

APECS Germany - Terms of Reference (ToR)

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This document is intended to describe the purpose as well as Terms of Reference (RoR) of APECS Germany and its relationship to APECS International.

APECS is an international organization focused on promoting early-career scientists working on cryosphere-related topics. APECS focuses on international level projects and has a number of national committees that focus on events and projects at the national level.

APECS Germany is a national committee under APECS International operating according to the [APECS National Committee Guidelines](#). APECS Germany was formed in July 2016.

These ToR for APECS Germany are intended as a guiding document for the operation of APECS Germany's Board and membership. This document outlines the leadership structure and workflow within APECS Germany. The conduct and structure of APECS Germany are different from APECS International and will be elaborated upon in the APECS Germany Rules of Procedure (RoP). For background information on APECS International, please see the APECS International Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure, including the guidelines for National Committees ([National Committees](#)).

1. Framework for APECS Germany

1.1 Name

The name of the committee shall be "Association of Polar Early Career Scientists Germany", hereinafter referred to as "APECS Germany".

1.2 Mission

APECS Germany aims at raising the profile of polar research in Germany by providing a platform for early career researchers based in or affiliated with Germany to engage, lead and support activities promoting polar research.

APECS Germany intends to organize career development events for early career scientists. In addition, APECS Germany aims at running education and outreach activities to enthuse and inspire young people about the Polar Regions and the Cryosphere. The aims of APECS Germany are threefold:

- (1) Provide networking opportunities for early career polar researchers across disciplines to meet, share ideas and experiences, and develop new research directions and collaborations.
- (2) Offer and facilitate access to opportunities for career development related to the Polar Regions and the wider cryosphere.
- (3) Strengthen education and outreach with regards to polar topics to young people and the general public.

We seek to achieve these aims by:

- Informing, creating, and facilitating access to transnational and interdisciplinary meetings
- Informing and providing opportunities for professional career development in the form of workshops or access to resources

- Promoting education and outreach as an integral component of future polar research
- Encouraging the interested German public to engage in polar research; and
- Organizing online and in-person activities to reach out to a broader audience and create an environment with fewer barriers for marginalized groups.

1.3 Membership

Membership is open to all APECS International members based in or affiliated with polar research in Germany. Members are automatically registered for APECS Germany when registering on the [APECS website](#) and choosing “Germany” as their country of residence. There are no fees associated with membership in APECS Germany.

1.4 Organization structure

The APECS Germany organization shall be kept simple. An open Board with a minimum of four members is intended to exercise the administrative authority of the committee. When less than four members are left on the Board, the remaining members shall decide to dissolve APECS Germany or actively recruit new APECS Germany Board members. These positions are open to all individual APECS Germany members. The roles and responsibilities of the Board are outlined in the APECS Germany RoP. APECS Germany is governed by a leadership team that is elected by the Board each year.

1.5 Rights and Responsibilities

APECS Germany may adopt, amend, or abolish the APECS Germany ToR and/or the APECS Germany RoP at any General Meeting of the Board with a 75 % or higher majority of those who vote, with a quorum of at least 75 % of Board members. Voting may be via means of communications set forth by the Board.

1.6 Language

APECS Germany’s official languages are English and German, and when possible, all relevant documents shall be made available in both official languages.

APECS Germany - Rules of Procedures (RoP)

The APECS Germany Rules of Procedures (RoP) have been drafted by members of the APECS Germany Board and passed April 20, 2021. They are intended to provide a framework for APECS Germany’s activities and governance. The APECS Germany RoP can be modified through due process in order to respond to the changing needs, compositions, and activities of an evolving APECS Germany (Section 1.5 of the ToR).

1. Membership

1.1. Individual membership in APECS Germany requires that the individual must be a member of APECS International. Membership is open to students, educators, early career researchers, government, non-government, private sector employees and others with an

interest in APECS Germany and activities related to Polar Regions and the Cryosphere.

1.2 Individual membership in APECS Germany is automatic with APECS registration and selecting “Germany” as country of residence, acknowledged by email request, and does not require affiliation with a member organization.

1.3 Individual members are entitled to:

(a) Nominate themselves or be nominated for positions of leadership within APECS Germany (board member);

(b) Participate in APECS Germany activities;

(c) Propose new APECS Germany activities through the Board; and

(d) Suggest new directions and ideas for APECS Germany to the Board.

1.4 Individual members shall not speak on behalf of APECS International or claim their views as representatives of APECS International without the explicit approval of the APECS Executive Committee or APECS International Director.

1.5 Individual members shall not speak on behalf of APECS Germany or claim their views as representatives of APECS Germany without the approval of the APECS Germany Board.

1.6 The APECS Germany Board reserves the right to remove APECS Germany privileges if a member behaves in a way that is contrary to APECS Germany RoP (Section 5.

Environmental and Social Responsibility, and Non-discrimination).

2. Organizational structure

The APECS Germany organizational structure shall consist of an elected Leadership Team - consisting of one Chair and maximal three Co-Chairs, an open Board, and individual members.

2.1 The Board is concerned with APECS Germany organizational matters and governance, including structure, elections and appointments, RoP, membership, and ongoing coordination of APECS Germany initiatives and activities. The Board votes on the approval of motions proposed by APECS Germany Board members, individual members, and organizational members. The Board is also responsible for ensuring ongoing communication and liaising with APECS International (e.g., keeping APECS informed of APECS Germany’s achievements, sitting on APECS committees when needed, etc.).

2.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Board

2.2.1 All APECS Germany members are eligible to serve on the Board.

2.2.2 The Board is mandated to make decisions and implement APECS Germany’s directions, activities, governance, and organizational structure. All members of the Board shall further act in the long-term interest of APECS Germany while fulfilling the mission of APECS Germany.

2.2.3 All members of the Board are responsible for attending meetings which shall be held online once a month. Board members are expected to work together outside of their outlined duties to promote major APECS Germany activities and governance.

2.2.4 Incoming Board members can self-nominate through an application process in the General board meeting or via Email to the APECS Germany Leadership Team. Board applications are reviewed and are approved by the current Board.

2.2.5 The Board term is from May 1 to April 30 of each year and is renewable. Board

members joining mid-term can be approved to the Board after their second attendance during a monthly Board call.

2.2.6 Terms are for one year and renewable, with the hope that not all Board members change at each nomination period in order to provide continuity.

2.2.7 The current Board will review incoming board member applications and vote to accept or, if deemed necessary, decline incoming Board members.

2.2.8 The APECS Germany board will consist of at least four members to be considered active and held to these ToR and RoP. There is no maximum size to the Board. The Board has the power and authority to increase or decrease its members as it sees fit based on the growth and development of APECS Germany while maintaining at a minimum of at least four members.

2.2.9 All Board decisions regarding governance and spending of monetary funds (if there are any) require a 75 % or higher majority of those who vote, with at least 60 % of board members voting. Any changes to the APECS Germany ToR or RoP must have a two-week review period for the Board before voting.

2.2.10 Decisions on the national level like approval of new Board members or participation in national activities require only a simple majority of those who vote.

2.2.11 Board Members are entitled to:

- a) Voting privileges on matters of importance to the ToR or RoP;
- b) Participate in decision-making for APECS Germany; and
- c) Apply to be a part of APECS Germany's Board Leadership Team.

2.2.12 Board members have the right and responsibility to share information on their organizational and research area's activities with APECS Germany members on a regular basis, as well as distribute APECS Germany information to their organizations' members.

2.2.13 In addition to the responsibilities of communication and participation, Board members are encouraged to also contribute to a number of APECS Germany events, articles and activities each year, including, but not limited to, the following tasks to build and enhance APECS Germany as an organization:

- *Post news items to the APECS website and social media pages*
- *Participate in and/or organize a webinar*
- *Encourage the recruitment of new APECS members*
- *Attend and/or organize APECS events at conferences when they attend*
- *Panel discussions and/or networking events at large conferences*
- *Social gatherings at home institutions*
- *Give APECS presentations at a conference/meeting*
- *Host a local education and outreach event*
- *Plan and host a career development webinar*
- *Suggest new activities not listed here.*
- *Contributions to the journal Polarforschung*

2.2.14 The Board is required to submit an activity report to APECS International once a year (usually in August), outlining events and activities that have occurred during the previous term (from May 1 to April 30 of each year).

2.2.15 If a long period of absence is part of a Board member's research/education/personal life or if periods of low activity due to upcoming commitments are anticipated, Board members have the responsibility to notify the APECS Germany's Board Leadership Team (Chair and Co-Chairs) at least 14 days in advance of the period in question.

2.2.16 The APECS Germany Board reserves the right to remove APECS Germany privileges if a Board member behaves in a way that is contrary to APECS Germany RoP (See section 5. Environmental and Social Responsibility, and Non-discrimination).

2.2.17 It is appreciated that formerly active outgoing members of the Board make themselves available as Ex-Officio advisors to the Board.

2.2.18 Board members can become Ex-Officios when they leave the Board and express their wish to fill in the role as Ex-Officio (self-nomination) or are asked by the APECS Germany Leadership Team to fill in the role as Ex-Officios. Ex-Officios require approval by the APECS Germany Leadership Team. The decision should be based on the former engagement in the Board, e.g., as a former part of the APECS Germany Leadership Team.

2.2.19 Each year in May, the Board will elect a Leadership Team that will be responsible for carrying out projects as mandated by the Board. Once in the new term, all board members may self-declare nominations or are nominated for any of the Leadership Team positions (as outlined in Section 2.3). Ex-Officios are contacted before a new term whether they would like to continue in their role.

2.2.20 The election of the Leadership Team is organized by the election committee, which consists of board members, who do not candidate for the Leadership Team.

2.3 Roles, responsibilities and election of the Leadership Team

2.3.1 The APECS Germany Leadership Team shall, at most, consist of one Chair of the Board (hereinafter referred to as the Chair) and three Co-Chairs. At a minimum, the Leadership Team must consist of a Chair at any given time to be subject to these Terms of Reference.

2.3.2 Upon the end of a Board term (May), the incoming Board will elect the APECS Germany Leadership team within one month (June 1). The Leadership Team term will be for one year (June 1 to May 31).

2.3.3 Incoming Leadership Team members must be APECS Germany Board members and self-nominate through an application process.

2.3.4 Each Board member gets one vote per position, which can be up to three votes if three Co-Chairs can be elected. Election of the Leadership Team positions are anonymous, online and open to all current Board members.

2.3.5 The nomination period of the leadership team will be open and advertised for two weeks at the end of each term to ensure that all Board members have an opportunity to apply. The nomination period will then be followed by a one-week online voting period by the Board.

2.3.6 If there is more than one candidate for the position of the Chair, the election committee will organize two separate elections for Chair and Co-Chairs at different times. The voting period then extends to two weeks, one week for each ballot. First, the Chair is elected. Then, the election for the Co-Chair positions follows in the second week. Thus, unselected candidate(s) for the Chair position have the option to be a candidate for the position of Co-Chair(s).

2.3.7 If a Leadership Team position remains vacant after elections have occurred by the end of May, the Leadership Team may divide any duties they feel are necessary for the term, as appropriate, among the other Leadership Team members. Any Leadership Team positions that are vacant may remain so until a suitable candidate is found (except for the Chair position as stated in 2.3.1).

2.3.8 If a Leadership Team position is vacated partway through the term, the Board may open a call for nominations if it is deemed necessary.

2.3.9 Chair

The role of the Chair of the Board may include:

- *Scheduling and chairing all Board meetings;*
- *Organizing and managing the general operations of APECS Germany;*
- *Advocating for and facilitating opportunities for APECS Germany members;*
- *Representing APECS Germany at official polar meetings and events in Germany. If the Chair is unable to attend, they can at any time ask one of the Co-Chairs or other Board members to replace them;*
- *Finding a representative that can speak on behalf of APECS Germany when needed;*
- *Providing the proceeding Chair with necessary documents and information to ensure the successful transition of APECS Germany, such as the ToR, RoP, previous budgets, and requests for funding;*
- *Promoting APECS Germany, encouraging and recruiting new APECS Germany members and board members;*
- *Demonstrating a working knowledge of the operating procedure of APECS Germany;*
and
- *Maintaining and responding to emails sent to the APECS Germany Board email address*

2.3.10 Co-Chairs

The role the Co-Chairs may include:

- *Assisting or substituting the Chair in his or her duties and responsibilities when necessary/requested. Co-chairs shall assume all responsibilities (see 2.3.7) of the Chair if he or she is temporarily not available.*
- *Maintaining and keeping all documents related to APECS Germany safe and publicly available;*
- *Coordinating the maintenance of the APECS Germany website*
- *Coordinating the maintenance and output of the APECS Germany social media platforms*
- *Liaising with various APECS Germany board members to assist and facilitate their work;*
- *Helping to recruit new APECS Germany members and board members;*
- *Maintaining and updating APECS Germany forms, poster presentations, and other documents;*
- *Developing and maintaining a working relationships and open communication with APECS and other APECS National Organizations;*
- *Reporting activities to the APECS National Committee Coordinators; and*
- *Reporting and communicating relevant APECS international and other APECS National Committee events or news to the Board;*

2.3.11 Other roles within the Board that may be appointed on a case-by-case basis:

- *Recording and distributing meeting minutes;*
- *Coordinating and advertise a potential APECS Germany webinar series;*
- *Coordinating educational and outreach activities including, but not limited to, Polar Week and Antarctica Day;*

- *Working closely with the Chair and Co-Chairs as well as APECS International on education and outreach activities;*
- *Coordinating and monitoring social media sites (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, APECS Germany website);*
- *Maintaining the Website and communicating APECS Germany events to the membership and greater public; and*
- *Developing and maintaining a working relationship and open communication with other German Polar organizations, such as the German Society for Polar Research (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Polarforschung - DGP).*

2.3.12 Individual members

The role of individual members include:

- *Supporting APECS Germany Leadership Team;*
- *Working closely with the Leadership Team to support activities; and*
- *Helping to recruit new APECS Germany members and Board members.*

2.3.13 Ex-Officio Advisors

The role of the Ex-Officio advisors may include:

- *Advising the APECS Germany Leadership Team and Board*
- *Supporting APECS Germany activities with their network*
- *Helping to recruit new APECS Germany members and Board members.*

2.4 Role and responsibilities of the APECS Germany-appointed Junior Editor of the journal *Polarforschung*

2.4.1 APECS-Germany is entitled to appoint a Junior Editor to serve as co-editor in chief of the journal *Polarforschung*. In their capacity as co-editor in chief of the journal, the holder of the position also sits on the Executive Committee of the DGP, and must be formally elected by the membership of the DGP.

2.4.2 The Junior Editor must be a member of the APECS Germany board and, in the case that more than one person applies for the position, shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the board before nomination to the Executive Committee of the DGP.

2.4.3 The nomination of the candidate by the APECS Germany board shall occur six months prior to the general meeting of the DGP, in order to allow close collaboration between the nominee and the incumbent editors, and therefore ensuring a smooth transition period. Upon confirmation by the DGP membership, the candidate will serve in the role for a period of two years.

2.4.4 The Junior Editor is responsible for supervising the APECS Germany pages in the journal *Polarforschung*, as well as any additional tasks and responsibilities in their role as journal co-editor in chief.

2.5 APECS Germany Affiliation

2.5.1 Members of the board and ex-officio officers of the Board are entitled to list the German National Committee of the Association for Polar Early Career Scientists as a professional affiliation when publishing or presenting materials relevant to APECS Germany.

2.5.2 APECS Germany and APECS International are non-partisan associations; as such, board members shall not use the APECS Germany affiliation to endorse a political candidate or political party. In extraordinary cases, permission may be requested from the APECS International Directorate.

2.5.3 Procedure for use of the APECS Germany affiliation:

Both the board and the leadership team must be informed via email prior to manuscript submission or presentation. In exceptional cases, members of the board are entitled to object to the use of the affiliation. If a member objects to its use, they are obliged to state their objection to the board within two weeks of the manuscript's submission to the board. The board will then hold a vote, which must occur within one week. More than 50 % of the board must participate in the objection vote. If 75 % of the board members voting on the decision object to the use of the affiliation, the member applying may not use it for the submitted manuscript. If less than 50 % of the board members participate in the vote, the objection cannot be accepted nor rejected and the affiliation may not be used. If no objection is raised within two weeks of submission to the board, the author is free to use the affiliation.

2.5.4 The APECS Germany affiliation should be: German National Committee of the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS Germany)

3. APECS Germany Activities

3.1 Any APECS Germany member may propose activities for which APECS Germany is (a) the lead organization, (b) a partner organization, or (c) represented in other appropriate roles. Approval must be provided by the Board in writing two weeks prior to the activity.

3.2 Letters of support for external proposals may be provided by the Board.

3.3 A report on the activity should be provided afterward for the website and additionally for social media, scientific journals, etc.

3.4 Contribution to the Journal *Polarforschung*

3.4.1 APECS Germany has committed to submit content to the Journal *Polarforschung* to the extent of at least two journal pages per edition, called "APECS Germany pages".

3.4.2 The APECS Germany board submits content for the APECS Germany pages. The supervision of the pages is handled by the Junior Editor (2.4.3).

3.4.3 At least one author of a contribution to the APECS Germany pages must be part of the board and use the APECS Germany affiliation (2.5).

4. Finance

APECS Germany has no particular finances. Application for financial support according to the [APECS funding guidelines](#) can be submitted to APECS via an application form.

5. Environmental and Social Responsibility and Non-discrimination

Preface: Members of APECS International and APECS Germany have a deep appreciation for the Polar Regions. We recognize that it is our responsibility and in our interest to make our research accessible and relevant to society, respect and safeguard the environment and cultures of the Polar Regions, be mindful of the implications and consequences of our professional actions, and be fair and ethical in the course of our work.

Here we outline the broadest sense of APECS Germany's commitment to Environmental and Social Responsibility and Non-discrimination with regard to APECS Germany's RoP.

5.1 Environmental and social responsibilities

5.1.1 APECS Germany will respect the integrity, morality, and spirituality of the culture, traditions, and relationships of indigenous peoples and local communities and endeavor to work in collaboration with these groups whenever possible.

5.1.2 APECS Germany will promote socially, environmentally and ethically responsible practices within the research community.

5.1.3 APECS Germany will not knowingly support research that promotes military conflicts or the production of weapons.

5.1.4 APECS Germany will recognize the need to advocate for science and evidence-based policy as it pertains to Polar Regions, without being partisan, and recognizes the difference between advocacy and partisanship.

5.2 Non-discrimination

5.2.1 APECS Germany will seek to provide equal opportunities to all members regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, ethnicity, country of origin, economic status, marital status, family status, age, disability, cultural mores, organizational affiliation, or conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspended.

5.2.2 APECS Germany will not discriminate against either members or others on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, ethnicity, country of origin, economic status, marital status, family status, age, disability or organizational affiliation.

6. Modification of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure

6.1 Proposed amendments to either the ToR or RoP must be presented in writing to, and approved by, the Board according to section 2.2.9.

6.2 Proposed amendments shall be considered annually unless extenuating circumstances dictate earlier.