

**Memorandum of Understanding
between
National Institute of Polar Research,
Vrije Universiteit Brussel,
Université Libre de Bruxelles and
Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences**

**Article 1
Purpose**

The National Institute of Polar Research, Research Organization of Information and Systems (NIPR), Japan, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium, and the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium, collaborate on meteorite research under the umbrella of the Statement signed in Tokyo in 2005 between the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Belgian Ministry of Economy, Energy, Foreign Trade and Science Policy. In 2009, NIPR and VUB signed an agreement regarding the sharing of the meteorite collected by Japanese and Belgian scientists in Antarctica during the 51st Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition (JARE).

Recognizing the successful collaboration in collecting meteorites in Antarctica during the past years, NIPR, VUB and ULB want to expand their collaboration in the coming years, and to include the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS), where the Belgian share of the meteorites will be deposited for curation purposes.

**Article 2
Items of cooperation**

1. The meteorites collected through the Antarctic campaigns in the Sør Rondane Mountains in the JARE-51 mission and subsequent joint missions, will be shared evenly between the two countries. This sharing will be accomplished by cutting in half the larger samples (> 50g). The smaller samples (<50g) will not be cut to avoid wasting precious small samples. They will be shared evenly between Japan and Belgium based on either total weight or total number. Priority access for research to the samples curated by the other partner is guaranteed. Specific sharing agreements will be tailored according to the circumstances, for the largest samples (> 4kg) because of their importance in terms of outreach and exhibits. Cutting them should be avoided, except for classification purposes.

2. All meteorites collected during the joint Antarctic campaigns – JARE-51 and subsequent ones – will first be sent to NIPR. Initial processing (defreezing, weighing, measuring, photography, provisional naming, short macroscopic description) of each meteorite will be carried out at Antarctic Meteorite Research Center (AMRC), NIPR in Tokyo. As this task is completed, AMRC-NIPR will make all possible efforts to cut the larger meteorite samples (>50g) and send the Belgian share to RBINS in batches of 30-50 meteorite samples within a reasonable time. If possible this timing should not exceed 15 months after the closing of each campaigns or for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 campaigns, the signature of the present MOU.

3. AMRC-NIPR and the RBINS agree on sharing the task of classification, following the existing AMRC-NIPR procedure, sample preparation (thin or polished sections) and analyses (ex. EPMA). Within the frame of the Belgian Antarctic Meteorites (BELAM) project, classification expertise will be

transmitted to the RBINS. Meteorite classification carried out under the full responsibility of RBINS will first be sent by RBINS to AMRC-NIPR for assessment, before being transmitted to the Meteoritical Society Nomenclature Committee for official approval. The ULB and VUB will assist in the classification process of out-of-the-ordinary identifications.

4. AMRC-NIPR and the RBINS agree on sharing the task of curation. AMRC-NIPR and the established Belgian curation system at the RBINS will harmonize their distribution of meteorite samples to avoid redundancy and duplication of requests. The existing regulations of NIPR will stand as a model for finalizing RBINS meteorite-allocation regulations. The Belgian Parties have set up a Scientific Loan Committee (SLC), which includes VUB, ULB and RBINS representatives. The SLC will handle the loan requests in coordination with the Committee at AMRC-NIPR. Before any decision, AMRC-NIPR and the SLC will systematically inform each other of all loan requests and will regularly keep each other informed of the loan follow-up.

5. Efforts will be made to establish strong research collaboration between NIPR and ULB-VUB scientists through the exchange of students and researchers. The Parties will mutually open their research facilities to their students and researchers. The Japanese and Belgian teams will discuss their research plans to avoid duplication and excessive use of sample material.

6. The meteorites will be referred to in publications and exhibitions as "collected during joint Japanese-Belgian meteorite expedition".

Article 3 Validity of this MoU

This MoU shall enter into force upon signature by all Parties and is valid for a period of five years, which will be renewed by tacit agreement for periods of five years. Any Party can decide to end the MoU at any given time, after notifying the partners. In that case, the remaining Parties shall negotiate the conditions for a new MoU, if they wish to do so. The discontinuation of the MoU by one of the partners does not revoke its right and duties for the campaigns already carried out; in particular in such case all efforts should be made by the withdrawing partner in order not to hamper the tasks of the remaining partners. Any amendments affecting the MoU shall be clarified among the Parties.

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