

TASK FORCE ON ARCTIC MARINE COOPERATION

From the [Iqaluit Declaration 2015](#)

43. **Establish** a Task Force to assess future needs for a regional seas program or other mechanism, as appropriate, for increased cooperation in Arctic marine areas.

From the [Iqaluit SAO Report to Ministers](#)

[pp. 77-78] With the opening of the Arctic marine environment as a result of diminished sea ice among other things, the time has come to explore the need for deepened cooperation in a range of areas. The Arctic Council working groups do outstanding, cutting edge work within their mandates. A cross-cutting effort that would look broadly at how our cooperation is working and how we might enhance collaborative efforts in the Arctic marine environment is a useful topic for a Task Force to explore.

The recommended composition and terms of reference of the Task Force are as follows:

Name: Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC)

Members: Representatives from the Arctic States, Permanent Participants, observers, and invited experts as may be necessary.

Co-Chairs: United States and Norway

Administration: Meetings of the Task Force should take place back-to-back with meetings of the PAME working group. The ACS will administratively support the Task Force.

Deliverable and timing: The Task Force should deliver a report to Ministers in 2017 identifying future needs for strengthened cooperation for Arctic marine areas, as well as whether the Council should begin negotiations on a cooperation mechanism for Arctic marine areas – ideally naming the specific mechanism - and/or any other recommendations it may deem appropriate.

Objectives: A Task Force reporting to the SAOs will be formed with a mandate to consider future needs for strengthened cooperation on Arctic marine areas, as well as mechanism (e.g. regional seas program, or other mechanism as appropriate), to meet these needs, and to make recommendations on the nature and scope of any such mechanisms. It should be noted that a decision by Ministers to form this Task Force would not constitute a decision to establish a cooperation mechanism. Arctic States would consider this decision at a later time, with the benefit of the Task Force's analysis and recommendations. In conducting the needs analysis, the Task Force should provide answers to the basic questions outlined below, which are by no means exhaustive.

1. Mandate and Scope

- What functions could a cooperative mechanism serve? Should a cooperative mechanism promote relatively informal coordination (e.g., by serving as a forum in which domestic officials responsible for specific aspects of domestic ocean management discuss shared challenges and best practices designed to address those challenges), or should it promote more formal coordination among countries of management measures? Should it serve as a mechanism to promote and coordinate efforts to improve scientific understanding of Arctic marine areas such as ocean acidification, marine debris effects, sea ice monitoring, etc.?
- Should a cooperative mechanism have a defined geographic scope such as, for example, the high seas area of the Arctic Ocean and/or other (seabed) areas beyond national jurisdiction?
- What would be the relationship between the work of a cooperative mechanism and the work of other institutions or mechanisms serving similar functions in adjacent or overlapping areas (such as AOOS, OSPAR, HELCOM, ICES and PICES, among others)?

2. Relationship to the Arctic Council

- Should a cooperative mechanism fit within the Arctic Council's existing structure (e.g. as part of PAME), or should it be established as a separate mechanism with a defined relationship to the Council?
- Questions of membership and participatory rights in a cooperative mechanism may bear on these considerations.

3. Legal Form

- Questions of legal form—whether a cooperative mechanism should be based on a legally binding agreement, or a non-binding alternative, will depend on answers to the substantive questions outlined above, and should only be taken up after a consensus on the substance begins to emerge.

Timeline:

- The Task Force should hold its first meeting no later than autumn 2015.
- The Task Force should complete its analysis of the issues outlined above no later than the 2017 Ministerial meeting.

[p. 69] PAME to feed into the analysis and outcomes of the Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC) as needed (U.S. lead).