



PAME PROGRESS REPORT TO SENIOR ARCTIC OFFICIALS

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PAME
Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment



ARCTIC COUNCIL

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1. Response to Arctic Council Priorities

The Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group (PAME) is the working group which focuses on the ocean agenda of the Arctic Council. It is guided by the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP) and biennial work plans as approved by the Arctic Council Ministers. PAME's mandate is to address policy and non-emergency pollution prevention and control measures related to the protection of the Arctic marine environment from both land and sea-based activities. These include coordinated action programmes and guidelines complementing existing legal arrangements. Continuous updating of the review of international agreements and arrangements regarding protection of marine and coastal areas is important and their implementation from an Arctic angle to identify possible ways and means to improve these instruments and compliance with them.

The common priorities agreed upon for the Norwegian, Danish and Swedish Chairmanship period of the Arctic Council are concerned with climate change, integrated resource management, the International Polar Year, Indigenous peoples, local living conditions and management issues.

PAME's work reflects the emphasis placed on these priorities, in particular the integrated resource management and climate change themes, with its apparent ocean focus which places a great importance and emphasis on the PAME mandate and work plan. Furthermore, PAME contributes to the priority of the Danish/Greenlandic Chairmanship on Megatrends in the Arctic through the Arctic Ocean Review (AOR) project.

PAME cooperates actively with the other Arctic Council working groups in an effort to contribute to improved efficiency and effectiveness of the Arctic Council

The climate change issues are addressed within all PAME projects and the participation of indigenous and other residents in PAME projects is fully recognized.

2. Follow-up since the Tromsø Ministerial Meeting

PAME held its working group meeting in Oslo, Norway 30 September-2 October 2009 and below is a summary of developments since the last SAO meeting.

PAME's objectives are based on Ministerial mandates as identified in PAME's Work Plan 2009-2011 accompanied by a set of specific actions which have all been assigned lead country(ies) responsibility.

This Meeting focused on initiating the PAME Work Plan 2009-2011 as approved by the 2009 Arctic Council Ministerial meeting with the aim to reach agreement on work planning on the following PAME projects:

- The Arctic Ocean Review Project - (leads: Canada, Iceland, Norway, Russia and USA)
- Follow up on the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (2009) – (work initiated by Norway)
- Follow up on the 2009 Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines - (lead: USA)
- Continuation on the work on Ecosystem Approach/LMEs - (leads: Norway and USA)
- Regional Programme of Action (RPA) – Follow up activities (initiated by Canada)

3. Summary of Progress on PAME Projects

Arctic Ocean Review Project (AOR)

The AOR project is led by Canada, Iceland, Norway, Russia, and the United States and a detailed project plan has been developed by the leads and approved by PAME. PAME HoDs have been asked to confirm representatives on the AOR Working Group. This group will contribute to the organization of a technical workshop and international conference, the production of various documents, and solicit input from Permanent Participants and other Arctic Council Working Groups as per the AOR Project Plan. Work on the AOR is proceeding according to its plan.

Reference is made to the SAO agenda item 5.3 for further information on the AOR Project Plan as approved by PAME.

Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment

In Tromsø, Ministers directed SAOs to identify appropriate follow-up actions to respond to the recommendations in the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA) 2009 Report. The AMSA was finalized shortly before the Ministerial meeting in Tromsø, hence no follow-up activities could be developed into projects and included to the PAME Work Plan 2009-2011 at that time. The PAME Work Plan states that: “*Activities to be added based on the outcomes/findings of the approved AMSA and as agreed by SAOs/Ministers in 2009*”.

During the PAME Meeting (30 Sep- 2 Oct 2009) PAME approved a working matrix dividing the 17 AMSA recommendations into the following three categories, and indicating the most appropriate leads and relevant partners:

1. Actions to be followed up/implemented by PAME as identified in the AMSA Matrix are recommendations I(A), I(B), I(C), I(D), II(D) and II(G). Canada, Denmark and Norway have indicated possible lead roles for follow-up of recommendations I.B and II.D.
2. Actions to be followed up/implemented by other Arctic Council working groups are AMSA recommendations I(E), II(C), II(F) and III(C). The PAME Chair to communicate this to the relevant working groups chairs for their consideration.
3. Actions to be followed up within national implementation processes/policies with possible future requests for reporting on national activities, if needed, are AMSA recommendations II(A), II(B), II(E), II(H), III(A), III(B) and III(D)

With respect to the six PAME follow-up recommendations mentioned in paragraph 1 above, potential follow-up commitments by countries are currently under review and consultations within respective Arctic Council countries, with a view to include in the current or 2011-2013. PAME Work Plan.

The PAME Secretariat is to prepare an information/outreach tool kit to include generic overheads and brochure to be used by PPs and others in communicating the AMSA 2009 Report.

Reference is made to the SAO agenda item 5.1 for further details on the Matrix for AMSA follow-up

Follow up on the 2009 Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines

During the updating process of the Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines the question arose as to whether the Arctic Council should update or develop guidelines specifically for Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs).

As a result of these informal discussions, PAME included in its Work Plan 2009-2011 an action item to formally discuss the need for and possible development of specific guidelines for Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas EIAs led by the United States. The rationale being that since the last consideration of developing such guidelines in 1997, the Arctic Council has published the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan as well as the “Oil and Gas Activities in the Arctic—Effects and Potential Effects (called the Oil and Gas Assessment or simply OGA)”.

All Arctic countries have an EIA or equivalent process in place. The Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines 2009 have a section devoted to EIAs, as well as an appendix that summarized the EIA process for all individual Arctic Coastal States. The Oil and Gas Assessment also has descriptions of the EIA processes in Arctic countries and found that they are critical and are applied across the Arctic.

The recent PAME meeting discussed the need to develop a set of guidelines for EIAs in the Arctic for Offshore Oil and Gas Activities. This discussion followed the recommendations for action in the AMSP section 7.2.3 by examining and discussing the adequacy of AC Guidelines in light of the OGA, and section 7.2.6 by identifying potential areas, as appropriate, where new guidelines and codes of practice for the marine environment are needed.

The PAME meeting agreed that each member state would provide an expert contact to the lead country, the United States, which would then follow-up by sending out a questionnaire to identify existing EIA legislation, procedures and practices for Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas activities. The lead on this activities will report to the next PAME meeting on progress and make recommendation on the way forward.

Follow up on the 2009 Regional Programme of Action (RPA)

The Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (RPA) was adopted by Arctic Ministers in 1998, as a regional approach to implementing the UNEP Global Programme of Action. In 2006, PAME was tasked by Arctic Ministers to review, update and expand the RPA to respond to the rapidly changing circumstances in the Arctic. The updated RPA was approved by Arctic Ministers in 2009.

Objective II of the PAME 2009-2011 Work Plan identifies two activities to assist with continuing the implementation of the RPA and PAME decided to proceed with the modified PAME Work Plan item Obj II, Action 2 (ii) i.e.:

Further develop the PAME website to include a Clearing House mechanism providing access to RPA related information and best practices held by Arctic Council and other organizations. LEAD: PAME Chair / Secretariat

The RPA Clearing House is intended to provide web-based access to information and data (for e.g. documents, websites, relevant fora, networks, etc.) and to demonstrate and profile Arctic States’ stewardship efforts related to land-based activities. The aim is to create a systematic way to outreach to Arctic Council Working Groups, Permanent Participants, observers and other stakeholders.

The PAME Secretariat was tasked to develop a work plan for this work in collaboration with the IPS Secretariat which offered to assist in the design of a Clearing House. This work will be structured according to RPA (GPA) categories - contaminants (e.g. POPs, heavy metals), habitat alteration / destruction (e.g. shoreline erosion and coastal development) and climate change adaptation. Work will proceed in a stepwise approach with Phase I as a pilot project to be developed over a period of 2-3 years; modest in scale, and success will be evaluated at end of term.

Ecosystem Approach

The 2004 Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP) refers to the following commitments towards the ecosystem approach, which has been the basis for the work of PAME's group of experts on ecosystem-based management and LMEs;

- (i) Identify the large marine ecosystems of the Arctic based on the best available ecological information (AMSP Strategic Action 7.4.1.);*
- (ii) Identify elements that can serve as key environmental and socioeconomic indicators of the state of Arctic marine ecosystems and thus guide effective decision-making (AMSP Strategic Action 7.4.2);*
- (iii) Promote pilot projects that demonstrate the application of an ecosystem approach to management (AMSP Strategic Action 7.4.3)*

Differences in circumstances and contexts have to be taken into consideration as ecosystem-based oceans assessments and management is context sensitive. There is not one single method for ecosystem-based assessments and management. A number of different practices and understandings of the concept appear to work. As a result PAME has decided to broaden the work of the LME-group of experts and rename it to a Group of Experts on Ecosystem-based Assessments and Management. Three elements are central to the further work of this Group:

- i) Use the LMEs as the appropriate scale for integrated management where the focus is on the status of the ecosystem (which is to be kept in good or acceptable state);
- ii) Assess the status of the ecosystems as a basis for advice for management actions;
- iii) Harmonize existing assessment work in the AC for this purpose, and establish clear links with relevant national and international activities and management structures, which will be the users of the assessment; and in doing so taking into consideration new development within this field.

The overall objective of the work of the expert group is to develop our understanding of how the ecosystem approach can be put to actual use in oceans assessments and management. The key issue is to address the needs of those agencies which are responsible for the protection and sustainable use of marine ecosystems.

The work on Ecosystem Approach within PAME is led by Norway and the United States. PAME has approved the Terms of Reference for the Group of Experts on Ecosystem-based Assessment and Management and the work plan for the group for 2009-2011.

This expert group will liaison, as necessary with other experts associated with the activities of other Arctic Council Working Groups including AMAP, CAFF and SDWG, and draw on the experience of other relevant fora.

Member States have been asked to nominate experts for the Ecosystem Group and an update and status of its work will be presented at the next PAME meeting.

4. Collaboration with other Working Groups

PAME continues to actively communicate with the other working groups of the Arctic Council on the need to collaborate on forwarding its work plan with their representation at PAME meetings and involvement in projects. EPPR and AMAP participated at the last PAME meeting. EPPR has expressed relevance of the AOR Project and AMSA follow-up to their work. Input from the other Arctic Council working groups is in the process of being initiated. Letters have been sent out to the other working groups regarding AMSA follow-up activities where AMAP, CAFF and EPPR have been identified for the purpose of guidance and possible follow-up of AMSA recommendations I(E), II(C), II(F) and III(C). These working groups have been asked to inform PAME of their possible considerations and/or actions, if any.

The work on Ecosystem Approach and its associated Group of Experts on Ecosystem-based Assessment and Management will liaison as necessary with other experts associated with the activities, in particular, AMAP, CAFF and SDWG. The lead countries on the Ecosystem work within PAME are the same as in the Marine Expert Group of CAFF.

The PAME Secretariat will collaborate with the IPS Secretariat in the design of a pilot clearing house as a part of the follow-up of the 2009 Regional Programme of Action (RPA).

5. PAME Management and Administration

The PAME International Secretariat is located in Akureyri, Iceland. The Secretariat has a staff of two. PAME is chaired by Norway, Mr. Atle Fretheim, and the vice-chair is Ms. Elizabeth McLanahan from the United States.

PAME is currently working on updating its homepage (www.pame.is) and is the PAME Secretariat is cooperating with the CAFF Secretariat in the development and management of a web portal /data management system whereby the AMSA database is being made accessible to the general public and scientific communities with the appropriate disclaimers as requested. The portal can be accessed through www.arcticdata.is

This work touches upon many of the key themes of the Arctic Council at this time and provides an active and accessible outreach and communication tool for Arctic Council data both spatial and otherwise.

The next PAME Meeting is tentatively scheduled for 3-5 March 2010 with alternative dates during the week of 8-12 March 2010. Location is to be confirmed.