From the PAME 2017-2019 Work Plan

Annex III: Desktop Study on Marine Litter including Microplastics in the Arctic (Project Plan)

Project Title:

Desktop Study on Marine Litter including Microplastics in the Arctic

2017-2019:

- ✓ Conduct a Desktop Study on Marine litter and Microplastics in the Arctic, and based on its outcomes, and
- ✓ Explore the possibility of developing an outline for a framework on an Arctic regional action plan on marine litter.

Background

A representative from the *Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities* ***(GPA)*** of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was invited by the PAME Working Group of the Arctic Council to present to its meeting in Maine, USA (September 2016) on the issue and possible linkages to PAME's work. The purpose was to inform PAME of UNEP's work and make recommendations on possible marine litter actions. UNEP presented the following nine recommendations with the aim to explore the possibility of developing a new PAME project on this subject for inclusion into the 2017-2019 Work Plan:

- ✓ Conduct an **assessment** of the marine litter issue in the Arctic region;
- ✓ Develop a **regional action plan** on marine litter;
- ✓ Develop joint **projects with UNEP** addressing marine litter in the Arctic;
- ✓ Contribute information and/or case studies to the next **MOOC**;
- ✓ Join the **Global Partnership on Marine Litter;**
- ✓ Nominate experts to the **Advisory Group** for the Assessment;
- ✓ Join the **Global Campaign on Marine Litter**;
- ✓ Engage in the monitoring of **marine litter indicators** under **Sustainable Development Goal 14.1.;**
- ✓ Organize **joint events** on marine litter in the arctic marine environment;

Rationale

Marine litter is one of the most pervasive pollution problems affecting the marine environment globally. UNEP defines it as 'any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment'. Marine litter consists of items that have been made or used by people and deliberately discarded into the sea or rivers or on beaches; brought indirectly to the sea with rivers,

sewage, storm water or winds; or accidentally lost, including material lost at sea in bad weather.[1]

The universal challenge of addressing and managing marine litter is a useful illustration of the global and transboundary nature of many marine environmental problems.

Arctic Council Ministers adopted the *Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (Arctic RPA)* in 1998 and updated it in 2009. The Arctic-RPA is a dynamic programme of action that uses a step-wise approach for its implementation and recognizes the continually evolving situation in the Arctic environment and the need for an integrated approach. It is the regional extension of the GPA, and as such provides a framework for addressing the main pollution source categories and respond to the global concerns. Marine Litter is one of eight contaminant categories of the GPA and the Arctic RPA.

Project Aims

- ✓ To evaluate the scope of marine litter in the Arctic, and its effects on the marine environment;
- ✓ Enhance knowledge and awareness of marine litter in the Arctic;
- ✓ Enhance cooperation by the eight Arctic Council member governments to reduce negative impacts of marine litter to the Arctic marine environment; and
- ✓ Contribute to the prevention and/or reduction of marine litter pollution in the Arctic and its impact on marine organisms, habitats, public health and safety, and reduce the socioeconomic costs it causes.

Main Activities

It is proposed that this project be developed in a stepwise approach to include the following two phases:

Phase I (2017-2019): Scoping and Outreach Phase:

- ✓ Conduct a desktop study on marine litter in the Arctic region with the aim to provide the current status on this issue.
- ✓ Develop communication products for outreach.
- ✓ Based on the outcome of the desktop study, explore the possibility of developing an outline for a framework of an Arctic regional action plan on marine litter.
- ✓ Explore collaboration with UNEP/GPA on marine litter such as possibly:
    - Joining the Global Partnership on Marine Litter http://unep.org/gpa/gpml/;
    - Nominating experts to the Advisory Group for the Assessment; and
    - Joining the Global Campaign on Marine Litter.

Phase II (2019-2021): Implementation Phase

[1] http://www.unep.org/pdf/unep_marine_litter-a_global_challenge.pdf

The initiation of this phase is subject to outcomes of Phase I and agreement on the activities for inclusion in Phase II.

Timeline and Major Milestones (Phase I):

In this project has a scoping and outreach phase, project leads propose convening workshops (proposed September 2017 and June 2018).

Phase I 2017-2019:

- ✓ Develop a desktop study on the status of marine litter issues in the Arctic;
- ✓ Develop communication products; and
- ✓ Explore the need to develop a framework/outline for an Arctic regional action plan on marine litter, based on the desktop study.

Main Tasks:

Feb – Sep 2017: Marine litter literature research -- compile existing and new reports of relevance (titles/references) and extract content in close collaboration with UNEP/GPA Global Partnership on Marine Litter

September 2017: Presentation by project lead(s) and discussions/inputs at PAME II-2017

September 2017: Arctic marine litter: Scoping workshop back-to-back with PAME II-2017 (TBC)

Sep – Dec 2017: Prepare summary report from the scoping workshop capturing the key points raised

Revise the draft desktop study on marine litter.

February 2018: Presentation by co-leads and discussions/inputs at PAME I-2018

March 2018: Presentation at the SAO meeting and guidance sought, as appropriate

Mar-Jun 2018: Work on a revised version of the desktop study on marine litter and update/incorporate comments/inputs, as relevant.

Prepare for an outreach workshop

June 2018: Arctic marine litter: Outreach workshop

Jun-Aug 2018: Continue work on the desktop study, and based on this work and guidance from previous workshops and consultations with Arctic Council members and others, explore whether a framework/outline for an Arctic regional action plan on marine litter is the most effective way to address the issue in the Arctic.

September 2018: Presentation by co-leads and discussions/inputs at PAME II-2018 and guidance sought

October 2018: Presentation at the SAO meeting and guidance sought, as appropriate

Oct/Dec 2018: Revisions and consultations as appropriate and prepare a final draft of the desktop study on marine litter issues in the Arctic

February 2019: PAME I-2019 meeting approval for submission of desktop study for review/approval by Senior Arctic Officials

March 2019: Approval of desktop study by Senior Arctic Officials

Mar/Apr 2019: Final layout and preparation of desktop study for Ministerial

April 2019: Arctic Council Ministerial

Overall Estimated Budget: Phase-I (2017-2019):

Consistent with the overall Arctic Council approach, the development of this project will be financed through voluntary contributions and in-kind support from member governments. The proposed stepwise approach, with PAME approval required for each phase, will facilitate financial planning and budgets. Financial contributions will be sought from other sources as well, such as the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Item	**Budget (USD/in-kind)**
Project management, coordination, consultation and outreach	50.000
External expert(s)	15.000
Scoping workshop Consultation workshop	15.000 35.000
Editing, final layout and printing	10.000
Estimated Total:	**125.000**

Project Team Structure/Lead Countries

- ✓ Leads: Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and AIA.
- ✓ Each Arctic Council member government and Permanent Participants' organization to appoint a project team member.
- ✓ Collaboration and assistance will be sought, as relevant, from e.g. UNEP/GPA, AMAP and other organizations (e.g. OSPAR), as appropriate.
- ✓ The PAME Secretariat will provide administrative and project assistance.
- ✓ Other Arctic Council working groups will be consulted accordingly.

Annex 1: Global Context: Background on UNEP-related Marine Litter Programs, and Other Initiatives

GPA

UNEP hosts the GPA, which serves as a global intergovernmental mechanism directly addressing the connectivity of marine pollution among terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. It aims to be a source of conceptual and practical guidance to be drawn upon by national and/or regional authorities for devising and implementing sustained action to prevent, reduce, control and/or eliminate marine degradation from land-based activities.

Under the GPA, the issue of land-based sources of marine litter has been highlighted as one of the nine source categories. Litter threatens marine life through entanglement, suffocation and ingestion, and is widely recognized to degrade visual amenities. Sources of littler include numerous human activities, including poorly managed or illegal waste dumps. According to the *United Nations Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP)*, estimated 60 - 80% of the world's marine pollution comes from land-based sources and activities.

The Global Partnership on Marine Litter

Marine litter has been an area of focus of for UNEP coordinated efforts through the *UNEP Global Initiative on Marine Litter*, involving the *Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans* (RSCAPs) and the GPA and more recently through the *Global Partnership on Marine Litter*.

Following the recommendations contained in the Manila Declaration[2], the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) was launched in June 2012 at Rio + 20 in Brazil. The GPML seeks to protect human health and the global environment by the reduction and management of marine litter as its main goal, through several specific objectives.

The GPML is a voluntary open-ended partnership for international agencies, Governments, businesses, academia, local authorities, nongovernmental organizations and individuals for coordination mechanism in which all partners agree to work together to further reduce and better manage marine litter.

Its current focal areas are:

- ✓ Goal A: Reduced levels and impacts of land-based litter and solid waste introduced into the aquatic environment;
- ✓ Goal B: Reduced levels and impact of sea-based sources of marine debris including solid waste, lost cargo, ALDFG, and abandoned vessels introduced into the aquatic environment;
- ✓ Goal C: Reduced levels and impacts of (accumulated) marine debris on shorelines, aquatic habitats, and biodiversity.

UNEA Resolution

In June 2014, governments attending the first UN Environment Assembly noted with concern the impacts of plastics and microplastics on the marine environment, fisheries, tourism and development calling for strengthened action, in particular by addressing such materials at the source. A resolution was adopted calling for the strengthening of

[2] http://www.unep.org/gpa/documents/meetings/IGRIII/IGRIIIDraftManilaDeclaration.pdf

information exchange mechanisms, requesting UNEP to present scientific assessments on microplastics for consideration by the next session of the Assembly.[3]

In addition to UNEP Programs and Initiative, other existing MEAs and Initiatives relevant to Marine Litter exist, including:[4]

- ✓ IMO- MARPOL 73/78 Annex V (garbage from ships)--London Convention and Protocol on Dumping;
- ✓ FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
- ✓ Basel Convention, CBD, CMS, IWC
- ✓ UNCLOS – ICP 17 – Marine debris plastics and microplastics
- ✓ G7 Action Plan on ML, OECD, EU, Ocean Conservancy, etc.

[3] 'Global Partnership on Marine Litter' <http://www.unep.org/gpa/gpml/issue.asp>.

[4] UNEP, '"Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics" Presentation to PAME Working Group Meeting Portland, Maine, USA 20 September 2016' (2016).