

Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic

The Government of Canada, the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark, the Government of the Republic of Finland, the Government of Iceland, the Government of the Kingdom of Norway, the Government of the Russian Federation, the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden, and the Government of the United States of America, hereinafter referred to as “the Participants,”

Mindful of the responsibility of the Arctic States to protect the Arctic environment,

Recognizing that the prevention of incidents leading to the release of oil into the Arctic marine environment is one of the most effective measures to protect the Arctic marine environment;

Recalling the 2013 Kiruna Declaration, which established a Task Force to develop an Arctic Council Action Plan or other arrangement on oil pollution prevention;

Taking into account the relevant provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;

Taking into account applicable rules of international environmental law that may be relevant to the Arctic marine environment;

Acknowledging the role of the International Maritime Organization related to maritime safety and the prevention of oil pollution by ships operating in the marine areas of the Arctic;

Recognizing that indigenous peoples, communities, and local and regional authorities can provide important resources and knowledge that are necessary for the development and adoption of measures to prevent marine oil pollution;

Recognizing the contributions and ongoing work of Arctic Council Working Groups, including the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment, and Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response;

Recognizing the contributions and ongoing work of: the World Meteorological Organization; the International Hydrographic Organization, specifically, the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission; and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission;

Recognizing that operating in Arctic conditions demands specific human resources, training, education, and expertise; and *stressing* the value of exchanging information and experience in technology, best practices and standards, as well as joint research and development, to prevent oil pollution;

Recognizing the importance of mapping ecologically vulnerable and sensitive areas in the Arctic and the importance of acquiring knowledge about such identified areas, and the use of such knowledge in assessing appropriate measures to prevent harm from marine oil pollution in the Arctic;

Have come to the following understanding:

1. INITIAL PROVISIONS

1.1 Objective.

The objective of this Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic — henceforth “Framework Plan” — is to strengthen cooperation, including exchange of information, among the Participants in the field of prevention of marine oil pollution in order to protect the Arctic marine environment.

1.2 Scope of application.

This Framework Plan applies to petroleum and maritime activities in the marine areas of the Arctic that entail a risk of oil pollution to the Arctic marine environment.

1.3 Nature of cooperation.

The Participants intend to cooperate under this Framework Plan in accordance with relevant rules of international law and with the national legislation (laws and regulations) and, as appropriate, policies of the respective States.

1.4 Information Sharing.

1.4.1 Information sharing efforts as detailed in this section are intended to be carried out by the Participants in accordance with their respective national legislation (laws and regulations)

and, as appropriate, policies, as well as in accordance with any contract, agreement or arrangement to which it is party.

1.4.2 Regarding information on processes, regulations, policies and practices related to the prevention of pollution of the Arctic marine environment by oil:

- a) the Participants may request such information from other Participants;
- b) the Participants may respond to such requests from other Participants, either directly or through existing fora as appropriate; and
- c) the Participants may in addition share any information of this nature that it considers may be of interest to other Participants.

The Participants may withhold information that may be unreasonably difficult or costly to discover or provide.

1.5 [Impact assessment and protection of the Arctic marine environment.](#)

1.5.1 The Participants intend to carry out impact assessments – in accordance with their national legislation (laws and regulations) and, as appropriate, policies – including environmental impact and risk assessments of petroleum and maritime activity which may result in the pollution of the Arctic marine environment by oil.

1.5.2 The Participants intend to protect and conserve the Arctic marine environment, including wildlife, vulnerable ecosystems and ecosystem services, while regulating or engaging in petroleum and maritime activities in the marine areas of the Arctic, in accordance with their national legislation (laws and regulations) and, as appropriate, policies.

1.6 Implementation of this Framework Plan.

1.6.1 The Participants intend to strengthen cooperation between their competent national authorities in order to implement this Framework Plan.

1.6.2 The Participants intend to — where possible, and in accordance with their national legislation (laws and regulations) and, as appropriate, policies — to cooperate with the private sector in order to improve standards and best practices for the prevention of the pollution of the Arctic marine environment by oil.

1.6.3 The Participants intend to have their competent national authorities implement this Framework Plan. The implementation may be discussed during the meetings of the relevant bodies of the Arctic Council when appropriate.

2. MEASURES FOR PREVENTION OF OIL POLLUTION FROM ARCTIC PETROLEUM ACTIVITY

2.1 Develop an overview of measures for improved safety

The Participants intend to:

- a) cooperate to develop an overview of the existing and potential technical and operational safety measures specifically designed to prevent oil pollution in the Arctic marine environment from offshore petroleum activity.

2.2 Promote standardization activities.

The Participants intend to:

- a) promote the development of standards and/or best practices relevant to the prevention of oil pollution in the Arctic, e.g., well design, source control, capping, containment and other technical and operational measures;
- b) assess whether existing and proposed standards for petroleum activity are sufficient to meet Arctic challenges; and
- c) support participation of technical experts in the efforts referred to in this section.

2.3 Strengthen cooperation of national regulators.

The Participants intend to:

a) promote cooperation between competent national authorities on issues concerning the prevention of Arctic marine oil pollution from petroleum activities.

3. MEASURES FOR PREVENTION OF OIL POLLUTION FROM ARCTIC MARITIME ACTIVITY

3.1 Strengthen traffic monitoring and management.

3.1.1 Remote and aerial surveillance.

The Participants intend to:

- a) share lessons learned and best practices from responding to/monitoring pollution incidents and operating in harsh Arctic environments;
- b) develop operational procedures for pollution patrol, ice patrol, etc. in the Arctic;
- c) explore possible exchange of personnel for familiarization tours as part of the crew;
- d) explore the possibility of coordination of earth observation satellites to acquire/share imagery over contiguous waters.

3.1.2 Enhancing cooperation on maritime risk assessments.

The Participants intend to:

- a) exchange experience and best practices of data collection and analysis for maritime risk assessments;
- b) exchange maritime traffic and environmental sensitivity data and associated methodologies; and

- c) explore the possibility of developing a common and publicly accessible database of Arctic maritime traffic and environmental sensitivity data.

3.2 Improve maritime services.

3.2.1 Navigational charts.

The Participants intend to:

- a) explore coordination of hydrography and mapping surveys to improve the safety of Arctic shipping; and
- b) exchange experiences and best practices on hydrography and nautical charting in the Arctic.

3.2.2 Improve meteorological and oceanographic forecasts.

The Participants intend to:

- a) exchange experience and best practices in the field of forecasting meteorological, oceanographic and ice related conditions and hazards as well as regarding climatological ice and metocean information; and
- b) improve methods, standards and systems for detecting and monitoring metocean and ice related conditions, and distributing this information, when appropriate, in a timely manner between Participants and communities throughout the Arctic.

3.2.3 Broadband and satellite communications.

The Participants intend to:

a) exchange information on relevant systems of broadband and satellite communication to improve safety of navigation in the Arctic.

3.2.4 Prevention of marine incidents that could result in oil pollution.

The Participants intend to:

a) develop a catalogue of existing resources (tug boats, tow packages, ship arrestors, mooring buoys, etc.) that may play a role in minimizing the potential for, and the environmental impact of, a marine incident that could result in oil pollution, and to assess the adequacy of such resources.

3.2.5 Navigation in ice conditions.

The Participants intend to:

a) exchange best practices and any other relevant information on national requirements and, when appropriate, industry standards for navigating in marine areas of the Arctic in ice conditions.

3.2.6 Icebreaking and ice-management services.

The Participants intend to:

a) exchange best practices and information on existing icebreaking and ice-management services.

3.3 Reduce risks associated with use and transport of heavy fuel oil.

The Participants intend to:

a) explore and pursue ways to reduce the environmental risk posed by transportation, storage or use of heavy fuel oil by ships in the Arctic.

4. OTHER PROVISIONS

4.1 This Framework Plan applies from April 25, 2015.

4.2 The Participants may modify this Framework Plan at any time upon their mutual consent in writing.

4.3 Any Participant may discontinue its participation in this Framework Plan by giving written notice to the other Participants.

4.4 This Framework Plan is not legally binding and does not create any rights nor obligations for the Participants under international law.

4.5 Nothing in this Framework Plan, including the exchange of information provisions, affects the respective positions of the Participants on the Law of the Sea in the marine areas of the Arctic or other marine areas.