Working Group Common Operating Guidelines

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U.S. Chairmanship

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Working Group Common Operating Guidelines

1. Introduction
   The Arctic Council (AC) has six Working Groups (WGs):
   - Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP)
   - Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP)
   - Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)
   - Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR)
   - Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)
   - Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)

   The WGs and their activities are subject to the 1996 Ottawa Declaration establishing the AC, the AC Rules of Procedure (RoP), the AC Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies and other relevant documents of the AC. These Operating Guidelines are to be read and used in conjunction with such documents.

2. Representation
   Representation on WGs includes Arctic States, Permanent Participants, and Observers. RoP Articles 39 and 40 allow WG Chairs to invite experts to participate in WG meetings under certain circumstances.

3. WG Chairs and Vice-Chair(s)
   The heads of delegation (HoDs) of each WG should select a Chair from an Arctic State to serve for a period of two years. The Arctic State that is chairing the Arctic Council should normally determine and provide the Chair of the SDWG. Each WG should also select one or more Vice-Chairs. WG Chairs should act in a neutral capacity to, inter alia, convene and preside over WG meetings, oversee the work plans of their WGs, ensure the fulfillment of requirements for reporting to SAOs, and represent the WG at other AC meetings. The Vice-Chair(s) should assist the Chair in his or her duties and should substitute when the Chair is unavailable. Should the Chair position fall vacant, a Vice-Chair will serve as Chair until the selection of a new Chair.

4. Role of WG Secretariats
   The WG Secretariats report to and take direction from their WG Chairs. The Secretariats’ duties are to provide administrative support such as drafting meeting minutes and reports, circulating official WG communications, distributing materials, coordinating WG activities, providing logistical support, managing the WG website and performing any other duties as assigned by the WG Chair or the WG as a whole. This may also include managing WG Secretariat staff and associated Secretariat and project finances.

5. Meetings
   Each WG should determine its respective meeting schedule and be responsible for the organization of its meetings. WGs should meet on average twice per year, in-person or otherwise, preferably well in advance of the SAO meetings to ensure that the WGs can meet their 30-day deadline to submit documents to SAO meetings. WGs should normally circulate invitations to its meetings and a provisional agenda at least 30 days ahead of the meeting, with the understanding that adjustments to the provisional agenda may be made up to and at the
start of the meeting. Each WG should establish a process for participants to be registered for each of its meetings.

6. **Decisions**

The RoP\(^1\) govern decision-making by WGs. Decisions taken at WG meetings should be recorded in writing and included in the meeting report.

7. **Reporting**

Within 14 days of the conclusion of WG meetings, WGs should normally circulate a draft meeting report to Arctic State and Permanent Participant HoDs. Arctic State and Permanent Participant HoDs should normally be given 14 days to provide comments on the draft meeting report. Within 45 days of the conclusion of WG meetings, WGs should submit all final meeting reports and other reporting documents to the Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS) for circulation to SAOs and Permanent Participants and for inclusion in the AC internal document archive. At least 30 days ahead of the spring and fall SAO meetings, WGs should provide to SAOs and Permanent Participants a written update on their activities.

8. **Project Tracking**

Within 14 days of the conclusion of WG meetings, WGs should normally submit to the ACS any updates to project entries in the Arctic Council Project Tracking Tool (“Amarok”).

9. **Ministerial Meetings**

Prior to each AC Ministerial Meeting, each WG should produce two items for inclusion in the SAO Report to Ministers: (1) a progress report covering its activities during the concluding Chairmanship; and (2) a work plan for the upcoming Chairmanship. Progress report and work plans should follow the guidelines laid out for each particular SAO Report to Ministers, which may vary from Chairmanship to Chairmanship.

10. **Cooperation among WGs**

WGs should endeavor to cooperate, coordinate and share information with one another.

11. **Amendments**

SAOs, in consultation with WG Chairs, may amend these Operating Guidelines.

12. **Annexes**

The Annexes to these Operating Guidelines contain additional understandings relevant to the operations of each individual WG. Notwithstanding paragraph 11, above, each WG may amend its respective Annex, subject to final approval by SAOs.

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\(^1\) See RoP Paragraphs 7, 8, 9 and 14.
TEMPLATE

ANNEX [1]: [Working Group]\(^2\)

1. WG Mandate
   Include a short paragraph (2-3 sentences) summarizing the mandate of the WG.

2. Project management
   This section could cover the role of project leads and expert groups; project proposals, the use of project templates and approval process.

3. Other
   This section may include any specific topics not covered elsewhere in the common operating guidelines or other relevant documents of the AC, e.g., additional roles of WG Secretariats, AMAP and CAFF boards, etc.

\(^2\) It is anticipated that each WG that wishes to will develop an Annex containing any additional material it deems appropriate to be submitted by 1 August to the SAOC via the ACS.
ANNEX: AMAP Working Group

1. WG Mandate

AMAP’s current mandate is: “to monitor and assess the status of the Arctic region with respect to pollution (e.g., persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals, radionuclides, acidification, and petroleum hydrocarbons) and climate change issues by documenting levels and trends, pathways and processes, and effects on ecosystems and humans, and by proposing actions to reduce associated threats for consideration by governments.”

The main objectives and priorities for the work of AMAP are documented in the ‘AMAP Strategic Plan’ and the prevailing ‘AMAP Workplan’, and may be supplemented by new requests from Ministers and SAOs concerning specific work items.

2. WG Chair

The AMAP WG Chair and Vice-Chair(s) shall serve for a period of two years. For both positions, the term can be extended for a further period of two years if so decided by the AMAP Heads of Delegation.

3. Executive Secretary

With the approval of the Chair, the Executive Secretary shall promote coordination among AMAP monitoring and research activities and those relevant to AMAP in other international organizations.

4. AMAP Board

The AMAP WG Board is composed of the AMAP Chair, Vice-Chair(s) and the Executive Secretary. The AMAP Chair, working through the AMAP Board, shall:

- Promote initiatives and formulate proposals for the effective functioning of the WG and achievement of its goal.
- Oversee the WG activities between the sessions.
- Carry out particular duties entrusted to it by the WG.
- Give final approval to documents for external publication.
- Ensure appropriate co-operation with organizations involved in monitoring.

The AMAP Board normally conducts its business through teleconference calls arranged as and when necessary.

5. WG Activities

AMAP activities are conducted in accordance with the AMAP work-plan which is periodically updated and approved by SAOs/Ministers. Work items added to the AMAP work-plan are evaluated in terms of, inter alia, their relevance with respect to AMAPs strategic objectives, international processes that AMAP has been directed to support (e.g. the Stockholm Convention, Minamata Convention, work under the UNFCCC/IPPC, etc.), and priorities established by the Arctic Council. In assigning activities to the AMAP work plan, account is taken of continuity and sustainability, definition of scope and objectives in relation to available resources, inclusion of traditional and local knowledge where applicable, timelines, deliverables and communication
and outreach, and relevant connections with activities under other bodies (Arctic Council groups and external organizations).

The guiding principles for the operation of AMAP (e.g., the monitoring strategy, the assessment expert groups, data QA/QC, etc.) are described in the AMAP Strategic Framework document. This is approved by the SAOs and is updated when necessary to reflect the decisions of the Arctic Council Ministers.

The AMAP WG may convene workshops and conferences as it may deem necessary for the performance of tasks which it shall determine.

6. Invited Experts
Subject to the agreement of AMAP Heads of Delegations (HoDs), the AMAP Chair may invite any person or organization that can contribute expertise and is able to contribute to AMAP’s work to participate in specific meetings. These persons or organizations do not have observer status.

7. Other
The AMAP Secretariat regularly receives requests for assistance from other parties, including governmental and non-governmental organizations, institutes, scientists, and others. In handling such requests, the AMAP WG has directed the Secretariat to adopt an appropriately flexible and co-operative attitude where requests do not impose a significant workload on the Secretariat. This would include requests concerning provision of information that has previously been approved for general distribution by the WG. Any major requests or requests that might interfere with the ability of the Secretariat to carry out its main task of supporting the AMAP program and the AMAP WG should be referred to the AMAP WG/Board for their consideration.
ANNEX: CAFF Working Group

1. WG Mandate
   CAFF's mandate is to address the conservation of Arctic biodiversity, and to communicate its findings to the governments and residents of the Arctic, helping to promote practices which ensure the sustainability of the Arctic’s living resources. A summary of the broad objectives and actions of CAFF include:

   A. to collaborate for more effective sustainable utilization and conservation including assessments, monitoring, research, and data management.
   B. to cooperate to further conservation efforts for Arctic flora and fauna, their diversity and their habitats.
   C. to protect the Arctic ecosystems from human-caused threats.
   D. to seek to develop more effective laws, regulations and practices for flora, fauna and habitat management, utilization and conservation.
   E. to work in cooperation with the indigenous peoples of the Arctic.
   F. to consult and cooperate with appropriate international organizations and seek to develop other forms of cooperation.
   G. to regularly compile and disseminate information on Arctic biodiversity.

   CAFF’s work is governed by a range of strategic action plans e.g. the Actions for Arctic Biodiversity 2013-21. In some situations to support its work CAFF develops Resolutions of Cooperation (RoC) to guide the development of partnerships with key organizations. A list of those organisations which CAFF has developed RoCs can be found here: http://caff.is/resolutions-of-cooperation.

2. Project management
   Each CAFF activity has a lead country(s) or/and Permanent Participant(s) and has a steering committee. Any proposed new activity is required to complete the project proposal template (below) before it can be considered for inclusion on the CAFF Work Plan. CAFF has a range of expert groups who focus on specific issues.

   CAFF’s project proposal template requires the following elements:

   A. Title: A concise, one sentence description of the project.
   B. Rationale: A summary of how the project relates to CAFF program priorities.
   C. Objectives: A statement of what is to be achieved.
   D. Study Area: Briefly describe the geographic focus of the proposed project.
   E. Project Design: Describe the proposed project including the scope, methods, and other information to ensure that the proposed project is fully understood.
   F. Relevance to indigenous peoples: Describe, where relevant how the proposed project relates to the traditional and cultural needs, values, and practices of indigenous peoples within the project’s scope.
   G. Traditional and Local Knowledge (TLK): Will the use of TLK lead to better project outcomes (yes or no)? If yes, explain how TLK will be used in the project (please describe in 2-3 lines) If no, provide an explanation why TLK is not applicable or feasible for this project (please describe in 2-3 lines).
H. Other Related Projects: If appropriate, briefly describe the relationship to related ongoing efforts by other organizations and how the present project would add to or complement those efforts.

I. Schedule: Indicate the dates for beginning and completing each phase of the project and the project’s duration.

J. Anticipated Outputs: Identify the expected results and/or products.

K. Application of Results: Describe how the results will assist CAFF to fulfil its mandate.

L. Literature Cited: As appropriate.

M. Personnel: Briefly describe the role of the person(s) involved in the project.

The Arctic Biodiversity Data Service (ABDS) is CAFFs data-management framework. It is an online, interoperable data management system serving as a focal point and common platform for all CAFF programs and projects as well as be a dynamic source for up-to-date circumpolar Arctic biodiversity information and emerging trends. The ABDS is connected interoperably to other regional and global data frameworks.

3. Other

CAFF is governed by a Chair and Management Board that consists of National Representatives assigned by each of the eight Arctic Council Member States and Permanent Participants representing the six Indigenous Peoples’ organizations of the circumpolar north.

The board meets twice year to provide ongoing oversight and direction to the work of CAFF.

The CAFF International Secretariat assists the CAFF Chair, Management Board and Working Group to implement the CAFF work plan, and provides necessary support functions to the CAFF program.
ANNEX: PAME Working Group

1. WG Mandate
   The Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) Working Group was established by the Arctic Council Ministers in Nuuk, Greenland in September 1993. PAME provides a unique forum for collaboration on a wide range of activities directed towards protection of the Arctic marine environment. PAME’s mandate is to address policy and other measures related to the protection of the Arctic marine and coastal environment from both land and sea-based activities. These measures include coordinated strategic plans as well as developing programs, assessments and guidelines, intended to complement or supplement efforts and existing arrangements for the sustainable development of the Arctic marine environment.

2. Project Development and Management
   PAME project leads are responsible for advancing the project in accordance with the project’s work plan and timeline. Expert groups and/or expert workshops are used in an effort to advance the work of its projects in a targeted manner.

   Development of new projects is based on ministerial mandates and the prioritization of ongoing activities. A project plan is developed and annexed to the PAME Work Plan. The following is an outline of how PAME projects are developed and managed.

   **Inclusion/involvement/contribution by Permanent Participants.** As instructed by SAOs a check-list (see below) should be used by Arctic Council Working Groups when developing new project proposals. Working Groups report out on the information in the checklist when they update their project entries in the Arctic Council’s project-tracking database following their twice-yearly Working Group meetings.

   Have Permanent Participants been engaged in the development of the project proposal?
   - Yes
   - No
   If no, why? (Please describe in 2-3 lines)
   If yes, please describe any role that Permanent Participants will have in the project. (Please describe in 2-3 lines)

   Will the use of TLK lead to better project outcomes?
   - Yes
   - No
   If yes, explain how TLK will be used in the project. (Please describe in 2-3 lines)
   If no, provide an explanation why TLK is not applicable or feasible for this project. (Please describe in 2-3 lines)

   **Outline for New Project Workplans**
   All new projects being incorporated in the *PAME Work Plan* need to have confirmed lead(s) and a project work plan. Below is an outline of the main components which should be filled out for all new/proposed PAME projects.

   **Project Title and Project Summary**
   - Include 2-3 short and precise paragraphs which summarize the project in a language suitable for possible public release/information on the PAME homepage.
Key Objective(s)
- Develop key objectives and keep in mind the PAME mandate and priorities, e.g. the implementation of the *Arctic Council's Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (2015-2025)* and the nature of the product or outcome (ultimate approval/welcome/note progress).

Scope
- The coverage and context of the project, relevance to other PAME activities and/or other Arctic Council projects/working groups’ activities.

List of Tasks/Activities:
- Describe the conceptual framework and provide step-by-step detail
- Identify themes and/or other issues
- Planned conferences/workshops/project meetings
- Inclusion/involvement/contribution by Permanent Participants (as per checklist above)
- Synergies and collaboration with activities of the other Arctic Council working groups and/or other partners and stakeholders.
- Outline plans for consultations and/or communicating the project findings and results; think of users and benefits as well. Name the interest groups, or type of reports, websites, etc.

Timeline and Major Milestones:
- Include a timeline that defines the proposed completion of all activities included in the project. List any milestones and/or critical decision points and plans for conferences and/or project specific meetings outside the biannual PAME Meetings.

Budget:
- To include financial considerations and a working budget for the required resources per project activity.

Main outcomes
- Interim products e.g. products of the milestones, if any and the final product.

Project Team Structure/Lead Countries
- Include names, titles and contact information.

*For larger projects – provide an outline of the project management and advisory structure and proposed roles.*
ANNEX: SDWG Working Group

1. WG Mandate

   Chairperson & Vice-Chairpersons
   - The chairperson shall be from the Arctic State that is chairing the Arctic Council. The chairing State is normally responsible for the logistics and organization of all Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) meetings.
   - A vice-chairperson shall be selected from among the Arctic States.
   - A second vice-chairperson shall be selected from among the Permanent Participants.
   - The chairperson and the vice-chairpersons shall each serve terms of two years. Their terms shall normally begin after the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting that follows their selection.

   Executive Secretary
   - The procedures for hiring the SDWG’s Executive Secretary, as outlined in the 2014 Operating Guidelines, remains the agreed upon selection and hiring process for this position.

2. Types of Projects
   SDWG projects may be authorized, endorsed or designated by the SDWG. Authorized and endorsed projects have been reviewed and recommended by the SDWG and approved by the SAOs. They may be grouped into clusters to promote synergy, provide for expert oversight and/or consolidate management.

   Designated projects are projects that do not meet the criteria for approval by the SAOs, but address priority subject areas.

   A. Authorized Projects
   Authorized projects meet the criteria for Arctic Council projects. They should enjoy the participation of all Member States and Permanent Participants. “Participation” may take the form of funding or the provision of human resources, in-kind contributions, or other resources. Authorized projects from their inception are circumpolar in nature, and should have circumpolar participation, effect and influence.

   B. Endorsed Projects
   Endorsed projects must be sponsored by more than one Member State. One or more Permanent Participants should also participate. “Participation” may take the form of funding or the provision of human resources, in-kind contribution, or other resources. Endorsed projects may be regional in scope and participation, but should have circumpolar effect and influence.

   C. Designated Projects
   Designated projects are projects that do not meet the criteria for approval by the SAOs, but address priority subject areas. They may be proposed by one Member State, a Permanent
Participant, an Observer or by an organization not affiliated with the Arctic Council. These projects should make a valuable contribution to the overall work of the Arctic Council. For such projects a designation from the Arctic Council may help a sponsor develop additional support or sponsors, raise funds for the project, or otherwise advance the project.

The Arctic Council takes no responsibility or active part in the implementation of designated projects. A Member State or Permanent Participant, at its discretion, may advise or support the sponsor of a designated project.

If a designated project evolves to fulfil the criteria for an endorsed or authorized project, the project lead may present it to the SDWG for a change in status to an authorized or endorsed project at the next scheduled SDWG meeting.

D. Project Clusters

A “project cluster” can include the grouping and joint management of related projects. Project clusters may be composed of projects from the SDWG as well as from other Arctic Council working groups.

In order to promote synergy among specific projects, the SDWG, by consensus among its members, may designate existing authorized and/or endorsed projects into a cluster consistent with a priority subject area. The SDWG, by consensus among its members, may create a cluster of new authorized and endorsed projects in a priority subject area. New authorized or endorsed projects may be added to an existing cluster.

Project clusters require an identified lead Arctic Council Member State or Permanent Participant who will:

a) organize reporting of all projects into a single report in a consistent format
b) create and maintain an oversight committee composed of subject matter experts to approve and maintain contact with projects within the cluster