

# Instructions for Observers subject to review

## Introduction

This document provides the reporting template and accompanying instructions for Observers to be reviewed during the **Icelandic Chairmanship (2019-2021)**.

The deadline for submission is **1 June 2020**.

According to the "[Arctic Council Rules of Procedure](#)" (Annex 2), every **two years** Observers are requested to submit to the Chairmanship up-to-date information about relevant activities and their contributions to the work of the Arctic Council. Every four years, from the date of being granted Observer status, Observers will be reviewed at the Ministerial meeting. The following **20 Observers** will be reviewed at the next Ministerial meeting, and are requested to submit their review report by **1 June 2020**:<sup>1</sup>

- Germany;
- The Netherlands;
- Poland;
- Switzerland;
- United Kingdom;
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
- Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM);
- OSPAR Commission (OSPAR);
- Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Regions (SCPAR);
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE);
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
- West Nordic Council (WNC);
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO);
- Advisory Committee on the Protection of the Seas (ACOPS);
- International Arctic Science Committee (IASC);
- International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES);
- International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH);
- Northern Forum (NF);
- Oceana; and,
- World Wildlife Fund for Nature – Global Arctic Program (WWF).

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<sup>1</sup> These include the Observers reviewed before the Fairbanks Ministerial meeting in 2017 as well as Observers admitted that year.

## Role of Observers

The role and responsibilities of Observers, as well as criteria for admission to the Arctic Council, can be found in the “Arctic Council Rules of Procedure” (Annex 2) and the “[Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies](#).”

The primary role of Observers is to observe the work of the Arctic Council. Observers contribute to the Arctic Council primarily through engagement at the level of Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups. Observers are invited to the meetings and other activities of the Arctic Council unless the Senior Arctic Officials decide otherwise. Observers may also propose projects through an Arctic State or a Permanent Participant.

## Report submission

Observer review reports should include the relevant information described below and in the template.

- (a) A description of the Observer’s contributions to the work of the Arctic Council since the time of the Observer’s most recent submission, or in the previous two years, with special focus on contributions to the subsidiary bodies through project participation and support, as well as collaboration with Permanent Participants;
- (b) If applicable, a description of the Observer’s future plans to contribute to the work of the Arctic Council, with special focus on contributions to the subsidiary bodies through project participation and support, as well as collaboration with Permanent Participants; and,
- (c) If applicable, a description of the Observer’s contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered in the previous sections since the time of the Observer’s most recent submission, or in the previous two years.

Observer review reports should be submitted electronically to the **Arctic Council Secretariat** via email: [acs@arctic-council.org](mailto:acs@arctic-council.org) not later than **1 June 2020**. Please bear in mind while preparing your report that all Observer reports will be published online in the *Observer* section of the [Arctic Council online Library](#).

If an Observer fails to submit a report during the review process, the Arctic Council will consider this to mean that the Observer **is no longer interested in maintaining its status** as an accredited Observer to the Arctic Council.

## Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

United Nations Environment Programme

Date of submission:

31.05.2020

Observer's website, if appropriate:

www.unep.org

### Information for appropriate contact person

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**Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer of the Arctic Council?**

**Yes**  **No**

## Observer Review Report

Please describe in no more than two pages your state's or organization's contributions to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years. Please highlight contributions to specific projects, such as through proposals, concept development, in-kind and financial support, and hosting of meetings. Please detail any collaboration with Permanent Participants, such as project proposal endorsement and support.

UNEP has been active as an Observer on the Arctic Council since 1996, taking part in the Council's Ministerial, Senior Arctic Officials meetings and, together with its collaborating centres GRID-Arendal in Norway and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) in the UK, has engaged actively in the efforts of most of the Council's scientific and technical working groups.

As the United Nations organization setting the global environmental agenda and along with the Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) it administers—including those on biological diversity, hazardous waste, chemicals and mercury—, UNEP plays an important role in scientific exchange and global communication of Arctic matters.

Since May 2018, UNEP has engaged in the Council's work, as follows:

- UNEP released its sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6) at the fourth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 4) in March 2019. Polar issues are cross-cutting and are referred to as relevant throughout the report. GEO-6 is UNEP's flagship assessment to keep the world environment under review, and combined with its negotiated and endorsed Summary for Policy Makers, is a critical knowledge product which bridges the science-policy interface at the ministerial level.
- UNEP and GRID-Arendal produced the publication "Global Linkages – A graphical look at the changing Arctic". All deliverables, as well as the final text and graphics of the publication were closely consulted on with the representative of the Ministry of the Environment of Finland, also in their capacity as the Finnish Arctic Council chairmanship, throughout the duration of the project. The report showcases geographic linkages of the Arctic in the areas of climate, pollution and biodiversity, as well as interconnectedness between these phenomena. A preliminary presentation was given by UNEP during the Arctic Environment Ministers' meeting in October 2018. The publication was launched at two events: globally, during UNEA4 in March 2019, and for the Arctic region at the 11th Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting (May 2019).
- Also at UNEA4, GRID-Arendal presented the preliminary findings of PAME's Desktop Study on Marine Litter on behalf of PAME.
- UNEP participated in the Arctic Environment Ministers' Meeting (October 2018, Rovaniemi), where it provided a keynote presentation for the ministers on the Global Arctic - inter-related issues in the areas of pollution, climate change and biodiversity.
- UNEP regularly participates in the Senior Arctic Officials meeting, and provided a statement during the observer intervention session (2018, 2019)
- UNEP shares the interest of the Arctic countries in the sphere of circular economy and its relevance for, and application in the Polar region. UNEP has delivered a presentation on these matters called "Striving for low-carbon and resource-efficient circular economy in the Arctic" during the October 2018 SDWG meeting.
- Black Carbon / AMAP – Nathan Arctic ministerial Rovaniemi May2019 - side event
- GRID-Arendal provided support to IPS for a map on Indigenous languages

- AMAP and UNEP have worked together on the Global Mercury Assessment, producing the highly regarded (2013 and) 2018 report. UNEP is interested in continuing this collaboration. During the Minamata Convention COP2 (Geneva, November 2018) UNEP and AMAP jointly presented the context, content and key findings of the upcoming final report. The Global Mercury Assessments are recognized as an important source of information for the effectiveness evaluation of the Minamata Convention in the report by an expert group to the Conference of the Parties. COP3 in November 2019 further discussed this.
- UNEP-WCMC contributes to the Arctic Council work on Arctic Biodiversity indicators, Arctic peatlands, protected areas, sea birds and wilderness protection, and biodiversity gap analysis.
- UNEP actively participated in this year's Arctic Biodiversity Congress, presenting relevant information and chairing various sessions, including closing remarks from the Director of UNEP-WCMC (October 2018). More specifically, during the Arctic Biodiversity Congress:
  - GRID-Arendal facilitated, jointly with the Sámi Council, a joint CAFF/AMAP session on "Understanding cumulative effects on Arctic biodiversity and landscapes".
  - UNEP-WCMC convened a session on private sector engagement in Arctic biodiversity conservation and data use
  - UNEP-WCMC, in collaboration with the CAFF Secretariat also updated the information on the status of protected areas in the Arctic
  - UNEP-WCMC also provided an overview of the potential for application of global biodiversity models in the Arctic, and their relevance to the future of Arctic conservation policy and practice.
- Building on experiences through the Proteus Partnership, UNEP-WCMC is engaging with the CAFF project on mainstreaming Arctic biodiversity considerations within the mining/extractives sector.
- GRID-Arendal has co-chaired two CAFF events: Nomadic herders lavvu dialogue and Nomadic herders: 'Enhancing the resilience of pastoral ecosystems and livelihoods of nomadic herders'.
- UNEP hosts the Secretariat of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), of which seven of the eight the Arctic Council member states are partners. The CCAC has worked to shape the expertise and good practices needed to address black carbon and methane abatement measures. Many of the CCAC initiatives on black carbon and methane are relevant for the Arctic Council member states. The work of CCAC is closely linked with the work of ACAP.
- UNEP (either directly or through either GRID-Arendal or WCMC) has participated in many of the annual working group meetings (PAME, CAFF, AMAP, SDWG, EPPR, ACAP), giving presentations when asked
- UNEP facilitated a meeting between EPPR, UNEP and UNECE in Geneva in January 2020 to discuss avenues of cooperation
- UNEP will participate in the UN Ocean Decade Arctic workshop in Copenhagen, tentatively scheduled for October 2020.

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your state's or organization's future plans for contributing to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups. Please highlight intentions to contribute to specific projects and to collaborate with Permanent Participants.

One specific aspect where the Arctic Council and its working groups can benefit from UNEP's support is on strengthening communication of Arctic matters and their global context. UNEP and the Arctic Council (through the working groups, the Secretariat, task forces and PPs) will explore further cooperation with regards to communication of Arctic issues to different target groups e.g. decision makers.

UNEP, together with WCMC and GRID-Arendal will – where it has capacity and relevant – continue to support the two-way exchange of knowledge and support the working groups, task forces and expert groups as well as the PPs, Arctic states and the AC Secretariat and Chairmanship.

- UNEP plans to continue supporting PAME on marine issues, including marine debris. GRID-Arendal has a dedicated program on waste and marine litter with a number of projects of direct relevance to the Arctic. Among these is the Barents Sea Leadership Training on Marine Litter which includes translation of UNEP's Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on marine litter into Russian and capacity building on marine litter in the Russian Arctic.
- UNEP and GRID-Arendal are partners in the organization of the Arctic Marine Plastics Symposium (originally scheduled for April 2020, now postponed until last at least October due to COVID-19). GRID-Arendal will provide reporting services to the Symposium  
GRID-Arendal is also a partner with AMAP and PAME and UArctic to organize a workshop back-to-back with the symposium.
- UNEP and GRID-Arendal are preparing a Rapid Response Assessment on global wildfires and plans to include a section on Arctic wildfires, an area of interest to EPPR.
- GRID-Arendal is preparing an Atlas of Arctic Permafrost (to be launched in April 2022). UNEP and AMAP will be invited to participate in the scientific advisory board (slight delay in starting up d/t COVID-19).
- GRID-Arendal is preparing a small report on the impact of the replacement of traditional handmade tools with plastic ones on Indigenous livelihoods (to be launched in 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2020) in partnership with the Saami Council
- Global monitoring plan (GMP) for POPs under the Stockholm Convention: AMAP is an important strategic partner for the GMP and POPs monitoring data generated by AMAP are included in the regional monitoring reports for WEOG. Inclusion in the GMP data warehouse of the human POPs monitoring data from the Arctic is still needed and should be facilitated
- GRID-Arendal is seeking review by ACAP (and SDWG) on its story map which is based on the work of these WGs related to waste in remote Arctic communities.
- GRID-Arendal is part of a consortium that will study marine ecological tipping points east and west of Greenland. CAFF is on the advisory board.
- UNEP, through WCMC, will continue to support CAFF on matters of biodiversity and protected areas
- UNEP will seek to facilitate collaboration on black carbon and related issues, through the Climate and Clean Air Coalition.
- UNEP and GRID-Arendal are discussing how they can support the Gender Equality in the Arctic (SDWG) publication – discussing with lead author on the environment chapter.

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your state's or organization's contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered by the previous sections since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years.

UNEP with its collaborating centres (WCMC and GRID-Arendal) are planning to step up where possible and relevant, their engagement and contributions to the AC, the chairmanship and the Secretariat, the PPs, the working groups and expert groups and task forces.

As the UN's voice for the environment, one of UNEP's strengths is its ability to convene representatives of UN Member States in support of Arctic Council priorities, as well as the business sector, NGO's, academia and the science community, and other stakeholders whose actions and work impact the Arctic.

UNEP will be looking for possible future initiatives that might assist with other aspects of the Arctic Council's goals, and will bring them to the attention of Council members and the Council's working groups as appropriate, and in interaction with the Arctic Council members, permanent participants as well as other observer organizations (in particular with the UN family members).

- GRID-Arendal is preparing a Rapid Response Assessment on coastal permafrost (release in summer 2020)
- UNEP and GRID-Arendal are preparing a Rapid Response Assessment on global wildfires and plan to include a section on Arctic wildfires, an area of interest to EPPR and AMAP.
- UNEP is looking forward to the AMAP Arctic Mercury Output document in 2021.
  - UNEP can help facilitate greater interaction between the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership (of which AMAP is member) and AMAP.
  - Minamata Convention requests parties to cooperate in research, development and monitoring on mercury, and to build on existing monitoring networks. AMAP could provide a framework for the parties to cooperate on these, and scientific knowledge to assist parties to protect the vulnerable environment and populations including the Arctic.
- Preliminary talks for a second edition of the Global Gender and Environment Outlook have commenced. Arctic experts and representatives of PP's are planned to be included.
- Marine Litter: UNEP can contribute to AMAP's monitoring work using expertise from other areas (esp. MEDPOL) and the review of regional action plans. *Vice versa*, AMAP can share information and expertise regarding the Arctic-specific issues and facilitate integration at the global level
- Waste: Basel Convention could look into waste management issues in Remote Arctic Areas
- GRID-Arendal and UNEP produced the Global Tailings Portal, a free, searchable database with detailed information on more than 1,800 mine tailings dams around the world. We think looking for funding for making an Arctic centred version would be interesting for all people living in the Arctic - <https://tailing.grida.no/about>
- UNEP's activities on Indigenous Peoples' issues in the Arctic are distributed globally through its annual reports to the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues. UNEP seeks to continue work with Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council and undertake a dedicated dialogue on matters of common concern and cooperation.
- UNEP, through WCMC, will continue to support CAFF on matters of biodiversity and protected areas
- UNEP will seek to facilitate collaboration on black carbon and related issues, through the Climate and Clean Air Coalition.