

Progress Report from AMAP Board to the SAO Meeting in Washington, D.C.

November 18-19, 1999

1: Organization

Since the last SAO meeting, Helgi Jensson (Iceland) has been elected the new Vice Chair of the AMAP WG. There have been no changes in the AMAP Secretariat.

2: Follow up after the SAO meeting in Anchorage, May 1999

2.1. AMAP Monitoring Programmes and National Implementation Plans (NIPs) for 1998 - 2003

At the 12th AMAP Working Group (WG) meeting in Helsinki, the WG agreed that the draft AMAP Trends and Effects programme documents available at that time formed a sufficient basis for preparatory work on the development on National Implementation Plans (NIPs) concerning contaminants and effects monitoring components (excluding climate change and UV-B effect issues). The WG approved and endorsed, subject to amendments and comments discussed and noted, the sections of the programme document as drafted. It was agreed that finalised versions and additional sections would be circulated for final approval when available.

The AMAP expert groups on radioactivity, human health and heavy metals have met during the year to further develop and specify the content of the AMAP programme related to their areas of concern.

Prior to the 13th AMAP WG meeting in Toronto, Canada (November 10-12, 1999), the Assessment Steering Group (ASG) discussed the updated versions of the AMAP Trends and Effects programme, and provided the WG with the latest corrections to improve the programmes. The WG welcomed the work done by ASG and requested the updated versions to be circulated among the AMAP Heads of Delegations for final approval within the next months.

Most of the Arctic countries presented their National Implementation Plans (NIPs) for the year 2000 and onwards. The ASG made an assessment of the available plans and the planned assessments. The plans to fulfill the Trend programmes (spatial and temporal) seem to be acceptable for AMAP so we can present the requested assessments in 2002. Regarding the Effect programmes the situation is more problematic since this is an area where we are facing the boundary of science, and this is a new major take on for AMAP.

2.2. The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA - assessment of effects due to changes in climate and UV/ozone.

As a follow up of decisions made in Helsinki (AMAP 12th WG) an Assessment Steering Committee (ASC) was established between AMAP, CAFF and IASC, and two meetings of the ASC have been held (March 1999 in Washington D.C. and September 1999 in Copenhagen) to develop the strategy and content of this work.

An updated version of ACIA (2.1 version) was circulated to ASG and the AMAP working groups prior to the meeting in Toronto. ASG and the AMAP WG discussed both the draft and the working group accepted the idea of such a holistic assessment. AMAP has initiated a process to develop programmes that will provide environmental effect data of interest for the assessment. This is done in close cooperation with other international bodies and CAFF and the first part of the programme will hopefully be in place early 2000.

The AMAP WG would, however, like to inform the SAOs that the socio-economic part of ACIA is at present neither under the mandate of AMAP nor CAFF. The WG would therefore make the SAOs aware of the situation that part of the assessment might lack an Arctic Council body to handle the deliverables regarding development and presentation of recommended socio-economic actions to be taken directly to the SAO.

2.3. Sources

In addition to the AMAP workshop on modeling and sources held in Bergen, 14-16 June, which resulted in 13 recommendations concerning needs for emission inventories and other source related issues, the AMAP Secretariat has attended meetings on work going on under OSPAR regarding source quantification (HARP-HAZ).

Within AMAP, work has also focussed on development and implementation of the PCB project in Russia, and development of the proposed project on 'Persistent Toxic Substances Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North', both of which aim to detect and quantify sources of major significance for the Arctic, see special progress reports regarding these projects, below.

2.4. AMAP deliverables to ministerial meetings in 2000 and 2002

The AMAP working group discussed the plan for preparation of deliverables to the ministerial meetings in 2000 and 2002. According to the plan presented to the SAOs in May, AMAP intended to present Interim reports in 2000 regarding Climate and UV. Due to the initiation of the ACIA, the working group felt that it would be too early to provide such interim reports. AMAP would like to inform the SAOs that the working group would present a progress report on these two issues at the Ministerial meeting in 2000. The first major report on these two items will be presented in 2002 based on the ACIA initiative.

The working group discussed the nomination of National Key Experts to be involved in the assessment work together with the Lead Country Experts. An extra nomination round will be performed during the months to come before the final list is presented for approval.

For the preparation of the progress reports to the ministerial meeting in 2000 and the major reports to the Ministerial meeting in 2002 a draft timetable was prepared, see attachment 1. The plans for 2001-2002 are all tentatively since we at this stage do not know the plans for the SAOs and the new AC leader. The plan will be adjusted according to the new SAO that will take over in 2000.

2.5. Revision of Rules of Procedures

The AMAP WG discussed how to adjust AMAPs existing Rules of Procedures, approved in 1991. The WG stated that AMAP now is operating under the Rules of Procedure for Arctic Council, and the Board was asked to develop a set of Operational Guidelines for AMAP. The WG identified the problem on how we with respect recognize the contribution from international organizations (e.g. WHO, IAEA, WHO, etc) that under the AEPS was accredited as observers to the AMAP WG and not to the SAO level. The AMAP Chair was asked to bring this up for discussion at the Chair meeting to clarify if the other WG had similar problems.

2.6. AMAP Strategic plan

The AMAP Work plan for 1998-2003 was approved at the SAO meeting in Whitehorse. At the AMAP WG meeting in Helsinki, December 1998, this plan was renamed to AMAP Strategic plan. This was done to avoid any confusion with yearly work plans. The Board was also asked by the WG to delete all the details that would occur in the AMAP Trend and Effect Programme. At the Toronto meeting a revised version was presented, and after final editing the plan will be circulated among the AMAP WG for approval.

2.7. AMAP Assessment Report (AAR) on CD

The (3.7 kg) AAR has now been produced on a CD-ROM. This production has been possible due to financial support from US-NOAA and the Norwegian Ministry of Environment. The CD will be circulated to those countries that have ordered copies, with the remaining stock kept at the Secretariat for further distribution.

2.8. Distribution of the SOAER

The English version of the SOAER available on the AMAP website (homepage <http://www.amap.no/>) now includes graphical elements, a development supported by UNEP.

2.9. Thematic Data Centers (TDCs)

All the existing TDCs had secured funding for 1999. In addition, a human health database has been established on the basis of a Danish contribution. Interest has been expressed by the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), in using a database established at that institute (SYNCON database) to operate the AMAP terrestrial TDC. Preliminary work to further investigate and develop this offer has been conducted during the summer, and representatives from UAF attended the ASG meeting to inform about their project.

2.10. Workshops arranged

On April 26-27, 1999, a joint workshop between AMAP, CAFF and IASC was arranged in Tromsø, Norway. The objective was to discuss the content of the research and monitoring programmes that need to be initiated to detect the effects of changes in climate and UV on Arctic ecosystems and Arctic peoples. A report from the meeting has been prepared by IASC.

On June 14-16, 1999, a workshop on modelling and sources (Workshop on Techniques and Associated Uncertainties in Quantifying the Origin and Long-Range Transport of Contaminants to the Arctic) was arranged by AMAP in Bergen, Norway. The objectives were to specify the AMAP needs for modelling work in support of assessments to be produced in the coming years and how to achieve progress in this area, and also how to obtain more reliable source data that can be used in the models. AMAP has developed a close cooperation with several international organizations regarding modelling and source issues, including OSPARCOM, UN-ECE and EEA. The report of the workshop (AMAP Report 99:4) is available both in printed form and on the AMAP website.

On September 7-10, 1999, the US-EPA arranged an AMAP workshop to specify the content of the AMAP Heavy Metal Programme; part of their work in representing the US as lead country for the AMAP heavy metal assessment. A report from the workshop was delivered to the ASG meeting; the recommendations have been circulated for discussion on their inclusion in the AMAP Trends and Effects programme.

On September 20-23, 1999, the 4th International Conference on Radioactivity in the Arctic was arranged in Edinburgh, Scotland. This was a joint arrangement between the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority (NRPA), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), and International Union of Radioecologist (IUR), and AMAP. 180 participants attended the conference from 20 countries. The Conference Proceedings are produced and available.

3. Special projects

3.1. Implementation of the Multilateral Cooperative Project on Phase-out of PCB Use, and Management of PCB-contaminated Wastes in the Russian Federation

This project was initiated in 1998 as a follow-up to the conclusions and recommendations of the AMAP Assessment Report and was supported by the First Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council (Iqaluit, Canada, September 17-18, 1998). The project consists of three phases:

- Phase 1: Evaluation of the current status of the problem with respect to environmental impact, and development of proposals for priority remedial actions;
- Phase 2: Feasibility study;
- Phase 3: Implementation of demonstration projects.

The 1st phase of the project, which has been endorsed by the Arctic Council, is

currently under implementation with financial and technical support of all Arctic States and the Netherlands. The Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) has recently made a decision to start the PCB Fast Track Project with the objective of financing the implementation of a (given number of) project(s) within a limited geographical area in Northwest Russia, which would cover all three phases in Multilateral project and can be considered as a NEFCO contribution to this project.

General management of the project organization and implementation is conducted by the steering group, which consists of one representative from each of the countries and NEFCO. According to the decision of the participating countries, supported by the Arctic Council, the 1st phase of the project is being organized by the State Committee of the Russian Federation for Environmental Protection in cooperation with the AMAP Secretariat.

The 1st phase started May 1, 1999. In August, the Steering Group adopted the Interim Report for Tasks 1 (PCB production term characterization) and 2 (PCB use term characterization), and noted the high quality and uniqueness of the report. At present, the draft Interim Report for Task 3 (PCB-containing equipment use characterization) has been distributed among designated experts from the participating countries for comments, and it is planned that the Steering Group meeting will consider it in December. In addition, the Steering Group meeting in December will consider detailed proposals and preliminary cost estimates for phase 2 (Feasibility Study) of the project, which, besides implementation/cost benefit analysis, should cover following issues:

- Selection of alternatives for replacement of PCB by substances with acceptable environmental characteristics and feasible production;
- Construction/retrofit of a prototype facility for production of alternative fluids;
- Construction/retrofit of a prototype facility for use of non-PCB alternative compounds in a major PCB use sector;
- Selection/development of environmentally sound technology for destruction of PCB-containing liquids;
- Selection/development of environmentally sound technology for destruction of PCB-contaminated containers, equipment and their elements;
- Selection/development of standard/innovated technology for rehabilitation of PCB-contaminated areas.

3.2. Persistent Toxic Substances (PTS), Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian north (the RAIPON-GEF project).

The AMAP working group discussed the RAIPON-GEF proposal and expressed a support to the project and the involvement of AMAP and the AMAP Secretariat. Some of the AMAP's lead experts in fields relevant to the subject of the project will be involved as the resulting information from the project will be a vital contribution to the needs for the respective AMAP assessments.

The main focus of the project will be on POPs and Hg; however, other pollution factors will also be covered. The project includes a strong human health component, consistent with the AMAP human health programme, also including important aspects such as nutrition and social-economic factors. This three-year project is expected to

provide essential information to the assessments that AMAP has been requested to perform during the next years. Although the proposed project is linked to the phase 2 of the AMAP programme, the outcomes goes far beyond AMAP's objectives and are aimed to develop practical diet recommendations for Russian indigenous peoples under the current socio-economic situation for the Russian North.

In addition to the links to the AMAP objectives, the project has also strong links to the Canadian sustainable development project on "The future of Children and Youth in the Arctic", the Danish/Greenlandic "Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic", and the Russian-Norwegian bilateral projects on health of Saami and Nenets Peoples. The AMAP Secretariat aims to coordinate the work with these projects, and if possible, allow their funding to be looked upon as matching support for the GEF project. However, extra funding from the Arctic countries is still important if this project is to be implemented in its full scale.

The results from the RAIPON-GEF project will be of interest for the ACOPS-GEF project, and this was emphasized during the consultation meeting in London between ACOPS and the AMAP Secretariat (June 24, 1999 in London).

It is the intention to initiate this project as soon as it has been approved by GEF. At present the start up of the project is planned for January 2000.

3.3. The Future of Children and Youth in the Arctic

The AMAP Chair and the leaders of the AMAP human health group took part in the Arctic Children and Youth project meeting held in Toronto in March. The AMAP human health group will take care of the AMAP contribution to this programme. The work is integrated into the AMAP workplan for 1999/2000, and will also be integrated with the planned RAIPON-GEF funded project in Northern Russia.

3.4. Anderma Station

The Russian Anderma atmospheric monitoring station has been in operation for the first year of its proposed two-year period of operation, an activity supported by Canada and Nordic Council of Ministers through the AMAP Secretariat. Initial results are now becoming available. The Anderma station will provide important information on POPs, both for the overall assessment to be prepared by AMAP, but also to the RAIPON-GEF project. Possibilities for funding to continue operation of this site and also to initiate Hg monitoring are considered.

4. International cooperation

4.1. IASC

A close cooperation has been established with IASC especially in relation to the preparation of ACIA and human health. A joint workshop on climate issues was held in Tromsø in April 1999, and a new joint workshop regarding human health and research needs will be held in Rovaniemi, January 2000.

4.2. UNEP

UNEP-Chemicals have during 1999 arranged several meetings linked to POPs issues, and the AMAP Secretariat has participated and presented results from the Arctic and experiences from the PCB project in Russia at conferences in Hanoi and Moscow. It has been agreed that cooperation between AMAP and UNEP-Chemicals should be further expanded, particularly in relation to preparation of an inventory of obsolete pesticides in CIS countries, including Russia. At the GRID-Arendal 10 years anniversary meeting, the AMAP Secretariat participated in a seminar on Environment related Health Issues, focusing on the Arctic. A project proposal involving UNEP, WHO, Indigenous Peoples and Arctic Council has been developed by a drafting group based on decisions made by UNEP, WHO and Indigenous leaders, see further details under 4.4. WHO.

4.3. European Union (EU)

4.3.1. European Environment Agency (EEA)

In Europe, there are several regional programmes and organizations with the mandate to assess the quality of the marine and coastal environment. These include the Black Sea Environment Programme (BSEP), the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), the Oslo and Paris Commissions (OSPARCOM), the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the EEA and AMAP. In 1996 an initiative was taken to try to coordinate and harmonize work carried out by these groups regarding monitoring and assessment. As an activity coordinated by the EEA, an Inter-Regional Forum (IRF) was established in 1996 to further this work. At the third meeting of the IRF, held October 27-28 in Venice, Italy, the AMAP Secretariat presented the reports of two relevant AMAP workshops: the 1998 workshop on Combined Effects and the 1999 workshop on Modelling and Sources. The conclusions from these two workshops are of interest for the other organizations and hopefully will be reflected in priorities associated with research funding under the EU's 5th Framework. Future work under the IRF was agreed, but AMAP did not take on any special activities for the next year.

4.3.2. ARTERI

The AMAP Secretariat has participated in the European Union funded Task Force ARTERI (Arctic-Alpine Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Initiative) since 1996. A final ARTERI meeting was held in Copenhagen, Denmark in January 1999, and a final report has been prepared and is available on request. The work performed will be of great importance in relation to the climate effects work to be performed by AMAP.

4.3.3. The Northern Dimension

At a special seminar in Brussels, October 10, arranged by Iceland, to discuss the environmental aspect of the Northern Dimension, the AMAP Secretariat was invited to present the environmental problems observed in the Arctic. The presentation invited an active participation of the EU, both regarding financing of research and monitoring programmes, and in establishing and implementing projects within the Arctic region that could reduce pollution from local sources, especially sources within Russia.

4.4. WHO

WHO has given a clear indication that it wishes to be more involved in work related to the human health of Arctic Indigenous Peoples. Recently, WHO, together with UNEP, have been actively involved in planning and drafting a proposal concerning a joint human health project for the Arctic, an initiative taken-up following the Arctic Indigenous Peoples leaders Summit meeting in Moscow (September 1999). The AMAP Board and Secretariat, with assistance of the leader of the AMAP human health group, has been involved in the preparatory work on this proposal, to ensure a cost/efficient use of available resources and avoid duplication of work. The resulting project proposal has been submitted to the SAOs by UNEP, WHO, and the Indigenous organizations, focuses on a study of existing policy among the eight Arctic countries regarding health of Arctic Indigenous Peoples.

4.5. The Barents Euro-Arctic Council

The AMAP Secretariat has participated as observer at the Barents Environmental Task Force. Follow-up of the NEFCO/AMAP projects, presented in December 1995, was one of the main items on the agenda. Some of the projects proposed are now at the stage of implementation.

4.6. Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM)

The AMAP Board participated at several meetings arranged by the NCM, to present the results from the AMAP study and to discuss future cooperation. The NCM has, over the years funded several core projects and activities of the AMAP work, and AMAP has received NCM funding for several projects in 2000.

4.7. ACOPS

To enhance cooperation between AMAP and ACOPS, particularly in relation to work on the preparation of proposals for GEF-funded projects, which have a certain overlap in their objectives, a consultation meeting between the AMAP Secretariat and ACOPS took place in London, June 1999. It was emphasized during the meeting that the objectives under the ACOPS-GEF project proposal (Identification of priority hot-spots and conduct of pre-investment studies for remedial actions in support of the National Plan of Actions for the Protection of Marine Environment from Anthropogenic Pollution in the Arctic Region of the Russian Federation), which are dedicated to transport of contaminants by air and water routes and assessment of pollution sources, will be reached by compilation of the existing information. In this connection, it was agreed that the results from relevant AMAP activities and the work planned to be implemented under the RAIPON-GEF project proposal could provide valuable contributions to the implementation of the ACOPS-GEF project.

In October 1999, an AMAP representative took part in the Steering Group (SG) meeting for the preparation of the ACOPS-GEF project proposal. During this meeting, the SG made the request to AMAP for corresponding contributions, which should be considered by the AMAP Working Group in Toronto.

During the working group meeting in Toronto the AMAP working group decided that AMAP assessment reports would be made available for the ACOPS-GEF project, and if wanted, a list of national experts could be prepared. The proposal from ACOPS to

sign a MoU between ACOPS and AMAP was discussed. Some of the participating countries felt that a MoU is a very formal arrangement and the WG decided that a MoU was not necessary to secure a close cooperation between AMAP and ACOPS. The WG felt that if MoU shall be used as a tool between AC working groups and other organizations, the AMAP WG would like to request the SAOs to develop general procedure related to signing of any MoU's between AC bodies and other organizations.

4.8. OSPARCOM

As part of an agreed strategy of cooperation between AMAP and OSPARCOM concerning assessment of their respective Arctic areas, the OSPAR region 1 (Arctic) Assessment 2000 has made extensive use of material from the AMAP Assessment Reports. AMAP representatives attended several of the OSPAR meetings where their assessments have been discussed.

4.9. QUASIMEME

AMAP was invited to attend the 1999 meeting of the QUASIMEME (Quality Assurance in Marine Monitoring) Steering Committee held in the Netherlands in October 1999. QUASIMEME is a major European laboratory performance and QA/QC scheme established specifically to support regional marine monitoring programmes a now operating on a laboratory subscription cost recovery basis. Through input to this group, AMAP can potentially influence the provision of Arctic relevant QA/QC activities and reference materials, etc.

4.10. GIWA (Global International Water Assessment)

During the AMAP working group meeting in Toronto, AMAP received a letter from GIWA requesting a close cooperation between AMAP and GIWA. GIWA shall produce worldwide assessments regarding international waters, the ecological status and causes of environmental problems of transboundary freshwater basins and their associated coastal and ocean systems. To avoid duplication of work GIWA would like to make full use of existing assessments. GIWA intend to present its reports in 2003. AMAP is requested to act as a Megaregional Host Institution for the Arctic region and as a Subregional Focal point for associated regions.

The AMAP WG found the GIWA request very interesting, and AMAP will through its secretariat convey AMAP products to GIWA. Regarding the involvement of AMAP in the GIWA work the working group would like to receive more information from GIWA regarding how the assessment work is planned to be implemented, how much work that is expected from the Megaregional Host, cost implications and financial possibilities for the work, etc. Based on the response, the AMAP working group will be able to make a decision regarding how deep AMAP shall be involved in this work. The work as presented in the letter of November 9, 1999, indicates involvement's of the other AC working groups. The AMAP chair has therefore brought this letter to the Chair meeting.

5. Future conferences and workshops under preparation:

The following activities are planned for 2000.

5.1 Subregional Expert meeting on Reduction of POPs, in particular dioxins and furans, December 14-17, 1999, in St. Petersburg, Russia. This is a joint arrangement between UNEP, UN-ECE, UNIDO, CIP and AMAP.

5.2 International Workshop on Human Health and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in the Arctic, January 18-20, 2000, Rovaniemi, Finland. This is a joint workshop between AMAP, University of the Arctic and IASC.

5.3 CAFF/AMAP Workshop on a Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme. This is planned for February 6-8, 2000, in Reykjavik, Iceland.

5.4 Biomarker Conference to be held May 1-5, 2000, in Anchorage, USA. This is a joint conference between US institutes and AMAP.

6. Finances

The AMAP Secretariat has, over the years, received its basic funding from Norway; some of the other Arctic countries and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) have also provided substantial contributions to finance common activities. For 1999, special support for Secretariat activities has been received from Canada and Finland. USA, Denmark and Norway have sponsored workshops and conferences.

For 2000, the estimated budget for the AMAP Secretariat is approximately 3.0 million Norwegian Kroner (400.000 US dollars, exchange rate 7.5). The Norwegian Ministry of Environment has allocated 2.2 million NOK (290.000 US dollars), leading to a deficit of approximately 800.000 NOK (110.000 US dollars). Part, but not all, of this deficit can be covered by overheads on projects administered by the AMAP Secretariat. The Arctic Countries are, therefore, kindly requested to consider voluntary contributions to the AMAP Secretariat so that it can provide necessary support to the working group, including key activities such as communications and the operation of the Thematic Data Centres, etc.

At the AMAP working group meeting it was stressed that for the assessment work to be performed during 2000-2002, it would be important that the countries made sufficient financial support available for their lead country experts and national key experts.

Appendix 1: Time schedule for AMAP 2000-2002

(The timing of 2001-2002 is tentatively since no information exists on where and when the ministerial meeting may take place.)

1999	
November	AMAP WG and SAO meeting
2000	
During the year new environmental and health data will be collected, QA/QC to be performed, modeling work etc.	
January	Workshop on POPs in Arctic ecosystems and human health

	Drafting of the progress report to the ministerial meeting in 2000
February	Circulation of the 1 st draft progress report to AMAP WG
March	Comments to the 1 st draft
April	Circulation of the 2 nd draft, presentation to the SAO meeting
May	Comments to the 2 nd draft
June	AMAP WG to approve the progress report to the Ministerial meeting in 2000
July/August	Printing of the progress report
September	Presentation to the ministerial meeting
2001	
During the year new environmental and health data will be collected, QA/QC to be performed, modeling work etc. Assessment will start, cross-fertilization meeting among assessment experts.	
October	Last date for entry of new environmental and human health data
November	Latest date for circulation of the 1 st draft
2002	
January	Comments to the 1 st draft
March	Circulation of the 2 nd draft
April	Comments
June	The AMAP WG to approve the report to the ministerial meeting
Autumn	Presentation to the ministerial meeting