



Compilation of Observer Review Reports

-

2020



According to the “Arctic Council Rules of Procedure” ([Annex 2](#)), every four years Observers are to state their continued interest in Observer status and will be reviewed in a Ministerial meeting. During the Chairmanship of Iceland (2011-2021) Observers who were reviewed for the first time at the Fairbanks Ministerial in 2017, as well as Observers admitted that year, were subject to review.”

Submitted reports have been combined into one document in the following order:

- [Germany](#)
- [The Netherlands](#)
- [Poland](#)
- [Switzerland](#)
- [United Kingdom](#)
- [Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea \(ACOPS\)](#)
- [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 Environment Programme \(UN Environment\)](#)
- [West Nordic Council \(WNC\)](#)
- [World Meteorological Organization \(WMO\)](#)
- [International Arctic Science Committee \(IASC\)](#)
- [International Council for the Exploration of the Seas \(ICES\)](#)
- [International Union for Circumpolar Health \(IUCH\)](#)
- [International organization of northern regions “The Northern Forum” \(NF\)](#)
- [Oceana](#)
- [World Wildlife Fund for Nature – Global Arctic Program \(WWF\)](#)



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 **19 Observers¹** will be reviewed at the next Ministerial meeting, and are requested to submit their review report by **1 June 2020²**:

- 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 Environment Programme (UN Environment)
- 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
- World Wildlife Fund for Nature – Global Arctic Program (WWF)

1 The original number of Observers under review during this Chairmanship was 20, but UN-ECE decided to withdraw its status earlier this year.

2 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 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:

Federal Republic of Germany

Date of submission:

29 May 2020

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

The German government continues to strongly support multilateral cooperation on Arctic issues, primarily in the Arctic Council. Germany actively participates in all working-groups (nonexhaustive list below) and strives to even further enhance its input, for example through the project "Ecologically Sustainable Use in the Arctic under High Environmental Standards" by the German Environment Agency (UBA). Germany operates one of the world's largest Arctic research programs aiming to enhance scientific research on Arctic issues and to inform and educate society and policymakers about the consequences of climate change in the Arctic

Germany's active participation in working groups:

ACAP:

Dr. Heike Herata (UBA) participated in the ACAP Working Group meetings in 2017/18. She provided expertise by UBA with regard to POPs, black carbon, waste and microplastics which could form the basis of ACAP to initiate and support concrete projects to reduce or prevent the input of such pollutants and will strengthen the collaboration within various initiatives in different WGs/EGs (e.g. PAME, EGBCM).

AMAP:

Dr. Volker Rachold (Head of the German Arctic Office at the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research, AWI) as well as a number of AWI experts, among them Prof. Hugues Lantuit, Dr. Andreas Herber, have contributed to the work of AMAP. The AWI, Germany's national polar institute, concentrates on observational and modelling studies of all elements of the Polar Earth System. Many of AWI's research activities are highly relevant for AMAP. Prof. Björn Rost (AWI), as an **Expert Group on Ocean Acidification** member, contributed to the AMAP Assessment 2018: Arctic Ocean Acidification.

CAFF:

Prof. Dieter Piepenburg (AWI) participated in the **Benthos Expert Network** (BEN) of the Marine Ecosystem group of CAFF's **Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program** (CBMP). AWI is supporting BEN's ongoing pan-Arctic benthic sample survey by offering the use of PANABIO (Pan-Arctic Information System on Benthic Biota), which has been developed under his lead. Gerold Lürßen (Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, CWSS) contributed to CAFF's migratory bird initiative, incl. hosting the African-Eurasian Flyway coordinator at CWSS (2018-19), co-financed by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).



EGBCM:

Michael Strogies (UBA), since 2017, has provided expertise in the field of monitoring Methane and Black Carbon emissions as well as for a common reporting structure of those emissions. Germany provided the first National Report on Black Carbon and Methane by the end of 2017 and annual updates thereafter.

EPPR:

Hans-Peter Damian (UBA), EPPR and **TFOPP** member since 2013, provided comments and remarks to relevant EPPR topics including information about the OSPAR Offshore Industry Committee, especially about the major challenges arising from the current decommissioning of many oil platforms in the North Sea.

Dr. Jürgen Holfort (German Federal Maritime Agency, BSH) provided comments and remarks in EPPR meetings on emergency response in shipping and the polar code.

PAME:

Dr. Janos Hennicke (Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, BfN) and Prof. Dieter Piepenburg (AWI), since 2015, have participated in PAME Meetings and in their associated **Expert Groups Pan-arctic network of MPAs, Ecosystem Approach to Management (AE), and Marine Litter**, and contributed to the discussions and the development of various products.

Dr. Heike Herata (UBA), since 2019, provided expertise with regard to microplastics, waste, tourism, underwater noise and shipping in the Arctic region. She is a member of the **Shipping Experts Group (SEG)**. She arranged UBA's access to the Arctic Ship Traffic Data (ASTD) database, so that an internal analysis of the ASTD in regards to ship traffic and its impact on the marine environment were possible. In a first step, UBA was especially interested to identify areas of high usage of ship traffic and is planning to analyse the data regarding the underwater soundscape and the sound emissions from shipping activities.

Dr. Jürgen Holfort (BSH) has actively contributed, in cooperation with WMO and IICWG, to the discussion and content of the Arctic Shipping best practice information forum's web portal.

PAME Project on Marine Litter in the Arctic:

Rita Fabris (UBA) and Melanie Bergmann (AWI), since 2017, have made various contributions to Phase I of the project and took part in the Arctic Marine Litter Workshop in Akureyri, Iceland (06/2018). Rita Fabris is the current German representative in the project group dealing with the establishment of an Arctic Marine Litter Action Plan (Phase II: 2019 till 2021). To further support the project, UBA initiated a pilot study on the possibilities of monitoring of plastic waste on Arctic coasts using remote sensing or airborne methods. Marine litter has been a major topic on Germany's environmental agenda during its G7 and G20 Presidencies as well as in OSPAR and HELCOM.



Underwater Noise in the Arctic State of Knowledge Report (CAN/WWF):

Mirjam Müller (UBA), Alexander Liebschner and Dr. Janos Hennicke (both BfN), with their extensive experience in underwater noise and its impact on the polar marine environment, have provided comments to the state of knowledge report on impacts of underwater noise on the Arctic marine ecosystem, incl. the identification of knowledge gaps.

Arctic Marine Tourism Project (CAN, ISL, UK):

Jacqueline Hilbert (UBA) contributed to the Marine Tourism Workshop in Oslo (02/2020) in support of the project “Arctic Marine Tourism: Development in the Arctic and enabling real change”.

SDWG:

Dr. Kathrin Stephen (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, IASS) and Prof. Dr. Otto Habeck (University of Hamburg), as well as researchers at other German institutions (DIE Bonn, Universities of Hamburg and Kiel) contributed to discussions and studies on Arctic governance, the role of NGOs, maritime law, international law for environmental protection. Further, they actively contributed to SDWG’s activities and priorities: A workshop on “Gender in Polar Research” (03/2020) as part of a series (since 2008) on gender roles and gender shifts in northern communities, was organised by social anthropologists from Germany, Arctic states, and other countries. A workshop in Ulaanbaatar (2019) was organised by the IPA’s “Permafrost and Culture” Action Group (founded 2014 by German researchers) to assess and study indigenous (pastoral) land use and its interaction with permafrost landscape dynamics (linking research fields such as climate change, biodiversity protection, maintenance of habitats, food production).

Cooperation with the AC Chairmanship:

Through the embassies of the Arctic states in Berlin, the Federal Foreign Office and AWI’s German Arctic Office have initiated joint seminars with the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. Following an event introducing the Finnish Chairmanship in 2017, a second seminar, summarizing the outcome of the Finnish and introducing the program of the Icelandic Chairmanship, was held in Berlin (05/2019).



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.

Germany will continue its active work via its experts in the WGs as outlined above. Many projects will be continued and new ones started in the following years (non-exhaustive list):

CAFF:

BfN is planning to engage notably in the discussions of marine issues. Further, BfN and BMU are facilitating a research project on Arctic Ocean governance and MPAs.

PAME:

BfN will continue to participate in PAME, its expert groups and TFAMC (if resumed).

UBA will provide its polar experience for projects with regard to microplastics, waste, tourism, underwater noise and shipping in the Arctic region. With respect to sewage from ships, UBA is planning to commission a project that delivers information on the occurrence and composition of black and grey water on board of ships including its effects on the marine environment. Further, UBA has undertaken research regarding Black Carbon emission from ships and its correlation to the aromatic content of the fuel. Preliminary results were published to the IMO (02/2020, PPR7/8). UBA is aiming to provide experience on the application of the Polar Code within the IMO and PAME framework.

After finalizing the project "Environmental Protection in Maritime Traffic – Scrubber Wash Water Survey", BSH on behalf of UBA started a follow-up project analysing the environmental impacts of scrubber discharge water in the North- and Baltic Sea (ImpEx, 2020-23). Moreover, UBA is continuing its aim to sensitize the general public in Germany to relevant environmental issues in the Arctic within education and outreach projects.

PAME Project on Marine Litter in the Arctic:

A new UBA project (since 2019) led by Rita Fabris is developing a method to evaluate the status of the Arctic environment and whether measures taken against marine litter were effective. Results and recommendations will be presented to PAME for further consideration. The project will flank the AC's activities on marine litter by establishing an Arctic-wide uniform procedure to record and evaluate the environmental status of Arctic coastal sections now and in the future.

Underwater Noise in the Arctic State of Knowledge Report:

Mirjam Müller will contribute to the PAME project dealing with current underwater noise emissions from shipping in the Arctic

SDWG:

German researchers will continue their cooperation with the SDWG and SECEG, to enhance



initiatives in the domains of economic assessments, infrastructure, heritage and culture of Arctic communities, reduction of inequalities, and science and research for a more sustainable path of development (in line with the German Agenda for Polar Research). German researchers will co-organise a workshop at the Arctic Circle Assembly (10/2020) on non-binary understandings of gender in Arctic communities with an explicit focus on indigenous approaches. Corresponding research initiatives are underway. Researchers at University of Hamburg and AWI will contribute to the transdisciplinary Horizon2020 Project “Drivers and Feedbacks of Changes in Arctic Terrestrial Biodiversity” (CHARTER, start summer 2020), which will closely cooperate with local/indigenous communities, identifying synergies between their ambitions for adaptation actions with novel forms of land management geared towards climate mitigation and sustainable development.



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.

New Arctic Policy Guidelines

The guiding principles of German Arctic policy are set out in the **Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines**, adopted by the Federal Government in August 2019. Germany holds **bilateral and multilateral consultations on Arctic issues** with Arctic and Observer countries, as well as within the EU and NATO. Germany has also been maintaining its engagement in matters of **Arctic security and defence cooperation**. Representatives of the Federal Armed Forces (Bundeswehr) annually join the NATO Northern Flank meeting and the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR) for exchange and consultation on Arctic security developments with the Forces of the Western Arctic nations and other observer nations.

Polar Research – MOSAiC Expedition

Germany is actively supporting **polar research** and is cooperating with Arctic as well as nonArctic countries in a variety of programs and projects in order to support the aims of the AC. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) supports Arctic research through **institutional base funding** and **additional project funding** in strategic fields of international cooperation. Besides bilateral science cooperation with Russia and the UK, BMBF funds dedicated research programs to the Greenland ice sheet ocean interaction and to ensure data evaluation and knowledge transfer from the ongoing German-led **MOSAIC expedition**.

Follow-up of the Second Arctic Science Ministerial 2018 in Berlin

Acting on the Joint Statement of Ministers, Germany and its co-organizers initiated a process towards establishing a **Forum of Arctic Science Funders**, officially founded during the Arctic Science Summit Week (03/2020). Its main objective is to enable multilateral discussions to facilitate the cooperation between national and transnational science funding programs.

Germany has been actively involved in the development of the **Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation** and its implementation.

Involvement and contributions to related Fora and Projects

Dr. Janos Hennicke (BfN), as the Convenor of the OSPAR working group on MPAs (ICG-MPA), German Head of Delegation in the OSPAR Biodiversity Committee (BDC) and the OSPAR working group on the protection of species and habitats (ICG-POSH), serves as a link between the **AC and OSPAR** and facilitates the exchange of ideas between the two organisations.

Dr. Janos Hennicke (BfN) and Tim Packeiser (acting on behalf of BfN and BMU) attended various **meetings and events** on Arctic issues, e.g. Side Events during the BBNJ negotiations at the UN in New York and at CBD COP 14, to bring forward German thoughts and positions.

Prof. Björn Rost and Prof. Dieter Piepenburg (both AWI) are involved in the **IPCC Sixth Assessment**



Report (AR6; WGII), including the Cross-Chapter Paper on Polar Regions.

Other major German research institutes that actively contribute to the AC include the **Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources** (BGR), and the **German Aerospace Center** (DLR). It documents the changes in geo-ecological conditions in the Arctic using new radar technologies, measurement and analysis methods. In the MOSAiC/MicrowaveRS project, DLR is researching the malfunctions of Galileo and GPS navigation systems near the poles over a long time period. The DLR project PermaSAR (Permafrost Airborne SAR Experiment) in Canada and Alaska provides new insights for climate research and serves to validate and improve satellitebased measurement methods. Current satellite missions TerraSAR-X, TanDEM-X to collect data on snow cover, settlement density in arctic regions and changes in the Greenland ice sheet; cooperating with Inuvik Satellite Station Facility (Canada) and Longyearbyen site (Svalbard).



Cover sheet

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Kingdom of the Netherlands

Date of submission:

1 June 2020

Observer's website, if appropriate:

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

Introduction

The Netherlands started active participation in AMAP in 1993 and has contributed actively to the work of the Arctic Council since its establishment in 1996. The Netherlands regards the Arctic Council as the primary circumpolar policy forum for sustainable Arctic development and management of the area. Experienced Dutch Arctic scientists have a long-term active involvement in three working groups (AMAP, CAFF and SDWG) and in 2019 the Netherlands also became active in PAME. Government officials always attend meetings of the Council (SAO, ministerial) and Observer meetings organised by the Arctic Council. As such they promote and support Dutch scientific research in the Arctic. Dutch polar researchers are active in a variety of fields, but have especially good reputations in glaciology, oceanography, biology, international law, human & social sciences and marine litter. The Netherlands Polar Research Programme enables the experts to make a substantive contribution to the work of the Arctic Council. The Netherlands stimulates participation by experts – policy makers, researchers and representatives from industry and NGOs – in seminars/workshops/expert groups, for example Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle.

AMAP

The Netherlands participated in AMAP since it became an observer to the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS). Frits Steenhuisen (Arctic Centre, University of Groningen) has represented the Netherlands as an observer in the AMAP working group meetings ever since. He participates in the Mercury Expert Group and in the Radioactivity Expert Group, contributing to work on the spatial distribution of global emissions inventories (SO₂, lead, mercury) that have been compiled for AMAP since 1995, including global mercury emissions to air, in the framework of the AMAP/UN Environment Global Mercury Assessment (GMA2013 and GMA2018). Several peer reviewed papers have been published in relation to this work. Steenhuisen also works with the AMAP secretariat on spatial analysis and map production of AMAP-reports and collaborates with the Norwegian Radiation Protection Agency in hosting of the AMAP Radioactivity Thematic Data Center. Frits Steenhuisen is highly involved in the global mercury emission modelling within the AMAP/UN Environment network (Global Mercury Assessment 2018) and the upcoming AMAP Mercury in the Arctic Environment Assessment, and in particular contributing to the spatial distribution of the global emissions data. The AMAP Radioactivity expert group is currently working on an undated Assessment of radioactivity in the Arctic to be delivered in 2023 as a follow up of the Radioactivity in the Arctic report (2015).

Several Dutch Research Institutes provide input to AMAP assessments, for example the Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research, Utrecht University, IMAU (University of Utrecht) contributed to the AMAP Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA) 2017 report. And Dutch



scientists have been involved in the review process of the AMAP POP's and Climate Change Interactions Assessment.

CAFF

The Dutch Wadden Sea is a very important hub during migration of Arctic breeding waders and geese. Conservation, protection and management of these bird populations is a major task which is carried out with the Arctic countries. That is why the Netherlands has been an active member in CAFF since 1992, with scientific ornithological programmes in Russia, Spitsbergen and east-Greenland.

As official CAFF representative, Maarten Loonen is active in the CBIRD working group and contributing with data collected during his fieldwork on Spitsbergen about arctic tern migration and breeding biology. In the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative, the Dutch government has partly financed an AMBI African Eurasian Flyway coordinator at the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (Sergio Rejado Albaina) for the period 2018-2019. The monitoring efforts and research in the Wadden Sea are very relevant as assessments of breeding success and population size in arctic nesting birds, which feed directly into management.

In the Arctic there are many ornithological studies supported. In Taymir (Russia) studies started in 1990 on Brent Geese (Bart Ebbinge) and now focus on Red Knots and other shore birds (Jan van Gils). In 1988 in the Pechora delta (Russia), studies on Bewick Swans started by Jan Beekman, followed as a multi-disciplinary approach by Mennobart van Eerden (PRISM) and are now continued by Bart Nolet. Jeroen Reneerkens monitors sanderlings in Iceland and east Greenland and Maarten Loonen and Jouke Prop are still working on their more than thirty year data collection on Barnacle Geese and Polar Bears on Spitsbergen. On the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, Theunis Piersma's team (Global Flyway Initiative) is very active in supporting conservation with scientific data.

The Netherlands has financed several research projects on arctic vegetation in Abisko, Spitsbergen and Russia. The Netherlands Arctic station on Spitsbergen is monitoring goose populations, vegetation change, insect and plankton biodiversity in lakes. All these projects have links with CAFF via Maarten Loonen as national representative to the observer status in CAFF.

SDWG

Over the past four years, the Netherlands has been one of the most active Observer States in the SDWG, and has demonstrated a commitment to both sustainable development and Indigenous issues in the Arctic. Since 2016, the Dutch representatives to the SDWG have included Dr. Annette Scheepstra and Dr. Sean Desjardins (both of the University of Groningen's Arctic Centre).

Dr. Scheepstra is highly active in the Arctic social scientific and policy arena, and has engaged substantively with the EU-PolarNet, as well as with the SDWG's Social, Economic and Cultural Working Group (SECEG), to which the Netherlands has pledged continued support. Dr. Desjardins, the current Dutch representative, is an anthropologist and archaeologist who carries out community-based, ethno-archaeological research with Inuit in Canada's Arctic; this has involved co-creation of scientific and traditional knowledge, as well as capacity building for Inuit youth—themes that



will be of increasing importance to SDWG projects in the coming years.

In recent years, the Netherlands has facilitated cooperation between Dutch experts in sustainable energy development and the Indigenous Peoples Organization (IPO) and Arctic Council Permanent Participant (PP) Gwich'in Council International. Additionally, the Netherlands has contributed to the development of the Arctic Renewable Energy Atlas (AREA), a repository of information about energy resources in the North. Going forward, the Netherlands has the capacity to engage more extensively with IPOs (both Observer organizations and PPs) on issues ranging from renewable energy to land-water management (a field in which the Netherlands is a globally-recognized leader).

PAME

Marine litter

Through ocean currents, litter may travel long distances. As a result of this, even in the remote and often sparsely populated Arctic, many shorelines are littered with plastic waste. The origin of which could be the Arctic itself, but a large share also originates from North-America and Europe, including the Netherlands. The Dutch government regards marine litter as an increasing problem on the national and international level, that not only has negative consequences for the marine ecosystem but also has social, safety and economic consequences as well as possible consequences for health. As such, the Netherlands is actively engaged on this topic in a number of different contexts: locally, nationally, regionally and globally. The effect of the Dutch effort is manifested in the Government-wide Programme for the Circular Economy.

Because of the international dimension to this issue, the Netherlands is actively working together with other countries to address this issue such as in OSPAR, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the UNEP Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML). Since 2019, the Netherlands is active on this issue in the Arctic Council (PAME working group on marine litter). In PAME, the Netherlands is represented by Wouter Jan Strietman MA, who is active on the topic of marine litter in the Arctic since 2017 within the context of the Arctic Marine Litter Project (www.wur.eu/arcticmarinelitter), which is partially financed by the Dutch government. By actively involving local stakeholders and experts in the project, a feeling of ownership and a better understanding of the issue and the solutions is cultivated. Within the working group he contributes his knowledge and the project's data from fieldwork on Spitsbergen, Jan Mayen, Iceland and Greenland on the origin, root causes and pathways into the Arctic marine environment. This knowledge and data also provides input to the Regional Action Plan which is being developed by the working group.

Shipping

The Netherlands is a nation of water and has a rich maritime history and a flourishing maritime industry. It is known around the world for its modern fleet: 2,200 vessels with some 30,000 crew members. Furthermore the Netherlands is acclaimed for its innovations and high standards when it comes to safety and sustainability. Every year, more than 50,000 vessels moor at the Dutch maritime ports – the biggest of which are Rotterdam and Amsterdam. The largest part of the Netherlands is situated along the North Sea – one of the busiest seas in the world. More than 250,000 ships pass by its coast every year. The Netherlands aspires to bring this knowledge to the table of the Shipping Expert Group. In this vain a representative of the Dutch Embassy in Oslo gave a presentation on this matter at the PAME-meeting in February 2020 as a first step in this direction.



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.

In its Polar Strategy 2016-2020 the Netherlands focusses on climate change, the environment and sustainability of Arctic activities, with international cooperation, higher standards and polar research as cornerstones. The Arctic Council remains the most important forum for the Netherlands to realize its policy goals. To continue the contribution to the work of the Arctic Council and to intensify the participation of highly qualified experts in AMAP, CAFF, SDWG and PAME the Netherlands increased its budget for polar research. In addition a separate budget has been created to fund meetings or co-finance studies of the Arctic Council working groups or expert groups. It can also be used to finance specific small-scale projects and outreach initiatives. The Netherlands is currently in the process of formulating its Polar Strategy for the period of 2021-2025.

An important part of the current Netherlands polar policy was the appointment of an Arctic Ambassador. The Ambassador will continue to participate as an observer in Arctic Council Ministerial meetings, conferences and engages in talks with Arctic and Dutch stakeholders with three objectives: increase international research cooperation, enhance cooperation between different stakeholders and raise sustainability standards. All these objectives are in the interest of the Arctic Council.

As a maritime nation with experience in offshore energy technologies, infrastructure development and marine protection and monitoring, and with a strong endeavor to contribute to cleaner, safer and sustainable shipping, the Netherlands has a growing interest to contribute to PAME. While a Dutch representative attended several marine litter expert group meetings, the Netherlands is planning to also provide active participation in PAME's Shipping Expert Group .



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.

The Dutch industry – gathered in the Dutch Arctic Circle (DAC) - has a strong interest in contributing to the sustainable development of the Arctic. In the remaining months of 2020, this initiative will be actively used to identify sustainable opportunities for engaging with the Arctic region.

In 2015, the largest ever Dutch polar research expedition visited the island of Edgeøya, Spitsbergen. The overarching goal of the expedition was to study climate change in the Arctic by reexamining an area that has remained untouched for 40 years. The multidisciplinary research team has mapped the consequences of climate change for the area by comparing the data that were gathered during the expedition with scientific data from 40 years ago. The results were shared with the members of the Arctic Council and the Arctic research community. There are serious plans to organize a second polar expedition of similar proportions in 2021 (postponed from 2020 due to COVID-19).

The Belmont Forum has awarded two Arctic projects for 2020-2023 with contributions from the Netherlands: SVALUR and SeMPER-Arctic.

The Netherlands participated in the German-led MOSAiC expedition (2019-2020). NL contribution 1.2 mio euros.

Granting (June 2020) of policy-driven research call the Netherlands Polar Program for Arctic and Antarctic research (5.5 mio euros).

Additionally, extra funding (4.5 mio euros) has been mobilized by the Dutch government and the Dutch Research Council to support a thematic research program on the effects of tourism on the ground in the Arctic and Antarctica for the coming three years.

Furthermore, the Netherlands will provide a financial contribution to the PAME project 'Plastic in a Bottle' with the aim to show how marine litter and plastics can travel and to gain a better understanding of how plastics that originate from far away end up on shores in the Arctic.



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

Republic of Poland

Date of submission:

29 May 2020

Observer's website, if appropriate:

www.gov.pl/dyplomacja

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

Since last report (December 2018) Poland's contribution to Arctic Council's continues. However, it needs to be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 caused a general disturbance to potential further engagements and initial plans.

Nevertheless, there are several actions being undertaken to strengthen Poland's its engagement in the future.

As previously, Poland's overall engagement into Arctic Council's work may still be divided into two applicable categories:

1. expert one
2. political one.

At the expert level, Poland continued its Observer activity with selected Working Groups and monitored activities of other subsidiary bodies. In the reporting period, Poland participated in the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group (PAME) on relatively regular basis. It also includes PAME Shipping Expert Group.

Poland continued its engagement in the initiative to strengthen the role of the Observers. Poland is one of the sponsors of the project to organize a specific workshops alongside aforementioned Shipping Expert Group to be devoted to specific Arctic shipping environment.

Polish representative used to hold the position of the co-leader in the Benthos group that was established under the auspices of the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group CAFF. The expert was participating in majority of the meetings, contributing to the group's work and providing overall support.

Poland submits to the Arctic Council biennial National Reports on Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions. Poland submitted two National reports (in 2015 and 2018) and plans to submit the third one in 2020. The reports are in accordance with the encouragement for Observer States included in the "Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions. An Arctic Council Framework for Action."

The reports include information on:

- a) black carbon and methane historical emissions
- b) emission projections
- c) analysis of emission trends



- d) sectoral analysis of emission sources
- e) strategies, policies and measures taken by Poland to reduce emissions
- f) good practices and lessons learned for the key sectors

In 2019 Poland accepted an invitation to participate in the works of the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane (EGBCM). Polish experts participated in the EGBCM meeting in Reykjavik (8-10 October 2019) and in following teleconferences organized by the EGBCM Chair.

The Group's main task is to analyse information included in National Reports submitted by Member and Observer States and report back to the Arctic Council on the progress of the implementation of the Arctic Council's Framework for Action on black carbon and methane. EGBCM is presently engaged in works on the next progress report, which is due in 2021.

The Group has been divided into sub-groups, which prepare sectoral inputs to the progress report. Poland volunteered to support the sub-group that works on the waste sector.

Additionally, comments and replies were provided within the system of consultations of different documents distributed by Arctic Council WGs secretaries on regular basis.

Regarding the second category i.e. political activity, Polish representatives participated in the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Rovaniemi (May 2019) and all Senior Arctic Officials meetings held in 2019 i.e. during Finnish and Icelandic Chairmanships.

Poland also participated in the first EU Arctic Forum in Umea (3-4 October 2019) that was organized by Sweden and the EU.

Finally, representatives of Poland took part in other major international events that dealt with international Arctic cooperation like Arctic Frontiers (January 2019), International Arctic Forum in St. Petersburg (9-10 April 2019) or Arctic Circle Forum in Shanghai (May 2019).



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.

Polish Polar Policy, a national strategy to cover both Arctic and Antarctic, has been prepared and agreed through all administrative stages and awaits adoption by the Government. It provides a sets of goals in relation to both polar regions including strengthening of the engagement into different levels of cooperation, above all with the Arctic Council. Therefore it is foreseen that the level of participation of Polish experts in other WGs and Task Forces may be extended and result in more active engagement.

Regarding already existing forms of active participation in the Arctic Council working structures, Poland will continue its engagement with the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane (EGB-CM), including the sub-group on the waste sector, PAME (in particular via Shipping Expert Group) and CAFF (via Benthos group) WGs in forthcoming years.

Poland will also continue its engagement in the polar research in the Arctic. Poland's main scientific and research assets in the Arctic are the polar stations: Hornsund Station in Svalbard (operating annually) and 4 seasonal stations operated by Polish universities. The Hornsund Station remains the part of the global research programmes and initiatives: Global Change Programme, European Biodiversity Flagship Site, Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System and PolarPOL. All of the researchers cooperate actively with their external partners and collaborators.

Polish Polar stations also perform important sea and land rescue functions that is of a vital importance in this very area.

Also, Poland as a member of SAON (Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks) engaged in strategic and long-term planning of national research and scientific activities to sustain their accordance with current global trends in the research area.

In 2019 and 2020 also the substantial number of research grants under Polish-Norwegian Research Programme (EEA / Norway Grants) was either initiated or continued, contributing to overall Polish polar research performance in the international context.

Permanent Participants were taking part in some of the previous Warsaw Format Meetings and its future engagement with the initiative is considered as vital. Nevertheless, one of the key principles of the Polish Polar Policy (applicable to the Arctic) and its future implementation is respect towards Indigenous Peoples' rights, interests, culture and traditions. This approach was upheld so far and will be continued.

Last but not least, Poland reassures its commitment to host meetings of the Arctic Council subsidiary bodies and/or seminars and workshops once to be organized under the auspices of the Arctic Council.



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.

In 2010 Poland launched an initiative called "Warsaw Format Meeting". It is a specific platform that allows the representatives of the Arctic Council Observer States, the EU and current chairmanship of the Arctic Council to engage into direct dialogue and exchange of views on relevant topics related to Arctic Council's activities and specific projects related to the Arctic.

The meetings were organized in Warsaw since its establishment and planned as biannual ones.

However, during the meeting of WFM in 2018 it was agreed that the meetings may be organized on annual basis. The last one was organised in June 2019. In the discussions the representatives of the Icelandic Chairmanship, Arctic Council Secretariat, EPPR and Permanent Participants Secretariat took part.

The WFM working meetings were also organized in the margins of SAO meetings during Finnish and Icelandic Chairmanships.

Additionally, the expert working group that was established by the Minister of Foreign Affairs i.e. Polar Task Force and that comprises the polar researchers and scientists as well as representatives of various ministries and central bodies shall continue its works and concentrate firmly on the future of the Arctic and the cooperation with the Arctic Council. The last meeting of the Polar Task Force was organised in December 2019.

Polar Task Force, through its Twitter account that was established in 2018, also supports the activities of the Arctic Council and its chairmanship.

In 2019 the project called Edu-Arctic which is an e-learning and training platform engaging both the teachers and the pupils from the different schools in many countries on various aspects of the Arctic was completed. However, the activities initiated by the project (e.g. webinars, social media campaigns) will be continued further and that is supported i.a. by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Representatives of Polish relevant institutions engage and participate in various initiatives and platforms concerning the Arctic and its future e.g. annual Arctic Circle Assemblies, Arctic Frontiers or Arctic Futures as well as collaborate and continue dialogue on bilateral basis with the Arctic states and other stakeholders.



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

Swiss Confederation

Date of submission:

29 May 2020

Observer's website, if appropriate:

<https://www.fdfa.admin.ch/eda/en/home.html>

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

Since 2017, Switzerland is an Observer State to the Arctic Council. The Observer status fosters Switzerland's long-lasting and reliable commitment to research excellence and to peaceful international cooperation with Arctic nations, ranging from a large number of joint research projects with Arctic partners to a strong engagement in sustainable development in the region through multilateral bodies.

The principles of promoting shared well-being, sustainable development, internal cohesion and cultural diversity, which are enshrined in the Swiss Federal Constitution, converge with the Arctic Council's overall objective of inclusiveness. As a country with outstanding research facilities, and as one of the most innovative countries worldwide, Switzerland is willing and able to provide valuable scientific contributions that could enhance the work of the Council.

Switzerland's high degree of involvement in the Arctic finds its motivation in the characteristics of Swiss landscape which has been shaped – like the Arctic – by the ice ages, and is composed of mountain ranges consisting of many glaciers, among them the largest ice flow of the Alps. Scientific exploration of the Arctic has consequently always been of particular importance to Switzerland.

Swiss partnerships include a long track record of initiatives with partners from all Arctic Council Member States. Over the past decade, Swiss researchers have participated in several international Arctic projects involving multiple Arctic Council Member States and Observers. Switzerland's strong commitment to international polar research cooperation has led to fruitful scientific exchanges. The Swiss Committee on Polar and High Altitude Research (SCPHAR) of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences acts as an exchange and coordination platform for Swiss scientists at various international research institutions, and specifically coordinates participation in the scientific work of the Arctic Council and of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC).

Switzerland's contributions to the work of the Arctic Council

Since being granted Observer status at the Arctic Council, Switzerland has been represented at every Senior Arctic Officials Meeting at the Ambassador level. Swiss representatives took part in all the formats offered to observers and were able to contribute with interventions to the different activities (Observer special sessions, Observer breakfasts, etc.). Following the invitation of Poland, Switzerland was also represented at the 6th annual Warsaw Format Meeting of Arctic Council Observer States in September 2019. This format represents a key channel between the Arctic Council and its Observer States and allows Switzerland a focused direct involvement in a smaller interest group of states with the same status.



Swiss representatives attended several meetings organized within the scope of the Arctic Council including the third meeting of the Arctic Council's Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum in London on 3-4 June 2019 and the meeting on implementation of the latter Best Practices on 11 March 2019 in Helsinki.

Switzerland has also strengthened and fine-tuned the participation of Swiss contributions to the work and the objectives of the different Arctic Council's Working Groups and Expert Groups. (Please find hereafter a non-exhaustive list):

Working Groups

AMAP

Switzerland operates several regionally representative monitoring stations whose data can be used to validate the models used for the AMAP scientific work. The data are freely available. Prof. Konrad Steffen, WSL/Swiss Polar Institute, contributes to AMAP.

Dr. Julia Schmale, Assistant Professor for Extreme Environments at Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, regularly participates in the AMAP Expert Group (EG) on Short-Lived Climate Forcers. One of her specific contributions in this EG is to establish the link between the EG and PACES, the international initiative on "Arctic air pollution: Climate Environment and Society" hosted by IASC and the International Global Atmosphere Chemistry Community. Dr. Schmale attended in 2020 the MOSAiC expedition, where she studied how airborne molecules and particles influence cloud formations in the Arctic.

CAFF

Dr. Gabriela Schaepman-Strub, Associate Professor at the University of Zurich, joined in March 2018 the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) as a representative of Switzerland. She contributes to the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) and to the Arctic Vegetation Archive Expert Group of CAFF. In 2019 she reviewed the draft vegetation subchapter of the State of the Arctic Terrestrial Biodiversity Report (CBMP START). In 2020, she delivered comprehensive information about the Arctic Vegetation Archive to the CAFF secretariat to update the related website (<https://www.caff.is/flora-cfg/ava>). Dr. Schaepman-Strub is acting as a link between CAFF and IASC Terrestrial Working Group for biodiversity and ecosystem functioning aspects.

SDWG

Between October 2017 and February 2019, Switzerland, through the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, covered this group with the aim of identifying areas/topics in which Switzerland could contribute. Since September 2019, Prof. Yvon Csonka, anthropologist and former president of the International Arctic Social Sciences Association, is representing Switzerland at the SDWG, with a particular dedication to fostering solidarity with Indigenous peoples and inhabitants.



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The Arctic Council is for Switzerland the leading intergovernmental forum to achieve its Arctic related policy goals. Observer status allows Switzerland to support the work of the Arctic Council and to put its expertise at the service of the various Working Groups, particularly in the field of interdisciplinary research related to the environment. Switzerland will continue to promote international collaboration and synergies in Arctic research within the framework of international scientific projects in connection to the Arctic (predominantly from the eight Member States, Permanent Participants, Organizations and Observers of the Arctic Council). Switzerland's commitment allows for a better understanding of the main challenges, particularly in relation to climate change, and thus promotes dialogue between science and diplomacy.

As mentioned above, Swiss experts regularly contribute to the various groups of the Arctic Council. Switzerland strives to ensure continued expert participation in Working Groups and are always exploring new possibilities to contribute to the work of the Arctic Council.

- In partnership with relevant Swiss institutions, Switzerland is ready to host meetings of the Arctic Council subsidiary bodies. For example and depending on the evolution of the health crisis related to COVID-19, one idea would be to host in Switzerland an AMAP Expert Group (EG) meeting on Short-Lived Climate Forcers.
- Switzerland will continue to work with the Swiss scientific community to provide information on the Working Groups. Switzerland welcomed the work carried out during the Observer-Working Group Session on 19 November 2019 in Hveragerði Iceland. These Working Groups are tools and mechanisms, which are useful for Observers to initiate discussions between Working Groups and Observers about potential partnerships moving forward. Switzerland showed interest in the following Working Group Projects:
 - AMAP: Climate Change: Trends and Impacts;
 - CAFF: Mainstreaming Arctic Biodiversity; Traditional Knowledge and Local Knowledge;
 - SDWG: Gender Equality in the Arctic III; One Arctic – One Health
- Depending on the opportunities that arise, Switzerland intends to nominate new scientist/experts in the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces and Expert Groups.
- Switzerland wants to improve its contribution to the Arctic Council's initiatives on black carbon and methane emissions reduction. In May 2020, Switzerland submitted to the EGBCM the biennial report on Black Carbon and methane emissions.



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Switzerland is currently working on a “Swiss Polar White Paper”. Overall, this document is a further confirmation of Switzerland’s multilateral commitment to a stable planet, be it in the geopolitical, climatic or in the human dimension. Moreover, the white paper will aim to institutionalize and acknowledge the long-lasting work of Swiss research institutions already active in the Arctic. In its typical bottom-up approach, Switzerland endeavours to support existing scientific initiatives by providing a clear political framework.

Switzerland has also intensified its commitment in the field of cryosphere. Together with partner countries and organizations – most of them members of the Arctic Council – Switzerland is establishing an operational and practical link between science and the political decision-making process on climate action and its respective multilateral negotiations. Switzerland is planning a major commitment at COP26 (2021), including Switzerland as the main partner of a Cryosphere Pavilion coordinated by *International Cryosphere Climate Initiative* (ICCI). Opportunities for synergies with the Arctic Council exist. In collaboration with ICCI, Switzerland will host the next “High Urgency” Meeting: The “High Urgency” process brings negotiators and IPCC scientists together on a regular basis to discuss policy implications for the climate negotiations of recent IPCC reports and cryosphere research. The meeting brings together scientists and representatives of committed States, including several Member and Observer States of the Arctic Council.

Through the international involvement of researchers in projects involving Indigenous participants and communities, and Swiss representation on the International Whaling Commission (IWC), as well as through the contacts of Swiss museums with Arctic artists and communities, Switzerland has set itself the objective of maintaining and developing good relations with Indigenous peoples while respecting their values, interests, traditions and culture.

In order to promote exchanges and international cooperation among all the stakeholders, Switzerland participates regularly to meetings, platforms, conferences and fora such as “Arctic Circle”, “Arctic Frontiers”, “Arctic Science Ministerial Meeting” and “The Arctic: Territory of Dialogue”.

The *Swiss Polar Institute* (SPI) was founded in 2016 by a consortium of Swiss universities in order to offer new opportunities and funding to all researchers based in Switzerland who work in the Polar Regions. It works to support the bottom-up nature of polar science performed in Switzerland and the multi-institutional approach covering many polar research areas. The SPI is currently preparing the *GreenLand Circumnavigation Expedition* (GLACE), a major expedition that will represent an unprecedented complete circumnavigation of Greenland in a single expedition lasting for an over 2-month period. The expedition will provide access to the remote territories– and as yet critically understudied – of Northern Greenland and provide a unique opportunity to investigate the marine, terrestrial, atmospheric, and cryospheric environments of the Arctic.

Switzerland intends to continue its commitment to peaceful international cooperation and to research excellence. To find solutions to common challenges, Switzerland is willing to collaborate and work with all the Member States, Permanent Participants and other Observers of the Arctic Council.



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Date of submission:

29 May 2020

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office>

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

The United Kingdom has a long historical association with the Arctic and our interest in the region remains just as strong today. We are the Arctic's nearest neighbour, changes in the Arctic environment are affecting the UK, just as activity in the UK is affecting the Arctic. Our Arctic Policy Framework "Beyond the Ice", published in 2018, sets out our commitments to the Arctic.

Commitments include addressing global climate change; supporting cutting edge scientific research that aims to advance global understanding of how changes in the Arctic environment will have global consequences; helping protect the fragile Arctic environment through our work at the Arctic Council and through other multilateral organisations; ensuring that British nationals who visit the region can do so safely, and that British business interests conduct their activities in a sustainable and responsible manner so that the people whose livelihoods rely on the Arctic can do so for generations to come; and working in partnership with Arctic nations to keep peace and stability in the region.

The UK's enduring engagement with the Arctic is reflected in our being one of the original Observers to the Arctic Council in 1996, having previously been accredited at the first Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy meeting in 1991. Officials from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office have represented the UK at each of the Senior Arctic Officials and Ministerial meetings of the Council since 1996, and continue to provide constructive engagement with the Council's work in accordance with Arctic Council Rules of Procedure and criteria for Observers.

In the **four years since the last full review of the UK's role as an Observer State** we have continued to be an active and engaged participant in the work and objectives of the Arctic Council, its working groups, expert groups and task forces, for example:

- With increasing numbers of British visitors to the Arctic we want to ensure that they can do so safely and responsibly. The UK is a co-sponsor with Iceland and Canada of the current PAME project **Arctic Marine Tourism: Development in the Arctic and enabling real change**. FCO funded, the British Antarctic Survey has provided technical and analytical support, assessing tourism statistics to better understand developments and identify gaps in the data.
- The UK Hydrographic Office shared relevant experience and feedback for the **Guidelines for Marine Risk Assessment** when they joined a workshop convened by EPPR, September 2019.
- As a strong proponent for safe passage for ships in Arctic waters the UK was active in discussions at the IMO and at PAME through the development of the Polar Code. Consequently, UK industry hosted the inaugural and subsequent **Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum** in 2017 and 2018. Participants from UK government agencies, the UK maritime industry and business services sector all contributed to advancing understanding of the Polar Code and the best practice website launched in London in May 2018. In FY 2019/20 the FCO provided a **financial contribution to support the ongoing development of the website**.



- Consistent implementation of the Polar Code is critical to its success in the Arctic. As such, the UK provided a submission in 2019 to **Norway for its PAME project on the Interpretation of the Polar Code**. As part of Finland's chairmanship we also worked closely with their Embassy in London to **hold a seminar on maritime safety and security in the Arctic**.
- The UK has a strong record of high quality, high impact and collaborative Arctic research and is a committed member of the International Arctic Science Committee. **UK institutions and researchers have co-authored and contributed to working group publications**, such as AMAP's Snow, Water Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic (2017) report. Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML) also work closely on the AMAP project on Arctic Ocean Acidification. **PML spoke about the effects of ocean acidification** at the Arctic Council / AMAP COP 25 breakout session in Madrid in December 2019.
- The UK Centre for the Environment, Fish and Aquaculture (Cefas) continue to actively engage on ways to address marine litter in the Arctic. They contributed to the PAME **marine litter desktop study** and are involved with the development of the **Regional Action Plan**, most recently joining the Marine Litter expert group meetings at PAME on 3-4 February 2020. Representatives of Cefas and The Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) were also on the **Steering Committee for the Intl. Symposium on Plastic in the Arctic and sub-Arctic**.
- As a strong supporter for action to reduce global emissions of black carbon and methane **the UK submitted a national report on black carbon and methane emissions in 2018** for inclusion in the framework on Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions. **The UK ratified the UN Minamata Convention on Mercury on 6 April 2018**. Safeguarding the environment from unnecessary pollutants and chemicals is essential to ensure a healthy, safe and productive Arctic.
- The UK Government's Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) continues to **share through CAFF data on populations of Arctic breeding bird populations which occur on UK territory**. The UK continues to engage with both the Circumpolar Seabird Group, holding a mutually beneficial visit to the British Antarctic Survey in February 2018, and the African-Eurasian Flyway Steering Committee of the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative. The JNCC and many other UK based researchers and interest groups also shared their valuable work the 2018 Arctic Biodiversity Congress.
- Research conducted by the UK Met Office Hadley Centre has **contributed to understanding of changes in Arctic weather patterns and the impacts of climate change on the region**. By attending the Arctic Meteorological Summit held in March 2018 in Kittilia, Finland under the Finnish chair of the Arctic Council, the Met Office built on existing partnerships and developed new connections with institutions that will deepen knowledge and further enhance meteorological cooperation. The UK is also a committed member of the World Meteorological Organisation, a fellow observer.

The UK believes that the Permanent Participants provide a unique and essential contribution to Arctic Council discussions. Only by learning about the use of traditional and local knowledge from indigenous and local communities themselves can Arctic change be properly understood. UK based researchers are committed to listening to, and working in partnership with, indigenous and local communities, to set joint priorities and incorporate traditional and local knowledge to ensure the best outcomes for communities and for science.



At the end of 2017, researchers from across the UK took part in a series of multi-day events involving local community and indigenous representatives from the Yamal-Nenets region in Northern Siberia with the aim of building capacity to monitor, understand and predict extreme weather events in the Arctic. At the same time, UK parliamentarians heard directly from people from Sami, Gwich'in and Inuit communities about the impact of changes in the Arctic and the need to support sustainable development in the region. We will continue to find ways that we can have constructive discussions with indigenous and local communities to ensure that we are benefiting from the full range of information available.



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Cooperation and collaboration, whether sharing research capability and infrastructure or collaborating on research projects, helps to deliver better solutions and builds people to people links. The UK reiterates its commitment to support the work of the Arctic Council, and its subsidiary groups, and to finding ways to improve coordination and information sharing.

We welcome the efforts of successive Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials' Chairs and the Secretariat to identify common issues and goals that would make it easier to more directly and substantively contribute to working groups. The UK has joined thematic discussions with working groups on plastic pollution in the Arctic and welcomed the invitation by the current SAO Chair to join a panel discussion at the **SAO Marine Mechanism on Regional Coordination of Marine Issues and Global Commitments**. Despite the meetings postponement, we hope still to participate when it is reconvened.

"Beyond the Ice" sets out what expertise the UK can offer to help meet some of the long term challenges facing the Arctic region and to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come, including through the Arctic Council and its subsidiary groups, for example:

- The UK is convinced of the importance in establishing a strong and coherent set of regulatory requirements for ships operating in the Arctic region. We therefore intend to continue to work with PAME and through the IMO in its work to ensure effective pan-Arctic implementation of the Polar Code and proposals to extend the Polar Code for non-SOLAS vessels; measures to mitigate the impact of heavy fuel oils in Arctic waters, acting as chair for the PPR sub-committee; and, to develop low and eventually zero emission shipping.
- The UK will continue to collect and share data on populations of Arctic breeding bird populations which occur in the UK, building on the 70 years of data already collected, primarily through the JNCC-coordinated Wetland Bird Survey. JNCC will continue to remain engaged with CAFF, in particular AMBI and CBird. The UK intends to explore additional ways of engaging with CAFF including supporting domestic and international implementation of the AMBI Workplan.
- Together the UK and Germany have invested £20m in the 5 year (2017-22) Changing Arctic Ocean programme to understand the implications for marine biology and biochemistry. UK-based researchers were also active participants in the MOSAiC programme. Collectively the findings will help refine regional decision making and will be applicable to AMAP, PAME and CAFF projects. We will continue to seek ways to strengthen engagement and cooperation with these groups.
- As joint hosts of COP26, we want the meeting to be ambitious and inclusive. We will work with the Permanent Participants to find ways in which their voices can be heard through the event. Also, in collaboration with Arctic communities, the British Museum will host an exhibition that explores the creativity and resourcefulness of the circumpolar Indigenous People, to celebrate their ingenuity and resilience throughout history.
- We continue to seek out further opportunities to work with the other working and expert groups. Government backed UK and Canadian institutions, and Indigenous Peoples groups,



are discussing new approaches to joint multi-disciplinary work that aims to further understand the Canadian Arctic. We hope that future collaborations will provide valuable information for SDWG and other Arctic Council projects.



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.

The UK remains committed to hosting an ambitious and inclusive COP26 in 2021. It is vital that the world comes together and takes renewed action to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. We urge every country to come forward with ambitious new nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that will help us meet the commitments set out under the 2015 Paris Agreement, including long-term strategies which mark a course to net zero emissions. As the world recovers from COVID-19 it is important that we build back greener to lay the foundation for sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth.

As strong advocates of the international rules-based system, the UK recognises the importance of negotiated and consensus driven agreements through multilateral organisations, treaties and conventions such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) of which we are a part. Such arrangements continue to provide an additional platform for cooperation and collaboration between Arctic States and the wider international community.

Another example of good cooperation is the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean. We look forward to the Agreement coming into force. Moreover, the UK is looking at joining the Agreement in its own right as an independent coastal State, now it has left the EU. We are committed to working with our Arctic partners to ensure future sustainable fishing in the region.

Over 70 institutions across the UK are engaged in Arctic research, and in 2021 the UK research station at Ny-Ålesund, Norway will celebrate its 30th anniversary. The UK also has a strong record of producing high quality, high impact and collaborative Arctic research – we are fourth after the US, Russia and Canada in terms of volume of publications. The UK participated in the inaugural and subsequent Arctic Science Ministerial Meetings, is a committed member of the International Arctic Science Committee, and has five institutions that are members of the UArctic.

The UK Arctic Office supports the UK Arctic research community, and along with the Science and Innovation teams in our overseas missions in the eight Arctic States, they build connections that contribute to important research and innovation collaborations across the Arctic region and to the Arctic Council and its subsidiary groups, this includes UK representation at relevant Arctic meetings such as the Arctic Science Summit Week, the UArctic Congress, Arctic Circle Assembly and Arctic Frontiers to name a few.

The Agreement on Enhancing Scientific Cooperation has begun to enhance collaboration between Arctic and non-Arctic states. Our Memoranda of Understanding with Canada and Norway, and our bursary schemes with Canada and Russia, are good examples of UK bilateral cooperation building on the Agreement. The 2018 State of the Polar Oceans report jointly produced by UK and Norwegian researchers, helped understand the impacts of climate and environmental change on the Polar Oceans, and was a product of the MoU.



Building further on the agreement, the UK NERC Arctic Office and UK Research and Innovation Council have developed a programme with Canadian partners, including indigenous groups, to further understand the Canadian Arctic. At a local level, Indigenous Peoples will be actively involved in developing project proposals. Additionally, since 2018 the UK Arctic research community has fostered greater collaboration between UK and Russian institutions to increase the volume and value of science projects in the Russian Arctic and to develop early career collaborations through APECS.

The UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency is also participating as practitioners in the Arctic and North Atlantic Security and Emergency Preparedness Network (ArcSAR) and have registered interest in the Automatic Vessel Anomaly Detection in the Arctic (AI-ARC) project, both under the EU's Horizon2020 programme.

The UK considers that raising awareness, education and outreach will ensure a new generation of Arctic researchers and champions. We have promoted the valuable work of the Arctic Council and the UK's position as an observer in several parliamentary debates and inquiries into the Arctic, and the education resource www.discoveringthearctic.org.uk provides education tools and learning materials for schools and teachers, we have also taken part in Model Arctic Council initiatives in Greenland, Italy and the UK.



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Department
for International
Development

27 May 2020

Einar Gunnarsson
Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials
c/o Arctic Council Secretariat
Fram Centre
Postboks 6606 Langnes
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Norway

Dear Einar,

I attach the UK's response to the Arctic Council's request for information on UK activities in the Arctic, and our interest in the Council. As Minister for the Polar Regions, I confirm the UK's ongoing commitment to supporting the work of the Arctic Council, through our observer status.

As our submission attests, the UK has a long-term commitment to supporting a peaceful and stable Arctic, and the protection and sustainable development of the region. We have world class expertise in areas such as polar science and maritime navigation, and cooperate widely with colleagues in the Arctic States and Council Working Groups. We are especially pleased to be working closely in the Working Group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment as co-leads with Iceland and Canada on the Arctic Marine Tourism Project.

The UK values its status as an observer to the Arctic Council and I am proud of our contributions to the Council's work. I look forward to this fruitful relationship continuing for many years to come.

BARONESS SUGG
Minister for the Polar Regions



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea (ACOPS)

Date of submission:

6 July 2020

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

ACOPS engagement with the protection of the arctic marine environment predates the establishment of the Arctic Council. It has since supported the Ottawa Declaration as well as the work of the Arctic Council and of its subsidiary bodies for matters that relate to the arctic marine environment and climate issues.

ACOPS participated to PAME in-person workshop on the development of a framework for more systematically engaging Arctic Council Observers in PAME's shipping-related work.

Due to budget limitations, ACOPS has had little resources to send representatives to in-person meetings in the last few years. ACOPS has also undergone a change of the entire management team and review of the governing documents. As ACOPS' activities evolved since the early 80s to respond to the context of its time, these documents which dated from the early 80 needed updating. This important stream of work and the subsequent Covid 19 crisis have limited the support that ACOPS could provide to the Arctic Council during that period.

ACOPS is now in a position to resume greater engagement and visibility in its support of the work of the Arctic Council and its subsidiary body, especially PAME. In this respect, maintenance of virtual participation to meetings would be extremely useful.



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.

Topics in the work of the Arctic Council and its subsidiary bodies that are within the area of expertise and concern of ACOPS are the following projects of (independently or jointly) PAME, CAFF and EPPR:

- Low-impact marine corridor initiatives;
- MPAs;
- Ecosystem approach to management;
- Improved engagement with observers in shipping related matters;
- Understanding, governance and management of pollution from marine plastics, including the implementation of ML-RAP;
- Underwater noise in the Arctic;
- Interpretation of the Polar Code (common ground for interpretation and remaining challenges);
- Black carbon emissions from shipping activity in the Arctic and Technology; and
- Environmental toxicity and fate of light and intermediate fuel when spilled in cold waters.

For most of these topics, parallel work streams are on-going in other intergovernmental organisations including the IMO, the LC/LP and OSPAR. ACOPS also takes part in parallel working groups established in these other fora thereby allowing for enhanced sharing of the work across the bodies and supporting the development of an overall consistent governance framework.

ACOPS' network also includes young researchers who focus on marine arctic issues. ACOPS brings the work of the Arctic Council to their attention and where relevant can provide their work to the WGs as relevant and useful. An example is ongoing work in Singapore on the ecological and/or physiological adaptation of a *Micromonas* Spp in the Arctic (a pico-phytoplankton species).



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.

ACOPS is a non-campaigning UK-based environmental NGO established in 1952 by Lord Callaghan. It functions as a pathway for information and dialogue at the interface of science, law and policy across academia, governments, IOs and relevant private and public stakeholders and NGO which depend on the marine or maritime issues being focused on.

In addition to the Arctic Council, ACOPS has consultative status with four intergovernmental organisations: The International Maritime Organisation, the governing bodies of the London Convention and its Protocol, the International Seabed Authority and OSPAR.

As an NGO and an advisory committee composed primarily of research academics specialised in ocean law and policy and oceanography, ACOPS supports the work of the Arctic Council in a number of ways including:

- Following the work of the Arctic Council and PAME and communicating it to its wide network of stakeholders, including through social media platforms;
- Declaring its support to ministerial statements and projects of WGs;
- Providing technical contributions to working groups on specific issues. Examples of current areas for such contribution are combatting pollution from marine plastics and the identification of marine sensitive areas in the arctic that take into account international law and examples of such identification and criteria for identification around the world;
- Budget permitting, contributing to research projects in the context of the PAME.



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Date of submission:

30 June 2020

Observer's website, if appropriate:

www.iucn.org and www.iucn.org/marine

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

IUCN's activity on Arctic issues in 2019 was limited.

Based on new and previous research, IUCN continued to examine the effects of microplastics on Arctic ice and the possibility that pieces of plastic trapped in the Arctic might contribute to the melting of glacial ice in the Arctic Circle. This research was particularly focused on the extent to which marine microplastics influence ice formation and melting.

The experiments involved creating isolated areas of water that are individually tested to examine the effect of the presence of plastics on the formation and melting of ice. The results of these experiments were published in 2019 as an article entitled 'Distribution and Impacts of Microplastic Incorporation within Sea Ice' in a peer-reviewed journal in Marine Pollution Bulletin.

Link: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0025326X19304758>



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.

As a project-funded entity, IUCN's Global and Marine Programme is dependent on project funding to be able to attend Arctic Council events. At the time of reporting, we do not have any active projects that are able to support this activity.



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

Nordic Council of Ministers

Date of submission:

June 2020

Observer's website, if appropriate:

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

Since the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) launched its Arctic Cooperation program in 1996 the NCM has been committed to promoting and supporting cooperation on Arctic issues, both within the Nordic Countries as well on the international level.

The Arctic constitutes a large part of the territory and geography of the Nordic Countries; home to its Indigenous people communities and makes a large contribution to the economy of the Nordic Countries. Since the NCM launched its Arctic Cooperation Program and joined the Arctic Council as an observer at the ministerial meeting in Barrow, Alaska in 2000, the Arctic has developed and changed dramatically, not least as the effects of global greenhouse gas emissions takes its toll on the fragile environment and ecosystem in the Arctic. The NCM would therefore like to highlight the following contributions to the work of the Arctic Council and its subsidiary bodies and provide an update to the NCM's 2016 observer review and the 2018 observer report focusing on the contributions in 2019, 2020 and plans for 2021.

The Nordic Council of Ministers Arctic Cooperation Program is an important instrument for the NCM and its members to demonstrate the importance of the region and its development for the Nordic countries. The program is primarily an instrument for project support that achieves its goals through supporting projects that are found to be relevant and important for enhancing knowledge about the Arctic and benefit the Indigenous and local populations in the region.

As reported and outlined in the December 2018 observer report covering years 2017 and 2018 the Nordic Council of Ministers Arctic Cooperation program supported eight projects in these two years lead by the Arctic Council Working Groups with the total amount to these projects 1.61- million DKK.

The breakdown of the above-mentioned projects and numbers can be found in the 2018 observer report. As a part of the period 2019 -2021 the NCM would like to highlight the following contributions to the work of the Arctic Council, its working groups and subsidiary bodies (amounts in thousands of DKK in parenthesis):

2019 - PAME – Arctic Shipping Status Report (200), Marine Litter Phase II (250), Arctic Marine Tourism (150), CAFF – follow up on the state of the Arctic marine diversity report (270), SDWG – Gender in the Arctic III (400), Arctic Pedagogy in Teacher Education (400). Total of 1.6 MDKK or around 215 TEUR.

In addition, several projects and funds were granted to among others, Saami Council and the Association of Reindeer Husbandry as a part of the focus on Indigenous communities within the NCM Arctic Cooperation program. A total of 22 Arctic projects were supported by the Arctic Cooperation program open application round in 2019 for a total amount of close to one million EUR.



In addition to the open application funding outlined above the NCM Arctic Cooperation program has funded directly through the so-called political priorities budget. Arctic Council projects that have received grants from this funding mechanism include: Resilience and management of Arctic Wetlands (CAFF), Blue bio economy in the Arctic (SDWG) as well as projects that raise awareness on ocean plastics and marine pollution, climate change information as well as supporting World Meteorological Organization 2020 conferences in Rovaniemi in May 2019 connected to the Arctic Council ministerial that marked the end of Finland's chairmanship in the Council.

In 2020 the NCM Arctic program continued to support the three abovementioned PAME projects for a total amount of 600 TDKK as well as supporting Arctic Shipping Best Practices Forum (200) organized by PAME, SDWG received continued support for the Gender in the Arctic III project (400) and CAFF received funds for project related to Arctic biodiversity data visualization (400). This amounts to a total of around 1.6 MDKK, a similar amount to the one in 2019 for around a total of 215 TEUR.

Like in 2019 number of projects lead by and/or with participation of Indigenous communities and organizations are supported. A total of 20 projects received funds from the Arctic Cooperation Programs open application process.

In relation to political priorities only half of the total funds for political priorities has been allocated in 2020 at the time of this report. That allocation included support to the SDWG project on Gender Equality. The remaining funds will be granted in the second half of 2020. It is also worth mentioning that in 2020 the NCM commissioned a report on Reducing risks and enhancing environmental security in Arctic Waters.

The NCM Arctic Cooperation Program is first and foremost a funding mechanism aimed to contribute financing for projects and programs related to the Arctic. As with all NCM programs the criteria are that at least three Nordic Countries are involved to make sure that the projects and programs that receive funding are truly Nordic in nature and can in that way encourage and promote cross national Nordic cooperation.

The current program for the 2018-2021 is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, the SDG's. This allows the four categories of the program: Planet, Peoples, Prosperity and Partnerships to connect to the relevant SDG's. The aim and the goals are in that way closely connected to the Arctic Councils main principles outlined in the Arctic Council Ottawa Declaration on sustainable development and environmental protection.



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.

2021 – Outlook and plans for the Nordic Council of Ministers Arctic Cooperation Program

Looking towards next year, the NCM Arctic Cooperation Programs budget for 2021 is expected to be approximately around the same amount as in previous three years, with total budget around 9.5 MDKK with close to 7 MDKK allocated to the open application process. The NCM budget is always subject to approval at the annual fall session of the Nordic Council.

In 2021 the NCM will develop and adopt a new Arctic Cooperation Program for the years running 2022- 2025 as a part of the international cooperation of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Given the importance of the Arctic region for the Nordic Countries and their ongoing collective commitment to fostering, promoting and developing knowledge about the region, the expectation is that the next program will include around the same elements and budget size as in previous periods. The focus will continue to be on sustainable development, environmental protection and mitigating the effects of climate change as well as the important elements of focusing on the social and economic conditions of Indigenous peoples and local populations in the Arctic

Decisions to fund projects from the 2021 open application process will be made in March/April 2021 timeframe, deadline for applications is normally in late January. Funds available from the political priorities budget are allocated twice a year, in the spring and in the fall. It is the responsibility of the Nordic countries to develop and propose projects that can be funded from the political priorities budget. This is done in consultations between the countries and the NCM Secretariat twice a year through the NCM Expert Committee on Arctic affairs staffed with representatives from the countries.

In August 2019 the Prime Ministers of the Nordic Countries adopted a new vision for the Nordic Council of Ministers with focus on a green, competitive and socially sustainable Nordic region. The NCM will prioritize policies in these three areas and has developed plans and projects to implement them in the coming years in the policies of the NCM and its Nordic institutions.

It is therefore expected that a similar amount from the NCM Arctic Cooperation Program in 2021 will be allocated to Arctic Council Working Group projects in 2020 along the same lines that has been the case in recent years and previous program periods. All the applications are subject to evaluation by Nordregio, the Nordic Institute of Regional Development in Stockholm.



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.

The Arctic and Nordic Cooperation – importance of regional and international cooperation

The Nordic Council of Ministers is committed to supporting greater international cooperation in the Arctic region. For over 20 years the NCM has contributed to enhancing knowledge and facilitate cooperation in the area and in that way helped build up the collective understanding about the Arctic, a region that was for a long time isolated and inaccessible. This accumulated knowledge is the result of a collective effort from our scientific community in close collaboration and cooperation with the people, both Indigenous and local communities, in the region.

The Nordic Council of Ministers has for a long time focused on the cross cutting strategies and mainstreaming the topics of sustainability, equality and children and young people into its projects. Special effort has been made to incorporate these elements into the NCM programs and plans with the aim to mainstream them in the NCM projects and policies.

Although the Nordic Council of Ministers Arctic Program is an independent program the NCM recognizes the importance of international cooperation and collaboration. Indeed, this was one of the major reason behind establishing the Arctic program in late 1990's and subsequent application of observer status in the Arctic Council in 2000. These principles still hold true today and in the years to come.

All the Nordic Countries have individually laid out their Arctic Policies and in all of them emphasize the importance of international collaboration and cooperation. The NCM Arctic Cooperation Program is aligned with these priorities. Although the lead institutions in projects supported by the NCM program need to be from one of the Nordic Countries the program is open for third country participation, including from other Arctic Council Countries.

It is important for the Nordic Council of Ministers to continue to support not only projects of the Arctic Council Working Groups but as well being able to follow discussions on the political level and follow the Arctic Council policies on important themes such as environmental protection, sustainability and climate change within the Arctic Council. It is also worth mentioning that NCM has supported many projects and initiatives in cooperation with the Arctic Economic Council and the University of the Arctic.

The NCM is an international organization that work across many sectors. Within the structures of the NCM ministerial councils there is an important link to the sectors of environment, climate, sustainability, social and health issues, economy, food production and culture just to name a few. These sectors also contribute to the NCM Arctic cooperation since the program can draw on the expertise and work of these sectors.

The NCM would like to use the opportunity to thank the Arctic Council; the nations and the Secretariat in Tromsø for the cooperation and collaboration. The Arctic Council observer status gives the NCM opportunity to follow closely the policies and projects in the Arctic Council as well as for the Arctic Council to see how the NCM Arctic Cooperation contributes to increasing and enhancing knowledge about the region.



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

OSPAR Commission

Date of submission:

06 April 2020

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

Introduction

The 1992 Convention for The Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the OSPAR Convention) provides the mechanism by which fifteen Governments and the European Union cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic (the OSPAR Maritime Area).

The Governments are Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom. OSPAR started out in 1972 with the Oslo Convention against dumping and was broadened to cover land-based sources of marine pollution and the offshore industry by the Paris Convention of 1974. These two conventions were unified, updated and extended by the 1992 OSPAR Convention. OSPAR, aims to take all possible steps to prevent and eliminate pollution and to take the necessary measures to protect the maritime area against adverse effects of human activities while restoring marine areas which have been adversely affected so as to safeguard human health and to conserve marine ecosystems. Five of our Contracting Parties are Member States to the Arctic Council and OSPAR Region I is Arctic waters.

This report focuses on activities and contributions undertaken by the OSPAR Secretariat, acting on behalf of the Commission.

PAME

OSPAR was co-lead to the desktop study on marine litter within PAME, and the Secretariat contributed with our experience gained from developing and implementing the OSPAR Regional Action Plan (RAP) for the Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic, adopted in 2014. Following finalisation of the study, we have contributed towards the initial development of the Arctic Council action plan on marine litter by joining the expert group; sharing relevant reports; participating in and presenting to the Arctic Plastics Pollution Workshop held in October 2019; and participating in the expert workshop held in February 2020. OSPAR has also been a co-sponsor of the marine litter Symposium, to be held in April 2020.

The Secretariat has continued to attend PAME working group meetings where we have strong interest in work on marine protected areas, climate change and ecosystem management. In several areas OSPAR has an opportunity to learn from and adapt experience acquired in the Arctic Council.



MORE INFO ON OTHER WORKING GROUPS

CAFF

OSPAR has recently engaged with CAFF to identify areas of work where collaboration could deliver synergistic outputs. Experts working on seabirds in OSPAR first informed the OSPAR Secretariat of similar activities of assessment of the same species by Arctic Council and CAFF. In further discussions between the CAFF and OSPAR Secretariats, seabirds were identified as a suitable topic to focus on in the short-term with a handful of species and specific assessments and measures being relevant. Several activities in the respective organisations seemed to be quite closely aligned and synergies could be found through some small adjustments e.g. on delivery times and sharing information. The OSPAR Secretariat participated in a CAFF Board meeting where next steps on delivering synergistic outputs were considered and it was concluded that further discussions with OSPAR Biodiversity Committee (BDC) would be appropriate.

Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP)

OSPAR's Working Group on Monitoring and on Trends and Effects of Substances in the Marine Environment (MIME) works on monitoring and assessment of hazardous substances in the OSPAR maritime area. The AMAP professional secretary, Simon Wilson, participates in the annual MIME meeting whenever possible, and engages with the experts throughout the year.

There is ongoing collaboration between MIME and AMAP on: (1) assessment procedures; (2) methods and process for providing AMAP's Region I information and data for the QSR 2023; (3) harmonising common guidelines; and (4) contaminant QA activities.

Regarding (1), MIME and AMAP have commissioned work by ICES to develop a common tool for assessing hazardous substances.

Regarding (2), in June 2019 ICES hosted an AMAP-OSPAR workshop on temporal trend analysis systems. The aim of the workshop was to gain more time series data in OSPAR Region I, Arctic Waters, including from AMAP Trends and Effects Monitoring Programme (ATEMP). It was well attended by MIME and AMAP experts, including from Canada and USA. There is a lack of data for OSPAR's Region I, Arctic Waters, because there are few OSPAR Contracting Party monitoring stations. However, the collaboration with AMAP means this will change for biota, with the inclusion of AMAP non-OSPAR data.

Emergency, Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR)

The work carried out by the Radioactive Substance Committee (RSC) may have common areas of interest with the just established Radiation Expert Group (RAD EG) under the EPPR. The leader of RAD EG was invited to the RSC 2020 meeting held in February in Paris, but it was finally agreed that the Chair of RSC, the leader of RAD EG and the Secretariats will discuss after the first meeting of the RAD EG in May 2020 future ways of collaboration.

OSPAR Secretariat is shared with the Bonn Agreement Secretariat. The Bonn Agreement (1983,



as amended) is the mechanism by which ten Governments (eleven when the accession of Spain agreed in 2019 comes into force) together with the EU, cooperate in dealing with pollution of the North Sea by oil and other harmful substances covering the Greater North Sea and its wider approaches. The BA scope of work is focused on the prevention, preparedness and response of accidental and illegal pollution from shipping, offshore oil and gas operations and other maritime activities. Bonn Agreement's work is also closely related to EPPR's. Updates from EPPR are given in the annual OTSOPA and Bonn meetings by Norway. Common areas of interest are the research on new low sulphur fuels, risk analysis and the use of Remoted Piloted Aircraft Systems.



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OSPAR is in the process of developing a new ten-year North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy, for the period 2020–2030. This will help to prioritise areas of engagement and common interest with the Arctic Council.

OSPAR has also initiated preparations for a Quality Status Report to be produced in 2023. The report, and its supporting assessments, will include evidence on the state of the marine environment in OSPAR Region I, which covers a part of the Arctic. We will wish to draw on evidence acquired by the Arctic Council where relevant including on the effectiveness of measures.

Subject to resources, and the priorities set by the new OSPAR Environment Strategy, we expect to continue to contribute towards the work of the working groups mentioned in the section above.



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Date of submission:

8 June 2020

Observer's website, if appropriate:

<http://www.arcticparl.org>

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Job Title: Secretary General

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region has an important role in giving a stronger voice for the people of the Arctic.

Elected by and representing the people of the Arctic countries, the Arctic parliamentarians have as their main focus the people living in the Arctic. This includes indigenous peoples. A strong political dialogue between the parliaments and the governments of the Arctic region is key to promote a sustainable development with prosperous Arctic societies, in which people can secure their livelihoods and live their lives.

The members of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR) work in their national parliaments to promote Arctic issues and raise awareness of what is happening in the Arctic and in the Arctic cooperation. The parliamentarians work to make the results of the Arctic cooperation known at a national level. Most members of SCPAR are elected from the Northern regions in their country, all of them share a passion and concern for the development in the Arctic.

Since 2018, the Arctic Parliamentarians have arranged six Standing Committee meetings gathering the heads of Arctic delegations from all the Arctic national parliaments. During these meetings, parliamentarians have shared their experiences on their Arctic policies and best practices. The committee has met with ministers responsible for Arctic Affairs and the Senior Arctic Officials to keep themselves up to date on the current Affairs of the Arctic Council. Committee meetings have been used also to convey the MP's messages to the Council.

Furthermore the members of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region have met with representatives of the United Nations to discuss how to better safeguard the pristine Arctic nature, how to mitigate the negative impacts of the climate change and how to support the people living in this regions.

SCPAR has been represented by the Secretary General in all the SAO-meetings available for the observers since 2018.



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.

SCPAR focuses its work on Arctic Parliamentary cooperation, in which it depends also from the information and knowledge generated outside of its secretariat. Besides the national ministries, the committee relies on the on the work done by the Council's Working Groups, Task Forces and Expert Groups. This is why the products and the expertise of the Council has been widely utilized in the work of the committee.

On its own behalf, the Committee has invited members of the Working Groups to participate in the Standing Committee meetings. The committee official and MP's have been encouraged to participate to the meetings of the Working Groups and contribute where possible.



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.

The Arctic Parliamentarians have an important role in supporting the cooperation between the Arctic countries. The SCPAR offers a unique venue for interparliamentary discussions and exchange of information. As the Parliamentarians have their legislative responsibility and role, they are uniquely positioned in supporting the work of the Arctic Council and in giving it more visibility in the respective member countries.



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

United Nations Environment Programme

Date of submission:

31 May 2020

Observer's website, if appropriate:

www.unep.org

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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 hand-made tools with plastic ones on Indigenous livelihoods (to be launched in 2nd 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 Cli-



mate 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.



Cover sheet

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

The West Nordic Council was admitted as an observer to the Arctic Council in 2017. The West Nordic Council has since 2018 attended all SAO meetings and the Ministerial Meeting in Rovaniemi in 2019. The West Nordic Council has prioritized its engagement in the Arctic Council Working Group; the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG). Staff from The West Nordic Council has attended SDWG-meetings for the past two years. The results from the meetings have been of great value to politicians in the West Nordic Council in their general parliamentary work within the Arctic field. It has, for example, been a significant factor in the choice of the upcoming West Nordic Council theme for 2020-2021, namely young people in the Arctic and their living conditions, especially in outer coastal and rural districts.

Involvement of teenagers and adolescents in the works of the Arctic Council has been high on the agenda in the SDWG Working Group, and Arctic Council on a broader scale, during 2019/2020. The West Nordic Council has addressed this issue in several contexts and has, for example, worked with abuse of drugs and alcohol as a subject.

On the Monday leading up to the SDWG meeting in Isafjörður in September 2019 The West Nordic Council co-arranged a conference under the title: "Strengths, Well-being and Engagement of Youth". The West Nordic Council moderated the conference that had a widespread participation of experts, politicians, and participants from the SDWG working group, highlighting the important subject of the conditions of youth in the Arctic.



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The West Nordic Council has intentions about taking advantage of the Icelandic Chairmanship in 2019-21. The Secretariat of the Council is located in Reykjavik, offering better opportunities for activities on a broader scale than otherwise. Our plans have, however, been somewhat hampered by the Corona pandemic of 2020.

The West Nordic Council has in April 2020 proposed to the Icelandic Chairmanship and the SDWG Secretariat that The West Nordic Council should facilitate a presentation about Youth and Adolescents in the Arctic during the SDWG meeting in October in Egilsstaðir. The presentation was mainly supposed to give expert views on how to secure equal access to education in both rural and urban areas of the Arctic. The chairmanship has because of the Corona crisis for the time being declined such a presentation in direct connection to the SDWG meeting since a lot of the general planning of the chair has been derailed. The West Nordic Council has, of course, the highest understanding of this situation. As an alternative to directly participating on the SDWG meeting, the West Nordic Council intends to arrange a conference, probably in Reykjavik in the days leading up to the SDWG meeting in October in Egilsstaðir. On this conference, preferably co-arranged with university experts and a permanent participant, The West Nordic Council will put young people in the Arctic on the Agenda.

In June 2021, The West Nordic Council will arrange an open theme conference spanning a whole day where we will put Young People in the West Nordic part of the Arctic on the Agenda. The theme conference will be held in Qaqortoq, Southern Greenland. During the conference university experts, politicians, locals and teachers will present their views on the status of young people in the coastal and rural regions and the Arctic, where health, education, innovation, startup business, abuse of drugs and alcohol will be among the subjects. It is our hope that we will be able to have participation from the ICC (Inuit Circumpolar Council) at the conference.

The West Nordic Council continuously monitors the projects in the SDWG with a view to assessing whether there are any projects that appear relevant for the participation of a small council with a limited budget and staff.



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.

During 2019/20 the West Nordic Council has been working ambitiously with the position of the three West Nordic languages, Greenlandic, Icelandic and Faroese. The languages share some important elements, being small Arctic languages spoken by relatively few people and challenged by other languages, English in particular. The languages have, however, also dissimilarities, among these are that Greenlandic is an indigenous language challenged by Danish in many societal and administrative aspects, while Icelandic is a significantly larger language with stronger financial and linguistic technological strength. The Faroese language is on many aspects placed in the middle. The West Nordic Council arranged a large open conference on the subject in Tórshavn in January 2020 and has also raised awareness on the subject in other circumstances. We have, however, not identified the challenges of the Arctic languages directly on the Arctic Council's present agenda. If this happens in the future, the West Nordic Council would very much like to contribute with the knowledge that we possess on these important matters.

At the Arctic Circle Assembly 2019 in Reykjavik The West Nordic Council arranged two breakout sessions with a clear Arctic focus. One centered on how small Arctic nations can thrive in the new geopolitical reality of the Arctic, while the other presented positive ways of overcoming the challenges that the small Arctic languages, Greenlandic, Icelandic and Faroese face. Both breakout sessions had ministers and other prominent speakers from Arctic governments, parliaments and the academia.

The West Nordic Council has for many years been a committed partner in The Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, SCPAR, the most important parliamentary cooperation of the Arctic. The West Nordic Council regularly organizes events, conferences, and participate in the general debate on Arctic matters with a prevalent focus on culture, economy, geopolitics, and international cooperation in the region. It is our strong belief that all our initiatives are in line with the values and goals of the Arctic Council.



Cover sheet

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

WMO as an Observer in the Arctic Council, and within the framework of its current strategic plan, 2020-2023, with its Members, is well-placed to contribute to the Pan-Arctic challenges identified by the Arctic Council. WMO has adopted an earth system observation and prediction approach to address socially relevant impacts of atmospheric, hydrological, ocean, and cryospheric change, including those affecting the Arctic communities.

Over the last 2 years the World meteorological Organization (WMO) has been engaged in several activities within the framework of the Arctic Council.

Pan-Arctic Earth System Model initiative

WMO co-hosted in November 2019, with Iceland, which holds the chairmanship of the Arctic Council from 2019 to 2021, a workshop addressing some of the core challenges set forward for the Arctic science community related to improvements of forecasting skill of weather, ocean, hydrological and climate models as a contribution to the development of a Pan-Arctic Earth Systems Model. This is in the context of Iceland's priorities to further the circumpolar meteorological and oceanographic cooperation to improve safety at sea, in collaboration with WMO, in support of safe and sustainable shipping in the Arctic, as well as emergency prevention, on search and rescue preparedness and response. The outcomes of the workshop are being evaluated for integration with the strategic goals of WMO on Earth System prediction and the provision of relevant services.

Engagement with the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP).

AMAP has been represented in the Executive Council Panel of Experts on Polar and High Mountain Observations, Research and Services (EC PHORS) for more than 10 years. Arctic Regional Climate Centre Network To meet the Arctic adaptation and decision-making needs, under the leadership of WMO, an Arctic Regional Climate Centre Network (ArcRCC-Network) has been established within this framework and has started its demonstration phase in May 2018. Its products and services are contributions to the goals of AMAP, being well aligned with the AMAP Climate Expert Group. ArcRCC-Network is based on the WMO RCC concept with direct contributions from all the Arctic Council member countries through a mutually agreed structure consisting of three sub-regional geographical nodes, namely, (i) North America, (ii) Northern Europe and Greenland and (iii) Eurasia Nodes. The users of climate information of the ArcRCC are engaged via the Pan-Arctic Regional Climate Outlook Forum (PARCOF); this includes AMAP, which has been engaged actively in the definition of requirements and the dissemination of results. All relevant information and products are accessible through a dedicated website <https://www.arctic-rcc.org/>

The implementation and designation of ArcRCC-Network was evaluated in successive meetings in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation in February 2019 and Tromso in January 2020.



Arctic Climate Forums

Climate Consensus statements are the flagship products of PARCOF sessions, which are held twice a year – a face-to-face session in May to issue Climate Consensus Statement targeting summer (JJA) season, and an online session in October to issue outlook for winter season. Since the inaugural session of PARCOF, in Ottawa, Canada, in May 2018, there has been a significant increase in the engagement of users of climate services.

The third PARCOF session was held in May 2019 in Rovaniemi, Finland, hosted by the Finnish Meteorological Institute, along with the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting. PARCOF-3 brought together Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council, representatives of Arctic Indigenous Peoples, scientists from all of the Arctic Council Member States, and various stakeholders. During the PARCOF-3 the forum was renamed as an Arctic Climate Forum (ACF) to reflect broader scope of the sessions.

The Fourth session of ACF was held online in October 2019 and a Consensus Statement was developed for winter 2019-20. The fifth ACF session, planned to be held face-to-face in May 2020 in St Petersburg was replaced with a virtual session due to the COVID pandemic. It was organized and facilitated by Roshydromet and its Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute (AARI). All materials of sessions are available at <https://www.arctic-rcc.org/acf>

WMO was represented to the 33rd Meeting of the AMAP Working Group in Tromsø, Norway, on 29–30 October 2019, and the representative of WMO reported on various relevant WMO projects and activities, including an overview of the planned WMO governance reform. The meeting noted that many scientists associated with AMAP are well-connected with CLIVAR and other WMO activities. AMAP noted the value of the collaboration within the framework of the WMO EC-PHORS group and expressed interest for a sustained mechanism to attain closer coordination and cooperation between AMAP and WMO, e.g. closer cooperation with the WMO Arctic regional climate centers.

Engagement with the Protection of the Arctic Environments (PAME) Working Group

WMO attended PAME in 2018 and 2020. For PAME-II 2018 (Vladivostok), WMO presented on the work of marine services and research in supporting meteorological work in the Arctic region. This was in the spirit of promoting meteorological work – the theme promoted by the Finland Chair of the Arctic Council at the time. For 2020 PAME-I (Oslo), the representative from WMO gave a presentation on the WMO-IMO Symposium on Extreme Maritime Weather (from October 2019). The Symposium, amongst several themes, had a dedicated polar session about maritime safety.

The PAME Best Shipping Practices Team is of particular interest to WMO, with respect to the maritime safety and SOLAS. In May 2018, WMO attended the Best Shipping Practice Forum in London and presented on the work of WMO in the WWMIWS. The Team was due to meet in May 2020 in London at the International Maritime Organization (IMO). WMO was invited to give a summary presentation of relevant outcomes from the WMO-IMO Symposium on Extreme Maritime Weather. Due to COVID-19, this has been postponed to a later date.



Other:

WMO is preparing for the 2nd UN Ocean Conference (postponed to a later date due to COVID-19). WMO has proposed, along with the UNESCO-IOC, to coordinate a Side Event on Polar issues. AMAP have shown an interest in participating, as have some Arctic Council Members including Finland, Iceland and USA.



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The Strategic Plan adopted by the Eighteenth World Meteorological Congress, in June 2019, sets the directions and priorities to guide the activities of WMO during 2020–2023 and up to 2030 to enable all Members to improve their information, products and services.

It sets three overarching priorities – enhancing preparedness for hydrometeorological extremes, supporting climate-smart decisions and enhancing socioeconomic benefits of related services – with a view to contribute to the societal needs reflected in the global agenda to realize sustainable development, and relevant to the activities of the Arctic Council.

WMO will continue to work with its Members, Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council, towards addressing Pan-Arctic priorities, within the WMO Strategic goals as are, for example the current priorities under the chairmanship of Iceland.

The Strategic Plan pursues five long-term goals and associated objectives,

1. Better serve societal needs;
2. Enhance Earth system observations and predictions;
3. Advance targeted research: Leveraging leadership in science to improve understanding of the Earth system for enhanced services;
4. Close the capacity gap on weather, climate, hydrological and related environmental services: Enhancing service delivery capacity of developing countries to ensure availability of essential information and services needed by governments, economic sectors and citizens;
5. Strategic realignment of WMO structure and programmes for effective policy- and decision-making and implementation;

The 11th session of the **Polar Prediction Project** Steering Group (PPP-SG) from 19 to 21 February 2020 in Bremerhaven, Germany, agree on the next steps for the Consolidation Phase activities:

- options for the PPP Evaluation and to build a legacy for YOPP;
- plans for two Targeted Observing Periods in the Northern Hemisphere (NH-TOP1, spring/summer 2020) and in the Southern Hemisphere (SH-TOP1, austral winter 2022)
- plan the Final YOPP Summit in May 2022 in Montréal, Canada (and a fellowship program)
- further progress on PPP science activities in Numerical Experimentation, Verification, Sea Ice Forecasting, and the YOPPSiteMIP initiative of the PPP Consolidation Phase to evaluate model performance at YOPP Supersites in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres;
- pursue PPP-related education activities around the Arctic Science Summit meeting in Lisbon in March 2021, and a PPP Spring School in Abisko, Sweden in March 2022 plus activities around the YOPP Final Summit in May 2022;
- the importance of the YOPP Data Portal for YOPPSiteMIP and YOPP Legacy activities;

WCRP: the incoming co-chair of CliC, Prof. Jason Box, has worked extensively with AMAP and



continuing discussions on working more closely with the Arctic Council WGs. Over the next year CliC will focus on communicating results to a broader audience, improve its links to policymaking, social science, and indigenous knowledge organisations. Specifically:

- GlacierMIP2: will expand the framework for a coordinated intercomparison of global-scale glacier mass change models, reduce uncertainties in global glacier projections, and focus on model improvements.
- Marine Ice Sheet-Ocean Model Intercomparison Project (MISOMIP): on coupled ice-ocean experiments
- BEPSII (Biogeochemical Exchange Processes at Sea Ice Interfaces) will focus on activities around model intercomparisons, an Ecosystem Services synthesis paper and a Field School (Cambridge Bay, Canada, Spring 2021)
- ISMASS will continue to explore improvements in understanding and quantification of past, present and future ice sheet and sea-level change.
- The Northern Ocean Region Panel will produce a review paper on Arctic Freshwater Storage and Fluxes and a paper on sea-ice ocean metrics for lower-latitude-Arctic interactions for CMIP diagnostics.



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Engagement with the Sustained Arctic Observing Network (SAON)

WMO in particular in the framework of the Global Cryosphere Watch of WMO, contributed to:

- publication of “Value tree for physical atmosphere and ocean observations in the Arctic”, 2019, under the Chairmanship of Finland;
- collaborative framework of the SAON Arctic Data Committee and the WMO Information System; WMO hosted the Polar Data Forum in November 2018.
- organization of the 2020 Arctic Observing Summit;
- the strategy “Roadmap for Arctic Observing and Data Systems” (ROADS).

Scientific contribution.

The Year of Polar Prediction (YOPP) is a major international activity that has been initiated by WMO's World Weather Research Programme (WWRP) as a key component of the Polar Prediction Project (PPP). YOPP is an internationally coordinated period of intensive observing, modelling, prediction, verification, user-engagement and education activities which involves various stakeholders.

Since the YOPP Core Phase (mid-2017 to mid-2019), scientists and operational forecasting centers from different countries continue to work together to significantly advance our environmental prediction capabilities for the polar regions and beyond. By observing and modelling of the Arctic and Antarctic weather and climate systems, this international effort will lead to better forecasts of weather and sea-ice conditions to improve future environmental safety at both poles. More reliable forecasts in polar regions are also expected to result in better weather prediction at lower latitudes where most people live.

As a response to rapid Arctic climate change and related transformation of societal and economic activities, YOPP contributes to the knowledge base needed to manage the opportunities and risks that come with Arctic environmental transitions.

The WMO/IOC-UNESCO/ISC World Climate Research Programme (WCRP; <https://www.wcrp-climate.org>) carries out a range of climate research in the polar regions, particularly via its Climate and Cryosphere Core Project (CliC; <http://www.climate-cryosphere.org>). WCRP also has a number of science activities covering Ice Sheet Mass balance and Sea Level (ISMAS), Arctic Sea Ice, Permafrost, Arctic Ocean science etc. as well as coordinating the Model Intercomparison Projects (MIPs). To give a few science highlights:

- High profile review paper, Hanna, E et al, (2020) Mass balance of the ice sheets and glaciers—progress since AR5 and challenges. Earth-Science Reviews
- Polar CORDEX (Coordinated Regional Downscaling Experiment) has focussed on investigating 1) Surface mass balance of Greenland & Antarctic ice sheets, 2) Coupled modeling, challenges & benefits, 3) Model evaluation, 4) Challenges of high resolution downscaling



- Significant GlacierMIP contribution to IPCC SROCC: intercomparisons of global-scale glacier projections from six modeling groups
- Ice Sheet Model Intercomparison Project (ISMIP6) special issue in The Cryosphere: 16 papers looking at improvements in ice sheet modeling, ice-climate interactions, or external forcings, as well as studies expounding on the ISMIP6 experimental protocol.
- Contribution to EU environment agency report on Arctic observation systems and input to EU Kepler project (Part of Copernicus - roadmap for delivering improved European capacity for monitoring and forecasting the Polar Regions)



Cover sheet

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

IASC has been an accredited observer of the Arctic Council from its very beginning and is supporting the work of the Arctic Council, its Working Groups (WGs) and Permanent Participants (PPs) by providing scientific expertise from all its members, including the non-Arctic countries. IASC has participated in all SAO and Ministerial meetings, mostly through its Executive Secretary as well as national IASC Council members.

Sustaining Arctic Observing Network (SAON) is an ongoing joint activity. SAON was initiated by IASC and the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) in 2007 and is now managed by a SAON Board, with AMAP appointing the Chair and IASC appointing the Vice-Chair. Secretariat support is provided by AMAP and IASC. The biennial Arctic Observing Summit (AOS) is held in conjunction with the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) and through SAON both IASC and the Arctic Council are contributing to the program. The most recent AOS was held in March-April 2020, and its outcomes will be delivered to the Arctic Science Ministerial.

IASC has closely cooperated with AMAP for many years. Most recently, IASC has agreed to help AMAP conduct its review process in an even more independent manner, in particular by identifying and recommending scientists to review its assessment reports. This is in addition to also being a resource for nominating experts to the groups developing the reports. IASC also continues to send representatives to AMAP meetings and receives reports from AMAP at its meetings. IASC aims to help AMAP, and all Arctic Council activities, achieve authoritative scientific input and review.

Cooperating with CAFF has grown much stronger since the IASC Secretariat moved to Akureyri almost four years ago. IASC continues to send representatives to CAFF meetings and working group meetings. In addition to the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP), to which several IASC scientists are contributing, the IASC Executive Secretary served on the Steering Committee for the Arctic Biodiversity Congress (October 2018), where he also co-chaired a session (with the AMAP Executive Secretary) on "Impact of reduced ice cover in the Arctic marine environment" and served as a rapporteur for multiple other session. When the IASC Executive Committee meets in Akureyri, the CAFF Executive Secretary is also invited to contribute to their meeting and discuss how IASC can better cooperate with CAFF and feed into CAFF's work.

In 2018 and 2020, IASC and CAFF also co-sponsored a joint Fellowship Program (10,000 Euro/year). Two fellows were selected for each cohort, each identified a joint area of interest and expertise, participated in and contribute to CAFF's work, and will produce some culminating output. The inaugural Fellows focused on the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI), CBMP's Terrestrial Working Group, and CBMP's Coastal Working Group. Fellows participate in the CAFF Board Meeting, working group meetings, and a large international conference such as Arctic Science Summit Week and/or the Arctic Biodiversity Congress as part of their fellowship.



IASC cooperation with PAME has also grown since the co-location of our Secretariats in Akureyri, and the more recent co-appointment of an IASC Vice-President as the PAME Chair. Like CAFF, when the IASC Executive Committee meets in Akureyri, the PAME Executive Secretary is invited to contribute to their meeting and discuss how IASC can better cooperate with PAME and feed into PAME's work. In addition, IASC nominated three experts to participate in PAME's desktop study on marine litter and plastic pollution; IASC sent representatives to multiple PAME meetings over the past two years; and IASC nominated four experts to the PAME reference group on Marine Protected Area Connectivity.

The Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) was initiated by IASC in 1999 to provide opportunities for coordination, cooperation and collaboration between the various scientific organizations involved in Arctic research and to economize on travel and time. Since 2013 the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS) has been involved in the planning of the ASSW and IASC provides travel support up to 15,000 EUR or more per year to enable the participation of PP representatives in ASSW, in particular as session conveners and presenters. The International Scientific Committee of ASSW2020 features two PP representatives – one as a member of the committee and one as a co-chair.

IASC is also well connected to SDWG and was represented at recent meetings through early career Fellows as well as senior experts. There is significant overlap in participation and interests between IASC's Social & Human Working Group and the SDWG, in particular under Iceland's leadership of the Gender in the Arctic Project; a complementary IASC SHWG-supported project is focusing on gender in the Arctic as well as gender in Arctic science. IASC also nominated experts to the SDWG reference group on Blue Bioeconomy.

Links with ACAP and EPPR have been maintained by IASC representation at recent ACAP meetings (in 2018) and EPPR meetings in 2019 (Norway and Iceland). IASC hopes to continue this representation at meetings in 2020, depending on travel restrictions.

IASC also participated in the meetings of multiple other groups. In particular, IASC Vice-President Henry Burgess has participated in the Arctic Shipping Best Practices Information Forum meetings.

Finally, IASC successfully convened an online meeting under the theme "Science for a Sustainable Arctic." While initially meant to be back-to-back with Arctic Council meetings in Akureyri, this online forum still enabled us to feature strong dialog between Arctic scientists and Arctic policy and diplomatic representatives from the Arctic Council family. Thanks to online platforms, this provided an excellent opportunity for a dialogue between scientists and policymakers to discuss how research informs policy and vice versa, responding to a rapidly changing Arctic. IASC hopes to be able to continue to support the Arctic Council's capacity for remote attendance and participation.



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.

Over its history, IASC has evolved into the leading international science organization of the North and its membership today includes national science organizations from 23 countries involved in Arctic research, including 15 non-Arctic countries. IASC is working to further expand its membership, as well. IASC is in the position to provide scientific advice on all aspects of Arctic research and during the last years Arctic Council WGs were making use of IASC's broad expertise to ensure the scientific quality of their reports and assessments. IASC hopes to continue in this role in the future.

IASC maintains very good relationships with those Arctic Council WGs addressing scientific questions, in particular AMAP, and CAFF and SDWG (and to some extent EPPR and ACAP). Several members of the IASC family are also involved in activities of these Arctic Council WGs in their national capacity, as experts from either Arctic Council member countries or Observer countries. IASC will continue the cooperation with the Arctic Council WGs and contribute to upcoming activities and assessments. Future engagement from IASC is also expected to align with the forthcoming Strategic Plan of the Arctic Council.

Supporting the work of the Arctic Council PPs, in particular with respect to Indigenous knowledge, is of high priority for IASC. IASC convened an Action Group on Indigenous Involvement, which featured engagement of multiple PP representatives as well as a member of the IPS, and is now working to implement the group's recommendations. One step in this will be to engage directly with the PPs and the IPS. IASC will continue to provide travel support for Indigenous participants to attend the ASSW 2021 in Lisbon (Portugal), ASSW 2022 in Tromsø (Norway – where we hope to have particular interest and participation of members from the ACS, as well), ASSW2023 (Austria), and future ASSWs.

SAON is an important joint activity of IASC and the Arctic Council. IASC will strengthen SAON, along with its new Strategy, Implementation Plan, and the developing ROADS process to identify shared Arctic variables based upon societal benefits. Discussions are moving forward regarding expanded and sustained funding of SAON. IASC will also continue to host the AOS at the ASSW every second year, the 6th Arctic Observing Summit will be held in Tromsø, Norway in 2022.

Based in Iceland, IASC is also excited to partner on and help support Arctic Council activities and initiatives during the rest of the Icelandic chairmanship, many of which have scientific interest. In addition, the International Science Initiative in the Russian Arctic (ISIRA) is a Russian and IASC cooperative initiative to assist Arctic science and sustainable development in the Russian Arctic; this group's activity may be of particular interest during the Russian chairmanship.



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.

IASC's Strategic Plan for 2018-2023 is built on the scientific priorities of the ICARP-III (i.e., 3rd International Conference on Arctic Research Planning - The Role of the Arctic in the Global System; Observing and Predicting Future Climate Dynamics and Ecosystem Responses; and Understanding the Vulnerability and Resilience of Arctic Environments and Societies and Supporting Sustainable Development; all underpinned by capacity building in Arctic research), IASC will:

- Facilitate Arctic Research Cooperation by
 - ...stimulating and promoting cutting-edge interdisciplinary research
 - ...supporting sustained and coordinated observations
 - ...facilitating data and information management and sharing
- Promoting Arctic Science Engagement by
 - ...building Arctic research capacity
 - ...supporting participation by Indigenous and local residents
 - ...nurturing and expanding IASC partnerships
- Ensure Knowledge Exchange by
 - ...encouraging high-quality scientific output
 - ...transferring knowledge to policy and decision makers
 - ...increasing Arctic science education, outreach, and communication

Recognizing that most of these scientific and organizational priorities are also of great importance to the Arctic Council, IASC will continue to engage WGs and PPs in the implementation of its Strategic Plan.

Adjacent to the work of the Arctic Council, and representing countries engaged in Arctic research, IASC will support the work of implementing the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation. More information at <https://iasc.info/ASA>. Likewise, IASC supports the initiation and development of a group of international Arctic science funders. Arctic research is international and non-Arctic countries are making invaluable contributions both in terms of scientific expertise and research infrastructure.

Finally, IASC would like to highlight that it will be releasing a 2020 State of Arctic Science Report in June 2020. IASC aims for this report to be of interest to all those stakeholders in Arctic research, in particular including the Arctic Council family. Follow-on reports may be developed in future years, depending on the feedback that IASC receives.



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

Date of submission:

29 May 2020

Observer's website, if appropriate:

<http://www.ices.dk/Pages/default.aspx>

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

ICES is an intergovernmental organization whose main objective is to increase the scientific knowledge of the marine environment and its living resources and to use this knowledge to provide unbiased, non-political advice. ICES supports its [Member Countries](#) and international governmental institutions like the EU Commission, NEAFC, NASCO, NAFO, NAMMCO, OSPAR and HELCOM by providing scientific data, knowledge, and advice.

Recognizing the important global contribution of ICES to the UN ocean agenda, ICES was in 2018 awarded observer status in UN General Assembly.

ICES has prioritized Arctic research to help improve understanding of ecological processes and human impact. A number of ICES expert groups focus on subarctic fish stocks in the Barents Sea, Iceland and East Greenland, as well as widely distributed and straddling stocks.

ICES has a network of Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) Groups, providing opportunity to share methods and guidance between ecoregions.

Of specific Arctic relevance are four IEA groups:

- Working Group on the Integrated Assessments of the Norwegian Sea ([WGINOR](#))
- Working Group on the Integrated Assessments of the Barents Sea ([WGIBAR](#))

Both of these groups provide knowledge about the state of ecosystems, overviews of available data, monitoring strategies, and adaptive management.

- the Working Group on Integrated Ecosystem Assessment for the Central Arctic Ocean ([WGICA](#); joint group with the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) and the Arctic Council Working Group Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)) works on IEA for the Central Arctic Ocean, with a specific focus on a description of the current status of this ecosystem. A joint peer reviewed report based on the work of WGICA will be published, planned 2020.
- the Working Group on Integrated Ecosystem Assessment of the Greenland Sea, working towards providing an ecosystem overview for the region in 2020, and also identifying trends, knowledge gaps, and research priorities.
- a joint ICES/PICES Working Group on Integrated Ecosystem Assessment of the Northern Bering Sea and the Chukchi Sea is under preparation.

In early planning stages is the development of ecosystem overviews in West Greenland waters, in collaboration with NAFO. In addition, following the great amount of scientific evidence presented at the first scientific researcher's conference in Arkhangelsk, under the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, it has been suggested that the



Russian Federation considers developing ecosystem overviews for Russian waters adjacent to the Central Arctic Ocean. This would deliver an almost complete overview of the adjacent sea areas to the Central Arctic Ocean from the North Atlantic gateway. This approach also offers a potential template for further development of overviews of adjacent sea areas linked to the North Pacific gateway.

A joint ICES and PAME workshop Ecosystem Approach guidelines and Integrated Ecosystem Assessment in the Arctic dealt with the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in IEAs in the changing Arctic region. This is crucial not only to avoid risks to human life and to secure resources important for indigenous peoples and their cultures, but also to support the scientific basis for management in rapidly changing Arctic ecosystems. More effort is needed to provide opportunities for meaningful participation of Arctic communities, including Arctic indigenous people, and ensure indigenous knowledge is included to the overviews.

ICES IEA Groups have compiled Ecosystem overviews for the [Barents Sea](#), [Icelandic waters](#), and [Norwegian Sea](#), providing a description of the ecosystems, identifying the main human pressures, and explaining how these affect key ecosystem components. Ecosystem Overviews are under preparation for the Greenland Sea and the Central Arctic Ocean, aimed for release during 2020.

ICES serves as the AMAP (marine) Thematic Data Centre in relation to data collected in the Arctic area for its thematic assessments – and in support of this an agreement has been concluded to ensure the inclusion of time-series data from Greenlandic monitoring to the ICES data portal and to keep this updated, for use in the AMAP assessments. In 2020 an agreement was concluded for ICES to deliver a contaminants assessment tool for use by AMAP.

For more than a decade ICES has produced an annual report of the North Atlantic and Nordic seas describing the state and trends in ocean climate. The report is available as an operational data tool; <https://ocean.ices.dk/iroc/>

ICES has been participating in the *Meetings of Scientific Experts on Fish Stocks in the Central Arctic Ocean (FiSCAO)*, supporting the December 2017 concluded Agreement to prevent unregulated high seas fisheries in the central Arctic Ocean (CAO Agreement). [A joint ICES/PICES document](#) presents a description of the potential contribution by ICES and PICES specifically to the CAO Agreement, as well as generally in the Arctic area.

Of the more than 160 expert groups and workshops that address many diverse marine ecosystem issues, more than one fifth of ICES groups address issues that overlap with Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ). In PICES, 26 out of 28 expert groups address issues that overlap with ABNJ. We draw upon our network of scientists to provide advice on biodiversity and sustainable exploitation in ABNJ to both the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and the OSPAR Commission.

ICES follows, and has been actively contributing to the planning phase of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Including the Arctic Regional Workshops, January 2020, and proposed Workshop third Quarter 2020.



Examples of events, scientific symposia, and themes sessions with Arctic focus

- 2017 ICES Scientific advice on distributional changes in fish stocks linked to environmental conditions (mostly through sea temperature) and fishing
- Joint ICES/PICES working group on climate change and biologically driven ocean carbon sequestration
- 2017 Symposium: Ecosystem Studies of Subarctic and Arctic Seas Program International Open Science Meeting
- 2017 Workshop on global ecological and economic connections in Arctic and sub-Arctic crab fisheries
- 2017 Joint ICES/PICES strategic initiative on climate change impacts on marine ecosystem, covering among other issues vulnerability assessments on fish and shellfish and on the human communities depending on them
- 2018 joint ICES/PICES Workshop on Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental scenarios to be used in climate projection
- [2018 symposium: Fourth International ICES/PICES/IOC/FAO Symposium](#), The effects of climate change on the world's oceans, Washington D.C., USA – addressing both consequences and impacts of climate change in the world oceans, gaps and insufficiencies in the evidence-base as the basis for proposals for priorities for future research, as well as to derive appropriate climate-ready policies that can help society adapt and protect the marine environment and living resources in the future
- ICES Annual Science Conference, 24-27 September 2018, Theme Session: The Nordic seas and the Arctic – climatic variability and its impact on marine ecosystems, fisheries and policymaking
- Second joint Arctic Council/PAME Ecosystem Approach Expert group, ICES and PICES
- International conference on implementation of EA in the Arctic, 25–27 June 2019, Bergen, Norway
- Joint AMAP/ICES/PICES International Symposium on Plastics in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic Region, Reykjavik, Iceland, 28-30 September 2020



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH)

Date of submission:

July 11, 2020

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www.iuch.net

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

The International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH) is an international non-governmental organization, formally established in 1981, with members, adhering bodies and affiliates throughout the circumpolar regions. The IUCH is a multilateral scientific union, which strives to contribute to the growing body of scientific medical and public health research data for the circumpolar regions and globally.

The health and wellness of northern peoples are the focus of the IUCH.

The IUCH is the main organization of its kind dedicated to health in the Arctic and Antarctic and brings together several health organizations from the entire circumpolar region.

The objectives of the IUCH are to:

1. Promote international cooperation in circumpolar health.
2. Encourage and support research and exchange of scientific information in the circumpolar health sciences.
3. Promote education and public awareness of circumpolar health.
4. Provide a means of communication with other scientific organizations.
5. Promote and encourage the participation of indigenous peoples in circumpolar health affairs.

The five adhering bodies include the scientific societies for circumpolar health in the USA, Canada, Denmark/Greenland, the Nordic countries, and the Russian Federation.

In the period since the last report and prior to that, the IUCH has performed many functions that are relevant to the Arctic Council, Arctic Council member states, and the permanent participants. As the lead organization within circumpolar health, the IUCH works together with the SDWG, the AMAP and the Arctic Human Health Expert Group (AHHEG), a subsidiary of the SDWG, and their members. We have also worked closely with many of the other circumpolar organizations, mainly the International Network of Circumpolar Health Researchers (INCHR), the International Association of Circumpolar Health Publishers (IACHP) and the UArctic Thematic Network of Health and Well-being in the Arctic. A non-legally, non-binding Memory of Understanding (MoU) has been made between the IUCH and the University of the Arctic (UArctic) under the Arctic Council. One of the collaborative areas is teaching activities, such as PhD courses in relation to the ICCH congresses.

Like most other health professionals and health organizations throughout the world, the IUCH and its members have worked with the COVID-19 epidemic since January 2020. There has been much concern over the possible course of the epidemic in Arctic areas, as such areas were, historically, very severely hit during past epidemics, including measles epidemics and the Spanish Flu in 1917-



18. Thus, IUCH members have been heavily involved in various work aspects of the COVID-19 outbreak. The IUCH was worked with the AC secretariat on COVID-19, as Anders Koch, past president of the IUCH, on behalf of the IUCH board and in collaboration with AMAP and AHHEG members, contributed to the recent COVID-19 report to the AC SAOs with a section on the epidemiology of COVID-19 in the Arctic.

A main task for the IUCH is to facilitate sharing of knowledge of circumpolar health and well-being through organizing the tri-annual International Congresses on Circumpolar Health (ICCH). These congresses are the main venue for such information sharing in the circumpolar world and attracts hundreds of researchers, health professionals and indigenous representatives from Canada, Greenland, Denmark, USA, Russia, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Finland and other countries interested in circumpolar health. These persons come together to share health related research findings and program successes that will improve the quality of life for those living in circumpolar regions.

In recent years the 13th ICCH was held in 2006 in Novosibirsk, Russian Federation; the 14th ICCH in 2009 in Yellowknife, NWT, Canada; the 15th in 2012 in Fairbanks, Alaska, USA; the 16th in 2015 in Oulu, Finland; and the most recent in August 2018 in Copenhagen, Denmark [www.icch2018.com], with approximately 400 participants from all circumpolar and related areas and countries. A wide range of health issues relevant to circumpolar populations were presented and discussed through keynote lectures, oral and poster sessions, in addition to a session of AHHEG and SDWG activities in the field of health and wellbeing.

The next ICCH conference, ICCH 18, is planned to be held in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, in August 2021.

Of particular relevance to the Arctic Council, the ICCH congresses in 2006, 2009 and 2012 were devoted to presentation, discussion and presentation of IPY projects and their results, respectively.

A very important element supported by the IUCH is the International Circumpolar Surveillance (ICS) collaboration, an international network with members from all Arctic countries whose purpose is to carry out circumpolar surveillance and research within infectious diseases. A similarly important element within the IUCH is the presence of a number of scientific working groups within the IUCH. Members of the IUCH are encouraged to sign up and participate in working groups. Examples of a few active IUCH working groups are: 1) The Infectious Disease Working Group with a membership of >100 individuals comprised of many topic-specific subgroups that meet regularly and are engaged in multi-center studies across the Arctic, 2) The Indigenous People's Working Group, 3) The Maternal and Child Health Working Group, 4) The Food Security Working Group, 5) The Birth Defects and Birth Outcomes Working Group, and 6) The Suicide Prevention Working Group. During the 17th ICCH conference a new Working group on Health and the Built Environment in addition to a Network on Mother and Child were formed.

The Working Groups share the general goals and objectives of the IUCH. By focusing on specific fields of interest within circumpolar health, the Working Groups promote and encourage closer collaboration between individuals and institutions involved in improving the health of circumpolar populations. Thus, the work of the working groups is relevant to the Arctic Council.

Both the ICS collaboration and the scientific working groups are Arctic Council endorsed projects that are being reported to the Council through the AHHEG.



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.

The IUCH intends to continue its activities as described above in relation to the Arctic Council, mainly within collaboration, sharing and dissemination of health information through the ICCH congresses and the Working Groups.

It must be anticipated that the world-wide COVID-19 epidemic will still require much work and attention from health professionals and health organizations in the period to come. The IUCH will strengthen collaboration with the AC and organizations/groups under the AC with the overall aim to reduce the spread and impact of the epidemic in Arctic areas.

The IUCH will continue to work with the University of the Arctic (UArctic) under the Arctic Council to possibly develop teaching activities under the collaboration.

The IUCH supports the Arctic Council-endorsed project, "Improving Health through Safe and Affordable Access to Household Running Water and Sewer (WASH)" that is co-sponsored by the US and Greenland.

The IUCH will contribute to the work of the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group (EPPR). Members of IUCH have expertise in the fields of telehealth and rural and remote medicine. Telehealth and rural/remote medicine themes are included in the triennial ICCH conferences. We have members who are experts in the field of contaminants in the Arctic who can contribute to the Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP) and the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP).

Finally, the IUCH will continue to support the Arctic Council by having its members serve the Arctic Council as SDWG/AHHEG and AMAP/HHAG representatives. Many of the AHHEG country and permanent participant representatives are IUCH members. Essentially, members of the entire group are IUCH members. This provides important cross-linkages between the larger community of Arctic health providers and researchers and the Arctic Council. Thereby the Arctic Council is served by making sure that recognized regional health leaders are engaged in advising AC activities.



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.

The IUCH is interested in remaining an observer to the Arctic Council. The IUCH is the only organization of its kind with elected representatives from across the Arctic and because of this, we work from a “bottom up” perspective. Members of the adhering bodies participate in Work Groups of their choosing (created by them) on issues important to them in the circumpolar world. Through IUCH's observer status, important findings from these Working Groups can then be brought to the attention of the SDWG, the Senior Arctic Officials and the Arctic Council (AC). Observer status on the AC is a very important mechanism for moving information from the grassroots IUCH working groups to higher levels in order to convert research into action and policy. We realize that institutions such as the AHHEG report to the SDWG; however, the mandate of IUCH is broader than that of the AHHEG, and we feel that our two organizations complement each other. We at the IUCH work with the AHHEG at every opportunity to promote improved health throughout the Arctic.

We have and will continue to contribute expertise to the Arctic Council through the findings of our working groups. Groundbreaking work of the IUCH Infectious Disease Working Group has resulted in circumpolar surveillance of infectious disease across all the Arctic countries (except Russia), introduction of Hepatitis B vaccine in Greenland, the formation of a Tuberculosis Surveillance Network across the Arctic that has created reports and papers on circumpolar tuberculosis epidemiology and surveillance systems, and a set of recommendations for treatment of *Helicobacter pylori* infection in circumpolar populations.

The IUCH works with all of the permanent participants of the AC (the Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), Sami Council and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)) in preparation for sessions at the International Congress on Circumpolar Health which occurs every 3 years. The permanent participants are well represented in scientific sessions and also sessions at the Congress specific to Indigenous peoples. In addition, one of the IUCH Working Groups is the Indigenous People's Working Group which works with and closely interacts with permanent participants on the AC.



Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

International organization of northern regions “The Northern Forum”

Date of submission:

04.09.2020

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677000 Russia

Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

The Northern Forum is an international organization for regional subnational governments in the circumpolar North and a platform for collaboration, sharing experiences and best practices across the North in improving the quality of life and promote sustainable development of northern regions. Representatives of regional governments need to be involved in shaping the international agenda and Arctic policies. Therefore, the Northern Forum has to do a lot of work to develop an effective mechanism for regional government's involvement in international Arctic cooperation and strengthening the role of regions in the Arctic Council.

During 2019-2020 the Northern Forum was represented at following Arctic Council's events:

- The Northern Forum participated in the SDWG meeting under Finland's chairmanship in Kemi in February 2019. 3-day Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) Meeting was held Monday-Wednesday, 04-06 February 2018 in Kemi, Finland. The Northern Forum was represented by Maiju Jolma-Taylor - Coordinator in the International Project collaboration, Regional Council of Lapland, Finland.
- The 2nd Northern Forum Governors' Meeting "Sustainable Development of Northern Regions" was held within the framework of the 5th International Arctic Forum "Arctic: Territory of Dialogue", bringing together regional governments in the circumpolar North to discuss sustainable development of the northern regions and the new Northern Forum strategy. The new Strategy dedicated to improvement of all aspects of the Northern Forum activities including strengthening collaboration with the main international organizations of the Arctic and the Arctic Council is high-priority in this direction.
- The Northern Forum at the 11th Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in May 2019, Rovaniemi, Finland. The Northern Forum was represented by the Acting executive director of the Northern Forum Secretariat Olga Timofeeva-Tereshkina and winner of Future Diplomat (a competition for school students from the Sakha Republic) Sabina Davetova.
- The Northern Forum participated in the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group online meeting in June 2020. Acting Executive Director of the Northern Forum Daryana Maximova participated in the plenary session of SDWG virtual meeting, held on June 8-9 2020. The Northern Forum supports one of presented projects – "Digitalization of the Linguistic and Cultural Heritage of the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic" which was presented on the SDWG meeting by Russian Federation.
- Also during these period the Northern Forum collaborated with the Russian Ministry of the Far East Development and the Arctic and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs which are involved on the Arctic Council's work regarding participation of the Northern Forum in activities under Russian Chairmanship in the Arctic Council.



- The Northern Forum collaborates and has cooperation agreements with the observers of the Arctic Council: The University of the Arctic, International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA), Association of World Reindeer Herders.
- Online International Summer School in cooperation with the North-Eastern Federal University was organized late July – August. Representatives of several Arctic states as well as Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat participated on this event.
- The Northern Forum organized consultations with members of SDWG and the Permanent Participants regarding opening of new format International Arctic School in Yakutsk, Sakha Republic (Yakutia). This project was presented in earlier years at the SAO meeting and, after that, on SDWG meeting. New building for the International Arctic School open its doors on September 1, 2020 and 185 children of 7, 8, 10 classes started their study.
- The I Northern Sustainable Development Forum was held in Yakutsk, Sakha Republic (Yakutia) in September 24-28, 2019. More than 40 side events were organized and participants from all Arctic states as well as Observer countries like China, Japan, Republic of Korea, France, Germany attended the Forum. This new international platform is intended to bring together Arctic and Asian regions, countries. Arctic Council's Observers: University of the Arctic, International Arctic Science Committee granted the I NSDF.
- The II Northern Sustainable Development Forum will be held on September 27-30, 2020. Due to COVID-19 pandemic all events will organized online. More than 50 events will be organized this year. Discussion around coming Russian Chairmanship in the Arctic Council will also take place. The main topics of this year Forum are "Transport Infrastructure of the Arctic and the North", "Human in the Arctic", "Management of the Arctic Territories", "Global Partnership of the Arctic and Asian States". Youth Northern Forum will also organize several events.

Participation of the Arctic Council's representatives is very welcomed. Detailed information is available on website: www.nsdf.ru

- Northern Sustainable Development Forum is becoming excellent platform to discuss all aspects of regional cooperation and regional involvement into global Arctic cooperation. The Northern Forum is ready to host any event of the Arctic Council or its members, Permanent Participants, Observers within the framework of the NSDF.



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.

The Northern Forum collaborates with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Arctic Council's issues. Mr. Nikolay Korchunov, the Ambassador at Large for the Arctic Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Russia and the Senior Arctic Official of the Russian Federation to the Arctic Council supports the Northern Forum's work and initiatives on collaboration with the members of the international organization. Mr. Korchunov supported idea to involve Northern Forum's secretariat to the future work of the Arctic Council Hosting Committee during the period 2021-2023 the Russian Chairmanship in the Arctic Council. Also the Northern Forum collaborates with the Russian Ministry of the Far East Development and the Arctic which is involved on the Arctic Council's work.

The Northern Forum suggested to organize SDWG meeting within the III Northern Sustainable Development Forum in Yakutsk in 2021, and ready to provide all necessary assistance in organizing Arctic Council's meetings and implementation projects on the territory of the Northern Forum member regions.

The Northern Forum plans to create the Arctic Business Directory initiated by the Arctic Portal – NF Business Partner and also the Northern Forum Chambers of Commerce' Network to organize regional contribution into the Arctic Economic Council's activities.

The Northern Forum will continue close work with all working groups, Permanent Participants to initiate new projects to strengthen regional involvement in global Arctic cooperation.

The Northern Forum General Assembly and the Northern Governors Summit are planned in 2021. Representatives of the Arctic States, Permanent Participants will be also invited.

The Northern Forum will be represented in all Arctic Council's main events.

To develop the Northern Forum's policy for participation in the Arctic Council:

- To create a regular data collection mechanism on the NF member regions' proposals and information on topical issues, which are discussed in the Arctic Council. Thus we will be able to create a communication channel and gradually synchronize our activities with the activities of the Arctic Council, as well as to show the participants of the Arctic Council that we can contribute to the debate on Sustainable Development of the High North.
- To strengthen the Northern Forum member regions' involvement in the Arctic Council projects
- To create an effective mechanism of regional government participation in the international Arctic cooperation and strengthening the regions' role in the Arctic Council.
- Urge the Northern Forum member regions to take part, if possible, in the projects of the Arctic Council.
- To continue to highlight the Arctic Council's activities among the NF member regions and business partners.



Cover sheet

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Oceana

Date of submission:

31 May 2020

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

Over the previous two years, and since the time of our most recent Observer report, Oceana scientists and policy leaders have had the opportunity to participate in each meeting of the Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials as well as the 11th Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council held in Rovaniemi, Finland. What is more, as the world's largest conservation group solely focused on protecting oceans, Oceana has a shared interest in the work of the Arctic Council Protecting the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) working group.

Since being welcomed as an Arctic Council Observer in 2017, Oceana scientists have consistently contributed to PAME meetings and participated in PAME expert groups such as the **Ecosystem Approach Expert Group** and **Marine Litter Expert Group**. Whether at the PAME working group or meetings of the Senior Arctic Officials, Oceana has greatly appreciated the opportunity to contribute and exchange ideas with representatives from Arctic nations and Arctic peoples around common goals of protecting the Arctic's unique ocean ecosystem and biodiversity for the benefit of Arctic peoples, local communities and the natural world.

Oceana's global reach, combined with focused local and national campaigns in more than a dozen nations, uniquely positions us to not only engage in Arctic Council discussions, but to integrate the ideas and practices developed at the Arctic Council and PAME working group within our campaigns. We are able to do this within the individual countries where we work, including multiple Arctic nations where we campaign for marine protections and strong science-based policies that support healthy oceans and coastal communities.

Oceana recently launched a campaign to end plastic pollution in our oceans. We are therefore extremely interested in the Icelandic Chairmanship's focus on the Arctic marine environment, particularly plastic pollution and the development of a Regional Action Plan to reduce marine litter, including microplastics. Plastic pollution has quickly become a leading threat to the health of our world's oceans. Plastic products and packaging, often designed to be used once and discarded, can last for thousands of years and are filling our oceans and beaches, threatening marine ecosystems, fisheries and ocean animals all over the world.

Oceana is now working around the world to reduce the production and use of single-use plastics, with efforts at the local, regional and national level ranging from support of strong plastic reduction policies to development of alternative plastic-free choices for consumers. In our role as Observers we have been pleased to combine our efforts with those underway at the Arctic Council.

Oceana marine scientists participate as members of the PAME Arctic Marine Litter Expert Group. In that role, we have been actively involved in the development of the Arctic Council's Regional Action Plan (RAP) on marine litter in the Arctic, contributing ideas and providing expert review of the plan as it develops, including at the recent Arctic Marine Litter Expert Group Workshop held in Oslo, Norway in February of 2020.



We look forward to the continued development of the RAP and ultimately working with partners on implementation of the plan. This presents an exciting opportunity for international collaboration and exchange of ideas as we all seek to tackle the incredible challenge of reducing the overwhelming flow of plastics and other harmful pollution into our world's oceans, including the Arctic Ocean.

While our primary focus this year is active participation in the PAME Arctic Marine Litter Expert Group, we remain engaged in a number of other subgroups within PAME as well. Just as our international ocean conservation campaigns cover a broad spectrum of issues facing the world's oceans, so do our contributions involve a wide array of issues under consideration by the Arctic Council.

For example, at the same February 2020 meeting in Oslo we continued our participation in discussions around an integrated ecosystem-based approach for the central Arctic Ocean, as well as discussions on how to implement Marine Protected Areas in the Arctic. This builds on our prior participation on the PAME Marine Protected Areas Expert Group, as outlined in our previous observer report.

The group's vision of a pan-Arctic network of Marine Protected Areas remains compelling for our own efforts at Oceana, as does the ongoing opportunity to bring our experience and expertise to bear, including our years of experience identifying and protecting Important Ecological Areas in the Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort seas.

Oceana scientists also engaged in discussions at a number of working groups at the PAME-1 and PAME-2 in 2019 in Malmo, Sweden and Reykjavik, Iceland respectively. Our years of experience focused on ecosystem based management, including developing data syntheses and mapping Arctic marine characteristics, continue to serve us well as observers and contributors to the Ecosystem Based Management working group, as again outlined further in our previous observer report and on our website here: <https://oceana.org/publications/reports/ecological-atlas-bering-chukchi-and-beaufort-seas>.

We also shared our vast experience working on Arctic offshore oil issues in the United States with the Resource Exploration and Development group within PAME, especially with regard to offshore oil development in Arctic Ocean waters. Considering the treacherous conditions and lack of infrastructure found through much of the Arctic, Oceana believes it imperative that no expansion of Arctic oil development in marine waters should be considered unless and until there is a clear sense of the risks, a realistic response plan, and adequate infrastructure in place to respond to any spill or other accident.

Oceana and our partners worked to implement that precautionary approach to Arctic Ocean waters, including the territorial waters of the United States and Canada. Oceana remains committed to ensuring that Arctic marine ecosystems are not irrevocably harmed by expanded development as sea ice recedes, and that any resource development occurs only with caution, care and with meaningful engagement of Arctic indigenous peoples and communities.

Going forward Oceana is excited to continue as an Observer organization and bring our unique perspective and expertise to the work of the Arctic Council, especially by continuing to engage at



the PAME working group as a member of the Arctic Marine Litter Expert Group and elsewhere as our common interests align. We are equally excited to concurrently bring the work and new ideas from the Arctic Council and its working groups back to the many nations in which Oceana campaigns around the world.



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.

As we are all keenly, and often painfully, aware, the sudden emergence of the COVID-19 virus and associated global pandemic has left much of the future in doubt. Like many institutions around the world, Oceana had to rapidly adjust to the current situation, including where and how we work. This is applicable both in terms of isolating our worldwide staff at home for the health and safety of our employees and to prevent the spread of infection, and in assessing how these dramatic changes might affect future collaborative efforts, research and policy change.

Oceana remains committed to our goals of protecting ocean ecosystems. Oceana is continuing our work to develop and implement science-based solutions and policies for the protection of marine ecosystems, sensitive habitats, and threatened species, as well as for the reduction of marine plastic pollution around the world. While the methods going forward may be different, and the current challenges unprecedented in our lifetimes, we are confident we can continue to work with stakeholders, local communities, indigenous peoples and all those who care for and about the oceans to ensure that we leave a healthy ocean legacy for future generations.

Our role as observers at the Arctic Council is a key part of that work going forward. It is Oceana's intent that whenever and however the Arctic Council and its working groups find ways to resume meetings and proceed that we will continue to engage and participate as Observers. This is especially true in our role on the Arctic Marine Litter Expert Group working to develop the Regional Action Plan on Arctic Marine Litter. As Oceana campaigns to reduce plastic production and waste around the world, we continue to discover new and innovative policy approaches, and look forward to bringing those new ideas to the expert group and the Arctic Council as a whole.

In addition, we envision continuing our now longstanding participation in other working groups focused on Ecosystem Based Management, Marine Protected Areas and Resource Exploration and Development.

Oceana has long valued Local and Traditional Knowledge as essential to any understanding of Arctic marine ecosystems, including the integration of LTK into the marine syntheses we developed in prior years covering the Bering Strait and Beaufort and Chukchi seas. Continuing our understanding of LTK and working with those who hold that knowledge remains essential to our campaigns to protect Arctic marine ecosystems, and we hope to engage more fully and directly with Arctic Council Permanent Participants in the coming years as part of our expanding role as observers.



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.

Our direct efforts as observers were well covered in the above sections. As the world's largest conservation group solely focused on protecting the world's oceans, Oceana remains well positioned to share the work and expertise of the Arctic Council around the world, in particular through our dedicated campaign offices in the Arctic nations of the United States, Canada and also within the European Union.

As the Arctic Council continues to develop a pan-Arctic vision for healthy marine ecosystems and responsible economic development, our role as observers allows us the opportunity to not only participate in shaping that vision, but also in sharing and reinforcing that vision within the individual nations where we work.

Whether it is helping develop a pan-Arctic vision for Marine Protected Areas, innovative ways to better understand Arctic marine ecosystems, new approaches to reduce plastics and other marine pollution, integrating ecosystem-based principles into Arctic management practices, or any of the other important projects of the Arctic Council and PAME working group, Oceana remains committed to share our own knowledge based on collective decades of experience working in individual Arctic nations, and bring new ideas and practices developed at the Arctic Council back to those same nations. We remain committed to and enthusiastic about continuing that work as observers in the coming years.



Cover sheet

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June 1, 2020 – 9 am AKST

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Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer for 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.

Climate change adaptation and resilience

Following a period of intensive, substantive, and in-kind contributions to AMAP's AACA and ARR, in the form of several WWF Arctic Programme staff co-leading whole chapters, contributing to chapters, and serving on the projects' steering committees, WWF did not directly engage with AMAP on the climate theme over the reporting period. However, in his capacity as Coordinating Lead Author for the Polar Regions Chapter of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC), WWF's Martin Sommerkorn initiated and carried out a series of interactions with AMAP secretariat and AMAP experts with the aim to inform the IPCC SROCC with the approaches, knowledge gained, and assessment results of AMAP's climate-related assessments, such as the SWIPA, AACA, ARR, and ongoing follow-up initiatives. The latest interaction in this regard was an invited presentation of the SROCC at the AMAP WG in fall 2019 to stimulate and inform WG discussions on future AMAP climate-related activities. All these substantial contributions to the work of the Arctic Council, and its global visibility, were given in-kind by WWF.

Stewardship of the Arctic marine environment

WWF is carrying out a project called ArcNet – An Arctic Ocean Network of Priority Areas for Conservation (formerly known as PAMPAN) with the overall goal of identifying and mapping an ecologically representative and well-connected pan-Arctic network of marine areas that require special management for the conservation and protection of biodiversity, ecological processes, and associated ecosystem services and cultural values. This project builds on the Arctic Council Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas (2015) and PAME's MPA-network toolbox (2015-2017), facilitating concrete next steps identified there that the Arctic Council WGs or Task Forces are not carrying forward at this time. WWF continues to share the project's proceedings, results, and outputs with the Arctic Council and its Subsidiary Bodies, particularly PAME and CAFF. The ArcNet project is also informed by, and informs, the ongoing work of PAME's MPA and EA Expert Groups, to both of which WWF contributed continuously throughout the reporting period. These substantive, in-kind contributions occur in the form of oral and written inputs to the EAs' meetings and documents, as well as serving on steering groups for, and participating and co-leading sessions in, the EA's meetings, workshops and conferences including: the EA-EG's workshop on Guidelines and Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (2018, Seattle, Washington, USA); the conference on Implementing Across Scales (2019, Bergen, Norway); the MPA-EG's workshops Indigenous and Local Involvement Workshop (2019, Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, Canada); and on Value and Valuation (planned for 2020).

The outcomes of the Arctic Council's 2019 Ministerial Meeting included a decision "to establish



a SAO based mechanism to coordinate marine issues in the Arctic Council.” In December 2019, WWF sent the Arctic Council the document, *Creating an effective SAO-based mechanism for coordinating work on marine issues in the Arctic Council*. The document calls on the Council to strengthen its’ effectiveness in addressing marine issues by promptly implementing an effective SAO-based mechanism and, to the maximum extent possible, implement all the recommendations of the TFAMC. WWF proposed substantive areas of focus for, and principles to guide the SAO-based mechanism.

At PAME, we co-lead a project on underwater noise pollution (see section three below), contribute research alternatives to heavy fuel oil, build awareness about wastewater discharges from ships (grey water) and contribute to the understanding of low impact shipping corridors. We also contributed to Polar Code harmonisation and linking Polar Code II to work of the IMO.

Conservation of Arctic biodiversity

WWF, together with Canada and OSPAR, co-led a work item in the PAME working group that produced the report, *Underwater noise in the Arctic: a State of Knowledge Review*. This report was finalised in May 2019. Building on this foundational work, WWF and Canada are developing and co-funding, with support from experts, global Arctic shipping underwater noise pollution intensity maps for PAME. These maps will be overlaid with culturally and ecologically significant areas.

WWF sits on the steering committee for the Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Arctic Mining project and co-leads the Inspiring Arctic Voices Through Youth project. WWF provided input to the CBMP marine meeting in Nuuk in 2019 and sits on the marine expert group for the CBMP.

WWF supported Norway’s, assessment of alternative ship fuels in the Arctic with a final report to PAME members in 2019.

WWF has actively participated in PAME’s Arctic Shipping Best Practices Information Forum since its inception in 2017. WWF is due to present research and recommendations on voyage planning at the forum later this year.

WWF financially contributes, uses and collaborates with the PAME secretariat on the Arctic Shipping Traffic Database.

WWF raised awareness at PAME about the need for a project on grey water discharges from ships in the Arctic through presentations from experts and submission of research materials. A formal decision on a PAME project about this issue is likely in the coming months.

WWF actively participates in PAME’s SEG (shipping experts’ group) throughout the year and at PAME in-person meetings.

WWF submitted a white paper on operationalizing low impact shipping corridors in 2018 to inform ongoing discussions and research by PAME states.



Sustainable Development

In November 2018, WWF presented its report *Getting it right in a new ocean* - the first study of its kind to outline how the Arctic's biodiverse ocean resources and economies can be developed to ensure long-term, economic and ecosystem health for the region and the planet. The report offers guidance to governments and business on how sustainability can be achieved at this pivotal moment of economic development in the Arctic. This is a direct contribution to addressing the priorities of the Icelandic chairmanship on Arctic ocean issues and blue bioeconomy.

Youth engagement

WWF supported youth-led organizations such as the Arctic Youth Network to intervene at the November 2019, SAO plenary, which in turn helped the Arctic Council move towards more effective youth engagement. This includes contributions to Arctic Council [social media content on Youth Engagement](#).

WWF provided support to CAFF and the SDWG to increase youth engagement, in the following ways:

- Support for the CAFF youth exchange program.
- Support for youth-led organizations such as the Arctic Youth Network to collaborate with CAFF and SDWG, including an intervention at the SDWG plenary meeting in September 2019.
- Support for CAFF youth-engagement events at venues like the Arctic Circle Assembly, and the September 2019 SDWG plenary side event: Strengths, well-being and engagement of youth in the Arctic.
- Support to the SDWG Social, economic and cultural expert group's Gender Equality Report on the structure and formation of youth positions within its' steering committee and a youth advisory board.

Arctic governance

In May 2019, WWF published the second Arctic Council Conservation Scorecard to shed light on the Council's ability to deliver good governance, greater environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic. The 2019 Scorecard showed that Arctic states are not fulfilling their roles as the prime stewards of the region. WWF hosted an informal side event for key Arctic Council stakeholders to discuss the results of the Scorecard in Rovaniemi, Finland, in May 2019.



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.

Climate change adaptation and resilience

WWF's Arctic Programme will continue to support the Arctic Council and contribute to the adaptation actions for a changing Arctic and Arctic resilience.

WWF has embarked on a project that aims to identify how information generated by the latest generation of climate models (CMIP6) can be used to inform planning and action on Arctic biodiversity, conservation, and marine and terrestrial ecosystem-based management. WWF will pursue knowledge exchanges, identify synergies, and where feasible, engage with AMAP and CAFF experts on their ongoing and cooperative project to forecast and assess climate impacts on Arctic ecosystems.

Stewardship of the Arctic marine environment

WWF will remain engaged and pursue partnerships with PAME and its EA and MPA expert groups to further engagement, refinement of knowledge and implementation of a pan-Arctic MPA network. In the coming years such interactions will be driven by our work on ArcNet (see above). Future opportunities for cooperation on ecological connectivity and the consideration of Indigenous knowledge to refine WWF's ArcNet will be based on the Arctic Council's MPA network framework (2015) and PAME's toolbox project (2015-ongoing).

WWF plans to remain as a co-lead for subsequent work items on underwater noise taken up by the Arctic Council in 2019-2021. This participation will depend on one of the Arctic states taking the lead to continue this work. Ideally, future work on underwater noise will be cross-cutting across multiple working groups and include substantial involvement by Permanent Participants.

WWF plans to participate and provide expertise for a robust SAO-based marine mechanism to coordinate Arctic marine issues. For example, help to consider the potential role of the Arctic Council in implementing the BBNJ Agreement in the Arctic and establishing an Arctic marine network of priority areas for conservation.

Conservation of Arctic biodiversity

WWF will continue to be a member of the Marine working group of CAFF and continue contributing and co-leading on underwater noise work (see above). WWF will engage in further implementing the project on mainstreaming biodiversity in mining, as per the definition of the next stages and deliverables by the steering committee under CAFF. We look forward to outputs from projects by the marine mammal expert group of the CBMP on marine mammal hotspots to see how they can be integrated into cross-cutting work such as shipping.

WWF plans to establish a project, with potential involvement of CAFF, about flyways of Arctic migratory birds. Every year, millions of birds move to the Arctic for nesting. In recent years, the number of Arctic bird species has declined at an alarming rate. The main goal of the project is to find out why that happens, which migration routes the birds take, and where the main rest and



wintering areas are located, to ensure that the right actions take place where they are needed most. In addition, several Arctic drained wetlands are suggested to be restored and a climate change scenario analyses will indicate what kind of mitigation actions can be taken to decrease and prevent negative future impacts on climate change on Arctic wetland.

Youth engagement

WWF supports further scoping of youth-engagement within the Arctic Council and its subsidiaries, including support for youth-led organizations to engage with the Arctic Council.

Sustainable development

WWF plans to contribute to the work of the Sustainable Development Working Group, both under the Icelandic chairmanship and with the Russian chairmanship. We are considering direct engagement in potential AC (SDWG) projects on sustainable finance and sustainable shipping, in cooperation with the upcoming Russian chairmanship. We are committed to the overall implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arctic and projects promoting increased use of renewable energy sources in Arctic communities.

End statement

WWF's Arctic Programme has been working in the Arctic for over 23 years, and as a long-serving observer will continue to offer support, expert advice and provide substantial input into the various working groups of the Arctic Council, including assisting with securing tools to implement the SAO-based mechanism with a focus on ecosystem-based management of the Arctic Ocean. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Arctic Council.



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.

WWF supports channeling resources from the post-COVID19 economic recovery into promoting sustainable development in the Arctic. We made an appeal to the Arctic Council members in April 2020 and will assess member state's recovery programmes and provide recommendations in line with the best available international practices. This approach relates to a long-term objective to promote sustainable economic development in the Arctic, through Arctic Council and other suitable initiatives. We also support a workstream to promote green jobs in the Arctic.

WWF supports transitioning away from the production of fossil fuels in the Arctic towards the use of renewable energy. WWF supports limiting the expansion of oil and gas exploration and production - given the environmental sensitivity, high risk of oil spills, avoidance of stranded assets/legacies and the contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions.

WWF will engage in global forums - particularly IMO structures - to promote sustainable shipping in the Arctic through a transition away from fossil fuel propulsion, the prevention of oil spills and accidents, and the reduction of ship pollution on biodiversity, including underwater noise. We will liaise and work together with the representatives of Arctic Indigenous Peoples in these international fora whenever possible.