

Instructions for submitting Observer reports

Introduction

This document provides the reporting template and instructions for Observers to report during the 2023 - 2025 **Norwegian Chairship** of the Arctic Council.

The deadline for submission is **1 December 2024**.

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 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 reports should be submitted electronically to the **Arctic Council Secretariat** via email: acs@arctic-council.org not later than **1 December 2024**. 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](#) (OAR) following the Chairship transition.

If an Observer fails to submit a report, 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 Observer State or Observer Organization:

Advisory Committee on the Protection of the Sea (ACOPS)

Date of submission of regular report:

01/11/2024

Observer's website:

www.acops.org.uk

Information for appropriate contact person

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Management

Job Title:

Trustee and Chair of the Board

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Observer 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 following description focuses largely on ACOPS contribution to the work of the Arctic Council in the preceding two years although, occasional references to ACOPS contribution will pre-date this period where relevant, The work of the Arctic Council was paused in March 2022 and recommenced following Norway taking over the Chairship in May 2023.

It is important first to highlight the role ACOPS is able to contribute to the Arctic Council. ACOPS is a knowledge (apolitical and non-campaigning) non-governmental organisation (NGO) that informs, advises and engages to achieve sustainable seas consistent with international law and sound science. ACOPS aspires to connect change makers, decision-takers and the public with scientific, legal and other specialists, as well as assisting those who wish to expand their professional development.

In our last report we explained that ACOPS had established a leadership team for the engagement of ACOPS with the Arctic Council. This team is now composed of ACOPS Trustee Dr Sian Prior, and ACOPS Chair Dr Youna Lyons. Together, they bring a solid expertise and experience in the development of marine policy from both a scientific and legal perspectives at the Arctic Council and in other international frameworks. They jointly frame and coordinate the work of ACOPS on Arctic matters with the support of a team of energetic volunteers from research and academia in marine and social sciences, and law of the sea.

As the Arctic Council, under the Norwegian Chairship has worked hard to reinstate Working Groups, Expert Groups and project, ACOPS has adjusted and refined where it has and will continue to provide input. ACOPS engagement in Arctic Council activities has focused primarily on the work of the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) Working Group along with some of its Expert Groups, and there has been increasing engagement in ACAP, AMAP, EPPR and the EGBCM.

Both before and since the resumption of work following the pause, ACOPS has engaged in the PAME Working Group, and in particular in the Shipping Expert Group. Participating in the regular Shipping Expert Group meetings before the pause and in all of the meetings organised since the resumption of work. Dr Prior plus a number of younger volunteers have attended meetings, contributed to the work of the Expert Group and to the Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum and the Raising awareness in the Arctic Council of the provisions of the 2012 Cape Town Agreement Correspondence Group.

ACOPS attended some of the recent EPPR meeting and is aiming to engage in the Marine Environmental Response Expert Group.



ACOPS recently participated in the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) and the Arctic Contaminants Action Programme (ACAP) meetings including a meeting of the Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Expert Group. ACOPS has expertise to offer with respect to addressing short-lived climate pollutants and is able to contribute to discussions and development of materials on short-lived climate pollutants and also to assist in the dissemination of outputs.

ACOPS has recently started participating in the meetings and discussions of the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane (EGBCM) and anticipates making an active contribution to the work.

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.

ACOPS future plans for engagement in the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Expert Groups and projects including:

- Continued engagement in the PAME Shipping Expert Group and in the 2012 Cape Town Agreement and Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum projects. ACOPS has also expressed interest in participating in the POLARIS project correspondence group once it is established and the Interpretation of the Polar Code project when appropriate (currently restricted to Arctic Council Member / Flag States). ACOPS also plans to provide some suggestions for new Arctic Shipping Status Reports.
- Potential involvement in PAME Marine Litter Expert Group and planning to contribute to the review of ALDFG report, consistent with parallel workstreams at the IMO and OSPAR where ACOPS also has consultative status and contributes to the work.
- ACOPS has identified the EPPR Marine Environmental Response Expert Group as the most relevant area of EPPR work for ACOPS' substantive contribution and hopes to have capacity in place to make an active contribution.
- ACOPS is also interested in contributing to the joint PAME-CAFF report on Marine Invasive Alien Species in Arctic Waters and plans to contact the project co-leads as well as in further work on the Central Arctic Ocean and the ecosystem approach, as new technical capacity has recently joined our network on these topics.
- ACOPS has expertise to offer with respect to ACAP and in particular addressing short-lived climate pollutants and the ACAP expert group. ACOPS is able to contribute to discussions and development of materials on short-lived climate pollutants and also to assist in the dissemination of outputs.
- ACOPS will aim to remain involved in the AMAP Working Group and to identify the most appropriate opportunities for contribution.
- ACOPS has recently started participating in the meetings and discussions of the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane and anticipates maintaining our involvement. ACOPS representatives have considerable expertise on black carbon emissions with Dr Stella Ebbesmeyer recently completing a PhD focused on black carbon emissions from shipping.

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 brings to the work of the Arctic Council the voice of the research community and civil society. ACOPS objectives are to inform and where possible contribute to research, quantification and understanding of root causes of threats to the marine environment and to provide opportunities to train young and senior professionals who contribute or aspire to contribute to the protection of the marine environment and to the development of marine environmental policy in intergovernmental bodies such as the Arctic Council.

In bringing Arctic academic researchers to the meetings of the Arctic Council, ACOPS contributes to the dissemination and outreach to that community of the work carried out by the Arctic Council and provides a channel for the most recent research findings to make their way into the working of the Arctic Council. This is made possible through partnership between ACOPS and research institutions with a focus on Arctic matters (e.g. UiT in Tromsø-Norway, CLIMA from the University of Copenhagen-Denmark and Chaire Enjeux Polaires hosted in Brest-France).

ACOPS is also working internationally with Observer Status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the London Convention & Protocol and the International Seabed Authority (ISA), and regionally within the OSPAR Convention framework. ACOPS is able to identify synergies and linkages between the various international marine fora in which we engage and "assist in joining up the dots" between the different workstreams and priorities internationally, supporting countries efforts to ensure coherence and avoid redundancies. As an example, ACOPS has participated in the OSPAR Arctic Outcomes Working Group contributing to the identification of priorities for OSPAR in the knowledge of work already underway with the Arctic Council Working Groups.