



WORKSHOP REPORT

**In Support of the Updating of the Regional Programme
of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine
Environment from Land-based Activities**

Reykjavik, Iceland

September 25, 2007

The PAME Programme

The programme for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) was established by the Arctic Council Ministers in Nuuk, Greenland, September 1993 with the mandate to address policy and non-emergency pollution prevention and control measures related to the protection of the Arctic marine environment from both land and sea-based activities. These include coordinated action programmes and guidelines complementing existing legal arrangements.

PAME members include National Representatives of the 8 Arctic Council States: Canada, Denmark (including Faroe Islands and Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden and United States. Indigenous groups organizations, termed "Permanent Participants" also participate in PAME, as well as representatives from several observer countries and organizations. Thus, PAME provides a unique forum for collaboration on a wide range of activities directed towards protection of the Arctic marine environment.

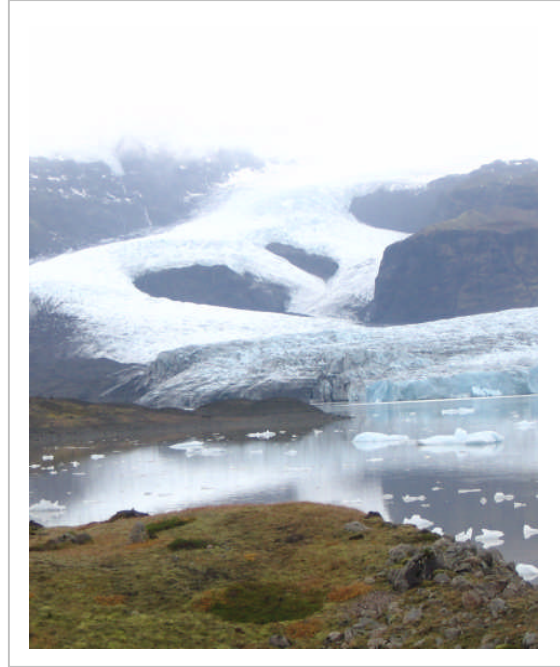


Photo by Peter Farrington

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**Disclaimer: This document reflects a summary of the ideas and views expressed at the workshop. Not all participants may share each of the views.*

Executive Summary

In 1998 the Arctic Council published the *Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (RPA)* as a regional approach to implementing the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Programme of Action (GPA). Many changes have occurred in the Arctic marine environment since the publication of the RPA. In 2006 the Working Group for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) was tasked by Senior Arctic Officials and Arctic Council Ministers to review, update and expand the RPA as necessary to respond more effectively to the rapidly changing circumstances in the Arctic. Taking account of a rapidly changing Arctic region is the overarching objective of the RPA update, and as such will be an important response to the 2004 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA).

In support of updating the RPA, Iceland hosted a one-day workshop on September 25, 2007, in Reykjavik. This workshop was well attended by experts from Arctic Council countries, Working Groups, Permanent Participants and Observers; as well as industry, NGOs and academia. The workshop opened with context setting presentations on the RPA and GPA, and continued with overviews on the state of the Arctic marine environment and socio-economic changes. Discussions continued through panel and break-out sessions focusing on the role of the RPA, priority issues and actions, governance and working with others.

The Workshop emphasized that the non-legally binding approach of the RPA would continue to be an important tool for intergovernmental cooperation in combating land-based sources of marine pollution in the Arctic. However, there was a strong message from some participants that the RPA is an important but individual contribution to a required, more comprehensive and coordinated mechanism that could address the total and interconnected stresses on the Arctic environment.

Overall, it was felt that the RPA needed to be updated to take into account pollutants, the implication of increasing economic activity and climate change, effects on habitat, and more modern environmental management approaches, such as ecosystem-based, risk-based and outcome-based management approaches. Key pollution issues were identified, with climate change identified as the driver of change in the Arctic marine environment, and as a major influence on all aspects of the RPA. It was also felt that the RPA needs to be more action and target oriented, as well as to be “mainstreamed” into existing national programme and policy processes to have long-term success. Another key message was the need for the RPA to collaborate with a broader set of stakeholders both within and outside of the Arctic Council, including industry.

1.0 Introduction and Context

The *Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land based Activities (RPA)* was adopted by Arctic Council Ministers in the 1998 Iqaluit Declaration in recognition of the need for a collaborative approach by the circumpolar governments and their peoples to address pollution sources and land-based activities impacting the Arctic's coastal and marine environments. At that time, the priority issues included persistent organic pollutants (POPs), heavy metals, radionuclides, petroleum hydrocarbons and the physical degradation of Arctic coastal environments.

While substantial progress has been made to address many of these issues, in 2006 it was recognized that the natural environment, economic development and interests, and governance regimes had changed considerably since 1998, thus necessitating the need to review and update the RPA accordingly.

Sustainable management of the Arctic is arguably a more complex challenge in 2007 than it was when the RPA was first developed. While the RPA has contributed to the progress that has been made respecting sustainable development in the Arctic, it is but one component of governance focusing on the transitional zone between the land and the sea. To work optimally, the RPA must be complementary to the other components that address terrestrial, marine, atmospheric, and climate issues in the Arctic. Indeed, as was observed by some during the Workshop, the time may be right for a broader and more formal mechanism to be put in place by the Arctic States, one in which a "new" RPA could be appropriately situated.

The RPA Workshop was conducted with the understanding that the governance regime in the Arctic could evolve rapidly, and somewhat unpredictably, over the next few years in response to growing interests and pressures in the region. This underscores the need for a flexible, as well as more current, RPA.

2.0 Objectives for the RPA Update

The aim of the September 25, 2007 RPA Workshop was to provide a forum for the Working Group for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), other Arctic Council Working Groups, along with invited participants to respond to the direction of Arctic Council Ministers to update the RPA to:

- Build on the strengths and successes of the RPA to date;
- Reflect post-1998 international developments and initiatives such as;
 - Arctic Council activities and reports
 - Stockholm Convention
 - GPA Intergovernmental Review Meeting (IGR-2) Outcomes
- Address additional priority issues;
- Be more responsive to emerging issues and opportunities; and,
- Improve the effectiveness of coordination and collaboration efforts.

To meet these objectives, the focus of the various presentations, breakout sessions and discussions was centered on the following three themes:

Priority Issues and Actions:

What are the priority issues that the RPA should address over the next 5-10 years, and what actions should it take?

RPA Governance:

What changes to the RPA are needed to make it more responsive to emerging issues and opportunities?

Working with Others:

How can the RPA be updated to facilitate improved coordination and collaboration amongst its members, and with other relevant jurisdictions, partners, initiatives, and parties?

3.0 Workshop Format

A variety of mechanisms were used to facilitate dialogue and encourage feedback and input from the participants pertinent to the workshop themes.

- **Policy and Technical Presentations:** These were made by experts to provide important “food for thought” to be considered during the RPA update process.
- **Panel Discussion:** Representatives from the Arctic Council Working Groups discussed ideas and perspectives on how working group initiatives contribute to the RPA, and how the RPA could be updated to make it more supportive of Arctic Council work.
- **RPA Update -- Annotated Outline:** To stimulate further discussion on the RPA, a summary of the preliminary thinking of co-leads (Canada and Iceland) with respect to how the Programme should be updated was presented.
- **Facilitated Breakout Sessions:** Participants were organized into three groups to examine questions pertaining to the three main workshop themes.
- **Plenary Discussion:** The facilitator for each of the breakout sessions reported on the main outcomes from their group discussions. This was followed by a summary from the workshop chairs of the key messages heard during the day. These messages were validated with all participants, with additional factors and considerations added.
- **Workbooks:** Participants were provided with a workbook to help organize and take note of ideas and key points over the course of the day. Participants were encouraged to submit their workbooks at the end of the workshop to provide an additional source of information for the RPA update.

4.0 Participants

The workshop was attended by 31 people, representing a wide range of international, political, scientific and policy expertise pertinent to the update of the RPA. More specifically, participants included:

- Arctic Council Working Groups:
 - PAME (Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment)
 - AMAP (Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme)
 - CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna)
 - EPPR (Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response)
- Permanent Participants – Inuit Circumpolar Conference
- Observers – World Wildlife Fund
- Swedish SAO
- Canada’s Ambassador to Iceland
- Industry – Statoil (Barents Sea Region)
- Government Representatives
- Non-government Organisations:
 - ACOPS (Advisory Committee on the Protection of the Sea)
- GPA Coordination Office
- Academia
- Research Institutes – Steffansson Arctic Institute

Please refer to Appendix 1 for a full list of participants.

5.0 Presentations

Presentations during the workshop focussed on a number of key themes, with the intent to provide updates on the RPA, GPA, and relevant environmental and economic issues.

- **Welcome and Introduction**
 - *Magnús Jóhannesson, Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment in Iceland*
- **Presentation on the RPA: Setting the Context**
 - *Chris Cuddy, Chair of PAME*
- **Global Programme of Action and the NPA: Natural Allies**
 - *Anjan Datta, GPA Coordination Office*
- **State of the Arctic Marine Environment: Arctic Regional Assessment**
 - *Vitaly Lystsov, Kurchatov Institute*
- **Russian NPA-Arctic with respect to Coastal Habitat**
 - *Dr. Ivan Senchenya, Project Manager: Support to the National Plan of Action for the protection of the Arctic Marine Environment– Russian Federation*
- **Socio-economic Changes: The Opportunities**
 - *Bjorn Kristoffersen, VP – Environment, Statoil Barents Region*
- **Challenges and Opportunities in the High North with Global Warming**
 - *Professor Trausti Valsson, University of Iceland*
- **Annotated Table of Contents for updated RPA**
 - *Geoff Holland, RPA project consultant*

Please note that presentations will be posted for your information online at www.pame.is

6.0 Workshop Outcomes and Key Messages

Discussions at the workshop were focused along specific themes:

6.1 Role of the RPA

In 1998, the RPA was established by the Arctic Ministers in recognition of the need for collaboration amongst circumpolar nations to identify and implement strategies and programmes to manage priority issues related to the impacts of land-based activities on the marine environment. While substantive progress has been made in addressing many of these issues, it was agreed that an updated RPA could facilitate better collaboration and communications, and contribute to further progress in these areas. Interest was also expressed both before and during the Workshop for the RPA to be more action-oriented.

The key messages made during the workshop about the role of the RPA included the following:

1. RPA addresses land-based pollution and physical alteration and destruction of habitat
 - focus not only on marine and coastal contaminant issues from land-based activities, but also give further consideration to challenges from physical habitat alteration and destruction of habitat as well.
2. Role needs to be better defined
 - describe linkages between the RPA and National Programmes of Action (NPAs), as the two types of Programmes are complementary in concept and can support putting into practice;
 - clearly articulate the role of the RPA in the management of issues. For example, should the RPA play a role in helping communities adapt to climate change, by sharing knowledge and information; and,
 - clarify the RPA role and the relationship to other Arctic Council Working Groups and their activities.
3. The inclusion of sea-based sources of pollution is considered to be outside of the scope of the RPA
 - While both sea and land-based sources of impacts affect the coastal environments, it was concluded that the RPA focus on the latter.
4. The RPA is considered a fundamentally important part of the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP)
 - A broader, more encompassing, integrating programme or mechanism may need to be developed to address issues that span the terrestrial, aquatic and atmospheric environments, as well as their various social, economic, cultural and ecological facets.
5. RPA is a tool for:
 - Communication
 - Within the Arctic Council,:

- Upwards to SAOs and Ministers
- Outwards to the Permanent Participants, Observers, public, etc. (e.g. via the Arctic Portal)
- Collaboration (to identify, assess, and manage risks)
 - With other PAME initiatives
 - Other Arctic Council Working Groups
 - GPA
 - Other stakeholders that the Programme has not traditionally worked with, such as industry
- Influence
 - Respecting the work agenda and projects of the Arctic Council
 - Decisions taken by Member States through the SAOs
 - Economic development and resource use in the Arctic
- these functions and roles should be described in the updated RPA.

6.2 Priority Issues and Actions

One of the principle objectives of the RPA update is to ensure that the Programme identifies the key stressors currently impacting the coastal and near shore environment and those projected to do so in the foreseeable future. While the focus of the RPA is on impacts caused by land-based activities, in some cases it is not possible to distinguish such impacts from marine or atmospheric sources. The latter situation underscores the need for a broader, more comprehensive approach to manage the risks in the Arctic posed by a range of stressors. Additionally, it was concluded that the RPA should be more “action-oriented”, i.e. with greater emphasis on the types of actions to be undertaken to address the issues.

The following list of priority issues was raised during the technical presentations, panel discussion, break-out sessions and plenary.

- Climate Change
 - The most significant environmental, social and economic challenge having emerged in the Arctic.
 - Climate Change is not acknowledged in the current RPA.
 - The impacts of climate change in the Arctic have been dramatic, with coastal erosion resulting in rapid losses of land cover in parts of the Russian Arctic, sea ice cover diminishing in thickness and extent, etc.
 - The habitat ranges of species have shifted in response to climate change, with the expectation that wildlife not normally found in the Arctic will move into this region in the foreseeable future, while other indigenous or keystone species like the Polar Bear will see their ranges shrink.
 - Climate change is a major threat to the Arctic, but also important in terms of how it is influencing the effects of the other Arctic stressors as well, including those listed below. For example, climate change is altering the pathway that contaminants are taking to reach the Arctic.
- Existing and new POPs
 - Persistent Organic Pollutants and other contaminants recognized in the RPA, while addressed to some degree, are still of concern in the Arctic.

- Other new contaminants are being found in the Arctic (e.g. pesticides – endosulphan).
- Heavy Metals – Mercury
 - Still an issue in many parts of the Arctic, with mercury the heavy metal posing the greatest risks to human and ecosystem health.
- Increased economic activity
 - The Arctic is witnessing: increasing demand for minerals and hydrocarbons, changing shipping conditions due to reduced sea ice, and advancements in technology. This is resulting in complex science, policy, governance and technological challenges for circumpolar states to achieve sustainable development.
- Coastal erosion
 - Some coastal areas in Russia are showing rapid erosion and loss of coast lines.
 - Closely associated with losses through erosion caused by submergence under the higher Arctic waters due a warming climate.
- Habitat alteration and species displacement
 - As noted above, loss of sea ice cover, coastal erosion and potential shifts in the types, distribution and concentrations of pollutants are all impacting wildlife habitat.
 - Shifts in species numbers and distributions in the coastal areas expected to occur in response to these changes.
- Radionuclides
 - Still an issue in the Arctic, but now an additional potential risk is being introduced in Russia with the advent of portable, offshore nuclear facilities (floating small nuclear power plants).
- Hotspots
 - Mapping of contaminant hotspots in or near coastal Russia has resulted in a significant resolution of the extent and nature of these hotspots, thus allowing for more targeted actions to be undertaken.
 - Similar mapping done throughout the rest of the Arctic would provide a complete picture of where the circumpolar countries should collectively target their “clean-up” efforts.
- Define sensitive areas
 - Criteria should be developed/refined for defining “sensitive areas” in the Arctic.
 - Those areas in the Arctic meeting these definitions, should be mapped, with appropriate risk management regimes established to conserve them.
- Russian NPA-Arctic

- The Russian NPA-Arctic programme responds to Arctic pollution originating from Russian sources and continues to work towards addressing these issues; remains a priority.

6.3 Governance

One of the key objectives for the RPA update is to modify the Programme so it can more effectively facilitate decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented by the Arctic States. Good governance is characterized by systems, processes and programs that:

- Enable participation by those affected by decisions (e.g. local communities and peoples);
- Promote integration and encourage cross-sectoral collaboration to resolve issues;
- Take a consensus and transparent approach to decision making;
- Have strong accountability mechanisms; and,
- Respond to issues within a reasonable time frame

The following elements were discussed during the workshop and should be considered in updating the RPA.

- **Flexibility:** Climate change influences most aspects of the RPA; supports the need for a robust and flexible RPA.
- **Responsiveness:** The RPA must be able to respond to rapid environmental changes and economic development – Reformatting the RPA could help address this challenge:
 - Main Principles and approaches, issues and goals up front in a relatively “stable” policy document
 - Annexes could be developed and modified as needed to address changes in these issues. The Annexes could be generated relatively quickly, and would be consistent with the direction of the main policy document.
- **Clear and concise:** The RPA could be a more effective communications tool if the issues and proposed actions were presented in a clearer and more compelling fashion. This could help with the goal of transparency.
- **Action-Oriented.** The RPA needs to be more explicit at identifying the actions that the Programme will take to respond to the priority issues facing the marine environment caused by land-based activities. The identification of more specific deliverables should improve the effectiveness of the Programme by facilitating more focussed actions, and increased participation by all parties concerned.
- **Mainstreaming the RPA:** The RPA needs to be better integrated into the existing decision making processes of governments and institutions.
- **New Tools:** One of the constraints to decision-making and action under the RPA has been the absence of clear supporting scientific evidence. Therefore,

the RPA could consider adopting or increasing its reliance on other tools, such as the use of “Scenarios”, when conditions warrant it (e.g. rapidly changing climate, lack of complete science, pressing issues).

In order for the RPA to evolve it must progress beyond the listing of principles and approaches, to applying the principles and approaches to address issues. The following approaches were identified at the workshop that could be applied within an updated RPA:

- **Ecosystem-based Management Approach**
 - Allows for an integrated basis for decision making and actions
 - Integrates social, economic, cultural and environmental factors
 - Facilitates the use of standard ecosystem mapping units

- **Risk-based Approach** to the RPA
 - Allows for the clarification of the role of the RPA for each phase of the risk management cycle (e.g. information gathering, risk assessment, risk management, etc.). More specifically, allows one to identify where efforts should be placed.

- **Outcomes-based Approach** to the RPA
 - Where the broad goals of the RPA can be translated for each project, decision or action into meaningful and measurable targets or objectives.

6.4 Working with Others

The RPA is a Programme of the Arctic Council that takes actions and decisions which affect our knowledge about, human use of, and the state of the Arctic environment. Given the limited resources to manage these risks to the Arctic, it is essential that the RPA update and its implementation be based on strong communication and collaboration between the Arctic Council and interested parties.

Key messages from the Workshop included:

- Enhance collaboration:
 - Between Arctic Council Working Groups
 - With GPA / NPAs, indigenous and local communities, industry, NGOs, etc.

- Bring forward important issues to SAO and Ministers in a timely fashion; (i.e. don't wait for absolutely clear and unequivocal scientific evidence)

- Mainstream the RPA with related government structures (e.g. NPAs and Sustainable Development Strategies)

- Enhance outreach and sharing of knowledge (RPA Clearing House / Arctic Portal)

7.0 Next Steps

<u>ACTION</u>	<u>TIMELINE</u>
<u>2007</u>	
1) Final workshop report ready for the SAO meeting. Notes to be provided to PAME Chair	Mid November
<u>2008</u>	
2) First Draft RPA to be distributed to RPA Contact Group & AC Working Groups, Permanent Participants and key workshop participants (including GPA Coordination Office and others)	Mid January
3) Second draft distributed to RPA Contact Group & AC Working Groups, Permanent Participants and key workshop participants (including GPA Coordination Office and others)	Early March
4) Distribute to PAME WG and SAO's (as an information item for SAO meeting)	Early April
5) PAME meeting – final approval / endorsement of penultimate draft	June
6) Forward final version to SAO's for approval at Fall Meeting	Fall
<u>2009</u>	
7) Forward new RPA to AC Ministers for approval at Spring Meeting	Early Spring

APPENDIX 1: List of Participants

RPA Workshop ~ Reykjavik, Iceland ~ September 25, 2007

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