

AMAP Progress report to the SAO meeting in Yellowknife, October 2014

AMAP held its 28th Working Group meeting in Whitehorse, Canada from 16-18 September 2014. Present at the meeting were representatives of all the Arctic countries except Iceland, Permanent Participants (AAC, ICC, Sami Council), Arctic Council Observer countries and organizations (China, Japan, Republic of Korea, The Netherlands, UNEP/GRID-A, WWF) and invited experts from APECS, EEA, EC-JRC). Representaives of the Canadian Chairmanship including the Canadian Senior Arctic Official (SAO), the Arctic Council (AC) Secretariat, and other AC WGs (SDWG and PAME) also attended parts of the AMAP WG meeting.

The main priority for the WG meeting was to review materials from the various AMAP expert groups, develop plans to finalize deliverables to the 2015 AC Ministerial meeting and provide input to draft AMAP workplans for 2015-2017. Other issues addressed included updating of the AMAP guidelines for monitoring trends and effects of contaminants and climate change on Arctic ecosystems and humans; best practices for the use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) in Arctic science; possible use of the Project Support Instrument (PSI); cooperation with other international organisations; and the coordination with other Arctic Council Working groups and Task Forces.

A joint meeting between the AMAP and PAME WGs was held in conjunction with the meeting, and also included representatives of SDWG. The joint meeting provided an opportunity for the Canadian SAO to inform the WGs about the Canadian Chairmanship plans for the process leading up to the 2015 Ministerial and the hand-over of the Chairmanship from Canada to the USA.

The joint AMAP and PAME meeting also allowed good exchange of information on respective WG activities of cross-cutting concern, including the greater need for involvement of all WGs in strategic initiatives such as the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP), Ecosystem-based Approach (EBA) and Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACCA). The WGs were informed of the development of activities relating to Traditional/Local knowledge (TLK) and the AC Secretariat (ACS) initiative to promote open-access to AC documents. In relation to the latter, AMAP Secretariat and ACS discussed solutions that would address (AMAP/PAME/CAFF) WG concerns about the OA project and possible applicaiotn of Creative Commons (CC) licensing to facilitate use of AC documents in teaching materials.

AMAP Expert groups have continued their work on:

- Short-lived climate forcers: Black carbon and tropospheric ozone; assessment for delivery in 2015;
- Short-lived climate forcers: Methane; assessment for delivery in 2015;
- Human health in the Arctic; update assessment for delivery in 2015;
- Radioactivity in the Arctic; update assessment for delivery in 2015;
- Persistent Organic Pollutants in the Arctic; update assessment for delivery in 2015 (temporal trends) and 2016/2017 (chemicals of emerging Arctic concern, biological effects, climate and POPs);

These assessments will provide the basis for two 'policy-makers summary' deliverables for the 2015 Arctic Council Ministerial meeting; the first addressing climate-related issues (Short-lived Climate Forcers) and the second covering pollution-related issues (POPs temporal trends, humans health and radioactivity).

Technical/scientific assessments reports are currently undergoing international peer review and are due to be completed by the end of the year. Work has also progressed on the preparation of documents relating to use of UAS for scientific and search and rescue purposes, also for delivery in 2015. Final approval of the policy-makers summary deliverables for the Ministerial meeting is planned for an AMAP HoDs meeting to be held 4-5 February 2015 in Copenhagen. However, following information that draft input to the SAO report to ministers may be required by the Canadian Chairmanship by 15 December 2014, the AMAP WG Chair will seek further clarification on how to converge the AMAP timelines with what is expected by SAOs regarding the input to the ministerial report at the SAO meeting in Yellowknife.

AMAP work on POPs temporal trends and human health biomonitoring assessments was arranged so as to provide technical information to groups currently engaged in preparing an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Stockholm Convention that will be completed in 2015. Further implementation of the AMAP POPs assessment (on chemicals of Arctic concern, biological effects and POPs and climate change) will continue in 2016/2017.

Progress, future plans and key issues were discussed related to AMAP's work on the Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA) project and work on follow-up assessments of Arctic Ocean Acidification (AOA) and Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA) (including an Arctic freshwater synthesis) with the latter being coordinated to provide input to the AACA activity. All of the above initiatives have deliverables due by the Ministerial meeting in 2017.

AMAP is engaged in collaboration with other organizations including the European Union (Horizon 2020 and PolarNet), the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) on work relating to Arctic Ocean Acidification and the EBA, and the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) on work to prepare for the 3rd International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP 3). AMAP is also continuing its involvement in the work of the Arctic Council (AC) Task Force on Scientific Cooperation (SCTF), the next meeting to be held in Tromsø in October 2014.

Two committees have been established to further implement Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON), one on data and one on observing systems, chaired by leads from USA and Canada, respectively.

AMAP Secretariat have presented results of AMAP work at international conferences including 'Dioxin2014' (Madrid, September 2014) and the International Radioactivity Conference (Barcelona, September 2014) and further outreach is planned in connection with the Arctic Change conference in Ottawa (December 2014), the Arctic Biodiversity conference in Trondheim (December 2014) and the Arctic Frontiers Conference in Tromsø (January 2015). AMAP is looking forward to receiving further information on the plans for WG involvement in the Ministerial meeting and planned outreach event in Ottawa associated with the AC Ministerial meeting in 2015.