

*A Circumpolar Inuit Response to the  
Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA)*



**A Proposal presented to the  
Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)**

**by  
*Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)***

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## **Introduction**

This document is a proposal to the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) that highlights some activities that the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) believes are essential to undertake pursuant to, and as a result of, the release of the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA). The AMSA was undertaken under the auspices of the Arctic Council's working group, Protection of the Marine Environment (PAME). The substance of the proposed work is to undertake an initial response to those AMSA recommendations that directly impact Inuit living in four (4) of the eight (8) countries that make up the Arctic Council region. They are Russia, USA, Canada, and Greenland. This proposal describes how this initial substantive response to the AMSA will be undertaken.

The AMSA covered a number of areas and dimensions. This proposal will bring to the implementation phase of the AMSA a response that deals with the human dimension. Because the SDWG focusses largely on the human aspects of sustainable development, ICC believes that placing this proposed project also under the auspices of the SDWG is important. ICC will still work closely with PAME as well, and solicit its support. In this context, ICC is keenly aware of the development of a draft scoping paper<sup>1</sup> by the Aleut International Association and the Saami Council within PAME, which encourages Arctic Council working groups beyond PAME to develop an Arctic Indigenous Marine Use Survey Process (AIMUS). A part of this ICC proposal to the SDWG does contribute to this goal and, as such, is complementary to the post-AMSA work so far undertaken by PAME.

The AMSA – simply by its geographical focus (the Arctic Ocean) and the issue it addressed (shipping) – was of great importance to Inuit in Greenland, Canada, Alaska, and Russia. Inuit are primarily a marine indigenous people and, as such, have both a strong interest in seeing the AMSA recommendations be implemented in a timely manner and have knowledge that would be of benefit in assisting the Arctic Council in doing so. ICC, through this proposed project, is offering to share that knowledge. While this project is about Inuit offering their knowledge from across four Arctic countries, ICC would be pleased to work with member states and other Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council as the project unfolds and would warmly welcome other knowledge and participation that would contribute to implementing the AMSA recommendations.

ICC is further interested in contributing to implementing the AMSA recommendations because it

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<sup>1</sup> The current draft by the Aleut International Association and the Saami Council is entitled “Development of an Arctic Indigenous Marine Use Survey Process: *A Scoping Paper to Assess Possible Joint Efforts of PAME & Other Arctic Council Working Groups Addressing AMSA Recommendation*”.

provided a substantive piece of work, through PAME, to the development of the AMSA itself. ICC feels that with the release of the AMSA findings, this earlier input needs to be updated and expanded to include Inuit from Russia (Chukotka), USA (Alaska), and Greenland. (The previous report provided to PAME and the AMSA, *The Sea Ice is Our Highway: An Inuit Perspective on Transportation in the Arctic*, focussed in particular on the Inuit of Canada). It is hoped that at a later date, this model could be used by other indigenous peoples of the Arctic, and ICC would be very pleased to share the results from this study.

## **Background on ICC**

ICC was founded in 1977 to promote Inuit rights and interests internationally. Its goals include the development and encouragement of policies that safeguard the Arctic environment. Since its establishment, ICC has grown into a major international indigenous peoples' organization representing approximately 160,000 Inuit in USA (Alaska), Canada, Greenland and Russia (Chukotka) with offices in each country. ICC is one of the six Permanent Participants on the Arctic Council and holds Consultative Status II at the United Nations. The Permanent Participant status inside the Arctic Council provides ICC with meaningful and direct input at the ministers, Senior Arctic Officials, and working group level meetings. ICC's four (4) country offices are each mandated by their respective boards to represent the interests of the Inuit of their country on international matters and, secondly to act as a conduit between Inuit of their country and Inuit elsewhere. ICC's office of the Chair assists in coordinating overall Inuit positions and to help celebrate the unity of Inuit across these countries. All offices take their mandates from the ICC quadrennial General Assemblies, and are mandated to take lead on behalf of all of ICC in certain files. For the purposes of the work proposed here, ICC Canada has been mandated to act as the coordinating office.

## **AMSA and ICC**

In recognition of the extraordinary changes and challenges confronting the Arctic, in part due to the combined effects of climate change and the global demand for energy resources, ministers meeting at the Arctic Council's November 2004 Ministerial meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, called for a comprehensive assessment of Arctic marine shipping.

The result of that meeting was the AMSA, which was conducted under the auspices of the Council's Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) working group. Its report and recommendations were approved at the 2009 Ministerial meeting in Tromsø.

As the Inuit are a marine people who rely for their survival on the sea and for whom the sea is integral to their way of life, AMSA has been one of the most important initiatives coming out of PAME and the Arctic Council for ICC. As a result, ICC closely followed the development of AMSA and contributed to it. Particularly noteworthy was the contribution ICC Canada made through its report on the Inuit use of sea ice. Entitled *The Sea Ice is Our Highway – an Inuit Perspective on Transportation in the Arctic* the report showed the dependence of the Inuit on their ability to move across the Arctic and that sea ice was integral to that movement. A more detailed summary of this report is presented in the next section of this proposal.

ICC took great interest in the AMSA 2009 final report and especially its recommendations.

Foreign ministers of the 8 Arctic states also took a great interest in the report, which was completed just prior to the ministers meeting in Tromsø, Norway.

The last ICC General Assembly, which was held in Nuuk, Greenland in summer 2010, gave rise to a 4-year directive to ICC by Inuit delegates. This directive, called the *Nuuk Declaration*, gives a specific mandate to ICC in paragraph 33 which calls upon:

*the ICC executive council to be actively involved in promoting the implementation of the recommendations of the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA), especially those provisions that aim to protect Inuit seas and coastal zones.*

Given the importance that Arctic Council ministers, several Arctic Council working groups, and the ICC General Assembly give to the AMSA, ICC is fully committed to helping move forward this important Arctic Council initiative.

### ***The Sea Ice is Our Highway – an Inuit Perspective on Transportation in the Arctic***<sup>2</sup>

In 2008, ICC provided this report to the AMSA describing an Inuit perspective on the human dimension of shipping. The study on which the report was based investigated the Inuit use of sea ice. The study drew upon three sources: 1) thirty-year old land use and occupancy studies upon which the modern Inuit land claims in Canada were based; 2) a small number of interviews undertaken in 2008 by ICC with hunters in Canada; and 3) additional studies from Alaska and Greenland.

The report demonstrated unequivocally that life in the Arctic is dependent on movement, and that sea ice is integral to this movement. Inuit have been a nomadic people living in the Arctic since ancient times; their entire culture and identity is based on free movement on the land and on the sea ice. Inuit rely on free movement in order to eat, to obtain supplies for traditional clothing and art, and generally to keep their rich cultural heritage alive. As the report notes, Inuit temporarily move out from settlements to harvest resources that are sometimes bartered or traded. This movement takes place on the sea ice that surrounds and connects Inuit communities.

The key findings of *The Sea Ice is Our Highway* were: 1) Tradition and Adaptation: Inuit are deeply connected to the past, both distant and more recent, but have also adapted; they continue to eat traditional foods for a large portion of their diet, and the diet requires continued hunting and harvesting of the available resources in the Arctic. Because the wildlife that make up the Inuit diet are highly transient, it is often necessary for Inuit to travel over great distances in for to feed themselves and their families; although climate change and thinning sea ice pose great challenges, Inuit hunters are determined to seek ways to cope, rather than give up on hunting for traditional food; 2) High Standard of Sustainable Use: It is the Inuit position that any action or intervention that affects their land must protect the environment, wildlife, and therefore the Inuit people in such a way that they can continue to live off this land for thousands more years. This is the standard of of sustainable use that they insist upon; 3) The Sea Ice is Our Highway: The sea is integral to the Inuit way of life. In winter their highway is sea ice; in summer it is the open sea.

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<sup>2</sup> Much of this account is taken directly from the report, which can be viewed in its entirety at: [http://inuitcircumpolar.com/files/uploads/icc-files/20080423\\_iccamsa\\_finalpdfprint.pdf](http://inuitcircumpolar.com/files/uploads/icc-files/20080423_iccamsa_finalpdfprint.pdf)

Movement across this highway is necessary to maintain the Inuit way of life due to the reliance of traditional food, and because hunting and being out on the land and sea are central to Inuit culture.

The report also highlights some of the caution and concern felt by Inuit as in the face of Arctic change and the potential for greater use of the Arctic by newcomers, including those that conduct shipping. Inuit showed in this study that they are confident that they will succeed in the face of change, but are less sure of what increased shipping may mean for their future. Newcomers are reminded, through the many Inuit hunter quotes found in the report that Inuit have lived in the Arctic for thousands of years and intend to live there for thousands more.

### **AMSA – Next Steps**

In considering AMSA at its 2009 meeting, Arctic Council ministers' approval included the recommendations on “enhancing Arctic marine safety, protecting Arctic people and environment and building Arctic marine infrastructure”. Furthermore, as set out in the Tromsø Declaration, the ministers requested Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) to develop appropriate follow up actions. Moreover, in noting increased access and navigation in the Arctic Ocean, ministers recognized the need for “development and implementation of suitable national and international regulations, and where appropriate, to advance the safety of Arctic marine shipping, including marine pollution prevention, reduce accident risk, and facilitate effective emergency response”.

Also, as mentioned in the introduction of this proposal, there is potential for indigenous-related work to be undertaken inside the working group, Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME). While no formal proposal has yet been put before the PAME working group, a scoping paper – currently in a draft form – has been developed by the Aleut International Association and the Saami Council, two other Permanent Participants with whom ICC has a close working relationship. The current draft of that scoping paper assesses possible joint efforts of PAME and other Arctic Council working groups to address the AMSA recommendations, especially in the context of Arctic indigenous marine use. The ICC proposal to the SDWG does, in part, look at indigenous marine use and, as such, is complementary to the aims of the current discussion within PAME. In one of its five (5) main recommendations to PAME, the current draft (01) of the scoping paper encourages “all working groups to provide support and endorsement ... to projects that plan to engage in survey of AIMU (Arctic Indigenous Marine Use Survey)” and as an example refers to the “ICC project submitted to SDWG”.

This proposal has been presented to the SDWG at several meetings going back to early 2010, the first simply being an intent to develop a proposal. Based on general support and further guidance from the SDWG on how to develop the proposal further, ICC is now confident that, if approved by the SDWG heads of delegation in February 2012, the results of the work will be a significant contribution to responding to the AMSA.

### **Circumpolar Inuit Response to the AMSA**

Marine safety and environmental protection is the focus of the AMSA report with its recommendations set out under three themes: I) Enhancing Arctic Marine Safety, II) Protecting Arctic People and the Environment, and III) Building Arctic Marine Infrastructure. For ICC,

each of these themes is of core importance to the interests of all Inuit. And it is in the context of these themes that ICC has developed its proposed plan to best respond to the AMSA findings.

In determining the best way forward, ICC has looked at where it can make its most effective contribution, which will both reflect Inuit interests and advance the implementation of the AMSA recommendations.

Taking all this into consideration, ICC believes there are three recommendations in particular where it could make its best contribution (See ANNEX A for details of these recommendations). These recommendations can be found under Category II – Protecting Arctic People and the Environment. However, in its work, all Categories of recommendations will be addressed in some fashion.

As such, ICC has developed a two-pronged Action Plan which builds on the work it undertook in developing its initial contribution to AMSA through its report *The Sea Ice is Our Highway*

### **ICC's Proposed Action Plan**

#### ***Action One: Communicate AMSA Findings to Inuit & Seek Guidance to move AMSA Forward***

As noted earlier, it is ICC's mandate to be a conduit of information between and among Inuit from Russia, USA, Canada, and Greenland.

Action one addresses the importance of both communicating the findings in plain language to all Inuit, and also to seek valuable information and guidance from Inuit on how best to respond to the AMSA findings and recommendations.

In line with the two recommendations under Category II, calling for a survey of Arctic Indigenous Marine Use and engagement with Arctic communities, ICC proposes to build on the survey work it undertook to develop its initial report -- *The Sea Ice is Our Highway* -- to AMSA and to broaden the consultative process with Arctic communities in carrying out this expanded survey.

As a first step in undertaking this work, ICC proposes to hold a workshop which would bring together relevant representatives of Inuit communities across the Arctic, including representatives from Russia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. The workshop would have three objectives:

- to brief Inuit on the outcome of the AMSA report and next steps;
- to seek information on the best ways forward in establishing up-to-date baseline information from Inuit communities across the Arctic on the impact of Arctic shipping activities;
- to seek input and develop the most appropriate methodologies to use in Action Two of the proposed work.

Deliverables:

1. Workshop on Inuit sea ice use and occupancy
2. Report on the findings of the workshop
3. A plan to move the Inuit-specific mandates forward

***Action Two: Undertake an Expanded Survey on Inuit Use of the Sea and Sea Ice***

In writing *The Sea Ice is Our Highway*, an important source of information regarding past ice use came from the extensive land use and occupancy studies conducted in the 1970s under the *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project* led by Milton Freeman. Much of this work was done within Canada. ICC drew on this work to put into context the information it obtained through the interviews it conducted with Inuit hunters and other users of the sea ice and coastal environs in the Arctic. ICC views the next step as broadening out the range of interviews to other Inuit communities in Russia, USA, and Greenland and therefore, to deepen the understanding and documentation of the impact of Arctic shipping – both as it is now and under likely future scenarios.

The workshop would provide an important consultative process with Inuit representatives to obtain a preliminary indication of the shipping issues affecting their communities and to identify studies which may be underway in other Arctic communities and which are of relevance to the Inuit context. It would also help inform on the best way in approaching the second step of this activity which would involve an expanded survey in Inuit communities to assess their current use of the sea and how it compares to that recorded in earlier land use studies. The activities proposed in this plan would cover the three additional regions - Chukotka, Alaska, and Greenland within the Inuit homeland, as well as expand on the interviews undertaken in 2008 with individuals from each of the Canadian Inuit land claims regions, especially where there were gaps, but also in the context of lessons learned through the AMSA process.

**Deliverables:**

1. Supplementary survey of Inuit communities in Greenland, Alaska and Chukotka to assess use by Inuit of the sea.
2. Where necessary, expand survey of Inuit communities in Canada to assess use by Inuit of the sea.
3. Report on the findings of the survey of Inuit communities to build on *The Sea Ice is Our Highway*

**Schedule**

This schedule is tentative and is subject to when approval and funding might be made available.

Action 1: Pending funding approval, timing for the proposed workshop would be early June 2012. Findings would be published by mid August 2012.

Action 2: The approach and timing of the proposed survey work will be informed by the advice coming out of the workshop. Some planning for the activities of Action 2 can commence immediately, but the bulk of the work would be undertaken in August to December 2012.

## Budget

	<b>Projected Cost</b>
<b>Action One: Workshop on Inuit sea ice use and occupancy</b>	
• preliminary research and workshop preparations	2,000
• document preparation	2,000
• participant travel and accommodation	56,000
• Russian & Inuktitut interpreters	6,000
• workshop venue and meals	4,000
• report preparation and printing	7,300
<b>Action One Sub-total</b>	<b>77,300</b>
<b>Action Two: Expanded survey on Inuit sea ice use</b>	
• preliminary document and data base research	1,000
• telephone and e-mail survey (Canada)	2,500
• telephone and e-mail survey (Alaska)	3,500
• telephone and e-mail survey (Greenland)	4,000
• on the ground interviewing - Canada	2,000
• on the ground interviewing - Alaska	2,000
• on the ground interviewing - Greenland	2,000
• on the ground interviewing - Russia	1,000
• e-mail survey (Russia)	3,500
• Translation	5,500
• report preparation and printing	7,000
<b>Action Two Sub-total</b>	<b>34,000</b>
Administration fee	11,130
<b>Total</b>	<b>122,430</b>



## ANNEX 1 --

### **The Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment Recommendations Relevant to ICC Canada's Proposed AMSA Follow-up**

#### **I. Enhancing Arctic Marine Safety**

**B. IMO Measures for Arctic Shipping:** That the Arctic states, in recognition of the unique environmental and navigational conditions in the Arctic, decide to cooperatively support efforts at the International Maritime Organization to strengthen, harmonize and regularly update international standards for vessels operating in the Arctic. These efforts include: ---Support the updating and the mandatory application of relevant parts of the Guidelines for Ships Operating in Arctic Ice-covered Waters (Arctic Guidelines); and, ---Drawing from IMO instruments, in particular the Arctic Guidelines, augment global IMO ship safety and pollution prevention conventions with specific mandatory requirements or other provisions for ship construction, design, equipment, crewing, training and operations, aimed at safety and protection of the Arctic environment.

#### **II. Protecting Arctic People and the Environment**

**A. Survey of Arctic Indigenous Marine Use:** That the Arctic states should consider conducting surveys on Arctic marine use by indigenous communities where gaps are identified to collect information for establishing up-to-date baseline data to assess the impacts from Arctic shipping activities.

**B. Engagement with Arctic Communities:** That the Arctic states decide to determine if effective communication mechanisms exist to ensure engagement of their Arctic coastal communities and, where there are none, to develop their own mechanisms to engage and coordinate with the shipping industry, relevant economic activities and Arctic communities (in particular during the planning phase of a new marine activity)