

# Report: SAO plenary meeting

Ruka, Finland | 13-14 March 2019

*Fourth SAO plenary meeting during the Finnish Chairmanship*

Link to meeting documents:

[https://arcticcouncil.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/AC/SAO/Shared%20Documents/Meetings/SAOFI204\\_2019\\_RUKA?csf=1&e=EYuzll](https://arcticcouncil.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/AC/SAO/Shared%20Documents/Meetings/SAOFI204_2019_RUKA?csf=1&e=EYuzll)

## Acronyms and abbreviations commonly found in Arctic Council reports

AAC	Arctic Athabaskan Council
AACA	Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AMAP project)
ABA	Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (CAFF, 2013)
ABDS	Arctic Biodiversity Data Service (CAFF)
AC	Arctic Council
ACAP	Arctic Contaminants Action Program (1 of 6 Working Groups)
ACGF	Arctic Coast Guard Forum
ACIA	Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (AMAP, 2005)
ACOPS	Advisory Committee on Protection of the Seas (Observer)
ACS	Arctic Council Secretariat
AEC	Arctic Economic Council
AHDR	Arctic Human Development Report
AHHEG	Arctic Human Health Expert Group (SDWG)
AIA	Aleut International Association
AINA	Arctic Institute of North America
AMAP	Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (1 of 6 Working Groups)
AMBI	Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (CAFF)
AMSA	Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (PAME, 2009)
AOA	Arctic Ocean Acidification (AMAP, 2013)
AOR	Arctic Ocean Review Project (PAME, AMAP)
AORF	Arctic Offshore Regulators' Forum
AREA	Arctic Renewable Energy Atlas (SDWG project)
ARENA	Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy (SDWG project)
ARR / ARA	Arctic Resilience Report / Arctic Resilience Assessment
ARAF	Arctic Resilience Action Framework
ASDI	Arctic Spatial Data Infrastructure
ASDS	Arctic Shipping Data Service (PAME)
AWRH	Association of World Reindeer Herders (Observer)

BCM	Black Carbon and Methane
BEAC	Barents Euro-Arctic Council
CAFF	Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (1 of 6 Working Groups)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBird	The Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group (CAFF)
CBM	Community-Based Monitoring (CAFF)
CBPM	Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CAFF)
CCU	Circumpolar Conservation Union (Observer)
CEMG	Coastal Expert Monitoring Group (CAFF)
CLEO	Circumpolar Local Environmental Observer Network (ACAP)
CliC	Climate and Cryosphere
CLRTAP	Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
EA	Ecosystem Approach
EAAFP	East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership
EALLU	Arctic Indigenous Youth, Climate Change and Food Culture (SDWG)
EBM	Ecosystem-Based Management
EBSAs	Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (AMAP, CAFF, PAME)
EG	Expert Group
EGBCM	Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (USA, Sweden)
EPPR	Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (1 of 6 Working Groups)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
FP-OPP	Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic (2015)
GCI	Gwich'In Council International
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
HFO	Heavy Fuel Oil (PAME)
HoD	Head of Delegation

IASC	International Arctic Science Committee (Observer)
IASSA	International Arctic Social Sciences Association (Observer)
ICC	Inuit Circumpolar Council
ICES	International Council of the Exploration of the Seas
IMO	International Maritime Organization (UN)
IPCAP EG	Indigenous Peoples' Contaminants Action Program
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPS	Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat
IPY	International Polar Year
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
IUCH	International Union for Circumpolar Health (Observer)
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature (Observer)
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (Observer)
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MEMA	Meaningful Engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Marine Activities (PAME, SDWG)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOSPA	Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (2013)
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NAMMCO	North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (Observer)
NCM	Nordic Council of Ministers (Observer)
NEFCO	Nordic Environment Finance Cooperation (Observer)
NF	Northern Forum (Observer)
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (USA)
OSPAR	The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
PAME	Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (1 of 6 Working Groups)
POP	Persistent Organic Pollutant
PP	Permanent Participant
PSI	Project Support Instrument

RAIPON	Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North
SAMBR	State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (CAFF project)
SAO	Senior Arctic Official
SAOC	SAO Chair (Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials)
SAOX	SAO executive meeting
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
SAON	Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks
SAR	Search and rescue
SCPAR	Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (Observer)
SC	Saami Council
SDG	[UN] Sustainable Development Goals
SDI	Spatial Data Infrastructure
SDWG	Sustainable Development Working Group (1 of 6 Working Groups)
SLCP/F	Short-Lived Climate Pollutants/Forcers
SWIPA	Snow, Water, Ice, and Permafrost in the Arctic (AMAP project)
TF	Task Force
TFAMC II	Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation II
TFICA	Task Force on Improved Connectivity in the Arctic
TLK	Traditional and local knowledge
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982)
UN-ECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Observer)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme (Observer)
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme (Observer)
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
WG	Working Group
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WWF	World Wildlife Fund for Nature – Global Arctic Program (Observer)
WP	Work plan

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Opening remarks

The SAO Chair (SAOC) welcomed delegates to the fourth and final plenary meeting of SAOs during the Chairmanship of Finland (2017-2019). He invited the new Head of Delegation (HoD) for the Russian Federation, Nikolay Korchunov, to introduce himself to the plenary delegates.

## 1.2. Welcome remarks

The mayor of Kuusamo, Jouko Manninen, delivered a welcome speech during which he presented a brief overview of the town. Ruka, one of the biggest ski resorts in Finland, is part of the Kuusamo municipality that shares a border with the Russian Federation to the East and Finnish Lapland to the North.

The SAOC thanked Mayor Manninen for the good cooperation during the preparations of the SAO meeting. He pointed out that Kuusamo, in cooperation with the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, was holding an outreach event in the town center on 14 March 2019 to discuss the Arctic Council, Arctic cooperation and climate change with the local residents.

## 1.3. Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved as presented. However, the SAOC indicated that the order of some of the items could possibly change for logistical reasons.

# 2. Report from SAO executive meeting

The SAOC provided information on issues discussed at the SAO executive meeting (SAOX) held on 12-13 March 2019 in Ruka. He noted the following points in particular:

- SAOs discussed the review of the Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS) expected to be carried out in 2019 under the Icelandic Chairmanship;
- SAOs discussed the next review of Observers due to take place during the Icelandic Chairmanship. The 14 Observers who were admitted as Observers to the Arctic Council in 1998-2000 and reviewed under the U.S. Chairmanship, will again be reviewed in 2020. These Observers will receive information about the next review process in due course;
- SAOs had a first discussion about new applications for Arctic Council Observer status and will continue the process at their next executive meeting in April;
- SAOs decided to use the terminology *traditional knowledge and local knowledge* in

key documents for adoption at the Rovaniemi Ministerial meeting in May 2019, the Rovaniemi declaration and the Arctic Council Strategic Plan. The change was intended to clarify the existence of different knowledge systems. The SAOs do not want to restrict the use of other terminology - such as “indigenous knowledge” - by the PPs, WGs or by anyone else;

- The SAOs discussed a draft MOU with the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) which will be further discussed at the SAOX in April;
- The new Icelandic Chair of the Arctic Council Project Support Instrument (PSI) Committee provided an update on the implementation of reforms called for in the PSI evaluation that was done last year. The SAOs were content with those reforms and reconfirmed their support of the prolongation of the PSI trial period until the end of 2021;
- The SAOs and the WGs discussed a first draft of the SAO Report to Ministers, including deliverables and achievements of the subsidiary bodies as well as their individual work plans for 2019-21. The report will contain a chapter on cross-cutting joint activities such as resilience and the work on Arctic marine litter;
- In addition to the SAO Report to Ministers, preparation by SAOs continued for key documents to be adopted at the Rovaniemi Ministerial meeting, namely the strategic plan and the Rovaniemi declaration;
- The Finnish Chairmanship provided an update of the preparations for the Rovaniemi Ministerial meeting taking place on 6 and 7 May 2019. Invitations and preliminary logistic information will be sent out to delegations soon after the Ruka meeting (were sent on 22 March). The size of Observer delegations will be 1+1. Only Arctic States will be invited at the political level. A weblink for registration will be provided.

### 3. Arctic Council Secretariat annual report for 2018

Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS) director Nina Buvang Vaaja presented the 6<sup>th</sup> annual report for the ACS that gives an overview of the secretariat, including the Indigenous Peoples’ Secretariat (IPS) and the ACAP and EPPR working groups’ (WGs) secretariat located now in the new premises of the Fram Centre in Tromsø, Norway. She reported on the secretariat’s activities and accounts and presented the financial statement and the auditor’s report for approval by the SAOs. The director welcomed the ACS’s newest staff member, Kristina Bär, who took office as Communications Officer in January 2019. In total, the ACS currently counts 12 employees. In addition, there are at the moment two secondments and two IPS interns, Michaela Stith from Alaska (10-month contract) and Michelle Saunders from Canada (two-month contract).

Conclusion: The SAOs took note of the ACS’s 2018 annual report. The accounts and the auditor’s report for 2018 were approved and will be forwarded to the Rovaniemi Ministerial

in May 2019 for final adoption. The complete annual report will be uploaded to the [Arctic Council Open Access Repository](#) following the Ministerial.

## 4. Report from the WGs-Observers session

PAME Chair, Renée Sauvé, informed delegates about the thematic session on marine litter between the Arctic Council WGs and Observers held on 13 March 2019 in parallel with the SAO executive meeting in Ruka. She noted that the discussions had been very enlightening and that the results had surpassed the participants' expectations. Everyone was ready and able to engage on the best ways to cooperate on this Arctic and global challenge. The workshop session included a presentation by Magnús Jóhannesson from Iceland who informed participants that marine litter, including microplastics in the Arctic, would be a priority for the incoming Icelandic Arctic Council Chairmanship. Exchanges between WGs and Observers followed Iceland's presentation.

Coordination on this issue is not easy given that a significant amount of marine litter in the Arctic comes from outside the region. This was another reminder of the importance of cooperation between the Arctic Council and Observers to better understand the provenance of marine litter and how to coordinate efforts to reduce it. The discussion provided useful information on research being conducted on marine litter, retrieval and restoration practices, and actions and regulations – existing or under development – used to address the issue. Many speakers reiterated the importance of engaging communities as part of the solution to combat marine litter.

The WGs and Observers had also a more general discussion on ways to enhance their cooperation. As one option, EPPR Chair Jens Peter Holst-Andersen proposed a “speed-dating” session back-to-back with one of the forthcoming meetings where Observers and WGs could meet individually to share how they could best cooperate. The EPPR Chair offered to lead this initiative in collaboration with the WGs, Observers and the incoming Chairmanship.

The SAO Chair thanked WGs and Observers for all the extra work they have been doing during the Finnish Chairmanship that helps strengthen Arctic cooperation.

## 5. Observers' regular reporting<sup>1</sup>

The ACS director provided an update about the process for regular reporting from the Observers in 2018. According to the “Arctic Council Rules of Procedure” (annex 2), every two years Observers are asked to provide up-to-date information about relevant activities and their contributions to the work of the Arctic Council. In 2018, the ACS received a total of 20

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<sup>1</sup> The Observer regular report process should not be mixed up with the Observer review process, which, according to the “Rules of procedure,” occurs every four years from the date Observers have been granted the status of Observer. During 2019-21, the Observers admitted in 1998-2000 will be reviewed.



submissions from the Observers who were asked to provide reports covering their ongoing activities related to the work of the Arctic Council. The National Geographic Society (NGS) decided in 2018 to withdraw as Observer of the Arctic Council. All 2018 Observer reports have been compiled into a single document that can be found on the Arctic Council's [Open Access Repository](#). The ACS director thanked all Observers for their time and efforts throughout the reporting process.

The SAO Chair concluded that the purpose of this reporting process was to learn more about the work of the Observers with Arctic Council subsidiary bodies, and their efforts to help strengthen Arctic cooperation.

## 6. Update on SAON

SAON Chair Thorsteinn Gunnarsson presented an update of the [Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks](#) (SAON), which was established by the Nuuk Declaration in 2011. SAON envisions a connected, collaborative and comprehensive pan-Arctic observing system that serves societal needs. SAON's current strategy and implementation plan were approved in 2018. Mr. Gunnarsson reminded the delegates that one of SAON's goals was to create a roadmap for a well-integrated Arctic observing system. SAON aims to promote free and open access observational data and ensure the sustainability of observing.

The SAON Chair explained that one of SAON's keystone efforts that identified 12 Social Benefit Areas was launched in the 1<sup>st</sup> Arctic Scientific Ministerial. Under Finland's Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the Finnish Meteorological Institute has been leading a project on value tree analysis methodology related to Social Benefit Areas, and a report from the project will soon be published. The next Arctic Observing Summit, SAON's outreach event, will take place in 2020 and it will include preparations for input for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Science Ministerial.

The SAO Chair thanked Mr. Gunnarsson for his presentation. Many SAOs recognized that SAON was delivering meaningful work that helps expand knowledge on and for the Arctic. It was also noted that SAON should continue its efforts in strengthening the integration of different types of knowledge, in particular that of indigenous peoples.

## 7. Working Groups: review and approval of proposed deliverables for the 2019 Ministerial

The WG Chairs presented a brief overview of their deliverables for final approval at the Rovaniemi Ministerial, as well as highlights from their 2019-2021 work plans. Background information on the deliverables can be found in the [Rovaniemi SAO Summary Report](#) of November 2018. Additional information can be found in update presentations made by the

Working Groups, Task Forces and Expert Group available on the Arctic Council Open Access Repository website of the [Ruka SAO meeting](#).

## 7.1 SDWG proposed deliverables for the 2019 Rovaniemi Ministerial and work plan for 2019-2021

### 7.1.1 Deliverables

SDWG Chair Pekka Shemeikka presented SDWG's projects and activities that were carried out in accordance with the new SDWG Strategic Framework approved at the Fairbanks Ministerial in 2017. For the period 2017-2019, there were over 20 projects in progress or under development, organized under four thematic groups.

SDWG deliverables approved by the SAOs and forwarded on for ministerial approval are listed below:

**Thematic Group 1:** Educational Opportunities; Heritage and Culture of Arctic Communities; Reduction and/or Elimination of Inequalities

Projects/deliverables include:

- **Teacher Education for Diversity and Equality in the Arctic:** project conclusions and book on policies of inclusion and equity;
- **EALLU – Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems: Youth, Knowledge and Change 2015-2019:** report including recommendations;
- **Gender Equality in the Arctic II:** website created by a circumpolar network of experts.

**Thematic Group 2:** Human Health; Community Vitality; Water and Sanitation Services

Projects/deliverables include:

- **One Arctic – One Health:** report including proposed action items for further work;
- **Circumpolar Resilience, Engagement and Action Through Story (CREATeS):** report and digital stories (videos) created by Arctic indigenous youth;
- **Arctic Resilience Action Framework (ARAF) project:** implementation project report and SDWG suggestions on further work on ARAF;
- **Best Waste Management Practices for Small and Remote Arctic Communities:** report including findings and proposed ways forward.

**Thematic Group 3:** Infrastructure; Sustainable Energy; Science and Research for Sustainable Development; Sustainable Business Involvement and Development.

Projects/deliverables include:

- **Good Practices for Environmental Impact Assessment and Meaningful Engagement in the Arctic:** report including good practice recommendations;
- **Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit:** report and toolkit on community energy

planning and implementation;

- **Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy (ARENA):** report and digital communication materials;
- **The Arctic as a Food-Producing Region:** report including policy considerations.

### 7.1.2 SDWG Work Plan for 2019-2021

SDWG Chair summarized SDWG's work plan for 2019-2021, which contains many initiatives both ongoing and new. The work plan was approved by the SAOs, with the understanding that its final version will be part of the Rovaniemi SAO Report to Ministers, which is not yet finalized.

#### Discussion

The wide array of the important work done by SDWG, e.g. on human health including mental health, environmental impact assessments and sustainable energy solutions, was welcomed by the SAO meeting. One delegate noted that the SDWG deliverables give the Arctic Council some powerful communications tools that should be strategically deployed.

Follow-up on the implementation of the Arctic Resilience Action Framework (ARAF) as a cross-cutting initiative has been one of SDWG's duties during 2017-19. The activities of the SDWG on this issue were welcomed. Resilience would not continue to be a stand-alone project in the SDWG for the next two years, but SDWG would possibly revisit the resilience issue in 2020.

## 7.2 PAME proposed deliverables for the Rovaniemi Ministerial and work plan for 2019-2021

### 7.2.1 Deliverables

PAME Chair Renée Sauvé presented PAME's key projects including a subset of 14 products that include i) trend analysis and recommendations; ii) best practices and voluntary guidelines; and iii) coordinated strategic plans. She noted that several deliverables represented a culmination of dedicated work over a number of years.

PAME deliverables approved by the SAOs and forwarded on for ministerial approval are listed below:

- **Underwater Noise in the Arctic:** report on the state of scientific knowledge and guidance for future work and resources on this issue;
- **Desktop study on Marine Litter, including microplastics in the Arctic (Phase I):** report on the prevention and/or reduction of marine litter pollution in the Arctic and guidance for future work and resources on this issue;
- **Guidelines for Implementing an Ecosystem Approach to Management of Arctic Marine Ecosystems:** to assist scientists, policy-makers, managers and communities in implementing an ecosystem approach for the Arctic marine environment;

- **Second reporting on the progress and implementation of the 2015-2025 Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP):** report on status of relevant AMSP strategic actions for 2017-19 and follow-up activities for 2019-21.

PAME Chair noted that the report on underwater noise provides a baseline understanding on the issue in the Arctic. The level of underwater noise has been found to be generally lower in the Arctic than in other areas of the globe, but seasonal and spatial variation is observed. Previous research has demonstrated that some vertebrates react to or avoid noise, but more information is needed to fill the existing knowledge gaps.

The report on marine litter highlights the need for more comprehensive understanding on sources, pathways and effects of litter in Arctic waters. The work on ecosystem approach will continue with the second congress on ecosystem approach in June 2019.

One project, Meaningful Engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Marine Activities (MEMA) Part II (Findings for Policy Makers), was delayed and will be submitted to SAOs intersessionally for their approval.

#### 7.2.2 PAME Work Plan for 2019-2021

PAME Chair summarized PAME's work plan for 2019-2021, which contains approximately 30 initiatives in five areas of work, both ongoing and new. The work plan was approved by the SAOs, with the understanding that its final version will be part of the Rovaniemi SAO Report to Ministers, which is still not finalized.

#### Discussion

There was general agreement that PAME had produced an impressive body of work. Some delegates reminded PAME and other WGs to ensure strong coordination and complementarity on the important theme of marine litter as a way to further increase the cross-cutting value of future deliverables on the topic. The same comment applied to the long-standing ecosystem approach project (i.e. cooperation between PAME, AMAP, CAFF and SDWG).

In addition to welcoming the deliverables, delegates thanked PAME for the good work on shipping issues, particularly on regional port reception facilities. Work on marine protected areas was also welcomed and further work to integrate indigenous perspectives on this issue is anticipated.

## 7.3 EPPR proposed deliverables for the Rovaniemi Ministerial and work plan for 2019-2021

### 7.3.1 Deliverables

EPPR Chair Jens Peter Holst-Andersen presented EPPR's deliverables and work plan for 2019-2021. He informed the delegations that the EPPR was happy to welcome for the first time GCI at the WG meeting that took place last year in New Orleans.

The EPPR deliverables approved by the SAOs and forwarded on for ministerial approval are listed below:

- **Prevention, preparedness and response in small communities:** outreach awareness videos on response principles for distribution to small communities (in English);
- **ARCSAFE:** report on the prevention, preparedness and response and the safety of rescue workers in case of a maritime accident involving a potential release of radioactive substances in the Arctic;
- **MOSPA 2018 After Action Report** (from the table top exercise in March 2018) **and updated MOSPA operating guidelines;**
- **MOSPA Exercise Planning Guidance:** a tool to facilitate design of future MOSPA exercises;
- **Review of Legal Challenges related to the MOSPA Agreement:** summary report synthesizing the MOSPA technical report to clarify liability issues for responder and requesting state(s), including recommendations for the MOSPA Parties;

EPPR Chair noted that the Follow-Up on the Framework Plan for Oil Pollution Prevention and Response will be submitted for adoption intersessionally. He also indicated that the EPPR Image Database was an ongoing project to be delivered during the Icelandic Chairmanship.

### 7.3.2 EPPR Work Plan for 2019-2021

EPPR Chair summarized EPPR's work plan for 2019-2021, which contains many initiatives both ongoing and new. The work plan was approved by the SAOs, with the understanding that its final version will be part of the Rovaniemi SAO Report to Ministers, which is still not finalized.

#### Discussion

Delegates expressed interest in the EPPR's upcoming circumpolar work on oil spills as well as on the growing concern raised by Arctic wildfires. In addition to response to wildfires, work on early warning systems were called for in the discussion. The SAO Chair commended EPPR for the innovative way of presenting its work through different traditional and non-traditional (digital-virtual) platforms.

## 7.4 CAFF proposed deliverables for the Rovaniemi Ministerial and work plan for 2019-2021

### 7.4.1 Deliverables

CAFF Chair Cynthia Jacobson presented CAFF's deliverables and work plan for 2019-2021.

CAFF deliverables approved by the SAOs and forwarded on for ministerial approval are listed below:

- **Arctic Coastal Biodiversity Monitoring Plan:** fourth and final monitoring plan under

the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme, based on multi-knowledge and ecosystem-based approaches and building a platform for co-production of knowledge;

- **State of the Arctic Freshwater Biodiversity Report (SAFBR):** scientific report and key findings and advice for monitoring;
- **Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI) workplan for 2019-2023:** collaboratively developed workplan involving experts from the Arctic States and beyond;
- **Sustainable Management and Resilience of Arctic Wetlands:** results and findings of a scoping study, Phase I, aimed at supporting policy development and developing management strategies to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services that wetlands provide (Phase II underway).

One of the key findings of SAFBR is that Arctic freshwaters are threatened by climate change and human activities, which will affect biodiversity and the ecosystem services that freshwaters provide. Better coordinated and standardized monitoring is needed, as well as inclusion of traditional knowledge and citizen science. As for the AMBI project, CAFF Chair also presented infographics on flyways that have been produced with PSI funding.

CAFF presented a series of progress reports which are submitted to the Ministerial meeting: on Traditional Knowledge; Arctic Biodiversity Data Service (ABDS); ABA implementation; and the Arctic SDI. The CAFF Chair noted that the Salmon Peoples of Arctic Rivers project was delayed and would not be submitted as a deliverable during the Finnish Chairmanship but as a progress report of Phase I. One outstanding deliverable, the Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Arctic Mining: Context, challenges and solutions for improvement report, will be submitted intersessionally for approval.

#### 7.4.2 CAFF Work Plan for 2019-2021

CAFF Chair summarized CAFF's work plan for 2019-2021, which contains many initiatives both ongoing and new. The work plan was approved by the SAOs, with the understanding that its final version will be part of the Rovaniemi SAO Report to Ministers, which is still not finalized.

#### Discussion

Many delegates recognized the abundance and value of the work produced by CAFF, which increased knowledge in areas that are less known and also led to new findings in the Arctic and abroad. It was reiterated that projects under CAFF demonstrate what the Arctic Council does well and is trying to perfect in terms of traditional knowledge and local knowledge integration in its work, as well as engaging with other bodies, stakeholders including the private sector and the Observers. The Saami Council highlighted the importance the Salmon Peoples project had on the co-production of knowledge about salmon populations on which indigenous people depend on. As the Actions for Arctic Biodiversity target year is 2021, review on its progress and an update of the plan was anticipated.

## 7.5 AMAP proposed deliverables for the Rovaniemi Ministerial and work plan for 2019-2021

### 7.5.1 Deliverables

AMAP Chair Marianne Kroglund presented AMAP's deliverables and work plan for 2019-2021. She noted how WGs significantly depend on scientists to produce Arctic Council deliverables.

AMAP deliverables approved by the SAOs and forwarded on for ministerial approval are listed below:

- **Arctic Climate Change Update 2019:** an update to key findings of Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA) 2017 with recommended action steps on i) limiting change; ii) adapting to impacts; and iii) improving understanding.
- **Arctic Ocean Acidification Assessment 2018 Summary for Policymakers:** case studies, key findings and recommendations to i) address the causes; ii) enhance research and iii) help resilience-building that reflects local and societal needs.
- **AMAP Assessment 2018 Biological Effects of Contaminants on Arctic Wildlife and Fish, Summary for Policymakers:** including key messages and recommendations on i) strengthening and accelerating measures to eliminate domestic use of PCBs, where needed; ii) increasing efforts to ensure environmentally sound management of PCB-containing waste and identifying hot spot areas; iii) full implementation of the Minamata Convention; and iv) continued support for monitoring and research to evaluate the effectiveness of measures to reduce contamination in the Arctic. Also addressing multiple stressors and new chemicals is encouraged;

AMAP Chair reminded the SAO meeting that climate change continues unabated in the Arctic, over two times faster in speed than the Northern hemisphere average and that the Arctic sea ice is increasingly vulnerable. Terrestrial and marine ecosystems as well as Arctic communities are also highly affected. One effect is the economic loss for fisheries as highlighted in the case studies on ocean acidification. As for the contaminants, pollution control activities have led to successes, in which the Arctic States have played a significant role, but some contaminants remain problematic.

In addition, the Strategic Framework 2019+ with guiding principles such as scientific integrity, inclusion of diverse perspectives, responsiveness and knowledge mobilization was approved by the SAOs.

### 7.5.2 AMAP Work Plan for 2019-2021

AMAP Chair summarized AMAP's work plan for 2019-2021, which contains many initiatives both ongoing and new. AMAP's climate work will include, i.a., more attention to extreme weather patterns in the Arctic. The work plan was approved by the SAOs, with the understanding that its final version will be part of the Rovaniemi SAO Report to Ministers, which is still not finalized.



## Discussion

There was general agreement on the high quality of the work produced by AMAP and how the future work of the WG will be important for Arctic societies. Inclusion of meteorological expertise in AMAP work was appreciated, as was AMAP's activity in crosscutting work. The Saami Council strongly encouraged AMAP to continue its efforts to better integrate traditional knowledge in its work. The AMAP Chair responded by noting how AMAP will strive to work closer with indigenous populations to find solutions, perhaps by focusing future work on smaller projects than large assessments.

## 7.6 ACAP proposed deliverables for the Rovaniemi Ministerial and work plan for 2019-2021

### 7.6.1 Deliverables

ACAP Chair Ulrik Westman noted that the working group will be delivering "showcase items" at the 2019 Rovaniemi Ministerial as none of ACAP's ongoing 17 projects have translated into deliverables. He reported that with continued progress, these items should become deliverables for the 2021 Icelandic Ministerial meeting. He also expressed a wish that the Arctic Council States would show leadership on climate change mitigation, as climate change is a major concern for the Arctic.

The SAO Chair reminded SAOs and PPs that the Arctic Council did not need to approve ACAP's items but looked forward reading the WG's projects in the SAO Report to Ministers to be adopted in Rovaniemi.

ACAP's showcase items for the Ministerial are listed below:

- **Black Carbon Case Studies:** including a video on black carbon and the history of ACAP's work, as well as a fact sheet for Arctic communities seeking to improve their energy reliability and/or reduce emissions from key sources;
- **Framework for the Circumpolar Expansion of the Local Environmental Observer Network (CLEO):** showcasing the LEO Reporter at ACAP's booth in Rovaniemi and translation of CLEO materials into additional languages;
- **Flaring and Greenhouse Gas Projects:** fact sheet on i) Mitigation of Black Carbon and Methane Emissions from Associated Petroleum Gas (APG) Flaring and ii) Phase-out of Ozone Depleting Substances and Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases at Fish and Seafood Processing Enterprises of the Murmansk Oblast.

### 7.6.2 ACAP Work Plan for 2019-2021

The ACAP Chair summarized the ACAP Work Plan for 2019-2021, which contains many initiatives both ongoing and new, to be conducted under ACAP's four expert groups.



## Discussion

Asked about the potential issue of prioritization of its many activities and projects in the work plan, the ACAP Chair clarified that several of the working group's projects were on a standstill and that it was necessary to keep slightly larger portfolios to choose from on a long-term basis (i.e. natural selection of projects in different temporal contexts). ACAP's increased involvement in waste management was welcomed by many of those who spoke. The work plan was approved by the SAOs, with the understanding that its final version will be part of the Rovaniemi SAO Report to Ministers, which is still not finalized.

Five out of the six Working Group Chairs were participating in their final SAO meeting in that capacity and were commended for their valuable contributions to the work of the Arctic Council.

## 8. Task Forces and other subsidiary bodies: review and approval of proposed deliverables for the 2019 Rovaniemi Ministerial

### 8.1 Black Carbon and Methane Expert Group (EGBCM)

The EGBCM Chair Mikael Hildén provided an update on the work of the expert group. He presented the findings of the 2017-2019 report and noted that the Arctic States as well as the Observer States reporting to EGBCM were moving in the right direction in reducing emissions of black carbon since 2013. A generally decreasing trend of methane emissions has been detected in the Arctic, however challenges remain. Significant emission reductions in the future can also be projected.

The EGBCM agrees on a wealth of actions that can be recommended to reduce emissions. As for areas where consensus is still lacking with regard to the final EGBCM report, the Chair identified three areas of concern. These are: a collective aspirational goal on black carbon reduction versus national actions; ongoing and future actions to reduce black carbon emissions from Arctic shipping; and ongoing and future actions to reduce gas flaring. The EGBCM Chair was looking forward to continuing constructive dialogue on these matters to finalize the report for the Rovaniemi Ministerial.

The future work of EGBCM should include more complete data to track the progress as well as a more systematic documentation and evaluation of policies and measures. Mutual learning between the Arctic States and Observer States provides opportunities.

The SAOC thanked the expert group for its tireless work throughout the Finnish Chairmanship and expressed the wish that the EG could soon finalize its report.

## 8.2 Task Force for Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC II)

The TFAMC's Co-Chair, Dr. Anita Mäkinen, reported on the work and the recommendations developed by the TFAMC II. Following the request of the SAOs, the TFAMC II had focused its work on developing recommendations for potential complementary enhancements to the existing Arctic Council mechanisms. The TFAMC II deliverable to the Ministers will consist of Co-Chairs' report and TFAMC II recommendations annexed to it.

Since the Fairbanks Ministerial in 2017, the task force was able to identify complementary enhancements to existing mechanisms that meet seven of the nine functional needs identified by the previous TF in 2015-17. The primary recommendation from the TFAMC II is to establish a SAO-based mechanism to guide the marine work of the Arctic Council and improve coordination on marine issues in the Arctic Council. The remaining two functional needs to be addressed are the extension of cooperation on marine stewardship and cross-sectoral integration, and further work is also needed on the functional need regarding regional cooperation on area-based stewardship.

The TFAMC II report leaves the decision to the SAOs which secretariats (ACS and/or PAME) would assume possible new responsibilities regarding Arctic Council marine activities. Dr. Mäkinen noted that the Co-Chairs decided not to conduct a detailed cost assessment on its recommendations for enhancements but determined that the costs would mainly occur from convening annual consultations of SAOs with marine experts and the hiring of one marine expert for one of the chosen secretariats.

### Discussion and conclusion

The SAOs thanked the TFAMC II for their work and decided to approve the report and the recommendations to be delivered to the Ministers. Following the proposal by the Russian Federation, it was decided that the word "work" in "SAO-based mechanism to guide the marine work" would be replaced with word "activities." Iceland proposed to discuss the practical organization of the SAO-based mechanism in detail at the Icelandic SAOX meeting in June 2019. Some SAOs highlighted the possibility to revisit the establishment of a possible new subsidiary body for the Arctic Council later, if needed.

## 8.3 Update on the Task Force on Improved Connectivity in the Arctic (TFICA)

TFICA Co-Chair Marjukka Vihavainen-Pitkänen presented the key findings and recommendations of the final draft report prepared by the Task Force.

The Co-Chair explained that the TFICA had met four times over the past fourteen months to get insight and input from key stakeholders in preparation of the report, examining potential connectivity solutions for the Arctic – both technological developments of special interest to the Arctic, as well as various financial models that have been used to improve connectivity in hard-to-serve/access locations across the Circumpolar North.

TFICA recommends the Arctic Council to work with the telecommunications industry and to facilitate engagement of indigenous peoples during the design and implementation phases of network technology infrastructure. The Arctic Council should engage with the AEC and other experts to expand and accelerate network deployment across the Arctic and highlight the connectivity needs of different user groups. The Arctic States are encouraged to provide regulatory clarity and reduce regulatory burden while respecting environmental assessments as well as to be technology neutral and allow a mix of technologies, including consideration of ways to accommodate emerging technologies.

The SAOs and PPs welcomed the report and agreed that the TFICA had successfully completed its mandate and that work on connectivity should remain high on the agenda of the Arctic Council. The incoming Icelandic Chairmanship informed the delegates that connectivity would remain a priority of the Arctic Council during the next two years with work focusing on connectivity gaps in the Arctic, exploring partnerships with PPs, and working more closely with the Arctic Economic Council (AEC).

Delegates discussed different options for future Arctic Council work on improving connectivity, in particular a proposal made by the United States to identify a senior level representative from the telecommunications industry that would utilize the Arctic Council TFTA and TFICA reports and work with the industries and communities to address Arctic-specific needs in connectivity projects. The Arctic Council would support the work via a focus team. There was overall agreement that the AEC is a logical partner to promote connectivity in the Arctic, but more discussion on practical organization of the work would still be needed, including with regard to the U.S. proposal on a senior principal. It was noted that new TFs or EGs on connectivity would not be the preferred way forward.

### Conclusion

The SAOs approved the TFICA report and it would now be submitted to the Arctic Council Ministers for adoption at the Rovaniemi Ministerial in May 2019.

## 9. Arctic Council participation in meetings of other bodies

### 9.1 Arctic Council side event at UNFCCC COP24

Henna Haapala, Ministerial Adviser at the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, briefed delegates on the Arctic Council's side event coordinated by Finland on "Curbing black carbon emissions for health and Arctic climate benefits" that was held on 10 December 2018 at the UNFCCC COP24 in Katowice, Poland. This side event presented current knowledge on black carbon, its climate and health impacts, as well as initiatives to reduce emissions by the Arctic Council and other stakeholders. At that meeting, opening remarks were made by the Ministers of the Environment of both Finland and Poland with about 60 to 70 participants in

attendance. The event is archived online [here](#). SAOs agreed that this kind of events are a valuable method for outreach.

## 9.2 Upcoming events with possible Arctic Council participation

The SAO for Finland René Söderman briefed delegates on the Arctic Council's side events organized during the Finnish Chairmanship. Over the past two years, the Arctic Council has been represented in side events at the UNFCCC COPs and at the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). The WGs have also been represented in conferences of parties of conventions, relevant to their work.

The SAO for Iceland Bryndís Kjartansdóttir noted that the incoming Chairmanship would continue Finland's practice of having the Arctic Council participate in relevant international events. This approach was mentioned as being consistent with the Arctic Council's Communications Strategy adopted in 2017. She informed the SAOs that they would be provided with a calendar of events for consideration and discussion at the first Icelandic SAOX in June 2019. She also looked for continuous support from the ACS in organizing possible side events. The SAOs welcomed Iceland's intent to continue this practice and looked forward to receiving a calendar of events for input and discussion in June. WGs highlighted their readiness to participate in these kind of important outreach activities, as resources allow.

## 10. Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation, report from the Inaugural Meeting

Frej Sorento Dichmann, Senior Advisor at the Ministry of Higher Education and Science in the Kingdom of Denmark provided a report on the inaugural meeting of the *Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation* that took place in Helsinki on 11 March 2019. The agreement, which was signed at the Arctic Council Fairbanks Ministerial meeting in 2017, came into force in 2018. It is intended to facilitate access to infrastructure, data and other relevant platforms or tools for researchers across the circumpolar North.

The inaugural meeting included both a public event and a closed-door event for the signatory parties to discuss implementation issues. All signatories were represented at the event. The PPs had also been invited to attend. Mr. Dichmann noted that the parties had made efforts thus far to disseminate information of the agreement, but that much work was still needed on addressing hindrances as well as sharing of best practices. The signatories have reached different stages of the implementation process, e.g. facilitating access to work permits. Stakeholder survey by UArctic had proven to be useful.

The meeting agreed on the development of a simple communication template for the use of researchers. A webpage will be created on the Arctic Council website with information about the agreement and its implementation process. Organization of next meetings concerning the agreement would follow the Arctic Council chairmanship with the next one held in 2020 in Iceland.

The SAO Chair thanked the Kingdom of Denmark for the swift beginning of the agreement's implementation process and Mr. Dichmann for his informative and encouraging presentation.

## 11. Report 'Business Finance in the Arctic'

Senior Advisor from the Kingdom of Denmark Anne Meldgaard, followed by the Chair of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC), Tero Vauraste, presented a study on business finance in the Arctic, commissioned by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and published in December 2018. The study, prepared in cooperation with the AEC, aims to gain a better and deeper understanding of business finance for small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups in the Arctic region and to present recommendations on how to improve the investment climate across the region. The study includes a register of available financing instruments for start-ups, microfirms and SMEs in the Arctic.

According to the report, the lack of venture capital is the biggest challenge hindering SME growth in the Arctic. Many of the recommendations of the report aim at improving the investment climate – to that end, the AEC proposes the development of an Arctic investment matrix taking advantage of the existing mechanisms as well as creating new ones, if needed. The AEC is seeking and mapping best practices that are in line with the Arctic Investment Protocol, as one of the recommendations of the business finance report is to make the Protocol applicable.

SAOs and PPs welcomed the report and its recommendations as a step forward to understand the challenges and opportunities related to Arctic development and find innovative solutions that could ultimately benefit Arctic inhabitants.

The SAO Chair concluded that there was general agreement among delegates that the report from Denmark/AEC and increased Arctic Council-AEC cooperation were both welcomed and needed in the future.

## 12. Update on Arctic SDI

The Director General of the National Land Survey of Finland and Chair of the Arctic Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) Arvo Kokkonen presented Arctic SDI's work, services and tools. The Arctic SDI reports to the Arctic Council via CAFF. The SDI is a joint project by all of the National Mapping Agencies of the Arctic States. Through its [Geoportal](#), Arctic SDI offers free-of-charge

tools to help Arctic stakeholders including the Arctic Council WGs visualize and deliver their data to decision-makers and other relevant audiences. It will soon provide users with tools to visualize statistical and spatial data on different themes such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and polar views of thawing Arctic sea ice.

CAFF Chair commented that CAFF had benefited enormously by working with the Arctic SDI to help develop CAFF's data management and acquire technical help and support. AMAP Chair noted that it was exploring the opportunities to collaborate with the Arctic SDI. The SAO Chair reminded the delegates that a similar briefing had taken place during the United States' Chairmanship, therefore this effort to collaborate between the Arctic Council and the Arctic SDI was another demonstration of continuity in Arctic cooperation.

## 13. Update on the Icelandic Arctic Council Chairmanship 2019-21

The SAO for Iceland Bryndís Kjartansdóttir briefed the delegates on the upcoming Icelandic Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, 2019-2021. She noted that the program for the Icelandic Chairmanship had remained the same since the Rovaniemi SAO meeting in 2018 and that the incoming Chairmanship had received positive feedback on its priorities for the next two years. She highlighted some changes to the dates of both regular meetings and events. The updated list of the Chairmanship's calendar of meetings is available to all participants of the SAO meeting. In addition, she welcomed upcoming engagement from Observers in a planned conference on "Plastics in the Arctic Ocean" to be held in April 2020. More details about this conference are available [on this website](#).

## 14. Other business

The SAO for Sweden Björn Lyrvall informed delegates of an upcoming joint EU Commission and Swedish high-level EU Arctic Forum in Umeå. The event is hosted by the High Representative of for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström. The forum will take place on 3 October 2019 back-to-back with the Ministerial meeting of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

### 14.1. Environmentally sustainable meetings during the Finnish Chairmanship 2017-19

Annariina Kukkonen, Conference Coordinator from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, provided an overview of the guidelines for environmentally sustainable meetings that the

Finnish Chairmanship decided to implement throughout its 2017-2019 meetings. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs developed these guidelines in cooperation with WWF Finland. WWF is an Observer to the Arctic Council. Ms. Kukkonen provided a briefing on the operationalization of the sustainable meetings concept. She reported that the sustainable meetings initiative has significantly reduced the volume of plastic bottles, paper cups and plates, wrappers, plastic utensils and other trash thrown away during the 12 meetings hosted by the Finnish Chairmanship since 2017. The concept has reduced the use of ground transportation during meetings. An integral part of organization of sustainable meeting are the catering choices. More details on the concept can be found [here](#).

An important aim of the sustainable meetings concept has been to inspire others to apply it in practice. To this end, the SAO of Iceland Bryndís Kjartansdóttir informed the delegates that Iceland would take up these guidelines on sustainable meetings during its Chairmanship. The Finnish MFA also plans to widen the application of the concept in its meetings.

The SAO Chair, joined by the SAO for Finland, commended Ms. Kukkonen for her initiatives throughout the Chairmanship and her innovative and sustainable approach to organizing events.