

Instructions for submitting Observer reports

Introduction

This document provides the reporting template and instructions for Observers required to report during the **Russian Chairmanship**.

The deadline for submission is **1 December 2022**.

According to the “[Arctic Council Rules of Procedure](#)” (Annex 2), every **two years** Observers are requested to submit to the Chairmanship up-to-date information about relevant activities and their contributions to the work of the Arctic Council. Accordingly, the following **19 Observers** from the *Fairbanks Group* are requested to submit their regular report by **1 December 2022**.¹

- Germany;
- The Netherlands;
- Poland;
- Switzerland;
- United Kingdom;
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
- Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM);
- OSPAR Commission (OSPAR);
- Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Regions (SCPAR);
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE);
- United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment);
- West Nordic Council (WNC);
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO);
- Advisory Committee on the Protection of the Seas (ACOPS);
- International Arctic Science Committee (IASC);
- International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES);
- International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH);
- Northern Forum (NF);
- Oceana;
- World Wildlife Fund for Nature – Global Arctic Program (WWF).

¹ The **Fairbanks Group** includes the Observers reviewed for the first time before the Fairbanks Ministerial meeting in 2017, as well as Observers admitted that year. This group of Observers was reviewed for a second time at the Reykjavik Ministerial meeting in 2021.

Role of Observers

The role and responsibilities of Observers, as well as criteria for admission to the Arctic Council, can be found in the “Arctic Council Rules of Procedure” (Annex 2) and the [“Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies.”](#)

The primary role of Observers is to observe the work of the Arctic Council. Observers contribute to the Arctic Council primarily through engagement at the level of Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups. Observers are invited to the meetings and other activities of the Arctic Council unless the Senior Arctic Officials decide otherwise. Observers may also propose projects through an Arctic State or a Permanent Participant.

Report submission

Observer reports should include the relevant information described below and in the template.

- (a) A description of the Observer’s contributions to the work of the Arctic Council since the time of the Observer’s most recent submission, or in the previous two years, with special focus on contributions to the subsidiary bodies through project participation and support, as well as collaboration with Permanent Participants;
- (b) If applicable, a description of the Observer’s future plans to contribute to the work of the Arctic Council, with special focus on contributions to the subsidiary bodies through project participation and support, as well as collaboration with Permanent Participants; and,
- (c) If applicable, a description of the Observer’s contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered in the previous sections since the time of the Observer’s most recent submission, or in the previous two years.

Observer reports should be submitted electronically to the **Arctic Council Secretariat** via email: acs@arctic-council.org not later than **1 December 2022**. Please bear in mind while preparing your report that all Observer reports will be published online in the *Observer* section of the [Arctic Council online Library](#) (OAR) after the 2023 Ministerial meeting.

If an Observer fails to submit a report, the Arctic Council will consider this to mean that the Observer **is no longer interested in maintaining its status** as an accredited Observer to the Arctic Council.

Cover sheet

Full name of Observer State or Observer Organization:

WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature, Arctic Programme

Date of submission of regular report:

16 March 2023

Observer's website:

<https://www.arcticwwf.org/>

Information for appropriate contact person

Full name:

Jan Dusík

Email:

Jan.dusik@wwf.se

Telephone:

+33 6 71 28 13 01

Organization or department:

WWF Arctic Programme

Job Title:

Senior Lead, Governance

Full mailing
address:

Ulriksdals slott
Slottsallén 1
170 79 Solna
SWEDEN

Observer Report

Please describe in no more than two pages your State's or Organization's contributions to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years. Please highlight contributions to specific projects, such as through proposals, concept development, in-kind and financial support, and hosting of meetings. Please detail any collaboration with Permanent Participants, such as project proposal endorsement and support.

Since our previous observer report in 2021 and in spite of challenges of continuity of pan-Arctic cooperation in the past year, WWF has continued extensive and active engagement with the Arctic States and Permanent Participants, contributing to numerous Arctic Council projects.

Underwater Noise in the Arctic: Understanding Impacts and Defining Management Solutions - Phase II. WWF is co-leading together with Canada and the US. WWF's involvement has included concept development, financial support, project coordination and steering, and awareness raising.

Management of Arctic Marine Oil and Gas Associated Noise. WWF is co-leading together with the US and UK. Our main involvement here has been input into project components including a survey and draft report, and provision of financial support for involvement of Permanent Participants in a project workshop.

Wastewater Discharges from Vessels in the Arctic - A Survey of Current Practices: WWF was one of the co-leads of this project. We have provided co-financing and steering of the production of the study *Wastewater Practices in the Arctic: Qualitative Insights*. Based on responses from a dozen Arctic operators from North America and Europe, the study was completed in February 2022 and after the final review and approval by PAME can guide further work of PAME and IMO in addressing wastewater discharges from ships.

In working on *black carbon emissions* from shipping within PAME, WWF has assisted with transfer of knowledge and follow up exchange between the Expert Group on Carbon and Methane and Shipping expert Group. Specifically, WWF has supported the Arctic Council's dedicated focus on black carbon emissions from shipping. To this end, WWF funds a research project to analyse current black carbon and emission data from Arctic shipping for AIS vessels under the Polar Code as well as Arctic Ship Traffic Data from PAME(ASTD). The research findings will inform the Arctic Council in its preparing specific reduction targets for black carbon emissions in the Arctic as part of the next Arctic Council report on black carbon from shipping.

Other Arctic Council work on shipping: WWF contributed to Arctic Council's PAME's Shipping and Expert Group (SEG), Arctic Shipping Best Practices Information Forum (ASBPIF), the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane (EGBCM), and the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR).

Expansion and refinement of the MPA-Network Toolbox: WWF's Martin Sommerkorn is part of the MPA Expert Group. Together with Canada, the US, and ICC, WWF is a partner in the AIA and Saami Council co-led project *Different Ways of Knowing: Applying Indigenous and Local Knowledge and Scientific Information to Arctic Conservation Planning*, which is a contribution to the Toolbox. WWF funds the project's case study coordinator/editor and contributes to a project session at a major international conference (IMPAC5) in early 2023.

Synthesis Report on Ecosystem Status, Human Impact and Management Measures in the Central Arctic Ocean (CAO): WWF serves as a co-lead with Canada, Finland, Sweden and US. We participated actively in the development of the project proposal, helped secure funding of the coordinating lead author, one chapter and a face-to-face workshop of the co-authors. WWF has also contributed to the development of the first draft report, by providing comments and participating in the co-leads' meeting.

Revision of the Ecosystem Approach Framework (EA) and development of a tool for following EA implementation in the Arctic LMEs. WWF's Martin Sommerkorn in his capacity as a member of EA EG engages in concept discussions and drafting papers. WWF contributed to updating guidance for national implementation of ecosystem-based management across the Arctic Ocean and works as part of the steering group for the Arctic Council's 2024 Ecosystem Approach Conference to develop the programme and speaker lists.

7th EA Workshop on values and valuation of the cultural, social and economic goods and services produced by the ecosystems. As a member of EA EG, WWF's Martin Sommerkorn is contributing to group learnings and discussions on the topic and shaping the workshop programme and speaker list of the workshop.

WWF serves also as a member of an advisory board of a joint PAME-CAFF project on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM) in the Arctic Marine Environment. WWF contributed to a project session at a major international conference (IMPAC5) in early 2023.

Advancing Arctic Resilience: WWF was co-leading the preparations with Finland, Russia, Iceland, US and AAC. WWF promoted the theme of climate change for its 2022 edition, focusing on impacts of permafrost thawing on resilience. However, the Forum has not convened as a consequence of the strategic pause of the Arctic Council.

Covid-19 in the Arctic: WWF contributed to the designing of the project and future report within SDWG, based on our 2021 report *Left Out in the Cold*. The results of the report and the updates were accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, *The Arctic Yearbook*, to be published in summer 2023.

AMAP project on ecosystems impacts & feedbacks on climate: WWF aims to inform this project with our extensive work on our [Arctic Conservation Forecast](#) (Arcon4) initiative. Arcon4 demonstrates a multi-disciplinary process for describing plausible futures for Arctic terrestrial and marine ecosystems under different greenhouse gas emissions pathways and presents scenarios of those plausible futures. It is designed as an approach to provide policy makers with science-based, robust information to proactively conserve the Arctic environment in the face of uncertainty.

CAFF Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative and CBMP: WWF supports work on migratory birds in Russia (Taimyr) and northern Sweden that will contribute to this project through identification of flyways and protection of important Arctic habitats. WWF is also supporting a number of research projects on species that are CAFF Focal Ecosystem Components in marine and terrestrial ecosystems. The projects focus on caribou, narwhal, bowhead whales, walrus and polar bears in different parts of the Arctic, the findings of which will contribute information useful to population status, important habitats and responses to climate change for informing CAFF's Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP).

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your State's or Organization's future plans for contributing to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups. Please highlight intentions to contribute to specific projects and to collaborate with Permanent Participants.

WWF's Arctic Programme has been working in the Arctic for over 30 years, and as a long-serving observer will continue to offer and provide support, expert advice and substantive input into the various working groups of the Arctic Council. We will continue our engagement in the projects we are already involved in and look forward to contributing to development of potential new projects.

We would like to stress that there is an urgent need to step up efforts to conserve and protect Arctic biodiversity and ecosystems, and WWF stands ready to support the Arctic States and Permanent Participants in this work. To further implement the Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021-2030, and contributing to regionally coherent implementation of the CBD Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework ("GBF") and the Draft agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction ("future BBNJ Agreement"), WWF encourages the Arctic Council to build a strong programme of work on area-based conservation for the coming three chairships from 2023 until 2029.

By 2029, we would like to see an Arctic Council that has contributed to the **establishment and effective management of a network of priority areas for conservation covering at least 30% of the Arctic Ocean**; augmented with measures **safeguarding ecological connectivity** across the Arctic Ocean and to the seas to the South; and embedded in **integrated ecosystem-based marine spatial planning frameworks** of the surrounding seascape, to enhance and deliver the ecosystem-based management of Arctic Large Marine Ecosystems. WWF stands ready to contribute with our extensive expertise on these issues and develop and implement Arctic Council projects that would advance the Council's work towards these goals.

We look forward to the resumption and continuation of work of the Arctic Council and further steps towards effective implementation of the Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021-2030.

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your State's or Organization's contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered by the previous sections since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years.

WWF is carrying out a project called ArcNet – An Arctic Ocean Network of Priority Areas for Conservation with the overall goal of identifying and mapping an ecologically representative and well-connected pan-Arctic network of marine areas that require special management for the conservation and protection of biodiversity, ecological processes, and associated ecosystem services and cultural values. This project builds on the Arctic Council Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas (2015) and PAME's MPA-network toolbox (2015-2017), facilitating concrete next steps identified there that the Arctic Council WGs or Task Forces are not carrying forward at this time. WWF continues to share the project's proceedings, results, and outputs with the Arctic Council and its Subsidiary Bodies, particularly PAME and CAFF. The ArcNet project is also informed by, and informs, the ongoing work of PAME's MPA and EA Expert Groups, to both of which WWF contributed continuously throughout the reporting period.

WWF is engaging in global forums - particularly IMO structures - to promote sustainable shipping in the Arctic through a transition away from fossil fuel propulsion, the prevention of oil spills and accidents, and the reduction of the impact of ship pollution on biodiversity, including underwater noise. We will liaise and work together with the representatives of Arctic Indigenous Peoples in these international fora whenever possible. In 2021 WWF initiated an Arctic Council discussion on a black carbon target for shipping and sent a letter to the Arctic Council on HFO and Decarbonization, calling on actions by Arctic states to i.a. eliminate the use of HFO and prevent the carriage of HFO as bunker fuel, without exemptions or waivers. WWF has prepared a policy brief, [Strengthening the Polar Code](#), based on the comprehensive review previously conducted by WWF and also incorporating relevant insight from the five annual meetings of the Arctic Shipping Best Practices Forum under PAME. The WWF work on the Polar Code was welcomed during the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee Session 106 (MSC 106) by several member states and the next steps on the review of the IMO's Polar Code for addressing the gaps are currently undertaken.

WWF has raised awareness to industry, government and the military on knowledge about (including PAME work) and action needed on underwater noise in the Arctic, through presentations at the [Vanguard Ship Tech Forum](#) (February 2022), a global webinar by CBD to launch its [Technical series on anthropogenic underwater noise](#) (May 2022), a [Polar Maritime Seminar](#) hosted by IMO and the Nautical Institute (October 2022) and through participation in the review of 2014 IMO guidelines to reduce impacts of underwater noise from shipping. Also, presentations on shipping impact on marine mammals and biodiversity were made to key shipping industry organizations, including the American Bureau of Shipping, and the Sustainable Shipping Initiative (SSI). Next steps will be to expand WWF engagement with shipping companies and the insurance sector on introducing guidelines on the measures to minimize shipping impact on marine biodiversity.

In January 2022 WWF sent a letter to the Arctic Council chairship on marine governance, highlighting that strategic leadership from the Senior Arctic Officials is important to complement the work on various projects undertaken by the Council's working groups and to give political direction for the update of the Arctic Council's Marine Strategic Plan. In spite of the pause of the Arctic Council since March 2022, the upscaling of Arctic marine governance remains highly relevant, also in view of global commitments such as the GBF and the future BBNJ Agreement. With this in mind we also prepared and shared with the Arctic Council members and permanent participants a WWF policy paper with suggestions of opportunities for advancing ecosystem management in the Arctic Ocean, also in the context of implementing the Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021-2030 (March 2023).