

Progress report from the AMAP Board to the SAO Meeting in Yakutsk, Russia April 6-7, 2005

1. Administrative issues

The loss of our friend and colleague Vitaly Kimstach in the Tsunami disaster on December 26, 2004 was a major blow for the AMAP Secretariat. Vitaly held the position of Deputy Executive Secretary in AMAP since 1993 and over the years made an invaluable contribution, not only to the work of AMAP but also in relation to ACAP projects, other Arctic Council initiatives, and activities organized under other international bodies. In particular, his work to facilitate the active engagement of the Russian Federation in AMAP during the early years of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy cannot be over-estimated.

The funeral of Vitaly Kimstach and a memorial service were held in Oslo at the end of February, and on behalf of Vitaly's widow and daughter, and the staff at the AMAP Secretariat, we would like to express our thanks for the many warm words of condolence received from all parts of the Arctic Council, and the wider Arctic community.

Although it will be difficult to fill the gap left by Vitaly, the AMAP Secretariat have started the process to look for a new member of the Secretariat.

To improve the situation within the Secretariat to manage accounting tasks, including project accounting work, an external professional accountant, Grethe Øksnes, has been engaged part-time. This represents a cost-effective solution to reducing the burden that these tasks were placing on the AMAP Administrative Assistant.

2. Update on ongoing work

The AMAP Strategic Plan 2004+ and Workplan for 2005-2006

The *AMAP Strategic Plan 2004+* was approved at the Ministerial meeting in Reykjavik in November 2004. Consistent with proposals presented to the SAOs in the document that was approved in November, the plan has now been updated to incorporate texts reflecting the ACIA follow-up decisions made in Reykjavik.

AMAP is following the workplan for the period 2005-2006 that was presented in the SAO report to Ministers, and approved at the Ministerial meeting in Reykjavik. At the AMAP Extended Heads of Delegation meeting in Helsinki in March 2005, and in accordance with decisions made by the Ministers and SAOs in Reykjavik, the AMAP WG agreed that the following item should be added to the workplan for 2005-2006:

Respond to the Reykjavik Ministerial request concerning follow-up of ACIA by, *inter alia*:

- Identifying specific activities that fall within AMAP's core capabilities, including proposals for implementing these activities under the AMAP programmes.
- Seeking, in collaboration with other Working Groups, and other international organizations, to address the wider multi- and interdisciplinary aspects of research and monitoring as identified in the ACIA recommendations regarding gaps in knowledge and needs for monitoring and research.
- Preparing a detailed multi-year climate-related workplan to be delivered to Ministers in 2006 for their consideration, including proposals for cooperation between Arctic Council Working Groups, and cooperation with other international organizations and programmes involved in climate-related research and monitoring.

The main tasks for AMAP during the period upto the 2006 Ministerial meeting are the production of two update assessments: (1) the Arctic Council Assessment of Potential Impacts of Oil and Gas Activities in the Arctic (OGA), and (2) the AMAP Assessment 2006: Acidifying Pollutants, Arctic Haze and Acidification in the Arctic.

First drafts of the scientific reports for both of these assessments have been prepared, and assessment expert meetings have been held in Helsinki (for the OGA) in February 2005, and in Kilpisjärvi (for the Acidification and Arctic Haze assessment) in March 2005. The AMAP Board would like to express its thanks to the Finnish government for hosting these two important meetings.

During both of these meetings, gaps in information were identified, some of which are critical to the planned delivery of the assessments in 2006. There was, therefore, a strong call from the experts responsible for the assessment for increased provision of necessary data and information from the eight Arctic countries, and improved participation by experts from some countries. The AMAP WG agreed to bring these matters to the attention of the SAOs with the request that they consider these issues, and the possible implications for the deliverables expected at the 2006 Ministerial meeting if missing information is not made available in the near future.

As part of the process to prepare the OGA, an AMAP *Symposium on Oil and Gas Activities in the Arctic* will be arranged as part of the 7th International Conference and Exhibition of Offshore Oil and Gas Development, in St. Petersburg, September 13 – 15, 2005. Work to organize this event is progressing and a first call for papers has been circulated. Additional sponsorship for this event is required.

The AMAP WG has also started a process to update the detailed work plans for assessing priority contaminants and health issues, reflecting the priorities given in the Ministerial decisions. This work includes examining options for reorganizing and strengthening the expert groups that have been involved in the production of the AMAP assessments.

Production of the 2004 ACIA Assessment Reports

The ACIA Overview report (*Impacts of a Warming Arctic*) that was presented to Ministers in November 2004 has now been translated and is being published in several

other languages. A Dutch language version was published and presented at a meeting organized by the Ministry of Environment in the Netherlands in early-December 2004. The Russian language version was released in St. Petersburg, March 30, at a combined Climate Workshop and press conference arranged in connection with this event. The report has also been translated into German, Norwegian, and Saami, and these reports are currently in the final stages of production. Translation into French is also underway. Information on how to obtain copies of these reports can be obtained from the AMAP Secretariat. On behalf of the organizations responsible for the ACIA, the AMAP Board would like to express its appreciation to the all the institutes, and in particular those in the observing countries of Germany and the Netherlands, that showed an interest in and provided the financial support necessary to facilitate the production of the translated versions of the ACIA Overview report.

The final editing and /graphical/layout/publishing work to produce the ACIA Scientific report has been ongoing since November 2004. A call for countries to order copies of the reports was circulated in 2004 and, based on the responses received, a contract for printing of this report is being negotiated with Cambridge University Press (CUP). At present, approximately 2000 copies of the ACIA scientific report will be produced, but this can still be increased if any countries would like to order additional copies. Electronic versions of the chapters of the ACIA scientific report that have been completed for publication will be placed on the are ACIA web site as soon as they are available.

AMAP Data handling

AMAP continues to operate four thematic data centers (TDCs):

- Atmospheric TDC located at Norwegian Institute for Air Research, NILU, Norway;
- Marine TDC located at International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, ICES, Denmark;
- Freshwater/terrestrial TDC located at University of Alaska-Fairbanks, UAF, USA;
- Radioactivity TDC located at Norwegian Radiation Protection Agency, NRPA, Norway.

The Arctic countries, observing countries and organizations are kindly requested to report relevant data to these TDCs so they these data are available to experts engaged in production of ongoing and future AMAP assessments. The Arctic countries are kindly requested to provide financial support for the operation of these TDCs.

National Implementation Plans for AMAP

At the AMAP Extended HoDs meeting in Helsinki, February 2005, some countries presented updated overviews of national monitoring conducted in 2004, and plans for monitoring to be performed in 2005 that is relevant to AMAP (i.e., information regarding their AMAP National Implementation Plans, NIPs). Countries that have not yet done so are kindly requested to submit their new AMAP NIPs to the AMAP Secretariat as soon as possible.

The AMAP Project Directory (www.amap.no >> Resources & Projects >> Project Directory) currently holds information on ca. 450 projects, of which ca. 250 have been registered through AMAP. Countries are requested to ensure that their scientists register (or update existing registrations) concerning all projects that are relevant to the work of AMAP, and in particular projects that might contribute to the ongoing assessments of acidification and petroleum hydrocarbons in the Arctic.

AMAP Website

New information is routinely added to the AMAP website. All AMAP reports, including AMAP assessment reports are available as electronic documents from the AMAP website. Maps and graphics produced for the AMAP assessments are also available from the website. The AMAP web server was employed to host the electronic dissemination of ACIA products, and work to develop an online GIS application to present data from AMAP and other Arctic Council WGs is being implemented in cooperation with EPPR. The AMAP Board would like to thank UNEP GRID-Arendal for its continuing offer to host the AMAP website.

Special Projects

RAIPON/AMAP/GEF project *'PTS, Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North'*

The final component of the PTS project work, the arrangement of four workshops to disseminate the results back to the regions and to the people that took part in this project, is under preparation and will be implemented during spring/summer 2005.

Phase 3 of the ACAP project *'Multilateral Cooperative Project on Phase-out of PCB Use, and Management of PCB-contaminated Wastes in the Russian Federation'*

Phase 3 of the project has been implemented over the last two years. At present, the following 4 pilot investment projects are being implemented under Phase 3:

1. Destruction of PCB fluids (organised and financed by NEFCO);
2. Cleaning of PCB-containing transformers (organised and financed by NEFCO);
3. PCB collection and storage scheme (organised and financed by Denmark);
4. Plasma Arc technology for destruction of PCB-containing capacitors (organised by USA with joint financing from the Arctic countries and the Netherlands, and in-kind provision of the basic equipment by USA).

All four projects are delayed according to the implementation plan. However, at the most recent Steering group meeting, on March 14 2005, there were clear indications that all projects would proceed. For more details, see the report from the ACAP Steering Committee.

The project ‘Dialogue on Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in Water management and flood preparedness in the Lena Basin’

The Russian government and scientific community have taken the initiative to develop further integrated activities, including proposing a GEF medium-sized project ‘*Climate change, sound water management, and flood preparedness at Lena and other Siberian rivers*’. Although this project received wide support in 2004, it appears that it has been rejected by the GEF Secretariat in Washington D.C. The eight Arctic countries are kindly requested to approach their GEF representative to ask if the decision regarding this important project, that is related to ACIA follow-up, can be reconsidered.

Russian data on effects due to Climate Change in Northern Russia

Based on funding from the NCM, a special project was implemented to collect data that are of relevance for the assessment of climate change in the Arctic from different sources in Russia. These data have been provided.

A joint workshop on the follow-up of ACIA was held at the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute (AARI) in St. Petersburg from March 30 – April 1. Approximately 40 experts from Russia and western countries participated. A report on priorities to fill gaps in knowledge, future research, monitoring and assessments, IPY activities, and rescue of data is under preparation

Atmospheric monitoring network in Russia and Alaska

Based on funding from Norway and Canada, the atmospheric monitoring of mercury at Amderma in northern Russia has been reinstated after the instrument had to be moved to a new site. Monitoring of POPs at Amderma is not currently funded.

Based on funding from the USA, mercury monitoring was carried out at Lavrentiya, and collection of samples and their analysis for POPs was conducted at Pevek, in the Russian Far East during 2002. POPs and mercury monitoring was also conducted at Barrow, Alaska, but has now been discontinued. The data from Pevek and Barrow have been reported to the AMAP atmospheric TDC, but the data from Lavrentiya are still not available. Support for the monitoring in the Far East of Russia has now unfortunately ceased. The sampling equipment is still at the site in Pevek, but funding is required to allow monitoring to be reestablished. This region is of particular interest because of the potential for effects due to long-range transport of pollutants from Asia, where emissions are increasing.

With the discontinuation of the monitoring at Pevek and Barrow, there are currently no background POPs air monitoring stations in the Russian Arctic or Alaska, and thus no current data on POPs in air are available for a large sector of the Arctic. Initiatives have been taken to try to open three atmospheric stations in northern Russia in connection with the IPY. AMAP, the Russian government and institutes in Russia are working closely to try to resolve this situation.

AMAP Ring tests on human blood

The ring tests are continuing under the lead of Institut National de Santé Publique du Québec (contact Jean-Philippe Weber).

1. Collaboration with other organizations

Collaboration with AC WGs

AMAP is working closely with several other Arctic Council WGs on the implementation of the Oil and Gas assessment.

ACAP

ACAP was originally established by the Arctic Council to address pollution issues documented by AMAP. In this context, AMAP has maintained a close collaboration with ACAP in all its projects, and is coordinating project work on some ACAP projects. AMAP has contributed to the initiation of the proposal for a new project on brominated flame retardants (BFRs), and looks forward to a close cooperation on this project, in particular in the work tasks concerned with the preparation of inventories of sources of BFRs. In consultation with the ACAP BFR steering group, AMAP have prepared a Fact Sheet on BFRs in the Arctic. There is a request that this fact sheet be translated into Russian if funding or in-kind support for this activity can be identified.

CAFF

AMAP and CAFF have been working in close cooperation on the preparation of a proposal for the follow-up of ACIA - see special proposal regarding this issue.

A planned workshop in Abisko to further develop coordination of AMAP/CAFF monitoring activities, related to the request from SAOs and Ministers regarding this work, appears now to be directed towards further development of the COMAAR project proposal. At present it is not clear what implications this will have for the work needed to make progress in harmonizing the AMAP and CAFF monitoring activities.

EPPR

AMAP and EPPR are engaged in a joint activity to develop an online GIS system that could be used to present data from the various Arctic Council WGs. A pilot system will be available for demonstration later in the year.

PAME

AMAP is cooperating with PAME on the Arctic Marine Strategy.

SDWG

Both AMAP and SDWG are engaged activities relating to human health issues. Improved cooperation and coordination of work on health projects under the respective groups, especially in relation to development of a human health proposal for the IPY is desirable. This latter aspect will hopefully be addressed at a special meeting to be held in Copenhagen, April 7, 2005.

International cooperation

UNEP

Stockholm Convention

The Stockholm Convention on POPs entered into force on 17th May 2004. Article 16 of the Convention requires periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of the Convention, the first such evaluation to be reviewed by the Conference of the Parties four years after entry into force. The interim Convention Secretariat at UNEP has developed plans for obtaining and assessing harmonized global environmental monitoring information on POPs to be considered by the Conference of the Parties at COP 1 in Montevideo in May 2005. The Arctic Council has taken note of this work and AMAP has participated in planning and is preparing to assist in implementation.

UN ECE

Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP)

The UN ECE Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants under the LRTAP Convention has now entered into force. Article 10 of this agreement requires that there be periodic reviews of the 'effectiveness and sufficiency' of the Protocol, the first of which must be reviewed by the Convention's Executive Body in December 2005. This means that work on the review (which will be prepared by the LRTAP Convention's Task Force on POPs), must be completed by June 2005. The AMAP WG and the SAOs have previously noted the potential contribution of AMAP to this activity. The AMAP Secretariat participated at a planning meeting for the POP TF in Rome, February 28 – March 1, 2005. The LRTAP POPs Task Force has compiled information from already available sources including regional and national reports in a report, including summary of levels and trends of POPs in the LRTAP region, and their possible effects. Following a request from the UN ECE Task-Force on POPs, and in accordance with the approved AMAP Strategic Plan 2004+, AMAP has participated actively in this work and contributed material from the AMAP 2002 assessment of POPs in the Arctic to this evaluation.

WHO

AMAP work on pollution, health and climate related issues was presented at a meeting at the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health in Rome in January 2005. WHO expressed a wish to establish a closer cooperation with AMAP on these issues.

EU

Under an EU initiative to develop a European Marine Strategy (EMS) several working groups have been established. These include groups on Strategic Goals and Objectives (SGO), Ecosystem approach (EAM), Hazardous substances (HS), and European Marine Monitoring and Assessment (EMMA); there are also linkages with the work under the EU group on Species and Habitats. Within the EU, this activity is co-led by DG Environment and the EEA, and is strongly linked to the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), and its possible extension to the marine offshore areas. The AMAP Secretariat has participated in meetings of the European Marine Monitoring and Assessment group (EMMA). The EMS aims to cover all European Seas, including European Arctic Seas (Nordic Seas, Barents Sea, etc.), thus it has an obvious geographical overlap with the area being addressed in the Arctic Council's Marine Strategy (ACMS). The relationship between the EMS and ACMS is, however, unclear; similarly the outcome of the EMS initiative is currently very uncertain. The main reason for AMAP participation in EMMA is the potential implications that the EMS development may have with respect to future monitoring and assessment in European Arctic Waters.

The AMAP Secretariat has continued discussions with relevant partners concerning the possible development of a research proposal for funding under the EU's 7th Framework programme.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

AMAP have had a close cooperation with WWF over the years, and welcome the way AMAP information has been disseminated through the WWF-Arctic Programme's '*Arctic Bulletin*'. A joint project on POPs in polar bears, to be implemented in 2004/5, and based partly on funding made available through WWF, is currently under implementation.

World Water Forum

The AMAP Secretariat has been invited to assist in arranging the 'Polar sessions' of the two previous World Water Forum meetings (in The Hague, Netherlands in 2000, and in Kyoto, Japan, in 2003). The Fourth World Water Forum will take place in 2006 in Mexico, and the AMAP Secretariat has again been requested to take part in the arrangement.

Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)

AMAP Secretariat participated in the BEAC meeting arranged January 26-27, 2005 in Oulu, Finland, and gave presentations about the status for the oil and Gas assessment and results from ACIA. BEAC expressed a clear interest to be informed on the follow up of both issues.

The International Polar Year (IPY)

The AMAP Chair participated at the IPY planning meeting in Paris, March 10-11, 2005. AMAP has presented a letter to the IPY calling for a close cooperation within several areas of joint interest, and has been involved in the planning of some larger joint projects, e.g. OASIS.

2. Requests to the SAOs

Funding Situation

Core funding for the AMAP Secretariat is provided by Norway, however this does not meet all the running costs of the Secretariat, or costs associated with funding other AMAP core activities. AMAP would like to express its continuing appreciation to Norway, and also Canada, Finland and the Nordic Council of Ministers that have provided financial support during 2004/2005 to fund AMAP Secretariat operations and other AMAP core activities and projects. Countries are kindly requested to investigate the possibilities to provide financial support in 2005/2006.

Furthermore, AMAP is grateful for the funding from Canada, Denmark, and Sweden that has allowed the AMAP atmospheric and marine TDCs to continue operations during 2004 and for Norwegian and University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF) support for the radioactivity and freshwater/terrestrial TDCs, respectively. The same level of funding will be required in 2005, in particular to allow data handling work associated with the delivery of the acidification and petroleum hydrocarbons assessments.

Monitoring and Observation activities

SAOs are requested to ensure the timely availability of the necessary finances to allow AMAP to fulfill its work-plan as requested by Ministers and SAOs. It is vital to ensure that observations of levels, trends and effects of contaminants in the Arctic continues, even during the periods between major assessments, in order to guarantee uninterrupted time series and ensure that future assessment reports presented by the AMAP WG are complete and reliable. In addition to the ongoing assessment production work, AMAP is currently considering the detailed plans for work in the years to come, in particular in relation to possible ACIA follow-up. Continuation of core observations and establishment of both baseline and long-term records are especially important in this connection.

Annex 1: Provisional Calendar of AMAP and AMAP Related Meetings: 2005-

Meeting Schedule 2005

January 10-12	OASIS project meeting, Rome, Italy
January 26-27	Barents Euro-Arctic meeting, Oulu, Finland
February 7-11	Alaska Forum on the Environment 2005, and Arctic Observation Network meeting, Anchorage
February 8-9	ACAP BFR project Expert Meeting, Oslo, Norway
February 8-9	EMMA (European Marine Monitoring and Assessment), Copenhagen, Denmark
February 16-18	AMAP Oil and Gas Assessment Expert Group Meeting, Helsinki, Finland
February 17-18	AMAP Extended HoDs Meeting, Helsinki, Finland
February 22-24	Ny-Alesund Scientific Seminar, Tokyo, Japan
February 28 - March 1	UN ECE POPs TF Informal Meeting, Rome, Italy
March 10-11	IPY Open Consultative Forum, Paris, France
March 14-18	AMAP Acidification Assessment Expert Group Meeting, Kilpisjarvi, Finland
March 30–April 1	Press conference in connection with the release of the Russian version of the ACIA Overview report, and Workshop on Climate Research and Monitoring, St. Petersburg, Russia
April 6-7	SAO meeting, Yakutsk, Russia
April 7	IPY Human health meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark
May 10-12	Arctic Observing Network meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark
May 18-20	AMAP Human Health Expert Group meeting, St. Petersburg, Russia
May 18-21	IPY COMAAR meeting, Abisko, Sweden
June 2-3	ACAP Hg project Steering Group Meeting, Ottawa, Canada
June 2-3	UN ECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, Geneva
June 13-17	ICES Advisory Committee meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark
June 20-23	Oil and Gas Assessment drafting group meeting, Washington DC, USA
September 13-15	AMAP Oil and Gas Symposium, St Petersburg, Russia

September 15-16	19th AMAP WG meeting, St Petersburg, Russia
September 27-28	ACAP BFR project Expert Meeting, Oslo
October 2-6	The 2nd International Conference on Radioactivity in the Environment & 6th International Conference on Environmental Radioactivity in the Arctic and the Antarctic, Nice
October 12-13	AMAP Acidification Assessment Expert Group Meeting, (Tromsø, Norway OR Helsinki, Finland)
November 10-13	ICARP II meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark