

Progress Report from the AMAP Board to
the SAO meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska,
April 27-28, 2000

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1: Organization

Since the last SAO meeting there have been no changes in the organization of AMAP. The Working Group (WG) has approved the International Union of Radioecology (IUR) as a new observer. There has not been arranged any Working Group meetings in this period.

2: Follow up after the SAO meeting in Washington D.C., November 1999.

2.1. The AMAP Strategic Plan 1998 - 2003

The AMAP Strategic Plan has been published and made available as an electronic document on the Internet (accessible from the AMAP homepage).

2.2. AMAP Monitoring Programmes and National Implementation Plans (NIPs) for 1998 - 2003

The AMAP Monitoring Programme documentation is also being made available on the Internet. The Secretariat has circulated a new format for registering projects and programmes that constitute the National Implementation Plans (NIPs) for AMAP in an updated AMAP Project Directory (AMAP PD 2000). The AMAP PD 2000 is a simplified version of the AMAP PD employed during AMAP phase 1, and scientists can register their projects directly in the AMAP PD system by means of an electronic form.

2.3. The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) - assessment of effects due to changes in climate and UV/ozone.

The 3rd meeting of the Assessment Steering Committee (ASC) was held in Washington D.C. back to back with the ACIA Scoping workshop February 28 - March 1, 2000. Bob Corell (USA) was elected as Chair and Pål Prestrud (Norway) as Vice Chair. An updated version of ACIA (version 3.1) has been circulated, see the special report to the SAO meeting regarding this issue.

2.4. Sources

The Arctic countries have been requested to provide AMAP with national information on sources of pollution that they maintain and report to other fora.

2.5. AMAP deliverables to the Ministerial meetings in 2000

A first draft of the report from AMAP to the Ministerial meeting in October 2000 has been circulated for comments and updating. The draft report is to a large extent based on new scientific information, in particulate that provided during AMAP related symposia such as the 4th International Arctic Conference on Radioactivity in the Arctic and the AMAP Workshop on POPs in the Arctic environment: Human health concerns.

2.6. Operating Guidelines for AMAP

Based on a decision made at the 13th AMAP WG meeting a set of Operating Guidelines is under development.

2.7. AMAP Assessment Report (AAR) on CD-ROM

The AAR CD-ROM has been produced in 1000 copies, and is being distributed to those countries that have ordered copies. The remaining stock is kept at the Secretariat for further distribution.

2.8. Thematic Data Centres (TDCs)

All the existing TDCs had secured funding for operations during 1999, however, for 2000 we are still looking for support for operation of the atmospheric and marine TDCs. The human health database has been further developed, and a possible cooperation with the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF), has been explored regarding operation of an AMAP terrestrial TDC based on the existing database being developed at that institute (SYNCON database).

2.9. International Conferences and Workshops arranged

A Subregional expert meeting on reduction of POPs, in particular dioxins and furans, was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, December 14-17, 1999. This was a joint arrangement between UNEP, UN-ECE, UNIDO, CIP and AMAP.

An international workshop on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in the Arctic: Human Health and Environmental Concerns was held in Rovaniemi, Finland, January 18-20, 2000. This was a joint arrangement between the Lapland Regional Environmental Centre, the University of the Arctic, and AMAP. The proceedings of the workshop have been published and are also available as an electronic document on the AMAP website.

A CAFF/AMAP workshop on circumpolar biodiversity monitoring was held in Reykjavik, Iceland, February 7-9, 2000. A draft summary report has been prepared and the recommendations will be taken into account in the future development of programmes for monitoring effects due to climate change.

At the Second World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference, held in The Hague, the Netherlands, March 17-22, 2000, the AMAP Secretariat was co-convenor of the session regarding Polar Regions.

3. Special projects

3.1. Implementation of the Multilateral Cooperative Project on Phase-out of PCB Use, and Management of PCB-contaminated Wastes in the Russian Federation

This project was initiated in 1998 as a follow-up to the conclusions and recommendations of the AMAP Assessment Report and was supported by the First Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council (Iqaluit, Canada, September 17-18, 1998). The project consists of three phases:

- Phase 1: Evaluation of the current status of the problem with respect to environmental impact, and development of proposals for priority remedial actions;
- Phase 2: Feasibility study;
- Phase 3: Implementation of demonstration projects.

Phase 1 has been delayed with approximately 2 months according to the original plan. The final report is expected to be presented at a meeting in Moscow last week of June 2000. The Steering Group has started the planning of phase 2 of the project and a special report will be presented to the SAOs on this issue.

The Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) has been involved in the multinational project, and initiated in October 1999 a Fast Track project in North West Russia. This is implemented in close cooperation with the multinational project, and with clear transparency between the two initiatives. The NEFCO project has also three phases, and the report from phase 1 was presented in February. Some new information generated from this study will also be incorporated in the multilateral project. NEFCO has decided to initiate phase 2 of the Fast Track project in close cooperation with the Multinational project.

3.2. Persistent Toxic Substances (PTS), Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian north (the RAIPON/AMAP/GEF project).

The project proposal was submitted to UNEP in Nairobi in July 1999. According to a letter of February 22, 2000, the GEF (Global Environmental Facilities) CEO (Chief Executive Officer) approved the medium-sized project proposal for a contribution of 750.000 USD from GEF. At the SAO meeting in November, Norway announced that they had made available 80.000 USD to co-fund the project. The Salamander foundation has decided to support this project with 10.000 USD. WMO has also decided to contribute to the project, providing 30.000 USD for modelling of PTS long-range transport in the Asian part of Russia.

AMAP and RAIPON are now preparing a letter of request to all the eight Arctic countries, the UN foundation and private foundations in an effort to raise additional necessary funding of 2.76 million USD for full implementation of the project.

Since funding is now available, detailed planning of the project has been initiated, and AMAP will arrange a special workshop in St. Petersburg in the last week of May. This workshop will focus on sampling and analyses of PTS and is the first in a series of QA/QC related project components and aims to ensure high standard sampling and analyses. Fieldwork is planned to be initiated early this summer.

3.3. The Future of Children and Youth in the Arctic

As earlier decided by AMAP WG, the AMAP Human Health group has accepted the responsibility for the biophysical health component in "The Future of Children and Youth in the Arctic" program. The AMAP Human Health group participated in developing a framework document for identifying and defining some biophysical measures of the health and well-being of children and youth in the Arctic and decided the role of the country contacts in order to complete the program. The framework document was discussed and accepted by the AMAP Human Health group at their meeting in Rovaniemi, Finland in January.

3.4. Anderma Station

The joint Russian-Canadian-AMAP supported atmospheric monitoring station at Anderma has been in operation for its first year. During this period, samples have been taken for POPs. Additional funding has now been made available to also allow monitoring of mercury at the site.

4. International cooperation

4.1. IASC

A close cooperation has been established with IASC, especially in relation to the preparation of ACIA.

4.2. UNEP

A joint workshop with UNEP Chemicals was arranged in Russia in December 1999. A project proposal involving UNEP, WHO, Indigenous peoples and Arctic Council has been developed. The resulting project proposal was submitted to the SAOs in November, and since then UNEP has allocated financial resources to this project

UNEP has received funding from GEF to do regionally based assessments of persistent toxic substances. This work is intended to start April 1, 2000, and to be finalized by April 2002. UNEP intend to prepare 12 regional reports, and one of the regions is the Arctic region. Since most of the data UNEP is interested in already has been published in the AMAP reports, they have requested AMAP to assist UNEP in the preparation of the regional report for the Arctic. The work will include some redrafting to fulfil their format, and an updating of new information. Based on financial support that has been made available from Canada AMAP is in a position that we can assist UNEP in preparing the wanted report.

4.3. Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM)

The NCM has over the years funded several core projects and activities of the AMAP work, and AMAP has received NCM funding for several projects in 2000.

4.4. ACOPS

ACOPS has been informed about the decisions made by the AMAP WG and SAOs in November regarding the ACOPS proposal for a MoU between ACOPS and AMAP.

4.5. GIWA (Global International Water Assessment)

Following the AMAP WG meeting in November 1999, the AMAP Board held a meeting with GIWA in December 1999 to clarify the extent of the job that GIWA had requested of AMAP. GIWA agreed to prepare a guideline on how to perform the task requested. This is expected to be circulated during spring 2000. AMAP is currently awaiting this information.

5. Future international conferences and workshops under preparation:

The following activities are planned for 2000.

5.1. Arctic Science Summit Week, April 2-7, 2000 will be held in Cambridge UK. IASC is responsible for the main arrangement. Further development of the ACIA is one of the main issues for that meeting. The 4th meeting of ASC will be held during this week.

5.2. Biomarker Conference to be held May 1-5, 2000, in Anchorage, USA. This is a joint conference between US institutions and AMAP.

5.3. AMAP workshop on Sampling and Analysis of Persistent Toxic Substances (PTS) to be held in St. Petersburg, May 28 - 31, 2000.

6. Finances

At the SAO meeting in November 1999, the Arctic Countries were kindly requested to consider voluntary contributions to the AMAP Secretariat so that it can provide necessary support to the working group, including key activities such as communications and the operation of the Thematic Data Centres, etc. To date, Canada and Finland have allocated support for specific activities, other activities are still unfunded. The request is therefore repeated.

At the AMAP working group meeting it was stressed that, for the assessment work to be performed during 2000-2002 in accordance with the requests of Ministers, it would be important that the countries made sufficient financial support available for the work by their lead country experts and national key experts. This statement is again repeated.