

ARHC- Protection Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)

Memorandum of Understanding renewal

Version 1.0 (July 08, 2024)

Submitted by: ARHC PAME Project Team (CA- S. Bhatia, NO- E. Flier, DK- H. J. Stang, USA – M. Brady and J. Justi)

Executive Summary: An MOU between ARHC and PAME was signed in March 2020 with a five-year period of validity until March 2025. The MOU has provided a context and framework for cooperation between the two bodies regarding hydrography and marine environmental protection. The MOU is proposed for review and approval to cover another five-year period (202502030) prior to its expiration with the proposed revisions reflected in Attachment 1.

Related Projects: [PAME webpage](#)
[ARHC Webpage](#)

Related Documents: [PAME Workplan](#)
[MOU between the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission and the Arctic Council's Working Group on the Protection of the Marine Environment](#)
[Hydrography in the Arctic Joint Policy Statement \(ARHC-PAME\) \(2020\)](#)

Background

The ARHC is a regional hydrographic commission recognized by the International Hydrographic Organization. The IHO “encourage(s) IHO Member States having common regional interests in data collecting or nautical charting to form RHCs to cooperate in the undertaking of surveys and other projects” and other purposes as outlined IHO Resolution 2/1997 as amended.¹ The ARHC develops Annual reports and work plans of agreed work. The Chair of the ARHC rotates annually- the current Chair and Vice Chair are Ms. Birte Borrevik (Norway) and RDML Benjamin Evans (USA), respectively.

PAME is a working group of the Arctic Council. “PAME addresses marine policy measures in response to environmental change from both land and sea-based activities. PAME develops and coordinates strategic plans, programs, assessments and guidelines, complementing existing legal arrangements aimed at protection of the Arctic marine environment. PAME’s projects largely operate within the following themes: Arctic Shipping Marine Protected Areas, Resource Exploration and Development, Ecosystem Approach to Management, [and] Arctic Marine Pollution.”² The Chair of PAME is currently

¹ See IHO Publication [M-3 “Resolutions of the IHO”](#) pages 133-137

² See [Arctic Council PAME Home page](#).

Katrine Nissen (DK).

The ARHC and PAME signed an [MOU](#) (March 30, 2020) calling for collaboration in areas of common interest in the intersection of hydrography and marine environmental protection and to raise awareness of the status of hydrography in the Arctic. The MOU was signed by then-ARHC Chair, RDML Shepard Smith, and then-PAME Chair Paula Kankaanpä. The MOU has fostered collaboration including the periodic update of the arctic hydrographic risk assessment (see most recently [ARHC13-C1 “Arctic Hydrographic Risk Assessment – 2023 Update and Revised Baseline”](#)) and has identified interests as outlined in the [Joint Statement on Arctic Hydrography](#). Interest has also been expressed to explore collaboration for the purposes of updating the note “[Caution Required When Using Nautical Charts of Arctic Waters \(28 June 2017\)](#)” in collaboration with PAME and which is expected to be discussed further at ARHC14. ARHC13 did note the ARHC interest to work with PAME and to contribute to the PAME Work Plan covering 2025. The ARHC-PAME MOU expires in March 2025.

The current MOU has been reviewed for comment by the ARHC (PAME) Project Team and by members of PAME’s Shipping Experts Group. The ARHC (PAME) Project Team includes representatives of the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, Canada and the US. The Project Team met opportunistically during the IRCC16 (June 2024) to discuss and explore a path forward to facilitate concurrent and somewhat parallel decision-making processes by ARHC and PAME, namely ARHC-14 and PAME-I 2024.

Proposed edits to update the existing MOU provided by PAME and the Canadian Hydrographic Service are reflected in track changes in Attachment 1.

The ARHC14 is scheduled to convene in Tromsø, Norway Sept 5-7. PAME is projected to meet virtually in late September or early October with the dates still to be confirmed.

Analysis

The MOU has provided a useful framework to promote interaction and collaboration to raise awareness of the state and changing situation in regards to hydrography and environmental protection in the Arctic, a common interest to both ARHC and PAME.

Informal reviews and vetting by both ARHC Project Team and PAME’s Shipping Expert Group has been conducted since ARHC13 (September 2023). Through the review process, edits were suggested such as:

- The addition of the phrase “environmental sustainability” to the first sentence of Paragraph 2 (Background) and to the first sentence of Paragraph 3 (Purpose) to reflect the importance of that concept in the work of both bodies. The merit of this addition is also underscored in the 2024 World Hydrography Day theme ““Hydrographic Information - Enhancing safety, efficiency and sustainability in marine activities.”³
- The addition of a sentence in Paragraph 2 (Background) referencing the Arctic Council’s 2021 Strategic Plan given the central role that document plays in guiding the work of PAME; and

³ See [IHO CL 01/2024](#) “THEME FOR WORLD HYDROGRAPHY DAY 2024 AND MEDIA OUTREACH”

- The addition of the phrase “exchange information with” in the first subsection of Paragraph 4 (Program of Activities) to underscore a major component of how the two bodies cooperate.

There are no major edits or revisions to the original intent of the MOU, in the opinions of the Project Team.

The MOU provides a context for contributing to PAME’s biennial work plan and has fostered similar explorations of interest with other Arctic Council working groups beyond PAME which address interest areas at the core of the ARHC—such as marine spatial data and emergency preparedness and response. The latter area of interest is addressed through the Arctic Council’s Emergency Prevention Preparedness, and Response (EPPR) Working Group and has been a subject of discussion for engagement at recent ARHC meetings.

Recommendation

The ARHC14 is invited to:

- 1) note the progress made by the ARHC PAME Project Team.
- 2) review the attached draft updated MOU for approval in principle
- 3) update the PAME point of contact, Peter.Oppenheimer@noaa.gov, of the outcome of ARHC14 discussions immediately following ARHC14, including additional proposed edits, if any
- 4) if ARHC-14 agrees, confirm a signing plan which could include identifying signatories and a means of signing. A simple renewal could follow past practice of Chairs signing on behalf of the ARHC and PAME.

Attached