

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE ARCTIC REGIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC
COMMISSION
AND
THE ARCTIC COUNCIL'S WORKING GROUP ON THE
PROTECTION OF THE ARCTIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT**

1. Participants

This document constitutes a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission (ARHC) and the Arctic Council's Working Group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME).

2. Background

The ARHC aims to improve Arctic regional coordination and environmental sustainability in the domain of hydrographic surveying, marine cartography and provision of modern navigation services in the Arctic. The ARHC's objectives include widening hydrographic activity in the Arctic Ocean and identifying regional surveying and charting needs. PAME works on matters related to the protection and sustainable use of the Arctic marine environment. One of PAME's key focus areas is Arctic shipping. Its 2009 Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA) Report noted that critical improvements are needed to Arctic navigational charts services and recommended linking with international organizations to enhance Arctic marine safety. Further, the first goal identified in the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan 2015–2025 is improving knowledge of the Arctic marine environment, including increased collection and dissemination of hydrographic data. The Arctic Council Strategic Plan (2021) identifies several goals which underscore the importance of sustainable development, environmental protection, and good governance in the Arctic, all of which are served by better knowledge of the Arctic marine environment.¹ The ARHC and PAME therefore have mutually supportive missions. In particular, both recognize that improving hydrographic surveys and charts in the Arctic is crucial to enhancing marine safety and protecting the environment from the effects of shipping.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this MOU is to foster greater communication between the ARHC and PAME and enhance coordination on strategies to improve hydrographic data and services in the Arctic and environmental sustainability, safety and efficiency of Arctic shipping. The ARHC and PAME intend to maintain and increase opportunities for scientific, technical and professional exchange between their members, sharing knowledge and expertise to the advantage of both.

¹ The Arctic Council Strategic Plan expressly recognizes the importance of collaboration between PAME and the ARHC in the context of the timely exchange of information. See Arctic Council Strategic Plan, Section 6.5 (available online at <https://tinyurl.com/5n7jcfps>).

4. Program of Activities

In accordance with the background and purpose described above, the ARHC and PAME decide to cooperate as follows:

1. Each body intends to exchange information with and consult the other on matters of common interest with a view to ensuring maximum coordination of their work and activities;
2. Each body intends to invite a representative of the other to attend any meeting at which topics within the other’s area of expertise are on the agenda;
3. Each body intends to provide notice of proposed seminars, workshops, etc., that may be of interest to the other to enable joint participation should it be of mutual benefit. The bodies also intend to identify opportunities to organize seminars or workshops under joint sponsorship;
4. At the request of PAME, the ARHC will provide input to PAME with respect to matters within the scope of activities and expertise of the ARHC; and at the request of the ARHC, PAME will provide input to the ARHC for matters falling within the scope of activities and expertise of PAME.

5. Financial and Resource Commitments

This MOU does not commit either body or any member of either body to any expenditures or in-kind contributions. All activities of both bodies are subject to the availability of funds, and cooperation between them is largely expected to consist of voluntary in-kind contributions by member governments.

6. Legal Status

This MOU does not create a legal relationship between the two bodies or any of their members. Neither body intends this MOU to be legally binding or create any rights or obligations under international law, nor does it bind any of the members of the ARHC or PAME jointly or severally. All activities by members and observers to each body will be undertaken voluntarily on a consultative basis.

7. Effective Date

This MOU will become effective upon signature by the chairs of both bodies and will remain operative unless terminated by either participant upon 30 days written notice. The participants will review MOU terms every five (5) years. Either participant may propose changes in writing. Amendments to this MOU are by mutual decision of the participants.

Date: _____

On behalf of the ARHC

On behalf of PAME

Chair, ARHC

Chair, PAME