

In the Inari Declaration of 2002, the Arctic Council Ministers, recognizing the international call for increased co-ordination and collaboration particularly at the regional level, agreed to develop a strategic plan for the protection of the Arctic marine environment, under the leadership of the Arctic Council's Programme for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME). The Arctic Council recognizes that the critical linkages between climate change, resource development, increased ship traffic through the Arctic Seas and emergency prevention and response are key anticipated issues affecting the management of the oceans. In addition, PAME will support the implementation and further development of the program support elements for the Regional Program of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (RPA) and will further support the implementation and development of the Russian NPA-Arctic and other National Plans as important components of the RPA.

Over the past 10 years the Arctic Council's Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) has conducted two major assessments of comparison with most other areas of the world, the environment. However, for some pollutants, combinations of different factors give rise to concern in certain ecosystems. The level of PCB, for example, in some areas is high enough to affect the health of individual animals in species including polar bears, marine mammals, sea birds and even humans. These circumstances sometimes occur on a local scale, but in some cases may be regional or circumpolar in extent."

The AMAP will continue its efforts as regards monitoring and assessing pollution in the Arctic with special emphasis on supporting global cooperation to address Persistent Organic Pollutants and the manmade sources of mercury pollution. The Arctic Council project on sources of mercury is an example of a regional contribution to these objectives

In addition, several other projects with direct application to the oceans agenda are carried out under the auspices of the Arctic Council. The Council's Working Group on Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) has launched some strategies and action plans concerning the marine environment, such as Legal Instruments and National Frameworks for Arctic Marine Conservation. A few reports on Seabirds have been published, including Seabird Incidental Catch in the Waters of Arctic Countries and Seabird Harvest Regimes in the Circumpolar Nations. Moreover, CAFF presented its comprehensive status report on Arctic Flora and Fauna - Status and Conservation in 2000, followed by a set of recommendations, in 2002. The Arctic