

PAME II-2019: Agenda 6.1(a)

Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum (ASBPIF) Summary & Next Steps

Introduction

The PAME I-2019 meeting in Malmo, Sweden adopted a Record of Decision that “instruct[ed] the Forum Coordinating Committee to provide a status report at PAME II-2019 on the outcome of the 3rd Forum meeting.” The following status report is in fulfillment of this ROD.

Meeting Summary

*3rd Meeting of the Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum
3-4 June 2019
United States Embassy, London, United Kingdom*

The Arctic Council’s Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum (the Forum) convened on 3-4 June 2019 for the third time since its inception in 2017, and for the first time since Iceland assumed Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. ‘From Theory to Practice’ was the overarching theme of the meeting with presentations oriented around practical experiences in implementing the Polar Code, with a particular focus on successes, impediments, and remaining challenges. The meeting commenced with opening remarks by distinguished delegates, including a video address by the Secretary General of the IMO.

Over the course of the day-and-a-half meeting, presentations focused on the unique experiences gained by Arctic States, shipowners, classification societies and intergovernmental organizations in implementing, complying with and/or making information available to support implementation of or compliance with the Polar Code.

Representatives of the Forums’ Organizing Committee jointly presented on the development of the web portal (www.arcticshippingforum.is), identifying changes in design and layout (based largely on user feedback), and noting the overall increase in web traffic since initially launching. The presenters also highlighted the significant increase in hyperlink submissions, as well as the time and effort required to maintain and update this information online. This prompted discussions on the long-term sustainability of the Forum and the need for further financial or in-kind support.

Indeed, before the meeting concluded, participants discussed the scheduling, logistics, and funding of future annual Forum meetings. There was a general recognition that additional support, including financial contributions, are necessary to help ensure the continued viability and vitality of Forum meetings. The Forum Coordinating Committee

indicated its receptiveness to such support and committed to determining how any offers of financial contributions could be accepted consistent with applicable Arctic Council Rules.

The first focus session was on progress made to date in implementing the Polar Code. The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) provided an update on additional guidance under development in support of Polar Water Operations Manuals, whereas Aker Arctic advised on POLARIS – a methodology for determining a ship’s operational capabilities and limitation in ice – noting the possible role the Forum could play in validating its efficacy. A new PAME effort to compile information on how Arctic States and Observer States understand and apply in practice the Polar Code was presented by Norway. A panel discussion focused on Polar Code implementation closed out this first session, with representatives from Stena, the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) and Lloyd’s Register joining the session presenters.

Building on the previous panel discussion, a second session on Polar Code implementation challenges followed focused primarily on efforts currently under way within various IMO sub-committees to address Polar Code provisions requiring further guidance or clarity. A representative of the IMO’s Maritime Safety Division highlighted work on communications at high latitudes, and efforts being undertaken by the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) to enhance the safety and efficiency of navigation via requirements and performance standards for navigation and communications equipment. Similarly, a representative from the Norwegian Maritime Authority spoke on efforts by the IMO Sub-Committee on Ships Systems and Equipment (SSE) to develop guidelines on life-saving appliances and arrangement for ships operating in polar waters. A panel discussion closed out this session, with a representative from DNV-GL joining to discuss Polar Code provisions considered challenging to meet, including provisions on maximum expected time of rescue.

The Human Element was a significant thread running throughout all discussions, though one culminating in its own dedicated focus session. A representative from the University of Stavanger presented on lessons learned from recent Norwegian Search and Rescue Exercises, particularly with respect to factors affecting survivability in Polar Regions. A presentation from the Russian Federation focused specifically on the crewing and training provisions contained in the Polar Code, while a representative from the Nautical Institute spoke on the importance of operator experience and consistent training and the benefits associated with Ice Navigators. An operator perspective was provided through a presentation by V.Ships Leisure S.A.M., underscoring the critical importance of training in reducing maritime accidents. A representative of the Arctic Coast Guard Forum accompanied the aforementioned presenters in a panel discussion that covered topics ranging from the application of indigenous knowledge, survivability, and concerns with inexperienced operators.

The second day of the meeting began with a panel session on voyage planning. A joint presentation by the Clean Arctic Alliance and Environmental Investigation Agency focused on the need for vessel operators to be aware of local marine mammals, potential impacts (e.g. pollution, noise, strikes) from shipping, and how the Forum can assist with mitigating these impacts. A representative from the Aborigin Forum highlighted the importance to indigenous people of sea ice and the wildlife both on and under it. ABS concluded the session with a comprehensive presentation on applying the Polar Code (e.g. conducting operational assessments), some of the trends encountered with respect to destination and transit shipping, and ice design in shipbuilding. A representative from Lloyd's Market Association joined the panellists for a wide-ranging discussion covering insurance premiums, the consequences of an HFO ban in the Arctic, and POLARIS.

The final presentation was from the perspective of a maritime student using information contained within the Forum's web portal to conduct virtual voyage planning along the Northern Sea Route, and the benefits and shortcomings of the information contained therein.

The Forum's complete agenda, list of participants and presentations can be accessed [here](#).

Next Steps

The Forum Coordinating Committee circulated to Forum Participants a short summary report (similar to the above summary), and requested a response by 15 July 2019 to a six-question survey on how to improve the efficiency of the Forum. The six questions asked were as follows:

- Q1: What topics would you propose for the next Forum meeting agenda?
- Q2: What is your top suggestion for improving the Forum?
- Q3: What is your top suggestion for improving the Web-portal?
- Q4: What is your top suggestion for increasing public awareness of the Web-portal?
- Q5: What changes, if any, would you suggest we make to the annual meeting's format, length, venue and scheduling?
- Q6: What presentation made at the year's Forum meeting did you find most helpful in supporting implementation of the Polar Code?

To date, ten replies were submitted in response to the survey (refer to the Annex below), however of those received, several suggestions were reoccurring. With regard to proposed topics and thematic area for subsequent Forum meetings, ongoing IMO developments (e.g. the Arctic HFO ban), as well as an ever greater emphasis on operator or practical experiences in applying the Polar Code received multiple mention.

Concerning ways in which the Forum and its web portal could be improved, respondents seemed generally happy with both, though a deeper engagement with the IMO and with indigenous communities affected by shipping in the Arctic was clearly noted. Moreover, it was suggested that the Forum web portal would benefit from more input from Arctic States, and could also serve as a clearinghouse of sorts for relevant research and development initiatives.

On logistics, the resounding view continues to suggest that the Forum be held once a year, and be organized alongside an appropriate IMO meeting in London. Accordingly, while details have not yet been confirmed, it is anticipated that a 4th meeting of the Forum will occur sometime during the first half of 2020 and will likely be two days in length. Logistical information will be shared as it becomes available.

Annex: 3rd Forum meeting Review – Survey answers

| N r | 1. What topics would you propose for the next Forum meeting agenda? | 2. What is your top suggestion for improving the Forum? | 3. What is your top suggestion for improving the Web-portal? | 4. What is your top suggestion for increasing public awareness of the Web-portal? | 5. What changes, if any, would you suggest we make to the annual meeting's format, length, venue and scheduling? | 6. What presentations made at this year's Forum meeting did you find most helpful in supporting implementation of the Polar Code? |
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| 1 | A session on the similarities or difference between the Arctic and Antarctic i.e. shipping patterns, types of shipping, SAR resources, fishing etc. Plus a session on how an incident (ship grounding, oil spill, etc.) would be responded to in the Arctic | Discuss with IMO staff to determine if the IMO has a way of advertising the forum's next meeting at the next session of MEPC and SDC. | - | - | None | Key take out was understanding the impact of lack of internet band width in polar waters has on the availability of safety / ice information in these areas. |
| 2 | Sharing to participants any hands-on experiences from navigating officers, marine engineers and ratings who have sailed on Polar voyages. What are the main concerns? Receive feedback from them. Input from search and rescue service providers who are prepared to venture into Polar waters and regions in case of emergency. We must raise awareness among operators on the remoteness from rescue facilities, response parties and limited communications in Polar regions. | Involvement of more indigenous participants who could share their experiences from increasing activities and operations in Arctic regions. Listen to their concerns, if any, and specify on the Portal. | More input from all Arctic Council States. Go systematically through the links and add any relevant information which could benefit the Portal and its users. | Arctic States and observers could distribute the Forum link as widely as possible, for example to shipping companies, fishing vessel operators, pleasure craft/expedition sailers' associations and Polar cruise line companies. Also to Administrations. | The format is good as it is. Also, it is appropriate to hold the Forum meeting back to back with the spring Maritime Safety Committee Meeting (MSC) to facilitate good attendance. | The presentation by the German navigating officer. |
| 3 | Emergency response in the Arctic regions | Views from the IMO | It looks good to me | Press release | Keep in London; annual is fine | All |
| 4 | Iridium is expected to start providing GMDSS services in 2020. An update for polar regions would be interesting. These services include distress alert by mobile satellite communication systems, and SAR messages and Maritime Safety Information (MSI) broadcasting using the Enhanced Group Call (EGC) technology (until now the only provider is Inmarsat and it not covers the poles). | None | 1. Include an iterative section for receiving questions from the general public, which should be answered by appointed volunteer experts. Questions and answers could be compiled in a FAQ (frequently asked questions) list. This FAQ would help the forum in identifying the areas with major information demand. | | Divulgate it in widely accessed portals from companies and international organisations. Divulgate it in maritime universities (graduate and undergraduate students) which public is more likely to sail in polar waters. | I tough the Polaris framework particularly interesting. |
| 5 | Changing bunkering market in view of 2020 sulphur cap and best actual practices of using fuels in the Arctic; reduction of risks of use of HFO as fuel in the Arctic - best practices | see 5 below | no specific at the moment | increase the availability of links to the web-portal throughout the industry, including the web-sites of the maritime administrations of the | allow more time for questions and discussions, perhaps the Q and A slot immediately after each presentation would | SARex outcome and virtual route planning - gave good impression of the fact that the overall understanding of |

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Steering Committee

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| | | | | Arctic states, if appropriate | be beneficial comparing to the current arrangements | the arctic realities, applicable legislation and the adequacy of requirements by the interested parties is far from some realities, thus the mission of the portal and the forum seems valid |
| 6 | <p>1. Having mariners to share their experience with the polar code would be very beneficial.</p> <p>If possible, to have someone to share a summary of all research conclusions related to polar safety equipment, the safety aspect of the human element and gaps. The outcome will hopefully be giving relevant stakeholders insight for actions in relation to training needs, equipment gaps and regulatory gaps.</p> | <p>First of all, this is a great forum, and thank you so much for your hard work. If you can keep the same level of different participants I would like to say that the forum keeps a very high level of diversity. Maybe some representatives from the fishing industry can be included next year?</p> | <p>As of now, I do not have any suggestions.</p> | <p>Maybe you are able to make a news story out of it?</p> | <p>I do not have any suggestions. Everything was great. Thank you!</p> | <p>I found value in all presentations in their own way. I therefore have no particular favorite.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Assessment of the potential impact of shipping accidents on Arctic indigenous communities and their traditional subsistence.</p> | <p>It would be productive to be able to see the abstract and bio of the speakers a few days before the meeting.</p> | <p>Video and poster formats are the most perceived way of ensuring clear information for non-professionals.</p> | <p>Translate the website into the official UN languages so that local communities can have information.</p> | <p>The current provision of the meeting looks optimal.</p> | <p>SARex</p> |
| 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the topic “voyage planning”, information and sources of information on new seasonal opened routes would be welcome. • Follow up of the articles of the Polar Code that could need revision or harmonised interpretation according to the experience gained. • How the Forum can help to countries that are not members of the Arctic Council nor Observers to raise the interest in that community about the PAME activities. • How can benefit Non-Solas vessels operating in polar waters from the Polar Code. | <p>Informing of the work of the Forum and progress, several times a year or on regular basis.</p> | <p>The portal is very good, but perhaps giving clearest directions on how to add information to the portal would be a token of improvement</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To agree with the IMO to set in the main IMO web page a link to the PAME and especially to the Web-portal. • To present a document in the Committee III (Implementation IMO Instruments) information concerning and promoting the use of the Web-portal. • To explain the benefits of downloading information in the Web-portal to improve the implementation of the Polar Code. In this regard, it would be important to link such information with the IMO topics that affect the maritime transport in polar waters. | <p>No changes are necessary having as reference the organization made in June 2019. Everything was organised very well.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum Web Portal • Polaris Update • Life Saving Appliances for ships operating in polar waters • International Polar Code. The human element. • Voyage Planning in the Polar Code: An environmental Perspective • Chukotkan Indigenous People, Bering Strait, and PAME • Polar Waters Voyage Planning: An operator’s perspective. • Maritime Student’s Perspective. • Arctic Ship Traffic Data |
| 9 | <p>The increasing role and requirements for satellite based data to support Arctic maritime operations.</p> | <p>No suggestion currently.</p> | <p>Guidance on accessing real operational information.</p> | <p>No suggestion currently.</p> | <p>Perhaps allow remote access to the meetings (assuming this is not already done).</p> | <p>Those related to Polar Code implementation, especially the POLARIS update.</p> |
| 10 | <p>New and ongoing developments at IMO: which could cover both safety (e.g. application of</p> | <p>Establishing working/experts groups to discuss specific issues, including possible</p> | <p>It could include a section listing studies and research projects</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of presentations at regional and international fora (e.g. IMO) as well as | <p>The organisation of the meeting was very good. Having the meeting back to</p> | <p>The presentations which were the most interested were those related</p> |

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| | <p>Polar Code to non-SOLAS vessels) and environmental issues (e.g. ban on carriage of HFO for use as fuel).</p> | <p>submissions to IMO meetings, in more detail throughout the year, and as the need arises, rather than restricting discussions only to an annual meeting.</p> | <p>(as well as including hyperlinks to the websites of these studies/projects) related to shipping traffic in the Arctic.</p> | <p>industry meetings – ECSA, ICS, BIMCO etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of articles in maritime related magazines. • Promulgation of general information through social media – e.g. facebook page, twitter account, you tube videos on its use. This would also be an easy way to announce developments, updates of information, news announcements, etc. • It would also be useful to ask the involved Member States and NGOs to include a hyperlink from their websites to the Forum's portal. </p> | <p>back with an IMO meeting will ensure a good and a high level of participation.</p> | <p>to voyage planning (in particular “Voyage Planning in the Polar Code: An Environmental Perspective” and “Polar Waters Voyage Planning: An Operators Perspective”) as well as the presentation highlighting the perspective by “Indigenous People” on Arctic Shipping.</p> |
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