

Memorandum to Senior Arctic Officials

Arctic Biodiversity Assessment

For information

PURPOSE: To update Senior Arctic Officials on the status of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA).

SUMMARY

The ABA, scheduled for completion in 2013, will synthesize and assess the status and trends of biological diversity in the Arctic. This will provide a much needed description of the current state of the Arctic's ecosystems and biodiversity, create a baseline for use in global and regional assessments of biodiversity, and provide a basis to inform and guide future Arctic Council work. The baseline it produces will be used by the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP). In addition, it will provide up-to-date scientific and traditional ecological knowledge, identify gaps in the data record, identify key mechanisms driving change, and produce policy recommendations regarding Arctic biodiversity.

CURRENT STATUS

Phase one is complete. The *Arctic Biodiversity Trends 2010: Selected Indicators of Change* report was released in May 2010. Phase two, now underway, will result in a full scientific Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and related policy recommendations scheduled for completion in 2013. Currently nine manuscripts have been received, with seven in peer-review and one finalized.

The ABA represents a circumpolar effort with Canada, Finland, Greenland/Denmark, Sweden and the United States leading the ABA development (Sweden is the current Chair of the ABA). Each of these countries have contributed funding to help develop the ABA. Additional sources of funds include the Nordic Council of Ministers and UNEP GRID Arendal. In-kind support, including teams of lead and co-lead authors, are drawn from all Arctic Council countries, Permanent Participants and Observers.

CONSIDERATIONS

The process for developing recommendations from the ABA is now being developed. A policy development workshop is being planned for May 2012 in conjunction with the Arctic Council Deputy Ministers meeting. The workshop will involve both scientists and policy people.

Its focus will be on developing the recommendations which will come from the ABA. A funding application is being submitted to the Nordic Council of Ministers Arctic Cooperation fund to assist with the ABAs policy development process

ACTIONS

SAOs to provide guidance on the policy development process of the ABA.