



Memorandum to Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) 5/3/2012

Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA)

To update SAOs on status and progress of the ABA.

STATUS:

The ABA is scheduled to be presented for endorsement at the Ministerial meeting in May 2013.

CHAPTERS UPDATE

- Drafts have been received for all but two texts - Freshwater fish and Terrestrial ecosystems. Authors have informed that drafts will be delivered in middle of March. A failure to deliver these chapters could affect the ability to deliver the ABA on time.

WORKSHOPS

- An authors meeting is scheduled for April 21-22nd in Montreal in conjunction with the IPY conference. The workshop will focus on discussing the synthesis report and the recommendations arising from the assessment. The results of this workshop will help inform the ABA policy workshop.
- The policy workshop will be held on May 14-15th in Stockholm. This is the first step in the development of policy recommendations from the ABA which are subject to approval of CAFF Management Board in conjunction with national consultations.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A communications plan has been created to provide guidance on how to develop, package, deliver and evaluate communications activities pertaining to the scientific assessment and the suite of policy recommendations.
- The film being developed as part of follow-up communications from the Arctic Biodiversity Trends 2010 report is currently under review.
- An Arctic Biodiversity Symposium is planned to launch the findings and recommendations from the ABA. The following outline the options for the launch of the ABA and the SAOs are asked for guidance and direction:
 - **Option 1:** Hold the symposium directly after the Ministerial where both scientific findings and policy recommendations are released together. If chosen this would allow the Ministers to endorse the ABA and announce any reactions before a symposium is held. This approach could also to increase visibility of the ABA as the symposium would follow directly from the Ministerial resolutions and statements on the ABA findings and recommendations.
 - **Option 2:** To hold the symposium immediately prior to the Ministerial where scientific findings are released and launch the policy recommendations after they have received ministerial approval. If chosen this would mean that the launch would take place before

Ministers have endorsed the ABA but after SAOs have done so. Such an approach could help raise attention on the ABA in the build up to the ministerial.

- Option 3: To hold the symposium some time after the ministerial. If selected this option would mean that the ABA might have a challenge in maintaining a high profile with the risk being that it is then seen as a completed project and would not benefit from the momentum and exposure accompanying a close association with the Ministerial.
- **CAFF recommends Option 1 is chosen**

DATA MANAGEMENT

- Work has begun to plan for and ensure that data from ABA is ready in appropriate format for ease of access and use when ABA is released. Compendiums of Traditional Ecological Knowledge compiled via the ABA are to be developed.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

- Direction is asked with regards to the “most effective approach to take in structuring and timing of the proposed “Arctic Biodiversity Symposium”.