

# Report of the 3rd Arctic Council Ecosystem-based Management Experts Group Meeting. October 3 – 5, 2012, Tromsø, Norway.

2012

## Arctic Council Ecosystem Based Management Experts Group

Arctic Council Secretariat

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### Background

**Nuuk Declaration of the Arctic Council Ministers, May 12, 2011:** “Decide to establish an expert group on Arctic ecosystem-based management (EBM) for the Arctic Environment to recommend further activities in this field for possible consideration by the SAOs before the end of the Swedish chairmanship”.

*The decision by the Ministers has been further elaborated by the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) and can be found in Annex 1 in this report.*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the EBM Experts Group was co-chaired by Magnús Jóhannesson, Secretary General, Iceland Ministry for the Environment and Laura Píríz, Senior Analyst, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management. The meeting was attended by 21 participants, including six Arctic States, several experts and observer organizations, and representatives from the SDWG and PAME. Russia, Denmark, and PPs were unable to attend the meeting. Else Berit Eikeland, Norwegian SAO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Alf Hakon Hoel, Regional Director of Norway’s Institute of Marine Research, and Magnus Johannesson all provided welcoming remarks.

### Work Products and Findings

The Expert Group received informative briefings from Trond Robert Gulbrandsen of Statoil, regarding their experience with EBM in Norway, as well as from Per Arneberg from the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research, discussing progress on the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program. Statoil provided examples of how EBM has saved their company time and money, but also pointed out areas for improvement regarding the aggregated level to which assessments are summarized as well as the enhanced level of engagement industry should have in the stakeholder process. Meanwhile, the CBMP presentation focused on the progress made with its Marine Monitoring Plan. Additionally, the meeting received information papers and brief interventions from representatives of four environmental NGOs regarding suggestions on pilot EBM implementation, as well as ideas for EBM goals and deliverables to the 2013 Ministerial.

The Expert Group also discussed two papers developed during the intersessional period in preparation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Expert Meeting. These included:

- An intersessional paper prepared by Norway considering EBM best practices, conservation standards, and ecological objectives.
- An intersessional paper prepared by Canada and the United States on Advancing EBM in the Arctic, which outlined ideas for potential activities related to EBM in the Arctic and also summarized relevant past and ongoing EBM efforts of the Working Groups.

The Expert Group used both papers to translate key findings into potential activities for the Arctic Council to consider to advance EBM implementation. These activities were classified according to 3 categories: Policy and Implementation, Institutional, and Science and Information.

The Expert Group also agreed to the outline of the draft Report of the Expert Group work that will be provided to SAOs for review and possible submission to the Ministers, and to this end, prepared a first draft. This Report includes: the Mandate from the Arctic Council Ministers and Recommendations related to the following: a Policy Statement; a Definition of EBM; nine Principles for EBM; and the aforementioned Activities to advance EBM implementation. The report will also include a context section on the importance and benefits of EBM in the Arctic, as well as a short section on how the expert group undertook its work, and what its outputs were. The intention is also to attach the intersessional documents as annexes. (Note: The meeting decided to merge the EBM Best Practices and Advancing EBM documents into one document and have a separate document for the overview of past and present EBM activities of the AC Working Groups.)

### **Conclusions and Next Steps**

Expert Group members agreed to submit the Draft Report to the SAO Meeting in Haparanda, November 14-15, 2012, for their review and guidance going forward, recognizing that SAOs may have additional comments that need to be addressed. The Expert Group plans to respond to comments and make revisions through electronic communications, unless the scope of work is beyond these means, in which case a 4<sup>th</sup> Expert Meeting will be held in Iceland. The expectation is that a final product will be ready for the 2013 Ministerial.

## **Annex 1**

### **Senior Arctic Officials Report to the Ministers, May 2011**

Human activities in the Arctic are increasing, and planning and management of these activities on a cross-sectoral basis can assist in reducing conflict among activities and in supporting the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

The Senior Arctic Officials recognize the desirability of exchanging information regarding marine and landscape planning and management among the Arctic States, and encouraging compatibility of planning approaches on an ecosystem basis.

We recommend that Ministers convene an ecosystem-based management (EBM) expert group, reporting to the Senior Arctic Officials, composed of governmental experts from the Arctic States and representatives of the Permanent Participants. The expert group should consider developing a common understanding of EBM, consider EBM principles for marine and terrestrial areas, and consider developing Arctic-specific guidelines for applying the ecosystem approach to all relevant areas of work in the Arctic Council. If appropriate, the work of the expert group could be presented at the next Ministerial meeting in 2013.