

How to include community based monitoring and traditional knowledge into the SAON process – a proposal on ways forward

Background

At a teleconference on June 16th 2009 of the SAON-Steering Group (SG) an action plan for the next stage in the SAON process was discussed. It was determined that item 2.c of the action plan is important and work should be started to consider how this could be implemented. Under 'Stakeholder Consultations', Item 2.c states:

“Bring together representatives of Arctic communities and Indigenous Peoples with members of the scientific community to discuss approaches to improve integration of local and indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge and for increasing engagement of local and indigenous people in Arctic observing network.”

Reference was also made to a statement from the Salekhard declaration on this issue which has not been implemented. This statement recommended that the Arctic Council:

“Support the continued cooperation with indigenous peoples of the Arctic, welcome the contribution of their traditional knowledge of flora and fauna to scientific research, and encourage further cooperation in the development of community-based monitoring of the Arctic’s living resources.”

At the teleconference it was agreed that a group of people should start work on a proposal which clarifies the text and how the item can be implemented. The people participating in this task were:

- Victoria Gofman (AIA)
- Bridget Larocque (GCI)
- Halldor (Arctic Portal)
- Eva Kruemmel (ICC)
- Tom Barry (CAFF Secretariat)

This task was scheduled to be ready and submitted to the SAON SG by July 16th.

Issues to consider

The group felt that there are two main questions to consider, how can we

1. Improve integration of local and indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge?
2. Increase engagement of local and indigenous people in Arctic observing networks?

In order to answer these questions, we first need to know what the current situation is and to identify:

- What community based monitoring/observation projects are currently active in the Arctic?
- Who are the principle people responsible for these activities? (These individuals may be indigenous and non-indigenous, scientists and local residents.)
- What similar efforts to this initiative are or have already been conducted?
- How can we learn from successful projects?

- What is missing?

Proposed action items

The group felt that the next steps could include the following

1. In order to answer the questions above and to propose ways forward, it was felt that it was important to compile a list of people involved with relevant organizations, programs and studies that incorporate and make use of relevant and active community based monitoring/observation projects . The development of this inventory could be approached as follows:
 - According to the minutes of the recent SAON SG meeting, national information about observing networks is to be collected by country representatives. We can ensure a comprehensive inventory of community-based monitoring projects by ensuring that this form allows for their identification.
 - To proactively circulate this questionnaire to relevant organizations and key contacts, requesting their assistance in identifying relevant projects.

Use should be made of all comparative efforts to insure that there is no overlap. For example the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS) in the process of collecting a list of Permanent Participant Experts engaged in the various Arctic Council working groups and projects. They may be experts in science or in traditional knowledge, but the list may also include anyone that a PP organization assigns to follow or maintain a file on a certain working group, programme or project. We will need to understand what progress has been made and if this initiative could perhaps be connected to and complement our efforts.

Please find attached a list developed by ICC as a contribution to start the process of creating this inventory

2. The next step would be to hold a workshop that will include identified experts from the above proposed list. At the workshop, this group of experts can discuss experiences that have been made so far, and propose ways on how the successful participation of indigenous people and incorporation of local and indigenous knowledge in the SAON process can be ensured.

If it is decided to convene a workshop then as we create the inventory of projects/groups and identify representatives we also need to start to consider how to structure the workshop to insure we can achieve what we need to do. A SAON workshop focusing on community based monitoring should be small and focused on developing a workplan for how to achieve the two objectives.

This workplan should include recommendations on next steps. It should ultimately endorse that all projects via funding mechanisms and workshop format and participation include community based monitoring as a component. This is the best way to ensure that it is incorporated into existing monitoring/observing. It was also noted that the CBMPs strategy for integrating community based monitoring (as related to biodiversity) may be of relevance as we focus on how to proceed.