FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL. Best Practices in Ecosystems-based Oceans Management in the Arctic BePOMAr.

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Norwegian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council

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Arctic communities and settlements are largely based on the use of natural resources. Traditionally these activities included hunting, fishing and reindeer herding. However, the importance of the non-renewable resources is growing in the Arctic. Both onshore and offshore petroleum developments are expanding to new areas of the Arctic.

New economic activities may provide an important basis for welfare and economic growth. It is vital that all resource use is planned and carried out in a sustainable manner to facilitate the coexistence of activities in different sectors. Economic activities must be carried out in accordance with environmental and safety standards and should be to the benefit of Arctic communities. Minimizing negative impacts of commercial activities on the ecosystems and living resources of the Arctic is a particularly important task.

On the basis of the mandate given at the Salekhard ministerial in 2006 (cfr. Report of SAO meeting), the Norwegian chairmanship of the Arctic Council would like to initiate a project on oceans management. The project will be a joint SDWG – PAME effort, and will report to those two working groups. A planning meeting providing input to this proposal was held in Tromsø 20-21 February 2007, and further inputs were provided at the meetings of PAME in Copenhagen 6-7 March 2007 and of SDWG in Tromsø 10-11 April 2007.

Background and rationale

The aggregate effects of multiple uses of the oceans – fishing, transportation, petroleum development, waste disposal, etc. – call for an ecosystems-based approach to oceans management (EBOM). The need for oceans management based on an ecosystem approach is now widely recognized by the international community, as reflected in calls for the implementation of the ecosystem approach by 2010 in the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation from WSSD as well as in recommendations from the UN General Assembly. In the Arctic context, the 2004 Arctic Marine Strategic Plan points to challenges and opportunities in this regard, and the working map of the 17 Arctic LMEs represents a basis for further work.

The employment of an ecosystems-based approach to oceans management is critical to the protection and sustainable use of marine ecosystems. Actual oceans management is carried out by governments, independently and in cooperation with other states. States and their practices in ecosystems-based oceans management will therefore be the basis for an analysis of the factors that contribute to sustainable use and conservation of Arctic marine ecosystems.

The application of the ecosystem approach to oceans management of Arctic waters raises a number of issues with commonalities across the Arctic region: ice-covered waters, transboundary cooperation, fisheries management, exploitation of petroleum under severe climatic conditions, long-range transport of pollutants, indigenous communities, socioeconomic growth and sustainability issues, and the impacts of climate change.

The project will build upon existing Arctic Council work, adopted strategies and programs, including the work of the LME expert group and relevant PAME, SDWG and CAFF projects.

The Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP) was adopted by the Arctic Council in November 2004. The AMSP identifies an ecosystem approach as "the best approach to managing the Arctic marine environment in such a way as to achieve the four goals of the Strategic Plan." The key features of the approach are identified and a diagram describing a possible methodology for applying the approach is presented. The methodology refers both to socio-economic issues and stakeholder participation. Finally, three specific steps to apply the approach are identified.

About PAME and the LME approach
Since 2004, PAME has led Arctic Council efforts to move toward an "ecosystem-based management" approach by undertaking the steps identified in the AMSP. These steps emphasize the need to first define the ecosystems and then determine how to measure change within them. Both steps are needed precursors to "management". The PAME Working Plan 2006-2008 describes the next steps to be taken, including (1) review of the indicator suites for assessing and monitoring the changing states of Arctic LMEs, based on productivity, fish and fisheries, pollution and ecosystem health, socioeconomics and governance; (2) preparation of a peer reviewed publication based on the AAAS presentations of February 2006; (3) an Arctic LME session at the Second Global Conference on LMEs and (4) developing the LME approach for pilot assessments, possibly in the West Bering Sea, Barents Sea and Beaufort Sea.

The proposed project will seek to contribute also to these efforts.

About SDWG and sustainable use
The SDWG was established in 1998, and has taken the lead in the Arctic Council work on sustainable development issues on the basis of the Sustainable Development Framework Document adopted by the Arctic Council in 2000. Among the priority areas are Sustainable economic activities and increasing community prosperity, and the Management of natural, including living, resources. Various projects in these and related fields have been established within the auspices of SDWG since its establishment, including cooperation with PAME on the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan.

The proposed project will seek to contribute also to these efforts.

Objectives

The objective of the project is to present the concepts and practices the Arctic countries have developed for the application of an ecosystem-based approach to oceans management. By way of reviewing how countries actually put to use such concepts and practices, lessons can be drawn on how to effectively do ecosystems-based oceans management.

A potential outcome of the project will be examples of best practices that will enable better management of the 17 Arctic LMEs identified on the working map.

Two sets of questions here address the substance and process of putting ecosystems-based oceans management to work, respectively:

- what practices and approaches have proved useful in moving towards effective protection and sustainable use of the Arctic marine environment?

- What are the main obstacles, and what are the important success elements in moving towards ecosystems-based oceans management?

The issue of practices and approaches in ecosystems-based oceans management will be addressed by requesting the Arctic countries to describe how they actually do this. Among the elements to be considered are how countries define ecosystems-based oceans management, the types of objectives that are formulated, the choice of policy instruments and organization of the work, for example in terms of how stakeholders are consulted and the geographical context for ecosystems-based oceans management, including existing transboundary agreements relevant to the management of Arctic marine ecosystems.

The question of obstacles and success elements will be considered by asking the Arctic countries to describe their experiences in applying an ecosystems-based approach to oceans management. Important elements here include the *process aspects* of interagency cooperation and the organization of that, the organization and use of science, and stakeholder involvement, as well as the actual *content* of ecosystems-based oceans management, such as institutions for ecosystems-based oceans management, legislation and policy tools, geographical approaches, including LMEs, and biodiversity considerations.

The main emphasis of the project will be on the analytical aspects of these issues, so that actions can be based on lessons learnt.

Outputs

Outputs from the project will include the following:

- A presentation of ecosystem-based oceans management practices in the Arctic countries

- examples of best practices for ecosystem-based oceans management in the Arctic,
- contribute to course development for ecosystem-based oceans management (possibly under the auspices of the University of the Arctic).
- An international workshop where lessons and experiences will be shared
- A final report of the project.

The project should thereby be able to move beyond just a report, but also help in actually improving practices in oceans management in the Arctic.

Constraints

The project will be conducted from spring 2007 till fall 2008. The limited time frame, together with the strict thematic focus of the project, provides significant constraints in terms of the work that can be done.

The project will build on previous assessments and work under the Arctic Council, and will neither venture into new studies of the Arctic marine environment, nor address issues relating to jurisdictions and rights to resources. The project will be oceanic in orientation.

Execution and timeline

The project will be executed as a discussion of how countries apply ecosystems-based oceans management in practice, and an analysis of lessons learnt in this regard and how they can be put to actual use in the Arctic. The emphasis will be on these latter, analytical aspects.

The final report of the project will contain country chapters, and as additional chapters addressing specific issues such as the international framework for ecosystems-based oceans management, a brief description of the status of the marine environment in the Arctic region, and some other selected themes (see separate report outline).

The report of the project will consist of a scientific part and a policy part.

Norway will be lead country. PAME and SDWG will establish a Contact Group as a joint group under their direction and with the approval of these working groups and in consultation with PPs. All Arctic Council working groups will have opportunity to participate in the project. The Contact Group will be responsible for producing the report. Each country will recruit its lead authors and decide on how its country chapter is to be written. The establishment of small advisory teams that can assist authors in drawing up the country chapters (see separate chapter outline), and include the participation of indigenous people, should be considered.

All reports, including recommendations (guidelines, best practices etc) will have to be reviewed and approved by PAME, SDWG and SAOs.

Timeline

Spring 07

1) Establishing of Contact Group
2) Member states select their lead authors for their country chapters

Autumn 07

3) A first version of country chapters to be presented at a meeting with SDWG and PAME.

Spring 08

4) Chapters, including chapter on best practices based on country chapters, to be elaborated upon and a draft report produced.

Autumn 08

5) Finalization by SDWG and PAME.
6) A final draft to be presented at the SAO meeting.
7) A manuscript ready for copy-editing and processing ready by end of the year.

Spring 09

8) Presentation to the spring 09 Ministerial Meeting.

Budget

The budget is estimated to 1,6 mill NOK (approx USD 250 000). This includes work of the project coordinator, an initial workshop, a small conference and printing of final document, and will be funded by Norway as lead country. The funding from Norway will also cover travel expenses to the initial workshop for one participant from each Arctic State and PP.

Each Arctic state will have to cover the costs related to the relevant country chapter as well as the country's participation in the Contact Group (as in kind contributions).

The participation of the PPs should be encouraged. Norway is supporting the Saami Council and Raipon with general traveling funds.

Project co-ordinator will be Associate Professor Alf Håkon Hoel, University of Tromsø, at hoel@sv.uit.no

Suggested Outline of Report (to be finally decided by Contact Group).

1. Introduction
    a. Introduction
    b. Global framework
    c. Arctic Marine LMEs
    d. Indigenous perspectives
2. Country responses
    a. Country 1
    b. Country 2 …
3. Analysis
    a. Process
        i. Stakeholder consultation (indigenous people, industry, NGO, regions, etc)
        ii. Development of knowledge
        iii. Interagency cooperation
    b. Content
        i. Structures for ecosystems-based oceans management
        ii. Legislation and policy tools
        iii. Geographical approaches, including LMEs
        iv. Biodiversity considerations
4. Conclusions
    a. Summary of findings
    b. Recommended best practices

Suggested Outline country chapter (to be finally decided by Contact Group).

1. Introduction
    a. Facts and figures
    b. Commercial activity
    c. Instititutions and policy
2. Introduction of Ecosystems-based oceans management
    a. Process
        i. Stakeholder consultation (indigenous people, industry, NGO, regions, etc)
        ii. Development of knowledge
        iii. Interagency cooperation
    b. Content
        i. Structures for ecosystems-based oceans management
        ii. Legislation and policy tools
        iii. Geographical approaches, including LMEs
        iv. Biodiversity considerations
3. Results