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Theme 2: Biodiversity

Ecosystem Approach to Management

Joint Ecosystem Approach Expert Group

PAME's joint Ecosystem Approach Expert Group (EA-EG) membership collectively contributes to the integration of EA implementation into the overall work of the Arctic Council. It also provides a mechanism to facilitate the exchange and review of information and experiences to support the development of a common and coordinated approach to EA implementation by Arctic States.

Questions

- Does your country/organization have experience/expertise in Ecosystem Approach (EA) to management and/or Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA)?
- Would you be able to contribute expertise to the development of EA Guidelines?
- How could your country/organization use Arctic Council EA Guidelines for an Ecosystem Approach?
- Does your country/organization have expertise in gathering and using Traditional and Local Knowledge (TLK)? Would they be able to contribute this expertise?

Background

PAME established the EA-EG in 2007, which was broadened in 2011 to a cross-Working Group joint Expert Group with participation from AMAP, CAFF, and SDWG. The EA-EG has convened six workshops from 2011-2018, as well as the first international EA conference in August 2016.

The concept of the EA to management was adopted as an overarching principle and approach by Arctic Council Ministers in 2004 as part of the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP). PAME is now past the stage of discussing what it is and what it means, and is dealing with the next stage: how to implement it in practice. PAME's *Status of Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Management in the Arctic* report was approved at the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in 2017, where Ministers also reaffirmed the need for an EA approach to management in the Arctic and encouraged future efforts to develop practical guidelines on the issue.

The EA Framework and Large Marine Ecosystems of the Arctic

The EA-EG has developed a framework for implementing the EA to management of marine (and coastal) ecosystems in the Arctic. This framework has 6 elements:

1. Identify the geographic extent of the ecosystem;
2. Describe the biological and physical components and processes of the ecosystem,
3. Set ecological objectives that define sustainability of the ecosystem,
4. Assess the current state of the ecosystem (Integrated Ecosystem Assessment),
5. Value the cultural, social and economic goods produced by the ecosystem,
6. Manage human activities to sustain the ecosystem.

This framework is the basis for Arctic Council work to support EA implementation in the Arctic. The identification of 18 Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) fulfilled the first step of the framework. LMEs are identified based on ecological criteria and are meant to be units of space or geography for applying the EA to management. PAME will seek collaborations with Arctic States and other Arctic Council Working Groups to develop the other elements of this framework. For example, collaborations with CAFF and AMAP will contribute to the description of the biological and physical components and processes of the ecosystem; and to Integrated Ecosystem Assessment. Collaboration with SDWG will advance the understanding of ecological objectives and ecosystem values.



Ecosystem Assessment Guidelines

At the PAME I-2018 meeting in February 2018, PAME agreed to next steps for developing EA guidelines for management in the Arctic. Guidelines will follow the six-element EA. PAME intends to prepare draft EA guidelines by the fall and hold a panel at the 2nd Arctic Biodiversity Congress in October 2018 to report on this work and solicit expert input. PAME will also seek formal input on the draft EA guidelines from other Working Groups. PAME aims to submit final guidelines to the 2019 Ministerial meeting.

ICES/PICES/PAME

One of the key elements of the 6-element EA framework is Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA). Thus, in addition to working on the development of general EA Guidelines for the Arctic as a whole, the EA-EG has pursued IEA best practices specific to the Central Arctic Ocean through leadership on the Working Group on Integrated Ecosystem Assessment in the Central Arctic Ocean (WGICA). This Working Group is co-sponsored by PAME, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and PICES North Pacific Marine Science Organization. WGICA held two meetings in 2016 and 2017, respectively, and made progress on the delineation of focal areas for IEAs, contributions to CAFF's *Status of Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report*, and the consideration of Ecosystem Vulnerability to potential stressors such as climate, shipping, commercial fisheries, and others. Next steps for WGICA include preparation of an initial draft Vulnerability Assessment (April 2018) and assembling the first version of an IEA (April 2018). The 3rd WGICA meeting will be held from 24-26 April 2018 in St. John's Newfoundland, Canada.