

## **Session VI: 11:30 Moving forward: What is the role of the Arctic Council in Implementing the Ecosystem Approach and how could/should it facilitate this?**

Catherine Coon, Session Chair

Note: Panel members have been analyzing the presentations on Day 1 and Day 2 to gather the answers to the questions and to formulate next steps. Panels and interested others will meet on the evening of Day 2 to compare notes and to plan the sessions on Day 3.

The Arctic Council issued the [Iqaluit Declaration](#) at the conclusion of the Canadian Chairmanship in 2015. The Declaration called for “... and request the development of practical guidelines for an ecosystem-based approach to the work of the Arctic Council be completed as soon as possible,” To this end, PAME, AMAP, and CAFF convened a conference on The Ecosystem Approach to Management of Arctic Ecosystems: Status of Implementation in August 2016. The first major hurdle to clear is addressing whether the Council has any role at all to play in implementing EA in the Arctic. Is not the act of implementation of EA in the Arctic the sole prerogative of the Arctic states? While the Arctic states have sole control of promulgating regulations for development and use of natural resources within their territorial domains, implementing EA may be facilitated by Arctic states working in concert. The steps leading to EA implementation, the current status of their development and recommendations for next steps have been addressed in other panel discussions.

The steps leading to EA implementation have been addressed by the joint AMAP/CAFF/PAME EA-Expert Group in [a framework for implementation](#) . The framework consists of six elements: define, describe, set objectives, assess, value, manage. Are the six elements of the EA framework sufficient to form the basis for the EA guidelines? What would be necessary to produce such guidelines?

### ***Questions on roles and approaches for developing EA guidelines in the AC***

At what level should the guidelines be developed? General and overarching guidelines, industry sector specific, or for specific steps toward implementation, such as defining ecological objectives? Should they be broken up into guidelines for various parts of the EA implementation? For example, should the joint EA-EG discuss guidelines for setting ecological objectives and for Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA)?

The wording of the Iqaluit request, ‘for an ecosystem-based approach to the work of the Arctic Council,’ clearly relates to the question of the role of the AC in implementing EA. Where do the guidelines fit into implementation of EA in the Arctic? Do the roles of the AC in implementation need to be addressed before addressing the guidelines? Some advice on roles for the AC seems essential before tackling the guidelines.

### ***Roles of the AC in EA implementation***

Possible roles that AC could play with regard to furthering EA implementation, bearing in mind that the final step of applying the EA including ecological objectives and management actions would be done by Arctic states:

- Provide a forum for exchange of information and experiences from development and practical implementation of EA
- Facilitate method development and conduct of IEA by sharing information and expertise from national and joint assessment activities
- Provide input from pan-Arctic level assessments (e.g. climate, pollution, shipping, biodiversity) to LME-specific IEAs
- Provide a forum and mechanism for exchange of information and coordination of IEA and management of adjacent LMEs
- Prepare guidelines for how to set ecological objectives for Arctic ecosystems, specifically LMEs, and contribute to their development and harmonization across the pan-Arctic
- Take the lead in implementation of EA for the Central Arctic Ocean LME that includes substantial extraterritorial areas