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## **Concept Paper / Project Plan**

### **Pan-Arctic Framework for a Network of Marine Protected Areas**

#### **1. Introduction**

The Arctic Council is increasingly focussed on marine issues, especially those that will promote environmentally sustainable development in the Arctic. The 2013 Arctic Council Ministerial Declaration calls for implementation of the recommendations in the 2013 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment, the 2013 Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) expert group report, and the 2013 Arctic Ocean Review report. These reports contain a variety of recommendations on protected areas, including identification and protection of ecologically and biologically important marine areas; enhanced cooperation, integration and coordination the management of the Arctic marine environment; and the promotion of functional connectivity within and between protected areas to protect ecosystem resilience and facilitate adaptation to climate change. The inclusion of these subjects in recent Arctic Council reports represents a significant investment already made by the Council towards the establishing a framework for a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPA network) in the Arctic. This is further evidenced by the extensive list of publications presented in Annex 1.

This document describes a proposed project to develop a pan-Arctic framework for a network of MPAs, which would build on current ecosystem-based management (EBM) efforts in the Arctic. EBM is the overall process within which individual MPAs and MPA networks are nested, representing the conservation element of broader EBM. The pan-Arctic framework would identify existing MPAs, cultural heritage sites and MPA networks in the Arctic; define common goals, objectives, principles, criteria, and terminology; and build on best practices and communications opportunities in order to promote cohesion and enhance effectiveness of the domestic Arctic MPA networks. The framework would not be binding, and each Arctic State would proceed with MPA network development at its own pace. However, international linkages would be strengthened and a basis would become available to relevant organizations and institutions.

This project would support international commitments and targets, such as establishing a representative network of MPAs by 2012 (The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002), and Aichi Target 11 established at the 2010 Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10/CBD) to conserve “at least... 10% of coastal and marine areas... through... systems of protected areas and other effective area based conservation measures... by 2020”. It would also contribute to implementation of several of elements of the Kiruna Ministerial Declaration of 2013, including those relating to EBM, biodiversity conservation, and a cooperative, coordinated and integrated approach to the management of the Arctic marine environment.

The project would be undertaken through the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) working group and would be co-led by MPA network experts from Canada, the US and Norway, with the expectation that all Member States would be active project partners in order to secure a consensus for the project’s outcome (i.e., a joint network of Arctic MPAs). An international expert group would be established that would report to PAME and work collaboratively with the Ecosystem Approach (EA) expert group. The MPA Network expert group would collaborate mainly through conference calls and virtual meetings, though annual face to face meetings and workshops for at least the two first years would be beneficial). Given the related work to build from (Annexes 1 and 2) and the fact that Arctic

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States have already proposed members for the expert group (Annex 3), it is anticipated that this project would get underway quickly and proceed efficiently once agreed to by all Members of the PAME working group of the Arctic Council.

## 2. Background

Past Arctic Council initiatives have laid the ground work for establishing a Pan-Arctic Framework for a network of MPAs. The work of the Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN, disbanded in 2010), such as its 2006 *Strategy and Action Plan* and 2010 report on Arctic Biodiversity Trends, advocated sufficient protection of all habitat types in the Arctic. Work related to recommendation II(C) from the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA) identified areas of high ecological and cultural value, especially in relation to potential threats from shipping.

Other existing guidance on establishing MPA networks that may inform a Pan-Arctic Framework includes the 2006-2007 OSPAR Commission / Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) guidance; the 2008 US *Framework for the National System of MPAs*; the 2010 ministerial for the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR); and the 2011 *National Framework for Canada's Network of Marine Protected Areas*. These documents are described in Annex 2. As well, the CBD has developed guidance on the design features and properties necessary for a coherent MPA network (the Azores Report), which could be considered during development of the Framework.

In 2012 the Swedish delegation presented a draft proposal on Ecologically and Biologically Significant Area (EBSA) and MPA network processes, which was considered premature by PAME II 2012. The idea of a network of marine protected areas for the Arctic arose again during planning for the Canadian Arctic Council Chairmanship (2013-2015). Canada has since proposed leading or co-leading the development of a pan-Arctic framework for an MPA network, given the country's recent experience in developing such a document for domestic application. The preliminary proposal was tabled at PAME I 2013, where it was agreed to: *"Establish an expert group to inter-sessionally work on refining the concept paper for the proposed Framework for an Arctic MPA Network, including the development of a project timeline, milestones, and linkages with relevant Arctic Council, national and international initiatives in advance of June 2013 and for inclusion into the PAME Work Plan 2013-2015"* (from the final Record of Decisions).

## 3. Description of the project

### **Purposes:**

- To promote sustainable development and strengthen ecological resilience by enhancing protection of Arctic marine biodiversity;
- To provide Arctic States with strategic guidance to encourage a consistent and predictable pan-Arctic approach for establishing domestic MPA networks in keeping with best international practices; and
- To identify ecological connections and functional linkages among MPAs across the Arctic, to help inform decisions and improve the effectiveness of domestic MPA networks.

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**Outcomes:**

- A pan-Arctic framework document outlining a common vision, goals (objectives), guiding principles, network design properties, etc.;
- An updated map of existing MPAs in the Arctic;
- Integration with domestic MPA network planning and management agencies to foster effective implementation of the framework through strengthened international cooperation; and
- An international community of practice for on-going Arctic MPA network collaboration.

**4. Proposed project timeline, work plan items and budget**

September-October 2013	Finalize MPA network expert group. Via conference calls, draft terms of reference, work plan for expert group. Identify gaps (e.g., gaps in protection; emerging issues) and plan how to address them.
November-December 2014	Via conference calls, develop table of contents, agree on fundamental elements of the framework, assign drafters, agree on next steps and review process, etc.
January-March 2014	Draft framework; plan face to face meeting.
Spring 2014 (tbc)	Hold a face to face meeting in association with PAME meeting to resolve any issues with the draft framework, discuss cross-boundary MPA network linkages.
Summer 2014	Final revisions of framework. States consult on draft framework internally; seek approval to proceed.
Fall 2015	Submit proposed framework for approval by PAME working group. Potentially, hold face-to-face meeting (location TBD) to discuss implementation of the framework, longer term coordination among States, etc.

**Budget**

- The budget requirement is expected to be modest – in-kind time and travel to one (or two) international meetings to be held in conjunction with PAME or other international meetings (TBD).
- Each Arctic State or organization will bear the costs of their representatives’ participation.

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## ANNEXES

**Annex 1: Previous related work of the Arctic Council** (available from internet-based sources) includes:

- *The State of Protected Areas in the Circumpolar Arctic. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 1* (1994)
- *Proposed Protected Areas in the Circumpolar Arctic. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 2* (1996)
- *National Mechanisms and Principles for Protected Areas in the Arctic Countries. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report Number 3* (1996)
- *Circumpolar Protected Area Network (CPAN) Principles And Guidelines. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 4* (1996)
- *Gaps in Habitat Protection in the Circumpolar Arctic – a Preliminary Analysis. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 5* (1996)
- *Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN) Strategy And Action Plan. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 6* (1996)
- *Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN), Progress Report 1997. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 7* (1997)
- *Circumpolar Marine Workshop: Report and Recommendations* (1999)
- *A Summary of Legal Instruments and National Frameworks for Arctic Marine Conservation. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 8* (2000)
- *Gap Analysis In Support Of CPAN: The Russian Arctic. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 9* (2000)
- *Protected Areas of the Arctic: Conserving a Full Range of Values. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 10* (2002)
- *Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN) - CPAN Country Updates Report 2004. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 11* (2004)
- *The Conservation of Sacred Sites of Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic: A Case Study in Northern Russia. CAFF Technical Report No. 11* (2004)

CAFF Habitat Conservation Reports are available on the Arctic Biodiversity Portal:

[http://www.caff.is/publications/view\\_category/21-circumpolar-protected-areas-network-cpan](http://www.caff.is/publications/view_category/21-circumpolar-protected-areas-network-cpan).

The 1999 Circumpolar Marine Workshop Report, which was produced by CAFF, PAME and IUCN/World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), is available at:

[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/arctic\\_circumpolar\\_wksp.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/arctic_circumpolar_wksp.pdf).

The 2002 CAFF Report on Protected areas of the Arctic: Conserving a Full Range of Values is available at: <http://arcticportal.org/uploads/WP/n5/WPn5BFu6Aq5YA5hdeYR0Fw/HCR-10---Protected-Areas-of-the-Arctic--Conserving-a-Full-Range-of-Values-2002.pdf>.

The important 2004 work focused on preserving the sacred sites of the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic is available at: [http://www.caff.is/publications/view\\_document/34-the-conservation-value-of-sacred-sites-of-indigenous-people-of-the-arctic-a-case-study-in-northern-russia](http://www.caff.is/publications/view_document/34-the-conservation-value-of-sacred-sites-of-indigenous-people-of-the-arctic-a-case-study-in-northern-russia).

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## Annex 2. Supporting Programs

**CPAN** Guidance (*Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN) Strategy And Action Plan. CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 6* (1996).

**HELCOM** is a network of Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPAs) established 1994 by Finland, Denmark and Russia. The HELCOM Recommendation 15/5 (1994) states that a network of BSPAs (MPAs) should be established. The status of the BSPA network has been reviewed four times (2004, 2006, 2007 and 2010); currently there are 163 established BSPAs in the Baltic Sea. See the HELCOM webpage ([www.helcom.fi](http://www.helcom.fi)) for details and the link to the BSPA Protected areas database.

**OSPAR** contracting parties (including Arctic Council member nations Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) began establishing a network of MPAs in 2003, with the purpose of establishing an ecologically coherent network of well-managed MPAs in the North-East Atlantic by 2012, under the direction of the OSPAR Convention – Annex V on Biodiversity Strategy. In 2003 there was a Joint Ministerial Meeting of Helsinki & OSPAR Commissions 2003 (see [http://www.helcom.fi/ministerial\\_declarations/en\\_GB/ministerial/](http://www.helcom.fi/ministerial_declarations/en_GB/ministerial/)). Sections 17 and 18 of the declaration concern the OSPAR- HELCOM MPA network:

17. The marine protected areas will be an important tool to protect the species and habitats identified as threatened, declining or in need of protection. We reaffirm our commitments to establish a network of well managed marine protected areas. Based on the progress made by HELCOM in establishing a system of coastal and marine Baltic Sea Protected Areas, and OSPAR's agreement to a Recommendation and guidelines for selecting and managing an OSPAR Network of marine protected areas, working with the European Community, we shall have identified the first set of such areas by 2006, and shall then establish what gaps remain and complete by 2010 a joint network of well-managed marine protected areas that, together with the NATURA 2000 network, is ecologically coherent.

18. To this end, HELCOM and OSPAR have adopted a joint Work Programme to ensure that this work is done consistently across their maritime areas. They will also seek to cooperate with the Arctic Council and the Barcelona Convention in this work. In 2010, and periodically thereafter, we shall assess whether an ecologically coherent network of well managed marine protected areas has been achieved and maintained in both the North East Atlantic and the Baltic Sea.

OSPAR has produced extensive guidance, including key criteria for ecological coherence, a set of MPA network design principles, and guidelines for identification and selection of MPAs (available through [http://www.ospar.org/content/content.asp?menu=00180302000011\\_000000\\_000000](http://www.ospar.org/content/content.asp?menu=00180302000011_000000_000000)). OSPAR recently undertook an analysis of the effectiveness of its MPA network, and is working towards coherence by 2016. Since 2010, OSPAR and other competent authorities have been discussing a collaborative arrangement for more effective management and protection of their collective marine waters.

**The US** is implementing the *Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America* (2008) at the national level, and evaluates new nominations for inclusion into the national system on an annual basis. The 437 MPAs in the national system are a subset of the nation's 1700 MPAs that have nominated themselves based on their desire to collaborate on common issues, and have been accepted based on an assessment of their contribution to national conservation goals and objectives. There are four national system sites in Alaska, all of them federally managed – Alaska

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Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, and Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. In addition, there are 32 fisheries MPAs managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game that are not currently members of the national system of MPAs. Only one MPA in Alaska, Walrus Islands State Game Sanctuary, contains no-take areas. The US framework is available at: <http://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/nationalsystem/framework/>

**Canada** developed The *National Framework for Canada's Network of Marine Protected Areas* (2011) through collaboration among Fisheries and Oceans Canada (lead agency), Parks Canada, Environment Canada and the provinces and territories. Canada's framework is consistent with international guidance on MPA network design and calls for the establishment of MPA networks in each of 13 bioregions covering Canada's three oceans and Great Lakes. Five of the bioregions occur within the Canadian Arctic; of these, MPA network planning is most active in the Western Arctic (Beaufort Sea portion). The framework is available through the Fisheries and Oceans Canada website, at: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/publications/dmpaf-eczpm/framework-cadre2011-eng.asp>.

**WWF** RACER (Rapid Assessment of Ecosystem Resilience - [www.panda.org/arctic/racer](http://www.panda.org/arctic/racer)). WWF developed RACER to emphasize the need to support ecosystems and ecosystem services important to people by addressing the future capacity of these ecosystems to adapt in the face of rapid climate change rather than by responding only to what's vulnerable now. By identifying key features where important drivers will continue to support exceptional ecological vitality, RACER finds the places that confer resilience to ecosystems across arctic regions. In the context of MPA networks, RACER offers a tool for identifying geographically discrete conservation targets that will remain significant through this climate-altered century and for initiating stakeholder discussions about how to manage and safeguard these targets. WWF presented RACER to the Arctic Council at the SAO meeting in the fall of 2011.

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**Annex 3. Proposed Expert Group Members and Observers**

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