

## Concept Paper

### Pan-Arctic Framework for Networks of Marine Protected Areas

#### Introduction

- The Arctic Council and its current Swedish Chairmanship are increasingly focussed on marine issues with a specific priority to issues that will promote environmentally sustainable development of the Arctic.
- During the interdepartmental discussions to plan for the Canadian Arctic Council Chairmanship, the idea of a network of protected areas for the Arctic arose.
- In response, Fisheries and Oceans Canada experts proposed that Canada's approach to marine protected area networks may be a useful model, and Canada may be able to lead the development of a pan-Arctic framework for development of cohesive and complementary networks of marine protected areas by Arctic Council States.

#### Background

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada led development of a *National Framework for Canada's Network of Marine Protected Areas* in collaboration with Parks Canada, Environment Canada and the provinces and territories. It was approved in principle by the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers in September 2011. Canada's framework is now being implemented at the regional level.
- The 2011 *National Framework* could serve as an appropriate model for the pan-Arctic framework, though Arctic Council States would be invited to propose additional or alternative models to build on.

#### Description of the project

- The overall objective of the pan-Arctic framework would be to provide Arctic Council States with strategic direction to ensure a predictable pan-Arctic approach for establishing their domestic marine protected area networks in a consistent manner.
- Having a common framework in place should expedite marine protected area network development in the Arctic and ensure that priority areas in need of protection are identified early on.
- For example, the framework would outline a proposed common vision, goals and principles for Arctic marine protected area networks, including network design properties and identification of priority gaps in marine protection.

- This project would be led by marine protected area network experts from Fisheries and Oceans Canada NHQ and Central and Arctic Region. An international task group would be established (possibly a working group under the marine working group of the Arctic Council) that would meet in person perhaps once a year for two years, in conjunction with other meetings. In between there would be conference calls to maintain momentum and ensure progress is made.

### **Budget**

- The budget requirement is expected to be modest. For Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the estimate is \$5,000-\$10,000 per year for two years, to be funded by the Oceans Policy and Planning Branch of Program Policy.
- Each Arctic Council State would bear the costs of their own participation.