



Memorandum 30/8/2018: Prepared by: CAFF and PAME Secretariats

PAME II-2018 Agenda 4.5 Arctic Protected and Important Areas *Working document, for information*

PURPOSE:

Arctic States have through successive Arctic Council (AC) Ministerial Declarations affirmed their commitment to the protection of the Arctic environment, including the health of Arctic ecosystems and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. In response the AC has undertaken a range of initiatives to identify and safeguard areas important for biodiversity in the Arctic. To guide and inform next steps the CAFF and PAME Secretariats were tasked with the following:

- Summarizing relevant, ongoing Protected Areas activities within the AC and identify what has already been done (CAFF February 2018); and
- Producing an overview of recommendations from the AC that relate to marine protected areas and the actions taken in response (PAME I-2018 February 2018).

PROCESS:

Recommendations and goals issued by each Working Group (WG) were evaluated to identify the status of current initiatives and/or actions undertaken or ongoing by the AC and relevant actions by other International Organizations. Status considered include: Complete, Ongoing, Scheduled, Delayed, and Not Started. Thereafter, the results and deliverables from the initiatives and/or actions were evaluated to identify the main gaps and needs going forward.

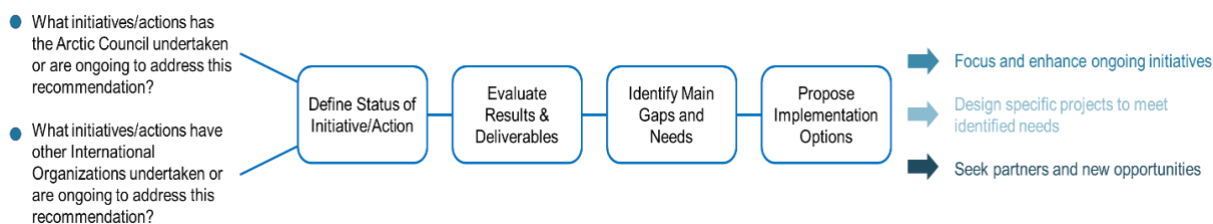


Figure 1. Process for Strategy Development

Initiatives and actions are in a separate excel sheet and are labelled as follows:

- **Complete:** when a deliverable fully addresses a recommendation e.g. one of the actions to address Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA) #Rec5 was to develop and follow-up on a framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that sets out a common vision for regional cooperation in MPA network development and management. The action was complete after PAME developed the Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas in 2015.
- **Ongoing:** when they are part of a long-term AC strategy and are not designed to be complete such as CAFF's Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring

| Status | Definition |
|--------|-----------------|
| ☑ | Complete |
| ● | Ongoing |
| ● | Scheduled |
| ● | Delayed |
| ○ | Not Started |

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Programme (CBMP). Initiatives are labelled as scheduled when work is currently underway and aligned to the timeline issued in the work plan of the respective WG.

- **Delayed:** when they have been identified in the work plan of a WG and fallen behind schedule.
- **Not been started:** when issues have been identified in workplans, yet no action has been taken.

KEY ARCTIC COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS-GOALS

Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA):

- Rec5: Advance the protection of large areas of ecologically important marine, terrestrial and freshwater habitats, taking into account ecological resilience in a changing climate.
- Rec6: Develop guidelines and implement appropriate spatial and temporal measures where necessary to reduce human disturbance to areas critical for sensitive life stages of Arctic species that are outside protected areas, for example along transportation corridors. Such areas include calving grounds, den sites, feeding grounds, migration routes and moulting areas. This also means safeguarding important habitats such as wetlands and polynyas.
- Rec7: Develop and implement mechanisms that best safeguard Arctic biodiversity under changing environmental conditions, such as loss of sea ice, glaciers and permafrost.

Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA):

- Rec2C: Arctic states should identify areas of heightened ecological and cultural significance in light of changing climate conditions and increasing multiple marine use and, where appropriate, should encourage implementation of measures to protect these areas from the impacts of Arctic marine shipping, in coordination with all stakeholders and consistent with international law.
- Rec2D: Arctic states should, taking into account the special characteristics of the Arctic marine environment, explore the need to internationally designate areas for the purpose of environmental protection in the regions of the Arctic Ocean. This could be done through the use of appropriate tools, such as “Special Areas” or Particularly Sensitive Areas (PSSA) designation through the IMO and consistent with the existing international legal framework in the Arctic.

Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP):

- Goal2 Strategic Action 10: Develop a pan-Arctic network of marine protected areas, based on the best available knowledge to strengthen marine ecosystem resilience and contribute to human wellbeing, including traditional ways of life.

Arctic Ocean Review (AOR):

- Rec13: Arctic states should advance conservation of Arctic marine ecosystems by considering management measures in ecologically significant areas of the Arctic Ocean that Arctic states might pursue at the IMO, building on the results of the AMSA Recommendation II(D) Report on Specially Designated Arctic Marine Areas.

Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas:

- Near Term Actions (2015-2017)
- Long Term Actions (2015-2020)

Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas (PANMPA):

- Goal1: To strengthen ecological resilience to direct human pressures and to climate change impacts, to promote the long-term protection of marine biodiversity, ecosystem function and special natural and cultural features in the Arctic.

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- Goal2: To support integrated stewardship, conservation and management of living Arctic marine resources and species and their habitats, and the cultural and social economic values and ecosystem services they provide.
- Goal4: To foster coordination and collaboration among Arctic states to achieve more effective MPA planning and management in the Arctic.

KEY INITIATIVES by International Organizations

Initiatives undertaken by the AC to identify and safeguard areas important for biodiversity in the Arctic have also been informed and complimented by work from other international organizations.

- UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and process to identify Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) in the Arctic.
- IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA): defines Protected Areas and Management Categories of protected areas to promote a representative, effectively managed and equitably governed global system of marine and terrestrial protected areas.
- UNESCO World Heritage List (WHL): facilitates the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.
- UN Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR): framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- International Maritime Organization (IMO): guidelines for the identification and designation of particularly sensitive sea areas (PSSA) to prevent, reduce or eliminate threats or identified vulnerabilities.
- Agreement to prevent unregulated commercial fishing in the high seas of the central Arctic Ocean: Not yet ratified and currently under review by states. This agreement is based on a precautionary approach to fisheries management and prevents unregulated fishing in an area of approximately 2.8 million square kilometers.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Please see the attached Excel document for a breakdown of the actions taken in response to each of the key Arctic Council recommendations as related to Arctic Protected and important areas.

SUMMARY:

Significant progress has been made to identify and safeguard areas important for biodiversity in the Arctic. Key actions include:

- Completion of the ABA which serves as the ACs reference to the status of biodiversity across the Arctic
- Use of the AMSP as the Arctic Council's guide to protect Arctic marine and coastal ecosystems and promote sustainable development.
- Use of the Actions for Arctic Biodiversity 2013-2021: implementation plan for the ABA recommendations as a critical a tool to inform the effectiveness of initiatives to identify and safeguard areas important for biodiversity.
- Completion of the Framework for a Pan-Arctic Framework of MPAs.
- Develop an MPA Network Toolbox which describes area-based conservation measures as tools for designing MPA networks and highlights ecological connectivity and contribute to some of the near-term actions listed in the Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of MPAs (near-term actions number 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9) including the following workshops:

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- September 2016: Approaches for mapping ecological connectivity
- February 2017: Effects of climate change on connectivity
- September 2017: Scientific considerations of how Arctic MPA networks may reduce negative effects of climate change and ocean acidification
- November 2018: Best practices for supporting Indigenous involvement in, and Indigenous led, marine protection in the Arctic.
- Identification of marine areas of heightened ecological and cultural significance (AMSAIIC) exploration of specially designated marine areas in the Arctic high seas (AMSAIID).
- Analysis of existing Arctic protected areas to identify gaps and priorities.
- Input and support to the UN CBD process to identify EBSAs in the Arctic.




| Gap | Current Implementation Options |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Social & Economic Benefits + Indigenous Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze the results of ICC's review of global protected areas schemes that promote Indigenous management practices, strong co-management schemes and support indigenous food security for consideration by CAFF. 2. Identify the range of benefits that MPAs and MPA networks have for sustaining livelihoods and ecosystem services to Arctic indigenous peoples and local residents, especially in light of supporting social-ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to rapid Arctic change. Communicate these benefits to Arctic decision makers. |
|  | <p>Refugia & Safeguarding Outside Protected Areas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop options for safeguarding potential marine and terrestrial refuge areas, including areas that will maintain multi-year ice (related to AMSA 2D). 2. Develop, where needed, guidelines or other tools, for safeguarding sensitive areas for biodiversity (outside protected areas) that are vulnerable to human activity and/or contribute to international processes developing such guidelines, including potential refugia that will maintain multi-year ice. |
|  | <p>Evaluation Metrics: Connectivity, Risk, & SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an agreed methodology to determine regional effectiveness of a pan-Arctic MPA network, and further develop an agreed mechanism to achieve this. Communicate status and progress to the Arctic Ministers. 2. Conduct circumpolar maritime environmental risk assessment, if appropriate, in order to better link the sensitivity of the Arctic marine environment with scientific calculations on risks caused by shipping and offshore oil and gas activities in the Arctic Ocean both presently and in the future. 3. Establish statistical indicators relevant for Sustainable Development Goals that set out a wide range of economic, social, and environmental objectives. |

Table 1. Current Implementation Options to Address Protected and Important Areas Gaps

AMAP's mandate does not identify areas important to biodiversity, however its work plays an important role in safeguarding areas important to biodiversity. In particular, the SWIPA report provides a robust assessment of the cryosphere which encompasses the majority of the ecosystems in the Arctic.

EPPR's mandate does not identify areas important to biodiversity yet plays an important role in safeguarding areas important to biodiversity through its approach to operational risk management and best practices across the Arctic. Particularly important is the RP3 report, which alongside AMAP's assessment of oil & gas activities in the Arctic and the AMSA provide the Arctic Council with an important overview of how increased economic activity in the Arctic, primarily oil & gas and shipping operations, can threaten areas important to biodiversity. As part of its 2015-2017 Work Plan, EPPR is developing a Circumpolar Oil Spill Gap Analysis that will determine the necessity and viability of a comprehensive Circumpolar Maritime Environmental Risk Analysis (CMERA).

The SDWG focuses on social and economic issues in the Arctic and therefore is not directly involved with identifying or safeguarding areas important to biodiversity. However, there is a need to consider the social and economic benefits of protected areas. Recommendation# from SDWGs ECONOR III is to establish statistical indicators relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which could help develop a framework to holistically assess the benefits of protected areas beyond just the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems.

ACAP currently does not have any initiatives in place or planned with regards to identifying and safeguarding areas important for biodiversity in the Arctic.

While progress has been made, it has not been even across ecosystems and gaps remain:

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- How well does the suite of protected areas meet the test of being an ecologically connected, representative, and effectively managed network of protected and specially managed areas that protects and promotes the resilience of the biological diversity, ecological processes and cultural heritage of the Arctic?
- Development of conservation strategies beyond protected areas that can also enhance species and ecosystem resilience.
- As the Pan-Arctic Network of MPAs grows, an agreed methodology should be developed to address regional effectiveness of established protected areas as well as to identify adaptive management practices to address change in the Arctic.
- Development of options beyond protected areas to safeguard potential marine and terrestrial refuge areas such as areas that will maintain multi-year ice. Working
- Development of evaluation metrics including, but not limited to, regional effectiveness, sensitivity to operational risks and alignment to sustainable development goals.
- Support public outreach and education efforts on the impacts of a changing climate on biodiversity and the role of protected area networks in conserving biodiversity and its social and economic benefits.

Action requested from CAFF and PAME:

- ✓ Consider this overview in support of the discussions on MPA-relevant activities for the PAME 2019-2021 Work Plans.