

Challenges and tasks on the road to implementing the ecosystem approach to management in the Arctic

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The ecosystem approach is mandated by a number of international organizations and bodies. The work of the Arctic Council, to develop and refine concepts and practices for the actual implementation EA, builds on the principle that an ecosystem approach would be required to conserve and manage Arctic marine biological diversity. This idea was present from the inception of the Arctic Council in 1996 and was reiterated in Council proceedings throughout the first decade of this century. The Arctic Council articulated a common definition of the ecosystem approach in Kiruna in 2013, acknowledging a body of challenges in the form of 12 recommendations for implementing the ecosystem-based approach in the Arctic. Subsequently a 2014 workshop in Trondheim reviewed the progress after Kiruna and provided nine recommendations as specific action items for the Council to consider. The participants in this Fairbanks conference are working to meet one of the principal Kiruna challenges; *“2.2 Institute periodic Arctic Council reviews of EBM in the Arctic to exchange information on integrated ecosystem assessment and management experiences, including highlighting examples from Arctic States.”* This conference meets challenge 2.2 by reviewing 1) the status of implementation in the Arctic, 2) Arctic integrated ecosystem assessments and 3) Arctic management experiences. The outcomes of this conference will assist the Arctic Council as it works to address the principal remaining Kiruna challenge: *“ ... to develop an overarching Arctic EBM goal, derived from established Arctic Council goals and visions, and provide guidance on how to develop and operationalize objectives supporting this goal.”* Over the next two and one-half days we will explore and identify ways and means for future collaboration among Arctic States, Permanent Participants and other states and institutions active in the Arctic. We will consider integrating the scientific and traditional knowledge base, integrated ecosystem assessment, integration across the sectors of human enterprise and the institutional arrangements of governance, and integration of biogeographic scales from Arctic communities, to terrestrial biomes and the Large Marine Ecosystems of the Arctic.