

Background Paper for the Joint AMAP/PAME/CAFF/ACAP session Wednesday, September 16, 2015

Breakout session: Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AMAP lead)

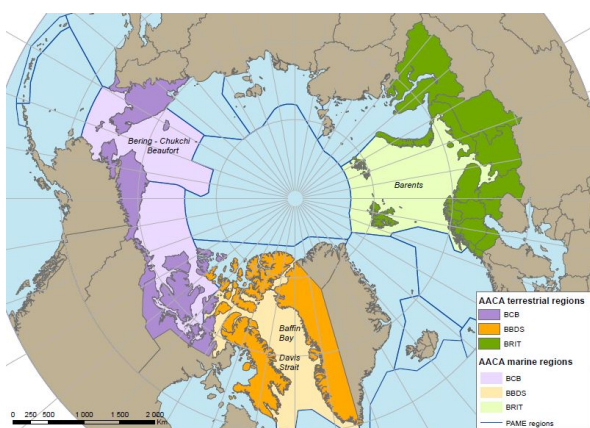
Background

Climate, environmental, and socio-economic drivers may interact and amplify the difficulty in making decisions in an unpredictable and rapidly changing Arctic. Cumulative changes may increase existing pressures in the Arctic, while others may bring new opportunities.

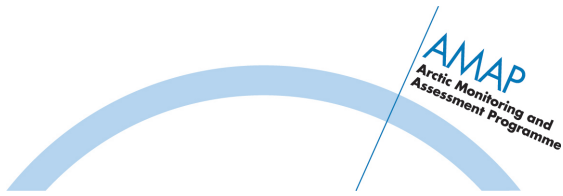
To respond to these challenges and opportunities, the Arctic Council initiated the flagship project [Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic](#) (AACA). The C-part of the project is conducted under the auspices of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) and has an *overall objective to enable more informed, timely and responsive decision making in a rapidly changing Arctic*.

Conventional assessments of climate, environmental and socio-economic issues in the Arctic have mostly focused on single drivers, e.g. climate, acidification, persistent organic pollutants, health, oil and gas exploration and development. These assessments have provided valuable information, but there is currently little understanding on how these drivers of change may interact. An understanding of the interactions of multiple drivers is necessary to inform stakeholders and decision makers as they respond to a changing Arctic.

AACA-C will break new ground by integrating knowledge from many different fields of expertise, and across regions with large cultural diversity, multiple uses and users of local resources, and ambitious development plans for the future. Developing a comprehensive knowledge base on how the drivers of the rapidly changing Arctic interact will provide decision makers with resources they need to respond to the challenges, and prudently take advantage of opportunities. AACA-C will draw on existing scientific knowledge to develop the assessment.



General Questions



Arctic Council Cross-Working Group Strategic Planning and Coordination

Historically, each of the six Arctic Council Working Groups have set their own goals and objectives about very specific issues and challenges. Presently, the Arctic Council leadership is placing a higher-level of attention on addressing complex, multivariate problems that demand closer interaction and integration of multiple workgroups. These issues and challenges can be linked to the broader issues of Arctic Council structure and governance; for this discussion, however, we will restrict the conversation to the steps that can be taken at the Working Group level in order to promote more effective goal setting, prioritization, planning and implementation of cross-Working Group tasks.

Question: Can the various working groups develop a joint strategic process that allows them to effectively discuss and prioritize these complex issues and subsequently formulate, plan and execute joint work plans and product development- while preserving the integrity of their own, specific working group priorities, goals and objectives?

Human resources

The capacity of the WGs to deliver the products requested by the Arctic Council Ministers is highly dependent on the ability of the WGs to engage appropriate experts. These human resources are becoming increasingly overstretched despite efforts to better coordinate work of the respective WGs. What can be done to improve this situation:

- by further enhancing synergies between working groups?
- by improving coordination at the national level to avoid perception on overlap by contributing experts?
- by making better use of the largely untapped pool of experts available in non-Arctic, especially observer countries?

Question: How can the Arctic Council and its working groups build capacity for participation of experts, both in assessments of the state of knowledge and the production of new knowledge?

AACA specific questions

AACA Regional Assessments contain climate drivers and related impacts information relevant to both terrestrial and marine environments.

1. What information are the current Regional Assessments collecting that is relevant to the various wg priorities?
2. Since most marine assessments are in “blue” water, and most terrestrial assessments do not include the marine environment, are there specific types of information within the coastal zone that are critical towards other AC WGs’ objectives, and which are currently not collected or well understood?