



WWF Statement for the Kiruna Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council

Technical recommendations

WWF emphasises the important role that the Arctic Council can play in the sustainable development and protection of the Arctic. WWF will continue to support the development and strengthening of the Council as a place where states, Indigenous peoples, and observers work together to benefit the Arctic's ecosystems and peoples. Recommendations to the Ministers and to the Council are in bullets below.

RESILIENT PEOPLES IN A RESILIENT ARCTIC

Traditional knowledge

WWF supports development of recommendations to ensure traditional and community knowledge are fully integrated into all Arctic Council programs. WWF recommends:

- The Arctic Council facilitates the coordination, development and integration of long term, standardized and spatially referenced scientific and traditional ecological knowledge data and facilitates access to it where supported by the Indigenous holders of the knowledge.

Social, Economic and Cultural Issues

WWF supports the establishment of the Social, Economic and Cultural Expert Group and encourages the group to assess challenges and opportunities for conserving community resilience in a rapidly changing climate and to consider mechanisms for sustainable Arctic development with a net benefit to Arctic communities. WWF recommends:

- SDWG develops and establishes green investment mechanisms in order to ensure financing of sustainable development in the circumpolar Arctic, particularly renewable energy projects.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

WWF welcomes the new Task Force to develop and recommend activities that will help facilitate the Council's engagement with businesses operating in the Arctic, including through the creation of a Circumpolar Business Forum. WWF recommends:

- SDWG develops a CSR inventory of best practices for industries by engaging Indigenous, local community and other stakeholders and provide a roadmap for future regulatory improvement.
- Efforts to promote responsible business conduct in the Arctic should be led by companies that adopt and follow the OECD guidelines and subscribe to the UN Global compact principles (respect for human rights, labor conditions, the environment and anti-corruption).

ACTING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Reducing CO₂ emissions

WWF urges the Arctic states to coordinate their actions through the Arctic Council in concluding a binding global climate agreement no later than 2015 that will take urgent action to meet the goal of limiting the increase in global average temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. WWF recommends:

- Arctic states, observer countries and global society take tangible steps towards reducing emission of CO² as a matter of urgency.
- Arctic states implement adaptation strategies that address all aspects of Arctic change, tailored to local and societal needs.
- Arctic Council member states act with respect to the policy recommendations based on the key scientific findings of the Arctic Ocean Acidification report, and ensure that these findings and recommendations are adequately reflected in national energy and emissions plans.

Short-Lived Climate Forcers (SLCF)

WWF urges a commitment to the development of an Arctic agreement on cooperation to reduce emissions of short-lived climate forcers, especially black carbon emitted at high latitudes.

PROTECTING THE ARCTIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Agreement on Arctic marine oil pollution preparedness and response

WWF welcomes the legally binding Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic. WWF appreciates the Agreement's commitments to have national response plans that include a minimum level of pre-positioned equipment that is commensurate with the risk involved and that takes into account anticipated risks to areas of special ecological significance. WWF recommends:

- Agreement parties plan preparedness infrastructure with respect to effective response time in Arctic conditions based on a comprehensive inventory conducted periodically.
- Arctic governments endorse a process to fill any gaps and expeditiously incorporate new developments in preparedness and response technology or methods.
- Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response working group updates and monitors application of oil pollution preparedness and response best practices and reports to SAOs.
- Arctic states complete, regularly update and maintain strong and practical operational guidelines and broaden the guidelines' scope in order to provide sufficient practical guidance for responders.
- Arctic states review existing and new methodologies and best practices for oil spill environmental sensitivity mapping as a contribution to the development of common precautionary pan-Arctic environmental standards of operation.

Arctic Oil Spill Prevention

WWF appreciates work on practices for Arctic oil spill prevention. WWF recommends:

- Arctic Ministers establish a Task Force to develop an international instrument on marine oil spill prevention dealing with all stages of project implementation.
- Arctic Governments ensure that the best practices in oil spill prevention are rigorously followed in the course of oil and gas operations in the Arctic and are updated in accordance with the new developments in the industry.
- Arctic states commit to further develop and strengthen prevention measures.
- Arctic Council member states emphasize the execution and implementation of the recommendations and guidelines flowing from the report on *Recommended Practices for Arctic Oil Spill Prevention* and instruct EPPR to monitor oil operators' practices in the Arctic.

Safe and environmentally sound Arctic Shipping

WWF urges Arctic countries to work together within the IMO to speed up adoption of a robust and mandatory Polar Code. WWF recommends:

- Arctic states impose restrictions on the use and carriage of heavy fuel oils in Arctic waters including, where appropriate, an outright ban.
- Arctic Council Member Governments create a coordinated response to update Arctic-specific shipping measures addressing the mutually dependant issues of environment and safety in relevant international instruments (e.g. MARPOL, SOLAS, and Ballast Water Management Convention).
- Arctic states develop a coordinated response ensuring that the provisions of the IMO Polar Code are consistent with the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment Report findings and recommendations.

- Observer states and ad-hoc observer states collaborate with Arctic states to speed up development of the environmental chapter of the Polar Code (including ice-strengthened hulls, measures to avoid harm to Arctic ecosystems and species, qualified on-board ice navigators, capacity to participate in search and rescue and spill response operations) and its adoption.
- PAME undertakes an analysis of Arctic shipping best practices to inform the regulatory processes as well as voluntary measures to be taken by shipping sector.

Marine Areas of Heightened Ecological and Cultural Significance

WWF welcomes the approach and progress on identifying Marine Areas of Heightened Ecological and Cultural Significance. WWF recommends:

- Arctic Council explores ways to advance conservation and management of identified significant areas, including the development of a pan-Arctic framework for networks of marine protected areas.
- Arctic Council further works to provide for a more detailed description of identified areas including the risks they face and develop an analysis for applicable spatial management regimes in accordance with existing national and international regulations.
- Arctic States agree on pilot areas beyond or across national jurisdiction and present joint submission to IMO and other appropriate UN bodies for conservation status.

PROTECTING THE ARCTIC ENVIRONMENT AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Arctic Biodiversity

WWF fully supports Arctic Biodiversity Assessment findings and policy recommendations. WWF recommends:

- Arctic Ministers commit for implementation of the policy recommendations with a special focus on resilience building, ecosystem-based management, identification and protection of significant areas.
- Arctic states advance the protection of a representative pan-Arctic network of terrestrial and marine areas based on the criteria of heightened ecological resilience, and distinctive ecological and or conservation significance, as part of their climate change adaptation strategies.
- Arctic states and observer states agree to a halt on commercial fishing in previously unharvested Arctic waters until sufficient research has determined the sustainability of any such harvest. Further, that states support such research.
- Arctic Council promotes integrated marine spatial planning to manage shipping and other industrial activities in the Arctic.

Life linked to Ice

WWF welcomes the Life Linked to Ice report. WWF recommends:

- Canada and Greenland consider jointly applying for World Heritage status for Northwest Greenland/Northeast Canadian Archipelago as a resilient area for ice-associated species, and people who rely on those species.

Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA)

WWF supports the AACA process to prepare appropriate management responses to current and future Arctic change. WWF recommends:

- The AACA develops the project's framework on the basis of integrative adaptation concepts that emphasise the interdependence of humans and ecosystems.

Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM)

WWF welcomes the recommendations of the expert group on ecosystem based management and urges proceeding with integration of these approaches into governance regimes for the coastal, marine and terrestrial environments. WWF recommends:

- Arctic Governments timely follow-up on recommendations of the expert group.
- Arctic countries further the integration of domestic national governance regimes enabling ecosystem-based management for the Arctic.

- Arctic nations pilot practical implementation of ecosystem based management principles in trans-boundary regions (e.g. Barents, Bering, Baffin and Beaufort) based on enhanced bilateral and/or multilateral cooperation.
- Arctic Ministers extend the mandate of the EBM expert group to lead the coordination of a common approach by developing an overarching Arctic ecosystem based management goal and providing guidance on how to develop and operationalize objectives supporting this goal.
- The Council develops policies and a best practice for incorporating traditional knowledge into ecosystem based management activities, coordinates national and regional approaches, and develops a process to monitor progress status on implementation and report annually to SAOs.
- Arctic states establish inter-ministerial and interagency coordination mechanisms needed for an effective national implementation of the ecosystem based management recommendations.

Arctic Resilience

WWF welcomes the interim Arctic Resilience Report and strongly support phase 2. WWF recommends:

- Phase 2 increases its focus on the sources of ecosystem resilience and its significance for ecosystem services and adaptation.
- Arctic states commit to the report aims to conclude the project in a way that maximizes its potential to integrate all efforts on responding to and preparing for rapid change.
- Arctic Governments apply the ecosystem approach in terrestrial and marine Arctic regions aiming at fostering regional and pan-Arctic resilience.

STRENGTHENING THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

WWF recognizes that Arctic Council Member states are responsible for the implementation of the Arctic Council's policy recommendations; hereby WWF urges the development of recurrent accountability reports to showcase Arctic states stewardship. WWF recommends:

- Arctic Council develops a set of agreed rules, procedures and mechanisms to evaluate and monitor the implementation of the Council's recommendations.
- Organizing all recommendations implementation reporting activities on the model of the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment biennial follow-up report on progress.

Arctic Environment Ministers

WWF welcomes regular organisation of Arctic Environment Ministers meetings as they are to a great extent responsible for domestic implementation of the Arctic Council recommendations.

Transparency and participation

WWF recommends that the Arctic Council be an open and transparent forum where stakeholders can cooperate and WWF recommends opening the procedures for Observers' input at the Working Group level.

Chairmanship

WWF thanks the Kingdom of Sweden for its active chairmanship of the Arctic Council during the period 2011-2013, including the establishment of an Arctic Council standing secretariat in Tromsø. WWF welcomes the Arctic Council chairmanship of Canada during the period 2013-2015 and looks forward to a chair that will emphasise core principles of transparency, inclusion, and accountability in the Council's work.