

Memorandum 2/11/2018

EBM9: Biodiversity as a fundamental component of environmental impact assessments and land use planning

This memo provides a summary of reports submitted on the session EBM9 organized at the Arctic Biodiversity Session in Rovaniemi, Finland, October 9-12 organized by the British Antarctic Survey.

Attendance: 25

Arctic Biodiversity Assessment recommendation themes most prominently addressed in the session:

- Ecosystem-based Management
- Mainstreaming biodiversity
- Identifying and safeguarding important areas

Key points raised in the session that were important to note:

- The importance of scale/working at different scales.
- The need to downscale from programmes such as CBMP to give useful input at local scale.
- Ongoing challenge in integrating different knowledge sources (most obviously scientific and 'traditional', but more complex than that).
- The presentations didn't really focus that closely on EIA itself, but did highlight the importance of including biodiversity in the planning and governance processes.
- In many cases data deficiencies were identified as a brake on progress, plus the common difficulty of getting support for long term and 'monitoring' requirements, which ought to be integral to delivering effective management.
- Synergy between monitoring and data management is needed. Monitoring efforts should provide data that can support EIA exercises.
- A collaborative approach is a must to involve actors at multiple levels, develop multi-scale networks and include traditional knowledge and local communities in the process. Complex interactions across levels of governance can and do happen, especially for big infrastructural projects.
- The protected area system for Antarctica has positive and negative aspects, but we are still on time to apply a continental scale conservation approach under existing frameworks. There are threats (mostly land use change in sensitive areas and biosecurity), but they are still limited in scope and scale, although affecting some critical regions.

Recommendations/actions identified for how to deal with the issues raised in the session:

- Collaboration across stakeholders is essential
- Integrate traditional knowledge in EIA exercise
- Importance of monitoring, and the need to conduct it in a way that can positively contribute to EIA

- Speed up action for protected area setting in Antarctica under existing frameworks to address existing challenges and threats on time

Take home message from the session:

- Translation of 'biodiversity' data (however biodiversity is defined) into governance action (i.e. management on the ground) is a complex multifaceted process, which is very hard to generalise across scales, countries, regions etc
- Biodiversity monitoring must be integrated better into the EIA process, as well as other biodiversity conservation efforts (such as those in Antarctica). There is abundant monitoring data that could positively be incorporated in EIA processes, whereas traditional knowledge could also provide essential insight to guide this process.