

## Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Arctic Mining Phase 2 Project Plan

11<sup>th</sup> November 2020

In 2013, CAFF produced the [Arctic Biodiversity Assessment](#) (ABA). This assessment identified the primary factors impacting biodiversity across the Arctic and included recommendations to policy makers on how to address those stressors. One of the stressors is development, including resource extraction. [Recommendation #4](#) of the ABA encourages all those working on development activities in the Arctic to incorporate biodiversity considerations in their planning and operations.

The CAFF's *Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Arctic Mining* project seeks to facilitate improved incorporation of biodiversity objectives and provisions into plans, operations and/or other tools specific to the mining industry operating in the Arctic, through dialogue with a wide range of experts. This project is timely given that climate change is increasing the potential for mineral development in the Arctic, which offers new economic opportunities and potentially presenting new challenges for Arctic biodiversity and conservation.

This Phase 2 project plan builds directly from the Phase 1 CAFF report *Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Arctic Mining – Challenges and Proposed Solutions* (hereafter, Challenges and Solutions Report), delivered to the 2019 Arctic Council Ministerial. Emphasis is on working with key partners, including representatives from the mining industry, governments, science and research, Indigenous Peoples, and biodiversity and conservation groups, in order to prioritize the specific actions identified in the Phase 1 report, identify additional actions, and draft an implementation plan that will guide future CAFF work on mainstreaming biodiversity in Arctic mining. This project plan describes the next steps – Phase 2 – of the CAFF Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Arctic Mining initiative, including its scope, organization, tasks, and timeline.

This project should be viewed as an ongoing and longer-term effort related to CAFF's work in Mainstreaming Biodiversity. As such, Phase 2 will seek to broaden the circle of partners and keep this work moving forward. It is not intended to be the final product of this work, or to set a fixed path for future work. Rather it will continue to evolve and inform the CAFF Working Group about how we can advance efforts to mainstreaming biodiversity.

### PROJECT SCOPE:

Phase 2 of this project builds on the results of all previous work (Phase 1), with a goal of **prioritizing** the identified actions and continuing to work with **diverse experts** in Arctic mining, representatives of Arctic Indigenous communities, government officials and scientists knowledgeable about Arctic species and ecosystems to design a clear path forward. The ultimate objective is to develop an implementation plan that will allow the CAFF to produce **tangible results** that will facilitate the incorporation of biodiversity objectives into mining and other sectors.

A number of actions were identified during Phase 1 of this project, however, in many cases these are written in general terms. As part of Phase 2, these general actions will be translated into specific actionable solutions that the CAFF can implement over the near-, mid- and long-term. This process will ensure that we can deliver concrete results.

During Phase 1, the CAFF and the Project Steering Committee brought together and consulted with a diverse group of experts in order to identify a range of possible actions that could assist in mainstreaming biodiversity. While the CAFF has engaged with many individuals and groups previously, the Challenges and Solutions Report should not be interpreted as being exhaustive of all perspectives. There is a need to ensure continued balance, so that all perspectives are taken into account moving forward. This includes the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples, industry, government, scientists, and biodiversity and conservation groups, and others. Continuation of the collaborative engagement between the CAFF and these key experts is essential to maintaining **credibility** as this work moves forward.

The primary deliverable of Phase 2 will be the development of an implementation plan that will guide CAFF in achieving the goal of mainstreaming biodiversity in Arctic mining. In addition, there are expected to be some near-term outputs and projects (outlined below) that the CAFF Steering Committee will deliver before the implementation plan is finalized. These interim products are important so that we continue the momentum established during Phase 1 and set ourselves up for success in future work. However, the development of the implementation plan (through the outreach process outlined below) is an essential step for this work, because it will ensure the CAFF is focusing on **the most important issues**, as identified by experts who truly understand mining, biodiversity, and the Arctic.

Additional general outcomes for Phase 2 include relationship-building and increased trust between industry, government, Arctic Indigenous communities, environmental and biodiversity conservation experts; proactive coordination; mutually beneficial partnerships; and establishing greater common ground by all groups with respect to sustainable development, biodiversity, mining and related activities.

## TASKS:

Outlined below are a number of key tasks to be completed as part of Phase 2 of this project. These are not intended to be exhaustive but will help to ensure the CAFF can deliver a prioritized implementation plan in time for the 2021 Ministerial. All of these tasks are subject to available time and resources, which will be continuously reviewed by the Steering Committee as this project moves forward.

- Review/update the Mining Contact Database.
- Establish, and begin implementation of, an outreach and communication plan. This includes routine activities such as updating the CAFF website on this project, as well as possible new projects such as a video summarizing the project goals and objectives.
- Provide opportunity for broad expert feedback into this process and CAFF's work to mainstream biodiversity in Arctic mining, based on the updated Mining Contact Database; focus will be on prioritization of the actions from Phase 1. This feedback

process would allow experts to quickly and easily review the actions in the Challenges and Solutions Report in order to suggest which ones they think are the most important. This will be the first of three very important components to Phase 2 that will ensure the implementation plan reflects what experts think is important for CAFF to do moving forward.

- Conduct one-on-one interviews with selected experts focused on prioritization of actions. This will be implemented by the Steering Committee and is the second of three key components. During and since Phase 1 was completed, the most substantive input the CAFF has received has come from direct discussions with key experts. The interviews would be carefully structured by the Steering Committee, to be consistent and clear, so that the results can be analysed and compiled into the implementation plan.
- Hold a series of facilitated panel discussions with invited experts to gather detailed input on the actions identified in Phase 1. This is the third and final key component of Phase 2. The focus of these facilitated discussions will be to: (1) receive input on prioritizing the actions in Phase 1; (2) gather feedback on next steps; and, (3) identify any gaps.
  - The Steering Committee will need to be especially attentive to how these panel discussions are structured. The project consultant will work closely with the CAFF Steering Committee to ensure we have balanced representation from experts across the Arctic (from all Arctic States, PPs, etc.).
- Identify geographically diverse participants with the support of the project Steering Committee. These experts will be invited to participate in facilitated virtual discussions and/or interviews. The invited expert panels will be composed of a small group of 5 to 8<sup>1</sup> experts from the following sectors:
  - Mining industry and associations
  - Government and regulatory agencies
  - Science and research
  - Traditional Knowledge Holders and/or Indigenous community representatives
  - Biodiversity and conservation groups
- Working with the steering committee, a clear methodology will be developed in detail to ensure a strong ethical approach is taken in the collection and analysis of information and to complete the work outlined in this proposal.

Depending on the input received during the feedback process, and other considerations, the CAFF would develop potential products for near to mid-term actions such as the following:

- Overview of current mining-related activities and maps to provide a snapshot of current operations in the Arctic; this could include location of active mines in the Arctic region, known exploration projects, shipping information associated with active mines, areas or regions with identified mining resource potential, and other relevant information. Any

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<sup>1</sup> The number of experts may be smaller or larger according to input from the Steering Committee. The goal is to have a representative group, but not so many participants that having substantive conversations would be difficult. The number will be adjusted as the first webinars are held and the Steering Committee learns what methods work best.

such near-term outputs will be discussed and agreed to by the Steering Committee in order to clearly identify what the purpose/value is, and how they will be supported.

- Additional larger online group dialogue(s) may be held involving combinations of some of the representatives previously engaged depending on available time and resources.
- Overview of (Arctic) mining “lifecycle of activities” including exploration and closure as well as offsite actions such as shipping and processing, and how biodiversity could be mainstreamed into these activities, building on currently available international methodologies (such as the [ICMM](#) and [CBD](#) guidance documents and others).
- Conduct benchmarking to evaluate and build off existing community guides to provide unbiased information about Arctic mining and outline the considerations that are necessary for communities to make informed decisions.
- Summary of potential impacts of mining on biodiversity, which could tie into the CAFF State of the Arctic Biodiversity reports drivers and focal ecosystem components and assist with prioritizing mainstreaming of biodiversity into the various stages in the life cycle of mining.
- Knowledge sharing or leading practices guide(s) for mainstreaming biodiversity into Arctic mining. This could build off the previous work by Arctic Economic Council Responsible Resource Development Group’s *Mineral Development in the Arctic* report, guidance by CBD, best practices by ICMM/IUCN and other reports.

## PROJECT PARTICIPANTS:

The experts involved in this project will include a diverse array of specialists. Every effort will be made by the Steering Committee to ensure that feedback from the representatives and experts reflects the diversity of perspectives regarding Arctic mining. This includes, among others:

- Industry representatives who are knowledgeable about and associated with active or proposed new mines in the Arctic region and/or their consultants;
- Arctic Indigenous community representatives who live in, or rely on, areas in the vicinity of active mines in the Arctic and/or who may rely on, own and operate, or otherwise be impacted by, such operations. This could also include areas where mines are not active now, but where there is prospecting or planning taking place, or where inactive mines may have had (or is still having) an impact on communities;
- Government representatives from regulatory and land management agencies in charge of reviewing, approving or enforcing aspects of mining development and operations in the Arctic and associated habitat and species conservation;
- Environment and Biodiversity experts who may be doing their own research or work for organizations with missions directed towards conservation and safeguarding biodiversity;
- Experts in mainstreaming biodiversity into industry sectors, with a focus on extractive industries (could be outside the Arctic); and

- Other experts with direct knowledge or active work in the Arctic region related to mining. In some cases, there may be experts who reside outside of the Arctic who have specific knowledge of the Arctic and its biodiversity that need to be included.

## **TIMELINE:**

Note – Given the uncertainty associated with travel limitations and other restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, **the Steering Committee will continuously review and update this timeline to ensure it reflects what can realistically be accomplished** in the time between now and the next Ministerial meeting. The CAFF Board will be updated as substantive changes may become necessary.

- June: Project website updated.
- Late June: Phase 2 project plan sent to CAFF Board for review and approval.
- July/Aug: Outreach and communication plan developed/approved by the Steering Committee, with specific communication tools that will be used to highlight this project. Outputs could include a short project video, story map, and other products. Any product developed will be reviewed by Steering Committee and circulated to CAFF Board for approval before it is released.
- Sept: After the Phase 2 project plan is approved by the CAFF Board:
  - Project website updated to represent Phase 2 actions as approved in project plan.
  - Survey released on a rolling basis; input welcomed through Aug/Sept, to allow time for analysis of results.
  - Email to project contact database to inform on plans for Phase 2 and inviting engagement in survey.
- Nov: Carry out a series of webinars and virtual panel discussion with small groups, as well as one-on-one interviews.
- Nov - Dec: Draft prioritized implementation plan and circulate for Steering Committee review.
- Dec - Jan: Draft prioritized implementation plan and circulate for CAFF Board review.
- Feb 2021: Implementation plan approved by Board for delivery to 2021 Ministerial.
- March 2021: Plan delivered to SAOs as a CAFF Ministerial deliverable.
- May 2021: Plan released at the Arctic Council Ministerial.

**STEERING COMMITTEE:**

Supported by the CAFF Secretariat, and a project consultant, the current membership<sup>2</sup> of the CAFF project Steering Committee for Phase 2 is listed below – these may change as CAFF Working Group members turnover or decide to join.

Project Co-leads: United States, Canada, Sweden

Steering Committee Representation:

- Aleut International Association
- Arctic Athabaskan Council
- Arctic Economic Council
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Gwich'in Council International
- Ministry of Nature and Environment, Greenland
- Ministry of the Environment, Finland
- Norwegian Environment Agency
- Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
- United Nations Environment Program World Conservation Monitoring Center
- United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
- United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
- World Wildlife Fund Arctic Program

Project Administration and Support: CAFF Secretariat, Nuka Research and Planning Group, and North Star Group

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:**

Task	Estimated costs
This sum outlines available or committed resources as of June 2020 for project coordination and outputs	Project coordinator: US\$100K Funding provided/committed to CAFF Secretariat for project outputs: US\$80K

<sup>2</sup>This list of CAFF project Steering Committee members is current as of June 2020; a final list of Steering Committee members will be reflected in the final prioritized implementation plan.