



## Diagnostic analysis of environmental problems of the Russian Arctic

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The geographic location of the Russian Arctic, the enormous expanses of land and sea, the exceptional natural diversity and extreme natural and climatic conditions, and the different levels of economic development, infrastructure, and settlement patterns – all these make it comparatively difficult to identify high-priority environmental problems and strategies that are the same for the entire Arctic regions of Russia.

First, even such obvious environmental problems as pollution, degradation of terrestrial ecosystems, and depletion of the stocks of biological resources tend to be regionally specific with regard to severity and scale. Second, the traditions of economic development of individual regions of the Arctic, as before, remain differentiated in terms of demographic, economic, and social and cultural tendencies, which are very conservative even in the context of new industrial development. Third, the systems that have taken shape for management, as well as for interactions among Arctic regions, with neighboring regions of Russia, and with neighboring countries, have different degrees of receptiveness with regard to centralized decision-making system. In addition, the Arctic regions differ substantially in relation to participation of governmental, public-private, and private structures in environmental decision-making and in the economic coordination and competition that ensure minimal impacts on the environment.

In prioritizing environmental problems in the Arctic Zone, approaches and criteria were used that are accepted in the methodology of the Global Environmental Facility and the Global International Waters Assessment. These provide for (1) quantitative assessment and ranking of environmental problems by priority, (2) identification of core, indirect, and sectoral reasons underlying these problems, and (3) a causal-chain analysis.

Analysis of the current condition of and predicted changes in the environment in the Arctic Zone has identified five environmental problems, given below in order of priority.

**Environmental pollution (transboundary transport of pollutants by water and air, and oil, chemical, and radiation contamination) and deterioration of the quality of surface and ground waters in the coastal areas of the Arctic Zone**



Change in biodiversity and depletion of biological resources, largely due to contamination of the environment and unauthorized use of biological resources and poaching



Deteriorating living conditions of the indigenous population and disruption of traditional nature use of indigenous peoples communities



Adverse consequences and threats associated with global climate change



Land degradation and land-use impairments



For additional information please visit <http://npa-arctic.ru> or contact project office (Ivan Senchenya, Project Manager, [Senchenya@npaf.ru](mailto:Senchenya@npaf.ru))