

Memorandum 2/11/2018

KNO2: TK and science under a co-production of knowledge

This memo provides a summary of reports submitted on the session MB5 organized at the Arctic Biodiversity Session in Rovaniemi, Finland, October 9-12 organized by the International Council (ICC) and the University of Washington.

Attendance: 68

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

- Identifying and safeguarding important areas
- Improving knowledge and public awareness
- Climate change
- Ecosystem-based Management
- Mainstreaming biodiversity

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

- There is still variety in terms used: Indigenous Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Inuit Knowledge. That can cause confusion.
- Indigenous Knowledge (IK)/Traditional Knowledge (TK) is an independent knowledge system, separate from scientific knowledge and should be treated as such. That means e.g. that it has its own validation system. "Not to translate one knowledge system to another."
- Indigenous/TK is verified through generations.
- In the co-production of knowledge, IK holders have to be there from the very beginning till the very end, from the problem definition and consideration of methods to the interpretation of the results.
- "Do Indigenous / TK and western science fit together? Yes." Ending up with the availability of best possible information.
- A scientist noted that he did not publish information because the information did not belong to him stressing the point of information sovereignty and the rights of IK holders to determine how, when, and where their knowledge will be used.
- IK is a systematic way of knowing; has its own validation and evaluation processes and it holds its own methodologies; it is a living process, including knowledge acquired today and in the future.
- There is a lack of funding to complete the work that needs to be done in gathering and documenting IK because the value is not recognized; it was also noted that within an environmental assessment process we cannot afford not to include IK in the work we are doing.
- We need to include IK in assessments, technical reports, and monitoring programs.
- There is an importance of building relationships and having people to people relationships and more trust between scientists and IK holders is needed
- It is important that we have a paradigm shift away from the idea that we will integrate IK into science and/or scientific reports - we are working toward bringing IK and science together on an equitable platform

- The work does not have value [or enough value/robustness] if the Indigenous community and their knowledge is not involved
- The practicality of implementation requires IK holder involvement at every stage of work - from inception, through the collection, and analysis
- It is okay to make mistakes within a co-production of knowledge approach; this requires those involved to continuously evaluate the process and question if the approach can be improved
- Conservation planning is greatly improved by engaging Indigenous communities in a co-production of knowledge, ensuring an evidence-based and Indigenous driven process.
- Co-production of knowledge in the conservation planning process aids in overcoming the research implementation gap, decision complacency, and policy relevance
- IK is harder to access because its value is not being recognized - funding and time is needed to bring forward this important knowledge. Industry examples were provided that demonstrated active involvement of IK holders

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

- You have to know the Indigenous institutions and organizations to begin with in order to reach for Indigenous / traditional knowledge. That is first of all how you can find the Indigenous / TK holders.
- In reaching out for Indigenous / TK you need to invest time. “You need to talk and listen a lot before you even start” (e.g. an Environmental Impact Assessment).
- Indigenous / TK holders own their own knowledge. It cannot just be pulled out from them.
- Indigenous / TK is important also in conservation planning. Why? The best available information is needed also there. Conservation has impacts on people and human dimension has often been neglected in conservation planning.
- A lot of work is being done by Indigenous organizations and communities that should be brought forward and included in Arctic Council work
- Trust and Respect is needed to ensure a co-production of knowledge. Equity needs to be actively worked towards in order to build a co-production of knowledge approach
- IK holders need to be involved in all steps from the very beginning - including the scoping process.
- Work toward empowering communities and letting Indigenous Peoples questions and needs should be addressed
- There is a need for equitable involvement of IK in assessment, reports, and decision making

Take home message from the session:

- It's a question about recognizing different knowledge systems. It's a question about utilizing the best possible knowledge. That can be scientific, Indigenous or many times both. Coproduction of knowledge is possible and can be achieved through trust, respect and true dialogue.
- Bringing together IK and science under a co-production of knowledge requires equity and combines epistemologies and methodologies to develop a collective understanding. To implement a co-production approach there is a need to include IK holders from the very beginning, from the scoping stage, through analysis. Assessments, technical reports, decision

making, and conservation planning are greatly improved through the equitable inclusion of IK throughout all stages of work.