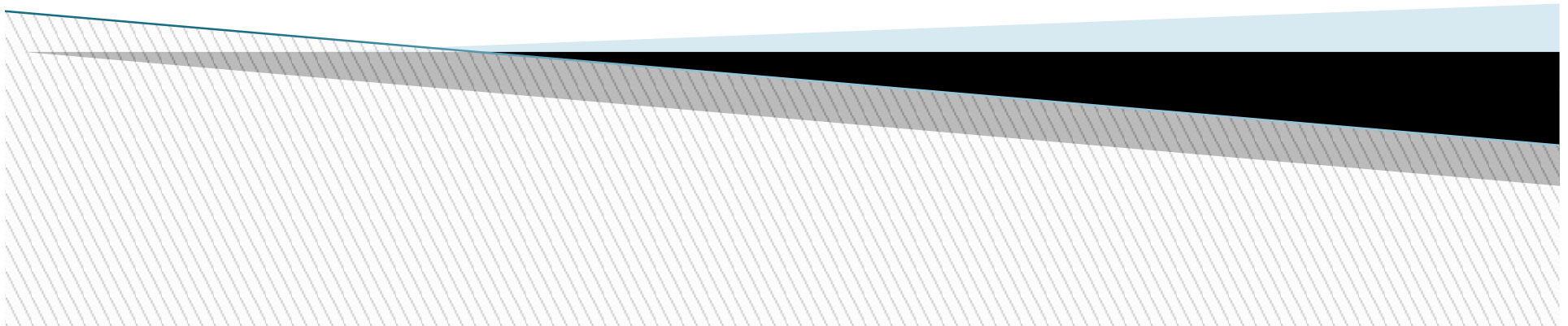




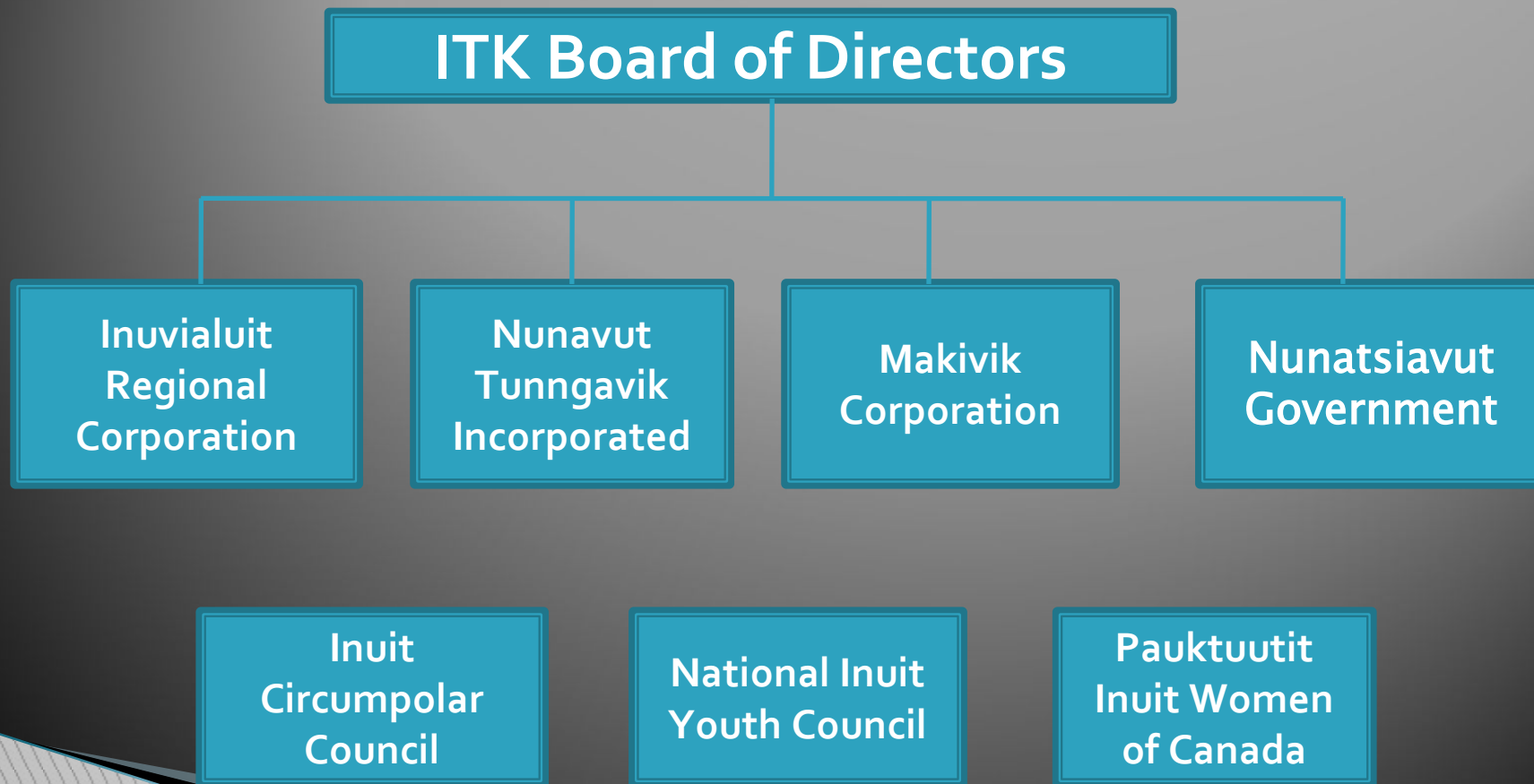
Inuit Commitments to the Conservation, Management and Sustainable Use of Polar Bear

**John Cheechoo
Director, Environment and Wildlife
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami**

Session: Sustainable Management of Polar Bear in a Changing World
Arctic Biodiversity Congress
December 2nd, 2014



Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Governance Structure

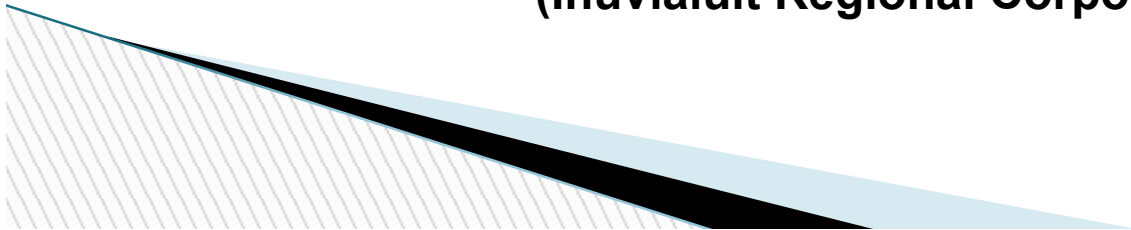


Inuit Livelihoods: Wildlife Harvesting

A basis of social, cultural, economic and mental well-being

Consuming country foods [wildlife] is important to Inuvialuit identity, and the culmination of a series of cooperative activities – harvesting, processing, distributing and preparing – that require behaving in ways that emphasize Inuvialuit values of cooperation, sharing and generosity.

(Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, 2007)



Inuit and “Arctic Biodiversity”

Our Arctic animals represent an integral strand woven through our language, our personal namesakes, our place names, our memories, our stories, our emotions, our intelligence, our wisdom and the lessons of life. Both at the individual and collective level, this strand is a part of us, and we a part of it.

All of this and much more combine to feed our spiritual awareness and strength as human beings within a larger, natural and interconnected world. It is what we would term a holistic view of life.

When we share our wildlife, or as Inuit say, our ‘country food’, this enables us to come together to bond and reconnect as families and as communities and helps sustain a resilient and meaningful identity in a world of constant change – whether that change is environmental, social, political, economic or a mixture of all of these interacting in an unpredictable manner.

(Mary Simon, 2009)

Inuit and “Arctic Biodiversity”

We remain today very much a hunting people of the land, the ice and the snow, and the process of the hunt is not well understood and oftentimes misunderstood.... You are taking survival-based risks that teach you how to be courageous at the right time. You are learning how to be bold under pressure. You are learning how to be reflective. You are learning how not to be impulsive. And you also learn to be extremely focused and strategic and become natural conservationists. And that really helps you. Not only to survive the land and the stressful situations around you, in the environment of a hunting culture, but it also develops wisdom; ultimately, it develops your judgment and your wisdom. And these skills, in our language, we call *silatunig*: wisdom.

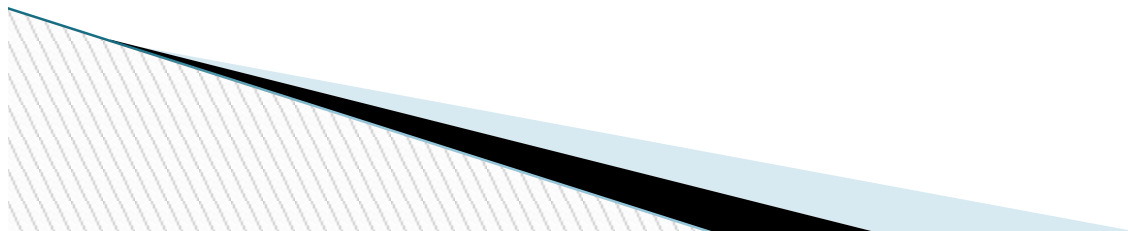
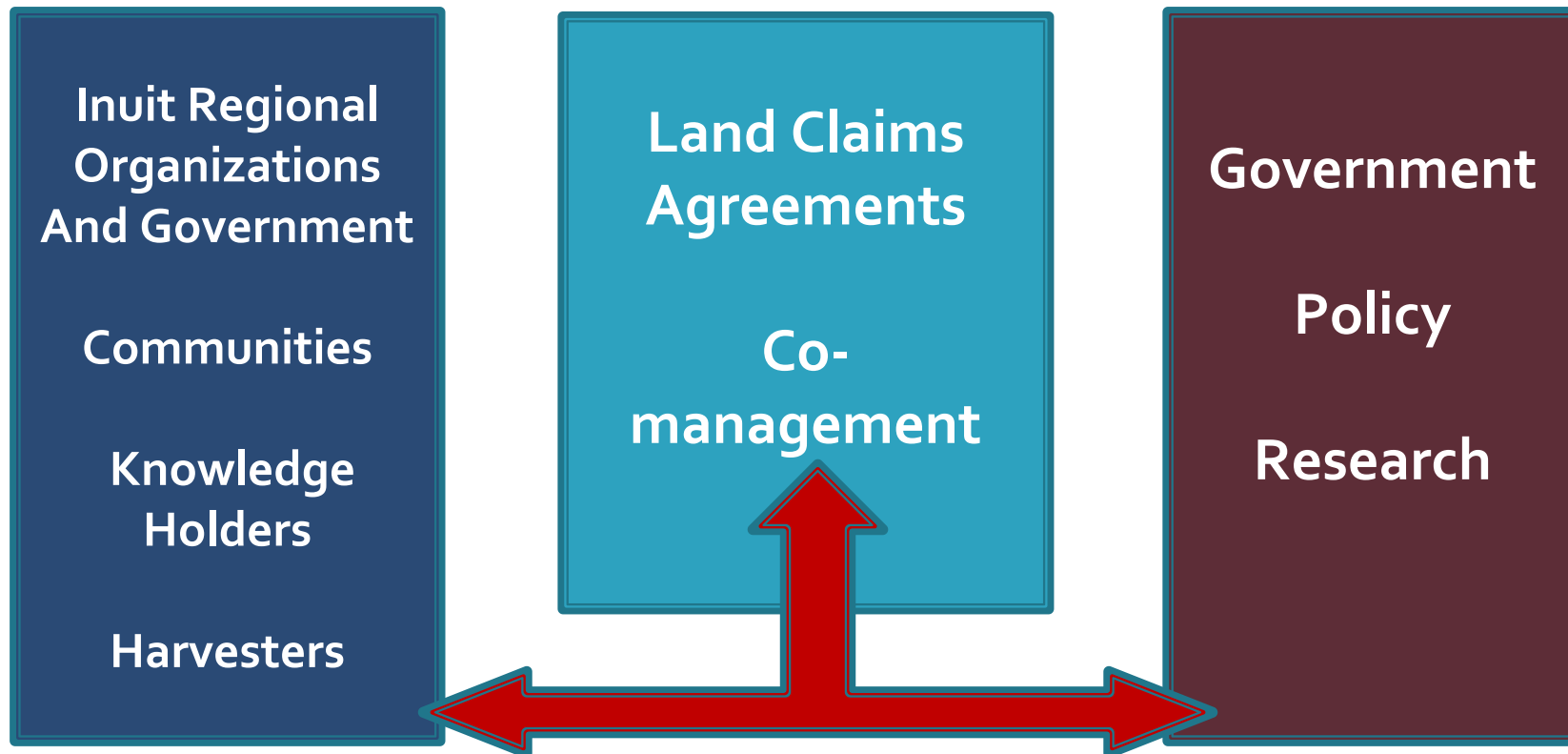
(Sheila Watt-Cloutier)

Canadian Inuit Land Claim Agreements

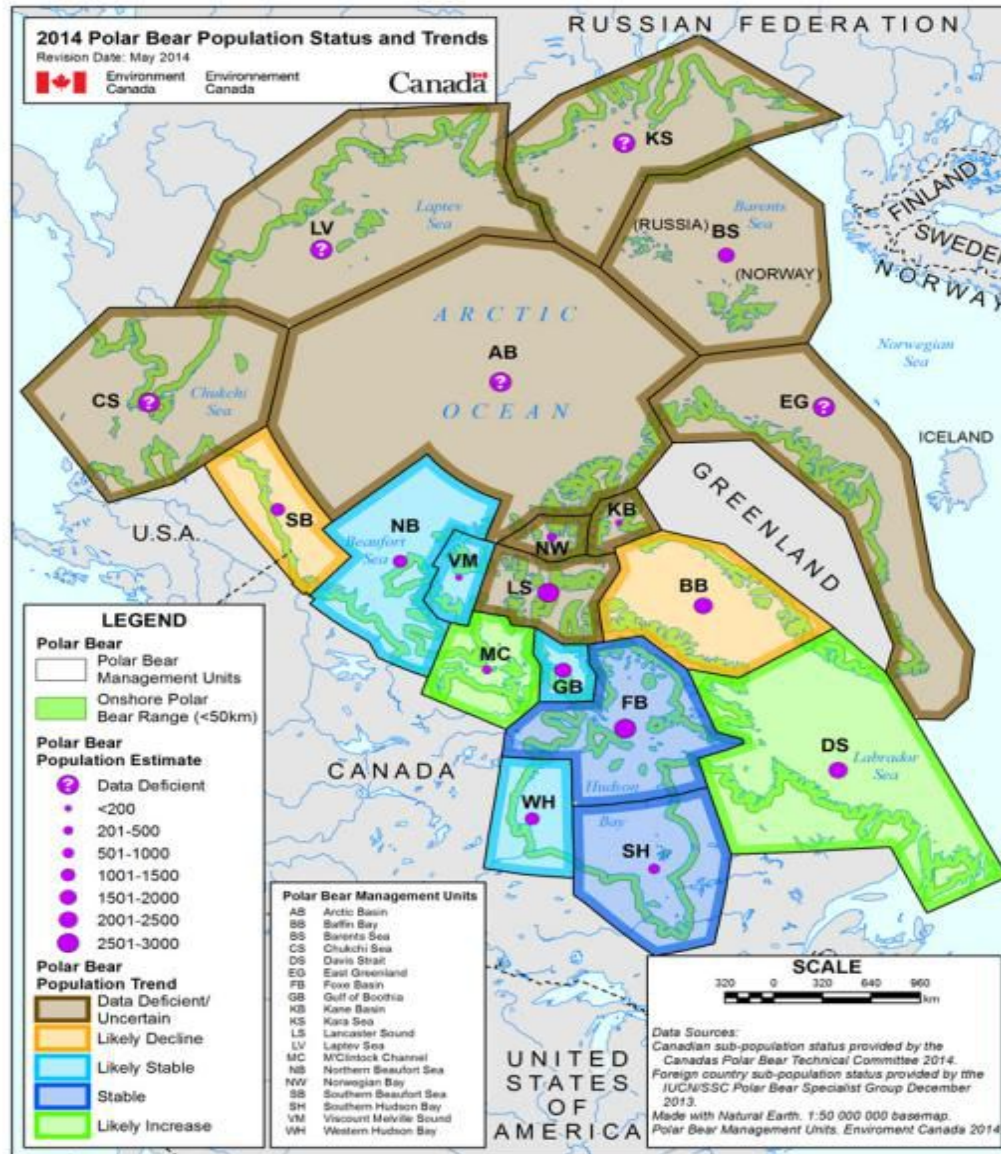
- Fully acknowledge and reflect Inuit wildlife harvesting rights, conservation obligations and key role of Inuit in wildlife management decision making
- Ensure local and traditional knowledge is treated as equally valuable to scientific knowledge in wildlife management decision-making
- Define co-management systems governed by and responsible for implementing conservation principles
- Serve and promote the long-term economic, social and cultural interests of Inuit harvesters and communities



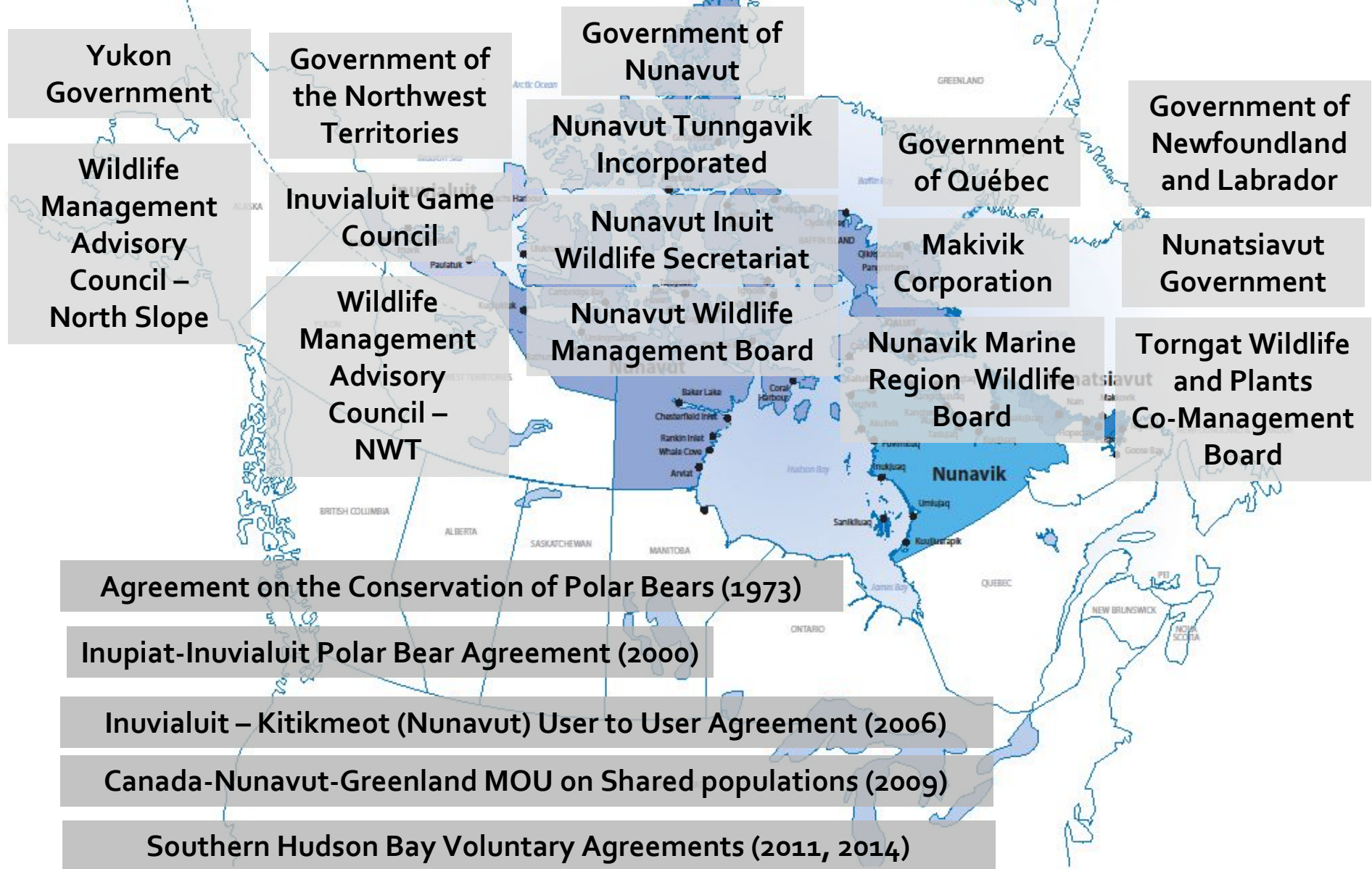
Co-Management Process



Polar Bear Subpopulations



Wildlife Management Authorities and Polar Bear Agreements



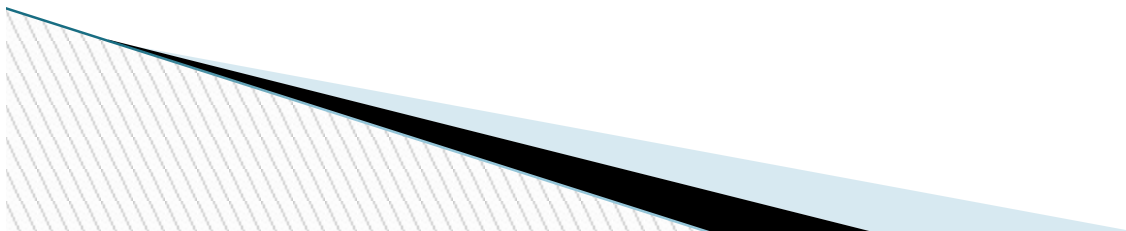
Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

"Sustainable use" means the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.


(Convention on Biological Diversity)

Both consumptive and non-consumptive use of biological diversity are fundamental to the economies, cultures, and well-being of all nations and peoples.

(IUCN Policy Statement on Sustainable Use)



IUCN Policy Statement on Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

- a) Use of wild living resources, if sustainable, is an important conservation tool because the social and economic benefits derived from such use provide incentives for people to conserve them;
 - b) When using wild living resources, people should seek to minimize losses of biological diversity;
 - c) Enhancing the sustainability of uses of wild living resources involves an ongoing process of improved management of those resources; and
 - d) Such management should be adaptive, incorporating monitoring and the ability to modify management to take account of risk and uncertainty.
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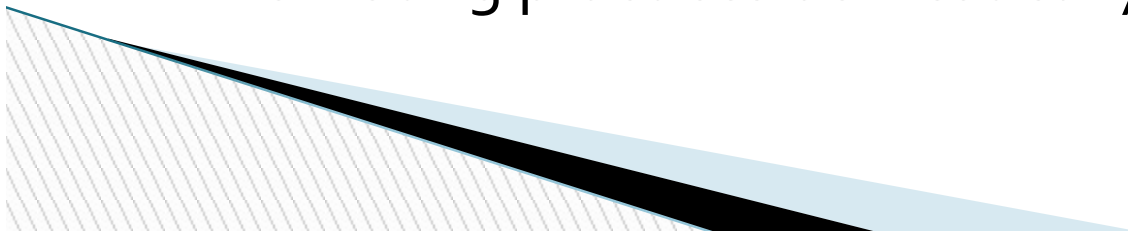
Sustainable Use of Polar Bear by Inuit

- Sustainably harvested for cultural, social, food and livelihood purposes
- Harvesting practices and traditions continue
- Traditional knowledge is integral to harvesting practices
- Inuit involvement in research and management
- Co-management and adaptive management
- Use of Total Allowable Harvest levels and quotas
- On-going local monitoring of subpopulations
- Conservation for future generations
- High degree of compliance by hunters

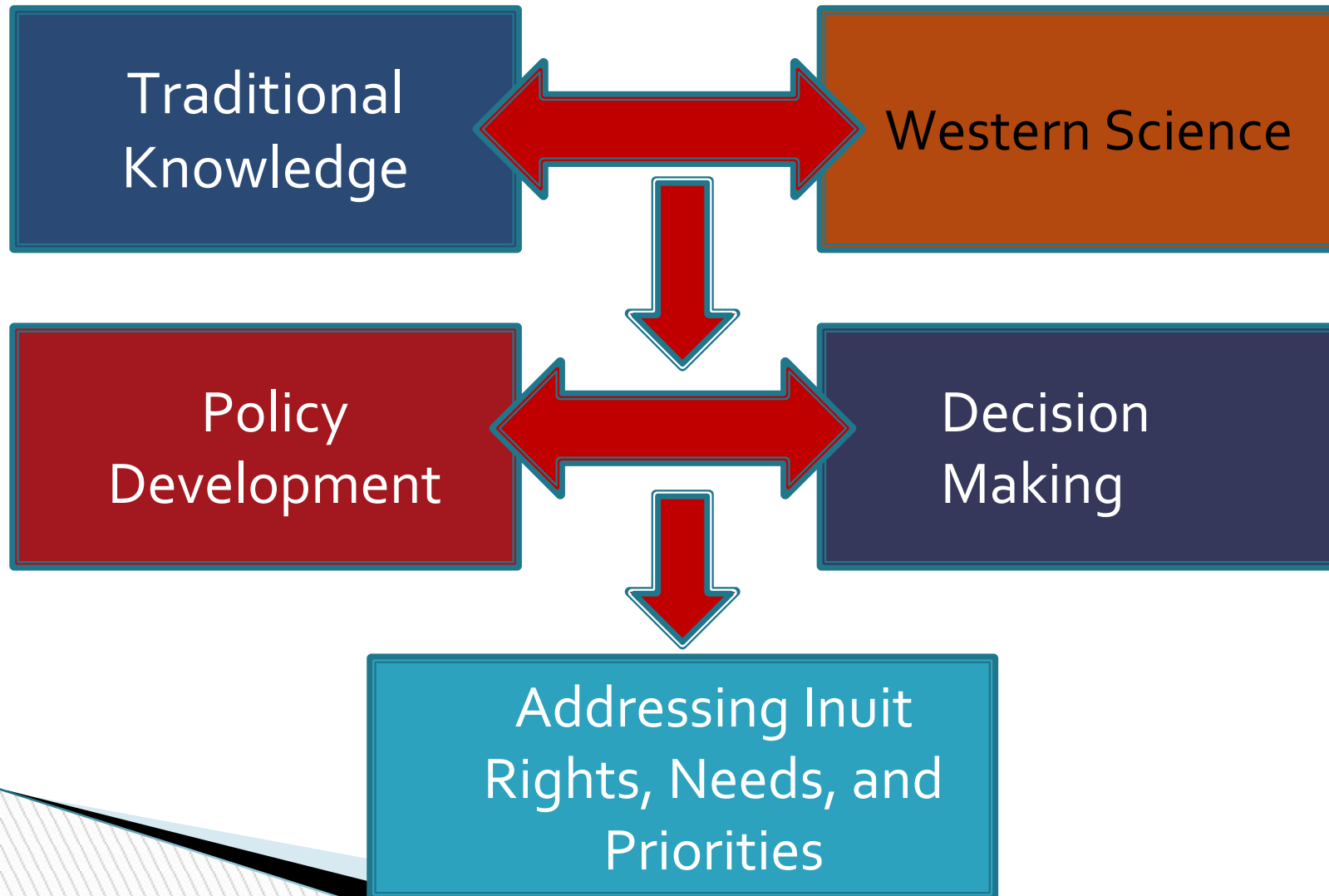


Inuit Wildlife Harvesting: Needs/Priorities

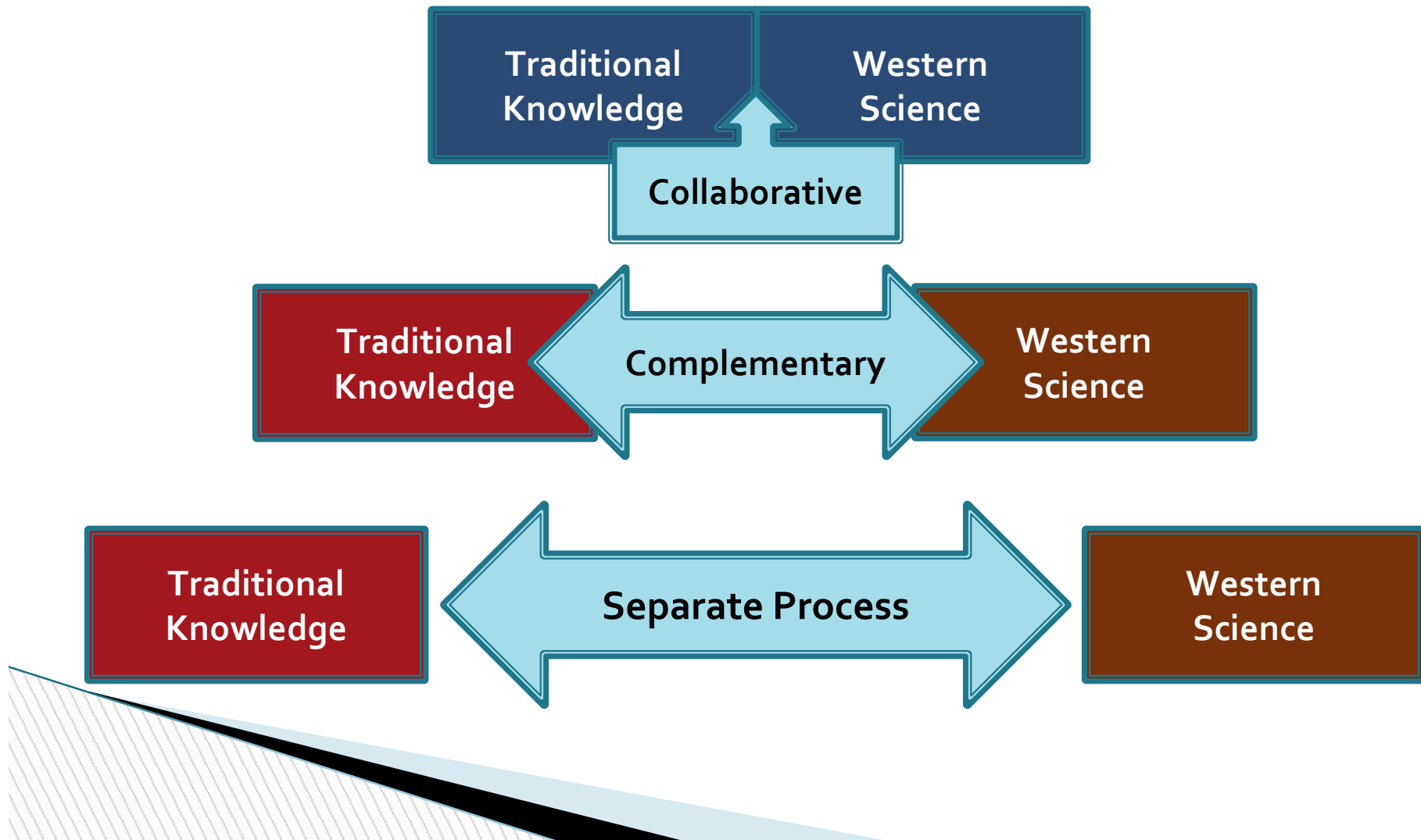
- Continuation of Inuit culture
- Integral to knowledge transmission
- Continuation of harvesting and use of wildlife
- Passing down of knowledge and skills
- Providing food for family/community
- Providing income through local livelihoods
- Ensuring spiritual and social well-being
- Conserving the species for the long-term
- Implementation of land claims agreements
- Promoting practices domestically and internationally



Key Processes to Consider



Levels of Integration- ATK/WS



Inclusion of ATK in Research and Management

- Researcher/hunter/community relations are key
- Inclusion of Inuit throughout the research process, from proposal to results
- Include Inuit priorities with research and management priorities
- Build on common objectives
- Communication in all phases – use of language translation and interpretation
- Share in the transmission of results locally, regionally, and nationally
- Credit given to knowledge holder contributions

One of the really troublesome facts...bear's status as a threatened species does not jibe with the fact that most polar bear populations have appeared to be in good shape for a while.

(Guest Editorial, Polar Research, 2009)

... polar bears are indiscriminately killed each year for their fur and parts ...

(International Fund for Animal Welfare, 2013)



Animal rights groups manipulated data on polar bear hunt: researchers "We need more nuanced conversations and media coverage about polar bear conservation" (Nunatsiaq News, 2014)

We're shooting polar bears?!?

(Macleans Magazine – Canadian edition, 2012)

“Polar Bear Publicity” Impact on Polar Bear Management

Behind the controversy, what's the real story about the future of polar bears? (National Geographic 2014)

*Blood on the rocks -
The polar-bear hunts
of northern Canada*
(Sunday Times)

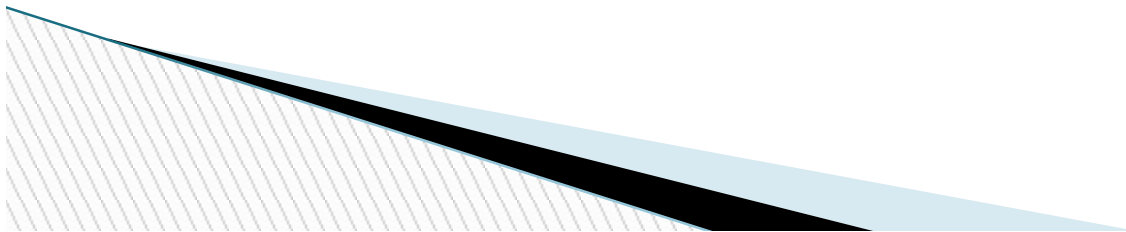
... Inuit will have to accept the moral imperative of deep ecology: the life of another species outweighs the preservation of their way of life.
(Editorial, The Ottawa Citizen, 2013)

*Is it the hunters
or the hunted
who are heading
for the sunset?*
(The Economist)

*There is hardly any
other species that
has the potential to
capture peoples'
attention more
effectively than the
"king of the Arctic."*
(Guest Editorial,
Polar Research, 2013)

Polar Bear Management Needs...

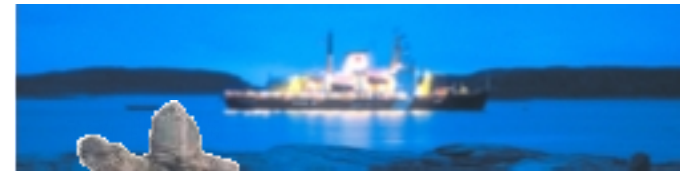
Collaborative partnerships and a
balanced discussion of multiple sources of evidence,
not a war of words



Takk!

Qujannamiik, Nakurmiik, Matna,
Koana, Qujaannaini

Thank you



www.itk.ca/polarbear

