



Development of Options for a German Environmental Policy for the Arctic

Project

Duration

Nov 2011 - Mar 2013

In this Project, Ecologic Institute elaborates policy options for the development of a strategy to protect the Arctic environment for the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). The project entails an analysis of the environmental situation and the legal framework for environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic as well as an identification of Germany's interests regarding environmental protection in this region.

The melting of the polar ice cap is increasing accessibility to the Arctic region; especially for new economic opportunities such as, oil, gas and mineral exploitation and commercial shipping, fisheries and tourism. In 2008, the United States Geological Survey estimated that the Arctic contains approximately 400 billion barrels of oil and oil-equivalent natural gas reserves, about 84% of which are located offshore. This development of economic activities and resources along with effects of climate change and transboundary pollution could severely impact the fragile Arctic ecosystems and trigger environmental impacts worldwide.

Against this background, the project focuses on the analysis of selected economic sectors and cross-cutting-issues. This includes natural resources, shipping, fisheries, and tourism as well as climate change and transboundary pollution by chemicals and other pollutants. The project contains an analysis of these actual impacts on the Arctic and an analysis of the legal and institutional framework for environmental protection and sustainable development within this region. Based on these results, Germany's interests regarding environmental protection in the Arctic region will be identified and assessed according to a range of criteria. Ecologic Institute aims to elaborate policy options for the development of a German environmental protection strategy for the Arctic with particular regard to their actual feasibility.

Within this project, Ecologic Institute's first task consists of an assessment of the actual environmental situation in the Arctic region, focusing on the mentioned global and regional impacts. In a second step, the legal and institutional framework – on European level as well as in public international law – will be described. In addition, interviews will be held with international and national experts on and actors in Arctic policy. In the following, Ecologic Institute analyzes Germany's interests for environmental protection in the Arctic and elaborates policy options for the development of an environmental protection strategy for the Arctic with a view to ensure a high level of environmental protection on the international level.

Funding

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