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ARCTIC RESEARCH AS A TOOL FOR POLICY AND BUSINESS

ABSTRACT

Researchers, public and private decision-makers need to work together more closely on the Arctic, where research, policy and business are inextricably intertwined. Today's circumstances make this all the more necessary.

Activities in the Arctic must be based on a comprehensive understanding of the situation, its causes and consequences. The Arctic is truly a game changer. Multiple drivers prevail: climate change and need for energy resources; development of technology and infrastructure; challenges between governance and sovereignty. The Arctic platform consists of many dimensions: environmental and economic; human and social.

The Arctic is a regional issue with a global reach. In an interconnected world regional approach is both constrained and enabled by global forces and dynamics: political, economic and environmental. When just a while ago the Arctic could be described as a zone of peace, the current politico-strategic developments do reflect on the "Pax Arctica".

In today's world political and economic leaders need scientific information more than ever, to examine the options and lead to right decisions. But to be meaningful, the complexity of the challenges has to be fully comprehended and the information effectively applied. The question is: to what extent can science, by itself, guide to the pursuing and implementing of the objectives and goals needed?

The Arctic Futures Initiative by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) is a large-scale multiyear interdisciplinary project focusing on interfaces between research, policy and business with a view of establishing a holistic, integrated systems approach to the Arctic.