

## Policy Brief 3: Recommendations

# Owning and Managing Living and Renewable Natural Resources and Biodiversity



From fisheries to minerals extraction, from hunting to husbandry – natural resources are a mainstay of both modern economic activities in the Arctic region and traditional livelihoods. For local and indigenous communities, nature and the resources it provides are also a source of cultural value, rooted in a living sense of connectedness with the natural world.

There are growing conflicts over the use of natural resources all around the Arctic, often traceable to different conceptions of resource ownership and management. The spectre of residual colonial patterns of exploitation lingers, creating grounds for injustice. In this light, the question of natural resource governance sits at the centre of debates over economic policy and a sustainable future for the Arctic.

What emerges as a central finding is a clash of values – and, essentially, of worldviews. The motives and drivers behind extractive undertakings are typically at loggerheads with those of local residents, NGOs, and indigenous rightsholders, with the modern idea of natural resources conceived as private property and a reservoir of exploitation colliding with traditional notions of non-economic value and shared access.

As a result, conflicts over natural resources in the Arctic cannot be solved by way of legislation and regulation only. Instead, greater emphasis must be placed on participatory governance as a means to counter the prevailing “top-down” management, with its disregard for the effects of new economic development on local and indigenous communities.

We propose a number of policy recommendations for a more sustainable and just Arctic natural resource governance regime. Among them are:

- 1 Recognize the rights of indigenous communities in the Arctic, particularly the right to livelihoods and intact land areas**
- 2 Increase the transparency around development plans and land use planning**
- 3 In carnivore governance, acknowledge reindeer herders’ assessment of carnivore damage, so as to counter their current exclusion**
- 4 Implement usage restrictions and guidance on resource use for tourism and outdoor recreation to protect traditional livelihoods, such as reindeer husbandry**

