

# INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLANNING IN THE BEAUFORT SEA: BLENDING NATURAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE IN A SETTLED LAND CLAIM AREA

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## **SUMMARY**

The Inuvialuit, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and industry (represented by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers – CAPP) have come together to collaborate in the development of an integrated management planning initiative for marine and coastal areas in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR). This venture is called the Beaufort Sea Integrated Management Planning Initiative (BSIMPI). Through BSIMPI, science and traditional knowledge together with social, economic and cultural information is brought to the table and incorporated into the management planning process. In this manner, BSIMPI supports modern ocean management in accordance with Canada's Oceans Act and Canada's Oceans Strategy.

Currently, BSIMPI is focused on evaluating a proposal for the establishment of a Marine Protected Area (MPA) in the Beaufort Sea. The areas under evaluation for MPA status are the three Zone 1(a)s (Traditional Harvesting/ Concentration Areas) in the Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan (BSBMP). The BSBMP is a community-based management plan that was developed by the Fisheries Joint Management Committee in cooperation with community Hunters and Trappers Committees and DFO. The Plan's purpose is to "ensure the responsible and effective, long-term management of the beluga resource by the Inuvialuit and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans."(1). The Plan contains by-laws and regulations to guide development and other activities within the various zones identified in the BSBMP. However, because the BSBMP is not legislated, compliance is voluntary. If designated as a MPA under the Oceans Act, enforceable regulations could be enacted.

In accordance with the National Framework for Establishing and Managing Marine Protected Areas (2), ecological, technical, and socio-economic assessments of the proposed MPA have been completed. A traditional ecological knowledge study is being conducted and will be incorporated into the ecological assessment. A non-renewable resource assessment and a multiple account framework are also being undertaken. The results of the completed assessments were presented to communities and industry as part of an extensive and ongoing consultation process.

The BSIMPI is an evolving process, which, through the efforts of its Inuvialuit, federal government and industry partners, has established the foundation for ongoing oceans management that reflects the unique physical, cultural and political environment in the ISR.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Oceans Act (1997) authorizes the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to lead the development of a national oceans management strategy guided by the principles of sustainable development, the precautionary approach and integrated management. Stemming from the Oceans Act, Canada's Oceans Strategy (COS) actively encourages Aboriginal groups in Canada to become engaged in Ocean Management and decision making through Integrated Management planning. COS acknowledges that "there is much to be learned from the holistic Aboriginal approach to the marine environment" and the important contribution to be made by traditional ecological

knowledge towards understanding the marine environment (3). Recognition of the need to incorporate socio-cultural and natural science values in planning, as well as to respect and support the participatory planning processes consistent with the Inuvialuit Final Agreement is implicit with respect to any planning processes conducted within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

Recently, there has been a resurgence of interest and activities by the oil and gas industry in the Western Arctic with most of this activity centered in the area of the Mackenzie River delta. With expectations of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline to be built it is anticipated that oil and gas activities will expand into the nearshore and offshore waters of the Beaufort Sea. The impact of this upsurge of activity has been to raise concerns amongst some Inuvialuit surrounding the potential impacts on beluga and beluga habitat in the areas identified as Zone 1a of the Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan.

The response within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) to this development activity has been to undertake integrated management planning for the marine and coastal environment. This work is moving forward through the Beaufort Sea Integrated Management Planning Initiative (BSIMPI) process. BSIMPI is consistent with the IFA, with representation including the Inuvialuit, federal government departments and industry. The initial focus of BSIMPI was to evaluate if the Zone 1(a)s of the Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan should be designated as a marine protected area under Canada's Oceans Act.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 The Inuvialuit Land Claim**

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) is the comprehensive land claim agreement for the Inuvialuit of the Western Arctic region. Finalized in 1984, the IFA establishes the boundaries of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) (Figure 1), and provides constitutional protection of aboriginal and treaty rights. Three fundamental goals are set forth under the IFA, namely: "to preserve Inuvialuit cultural identity and values within a changing northern society; to enable Inuvialuit to be equal and meaningful participants in the northern and national economy and society; and to protect and preserve the arctic wildlife, environment and biological productivity" (4: s.1 ).

To guide development according to the aforementioned objectives, and ensure that the needs of the Inuvialuit are at the forefront of decision-making in the ISR, the IFA outlines a management structure that includes the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC), the Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) and the Fisheries Joint Management Committee (FJMC). IRC is responsible for managing compensation and benefits received by the Inuvialuit under the IFA, while IGC represents "the collective Inuvialuit interest in wildlife" (4. s. 14(74)). FJMC assists with the administration of rights and obligations related to fisheries under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA), and advises the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on matters relating to the Inuvialuit and Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) fisheries. FJMC is a co-management body comprised of equal representation by the Inuvialuit and Government of Canada representatives plus an independent chairperson.

The Wildlife Management Advisory Committees (WMAC Northwest Territories, WMAC Yukon), Environmental Impact Screening Committee (EISC) and Environmental Impact Review Board (EIRB) were also established through the IFA. These bodies screen development applications and make recommendations for appropriate action based on the input of the IRC, IGC and FJMC, as well as scientific experts.



Figure 1. The Inuvialuit Settlement Region

## 2.2 Marine and Coastal Planning And Conservation

The Inuvialuit traditional lifestyle was highly dependent on the marine environment and the species it supported. Fish, seals and beluga whales, in particular, were major food sources. Historical evidence suggests that the subsistence harvest of beluga by the Inuvialuit has been taking place for more than 500 years. The strong cultural linkages to the tradition of the subsistence hunt have been recognized for years, and are still apparent today, even though the dependence on beluga as a food source has declined. Preserving the beluga and other arctic wildlife is widely recognized as fundamental to the cultural survival of the Inuvialuit, and explicitly mentioned in documents including the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, the Inuvialuit Renewable Resource Conservation and Management Plan and the Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan.

The importance of protecting arctic marine wildlife in general, and beluga and beluga habitat, in particular, has been well documented over the years. Table 1 shows a number of policy documents that have included specific reference to the need for conservation and protection of arctic marine wildlife and habitat.

**Table 1. Initiatives and Recommendations Concerning Arctic Marine Conservation (adapted from 5)**

Year	Initiative
1977	Report of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry (Berger Inquiry)
1984	Report of the Task Force on Northern Conservation
1987	DFO Arctic Marine Conservation Strategy
1987 - 1991	Mackenzie Delta Beaufort Sea Regional Land Use Plan
1988	Inuvialuit Renewable Resource Conservation and Management Plan
1989	Arctic Environmental Strategy (AES)
1991	Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan – 1 <sup>st</sup> release
1990 - 1994	Community Conservation Plans
1995	Canada's National Marine Conservation Areas System Plan
1998	Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan – update & 3 <sup>rd</sup> printing

### 2.3 A Brief History of Petroleum Exploration in the North

The search for oil and gas in the Mackenzie Delta-Beaufort Sea Region began in the late 1950s and early 1960s. At that time significant gas discoveries were made in the Delta region; however, without a pipeline to transport hydrocarbon resources to southern markets, it was not economically feasible to make the transition from exploration to production. When a proposal to construct a pipeline to transport gas from the Mackenzie Delta southward was tabled in the 1970's, the federal government held an inquiry into the potential impacts of constructing a pipeline along the Mackenzie River valley. The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, headed by Justice Thomas Berger, assessed both the environmental and social impacts of the proposed development. The result of the inquiry was a recommendation for a 10 year moratorium on the construction of a pipeline such that there would be adequate time to settle land claims (6).

The moratorium led to a substantial reduction in hydrocarbon exploration in the Mackenzie Delta/Beaufort Sea until the mid -1990's when political and economic factors rekindled interest in exploration and development in the Delta region. Once again, the construction of a pipeline is the key to development; however, the feasibility of pipeline construction has now greatly increased as most of the land claims along the Mackenzie Valley are either settled, as in the case of the ISR, or in the advanced stages of negotiation. Eight aboriginal groups whose lands would be affected by the proposed pipeline corridor have come together to form the Aboriginal Pipeline Group (APG). The APG supports pipeline development and is looking to become one-third owners of the pipeline if it is constructed.

### 3. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLANNING

A key component of integrated management under Canada's Oceans Act is the development of an effective planning process. Appropriate management plans need to be based on a process that effectively represents social, cultural, environmental and economic values and supports the principles of sustainable development and the precautionary approach. In the ISR, the Beaufort

Sea Integrated Management Planning Initiative was established to undertake the task of integrated management planning for the marine and coastal environment. The members of BSIMPI agreed that the initial focus of the initiative would be on the evaluation of the Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan Zone 1(a)s as a potential marine protected area under Canada's Oceans Act.

### **3.1 The Beaufort Sea Integrated Management Planning Initiative**

After Canada's Oceans Act was passed in 1997, discussions between the FJMC and DFO Oceans began to focus on Oceans Act implementation in the ISR. The resurgence of petroleum exploration in the Mackenzie Delta and Beaufort Sea brought the need to balance development and conservation interests back to the discussion table. Discussions about Oceans Act implementation, and integrated management planning in the Beaufort Sea naturally broadened to include a more diverse set of interests, including the IGC and IRC and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP).

In 1999, DFO, FJMC, IRC, IGC and CAPP formally agreed to collaborate in the development of integrated management planning for the marine and coastal environment in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Called the Beaufort Sea Integrated Management Planning Initiative, or BSIMPI, the initiative is guided by the following principles:

- recognition of rights under the IFA;
- respect for the view of all parties;
- commitment to building consensus;
- use of local, traditional and scientific knowledge; and,
- adoption of transparent, timely and coordinated procedures.

BSIMPI is organized into a Senior Management Committee (SMC) and a Working Group (WG). The SMC guides the integrated management planning process through the WG. The SMC has five members, the chairs of the FJMC, IGC and IRC, and a senior representative from each of DFO and CAPP.

The Working Group carries out integrated management activities such as identifying issues, planning and community engagement. The Working Group includes one representative from each of the organizations on the SMC, plus a representative from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and an independent chair. Administrative, technical and communication support for the SMC and WG is provided through the BSIMPI Secretariat, which consists of Regional DFO Oceans staff and the Chair of the BSIMPI WG. Other organizations, governments and communities with an interest in ocean use and management are brought into the BSIMPI process through interactions with the BSIMPI Secretariat. The Secretariat ensures that these groups are well informed of BSIMPI activities and progress and that any issues, comments and recommendations are brought back to the WG and SMC. The balance of Inuvialuit organizations and other groups on the WG and SMC is consistent with the principles of co-management as outlined in the IFA, and ensures that the Inuvialuit have a strong leadership voice in the decision-making process. The relationship between the SMC, the WG and the Secretariat is shown in Figure 2.

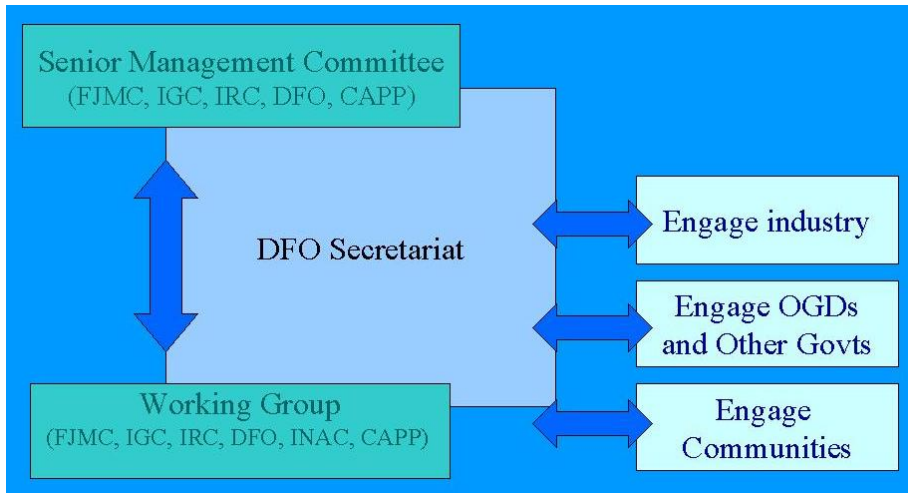


Figure 2. The Organizational Structure of BSIMPI

#### 4. ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS UNDER BSIMPI

The BSIMPI's activities and programs follow the Integrated Management framework outlined in Canada's Oceans Strategy. Activities and programs related to Integrated Management and Marine Environmental Quality (MEQ) are discussed in this section, while Marine Protected Areas are discussed in detail in section 5.

##### 4.1 Marine Environmental Quality

In support of Marine Environmental Quality (MEQ) objectives BSIMPI has partnered with local communities to develop an ocean monitoring program that is based both on science and traditional knowledge. Tariuq means "ocean" in Inuvialuktun. The Tariuq Monitoring Program is a community-based program. Monitoring parameters were selected by the members of the Tariuq community working groups, which include representatives from the Hunters and Trappers Committees, the Elders Committees, the Youth Committees and representatives from DFO. The program is being piloted in two ISR communities and has been active for two years. Tariuq complements other monitoring programs that are active in the ISR including the Cumulative Impacts Monitoring Program (CIMP), Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op and the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network for the North (EMAN North).

##### 4.2 Support for Integrated Management

BSIMPI has initiated a number of activities in support of broader integrated management. An Ecosystem Overview and Coastal Resource Inventory were completed. A traditional knowledge advisory committee was formed to help ensure that traditional knowledge was recognized in BSIMPI activities. BSIMPI was involved in the development of the curriculum for Experiential Science 20, a high-school level arctic marine biology course. Efforts to support and include youth in BSIMPI activities include: developing a youth strategy; hosting a youth retreat; and including youth in promotional events such as Oceans Day.

#### 5. MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

The Marine Protected Areas program was of particular interest to the FJMC. In 1991 the FJMC, together with community Hunters and Trappers Committees and Government of Canada representatives, jointly developed a community-based plan for the management of beluga whales in the Beaufort Sea called the Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan (BSBMP). The purpose of the BSBMP is to "ensure the responsible and effective, long-term management of the beluga

resource by the Inuvialuit and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans” (1:3). The BSBMP divides the Beaufort Sea into four zones based on traditional knowledge of beluga activity, traditional harvesting practices and scientific knowledge. There are three separate areas with the designation of Zone 1(a), which are the traditional harvesting\beluga concentration areas. According to the BSBMP, “In the review of any development proposal, Zone 1 is to be considered a Protected Area” according to the guidelines described in the BSBMP (1:13). The BSBMP provides guidelines that are to be used to guide development activities within the various zones, and each community has by-laws under which they are to conduct their beluga harvest. However, there is no legislation to back the BSBMP, and, thus, compliance with the guidelines is voluntary. The FJMC saw in the Oceans Act the potential to add legal backing to the protection provided by the BSBMP. The SMC directed the WG to evaluate the feasibility of establishing these three BSBMP Zone 1(a)s, herein referred to as the Area of Interest (AOI), as a Marine Protected Area under Canada’s Oceans Act.

The AOI is shown in yellow in Figure 3, along with the boundaries of existing oil and gas Exploration Licenses (ELs) and Significant Discovery Licenses (SDLs) in the Beaufort-Delta Region. Exploration licenses (ELs) are areas in which a petroleum company has purchased the right to explore for oil and gas deposits. ELs are valid for up to nine years. Significant discovery licenses are areas in which a hydrocarbon discovery that satisfies specific criteria has been confirmed, and past SDLs allow the licensee company to hold the rights to potential production in that area, in perpetuity.

The BSBMP is recognized by the Inuvialuit as a legitimate tool for beluga management within the ISR. Although the Plan has no legal authority, i.e., the BSBMP does not have the authority of legislation (Act or Regulation) to enforce compliance and adherence to the guidelines, other federal government agencies such as the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) have respected the BSBMP. INAC, which has a mandate in the north to manage non-renewable resources including the issuance of Crown petroleum rights, has voluntarily withdrawn these three areas from oil and gas lease nomination at the request of the Inuvialuit Game Council and Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.

With many ELs and SDLs in close proximity to the Zone 1(a)s there is concern about the potential for conflict to arise from incompatible activities, i.e., having beluga harvesting, and construction and production of hydrocarbon resources take place simultaneously. There is also concern about the potential for direct impacts on beluga and beluga habitat stemming from oil and gas production. For example, transportation activity, such as the movement of crews and equipment to the production site by ship or helicopter, construction activities such as dredging for artificial islands, and production activities that create noise or result in discharges into the marine environment, such as drilling, could all adversely affect beluga or beluga habitat.

Under Canada’s Oceans Act (7: s. 35(1)), a MPA can be created for the conservation and protection of:

- commercial and non-commercial fishery resources, including marine mammals and their habitats;
- endangered or threatened marine species, and their habitats;
- unique habitats;
- marine areas high in biodiversity or biological productivity; and,
- any other marine resource or habitat necessary to fulfill the mandate of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

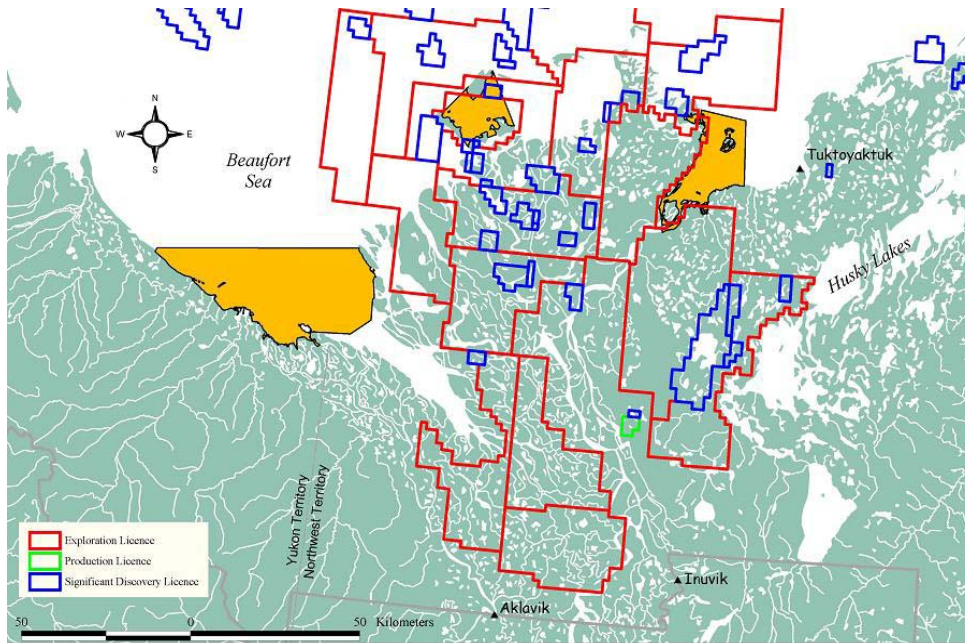


Figure 3. The Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan Zone 1(a)s, and Exploration Licenses and Significant Discovery Licenses in the ISR

### 5.1 Assessment of the Proposed MPA

In accordance with the National Framework for Establishing and Managing Marine Protected Areas, ecological, socio-economic and technical assessments of the AOI were completed (2). While the completion of these reports involved discussions with communities, industry, government bodies and other stakeholders, much more extensive consultation occurred after the initial assessments were drafted.

Industry consultations were held concurrent to community consultations. All petroleum companies with a known interest in the marine region of the ISR were presented with background information on BSIMPI, including the management structure and process of BSIMPI, and more detailed information about BSIMPI's evaluation of the AOI as a potential MPA. In addition, BSIMPI representatives held two consultations with the Northern Environmental Managers Group, which includes representatives from petroleum companies that work in Northern Canada.

Shipping and marine transport and tourism are also important industries in the ISR. A major marine shipping route goes directly through the AOI. During the summer months goods are brought to the Hamlet of Tukttoyaktuk for local use and transport to other outlying communities. As shipping is an essential service to these communities, and the effects of shipping and marine transport on beluga are thought to be minimal, BSIMPI has always maintained that such shipping activity should not be changed by the establishment of a MPA. The Northern Transport Company Limited (NTCL) is the primary transport operator in the ISR. NTCL has been advised of BSIMPI's work regarding the proposed MPA, and representatives from NTCL have expressed NTCL's interests at a BSIMPI WG meeting. In addition, BSIMPI has presented information on its evaluation of the proposed MPA at two Northern Canadian Marine Advisory Council meetings, which are attended by most major shipping companies in the north, as well as the Canadian Coast Guard and Department of Transportation. Similar consultations have been held with all tourism operators with an interest in marine tourism in the ISR. Currently, no tourism operators conduct activities in the AOI, as is consistent with the tourism guidelines developed by the FJMC (8).

In each of the affected communities, community consultations involved a series of meetings with the local Hunters and Trappers Committees, the Elders Committees and the Community Corporations. The BSIMPI Community Consultation Strategy identified the following four objectives (9):

- to have well informed communities that are knowledgeable about BSIMPI, Integrated Management, Canada's Oceans Act and MPAs under Canada's Oceans Act, and have a full understanding of the MPA establishment process and the implications of establishing a MPA;
- to engage the communities in meaningful dialogue about integrated management and the proposed MPA, and the MPA establishment process;
- to document the concerns, views and desires of the community members with respect to integrated management, BSIMPI and the establishment of a MPA; and,
- to ensure the concerns, views and desires of the communities are addressed in integrated management planning and in the planning and development of the proposed MPA.

Initial meetings provided background information on BSIMPI and the assessment of the AOI as a potential MPA, as well as an explanation of the work already completed and the plan of action for further consultation. Comments were recorded and sent back to the organizations for their approval, and whenever possible, the consultation plan was revised according to the suggestions made by the organizations. Approved comments were circulated to the WG and SMC.

While the consultation process was ongoing, it was necessary to have an indication of where the communities stood with respect to the establishment of the proposed MPA. At the request of the communities, the BSIMPI WG hosted a joint meeting that brought together representatives from the Elders Committee, Hunters and Trappers Committee and Community Development Corporations from all three communities. At this meeting the representatives had an opportunity to discuss their views and concerns with their peers and clarify any outstanding issues with the WG. During the meeting, eight out of nine community organizations indicated that they supported proceeding with the establishment of a MPA. An additional meeting with the ninth organization clarified their outstanding concerns, and this organization also indicated their support for proceeding. Written letters of support from the community organizations included various conditions of support. These letters were tabled at the next BSIMPI WG meeting, and the WG recommended to the SMC "that actions be taken to proceed with the process towards designation of the Beaufort Sea Beluga Management Plan Zone 1A as a Marine Protected Area under Canada's Oceans Act." (10). The BSIMPI SMC accepted the recommendation of the WG and directed the WG to proceed according to their suggested workplan.

## **5.2 Next Steps in Marine Protected Area Planning**

In continuing its efforts towards establishing the MPA the Working Group has adopted a set of principles:

- to work cooperatively to address and resolve any issues that may arise leading up to the designation of the MPA;
- to continue to exchange information during the MPA planning process and to share information in a timely manner;
- to provide opportunities to review and provide comments on drafts of proposed regulations and the operational management plan; and,

- to keep members of our organizations updated on the MPA planning process.

The principles will serve to guide the Working Group as it undertakes the Course of Action that has been prepared as next steps in the MPA planning process. Major milestones include:

- reaching agreement on activities allowed or restricted within the MPA;
- establishing Marine Environmental Quality Objectives for the MPA;
- developing regulations, a regulatory management plan and Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement; and,
- preparing an operational management plan.

In support of these actions, a Nearshore Oil and Gas Technical Workshop is planned for September 2003. A second workshop, tentatively scheduled for October, will focus on marine environmental quality objectives within the MPA. Consultations with communities, industries and other government agencies will continue during the implementation of the Course of Action, as it has throughout the BSIMPI process. Community representatives will be invited to actively participate in the workshops and DFO Oceans staff will continue to work with the communities.

## 6. CONCLUSION

BSIMPI is proving to be an effective planning process for implementation of the Oceans Act within a settled land claim area. Several factors have contributed to this success. First and foremost is the clarity provided by the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. The IFA provides guidance regarding the composition of planning bodies and contributes to bringing a balanced approach at the table. A second factor is the explicit recognition within Canada's Oceans Strategy of the value of traditional knowledge as a component for understanding the marine environment. Recognizing the value of traditional ecological knowledge, and cultural/traditional values which cannot be measured in economic terms, is essential in the context of communities where residents continue to utilize traditional foods and activities to maintain their culture. Finally, perhaps the strongest endorsement of the BSIMPI process comes from unanimous endorsement by the three communities and nine community organizations that provided letters of support to continue the BSIMPI process and the work towards designation of the Zone 1(a)s as an MPA under Canada's Oceans Act.

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