

Conclusions and recommendations

The GIWA region Russian Arctic extends from Novaya Zembyla on its western boundary to the Mys Dezhneva (East Cape) on the eastern one. As a result of human activities such as industrial, urban and agriculture, pollutants enter the Arctic seas via river run-off from the large river basins situated in the region. Harmful persistent pollutants are also transferred via long-range atmospheric transportation from western Europe and the East.

The assessment, as carried out in accordance with the GIWA methodology, has identified pollution, mainly from chemicals and oil spills, and habitat and community modification of neritic, lagoon and estuarine systems as the most important concerns for the Russian Arctic region. The analysis of the level of impact of these GIWA issues in the Kara, Laptev, East Siberian and Chukchi seas showed that the problems are more significant in the Kara Sea sub-system. Therefore, the Causal chain and Policy options analysis focused on identifying the root causes of the problems in the Kara Sea sub-system, and evaluated possible options to mitigate them.

Successful implementation of the policy options discussed in this report can be only be provided based on the principles of sustainable development. In the short term, priority should be given to:

- Beginning the work to create a strategy for sustainable development in the Russian Arctic and in legislation as well as in long-term socio-

economic and ecological programs for development of the Arctic region;

- Deepening of market mechanisms and stabilisation of the economic situation to create a sustainable financial basis for solving ecological and social problems;
- Development of a single strategic approach for sustainable development, so that Arctic countries can have a common, integrated strategy for management and protection of Arctic resources;

In the long-term, priority should be given to:

- Sequential implementation of the strategy of sustainable development;
- Deepening of international coordination in terms of Arctic ecosystem conservation and recreation.

The stabilisation of the Russian economy after 2000 and the increase in interest in the problems of Arctic by the government allow hope that the ecological and social situations in Russian Arctic region will improve in the next two decades. The measures proposed can be effective provided the relevant political measures are taken. Political measures should also be directed against corruption, taxes on the oil and natural gas industry profits will create the financial assets needed to solve the environmental and socio-economic problems in the region.