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# Responding to a Changing Arctic

## The Foundation for Science and Technology

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### Presentation content

- A reminder of some of the important **geo-political realities**;
- Overarching **context** for the United Kingdom's Arctic engagement;
- Key **principles and approaches** within our Arctic Policy Framework: *'Adapting to Change – UK policy towards the Arctic'* (2013);
- Examples of how the approach is **delivering results**;
- The **next phase** of Arctic engagement across the UK.

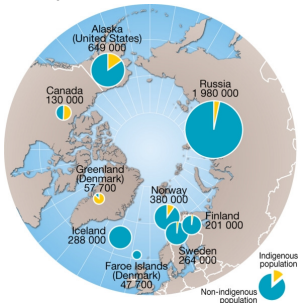




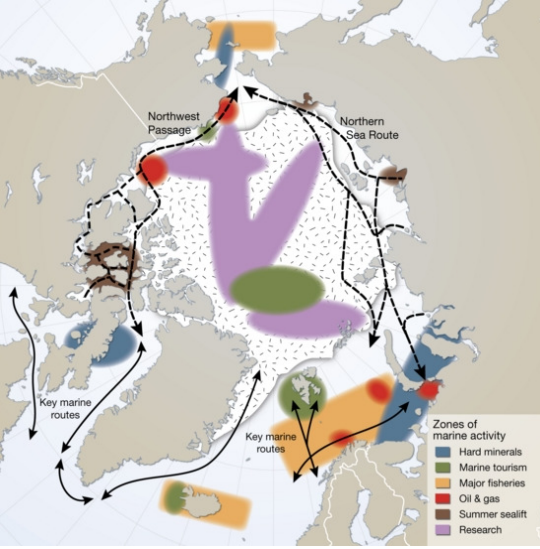
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## The Arctic is not a blank canvas

- Inhabited
- Existing activity, both traditional and non-traditional
- International governance regime
- High degree of co-operation




| Country/Territory         | Population |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Alaska (United States)    | 649 000    |
| Canada                    | 130 000    |
| Russia                    | 1 980 000  |
| Greenland (Denmark)       | 57 700     |
| Norway                    | 300 000    |
| Finland                   | 201 000    |
| Iceland                   | 288 000    |
| Sweden                    | 264 000    |
| Faroe Islands (Denmark)   | 47 700     |
| Non-indigenous population | -          |



Key marine routes: Northwest Passage, Northern Sea Route


Zones of marine activity:




- Hard minerals
- Marine tourism
- Major fisheries
- Oil & gas
- Summer sealift
- Research



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## The Arctic is a governed and claimed space



-  Internal waters
-  Territorial sea and exclusive economic zone; or potential continental shelf
-  Unclaimed or unclaimable continental shelf

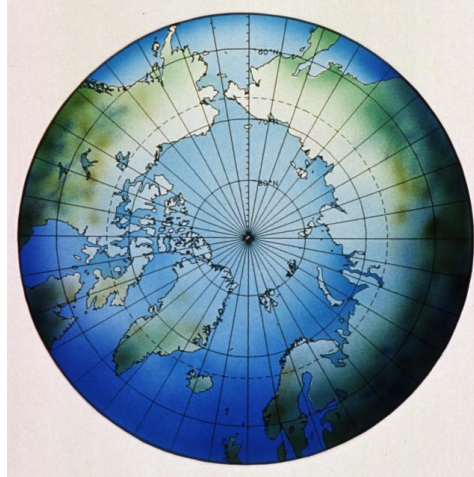
International Boundaries Research Unit, Durham University

## The context of the United Kingdom's Arctic engagement

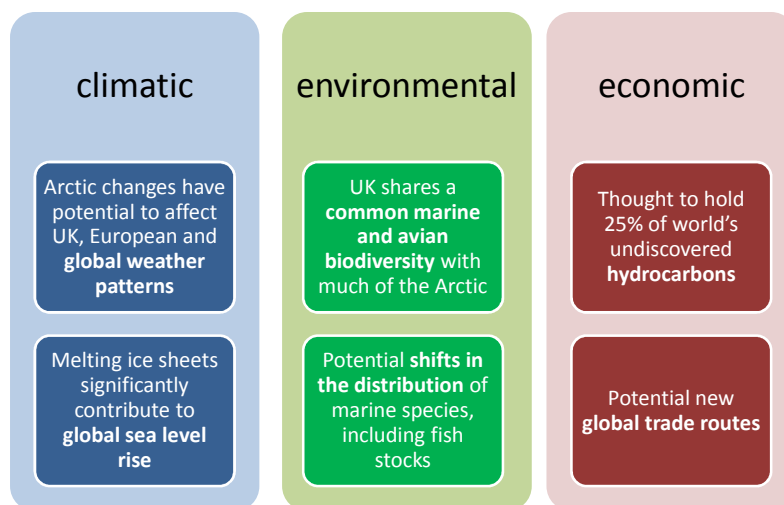


Arctic's nearest neighbour

- strong interests in the **strategic importance** of the region;
- as well as **climate change** and **environmental protection**;
- **scientific co-operation**;
- **sustainable use of mineral and natural resources**; and
- **transportation and access**.



## The Arctic is inextricably linked to global processes, with direct results for the UK



## The Government's policy approach to the Arctic



*'The United Kingdom will continue to support and respect: the sovereign rights of the Arctic States to exercise jurisdiction over their territory; the people who live and work in the Arctic; and the unique and fragile natural environment.'*

*It outlines the United Kingdom's legitimate interests in the region; our priorities for practical action and willingness to show leadership in appropriate areas.'*

Foreword by the Minister for the Polar Regions (2013)



## Key principles of the UK's approach



### Human dimension

- *Work towards an Arctic that is safe and secure; well governed in conjunction with indigenous peoples and in line with international law*

### Environmental dimension

- *Promote an Arctic where policies are developed on the basis of sound science with full regard to the environment*

### Commercial dimension

- *Promote an Arctic where only responsible development takes place*

  
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## Promoting engagement



The most up-to-date, in-depth and interactive teaching and learning resources on the Polar Regions

**DISCOVERING THE ARCTIC**  
www.discoveringthearctic.org.uk

Discover more about the Polar Regions

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- Exploration
- GIS in action
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For KS2, GCSE and A level geography and science

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**frozen planet**  
the complete series



**The Arctic: The Science of Change**



[www.discoveringthearctic.org.uk](http://www.discoveringthearctic.org.uk)

  
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## House of Lords Inquiry – February 2015

**Recommendations** relating to:

- UK to raise its Arctic **profile**;
- Increase in Arctic Science **funding**;
- Focus on **climate change**;
- Moratorium on high seas **fishing**;
- Development of International Standards for **hydrocarbon** exploration;
- Confirmation of **EU** as an Observer to the Arctic Council.

HOUSE OF LORDS

Select Committee on the Arctic

Report of Session 2014–15

**Responding to a changing Arctic**

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2015

## Responding through action



- UK **scientific and technical** engagement in key Arctic Council Working Groups and Taskforces;
- Global **Arctic Conference** engagement: GLACIER; Arctic Circle; Arctic Futures;
- **Science and Innovation Network** engagement;
- Over 75 UK **Universities and Institutes** work on Arctic issues. UK rated 4<sup>th</sup> in number of citations and 3<sup>rd</sup> in number of articles;
- UK Arctic **Research Station** in Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard (marine, atmospheric, terrestrial ecology and glaciology) and British Antarctic Survey vessels and planes.

## NERC's Arctic Research Programmes are delivering results



### £15m Arctic Research Programme 2010-2015:

- Aerosol Cloud Coupling and Climate Interactions in the Arctic (ACCACIA) findings published in *Nature* (September, 2015);
- The Environment of the Arctic: Climate, Ocean and Sea-Ice (TEA-COSI) findings published *Nature Geoscience* (February, 2015).



### £16m Arctic Research Programme announced July 2015:

- Changing Arctic Ocean programme: focusing on the effects of changes to sea ice cover on the marine eco-system.

## New polar research vessel operational in 2019



- State of the art robotic deployment and remote management systems – marine and airborne – for the broadest range of Arctic systems research
- On-board environmental monitoring systems and laboratories
- Ice-strengthened: 1m ice at 3knts – 60 day duration - up to 60 scientific staff

## The next phase: International



- Top priority remains: for the region to be **peaceful, stable and well-governed**.
- Commitment to the **Arctic Council** as the pre-eminent forum – ensuring UK representation to all political level meetings;
- Developing **practical agreements** with Arctic States and non-Arctic states to generate more collaborative opportunities;
- Strong role in **European** Arctic political and scientific engagement, including through EU-PolarNet;
- Facilitating UK engagement with the work of the **Arctic Economic Forum**.

## The next phase: Domestic



- > Effective engagement with **Parliament and the APPG** on the Polar Regions;
- > UK-led **international policy** event at Wilton Park in 2016;
- > New Head of the **UK's Arctic Office**, funded by NERC and hosted by BAS, to champion UK Arctic science;
- > Work with the Royal Geographical Society and the British Antarctic Survey to upgrade the award-winning **[www.discoveringthearctic.org.uk](http://www.discoveringthearctic.org.uk)** educational website, ensuring compatibility with the latest mobile technology
- > Review the UK's **Arctic Policy Framework** in due course.

# Thank you



*Ny-Ålesund Research Facility, Svalbard*