

The **Sustainable Development Working Group** addresses a range of projects, such as telemedicine, ecotourism, fisheries management, and Arctic children and youth.

The **Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme** monitors and assesses the effects of pollutants on the Arctic environment and residents, especially Indigenous communities, reports on the state of the Arctic environment, and gives scientific advice to ministers. This research provides most of the scientific justification of the need for international controls on sources of Arctic pollution. It has also provided the basis for regional protocols on heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants under the auspices of the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution.

The **Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna** working group's objectives are to enhance the conservation of Arctic species, habitat, and ecosystems; to integrate sustainable use into conservation work; and to integrate input from Indigenous communities and their traditional knowledge into that work.

The **Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response** working group provides a framework for the Arctic countries to cooperate in responding to environmental emergencies and to review existing arrangements and recommend improved systems.

The **Protection of Arctic Marine Environment** program includes marine pollution prevention and control measures to protect the marine environment from land- and sea-based activities, complementing existing international agreements. The working group has prepared an evaluation of existing international arrangements and agreements as well as Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines.

### *The Barents Euro-Arctic Council*

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council (Barents Council), formed in 1993, is composed of governmental representatives from the member countries involved, including Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, and Sweden, as well as the European Commission. There are a number of observer countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The foreign ministers in the Barents Council meet once a year.

A unique feature in Barents cooperation is the two-tier approach of the national level and the regional level. Effective cooperation is dependent on strong and active regional involvement. The Regional Council and its bodies have a vital role to play in reflecting the needs