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ARCTIC COUNCIL CONSERVATION SCORECARD
CANADA

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: B-

Canada, including its Arctic archipelago, holds the largest Arctic landmass; as such, it plays an important role in Arctic management and conservation. The country has made good progress in several areas, such as designating protected areas in the Arctic, collaborating with neighbouring countries to reduce the impacts of shipping (e.g., by committing to establishing low-impact navigational corridors through the *United States-Canada Joint Statement on Climate, Energy and Arctic Leadership*); setting stricter regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and acting to adapt to climate change. Canada also continued to contribute to better management of the Arctic environment and regional cooperation to achieve shared conservation goals.

However, given ongoing Arctic oil and gas exploration and increases in marine shipping, Canada will need to balance these developments with greater preparedness for oil spills and efforts to reduce risks to Arctic coastal and marine ecosystems.

AREAS OF GOOD PERFORMANCE

- Canada continues to designate protected areas in the Arctic, as exemplified by the boundary agreement for a national marine conservation area (NMCA) in Tallurutiup Imanga. Furthermore, it continues to scope its waters for areas that would qualify for NMCAs or marine protected areas (MPAs), such as under the Nunavut Land Use Plan draft. It is considering extending its network of MPAs in Arctic waters.
- The Canadian government is developing a federal carbon pricing system under which flaring will incur a financial penalty. This is expected to increase pressure on industry to reduce flaring.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although Canada has published an Arctic Marine Biodiversity Plan, the plan does not yet include information about specific biodiversity objectives and provisions, and it omits measures that would incorporate resilience and adaptation of biodiversity to climate change.
- Despite Canada's positive performance in reducing black carbon emissions overall, it is not implementing strong regulations to reduce emissions from shipping in the Arctic. Currently, ships in Canada's Arctic waters may use heavy fuel oils, and emission control areas have not been designated.

SEE THE FULL REPORT: PANDA.ORG/ACSCORECARD

RATINGS FOR CANADA

C BIODIVERSITY

Mainstreaming biodiversity and its resilience	1/6
Sustainable management of living resources and habitats	3/4
Monitoring biodiversity	3/4
OVERALL RATING	**7/14**

B CONSERVATION AREAS

Identification of conservation areas	5/6
Protecting areas of ecological importance	2/4
Mechanisms to safeguard connectivity	4/6
OVERALL RATING	**11/14**

A ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

Environmental impact, strategic environmental and risk assessments	8/8
Assessment of combined effects of multiple stressors	2/2
Arctic state cooperation in advancing implementation of EBM	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**12/12**

A BLACK CARBON AND METHANE

Short-lived climate forcers: black carbon and methane emissions	10/10
Climate change adaptation	4/6
Climate change observation	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**16/18**

A OIL SPILLS

National action for preparedness and response	2/2
Oil spill monitoring	4/4
Oil spill prevention	6/8
OVERALL RATING	**12/14**

D SHIPPING

Protection from various shipping risks	2/6
Actions to reduce air emissions from shipping	1/8
Arctic marine traffic system	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**5/16**

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ARCTIC COUNCIL CONSERVATION SCORECARD

KINGDOM OF DENMARK

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: C-

The Kingdom of Denmark, composed of Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, presents an interesting case within the Arctic. Since Greenland and the Faroe Islands are semi-autonomous entities, each legislates and governs aspects of nature conservation and other areas.

In some areas, both Greenland and the Faroe Islands performed well, such as in identifying areas of heightened ecological significance, carrying out impact assessments of petroleum and maritime activities, and taking action on some aspects of oil spill prevention.

However, individually, Greenland and the Faroe Islands performed quite differently. Greenland, in many cases, had more readily available information and tended to perform well on multiple aspects of the Scorecard. The Faroe Islands, on the other hand, had less readily available information and seemed to have made slower progress on Scorecard elements.

Experts noted that both countries struggled with capacity issues, which affected the implementation and effectiveness of their Arctic conservation actions.

AREAS OF GOOD PERFORMANCE

- Biodiversity monitoring efforts and protection measures within Greenland are ongoing, though some experts reported that additional efforts to update and expand are necessary.
- Greenland has taken measures to prevent and manage marine invasive species and protect areas of heightened cultural significance from Arctic marine shipping.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The Kingdom of Denmark's Arctic strategy fails to provide clear biodiversity-related objectives and to incorporate resilience and adaptation of biodiversity to climate change.
- Both Greenland and the Faroe Islands should further promote sustainable fishing practices to avoid significant adverse impacts to the seabed and to reduce bycatch. They should also undertake an ecosystem-based management initiative with a neighbouring country.

SEE THE FULL REPORT: PANDA.ORG/ACSCORECARD

RATINGS FOR KINGDOM OF DENMARK

C BIODIVERSITY

Mainstreaming biodiversity and its resilience	2/6
Sustainable management of living resources and habitats	2/4
Monitoring biodiversity	2/4
OVERALL RATING	**6/14**

D CONSERVATION AREAS

Identification of conservation areas	3/6
Protecting areas of ecological importance	0/4
Mechanisms to safeguard connectivity	3/6
OVERALL RATING	**6/14**

C ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

Environmental impact, strategic environmental and risk assessments	6/8
Assessment of combined effects of multiple stressors	1/2
Arctic state cooperation in advancing implementation of ebm	0/2
OVERALL RATING	**7/12**

C BLACK CARBON AND METHANE

Short-lived climate forcers: black carbon and methane emissions	4/10
Climate change adaptation	3/6
Climate change observation	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**9/18**

B OIL SPILLS

National action for preparedness and response	1/2
Oil spill monitoring	3/4
Oil spill prevention	5/8
OVERALL RATING	**9/14**

D SHIPPING

Protection from various shipping risks	2/6
Actions to reduce air emissions from shipping	3/8
Arctic marine traffic system	1/2
OVERALL RATING	**6/16**

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ARCTIC COUNCIL CONSERVATION SCORECARD

FINLAND

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: B+

Overall, Finland has relatively strong standing among the Arctic states for its protection of biodiversity in the Arctic.

The sheer abundance of Finland's natural wealth—almost 75 per cent of its area is covered in woodland—seems to provide a buffer for the environmental impacts of questionable policies, such as the new National Energy and Climate Strategy for 2030, which foresees a 23 per cent increase in wood harvests.

Even if the objective is the continued growth of the bio-economy and long-term carbon neutrality, Finland will have to be careful when balancing costs and benefits in the ecologically and socially delicate Arctic space.

AREAS OF GOOD PERFORMANCE

- Finland has done solid work on identifying and monitoring biodiversity and expanding conservation areas.
- Cooperation is a strong theme in Finland's work on Arctic prevention of industrial impacts, including joint work with international, EU and national agencies on oil spill preparedness and monitoring as well as leadership in the Arctic Council on black carbon. Finland's own black carbon emissions are low by global standards, and the Finnish president has made minimizing them a diplomatic priority abroad, providing funding and expert assistance to regional and global initiatives.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Despite encouraging "regional councils and local actors" and safeguarding Indigenous knowledge and "the ways in which the Indigenous Saami People in Finland traditionally utilize nature," more concrete state efforts have been lacking. This applies to, for example, support for Indigenous knowledge holders and scientists to contribute to the Arctic Council's Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program or the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in developing projections for the Arctic under various emissions and development scenarios.

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RATINGS FOR FINLAND

C BIODIVERSITY

Mainstreaming biodiversity and its resilience	4/6
Sustainable management of living resources and habitats	2/4
Monitoring biodiversity	2/4
OVERALL RATING	**8/14**

B CONSERVATION AREAS

Identification of conservation areas	0/2
Protecting areas of ecological importance	4/4
Mechanisms to safeguard connectivity	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**6/8**

A ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

Environmental impact, strategic environmental and risk assessments	6/6
Assessment of combined effects of multiple stressors	1/2
Arctic state cooperation in advancing implementation of ebm	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**9/10**

B BLACK CARBON AND METHANE

Short-lived climate forcers: black carbon and methane emissions	4/6
Climate change adaptation	4/6
Climate change observation	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**10/14**

A OIL SPILLS

National action for preparedness and response	2/2
Oil spill monitoring	2/2
Oil spill prevention	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**6/6**

B SHIPPING

Protection from various shipping risks	2/2
Actions to reduce air emissions from shipping	2/4
Arctic marine traffic system	N/A
OVERALL RATING	**4/6**

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ARCTIC COUNCIL CONSERVATION SCORECARD

ICELAND

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: C+

Iceland continues to contribute to improved management of the Arctic environment and to regional cooperation to achieve regional conservation targets. It has made progress on environmental monitoring and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It has also has identified a need to map and designate further sensitive terrestrial and marine protected areas.

However, Iceland has not yet defined specific biodiversity objectives in its national Arctic policy. Furthermore, balancing economic pressures from shipping activities with the protection of marine protected areas remains a challenge.

For now, the risk of oil spills from exploration or exploitation activities in Iceland remains low. The country allowed the start of exploration and licensing for hydrocarbons in 2014 and put a legal framework in place. However, plans to start exploiting oil from 2022 onward were halted in 2018 when two of the three companies involved decided not to proceed.

AREAS OF GOOD PERFORMANCE

- The Environment Agency of Iceland is making progress on monitoring environmental stressors, including contaminants, persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals in biota, and endocrine disruptors in some marine species. It is also monitoring marine litter on beaches and plastic particles in seabirds under the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR).
- The Icelandic Institute of Natural History has completed a gap analysis for a network of terrestrial protected areas, with an emphasis on habitat types, birds and geological formations. Some of the identified sites could be given protected status by the Parliament in the future.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Iceland's keystone Arctic policy does not contain specific biodiversity objectives, nor does it include climate change and its impact on biodiversity.
- Iceland could improve its sustainability efforts in Arctic shipping by implementing regulatory requirements for lower-emission fuels and adopting operational practices to lower air emissions or banning the use of heavy fuel oil. Currently, air emissions from shipping remain an important pressure in Icelandic waters.

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RATINGS FOR ICELAND

C BIODIVERSITY

Mainstreaming biodiversity and its resilience	2/6
Sustainable management of living resources and habitats	2/4
Monitoring biodiversity	2/4
OVERALL RATING	**6/14**

B CONSERVATION AREAS

Identification of conservation areas	4/6
Protecting areas of ecological importance	2/4
Mechanisms to safeguard connectivity	2/6
OVERALL RATING	**8/14**

C ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

Environmental impact, strategic environmental and risk assessments	6/8
Assessment of combined effects of multiple stressors	0/2
Arctic state cooperation in advancing implementation of EBM	0/2
OVERALL RATING	**6/12**

C BLACK CARBON AND METHANE

Short-lived climate forcers: black carbon and methane emissions	3/10
Climate change adaptation	5/6
Climate change observation	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**10/18**

B OIL SPILLS

National action for preparedness and response	1/2
Oil spill monitoring	4/4
Oil spill prevention	6/8
OVERALL RATING	**11/14**

D SHIPPING

Protection from various shipping risks	2/6
Actions to reduce air emissions from shipping	1/8
Arctic marine traffic system	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**5/16**

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ARCTIC COUNCIL CONSERVATION SCORECARD

NORWAY

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: B-

Norway performed well in terms of considering environmental and biodiversity protection within most parts of its Arctic policy. For example, it has significant terrestrial conservation areas within Norway, Svalbard and Jan Mayen that provide important refuge for Arctic biodiversity. Furthermore, it has shown willingness to engage and cooperate with other Arctic states to protect and manage natural resources and biodiversity.

However, the lack of clear measures and implementation within some policy areas, as well as the unclear balance between environmental protection and Arctic development, raise questions about Norway's Arctic priorities. For example, it has licensed petroleum production near the marginal ice zone even though it lacks the technical ability to clean up oil spills within such areas, and it lacks conservation areas within its Arctic waters outside of the 12-mile nautical zone. This also applies to its recently announced intention to mine copper in its Kvalsund municipality despite opposition from Indigenous groups and environmentalists.

AREAS OF GOOD PERFORMANCE

- Norway has banned the use of heavy fuels for some protected areas around Svalbard, though not for all its Arctic waters. It has also worked hard to implement an international ban on heavy fuels through the International Maritime Organization.
- Norway has an extensive number of terrestrial conservation areas, especially around Svalbard and Jan Mayen, and the recognition of additional areas is in progress.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Norway has been ambivalent about the balance between development and environmental protection. This ambivalence is exemplified in its long-standing record of requiring environmental impact assessments prior to petroleum activities in its Arctic waters. Experts have said that the high rate of allowances issued through such assessments raises questions about the weight given to development versus environmental protection.
- Although Norway is in the process of protecting areas of ecological importance, its marine protection areas currently only cover an area of about 12 nautical miles off the coast, leaving out a significant portion of its Arctic waters.

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RATINGS FOR NORWAY

BIODIVERSITY

C

Mainstreaming biodiversity and its resilience	2/6
Sustainable management of living resources and habitats	3/4
Monitoring biodiversity	3/4
OVERALL RATING	**8/14**

CONSERVATION AREAS

C

Identification of conservation areas	4/6
Protecting areas of ecological importance	1/4
Mechanisms to safeguard connectivity	3/6
OVERALL RATING	**8/14**

ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

A

Environmental impact, strategic environmental and risk assessments	7/8
Assessment of combined effects of multiple stressors	2/2
Arctic state cooperation in advancing implementation of EBM	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**6/12**

BLACK CARBON AND METHANE

B

Short-lived climate forcers: black carbon and methane emissions	8/10
Climate change adaptation	4/6
Climate change observation	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**10/18**

OIL SPILLS

B

National action for preparedness and response	1/2
Oil spill monitoring	4/4
Oil spill prevention	5/8
OVERALL RATING	**10/14**

SHIPPING

B

Protection from various shipping risks	5/6
Actions to reduce air emissions from shipping	3/8
Arctic marine traffic system	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**10/16**

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ARCTIC COUNCIL CONSERVATION SCORECARD

RUSSIA

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: C-

Perhaps more than any other Arctic country, Russia has much to gain from climate trends in the Arctic. In particular, exploration and shipping expansion hold enormous economic and geopolitical promise. In view of this, Russia's Scorecard performance reflects a certain ambivalence about the high opportunity costs that are inherent in a robust Arctic protection regime.

On several indicators, Russia received partial credit for initiating actions (as plans and strategies have been drafted, but not yet adopted); in other areas—such as identifying and filling conservation gaps—it has taken necessary steps, but often in a piecemeal rather than systematic way.

AREAS OF GOOD PERFORMANCE

- Russia conducts comprehensive, advanced monitoring—bolstered by assessment mechanisms—for Arctic ecosystems, cryospheric changes and oil spills.
- Russia has done a notable job of expanding protected areas in its large territory. Examples include offshore expansions near Franz Josef Land National Park and in the territory of the Great Arctic State Nature Reserve as well as the creation of Khibiny National Park and the Novosibirsk Islands Federal Nature Sanctuary in 2018.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Oil spill regulation—and corresponding work to identify and establish conservation areas sensitive to threats, including to migratory species—remains weak. This lack of protection extends to the absence of state-led environmental impact and risk assessments for exploration and maritime activities in Russia's Arctic waters.
- While Russia has taken measures to introduce shipping routes to protect particular marine conversation areas, its actions to address the dangers posed by maritime activity have not extended to a ban on heavy fuel oil, of which Russian-flagged ships are the heaviest users in the Arctic. This shortcoming can also be seen in the stagnation of the adoption of several other regulatory requirements for shipping.

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RATINGS FOR RUSSIA

BIODIVERSITY

C

Mainstreaming biodiversity and its resilience	2/6
Sustainable management of living resources and habitats	4/4
Monitoring biodiversity	2/4
OVERALL RATING	**8/14**

CONSERVATION AREAS

C

Identification of conservation areas	2/6
Protecting areas of ecological importance	2/4
Mechanisms to safeguard connectivity	4/6
OVERALL RATING	**8/14**

ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

C

Environmental impact, strategic environmental and risk assessments	3/8
Assessment of combined effects of multiple stressors	0/2
Arctic state cooperation in advancing implementation of EBM	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**5/12**

BLACK CARBON AND METHANE

B

Short-lived climate forcers: black carbon and methane emissions	5/10
Climate change adaptation	4/6
Climate change observation	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**11/18**

OIL SPILLS

C

National action for preparedness and response	1/2
Oil spill monitoring	4/4
Oil spill prevention	3/8
OVERALL RATING	**8/14**

SHIPPING

D

Protection from various shipping risks	3/6
Actions to reduce air emissions from shipping	0/8
Arctic marine traffic system	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**5/16**

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ARCTIC COUNCIL CONSERVATION SCORECARD

SWEDEN

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: B+

Sweden has a solid record of implementing sustainable policies and practices in the Arctic. Its high score is the result of a strong commitment to the Arctic environment; however, it may also partially reflect the fewer assessment criteria applied to the country, given its lack of Arctic Ocean coastline and waters.

The highlight of Sweden's recent work has been a set of measures to track and minimize climatic stressors of high relevance to the Arctic environment. In addition, the country's Zero Vision Tool shows how shipping can be increased without driving up greenhouse gas emissions.

On the other hand, like Finland, Sweden will need to make sure that its strides toward Arctic sustainability do not falter in the face of a burgeoning bio-economy and increased interest in harvesting forests with high conservation value.

AREAS OF GOOD PERFORMANCE

- Biodiversity is a policy strength. It features prominently as a priority area for "Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region" as well as in the newer Environmental Policy for the Arctic.
- Sweden cooperates frequently with neighbouring states to assess the extent of necessary protected areas. The Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN) project, co-funded by Sweden, analyzes landscape fragmentation and connectivity loss; not all gaps have been filled yet, but the project is a sound basis for further work as well as for ecosystem-based management of cross-border populations of vulnerable large predators.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Even with Saami participation in the governance of some protected areas, no evidence has been found for the state's inclusion of Indigenous and local knowledge to develop short- and long-term projections for the Arctic.
- Despite regulations for environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments prior to new exploration or exploitation activities, Sweden currently does not have a requirement for risk assessments.

SEE THE FULL REPORT: PANDA.ORG/ACSCORECARD

RATINGS FOR SWEDEN

B BIODIVERSITY

Mainstreaming biodiversity and its resilience	5/6
Sustainable management of living resources and habitats	2/4
Monitoring biodiversity	2/4
OVERALL RATING	**9/14**

B CONSERVATION AREAS

Identification of conservation areas	0/2
Protecting areas of ecological importance	3/4
Mechanisms to safeguard connectivity	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**5/8**

A ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

Environmental impact, strategic environmental and risk assessments	4/6
Assessment of combined effects of multiple stressors	2/2
Arctic state cooperation in advancing implementation of EBM	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**8/10**

A BLACK CARBON AND METHANE

Short-lived climate forcers: black carbon and methane emissions	6/6
Climate change adaptation	4/6
Climate change observation	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**12/14**

B OIL SPILLS

National action for preparedness and response	2/2
Oil spill monitoring	2/2
Oil spill prevention	0/2
OVERALL RATING	**4/6**

A SHIPPING

Protection from various shipping risks	2/2
Actions to reduce air emissions from shipping	4/4
Arctic marine traffic system	N/A
OVERALL RATING	**6/6**

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ARCTIC COUNCIL CONSERVATION SCORECARD
UNITED STATES

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: C+

The USA has a mixed performance across the thematic areas and is currently experiencing increased uncertainty brought on by a change in administration that has prioritized industrial development over environmental protections throughout the country.

While the USA continues to perform well in the area of monitoring Arctic sea ice, permafrost and other ecological conditions, there are many instances where the government is trying to reverse existing environmental and management standards. Since 2017 the USA has attempted to jump-start fossil fuel exploration in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas. In addition, though USA law requires impact assessments prior to drilling, the current administration has pushed forth an Executive Order that calls for a review and update of exemptions to this process, which could ultimately undermine the effectiveness of such assessments. This Order also speeds up the process, hindering the inclusion of Indigenous and local communities in these decisions.

AREAS OF GOOD PERFORMANCE

- The USA promotes sustainable fishing practices in the Arctic to avoid significant adverse impact to the seabed and to reduce by-catch, supported within the Fishery Management Plan for Fish Resources of the Arctic Management Area.
- The USA has successfully established shipping routes and Areas to Be Avoided to enhance maritime safety and protect marine areas with ecological importance and subsistence values in the Aleutian Islands, Bering Sea and Bering Strait. While the measures are voluntary, they exemplify precautionary management given that the International Maritime Organization recognizes the designations and mariners mostly adhere to the guidance.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The USA has high standards and requirements for contingency planning and oil spill response as specified in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990; however, gaps remain in the full implementation of these standards. Furthermore, the current administration has attempted to decrease safety and accountability standards for offshore drilling in USA waters.
- Alaska's marine waters have multiple management areas, though none are strictly protected, and few have biodiversity conservation as their primary objective.

SEE THE FULL REPORT: PANDA.ORG/ACSCORECARD

RATINGS FOR UNITED STATES

D BIODIVERSITY

Mainstreaming biodiversity and its resilience	0/6
Sustainable management of living resources and habitats	2/4
Monitoring biodiversity	1/4
OVERALL RATING	**3/14**

C CONSERVATION AREAS

Identification of conservation areas	4/6
Protecting areas of ecological importance	1/4
Mechanisms to safeguard connectivity	2/6
OVERALL RATING	**7/14**

A ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

Environmental impact, strategic environmental and risk assessments	8/8
Assessment of combined effects of multiple stressors	0/2
Arctic state cooperation in advancing implementation of EBM	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**10/12**

C BLACK CARBON AND METHANE

Short-lived climate forcers: black carbon and methane emissions	4/10
Climate change adaptation	4/6
Climate change observation	2/2
OVERALL RATING	**10/18**

B OIL SPILLS

National action for preparedness and response	1/2
Oil spill monitoring	3/4
Oil spill prevention	7/8
OVERALL RATING	**11/14**

D SHIPPING

Protection from various shipping risks	3/6
Actions to reduce air emissions from shipping	1/8
Arctic marine traffic system	0/2
OVERALL RATING	**4/16**

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