

## Overview of some of the projects taking place at UiT The Arctic University of Norway

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### 1. The Research Centre for Arctic Petroleum Exploration (ARCEX)

The Research Centre for Arctic Petroleum Exploration (ARCEX) addresses key cross- and multi-disciplinary challenges in petroleum research and development in the Arctic. The overarching research goal for ARCEX is to reduce risk. This can be further broken down for the three main pillars (geology, environment, technology) as follows: the geological research activity aims to reduce the risk for not finding resources, the environmental research activity aims to reduce the operational risk, and the technological research activity aims to reduce the risk for inaccurate and incorrect measurements and analysis. The research activities in the three research pillars are highly intertwined and interconnected, providing a collective, coordinated and coherent approach to solve the overarching research goal of ARCEX in a holistic manner.

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### 2. The Nansen Legacy project

The *Nansen Legacy* is the collective answer of the Norwegian research community to the outstanding changes witnessed in the Barents Sea and the Arctic as a whole. The *Nansen Legacy* constitutes an integrated Arctic perspective on climate and ecosystem change, from physical processes to living resources, and from understanding the past to predicting the future. The project runs from 2018-2024, involves about 230 scientists from ten Norwegian research institutions with Arctic marine expertise, and collaborate internationally. The project includes 70 early career researchers.

Website: [www.nansenlegacy.org](http://www.nansenlegacy.org)

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### 3. Researcher project (RCN): Developing good ocean governance of the Arctic in times of unpredictable and rapid changes (DOGA) 2021-2025:

Project leader: Professor Ingvild Ulrikke Jakobsen

Project summary:

The vulnerable and sensitive Arctic ecosystems are affected by climate change and by increasing human activities. With rapid changes and uncertainties, there is a need for urgent measures to ensure socio-ecological resilience and good ocean governance. The project therefore investigates the capacity of the existing legal framework in providing for sustainable development of the marine Arctic. The primary objective of the project is to contribute to good governance of the marine Arctic by critically investigating the implementation of EA in Norway. The subsidiary objective is to propose a set of best practices or recommendations that could be applied to foster the implementation of EA

in the Arctic region on a general level. The project investigates the ecosystem approach (EA) to ocean governance as a key strategy for sustainable development. The project examines how ecosystem approach can be implemented within the legal framework and provide for adaptive, integrated and holistic management without undermining the rule of law and such core values as accountability, participation, legal certainty and predictability. As the implementation of ecosystem approach hinges on the choices made by individual states, the project predominantly focuses on regulations applicable to and within the Arctic waters under the Norwegian jurisdiction. As the ecosystems of the marine Arctic as well as the effects of human activities are transboundary, the Norwegian law is investigated in the context of global and regional law and policy. Science is a critical component to EA. The project thus investigates how law and science can be integrated to provide for adaptive governance. Furthermore it examines whether and how EA is implemented into the sectors of fisheries, shipping/tourism, hydrocarbons and new activities. Possible mechanisms for implementing EA, as well as the potential of implementing EA across jurisdictions through cooperation with other states, are also assessed.

#### **4. Fram Centre project: “Assessing the implications of a global treaty on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction for ecosystem-based governance in the Arctic Ocean (ARCTIC\_BBNJ II)”**

Project partners: FNI, Faculty of Biosciences, Fisheries and Economics (UiT) and Institute of Marine Research (IMR)

Project leader: Professor Vito De Lucia

Project summary:

The Arctic Ocean (AO) is undergoing dramatic changes due to sea ice melting and the opening of previously inaccessible sea areas. It holds a multitude of unique life forms highly adapted to its extreme seasonal conditions. Considerable and competing interests in the AO have arisen, ranging from shipping and exploitation of living and non-living resources to conservation of the fragile marine ecosystem. Nearly 2,8 million square kilometres of the AO are located in areas beyond the national jurisdiction (ABNJ) of the coastal states and are subject to a new treaty being negotiated at the United Nations (UN) under the Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC) on marine biodiversity in ABNJ (hereinafter BBNJ treaty). Arctic coastal states, however, have consistently declared that the AO should remain under their stewardship and reject the need for a new international regime. Conversely, the EU, many developing nations and environmental NGOs view the AO as a unique global common in need of strong conservation measures and believe that a BBNJ treaty would be the appropriate tool. Taking the BBNJ treaty negotiations as a starting point, the project will analyse the opportunities for AO governance with a view to protecting biodiversity, particularly through marine protected areas (MPAs) and ecosystem-based management (EBM). Various options for the outcome of the negotiations will be assessed against the existing AO governance regimes and the best available scientific knowledge, taking into account the complexities involved in reconciling ecological requirements for effective EBM and the realities of jurisdictional fragmentation.

#### **5. NFR Project (start 1 november 2021): Disinformation and People: Impacts on Societal Trust and Resilience (FAKENEWS)**

FAKENEWS applies an interdisciplinary focus - law, media studies, and security studies (social sciences and humanities), technology and societal security, and health sciences (psychology) – to the

ways civilians identify and react to the abstract and intangible threat of disinformation, and the subsequent interaction during crisis between civilians, civilian organisations and authorities, and at times, militaries. FAKENEWS does so through developing theory and methods of “trust,” and “resilience,” as well as understanding the nature of “threat,” applied to Norwegian and Swedish case studies focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic, and the civilian reactions to the migration crisis of 2015. The focus is on what people do in crisis, particularly in light of increased mis- and disinformation that can be used to mislead people and exacerbate, rather than reduce, a crisis situation. Norway and Sweden are both well known as societies with high trust levels. Sweden and Norway do not handle crisis in the same way however. FAKENEWS examines the Norwegian and Swedish reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic and the use of disinformation during the 2015 migration crisis as a hybrid threat to create destabilization in society. We further examine to what degree Norwegians and Swedes contribute to societal resilience – the capability of resisting or mitigating a threat. We ask: How do civilian perceptions of threat and subsequent actions affect societal trust and resilience in the face of a crisis? The data collected will be used to compare with institutional policies and legal measures, to expose any inconsistencies or contradictions between institutional and civilian practices of resilience.

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