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**Title:** *Reindeer herders in the Timan-Pechora oil province of Northwest Russia: an assessment of interacting environmental, social and legal challenges*

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The IPY project MODIL-NAO, concluded in 2010, now fully published in print in Russian and English, was a collaboration between scientists and indigenous peoples' representatives of the Nenets Autonomous Okrug in Northwest Russia. It has resulted in an interactive GIS database (<http://ipy-nenets.npolar.no/main%20pages/frame.html>) on the Internet showing traditional economic activities as well as modern oil development and is aimed at serving as a tool for the indigenous peoples for negotiations about land use issues. The project focused also on assessing the state of socio-economic, juridical and environmental conditions for the indigenous population. Major data sources were a questionnaire survey amongst reindeer herders, and a satellite image interpretation with the aim to monitor physical degradation of the tundra.

Besides the mere collection of data, most important general findings were:

(1) Difficulties that affect reindeer herding units, apart from deterioration and reduction of the pasture areas, include such social factors like poor management, the loss of prestige in reindeer husbandry as a livelihood, loss of traditional knowledge, change of values in the Nenets society, social apathy, unemployment, and the abuse of alcohol.

(2) There are frequent complaints by local populations regarding oil companies and their responsibility towards pollution of pastures, illegal waste disposal, pollution of water resources, decrease of fish stocks, poaching by oil workers and others, and attacks by stray dogs on domestic reindeer.

(3) In areas where future oil development is expected, people are afraid of its negative influence on traditional land use. In areas where oil development has been a reality for some time, people noticed this negative influence but simultaneously saw an improvement of the economic situation due to investments by oil companies into the system of social security.

(4) Traditional land users have little to no influence over the most of the development of oil and gas installations, apart from providing minor technical recommendations.



(5) The high consumption of traditional food among traditional land users indicates a high degree of indigenous people's vulnerability in the event of reduced or eliminated traditional sources of subsistence.

(6) Environmental regulations are not satisfactory, as there are no effective mechanisms of control. A severe deficiency is the lack of control over the use and misuse of the environment; companies unlawfully use tracked vehicles on summer pastures, pollute lakes and rivers, etc.

(7) Only a few companies fulfill their legal obligations towards indigenous peoples; in recent years' the trend shows that such liabilities are no longer included in the license agreements.