

Youssef Mani

[Assistant Commissioner, Arctic Region, Canadian Coast Guard](#)

Youssef Mani joined Canadian Coast Guard, Arctic Region as Assistant Commissioner in January 2023.

Prior to joining the Canadian Coast Guard, Assistant Commissioner Mani held a number of senior management positions in the Canadian Public Service both in the regions and in the National Capital where he demonstrated strong leadership. He has built a reputation for developing programs and designing new business models in a variety of work environments.

Assistant Commissioner Mani is a graduate of the National Security Program at the Canadian Forces College in Toronto. He also holds a Post-MBA in Financial Services from the University of Quebec in Montreal, and an MBA from Sherbrooke University and a Lean Leadership Certificate from the University of Ottawa.

Dr. Julia Olsen

[Associate professor, Nord University](#)

I am associate professor in Environmental sociology at Nord University, Bodø, Norway. My research is dedicated to the sustainable development of the Arctic region, focusing specifically on human-nature relations in the context of shipping and tourism development. I am working to propagate a deeper understanding of communities' relations with their changing natural environment, as well as how Arctic populations adapt and respond to increasing shipping activities. I am involved in transdisciplinary research projects that examine sustainable cruise practices, tourism management, environmental governance, and sea ice protection. Being a social scientist, I typically travel to research areas to meet face-to-face communities and collect first-hand knowledge by conducting interviews, observations, and workshops. Dissemination of research results to a broader population outside academia is integral to my job.

Leslie Canavera

[CEO, PolArctic LLC](#)

Leslie is the CEO of PolArctic LLC, an oceanography and data science company focused on solving complex challenges in the Arctic. She holds a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) with a concentration in International Business and is a Veteran of the US Air Force, where she served as a commissioned officer. From the USAF, she transitioned to the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) for five years, conceptualizing and initializing programs with complex geospatial components and analytics. She left NGA to found the technology start-up PolArctic LLC based on her experience and passion for the Arctic, and to bridge the gap between science and business requirements. PolArctic's AI

tools evolve in near real-time to compensate for climate change to support the industries operating in this dynamic environment. Leslie is Yup'ik, Alaska Native, born and raised in Alaska. She was awarded the Women in Artificial Intelligence (WAI) North America Award for AI for Good: Environmental Social Governance (ESG) for 2022, and was listed as a 2021 Forbes Next 1000 entrepreneur.

Martin Skedsmo

[Key Account Manager, KSAT](#)

Martin Skedsmo is currently Key Account Manager at Kongsberg Satellite Services (KSAT). He has been working with Project Management and consulting services internationally for 20 + years, both within the private industry and governmental institutes. KSAT is a world leading provider of communication services for spacecraft and launch vehicles from their global ground network. Their mission is to be the world's leading commercial satellite centre. In his previous position at Norinnova, he worked with bringing research and technology from UiT- Norway's Arctic University to the market.

Dr. Shannon Bard

[Intertidal Solutions & Foresight Cleantech Accelerator](#)

Shannon Bard, PhD is a marine biologist, environmental scientist, biomedical researcher, corporate innovation leader, and former university professor. She specialises in accelerating deep science ventures from lab to societal adoption in 2-5 years versus 30 years average. She has supported over 80 startups in climate/environment, health and social impact. She launched and led the Climate Venture Studio at entrepreneurship@UBC, winning both the BC Cleantech Award and Clean50 Award. Her portfolio teams have won two \$1M X-Prizes for carbon sequestration, £1M Earthshot Prize, \$1M Women in Cleantech, etc. She is a graduate of Stanford University, Université de Nantes, & MIT.

Kendra MacDonald

[CEO, Canada's Ocean Supercluster](#)

Kendra MacDonald is the CEO of Canada's Ocean Supercluster, where she leads a national cluster accelerating ocean innovation and positioning Canada as a global leader in the sustainable blue economy. Kendra has played a pivotal role building the OSC from the ground up, harnessing Canada's ocean advantage to solve global challenges and unlock economic opportunity. Under her leadership and with a dedicated team across Canada, the OSC has committed to almost 150 projects, contributed to the creation of thousands of jobs, and helped launch almost 200 ocean companies, fostering unprecedented collaboration across regions, sectors, and communities.

In recognition of her leadership in ocean innovation, Kendra has been named one of Atlantic Canada's Top 50 CEOs by Atlantic Business Magazine for the last five years and one of Canada's Top Sustainability Leaders by Clean50 in 2022. Kendra is also committed to community through her Board work with multiple organizations including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and was recently recognized as a recipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

Prior to leading Canada's Ocean Supercluster, Kendra was a Partner at Deloitte and served as the first Chief Audit Executive for Deloitte Global. She brings more than 30 years experience in innovation, risk management, and strategic growth; experience she now applies to help shape a sustainable, digital, and inclusive future for Canada's ocean economy.

Dr. Roberto Rivas Hermann

[Professor, Nord University](#)

Roberto Rivas Hermann is Professor of Innovation and Sustainable Organization at Nord University Business School (Centre Nordlab for Preparedness and Collaboration). His research focuses on sustainable innovation, circular economy, and green transitions in Arctic and maritime contexts. He has led and contributed to research projects on green shipping, Arctic logistics, and sustainable business models, including the forthcoming book Arctic Shipping and Logistics (Routledge, 2026). Roberto currently chairs the Arctic Six Network's Green Transportation Corridors initiative, fostering collaboration across Nordic partners to advance low-carbon and resilient maritime solutions in Arctic and sub-Arctic regions.

Dr. Jason Goldsworthy

[Executive Director, COAST](#)

With over 20 years of international experience in managing engineering businesses and projects, Jason brings leadership, technical and commercial aptitude to the team. His experience spans multiple industries including renewable energy, urban development, environmental consulting, mining, and commercial and infrastructure construction.

He has worked with large multinational corporations as well as being involved in several startups. He has acted on several corporate boards in both Canada and Australia.

Jason holds a PHD in Engineering from the University of Adelaide, Australia, and is a member of the Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia.

Hilu Tagoona

[VP, Partnerships and Engagement, Oceans North](#)

Hailing from the central Canadian Arctic, Hilu has extensive experience in community development and environmental review processes. She is a member of Nunavummiut Makitagunarnngningit, an independent NGO that informs Nunavut residents about the impacts of uranium mining, and is on the board of MiningWatch Canada. Hilu has also represented Inuit nationally and internationally. She has presented at a United Nations seminar on the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, helped craft the Native Women's Association of Canada's input on the Canadian Impact Assessment Act, and assisted Europe's largest science agency with integrating local knowledge into Arctic research. Hilu is a mother of two young adults and has her B.A. from Carleton University.

Brent Dancey

[Director of Marine Climate Action, Oceans North](#)

Drawing on nearly 15 years of experience working on energy, environmental, and Indigenous issues, Brent is focused on advancing marine-based climate solutions. Before joining Oceans North, Brent served as Chief of Staff for the Minister of Environment, Parks, and Climate Change in Alberta, where he helped to develop and implement the province's Climate Leadership Plan, as well as to advance an ambitious agenda to create new parks and protected areas. In his spare time, he can be found wandering the mountains on his skis or exploring Canada's rivers and lakes. His passion to explore nature and his dedication to public service motivate him to help accelerate the transition to a net-zero emissions world.

Dr. Anita Lafferty

[University of Alberta](#)

Dr. Anita Lafferty (Łíídlı́ Kúé First Nation) is a Dene Cree scholar, storyteller, and land-based educator whose work centers on matriarchal wisdom, Indigenous language, and learning from and with the Land. Holding a PhD in Education from the University of Alberta, her research is grounded in Dene philosophy and Indigenous curriculum perspectives. A fellow with the International Arctic Science Committee and elected council member of the International Arctic Social Science Association, her work bridges Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, focusing on identity, healing, and resurgence through relationships among youth, Elders, and communities.

Ambassador Hanne Ulrichsen

[Norwegian Ambassador to Canada, the Norwegian Embassy in Ottawa](#)

Ms. Hanne Ulrichsen was appointed as the Norwegian Ambassador to Canada on September 24, 2025. She has previously been Director for the Section for Middle East and North Africa in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She has previously been posted to Amman, Jordan (also accredited to Iraq) as deputy Head of Mission (2005-2008), served as a Transatlantic Diplomatic Fellow (TDF) in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State (2008/2009) and served at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Washington D.C. (2009-2011). Other assignments include the Office of the Prime Minister, the Office of the Norwegian Director of Intelligence and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI).

Specialized in security policy, she holds a Master's degree in political science from the University of Oslo. She has also completed studies at Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Grenoble (France), University of Warwick (United Kingdom) and holds a Master of European Administrative studies from the College of Europe in Bruges (Belgium). She graduated from NATO's Senior Leadership Course at the NATO Defence College in Rome (Italy) with high distinction in 2015. She speaks English and French. (Carbon Capture Canada)

Dr. Michael Byers

[Professor, Department of Political Science, The University of British Columbia](#)

Michael Byers' work focuses on Outer Space, Arctic sovereignty, climate change, the law of the sea, the laws of war, and Canadian foreign and defence policy. He is the co-director of the Outer Space Institute (OSI), a global network of space experts united by their commitment to highly innovative, transdisciplinary research that addresses grand challenges facing the continued use and exploration of space.

Dr. Byers has been a Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford University, a Professor of Law at Duke University, and a Visiting Professor at the universities of Cape Town, Tel Aviv, Nord (Norway), and Novosibirsk (Russia), as well as the Geneva Graduate Institute. He has also been a Senior Global Fellow at the University of St Andrews and a Fellow of the Kolleg-Forschungsgruppe "The International Rule of Law – Rise or Decline?" of the Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Universität Potsdam and Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin.

Dr. Byers' most recent book is *Who Owns Outer Space? International Law, Astrophysics, and the Sustainable Development of Space* (Cambridge University Press), which he co-authored with Dr. Aaron Boley (UBC Physics & Astronomy). His previous book was *International Law and the Arctic* (Cambridge University Press). Both volumes won the Donner Prize for the best book on public policy by a Canadian. Dr. Byers is a regular contributor to the *Globe and Mail* newspaper. (UBC webpage)

Nick Burchill

[VP, Mapping and Ocean Science Americas, Kongsberg Discovery](#)

Nick Burchill, VP Mapping and Ocean Science, Americas for Kongsberg Discovery, is an experienced Sales Manager and former Canadian Naval Officer with a demonstrated history of working in the maritime industry. His areas of expertise include autonomous shipping and vehicles, hydrography, geomatics, underwater sensors, marine robotics, underwater acoustics and naval and defence projects. (LinkedIn)

Geir Haugum

[Commercial Counsellor at the Norwegian Embassy in Ottawa, Innovation Norway](#)

Geir A. Haugum serves as Commercial Counsellor at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Ottawa and for Innovation Norway in Canada. Since joining team Norway in March 2025, Geir has played a key role in strengthening Norwegian business interests across Canada, leveraging his extensive background in international collaboration, innovation, and industry development.

Prior to his current role, Geir led Business Region Kristiansand and served as Head of Economic Development and International Affairs for the City of Kristiansand. There, he worked closely with businesses, industry leaders, and government stakeholders, with a particular focus on energy and offshore technologies.

Geir's international experience includes four years in Brussels, where he developed research and business programs across 11 European countries through the EEA Grants. He also brings deep familiarity with Innovation Norway, having held various positions from 2002 to 2013 in Beijing and Bergen. In Bergen, he was cluster lead for Maritime Cleantech and contributed to pioneering projects such as the development of electric ferries in Norway, as well as initiatives in fisheries, aquaculture, and energy.

His industry background includes roles at Mowi, BioMar, and the Institute of Marine Research, where he participated in international research projects—including collaborations with Canadian institutions—and spent time at Université Laval in Québec.

Geir's broad expertise in innovation, sustainability, and international business development continues to be a valuable asset to Innovation Norway and Region Americas, as he supports Norwegian companies exploring opportunities in the Canadian market.