

Actions for a Changing Arctic (ACA). Decision document for SAOs.

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Arctic Council

Arctic Council Secretariat

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Actions for a Changing Arctic (ACA)

Decision document for SAOs

At their meeting in Luleå, Sweden in November 2011, the SAOs “instructed AMAP to coordinate an updated ACA proposal for submittal to SAOs ... to be on the agenda at the SAO meeting in March 2012 and if approved, be forwarded to the Deputy Ministers Meeting in May 2012 for their consideration.” [Minutes of the Luleå SAO meeting]

This document is prepared as a basis for decisions to be made by SAOs regarding the proposed initiative ‘Actions for a Changing Arctic (ACA)’.¹

The document (and supplementary documentation presented in the *ACA Prospectus* [D1], see below) has been produced through an *ad hoc* drafting group and consultation process that involved representatives from all of the AC WGs, ICC, WMO, IASC and IASSA including individuals engaged in the production of ongoing AC assessments (AMSII, ABA, AHDRII, AOA, SWIPA, ARR), national experts and included a review process involving all Arctic countries and AC PPs.

Representatives from WMO, IASC and IASSA have indicated the full support of their organizations for the implementation of the proposed ACA.

This document makes reference to the following supplementary materials:

- [D1] *ACA Prospectus* (version 29 February 2012)
- [D2] *ACA Proposal to SAOs* (ACA proposal presented at the Luleå SAO meeting)

It also addresses comments received from countries to the 17 January version of the ACA Draft Technical Proposal.

Actions and Outputs of the ACA:

The ACA will:

- Anticipate/forecast future decision needs in the Arctic and proactively plan to ensure the appropriate knowledge (at pan-Arctic, regional and local scales) is available for decision-makers in a timely manner.
- Be responsive to the human dimension of the Arctic and the needs of the peoples who live there, including improving decision-making to support indigenous peoples and local communities to maintain the cultural diversity and promoting adaptation opportunities.
- Provide added-value through integration of the results of the many Arctic Council assessments, other processes and products, and recent research results across thematic priority areas at the pan-Arctic and regional levels.
- Produce pan-Arctic integrated assessment products, based on a matrix of priority (social benefit) interest areas, including aspects of the human dimension and traditional knowledge and recognizing and addressing knowledge gaps.
- Create a capacity, and establish a process and framework for organizing in more effective way future work and assessments under the Arctic Council (such as ARR, SWIPA, EBM, ABA, AMSA-II, AHDR-II, etc.), national actions, and products of external groups and processes to support better informed decision-making and policies.
- Engage with stakeholders throughout the ACA process in order to provide a robust understanding of key issues and the related information needed to help local governments,

¹ It is recommended that the name of the initiative be changed to ‘Actions for a Changing Arctic’ from its earlier title of ‘Arctic Change Assessment’.

communities, industry and others adapt to a changing Arctic by identifying and planning for challenges and maximizing the opportunities.

General Components and Principles of the ACA:

1. The **overarching goal** of the ACA is:

To enable more informed, timely and responsive policy and decision-making related to a changing Arctic through a coordinated, regionalized and integrated assessment process. [D2]

The Arctic Council is initiating the ACA in response to the following **rationale**:

During the coming decades, a number of changes across the Arctic and the planet are projected to occur with high probability and scientific confidence that pose unprecedented challenges and emerging opportunities to human societies, their economic foundations and government institutions; including challenging consequences from climate change, human demographic shifts, industrialization and demands for energy and natural resources. These changes will have significant socio-economic and policy implications for all Arctic nations and their peoples.

There are clear expectations that human activities in the Arctic will expand in the coming years. These activities will require clear guidelines and regulatory structures in order to maximize benefits to and minimize the negative effects on Arctic peoples and ecosystems. Arctic peoples/residents and local governments need information that is relevant to their specific and unique regional circumstances; this information will allow them to adapt to changes, benefit from new opportunities, and at the same time retain their unique way of life and culture. [D2]

2. The ACA will be implemented according to the **guiding principles** of *Inclusiveness and Ownership, Stakeholder Engagement, Transparency, Reliability, Relevance and Flexibility* as described in D2.
3. The ACA will be undertaken under the direction of the Arctic Council members (countries and PPs). The ACA will involve all of the AC WGs, and be implemented in collaboration with core partners including WMO, IASC and IASSA.
4. The ACA can be used as a **framework for organizing and integrating assessment activities** conducted by the various AC WGs **during the period 2012-2017**, and for translating the results of these assessments into information products suited to meet the needs of policy/decision-makers and other stakeholders.

The ACA will also provide a mechanism for integrating results of processes/initiatives outside of the AC into the work of the AC (and *vice versa*) and thus **promote AC leadership** in development of Arctic policies that reflect the consensus views of its members.

As such the ACA concept represents a new approach to policy and decision support in the Arctic Council which is proactive and highly relevant to the development of adaptation strategies and which, if successful could continue also after 2017 as an integrative way of feeding in knowledge to policy- and decision makers.

5. The **pan-Arctic ACA components** will reflect the shared national priorities identified by the Arctic countries (as summarised in Table 1 [D1]). The implementation plan (see below) includes a process for further development of **regional ACA components** to reflect regional priorities identified by regional stakeholders.
6. The ACA will **employ integrated and relevant scenarios of both climate change and socio-economic activities in the Arctic and assess the consequences of change for Arctic societies and peoples/residents**, thus creating a basis for more informed, timely and responsive policy- and decision-making in a rapidly changing Arctic through a coordinated, regionalized and integrated assessment process. [D1]

It will promote the integration, synthesis and assessment of the multiple factors that are related to ongoing and projected change in the Arctic in a clear and concise way that will **enable and**

empower all forms of policy and decision-making that in turn will promote a more healthy, vital and resilient Arctic. [D1]

The ACA will **utilise information that is available** from a large number of completed and ongoing assessment activities, conducted by AC WGs and others, **adding significant value** to these results through integration.

Furthermore it will develop a process that can operationalize the findings of activities such as the ARR and build new stronger partnerships to create and share knowledge between science and traditional knowledge holders.

Just as “EBM has become an accepted alternative to problematic single-sector management approaches” [Report of the EBM Expert Group] the ACA will address the limitations of single-sector assessments and **provide the integrated scientific knowledge base** required by activities such as the AC EBM initiative and other more policy-orientated initiatives.

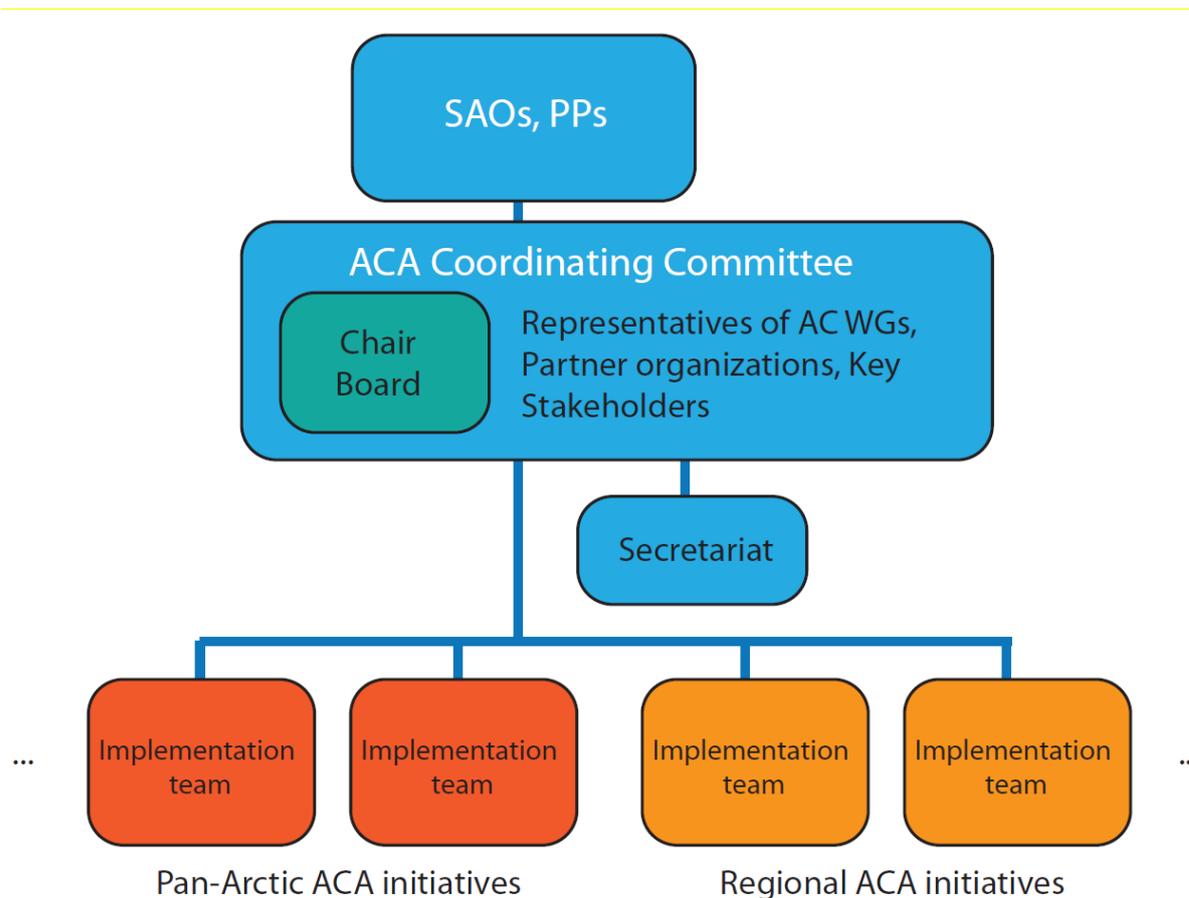
7. The ACA will **engage stakeholders** to the greatest possible extent. The term ‘stakeholders’ is intended to cover the diverse range of parties that are affected by the changes that are taking place in the Arctic. **Key stakeholders** in this respect are northern residents (including both Arctic indigenous and non-indigenous populations), representatives of Arctic governments (at national, regional and local levels), and representatives of relevant industrial and business sectors.

Stakeholder consultations will identify ‘user-needs’ with respect to both information and outreach, to promote active participation of relevant stakeholders in the work, and to ensure that traditional knowledge is effectively utilised.

An **ACA communication and outreach** plan will be developed as an integral and initial part of the process and in accordance with the overarching Arctic Council communication and outreach strategy.

8. **Organizational elements and related governance necessary to manage the implementation of the ACA** will need to be established. These elements are likely to be different for the pan-Arctic and regional components.

For the first Phase the organizational structure should be simple and made up of a Board (e.g., chair and 2 vice-chairs), Coordinating Committee (including AC WGs, national experts, PPs and representatives from IASC, IASSA and WMO) and a Secretariat. Implementation teams would likely be established to conduct regional case studies and implement major pan-Arctic components.



In totality, this structure will address the following functions:

- High-level coordination between the AC, its members, its WGs and the ACA implementation groups;
- Liaison issues to ensure coordination of the ACA with relevant activities within the AC such as the ARR and EBM initiatives and other ongoing and future AC activities;
- Liaison issues to ensure coordination of the ACA with relevant activities outside of the AC (e.g., WMO, IASC, IASSA, IPCC activities, etc.);
- Involvement of the AC Permanent Participants, to enhance and build on the AC model of engagement with the Permanent Participants in decision paths;
- Stakeholder engagement;
- Coordination and integration of scientific activities in support of the ACA and its contributing assessment activities;
- Coordination of regional implementation activities and of regional with pan-Arctic ACA components.

The SAO Chair will take responsibility for the development of a management structure for the ACA/ARR and possibly EBM. *[Minutes of the Luleå SAO meeting]*

9. The ACA will be implemented in a phased, stepwise approach² with Phase 1 being carried out through to the AC Ministerial meeting to be held in Kiruna, Sweden in spring 2013. Based on the results of Phase 1, subsequent phases may be implemented in the period to 2017 (e.g., Phase 2 in 2013-2015 and Phase 3 in 2015 – 2017).

² For details see *ACA Prospectus* (version 29 February 2012) [D1]

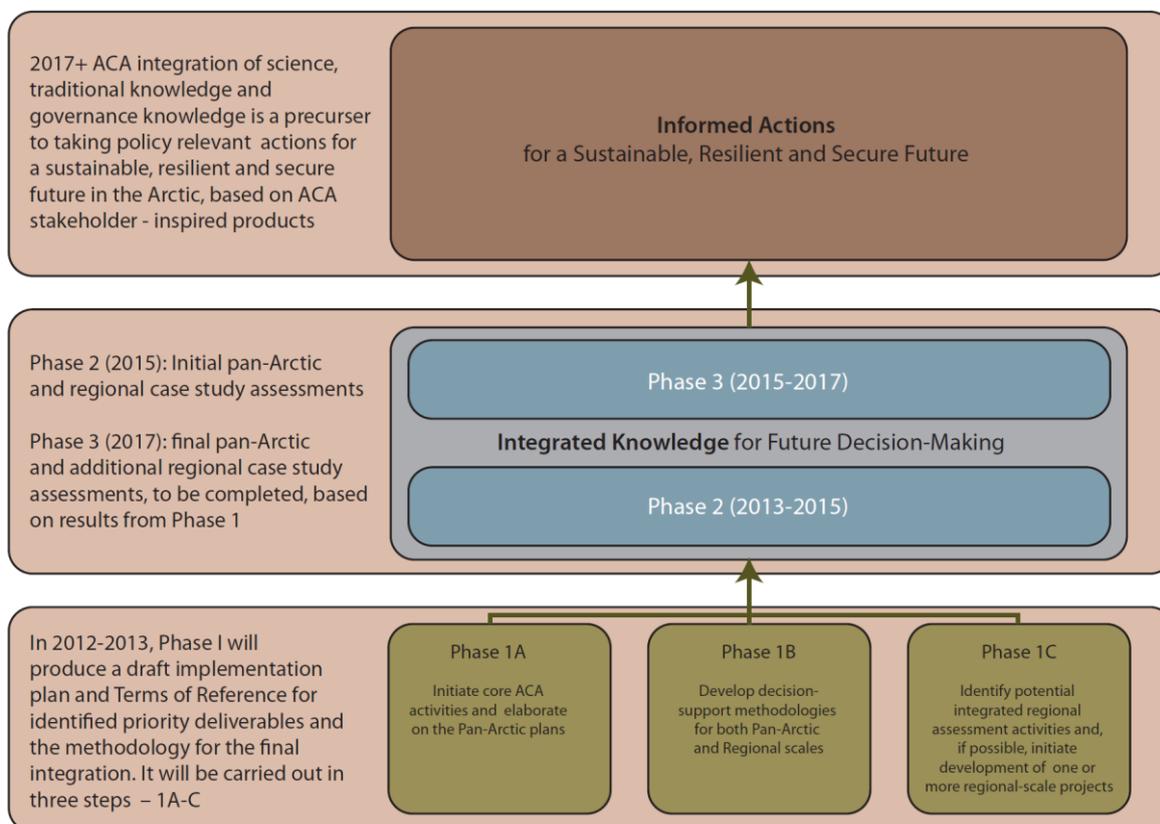
10. Resources for ACA Phase 1 are estimated at <600K USD, of which the majority is expected to be covered through in-kind (national) contributions, supporting participation in the work of relevant experts, etc. A large part of these contributions can potentially be delivered through ongoing national activities; such as ongoing relevant work being carried out in Canada (e.g. IRIS/ArcticNet), Greenland, Norway, and the US. In addition, Norway and Canada have provided funding for ACA Scoping and the Needs Analysis that is due to be completed by May 2012; Norway has provided support for ACA Secretariat functions.

	Phase 1A	Phase 1B	Phase 1C
Estimated requirement (largely in-kind)	200K USD	<200K USD	<200K USD
Core support	ACA Scoping and Needs Analysis (funded by Canada and Norway); Secretariat support: man-year position (funded by Norway) in AMAP Secretariat; Secretariat support from other AC WG Secretariats, IASC Secretariat, etc. (in-kind by Secretariats wishing to support ACA)		
Support for ACA Chair	? (possibly supported by Chair persons country)		

Annex 1. Implementation Plan

Actions for a Changing Arctic

ACA Phased Stepwise Approach



This annex provides a summary of the ACA implementation plan. For more detailed information see the ACA Prospectus [D1]; the ACA Prospectus also includes information on preliminary activities (*Needs Analysis*) that are expected to be completed before May 2012.

Approval for implementing Phase 1 of the ACA implementation plan is the subject of decisions addressed in this paper. Information relating to Phases 2 and 3 of the ACA should be considered very preliminary and tentative. Detailed planning of the implementation plans for ACA Phases 2 and 3 comprise components of the Phase 1 work and will be subject to separate approval processes.

Phase 1 (May 2012 – May 2013)

Phase 1 is divided into three parts: 1A: Initiating ACA, 1B: Methodological development, and 1C: Preparation of regional components.

1A–Initiating the ACA

Objective: To initiate core ACA activities; further elaborate on the pan-Arctic ACA implementation plans.

Time frame: May 2012–April 2013

Budget and financing of Phase 1A activities: Estimated 200K USD including in-kind contributions from national experts (to be specified), national contributions, other contributions.

Expected results:

- Stakeholder listening sessions or synthesis of existing stakeholder consultations in order to forecast, verify and validate key issues and related societal benefit areas.
- Detailed schedule for implementation of ACA Phases 1B and 1C.

2013 Deliverables:

- Report reviewing key findings/recommendations from AC reports and other assessments of relevance since 2002, and an analysis of their relationship to key priorities of pan-Arctic and National concern for ACA.
- Report on major gaps in knowledge to address identified priorities.
- Implementation plan for ACA Phase 2.

1B–Methodological development

Objective: Development of the ACA foundational assessment and related decision-support methodologies for both pan-Arctic and Regional scales

Timeframe: May 2012-April 2013 (some activities will be completed; others will be underway).

Budget and Financing: < 200K USD; a significant part of the estimated budget is expected to be provided through in-kind contributions from national experts (to be identified), the remainder through contributions from national and other funding sources (applications for funding for some generic activities relevant to ACA and other projects have already been submitted).

Expected results:

- Specification of fundamental scientific and socio-economic concepts/methodologies for production of integrated deliverables, including initial decision support resources.
- Modelling and scenario analysis (at pan-Arctic scale, ready for subsequent regional down-scaling where appropriate and feasible).
- Guidelines for ACA regional implementation processes.
- Updated implementation plan for ACA Phase 1C

2013 Deliverables:

- Report from workshops on models and scenarios.

1C –Preparation of regional components including possible regional pilot implementation

Objectives: To delineate regions, identify potential integrated regional assessment activities and, if possible, initiate development of one or more regional-scale projects that can serve as proof-of-concept for the ACA decision-support model.

Timeframe: May 2012-April 2013 (some activities will be completed; others will be underway)

Budget and Financing: < 200K USD; a significant part of the estimated budget is expected to be provided through in-kind contributions from national experts (to be identified), the remainder through contributions from national and other funding sources. This estimated budget does not include regional implementation for which costs would depend on the scope of the activities and the situation in chosen region(s) with respect to existing/ongoing activities that could contribute to the work, and costs for additional necessary work).

Expected results:

- Stakeholder workshops to clarify interest and priorities for regional ACA activities
- Identification of regions relevant for ACA regional implementation.
- Concept for interlinking pan-Arctic and regional scale activities

2013 Deliverables:

- Progress reporting on pilot regional implementation
- Updated implementation plan for ACA Phase 2
- Report on the first initiated regional projects.

Phase 2 (May 2013 – May 2015)(tentative plan)

2A – Integrated pan-Arctic assessment of priority areas

Objectives: The realization of the pan-Arctic scale ACA and its decision support capabilities and capacities

Timeframe: May 2013 - May 2015

Possible outputs:

- Pan-Arctic ACA technical, communication and outreach products with focus on priority issues under Canadian chairmanship

2B – Integrated regional assessment(s)

Objectives: The realization of (pilot) regional scale ACA and its decision support capabilities and capacities

Timeframe: May 2013 - May 2015

Possible outputs:

- Regional ACA technical, communication and outreach products (pilot region(s))

Phase 3 (May 2015 – May 2017)(tentative plan)

3A – Integrated pan-Arctic assessment of priority areas

Objectives: The further realization of the pan-Arctic scale ACA and its decision support capabilities and capacities

Timeframe: May 2015 - May 2017

Possible outputs:

- Pan-Arctic ACA technical, communication and outreach products with focus on priority issues under US chairmanship

3B – Integrated regional assessment(s)

Objectives: The further realization of regional scale ACA and its decision support capabilities and capacities

Timeframe: May 2015 - May 2017

Possible outputs:

- Regional ACA technical, communication and outreach products (additional region(s))

3C – ACA Evaluation

Objectives: Evaluation of ACA Phase 1 and 2 and recommendations for possible future development

Timeframe: May 2015 - May 2017

Possible outputs:

- Evaluation and recommendations report