

# Chairmanship Initiatives: Compendium of best practices / promoting traditional ways of life.

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Arctic Council

Arctic Council Secretariat

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Arctic Indigenous peoples and communities have a long history of self-reliance and self-sufficiency, sustained through generations of traditional economies and cultural practices. For many, living according to traditional ways of life creates a sense of cultural identity, fosters a close connection to nature and provides them with increased control over their own destiny. Sustaining their traditional ways of life, through the transfer of traditional practices, ensures that their values persist and that important social and cultural links are maintained.

As a result of factors such as globalization and climate change, the Arctic has been undergoing transformative changes on many levels, including social, cultural, environmental and economic. These changes present both challenges and opportunities to traditional ways of life in Arctic indigenous communities. And while globalization and modernization have undeniably affected the Arctic, it is important to acknowledge that traditional and modern ways of life can co-exist in ways that benefit Arctic peoples and communities. In this time of rapid change, Arctic indigenous peoples continue to demonstrate resilience and an ability to adapt. They are finding innovative ways to help ensure that traditional ways of life remain a sustainable choice. The positive impacts of these innovations, or best practices, are being realized in the region and beyond.

The Arctic Council has a long history of undertaking activities that support vibrant and sustainable circumpolar communities. It has been a common sentiment that through raising global awareness and understanding of the importance of traditional ways of life to the health and wellbeing of Arctic Indigenous peoples, better decision-making by those outside the region will ensue.

The Council's initiative to promote the traditional ways of life of Arctic indigenous peoples expresses this important priority. One of the key components of this work was to develop a compendium of initiatives, programs and policies considered by Arctic states and Indigenous Permanent Participant organizations to be a sampling of best practices in promoting these practices. While by no means an exhaustive list, the compilation of best practices in this volume attempts to provide the reader with an understanding of some of these practices, their importance, and the work being done at various levels to ensure they continue to flourish.

The individual submissions in this compendium have been identified as a best practice and submitted by the respective Arctic state or Indigenous Permanent Participant organization. As such, if you are interested in learning more about any of the best practices described, please contact the individual or organization identified in the example.

By working to influence decisions and actions that may positively impact the lives of Arctic residents, the Arctic Council aims to continue to promote a healthy and dynamic circumpolar north, where rich and vibrant cultures continue to thrive.

## **CHAPTER 1: Education, Language, Elders, Youth**

### **Aleut International Association**

#### **Best Practice**

Urban Unangax Culture Camp

#### **Contact**

Millie McKeown,  
Cultural Heritage Director

#### **Project Description**

Each year, the Urban Unangax culture camp attracts nearly 200 participants, who join together to explore cultural traditions and create Aleut art. Although open to all, the camp's primary audience is youth of Unangax (Aleut) descent who are affiliated with one of the Aleutian Pribilof Islands region's 13 tribal communities, along with shareholders or shareholder descendants of the Aleut Corporation. The culture camp is held during the summer at Unangam Ulaa, the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association's (APIA) Anchorage central headquarters.

The camp is a best practice because it supports the intergenerational transfer of traditional skills and knowledge. Participants connect with Unangax elders and camp mentors—artists and bearers of traditional knowledge—to learn customs, values and oral traditions, and to gain artistic knowledge. Some of 12 to 14 mentors at the camp each year travel from the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Region to impart their traditional knowledge. From morning until evening, they share traditional stories, reminisce about the old days and share family genealogical information.

The camp includes a variety of cultural activities, including dancing, singing and the preparation of traditional foods, such as halibut fish pies and patties, dried salmon, reindeer jerky, fish soup, duck soup, baked salmon, berry tarts, seal-meat patties and halibut. Participants can also learn to make a variety of traditional items, such as bentwood hunting visors, drums, model kayaks, atka style baskets, headdress and regalia. There are also genealogy workshops and activities for younger children, who can make regalia t-shirts, simulated traditional dance wear, leather wristbands and beaded necklaces with Aleut names.

The camp provides an opportunity and a gathering place for community members to learn about the culture and heritage of the Unangax people and help to revitalize and perpetuate their art, traditions, values, customs and language.

Aleutian Pribilof Islands Associates (APIA) organized the camp in response to a series of requests from Aleuts residing in the Greater Anchorage. A decline in the fishing industry and the unstable economy led many residents of the Aleutian Pribilof Islands to move to urban areas, where employment opportunities are more abundant. The camp bridges the gap between rural and urban life for the Aleut community and provides a venue to gather, share and learn cultural values and traditions.

The camp attracted 110 participants in its first year (2008); more than 170 have participated each year since 2010.

An important factor that has contributed to the success of the camps is the participation of cultural mentors willing to share their traditional knowledge. Volunteers from the community, along with contributions and grants from APIA, have also been important.

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## Canada

### Best Practice

The Old Crow Experiential Program

### Contacts

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### Project Description

Introduced in 2010, the Old Crow Experiential Program provides students of Grades 1-9 with opportunities to learn about Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation culture and traditions. An annual culture camp—a combination of field trips, land-based

and cultural activities, and western-style education—is a key component of the Program.

The Program incorporates local resources into experiential-education projects, facilitates community involvement with students, and develops resources and field-trip inventories. The Program’s focus follows a three-year rotation: traditions and science; traditions, history and geography; and traditions, arts and trades. Students do not repeat the same camp during their school careers, and activities increase in depth and complexity as students get older.

The Program is a best practice because it provides students, school staff and residents of Old Crow with opportunities to grow and learn together on the land, while deepening their understanding of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation culture, language and history. The Program can be adapted readily to other communities.

The Program includes a variety of innovative learning opportunities. Students learn to trap, skin and dissect muskrats, for instance. During another camp, they earn paper money through various activities and use it to purchase goods at a mock trading post. Other activities include building rabbit fences, learning traditional Gwitchin place names, and cooking competitions.

Chief Zzeh Gittlit School aims to create culturally relevant, engaging and socially responsible conditions for learning for all students. The School strives to take advantage of its tremendously rich natural surroundings. The Program emphasizes learning outside the traditional classroom, and focuses on the Vuntut Gwitchin language, and cultural and traditional practices.

The Program involves a partnership between the Yukon Government and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. An evaluation of the first three years indicated positive results, such as: increased use of local heritage resources; stronger relationships among teachers students and families; and reduced negative behaviours and discipline problems.

Key factors contributing to the success of the Program include broad support from the community, and the financial and human resources provided by multiple organizations, including Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Yukon Education, Chief Zzeh Gittlit School and the Government of Canada. The collaboration of traditional teachers, elders, community members, and teachers and staff of Chief Zzeh Gittlit School is also important.

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## **Saami Council**

### **Best Practice**

Use of New Technologies to Support Saami Language Learning

### **Contact**

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### **Links**

<http://slovari.saami.su/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbQBfaZVXSSP8I43kad8-zw>

<http://saami.forum24.ru/?1-29-0-00000011-000-0-0>

### **Project Description**

The project involves the development of software to help teach the Saami language. Compatible with all computer operating systems (Windows, Linux, Mac OS and Android), the software functions off-line and features a digital Saami-Russian, Russian-Saami dictionary. The project also includes a free, user-friendly downloadable application that can be updated by users, as well as subtitled films and free online dictionaries.

The project is a best practice because it enables young people to use the Saami language on computers—the mechanism they find most appealing. Promoting the use of the Saami language on YouTube and other social-media platforms, along with in computer games and applications, the project supports the preservation of Saami culture.

Language forms the foundation of Saami culture and traditions. Along with a vehicle for communication, language shapes the way people understand and relate to their world. The project encourages people to build a Saami vocabulary of culturally significant places, household items and traditional tools. Many of these names and the concepts they support, cannot be readily translated into other languages.

The software began as a pilot project and took several years to complete. Work continues on the development of complementary applications. The project could readily be adapted for other indigenous languages.

The efforts of volunteers and people fluent in Saami were essential to the success of the project.

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## **The Russian Federation**

### **Best Practice**

Best in Their Trade and Crafts of the Dersu Land

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### **Project description**

The project consists of a series of competitions related to the traditional skills of indigenous peoples in Khabarovskiy Krai, a region in Russia's far east. There are regional competitions in fishing, hunting and reindeer herding (Best in Their Trade), as well as in folk crafts and art (Crafts of the Dersu Land).

Representatives of the indigenous peoples of the region design and organize the competitions. Best in Their Trade competitions took place in Nanaiskiy (2012) and Kabarovskiy (2013) municipal districts; in 2015, they will be held in the community of Arka in the Okhotskiy municipal district. The regional competition "Crafts of the Dersu Land" takes place in Khabarovsk and coincides with the International Day of Indigenous Peoples.

The project helps to preserve, develop, promote and celebrate the traditional ways of life, along with the economic activities and businesses, of the region's indigenous peoples. The competitions give indigenous peoples opportunities and incentives to not only practice pass on their traditional activities, but also to pass them on to future generations. In addition, the competitions attract tourists interested in learning more about the traditions and heritage of indigenous peoples. This contributes to social and economic development.

The competitions increase the profile and prestige of traditional crafts and economic activities among residents and visitors alike. This is particularly important among young indigenous peoples, who may be less likely to learn and practice traditional crafts and economic activities. Some competitions involve novice and first-time participants, and plans are underway to increase the participation of children and youth.

The "Best in their Trade" competitions test both technical knowledge and practical ability. The "Crafts of the Dersu Land" competition focuses on both traditional and contemporary applied and decorative art, and assesses contestants' abilities to use natural materials (e.g. wood, leather, birch-bark, bone, etc.). Judges also consider the functional quality of the objects produced.

Several indigenous peoples' unions in the region proposed the competitions as a way to promote their traditional crafts, ways of life and economic activities. The top competitors win cash prizes of up to 50,000 rubles. Winners often invest their prize money to establish or further develop businesses associated with traditional crafts and economic activities.

The projects have attracted significant numbers of participants and visitors.

Residents of the Nanaiskiy, Amurskiy, Nickolaevskiy, Ulchskiy, Khabarovskiy, Solnechny, Tuguro-Chumikanskiy, Okhotskiy, Ayano-Mayskiy, Verkhnebureinskiy and Sovetsko-Gavanskiy municipal districts take part in the competitions.

The most significant factors contributing to the success of the project are direct involvement of indigenous peoples in planning and implementation, and broad public discussion.

The regional government, through the program “Development of the Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of the Russian Federation” contributed approximately 2 million rubles to the project between 2012 and 2014.

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## **CHAPTER 2: Heritage**

### **Aleut International Association**

#### **Best Practice**

Aleut/Unangax Ethnobotany: An Annotated Bibliography

#### **Contacts**

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Website: <http://www.caff.is>

#### **Project Description**

The project involved creating a record of existing information on the plants used by the Aleut and posting the record online. The formal name of the original project is Traditional Use and Conservation of Plants from the Aleutian, Pribilof, and Commander Islands for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna.

The project is a best practice because it collects existing information into a single, searchable online document, and identifies the knowledge gaps that can be addressed through further research. The document lists the common, scientific and Aleut names of plants, along with their traditional uses. This promotes the use of traditional plants.

The project presents information about the flora of the Aleut region, as well as the history, anthropology, and traditional knowledge of the Aleut people, in a convenient searchable format.

The project's success is the result of the support of many partners, including the Aleut International Association, CAFF (the biodiversity working group of the Arctic Council), and Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies of the University of Alaska Anchorage.

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## **Aleut International Association**

### **Best Practice**

Qaqamiigux: Traditional Foods and Recipes from the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands

### **Contact**

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### **Project Description**

The project involved publishing a book compiling the stories, experiences, recipes and wisdom related to traditional foods shared by elders, food preparers and hunters from the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Region of Alaska. Literally translated from the Aleut language (Unangam tunuu), qaqamiigux means "to hunt or fish for food and collect plants for subsistence." This book is a cultural, historical and nutritional tribute to the region's traditional foods. Author Suanne Unger won the "local area impact" award from the National Indian Health Board in 2014.

The project is a best practice because it preserves and documents elements of the Aleut language, history, culture, traditional foods and preparation, and knowledge. The connection between traditional foods and other cultural practices is strong; documenting methods of harvesting, storing, preparing and sharing traditional foods helps preserve other elements of Aleut culture. The project provides an example that other indigenous peoples can follow.

The book contains hundreds of words in Unangam tunuu, as well as historic and contemporary information on harvesting, preserving and preparing traditional foods. Along with hundreds of recipes, the book also contains nutritional information for many traditional foods and comparisons with the nutritional information of store-bought foods in a colourful graphic format. There are also stories, beautiful photographs and information on the role that traditional foods play in the prevention of dietary-related diseases.

While many other projects focus on the contaminants found in traditional foods, few highlight their nutritional benefits. Recent surveys show declines in the consumption of traditional foods, in part due to the fact that as elders pass away, fewer people know how to properly collect and prepare traditional foods. The book addresses this loss of knowledge.

Among the factors that contributed to the success of the project are the hard work of author Suanne Unger and financial support from Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc. and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Equally important was the collaboration of local communities and elders.

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## United States

### Best Practice

*Faces We Remember/Neqamikegkaput*: Leuman M. Waugh's Photography from St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, 1929-1930

### Contact

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### Project Description

The project involved the publication of a 192-page annotated catalogue of photographs taken in 1929 and 1930 of residents of the communities of Gambell and Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island.

In 2002, the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian acquired approximately 5,000 photographs taken in Aleut communities during the 1920s and 1930s. After the images had been catalogued, the Museum sent a selection of 120 prints to Gambell and Savoonga with a request for more information. Elders in the communities provided a wealth of details about what the photographs depicted, including the names of individuals and stories associated with them. The elders organized a group of experts for the project and contacted or recommended more knowledgeable persons who could provide additional assistance. In all, a team of 20 individuals collaborated to produce a catalogue based on the photos and information.

The project is a best practice because it demonstrates that old photographs, when combined with information provided by elders, can raise awareness and foster respect of traditions and past ways of life. The project generated great interest among younger community members, who worked with elders to document stories. This process helped reconnect people to the history of their communities. The catalogue documents what communities looked like, and how people lived and organized their lives.

The catalogue includes has more than 100 historical photographs and numerous related stories; a total of 600 copies of the catalogue were given to village councils in Gambell and Savoonga. The councils then gave a copy to each family.

A key factor in the success of the project was the direct involvement of elders from the villages where the photographs were taken. The considerable energy and excitement that the photographs generated in the communities drove the project.

Many good collections of historical photographs of Arctic communities and residents exist, and current residents are almost universally interested in using old photographs to strengthen their heritage. For similar projects to succeed, however, several factors must be considered. Current residents are likely to recognize people in, and remember stories about, photographs that are less than 70 years old, for instance. A project must also pique the interest of current residents; it must generate energy within the community. It is also important that projects have a strategy and goal, such as a book, catalogue or website. Finally, copies of the photographs and the information generated should be shared with the community to foster a strong connection.

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## **United States**

### **Best Practice**

Yuungnaqpiallerput/The Way We Genuinely Live: Masterworks of Yup'ik Science and Survival

### **Contact**

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### **Project Description**

The project involves a website, catalogue, bilingual publication and travelling ethnographic exhibit documenting 19th-century Yup'ik technologies and practices, their contemporary applications and the scientific processes underlying them. The exhibit's design focused on the four seasons and included 250 Yup'ik technical masterworks—items from museum and family collections—ranging from a needle made from the wing bone of a crane to a bearskin boat. The exhibit, supported by activities and films, toured several locations, giving patrons direct encounters with Yup'ik culture and the role science plays in everyday Yup'ik life.

The project was collaboration between the Anchorage Museum of History and the Calista Elders Council (CEC), an organization of Yup'ik elders in the Kuskokwim-Yupik region of western Alaska. A steering committee comprised of

Yup'ik elders and educators named the exhibit, determined its organization and content, and guided every aspect of its planning and development. The steering committee specifically used the present tense in the exhibit title, because while tools have changed, their way of life continues. The exhibit and catalogue highlighted the decade of work with Yup'ik elders documenting the construction and use of the tools and techniques presented in the exhibit.

The project is a best practice because it increased awareness of not only how the Yup'ik used various tools, but also of the meaning of past and current harvesting practices.

This project arose from the desire of Yup'ik elders and community members to share their way of life and their knowledge. Members of the steering committee felt strongly that their way of life and knowledge continue to have value in today's world.

The primary factor in the project's success was the desire of Yup'ik individuals of all ages to participate in every aspect of the exhibit's design. The financial support of the National Science Foundation was also crucially important.

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## **Gwich`in Council International**

### **Best Practice**

Gwich'in ethno-botany project

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### **Project Description**

The project involves a book and website documenting the Gwich'in names (in Gwichya Gwich'in and Teet'it Gwich'in dialects), along with the typical locations and traditional uses of plants. Several recipes for making medicine and preparing food are also included. The book is part of a kit developed for educators in the Gwich'in Settlement Area that also includes 28 laminated plants, samples of dried berries and fungi, and two jars of lichens and mosses. The book is a compact size, making it easy to carry into the bush, and it features numerous photos and easy-to-read text.

The project is a best practice because it helps preserve and promote traditional knowledge and activities. Gwich'in have used trees, shrubs and berries for food,

medicine, shelter and tools for millennia. In recent decades, however, this knowledge has gradually disappeared as more and more Gwich'in settle into permanent communities and spend less time on the land.

The book and website are used by all schools of the Beaufort-Delta Education Council—particularly in the elders-in-the-school and land-based programs. During these programs, elders and local harvesters demonstrate cultural activities, including the collection, use and preparation of medicinal plants. Schools outside the Gwich'in Settlement Area, along with the Tombstone Territorial Park Visitors Centre in Dawson City, also use the book. The origins of the project lie in research conducted in the 1990s. In response to concerns about the loss of traditional knowledge, the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute (GSCI) and Aurora Research Institute began to document the uses of 32 plants and three types of rocks and minerals. This research contributed to the current project. A key point emphasized by Gwich'in elders is that resources should be harvested only as needed—a message included in the book and on the website.

Approximately 300 copies of the book are ordered each year, and the GSCI presents workshops of traditional medicinal plants to groups inside and outside the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

A major contributing factor to the project's success was the desire of Gwich'in elders to share their knowledge and to provide first-hand demonstrations in how to identify and use various plants, rocks and minerals. Significant fundraising, along with volunteer efforts and in-kind contributions, also contributed to the project.

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## **Gwich'in Council International**

### **Best Practice**

The Gwich'in Place Names Project

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### **Project Description**

The project involved compiling a list of approximately 900 Gwich'in place names, along with associated physical extents, translations and stories. The names provide insight into Gwich'in culture, perspectives and knowledge of the land. This 20-year project saw more than 50 elders, along with researchers and youth,

work together, often in the bush. The territorial governments of the Northwest Territories and Yukon have officially recognized almost 500 place names to date. Work continues on the development of maps and a website of place names and stories.

The project is a best practice because it helps protect Gwich'in land rights, preserve Gwich'in identity and promote an intergenerational exchange of language and knowledge. The project will also help preserve the Gwich'in language, considered the most endangered Athapaskan language in the Northwest Territories.

Gwich'in place names are rooted in traditional knowledge and culture. Place names are usually inspired by one or more factors, such as physical characteristics, associations with sacred beliefs, historical events or individuals who lived or travelled there, and the resources available nearby and the traditional methods used to capture or use them. Understanding place names and oral history behind them is critical to the ongoing process of Gwich'in cultural and language revitalization.

The project began as a complement to archaeological research underway in the Gwich'in Settlement Region, and was expanded at the request of Gwich'in elders and the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC). The project has helped the Gwich'in protect their land rights, foster identity, preserve their history for future generations, and preserve the ancient aspects of Gwich'in language often embedded in the names. The place names have helped the GTC manage lands and resources in a culturally appropriate manner, as required under the *Gwich'in Land Claim Settlement Act*.

A related project is The Gwich'in Place Names and Story Atlas, created in partnership with Carleton University's Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre. The online Atlas presents the place names on a Google Earth background with links to audio, along with translations, associated oral histories, photographs and videos. The project also led to the designations of one of Canada's oldest and largest National Historic Sites (Nagwichoonjik) and of eight new Territorial Historic Sites.

Several factors contributed to the success of the project, including the desire of elders to share their knowledge and accompany researchers into the bush. The long-term support of governments and research institutions, along with the fundraising efforts of many groups, were also important. Another key factor was access to researchers skilled in anthropological and traditional-knowledge, and in topographic maps and Geographic Information Systems.

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## **Kingdom of Denmark**

### **Best Practice**

## Turf roofs in the Faroe Islands

### **Contact**

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### **Project Description**

Traditional turf roofs are common across the Faroe Islands and are found on all types of buildings, from homes to churches and other public buildings.

A turf roof – also known as a living roof - is a roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation planted over a waterproof membrane.

In the Faroe Islands pieces of turf are placed on the top of the roof. In the past, five layers of birch bark formed the waterproof membrane. This also prevented the turf from sliding off the roof. Each layer of birch was said to last for 10 years; therefore a five-layer turf roof would last 50 years without major repairs. On modern turf roofs, tarpaper and a rough plastic surface are used for the waterproof layer, in part due to the high cost of birch bark.

Turf roofs serve a variety of valuable purposes; they absorb rainwater, for instance, and provide insulation. They help keep interiors warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Turf roofs reduce the amount of energy required to heat and cool buildings—a major concern in the fight against climate change caused by excess emissions of greenhouse gases. As a living material, a turf roof requires very little maintenance.

The Faroe Islands still have a living tradition of using turf as a roofing material. Today turf roofs are to some extent an expression of Faroese identity, but they are also highly appreciated for their aesthetic and sustainable value.

Turf has been used as a building material for thousands of years in Northern Europe. The practice originated when few building materials were available; as a result, people used whatever materials were available.

To ensure the technique continues in the Faroe Islands requires on-going training. Although the work on turf roofs is being carried out mainly by carpenters today, the willingness of residents to share and pass along the required skills and knowledge is largely responsible for the success of the project. Multiple generations often work together on turf roofs, learning from one other as they go.

The Faroese National Historic Museum has also published a manual for laymen and professionals which provides detailed guidance on the construction of a turf roof.

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## **CHAPTER 3: Community Building**

### **Canada**

#### **Best Practice**

Iliqusittigut Makigiarniq (Using Our Cultural Strength to Rise Up)

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#### **Project Description**

The project involves counselling, wellness and healing, along with training in cultural skills, and practical support and advocacy for residents of Iqaluit, particularly those wanting to learn or relearn important aspects of Inuit language and culture, and those who are disadvantaged or marginalized. The project, delivered through the Tukisigiarvik Society, engages Inuit elders in planning and delivery as board members, counsellors, advisors and instructors.

The project represents a best practice because it relies on Inuit traditional knowledge (Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit) to resolve problems and address concerns. By working directly with elders, clients become more grounded in Inuit culture and improve their self-esteem. The program strives to assist individuals most in need, such as single mothers, widowers, survivors of Indian Residential School survivors, and youth.

To resolve the deep-rooted social, health and wellness problems that Inuit face, the Tukisigiarvik Society believes that Inuit must be directly involved in designing and implementing programs and services. The Tukisigiarvik Society aims to ensure that Inuit societal values, customs, beliefs and practices—Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit—form the basis of all of the services and cultural-skills programs it delivers. Nearly 1,000 residents have completed the cultural-skills component of the program and more than 2,100 have completed the land-skills component.

Engaging Inuit elders as advisors, counsellors, and instructors has been key to project's success. It ensures the program remains relevant to the needs of the community, and also honours and reinforces the project's central concept: Using our cultural strength to rise up. The continuity of program administrators has also contributed to the project's success.

Funding for the program comes from several sources, including the governments of Nunavut and Canada, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and the City of Iqaluit. The Indian Residential Schools Settlement provided some funding for a limited number of years, as well. The total annual budget for Tukisigiavik Centre programs and services is just over \$560,000.

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## Kingdom of Denmark

### Best Practice

The Greenlandic nutritional guidelines with 10 tips for healthy eating and living

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### Project Description

In 2005, the Greenlandic Council of Nutrition (Ernæringsrådet) published nutritional guidelines with 10 recommendations for healthy eating and living. The guidelines emphasize the importance of local foods, such as marine and land animals, fish, berries and vegetables.

The guidelines are considered a best practice because the countryside is a rich source of fresh and healthy food. Food and eating are primary expressions of culture. There is a long history of fishing, hunting and gathering plants in Greenland; these activities are the very foundation of traditional cultures in Greenland. Including a recommendation about the importance of Greenlandic foods in the nutritional guidelines helps support not only public health, but also the traditional way of life.

Despite the long tradition of eating Greenlandic foods, statistics indicate that western cuisine—particularly processed and fast foods—is increasingly a part of the diet of many people in Greenland. The project promotes the consumption of fresh, healthy Greenlandic foods.

The guidelines have helped raise the profile of Greenlandic foods, which benefits public health and traditional cultures. In addition, the publication of the guidelines has inspired a considerable amount of public discussion and debate. Many stakeholders also have begun to promote it as a best practice—many retailers now feature Greenlandic foods in their advertisements, for instance.

One factor that has contributed to the success of the best practice is that many public and private stakeholders have engaged in the positive, constructive debates about the matter, helping raise awareness of Greenlandic foods.

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## **Saami Council**

### **Best Practice**

Foundation Protect Sápmi

### **Contact**

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### **Project Description**

The project provides legal, administrative and communications assistance to Saami communities facing threats to their land rights. Protect Sápmi is comprised of experts in process, negotiation, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and certification systems for sustainable business, and secures expertise on an as-needed basis in other areas, such as reindeer-farming rights, and various aspects of law. Protect Sápmi also provides advice to government authorities regarding land issues and impact assessments within Sápmi.

To quote from the Foundation's statutes:

“The Foundation's purpose is to maintain and develop the Saami cultural community, including the promotion of the interests of Saami industries, adapted to the requirements of modern society. The Foundation shall build and maintain a strong and professional organization in order to provide assistance in securing the interests, land rights, resource rights and potentialities for development of Saami land rights holders.

“Based on such interests and rights, the trust shall be a major term-setter and a partner to the authorities and new industry players in their efforts and activities in Saami areas. The Foundation shall provide qualified advice and assistance and participate in negotiations on behalf of Saami interests as a basis for new activities, e.g. extractive industry, in the Saami areas. Such assistance shall, if possible, be provided for a fee.”

The Foundation expects fees to be paid by project proponents rather than by the Saami rights holders.

The project represents a best practice because it provides expertise, advice and services to Saami facing threats to their ancestral lands, typically through proposed resource-development projects within Sápmi. Sápmi is the land of the Saami people; it encompasses parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. To date, Protect Sápmi has focused on the Norwegian parts of Sápmi, although the goal is to expand into the portions that lie within other countries.

Indigenous peoples living in and near the Arctic face major challenges. Changes in weather patterns and encroaching development threaten traditional activities such as fishing, trapping and reindeer herding, fishing and trapping. Protect Sápmi provides Saami rights holder with predictable processes, integrates traditional knowledge into evidence-based decision making, and promotes methods for impact assessment that integrate social, cultural and cumulative perspectives. Protect Sápmi promotes dialogue and considers free, prior and informed consent an essential component of negotiations with holders of land rights.

Protect Sápmi arose in response to increased industrial activity on and near traditional Saami grazing lands. The cumulative effects of recent industrial activity threaten Saami culture. The primary reindeer-herding organizations in Sweden and Norway agreed on common strategies and tools to protect Sápmi. Two members of Saami Council—the Sami Reindeer Herders' Association of Norway (NRL) and the Sami Reindeer Herders' Association of Sweden (SSR)—created Foundation Protect Sápmi in 2012. The Foundation now operates in Norway with financial support from the Norwegian Saami Parliament.

To date, Protect Sápmi has provided counselling, consultation and negotiation services in a total of 26 cases in 20 reindeer-herding districts. Along with helping individual rights holders, Protect Sápmi also engages in strategic work, such as contributing to the development of standard tools within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development guidelines for multinational enterprises.

The key to the success of the project has been direct engagement with Saami right holders. All advisors and consultants are senior experts with strong bonds to Saami culture. All services are designed to build competence, capacity and confidence within Saami communities.

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## **The Russian Federation**

### **Best Practice**

The Living Thread of Time: International Festival of Artistic Craftwork of Indigenous Peoples of the Far East

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### **Project Description**

The Living Thread of Time festival is a celebration of indigenous arts and crafts held annually in the city of Khabarovsk since 2008. Timed to coincide with the Day of Indigenous Peoples of the World, the festival promotes indigenous crafts and traditional economic activities. It also strengthens inter-ethnic, inter-regional and international relations, and supports the business initiatives of craftsmen.

The festival is comprised of many events, including a trade show of applied and decorative arts, a fashion show featuring traditional and modern clothes, and a variety of workshops. There are also competitions in a long list of categories, such as products made from particular materials (e.g. birch bark), national costumes and enterprises that contribute to the promotion and development of applied and decorative art and folk crafts of different ethnic groups.

The Living Thread of Time provides opportunities for professional craftsmen to improve and make money from their skills, and helps to raise awareness of the value of the traditions and customs of the indigenous peoples of the region. The festival also fosters friendly relations among representatives of various ethnic groups.

The festival attracts up to 500 participants, including representatives from the eight constituent territories of the Russian Federation, as well from China and Japan. The festival enables promotion of traditional crafts and economic activities, makes them known to a more general public, and gives different indigenous communities an opportunity to share their experiences and market their products internationally. Ultimately, the festival enables indigenous artists and crafts people to improve their marketing and merchandizing skills.

The festival grew out of the collaboration of several associations of the indigenous peoples of Khabarovskiy Krai (federal district in Russia's far east).

Participants in the festival benefit in a number of ways. About 75-80 percent of the goods presented at the trade show, for instance, are usually sold during the festival. Winners of the various competitions receive valuable prizes, such as computers and software. Given that the festival attracts more and more visitors from outside Russia, the event also helps build the international reputation of local arts and crafts.

The Living Thread of Time provides opportunities for the peoples of the Far East to interact, and to celebrate, revive, preserve and develop their folk artistic crafts and traditional applied and decorative arts. All of these are important constituents of the cultural heritage of the world.

Several factors have contributed to the success of the festival, including strong collaboration among government authorities and indigenous groups. Also important has been a commitment to ensuring that traditional culture and crafts remain the central focus of the festival.

The federal district of Khabarovskiy Krai contributed approximately four million rubles to the festival during 2012-2014.

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## **The Russian Federation**

### **Best Practice**

Alkhalalalay—Our Traditional Festival

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### **Project Description**

Alkhalalalay—Our Traditional Festival celebrates the end of the annual cycle of seasonal labour of the Itelmen people, who live along Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. The event takes place each September in Pimchakh—a reconstructed Itelmen village—and in the modestly sized village of Kovran, an Itelmen community. The Festival includes a variety of traditional activities and contests: cooking and household skills for women, and tests of strength and dexterity for men. The event recreates the Itelmen tradition of marking the end of autumn and beginning of winter with a purification ceremony. During the ceremony, participants move through an arch made of birch branches to the accompaniment of frame drums. An effigy, known as Khantay, is set up in the centre of the camp to protect the settlement during the following year. A marathon of national dance is another Festival component; in 2011, the Kamchatka Indigenous Dance Championship was incorporated into Alkhalalalay. In 2013, the Festival set a new record, with 16 hours, 20 minutes of non-stop dancing.

The Festival is a best practice in part because it honours and celebrates elements of the culture and rituals of the indigenous peoples of Kamchatka. For centuries, the rituals have helped to regulate the relationships between people and nature, and to ingrain valuable knowledge and skills in community members from an early age. In traditional cultures, children played valuable roles in economic and household activities.

Residents of all ages, including school children, play an active role in planning and delivering the Festival. In Kovran village, clans compete in setting stop nets in the river. Other competitions involve dancing, grimacing, birch-bark basketwork, and the processing of marine animals and salmon. In Pimchakh village, Itelmen is the official language during the festival. The Festival helps to integrate these and other traditions into contemporary life.

Originally designed to preserve the identity and customs of the Itelmen, Alkhalalalay has grown to include other indigenous peoples and residents of

Kamchatka Peninsula. Celebrating traditional folk culture is an important means of preserving indigenous languages and traditions.

The Festival attracts up to 10,000 people each year and has become a mainstay in the region. In 2009, Alkhalalalay became an official holiday in the region; in 2012, it was added to the Electronic Catalogue of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Peoples of Russia; in 2014, the Festival won top prize in “Folk Traditions” at the Russian National Open Fair of Event Tourism. A video of the Festival won third prize at the Russian National Festival of Video Films about folk art, traditional culture and ethnography.

Several factors contribute to the success of Alkhalalalay; first and foremost, the Festival aligns with traditional practices and beliefs and directly involves indigenous peoples in planning and organization. Festival organizers successfully integrated Itelmen traditions into contemporary cultures of Russia, Ukraine, and elsewhere, helping make events easy to understand and accessible for all participants. In 2012, indigenous groups from across Russia took part in Alkhalalalay and the Festival administrators concluded an agreement with “Ridu-Ridu,” the international Saami festival held in Norway.

The regional government supports the Festival to ensure adequate entertainment, boarding, transportation and security. The youth organization “Friendship of Northerners” also provides valuable assistance.

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## **CHAPTER 4: Sustainable Resource Management**

### **United States**

#### **Best Practice**

The Glacier’s Eternal Gift: Sealing, Science, and Indigenous Knowledge at Yakutat Bay, Alaska

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### **Project Description**

This multidisciplinary and cross-cultural project examines the relationship of native peoples to Yakutat Bay, an ancient, storied ecosystem in southeast Alaska through a combination of scientific research, filmmaking and education. The project integrates indigenous knowledge, oral tradition, linguistics, archaeology, glacial geography and seal biology to explore the 1,000-year old relationship between people, seals and the evolving landscape. The three main components of the project include involving younger members of the community in field research and discovery, contributing to the development of a locally focused science curriculum for Yakutat middle and high school students, and supporting the production of a community-based television documentary (with the Smithsonian Channel) that will highlight Yakutat community knowledge and perspectives.

Yakutat Bay is a mountain-rimmed fiord where harbour seals thrive among the ice floes discharged from Hubbard Glacier. It is also home to people of Tlingit, Eyak, and Ahtna heritage, who have hunted seals in the shifting ice for centuries. In elders' words, the seals are the glacier's gift, and the generous spirit of the ice is honoured in hunters' prayers.

This project is a best practice because it places indigenous ecological and historical knowledge at the core of a scientific study. Clan history and ownership are thoroughly embedded in the cultural landscape, and traditional use-rights and resource management have protected the seals over the centuries. The "best practice" dimension involves the recording, balancing, and integration of these perspectives through collaboration in both research and in development of educational media and curricula for indigenous youth, which will inform cultural identity and encourage the continuity of sealing and environmental knowledge into the future.

Yakutat's subsistence economy is dominated by sealing (it has the highest seal-harvesting rates in Alaska and likely in the circumpolar region), yet the regional population of seals is in rapid decline. At the same time, fewer young people in indigenous communities appear to participate in the seal harvest.

The project originated in the observations of Yakutat Tlingit elder George Ramos, who suggested that Yakutat history can be traced by analyzing the retreat of glaciers. The oldest settlements lie at the mouth of the bay, while progressively younger settlements and sealing camps are located farther up the bay as people apparently followed the receding ice edge. The languages (Eyak, Ahtna, Tlingit)

of various place names should track this progression, along with physical evidence of glacial positions and radiocarbon dates from archaeological sites.

The project is in the pre-publication phase of active field research, with archaeological and geological investigations continuing through August 2014. Yakutat youth, including high school, undergraduate and graduate students, participate actively in the project, the documentary film is in its fourth year of filming, and interviews about contemporary and traditional seal hunting and ecological knowledge continue. Place-based science curriculum for Yakutat and Alaskan schools will incorporate youth experiences with the project. The archaeological rediscovery of abandoned sealing camps has stimulated tribal aspirations to reclaim land from the federal government under the *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*.

Key factors contributing to the success of the project are the engagement of Yakutat elders and hunters, consultations with active tribal and Alaska Native regional and village corporations, and regular presentations of research results to the community, including end-of-season receptions at archaeological sites. Also important are generous financial support from the National Science Foundation, a media strategy that evolved from research documentation to community-based filmmaking, and the creative enthusiasm of many participants.

The project has involved a large number of elders, hunters and other community members, two years of archaeological field schools from the University of Alaska Anchorage, and approximately \$700,000 worth of sponsor funding.

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## Canada

### **Best Practice**

Fur Harvesters Support Program

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### **Project Description**

The project includes two programs to support the traditional hunt of seals and other furbearing mammals. The first program ensures that Nunavummiut (Inuit residents of Nunavut) receive fair compensation for harvested furs and sealskins. The second program ensures that craftspeople can buy dressed sealskins at reasonable prices to produce arts, crafts and garments.

Conservation Officers in every Nunavut community deliver the program. Harvesters receive advance payments of 75 percent of the appraised value of

furs. Seal pelts are purchased outright from hunters and shipped to auction at no cost to harvesters. The advance payments are reimbursed once the pelts are sold. In addition, harvesters can receive advance payments, based on the sales of previous years, to offset their annual fall start-up costs.

The project represents a best practice because it helps preserve the traditional knowledge and skills related to the harvesting of wildlife and the preparation and transformation of sealskins and furs. The project promotes the continuation of traditional lifestyles, including the practice of using all parts of an animal for food, clothing and trade.

Protests against seal harvesting and international bans on the import and sale of pelts have had significant, negative impacts on Inuit. The sealskin-purchase program was developed to reduce some of these impacts. The dressed sealskins for Nunavummiut program followed, to promote the production of arts, crafts and garments.

The project is relatively inexpensive to operate, particularly when compared with the benefits it provides. Advanced payments are reimbursed from sales; the only net costs relate to shipping, pelts that sell for less than advance payments and the fall incentive payments.

The project enables Nunavummiut to not only maintain their traditional skills, but also to pass them on to future generations. The programs also have significant economic and social impacts, ensuring that harvesters and craftspeople can make enough money to support their families and communities. The program contributes to the continued strength of the sealing and fur industries in Nunavut, helping ensure that these sectors remain important parts of the economy in remote communities, where employment opportunities are limited.

The most important factor in the success of the project has been the commitment from the Government of Nunavut to support the traditional economy and recognize the importance of seal and fur harvesting to Inuit culture and socio-economic wellbeing.

The project requires staff, along with dedicated office and storage space, in every community in Nunavut. In addition, the project requires funding for advances, the shipment of furs, and marketing initiatives.

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## **Canada**

### **Best Practice**

Sustainable management of Canada's polar bears

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### **Project Description**

The project involves the collaborative management of polar-bear populations across Canada's Arctic. The management approach considers both science and Aboriginal traditional knowledge, and balances long-term conservation goals with Aboriginal harvesting rights. The provinces and territories, the Government of Canada and Aboriginal organizations established under relevant Land Claims Agreements all work together to manage polar-bear populations.

The project represents a best practice because it helps maintain both a viable population of polar bears and traditional Inuit harvesting practices. In Canada, Aboriginal peoples have an exclusive right to harvest polar bears. Polar bear hunting remains an important part of the traditional culture of northern Aboriginal communities. In a region where the cost of living is extremely high and economic prospects are scarce, polar bear hunting provides nutritious food and an opportunity to generate income. The management system promotes the passing down of traditions and practices to younger generations of hunters.

Canada's management system for polar bears began in the 1960s in recognition of both the Aboriginal right to harvest wildlife and the need to protect polar-bear populations. The management system has become more responsive and robust over the years. A measure of its success is that most Inuit communities engage in a sustainable harvest of polar bears and most polar bear sub-populations in the Canadian Arctic are either stable or increasing.

The primary factor contributing to the success of the management system is the direct involvement of hunters and Arctic communities, as well as the consideration of both scientific data and Aboriginal traditional knowledge in decision-making. Wildlife Management Boards, established under the various Land Claims Agreements in effect in Canada, play an important role in the process, particularly in decisions about harvest limits. The Boards contribute to these decisions through a formal process, by conducting hearings to gather input from interested parties and stakeholders, then submitting their views to the federal Minister responsible for the relevant policies.

There is a high rate of compliance with polar-bear harvest limits, in part because the system assigns a direct and meaningful role to Inuit communities. Supporting a responsible, sustainable harvest helps preserve the traditional and cultural practices that have been in place for thousands of years.

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### **Kingdom of Denmark**

## **Best Practice**

PISUNA (*Piniakkanik sumiiffinni nalunaarsuineq*); collaborative monitoring of natural resources

## **Contacts**

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## **Project Description**

PISUNA assigns the residents of seven communities in northwest Greenland a direct role in gathering and interpreting the data that inform decisions about the management of natural resources, such as fish and wildlife stocks.

A project of the Government of Greenland in collaboration with several local and regional groups, PISUNA aims to:

- Engage local residents in natural-resource management;
- Increase the capacity of residents to quantify, document and manage living resources;
- Adjust the management of natural resources in response to changes in the populations and distribution of species; and
- Foster dialogue between fishermen, hunters, scientists and managers.

Community members and government officials work together to decide which data to collect. These data, along with observations of natural resources and resources use, are reviewed and interpreted at regular meetings of the community's Natural Resource Council and summarized four times per year. All PISUNA data belong to the local Natural Resource Council and are stored in the municipal office in each community.

Proposed management decisions, along with supporting data, are submitted to authorities responsible for the specific settlement. Community residents, along with government authorities, may also use the data to make about the management of living resources. The sharing of data also helps to raise awareness of local management issues and conditions that may need further exploration, such as significant changes in species distribution, abundance, or behaviour.

PISUNA promotes the use of local and traditional knowledge, and builds on local and indigenous institutions that are deeply rooted in the culture of Greenland's fishing and hunting communities.

Fishermen, hunters and other members of the community participated in the development of PISUNAT. The community members collect, process and interpret the data. Moreover, they discuss trends in resources and resource use, and they propose management decisions that need to be taken by themselves, governments and others.

The Government of Greenland had long been keen on increasing the involvement of local residents in the management of living resources. This type of involvement is mentioned as an objective of a hunting law enacted in 1999, yet limited efforts had been made to realize it.

PISUNA enables Greenlandic fishermen and hunters to document trends in living resources and to propose management decisions. During the first three years of PISUNA (2009-2012), a total of 14 distinct recommendations were made for 12 resources. Some of recommendations related to harvesting quotas, hunting seasons, topics for future research and the regulation of fisheries through municipal bylaws. As of June 2013, the local municipal authority had reviewed and made decisions regarding 11 of the 14 proposals.

Several factors have contributed to the success of PISUNA, including:

- Community residents, local authorities, scientists and government officials have all collaborated closely;
- The existing, informal observation methods used by fishers and hunters are incorporated and built upon;
- Simple, low-cost tools and approaches are used; and
- The project was incorporated into local governance structures, rather than operating an isolated research project.

Funding is needed to support strong coordination among the various parties involved. It is crucial that governments take the findings and recommendations of community members seriously, and that the outcomes of proposals are communicated to the communities. The PISUNA approach is suitable only when residents are interested in voluntarily sharing their observations and knowledge.

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## **CHAPTER 5: Policies**

### **Canada**

#### **Best Practice**

Traditional Knowledge Policy

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### **Project Description**

The project gives legal recognition to traditional knowledge as a valid and essential source of information about the natural environment and its resources, the use of natural resources, and the relationship of people to the land and to each other.

With approximately half the population of the Northwest Territories of Aboriginal descent, the region has a vast store of traditional knowledge. In 1997, the Government of the Northwest Territories implemented the Traditional Knowledge Policy, defined as the knowledge and values acquired through experience and observation, handed down from one generation to another. The Policy requires the Government of the Northwest Territories to consider traditional knowledge in its decisions and in the programs and services it delivers to residents.

The Interdepartmental Traditional Knowledge Working Group provides a forum for the exchange of relevant information among government departments, and publishes an annual report on its work. The 2012-2013 edition of the report highlights 114 programs and activities.

The project represents a best practice because it incorporates traditional knowledge into day-to-day government activities and operations. Under the policy, planning processes for infrastructure projects include consultations with community and Aboriginal groups to gather traditional knowledge on factors such as ground conditions, snowfall, snowmelt, flooding, wind direction and underground streams. To help minimize the potentially negative impacts of highway and bridge construction in areas of traditional importance and activities, for example, territorial officials collaborate with their counterparts in Aboriginal governments. In addition, public-health measures and restorative-justice activities emphasize the importance of traditional wellness and health, along with connection to the natural world.

The Government of the Northwest Territories employs a full-time Traditional Knowledge Coordinator and provides in-kind support to communities, Aboriginal cultural organizations and research institutions wishing to conduct studies or projects related to traditional knowledge. Grants and contributions are also available for specific wildlife and forestry research related to the collection of traditional knowledge.

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## **Kingdom of Denmark**

### **Best Practice**

Pre-consultation (Greenland)

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## **Project Description**

The project involves a legal requirement for pre-consultation as part of proposed mineral-development projects in Greenland. The project consists of a 2014 amendment to the *Mineral Resources Act*, along with guidelines related to mineral-resources activities, and ensures a meaningful and early involvement of residents in decision-making processes related to proposed projects.

Pre-consultation is a multi-part process that begins with a company's official announcement of a project. The announcement is considered a request for a formal social-impact assessment and must be accompanied by a non-technical summary and a project description. The project description can be considered as a draft Terms of Reference (ToR). The project description is posted to the Government of Greenland's website for 35 days and members of the public, NGO's and other stakeholders are invited to submit comments and questions. Based on input from the pre-consultation the ToR is updated. The updated ToR will ensure a more sustainable foundation for the subsequent social impact assessment process.

The project represents a best practice because it ensures that traditional and local knowledge, along with alternative proposals from stakeholders, ideas and clarifying questions, are considered early in decision-making processes. Pre-consultation promotes the early involvement of stakeholders and facilitates the sharing of relevant information.

Pre-consultation provides local stakeholders, including sheep farmers, hunters and fishers, an opportunity to become involved in planning and decision-making processes. Decisions can relate to the location of roads, harbours and shipping routes.

The project grew out of concerns about the inadequacy of consultation processes related to proposed mining activities. There was criticism of public-participation processes for several advanced mineral projects. Many Greenland residents called for earlier involvement and a more meaningful role in decision-making processes.

As the initiative is relatively new, it is difficult to measure the impacts of pre-consultation. Incorporating pre-consultation in the *Act* and guidelines has, however, made public-involvement processes more formal, transparent and predictable.

Industry accepts pre-consultation and several stakeholders support the initiative. Transparency International Greenland, for instance, is pleased that pre-consultation includes terms of references. Inuit Circumpolar Council Greenland, along with a non-governmental coalition for better public involvement, appreciate the introduction of pre-consultations.

Mining projects that have yet to reach the terms-of-reference phase will have to incorporate pre-consultation in planning processes. The goal is that stakeholders gain from the process, while mining companies receive qualified, constructive and more sustainable inputs, along with an improved social licence to operate.

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## **Kingdom of Denmark**

### **Best Practice**

Service contracts

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### **Project description**

The Government of Greenland maintains a series of service contracts with private companies to ensure the continued existence of smaller villages and settlements. These contracts ensure a reliable supply of basic goods and services, enabling residents to maintain a modern and comfortable lifestyle. Air Greenland, for instance, provides regular flight services to a number of distant towns, villages and settlements. And the company KNI is contracted to ensure that retail stores in each community maintain a predetermined stock of basic goods. Since villages and settlements play a defining role in the traditional way of life in Greenland, service contracts help keep ancient traditions and cultures alive.

The contracts enable the Government of Greenland to ensure a minimum standard of living in poor, remote regions. Suppliers must follow specific rules set out in contracts and must handle logistical challenges such as shipping to remote locations. The rules help limit the potential negative impacts on government resources. The contracts also list specific service levels and ensure that companies can make enough of a profit to remain in business. As long as a company fulfills the obligations in its contract, it may keep whatever profits remain. This encourages and rewards innovative thinking and lean business processes. Some of the contracts—such as those for passenger-transportation services, are subject to public tenders to ensure that prices remain competitive.

Service contracts represent a best practice because they ensure that residents of remote communities are able to consistently buy healthy food at reasonable prices, along with the other goods and services needed to maintain a decent standard of living.

Many residents of remote villages and settlements engage in traditional activities, such as hunting and fishing. Without access to outside goods and services, many residents of these communities would leave, and traditional ways of life would gradually disappear.

Greenland has one of the world's smallest population densities, making it difficult for most businesses to operate sustainably. In light of this reality, the Government of Greenland acted to ensure the long-term survival of villages and settlements by guaranteeing the availability of specific goods and services. The service contracts help support and maintain the traditional lifestyle and the core of Greenlandic culture, by ensuring the continuation of life in villages and settlements.

The most important factor in the project is adequate funding, and the key to ongoing funding is the appropriate level of political will.

Another key factor is managing the contracts efficiently. On the one hand it means informing politicians of the progress or lack thereof, and ensuring that the requirements stipulated in the contract are being met. On the other hand, it is imperative to maintain a constructive relationship with the various companies, which ensures that things run smoothly.

The Government of Greenland provides a considerable amount of funding in support of the project, along with administrative resources to ensure satisfactory levels of contract management and political control. Ongoing dialogue between politicians and their constituents is also needed to ensure that the cost of the program, as well as the amount and quality of the services and goods it funds, are appropriate.

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## Kingdom of Denmark

### **Best Practice**

White Paper

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## **Project Description**

A White Paper is a document that requires proponents of mining activities to list comments and concerns provided during a public consultation process in a structured way.

Under law, proposed mineral projects in Greenland must complete a series of assessments and reviews. Members of the public can comment on proposed plans during the 35-day pre-consultation and an eight-week public consultation phases. Proponents must incorporate and respond to public feedback in a White Paper, which is then reviewed by the authorities responsible for issuing development permits. Proponents must publish White Papers in Greenlandic, Danish and English; these are also posted to a government website.

The White Paper concept represents a best practice because it ensures that companies in a well known and structured way respond to questions and concerns raised by the public during consultations related to proposed mining activities. Mines and mining activities can have significant impacts on communities; therefore it is important for the population of Greenland- a population which is primarily Inuit - to have tools and procedures in place that enables them to be heard. A White Paper is a basis of decision making for the Government of Greenland.

White Papers enable proponents to respond to all questions and concerns, and to refer directly to which sections or pages in the final EIA or SIA assessments that require amendments as a consequence of the public consultation phases. The White Paper is a constructive and transparent way to keep track of all concerns, comments and issues raised during a project. A White Paper is also an important historical document that records traditional knowledge about issues raised at a specific time.

The White Paper concept was originally introduced in the 2011 environmental-impact assessment guidelines and is further developed and incorporated into the 2015 social-impact assessment guidelines. The concept responded to calls for a more transparent way to handle hearing comments and for a clear structure on addressing questions in subsequent processes. Reaction to the White Paper concept has generally been positive; the Employers' Association of Greenland considers it an important element in securing follow-up and documentation of questions raised. The municipality of Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq found it positive that all hearing comments are addressed in a White Paper.