



**ARCTIC ADAPTATION EXCHANGE:
Facilitating Adaptation to Climate Change**

- COMMUNICATIONS PLAN -

Prepared for:

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INTRODUCTION

The Arctic Council is the leading international forum for Arctic cooperation, and promotes environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic region. It is comprised of eight Member States (Canada, the United States, Iceland, Norway, Finland, the Kingdom of Denmark, Sweden, and the Russian Federation) and six indigenous organizations who serve as Permanent Participants (Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and the Saami Council).

In the fall of 2013, Canada and the United States submitted a proposal to the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group to develop an online climate change adaptation information portal called the Arctic Adaptation Exchange (AAE) to enhance adaptation to climate change in the Arctic. The rationale for this initiative is that there are many regional and national websites and information portals focused on either the Arctic or climate change, but none that address both these issues to effectively leverage the wealth of information that supports adaptation in the circumpolar north. It is envisioned that the portal will enhance adaptive capacity and foster innovation, learning by doing, and the development of best practices.

The Project Team consists of Canada (Natural Resources Canada, and Yukon Government, Department of Environment), the United States (State Department and University of Alaska Fairbanks – UAF), Aleut International Association, and Gwich'in Council International.

In summary, the purpose of the project is to:

- Learn about climate change and how it is impacting the Arctic;
- Increase knowledge of climate change impacts and adaptation in the Arctic among those who live, work, and conduct research in the north;
- Map, download, and use resourceful data to allow users to connect to their communities; and
- Keep users returning for new ideas, discussions, expert opinions, presentations and new website links and uploads.

This user outreach plan has been designed to introduce the value and utility of the portal prior to its launch. This plan will create awareness, and encourage acceptance and positive anticipation of this new knowledge creation and exchange tool. The plan will outline specific areas, responsibilities and tasks, including:

- i. A description of the target audiences for the outreach campaign;
- ii. A description of the strategies that will be employed to reach these target audiences;
- iii. A work plan (including strategies) and timeline, drafted in consultation with the Project Team, for the development and implementation of the user outreach plan.

It will be critical to communicate with each identified target audience in a way that speaks to them, keeping in mind specific outcome expectations and access to resources that affect their capacity to participate. The structure of the portal lends itself to target audiences fluent in online communications and it is assumed these target audiences will be early adopters of the portal. Early emphasis should be on finding ways to engage target audiences that do not have that luxury, as they are the “boots on the ground” in the campaign to gather climate change adaptation information.



CONSTRAINTS AND CONDITIONS

- i. This outreach plan has been written by those who have a strong knowledge of the geographic and demographic challenges in Canada, and address them in this communications plan. Although there are similar internet access challenges in other parts of the circumpolar north, these needs differ based on location. This will impact both the key messages and the tactics used to engage the target audience.
- ii. This communications plan has been put together with a variety of different tactics, with realistic budgets assigned to each. The actual communications budget will likely not be able to include all of the tactics, and so consideration will need to be given to which tactics are best pursued.
- iii. As of April 1, 2015, this communications plan and the technical aspects of the portal will be transferred to the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF); our aim is to develop the communications and outreach tool(s) selected by the project team between January and April 2015, and implement the tool(s) after the portal is formally launched in April 2015.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Through the portal scoping process, three distinct target audiences looking to access information on the Climate Change Adaptation Portal were identified: intermediary organizations that can channel information to and from indigenous groups and local communities; decision-makers working at various levels of government and in the private sector; and academic researchers.

COMMUNITIES (Community)

This user group comprises individuals directly affected by climate change and also in management, advisory, policy or planning roles within indigenous and community groups across the circumpolar north. The possibility of using the Portal to engage indigenous groups and local communities has been raised often since this project's inception. Feedback received during the scoping phase suggests that facilitating direct and effective community-level participation through this site remains an important objective over time, but also that it is difficult for this type of web-based platform to directly reach this audience. For this reason, the Portal will target intermediary organizations and rely on them to identify individuals at the community level who would benefit most from information on climate change adaptation, and who are also able to communicate it to them in a meaningful and accessible way. To facilitate productive engagement with these intermediaries, the Portal will seek to include content that is relevant to indigenous groups and communities and easy to disseminate.

DECISION-MAKERS (Practitioners)

There is great interest within governments and private sector organizations operating across the Arctic to better understand climate change adaptation. These individuals are gathering information to help inform policy and business decisions on a wide range of issues affected by climate change. To communicate clearly with decision-makers using the Portal, it is crucial to present information in a clear, structured and easy to navigate format. The key messages in this communications plan have been developed to clearly target this group, as users within the group may have very different objectives for accessing the Portal, compared to communities and researchers. It must be presented in a way that fosters trust and confidence in the site as a source for climate change adaptation information in the Arctic.

RESEARCHERS (Academia)

This group includes researchers and funded government projects. This research spans the full spectrum of fields of study, including environmental, social, cultural and scientific. We assume that these users move through large amounts of information very quickly, while being able to absorb critical details relating to the content. This group is seeking information and engagement from the other user groups for data and sharing information. This user group is one of the most engaged in data supply and research. To communicate effectively with this user group through the Portal, it is crucial to make search content intuitive and simple.



KEY MESSAGES

The communications plan will seek to answer key questions and incite action by each user group respectively. This information will be the foundation of an online community that is a trusted source of information on climate change in the Arctic and fosters relationships and partnerships between all user groups and facilitates the sharing of knowledge between them.

Tactics and messaging from other initiatives can be drawn upon and added to the communications plan as the Portal is used. In communicating with key audiences, the Portal administrator will need to differentiate between tactics (immediate results) and strategy (steering trajectory toward larger, longer term goals) as well as tactics that supplement overall strategy.

COMMUNITY

An important measure of success for the Portal will be the participation of local communities and/or indigenous groups and their contribution of information. While the other two user groups are seen as early adopters of the Portal, this user group may not have the same level of access to communications technology or be as enthusiastic in the process, so there should be an added emphasis on tactics to engage them. It is important that local communities understand that their knowledge and experience is crucial to the Portal, and that by sharing it, they will not only help researchers and governments understand their challenges, but share with communities encountering those same challenges.

Key messages targeting this user group include:

- Climate change effects will be felt in your community. It is not a question of “if”.
- There are strategies being used in other communities that you can learn from and implement in your home community.
- The portal is a good place to learn about resources/information for local communities to help implement new strategies or enhance current strategies in adapting to the effects of climate change.
- Communities whose ancestors have lived in the Arctic for multiple generations have historical experience and local or traditional knowledge that will offer insight to climate change adaptation.



PRACTITIONERS

Decision-makers in both the public and private sectors are mainly looking for resourceful and trustworthy information, including policy research, project reports, presentations and informative collateral such as brochures and booklets. By participating in the Portal, policymakers will have access to the policies and reports from governments, trusted research and non-profit organizations and the experience of local communities across the Arctic, giving them valuable reference points.

Key messages targeting this user group include:

- The Portal is a resource for businesses and governments at all levels throughout the Arctic to learn from each other's experience with climate change.
- Governments need relevant, up-to-date information to inform policies and priorities affected by climate change impacts.
- Businesses need to understand how the impacts of climate change affect their bottom-line, and what options are available to adapt their operations to these challenges
- The Portal is a resource for examples of collaboration different public and/or private sector organizations (whether businesses, different levels of government or different national governments) that have been successful and mutually beneficial in adapting to the effects of climate change in the Arctic.

RESEARCHERS

Researchers and scientists studying the Arctic are looking for trustworthy content to be used for research papers and lectures. By participating in the Portal to explore and engage, they will have access to a wealth of invaluable information resources, as well as the opportunity to connect with on-the-ground resources in areas that are virtually inaccessible.

Key messages targeting this user group include:

- The Portal is a forum for the most pressing questions researchers have about climate change in the Arctic.
- The Portal has information about the hurdles scientists encounter (environment, travel restrictions, local knowledge, etc.) when trying to conduct research in the Arctic and how governments and local communities help researchers overcome those hurdles.
- The Portal contains information for how researchers can establish relationships with local communities that have access to years of anecdotal evidence in specific areas.



HIGH LEVEL STRATEGY

Keys to Success

Early momentum

Immediately following the approval of the portal by Arctic Council Ministers in April, it will be imperative to have strong messaging advising users that the portal is active and at their disposal. Quick uptake by the target audiences will provide the momentum needed to achieve visitation goals to the AAE. The portal should also be pre-populated with relevant information so that we are not just launching an empty shell.

As the AAE is about adapting to climate change in the Arctic, it should not appear to be an exclusively Canadian product. Significant effort should be made to solicit international participation, and – recognizing inherent budgetary and logistical constraints – the project team should explore what options are available to develop outreach materials in the languages of other Arctic Council members and permanent participants and distribute these materials to prospective users all across the Arctic.

Engagement strategies

To engage the three identified target audiences, we have developed four strategies that will be pursued by using the tactics described in the following section.

1. Mass outreach must take into consideration that the launch of a highly sophisticated digital product means that the majority of the proposed communications are also executed through digital methods. For heavy computer users like both the academic and policy audiences, heavy online marketing makes sense. For the communities target audience, it may be necessary to supplement online communications with traditional methods, as it is assumed that they do not have the same level of access to online resources as the other two key user groups.
2. Community development will be essential to the portal's success. Because of the lack of communications options in small northern communities, traditional media such as direct mail or print advertising may be the most effective means of reaching the communities target audience.
3. Informing and instructing the target audiences and other users of the portal will make using the portal less intimidating and ultimately more accessible and easy to use. Emphasis will be put on building relationships with those who will be using the portal and provide training to those who will be training the users to give a uniform and seamless experience.
4. Cultivating and enabling the communities with target audiences is important so that they see themselves as stakeholders in the AAE. Users will be provided with the tools they need to participate in the portal and recognized for that participation with tangible rewards and clear win-win scenarios.



TIMING & PROCESS

In the first three months of 2015, project co-leads will assess the outreach tools outlined in the subsequent section and determine which option(s) provides the most effective mechanism(s) for reaching prospective users from the three key audiences. These tools will then be developed by the contractor, with direction provided by project co-leads, and implemented after the AAE is formally approved by Arctic Council Ministers in late April 2015. Initial steps and transfer to UAF have been accounted for in the tactical plan presented below.

The AAE is scheduled to launch April 24-25, 2015, pending Arctic Council approval from Sustainable Development Heads of Delegation (HoDs) and Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs).

TACTICAL PLAN

MASS OUTREACH

Direct Mail	
Description	Develop a well-designed postcard that can be used to promote uptake among key user-groups. <i>Tasks/Requirements</i> – develop key messages, preliminary design; develop address list for key individuals and organizations; finalize design and messages, print postcards.
Timing	Delivery for April 15, 2015.
Target Audience	Communities.
Client Resources	Client will be required to review and approve the messaging and design concepts for the postcard.
Implementation	Design and layout of the postcard will begin in January to allow ample time for review and approval. Files will go to print and prepared for mail out in March 2015.
Transition	Final approved files as well as working files will be provided on April 1, both for record purposes and for adaptation if future mail outs are required.
Budget Range	\$7,000 - \$10,000
Budget Considerations	An unaddressed mail out (all households, so less targeted) would cost significantly less than an addressed (targeted) mail out, which accounts for the budget range. The budget also includes the design and layout of the postcard.

E-mail Marketing	
Description	As we expect that every audience group will have access to, and be generally familiar with email, developing a strategy that uses this medium may be an effective way to initiate initial contact with prospective users and engage them with the portal. <i>Tasks/Requirements</i> – Develop an extensive email list for prospective users; Design a visually appealing email to promote the launch of the site and provide direct access to it; Distribute email, include a mechanism to encourage further dissemination.
Timing	April 2015, monthly until December 2015.
Target Audience	All target audiences could be reached through e-mail marketing.
Client Resources	E-mails could be sent out using a third party e-newsletter tool by the AAE administrator with some training.
Implementation	Initial email newsletter completed in time for the official launch. Ongoing content generation and delivery over time by UAF to highlight new information added to the portal.



Transition	The third party e-newsletter account can be set up under the Web Administrator email address that is transferred to UAF April 1, 2015. Credit card information can also be provided by UAF in advance, and pre-loaded into the system, or done upon transition.
Budget Range	\$2,500 for initial template set up, \$10-25 fee from third party system per send out thereafter.
Budget Considerations	There are several different ways third party newsletter systems set up billing; some use a monthly fee for unlimited send outs, and others charge per email address sent to. The costs are very reasonable, and will likely be less than the stated budget range above in the beginning, but may grow to the upper end of the budget as more subscribers sign up for the e-mail marketing distributed.

Search Engine Marketing	
Description	A Google Adwords marketing program will allow a range of options to target audiences by type, target by website or target based on timing. It allows for directly measurable results (pay per click).
Timing	April 2015 to March 2016
Target Audience	All; To be determined by search terms chosen.
Client Resources	This tactic can be fully managed by the AAE administrator with some training or by taking the free online tutorial.
Implementation	Initial set up completed in time for the official launch. Ongoing monitoring to tweak and adjust results will make the Adwords program more effective.
Transition	The Adwords account can be set up under the Web Administrator email address that is transferred to UAF April 1, 2015.
Budget Range	\$250-500 per month
Budget Considerations	It's recommended that a higher budget be spent for the first 3-6 months after site launch to generate greater traffic. After the site is getting organic traffic as well, the program can be scaled back.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Social Media	
Description	Targeted outreach to promote the portal to prospective users using Facebook, Twitter or other social media to effectively reach prospective users. <i>Tasks/Requirements</i> – Identify social media platforms that will effectively reach prospective users; develop specific outreach tactics to engage users through these platforms; develop a communications plan and schedule for these users.
Timing	April 2015 to October 2015
Target Audience	All three target groups, with an emphasis on intermediary organizations in communities.
Client Resources	This tactic can be managed by the AAE administrator with some training.
Implementation	Initial set up completed in time for the official launch. Ongoing monitoring and engagement to continue to grow the user base, and to encourage early adopters to advocate for the portal.
Transition	The social media accounts can be set up under the Web Administrator email address that is transferred to UAF April 1, 2015.
Budget Range	\$200-400 per month (for social media ads).
Budget Considerations	Similar to Google Adwords, it's recommended that a higher budget be spent for the first 3-6 months after site launch to generate traffic. Once the site is getting organic traffic, the program can be scaled back.

Media Relations	
Description	To ensure the successful launch of the portal, media relations should focus on informing the public of the portal, its features and benefits in a positive, consistent and credible manner. The portal developed is likely to be of interest not only to the three identified target markets but also the general public, and so media uptake could generate free publicity for the portal.
Timing	April 2015 to October 2015
Target Audience	Academic, policy, general public
Client Resources	While media relations could be managed by the AAE administrator, it is recommended that a professional specializing in media and public relations be utilized for the first three to six months when it is most important to secure positive media attention on the portal. Would also recommend the AAE suggesting members or other experts to be interviewed about the portal.
Implementation	Press releases developed in advance of the portal launch. With the launch, press releases, interviews and additional engagement should be implemented in order to



	ensure media pickup and consistent communication across markets.
Transition	Working alongside the media relations specialist for the first three to six months, the UAF can transition future media relations to an internal representative.
Budget Range	\$1,000 - \$3,000 per month
Budget Considerations	Rates would be negotiated directly with a media and communications consultant and so will vary based on the selected proponent as well as the amount of time they put in each month. To gain the most media attention around the launch, the budget will typically be higher initially, and then decrease over time.

Widget	
Description	Develop a web tool for other websites to use that would post activity that is happening on the portal (similar to an RSS or social media feature). The widget would be a direct link to the portal if a user wanted more information on it.
Timing	April 2015
Target Audience	Collegial website administrators in the climate change field
Client Resources	No client resources would be required, other than approval on the final developed widget.
Implementation	Widget would be developed, tested, and ready for installation on external websites timed with the portal launch.
Transition	With the widget developed in advance of the transition, nothing would be required of UAF.
Budget Range	\$8,000 - \$15,000
Budget Considerations	During a discovery process, the required look and functionality of the widget would be discussed. As the complexity increases (for example, if it was determined that the entire interactive map should be incorporated into the widget), it becomes harder to program, and therefore the cost of the project would increase.

Incentives	
Description	Provide some kind of prize that will incentivize users to share the information among their networks. Could be applied in conjunction with any of the above concepts.
Timing	April 2015 to May 2015
Target Audience	Academic, Policy
Client Resources	Incentives can be determined and awarded by the AAE administrator.



Implementation	A full program for the contest/incentive can be developed in advance of the portal launch. Prizes can also be secured in advance for streamlined awarding.
Transition	Future incentives can be determined and awarded by the UAF.
Budget Range	\$200 +
Budget Considerations	Budget can vary dependent on the incentives rewarded. The incentive needs to at least be worthwhile enough (whether in monetary value or attributed value by the target audience) to encourage users to share the information across their networks.

Newsletters	
Description	An important measure of success for the Portal will be the participation of local communities and/or indigenous groups and their contribution of information. Those in communities may not be as familiar with digital technology, and so a print newsletter would be a traditional marketing opportunity used to engage them. The newsletter would highlight what the portal does, and the different types of projects that currently live on the portal (or are added in the future).
Timing	April 2015, September 2015
Target Audience	Intermediary organizations in communities, community residents
Client Resources	Client will be required to review and approve the design concepts for the newsletter template, as well as content created for the April 2015 newsletter.
Implementation	Initial newsletter completed in time for the official launch. Ongoing content generation and delivery over time by UAF to highlight new information added to the portal.
Transition	Final files will be provided to the UAF for production and distribution.
Budget Range	\$3,000
Budget Considerations	For an even greater outreach to targeted markets, the newsletter could be translated into indigenous languages. In order to accomplish this, additional budget would be required for translation services (available through Kellett's network of translators) as well as the design and layout of the newsletter in multiple languages.



INFORM AND INSTRUCT

Train-the-trainer Sessions	
Description	Hold one or more in-person events with prospective user groups to present the portal and provide training on how to use it. Partnering with community-intermediary organizations (e.g. Gwitch'in Council International) could help with the engagement of community intermediary organizations. <i>Tasks/Requirements</i> – Identify partner organizations to facilitate engagement of prospective users; design a presentation and training program to share with prospective users; in conjunction with partners, plan and deliver the events.
Timing	May 2015, ongoing as requested
Target Audience	Intermediary organizations in northern communities
Client Resources	Events and training sessions can be executed by the AAE team
Implementation	Partner organizations can be identified in advance of the transition, as can the presentation design. Events can be delivered after the transition.
Transition	The developed presentation will be provided to the UAF for delivery to audiences.
Budget Range	\$3,500 for development of initial presentation.
Budget Considerations	A variety of expenses will impact the overall cost of an event; transportation to remote northern communities is typically very expensive, and room and equipment rentals can also vary. These costs should be considered when choosing communities in which to host the in-person events.

Training Webinar	
Description	Development of a short presentation that can be delivered to users for all three user groups. Presentation should aim to effectively explain how the portal works, how to use it, and what users can accomplish through the portal (e.g. scenarios).
Timing	April and May 2015
Target Audience	All three user groups, with a heavier focus on policy and academic groups.
Client Resources	This tactic can be fully delivered by the AAE administrator after they are trained on the webinar system and what the presentation includes.
Implementation	The presentation will be developed in advance of the portal launch, with webinars being scheduled after the launch of the portal.
Transition	The webinar account will be set up with the email and user information of the UAF contact for simple transition.



Budget Range	\$3,500 for development of presentation
Budget Considerations	A variety of free online tools already exist which can be utilized for the delivery of the training webinar, so the only ongoing cost will be the cost of time of the AAE administrator delivering the webinar.

How-to Video	
Description	Development of a how-to video that can be hosted on the website or delivered to users groups. Video should aim to effectively explain how the portal works, how to use it, and what users can accomplish through the portal (e.g. scenarios).
Timing	April 15, 2015
Target Audience	All three user groups would benefit from the how-to video
Client Resources	Client will be required to review and approve the how-to video before it is published online or distributed through other communication channels.
Implementation	The video will be produced and completed before the AAE launch in April.
Transition	The video will be added to the website before transition to the UAF, and all files will be provided to them upon transition as well.
Budget Range	\$10,000
Budget Considerations	The budget proposed is average for a well-produced, professional training video. Dependent on the vision of the video, the budget could be minimized or expanded to include additional special features such as animation or live video footage.



MEASUREMENT

In completing this plan, we will measure success by the portal's ability to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Enhance awareness of the portal among prospective user groups
 - a. Measure number of visitors to the portal by week or by month for the first year of the portal being live.
- ii. Increase visitors to the portal
 - a. Increase the number of users who search and register with the site
 - b. Increase the number of documents submitted to the electronic library
 - c. Increase the number of documents downloaded from the electronic library
- iii. Measure the success of the implemented communications tactic, including but not limited to:
 - a. Report and record the number of click through's from digital marketing, including the e-mail marketing newsletters, Google ads, and social media presence
 - b. Measure attendance at in-person events and training sessions
 - c. Report and record the number of views of the how-to video

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