

## **Guidelines on Access to Arctic Council Records**

### 1. Effective Date

These guidelines have been approved by the Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) and take effect on October 22, 2014.

### 2. Scope

These guidelines apply to Arctic Council (AC) records held by the Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS), as defined under article 1(h) of the Host Country Agreement, signed between the ACS and the Kingdom of Norway on 21 January 2013: “Archives means all correspondence, documents, manuscripts, photographs, computer data storage, films, recordings and any other records, in paper, electronic or other form, belonging to or held by the Secretariat.”

These guidelines apply equally to all ACS archives or records that were created before the guidelines took effect, as well as those created subsequently.

AC records held in the repositories of Arctic States, Permanent Participants, Observers and the secretariats of AC subsidiary bodies are excluded from the scope of these guidelines. However, these bodies are encouraged to submit to the ACS documents that contribute to the collective memory of the AC.

### 3. Purpose

Given its rotational nature, the AC acknowledges that sharing information is essential to its work. The AC also acknowledges the need to restrict access to certain types of information. For example, access should not be granted to information that would pose a threat to the national security of any of the Arctic states or that would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

These guidelines establish the rules under which the ACS may provide internal access to its records.

These guidelines are to be applied in conjunction with the *Policy on Records Management for the Arctic Council Secretariat* approved by SAOs and Permanent Participants on 25 July 2014, the *Guidelines on the Release of Records Held by the Arctic Council Secretariat*, and the *Integrated Records Management Tool (IRMT)*.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

- a) **Senior Arctic Officials**, with the active participation of **Permanent Participants**, shall:
  - i. review and approve these guidelines, as well as any subsequent versions;
  - ii. ensure that these guidelines are upheld, by reviewing biennial reports on compliance that are to be submitted by the Director of the ACS, in accordance with section 8.4 of the *Policy on Records Management for the Arctic Council Secretariat*.
- b) The **Director of the Arctic Council Secretariat** shall ensure that:

- i. these guidelines are implemented and adhered to by the ACS;
- ii. appropriate remedial action is taken to address any deficiencies within the ACS related to the implementation of these guidelines;
- iii. information on compliance with these guidelines is contained within the Director's biennial report, to be completed in accordance with section 8.4 of the *Policy on Records Management for the Arctic Council Secretariat*.

## 5. Access to ACS Records

Wherever possible, the AC works in an open and transparent manner. Internal access to ACS records shall be authorized according to the "access" column in the current version of the IRMT, as approved by SAOs.

Any changes to the "access" column in the IRMT must be approved by SAOs or as delegated by SAOs.

The level of access is determined according to the following guiding principles:

### 5.1 ACS Staff

The Director and Deputy Director of the ACS shall have access to all ACS records. The Director of the ACS may limit access to other ACS staff, as he or she considers appropriate.

The ACS officer responsible for Human Resources shall have access to personnel files.

Staff of the ACS shall have access to their own personnel files, if required. This applies to individuals currently working for the ACS and those who previously worked for the ACS.

### 5.2 Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials

The Chair of the SAOs shall have access to all ACS records.

### 5.3 Senior Arctic Officials

SAOs and their delegates shall have access to ACS records, with some exceptions. For example, an exception would be personnel files of ACS staff.

### 5.4 Permanent Participant Heads of Delegation

Permanent Participant Heads of Delegation and their delegates shall have access to ACS records, with some exceptions. For example, an exception would be personnel files of ACS staff.

### 5.5 Other Members

Working Group and Task Force Chairs, Executive Secretaries, and Working Group and Task Force Heads of Delegation shall have access to ACS records that support the work of their subsidiary bodies as indicated in the IRMT.

Accredited Observer Heads of Delegation shall have access to all publicly available ACS records, as well as any additional records indicated in the IRMT.

#### 5.6 Members of the Public

Members of the public shall have access in accordance with the *Guidelines on the Release of Records Held by the Arctic Council Secretariat*.

#### 6. Exceptional Access

The Chair of the SAOs, in consultation with SAOs, may grant access to AC records outside of the rules established by these guidelines, if such access is necessary for AC operations. Such exceptional access to AC records should be based on a proven need for the records.

#### 7. Guidelines Review

These guidelines shall be reviewed by the SAOs every five years beginning on the date that the guidelines take effect.

#### 8. Enquiries

Enquiries about these guidelines should be directed to the Director of the ACS.