

Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

The Northern Forum

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Observer's website, if appropriate:

www.northernforum.org

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Is your state or organization still interested in continuing as an Observer of the Arctic Council?

+ Yes No

Observer Report

Please describe in no more than 2 pages your state or organization's contributions to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces and/or Expert Groups since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years. Please highlight contributions to specific projects, such as through proposals, concept development, in-kind and financial support, and hosting of meetings. If applicable, please include mention of collaboration with Permanent Participants, such as project proposal endorsement and support.

The Northern Forum is an international non-profit organization for governors of northern regions, which was established in 1991 in Alaska with 13 regional members from eight northern countries. The aim of the Northern Forum is to improve the quality of life of northern peoples and support sustainable development of northern regions by providing a platform for collaboration, knowledge and experience sharing and implementation of joint projects. This also includes development of tools and means for leaders of northern regions in addressing common challenges.

The history of cooperation between the Northern Forum and Arctic Council includes joint work on different projects: Reindeer Herding Management project (SDWG), SMART project (SDWG), CITF – Aviation, North Sea Route, Information Technologies (SDWG), Telemedicine Pilot Project (SDWG), Indigenous languages (SDWG), Brown Bear Management (CAFF), Flood Management (EPPR), Aerial Bird Surveys (CAFF-ECORA)

During the reporting period, the Northern Forum contributed to the work of Arctic Council by participation in the work of Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) and in different Arctic Council meetings.

1. CAFF Biennial Meeting in Yakutsk

In 2013 February 11-14 the Northern Forum Secretariat along with the Government of Sakha Republic hosted CAFF Board and Biennial meeting in Yakutsk in Eastern Siberia (The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russian Federation). Around 50 delegates who took part in the Biennial, discussed draft Policy Recommendations of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and other assessments. The meeting agenda also included other important aspects of CAFFs work, as developments in the work of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Plan, CAFFs participation in Arctic Council projects, cooperation with Arctic Council working groups, international cooperation, data management etc. Northern Forum and the Government of Sakha Republic have made in-kind contribution to host this meeting in Yakutsk.

2. Participation in Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Kiruna, Sweden

The delegation of the Northern Forum has participated in the Ministerial Meeting in Kiruna on May 15th, 2013.

3. SDWG meeting and SAO meeting in Yellowknife, North-West Territories, Canada

At these meetings Northern Forum has presented a new project proposal Humans in the Arctic, which is the project of the Russian Federation, initiated by Sakha Republic. Humans in the Arctic Project will evaluate the economic and living conditions of Arctic peoples, identify barriers to socio-economic development and produce a best practice guide that highlights models for improving the region's quality of life.

This assessment will include measures that describe paths to employment and workforce development, cultivation of innovation and entrepreneurship, small and medium enterprise development, and support for the continuation of traditional lifestyles in a modern context. To supplement the social and economic context, a review of local and sub-national economic development strategies will be completed. These will help to identify pathways to improved living and economic conditions – the lives and livelihoods of northern peoples. The project is under the concept development and discussion with Arctic states and Permanent Participants.

4. Participation in Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting 23-25 April 2015 Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada

Executive Director of the Northern Forum Mikhail Pogodaev attended the Ministerial Meeting in Iqaluit.

5. Participation in SAO Meeting in Anchorage, Alaska October 20-22, 2015

6. Participation in SDWG Meeting in Barrow and SAO meeting in Fairbanks

Cooperation with Arctic Council working groups on different projects:

1. SDWG EALLU Project: Arctic Indigenous Youth, Climate Change and Food Culture

The Northern Forum is a partner in the SDWG EALLU Project. The project is co-led by the Sami Parliament and recently other PPs became a co-leads of the project. This project seeks to maintain and further develop a sustainable and resilient reindeer husbandry in the Arctic in face of climate change and globalization, while working towards a vision of creating a better life for circumpolar reindeer herders. On 5th of November 2015 on occasion of the 12th General Assembly of the Northern Forum in Yakutsk Northern Forum in collaboration with Association of World Reindeer Herders and International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry held a special reception with presentation of indigenous peoples' food cultures as a part of implementation of the Arctic Council SDWG EALLU Project.

2. SDWG Arctic Energy Summit

Northern Forum has participated in the Arctic Energy Summit held in Fairbanks on 28-30 of September 2015 and was represented by the Minister of Sakha Republic on Federal and External Relations Vladimir Vasiliev. Along with the Arctic Energy Summit there was a Governors Meeting initiated and hosted by the Governor of the State of Alaska Bill Walker.

3. SDWG AREA Project

The Northern Forum is a partner in the SDWG AREA Project and will be responsible for implementation of the project in the northern regions of Russia. This project was endorsed by SDWG meeting in Barrow and SAO meeting in Fairbanks on March 2016. *Arctic Renewable Energy Atlas (AREA)* - a comprehensive online tool - to enhance knowledge of the best practices and local adaptation actions on renewable energy within the Arctic region. Key partners in the project Arctic Portal and Institute of the North.

4. SDWG ARENA Project

The Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy (ARENA) project addresses the need for the development of community energy experts to ensure affordable, reliable, renewable source energy solutions for Arctic communities. During the SAO meeting in Fairbanks on March 16-17, 2016 the Northern Forum's Executive Director Mikhail Pogodaev held meetings with the ARENA project leadership and discussed cooperation with the project and involvement of regional governments in a project activities.

If applicable, please describe in no more than 1 page your state or organization's future plans for contributing to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces and/or Expert Groups. Please highlight intentions to contribute to specific projects and to collaborate with Permanent Participants.

The Northern Forum is going to strengthen cooperation with the Arctic Council in a years to come. Today there are reforms in the Northern Forum and a process of restructuring of organization and its activities. Chair region and Secretariat of the Northern Forum are working to assemble more regional governments to the Northern Forum and make this organization truly circumpolar. In April 2016 State of Alaska and Lapland announced that they rejoin the Northern Forum.

As the main outcome of the 12th General Assembly of the Northern Forum held in Yakutsk on 4-7 November 2015 the Board of Governors has made a decision to establish working groups of the Northern Forum. These working groups will develop a new approaches in interregional cooperation in the Arctic and the idea is to link its activities with the working groups of Arctic Council.

There is a need for support mechanisms in implementation of Arctic Council projects and policies on a sub-national and local levels. The Northern Forum will take measures to synchronize activities of its working groups with the work of Arctic Council working groups.

Northern Forum is planning to continue active cooperation with SDWG, CAFF, EPPR and other working groups, Task Forces and/or Expert Groups.

Northern Forum will continue cooperation and will provide financial and in-kind support to SDWG EALLU Project, AREA project and other relevant projects. There is also a plan to submit the Northern Forum project Humans in the Arctic to SDWG for endorsement.

The Northern Forum also invites Permanent Participants to discuss the ways to strengthen cooperation with indigenous organizations on a sub-national and local levels. There is a discussion within the Northern Forum about special status for indigenous peoples' organizations representing indigenous communities in respective regions – members of the Northern Forum.

Priority directions for cooperation in the Northern Forum are:

1. Creation of conditions for sustainable development of industries and entrepreneurship in the North on the basis of application of the highest environmental and ethical standards. Stimulation of small and medium business development, including those owned by indigenous peoples.
2. Development of transport and telecommunication infrastructure in the North, including the Northern sea route and other transport corridors.
3. Practical cooperation in application of innovation technologies in renewable energy, heat energy, energy efficiency, housing, construction in the North.
4. Development of education and knowledge base in the North. Provision of access to quality education for peoples of the North.
5. Preservation of fragile northern environment, implementation of joint projects in development of nature conservation activities and maintaining environmental safety of northern regions, including traditional knowledge and experience of indigenous peoples.
6. Improvement of life quality in the North, implementation of the joint projects in healthcare, telemedicine and social infrastructure development;
7. Engagement of indigenous peoples of the North and their organizations in interregional and international cooperation on issues related to preservation and development of traditional livelihoods, languages and cultures;
8. Engagement of youth to international cooperation, development of competence and implementation of business potential for youth through participation in innovative projects.
9. Preservation and development of unique culture and traditional economic activities of indigenous peoples; implementation of international projects in culture and sports.

If applicable, please describe in no more than 1 page your state or organization's contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered by the previous sections since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years.

The Northern Forum is implementing different projects which are in line with the Arctic Council mission and might contribute to the work of this intergovernmental forum.

1. Renewable Energy and Affordable Energy for Remote Settlements of Northern Regions

The project was initiated by Yukon (Canada) and focuses on the issues of sustainable energy - electricity and heat. Using those in the Far North appears to be extremely promising, given the complexity and high cost of the use of conventional power, as well as a "regional response" to the global initiative to the wider application of "green energy technologies". As the outcome of the project there is an international conference on renewable energy held in Yakutsk annually.

2. Prevention of Addictions and Alcohol Abuse

Project objective is improving prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of persons suffering from alcoholism and drug addiction in the Arctic region.

3. Monitoring of Infectious Diseases

This project is a legacy of the Arctic Council SDWG International Circumpolar Surveillance (ICS) Project and focuses on joint efforts on research and monitoring of infectious diseases especially tuberculosis.

4. Suicide Prevention

Suicide (suicide) is now turned into one of the most urgent challenges of modern society. Suicide Prevention Project therefore focuses on the concrete efforts in combating suicide in northern communities by providing a platform for research, knowledge and experience exchange and development of programs on prevention of suicide, taking into account the effect of sociological, climatic and ethnic factors.

5. Telemedicine

Telemedicine is a pilot project of the Northern Forum, has reached some success, in the framework of seminars and exchange of experiences in Anchorage, Seward, Khanty-Mansiysk, Yakutsk, Seattle, Pëngchan etc. remote communication technology and data transfer for briefing and seminars allows to apply the experience of leading medical centers in any remote hospitals.

6. School Partnerships

Cooperation and exchange program between schools of northern regions

7. Development of Protected Areas

Cooperation between governments of northern regions on environmental protection and development of protected areas. In October 2015 Northern Forum held a workshop on Protected Areas in Saint-Petersburg hosted by the Government of Leningradskaya oblast.

8. Youth Eco-Forum

Project initiated by Hokkaido and is the annual gathering of youth. The forum not only a platform for young people to meet each other, but also to share experiences on environmental challenges in their home regions. Focus topics – mitigation and adaptation to climate change, awareness raising on environmental issues, urban ecology, ecological education etc. Next Youth Eco-Forum will take place on 26-28 of August 2016 in Salekhard, Yamal-Nenets AO, Russia.

9. Water and Climate Change Working Group

The Project focuses on research and experience sharing among member regions on floodings resulted from climate change. Every year especially in northern regions flooding is big challenge for small northern communities. Therefore there is a need to increase understanding on flooding and reduce impact to local communities.

10. International Arctic School

Initiative by the Government of Sakha Republic to develop a new paradigm in education for indigenous peoples. This school will be located in Yakutsk and will be opened in 2019.

11. International Centre for Culture and Art