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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP  
2017-2019 WORK PLAN



ARCTIC COUNCIL



Sustainable Development  
Working Group

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## **Introduction:**

Pursuant to its new Strategic Framework, the SDWG, through the lens of the human dimension, will encourage projects and initiatives that strengthen the resilience and well-being of the peoples of the Arctic and promote the three basic sustainable development pillars (social equity, economic development and environmental protection).

This work plan for the period 2017 to 2019 has been developed taking into account the thematic priorities set out in the Strategic Framework and will be implemented in accordance with the principles and guidelines contained in the Framework and related operating documents.

The SDWG requires the integration of traditional and local knowledge in all projects, as appropriate. Project budgets, start dates, meeting schedules, end dates and anticipated deliverables are contained in the project proposals. Co-leads and partners are listed as of the date of drafting.

The projects identified in this work plan consist of both projects that have already been endorsed by the SDWG and projects that are under development for future SDWG review and possible endorsement. Additional project proposals may be developed within the scope of this work plan between 2017 and 2019.

### **A. Continuing Projects**

A number of SDWG projects commenced during the 2015-2017 U.S. Chairmanship will continue into the Finnish Chairmanship under their current templates. The following SDWG projects in this category are summarized below in alphabetic order:

**1. The Arctic as a Food-Producing Region** [Leads: Canada, Norway, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council]

The aim of this project is to assess the potential for increased production and added value of food from the Arctic, with the overarching aim of improving economic and social conditions of Arctic communities. The Arctic or northern areas are already important as a food-producing region, but have potential to become even bigger. By focusing on biological (climate change), industry (commercial resources, infrastructure and industry policy) and market conditions, the project will explore and describe possible paths of development for Arctic food production. The aim is to identify conditions for increased production, new species and last but not least the potential for added value of food from the Arctic.

**2. Arctic Indigenous Youth, Arctic Change and Food Culture (EALLU)** [Leads: Canada, Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, Russian Federation, United States, Aleut International Association, Saami Council]

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The goal of EALLU is to utilize the food cultures and systems of Arctic indigenous peoples as a foundation for adaptation to Arctic change. Active engagement of circumpolar indigenous youth is at the core of the project. The project seeks to explore the opportunities of a changing Arctic for indigenous peoples, based on their own terms, their own knowledge and people, and thus from within their respective cultures. The project documents Indigenous traditional knowledge on food, through youth engagement, education, training and outreach. The project focuses on food security, food empowerment, and understanding Indigenous peoples food systems, developing recommendations to the Arctic Council on how such systems and knowledge can best be leveraged for sustainable development. The project engages Indigenous trans-boundary knowledge institutions. For the next phase, it is envisioned to strengthen education components and explore new possibilities for local economic development from northern sea routes.

**3. Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy (ARENA)** [Leads: Canada, Iceland, United States, Gwich'in Council International, Aleut International Association]

SDWG will continue to assist capacity building by sharing knowledge and establishing professional networks related to the transition from diesel to hybrid and renewable energy systems. These goals will be accomplished during 2017-2019 through a combination of a webinar series (covering topics ranging from electrical energy storage to solar energy) and an on-site program. In 2017, 20 Arctic energy "champions" will attend workshops in Canada (Yellowknife, Northwest Territory), the United States (Kodiak and Fairbanks, Alaska), and Iceland, combining classroom instruction, coaching, peer engagement and visits to communities and sites operating microgrid energy solutions.

**4. Arctic Renewable Energy Atlas (AREA)** [Leads: Canada, United States, Gwich'in Council International]

SDWG will contribute to Arctic regional sustainable development through AREA, an online tool that enhances knowledge of the best practices and local adaptation actions on Arctic renewable energy and energy efficiency. The initial launch of AREA was in May 2017. This tool will visualize collected renewable energy supply and demand data in addition to Arctic-wide local community success stories. AREA improves the understanding of Arctic investment potential, identifies information gaps, and highlights best practices.

**5. Gender Equality in the Arctic II** [Leads: Iceland, Sweden, Finland, Aleut International Association]

Objectives of this project are a) to enhance and foster relations between gender equality experts of Arctic Council member states and Permanent Participants; and b) to create a formal network of experts for information sharing and development of issues relevant to advancing gender equality in the Arctic.

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The experts will evaluate the continuation of the project in two years time.

Possible deliverables and outcomes of the project include increased information sharing about the many aspects of gender equality in the Arctic and its social and economic manifestations. The project will engage traditional and local knowledge based on input from Permanent Participants regarding the status, role and history with regard to gender equality in the Indigenous communities and within their societies.

**6. Operationalizing a One Health approach in the Arctic, Part 2 (One Health)**

[Leads: Canada, United States]

SDWG will continue to build ties between human, animal, plant, and environmental health stakeholders in the circumpolar region, as a key strategy for adapting to rapid environmental change. During the 2017-2019, the project will emphasize: 1) continued knowledge and information sharing, 2) further simulation exercises that identify strengths and areas for further capacity building, and 3) cooperative activities to address observed events [such as those identified by the Circumpolar Local Environmental Observers (CLEO) Network]. It will also work to build relationship with traditional and local knowledge holders - as well as relevant stakeholders in other working groups, such as AMAP, ACAP, and CAFF.

## **B. New Projects**

The following are new projects that the SDWG has endorsed for the 2017-2019 Finnish Chairmanship (listed in alphabetical order):

**7. Arctic Energy Summit 2017** [Co-leads: Finland, Iceland, Russian Federation]

The Arctic Energy Summit is a three-day conference that establishes a comprehensive approach to Arctic energy that includes petroleum-related activities, renewable energy potential and projects, energy efficiency and remote energy systems. The Summit responds to climate change and sustainable development, and provides a forum to share best practices, emerging technology and process innovation as well as relevant and topical policy issues. It produces a summary of findings that encourage consideration of pilot projects, research gaps and best practices. The 4th Arctic Energy Summit will take place 18-20 September, 2017. Conference planning and preparations have begun, with great interest from around the Arctic and world. The project will deliver its final report in February 2018.

**8. Good Practice Recommendations for Environmental Impact Assessment and Public Participation in the Arctic (Arctic EIA)** [Co-leads: Finland, the Kingdom of Denmark, Canada]

The objectives of the Arctic EIA project are: a) to improve the utilization of EIA as a tool to combine economic activities and environmental aspects; b) to increase the weight of environmental issues in project planning and decision making; c) to

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strengthen public participation and inclusion of Indigenous, traditional and local knowledge in EIA processes; d) to identify good practices within Arctic region by sharing experience and learning from each other through networking; and e) to reach developers and to learn about Arctic-specific issues in EIA (in cooperation with the Arctic Economic Council).

The project will produce Good Practice Recommendations on EIA and Public Participation in EIA in the Arctic. It will build a network of national and regional EIA authorities and other actors in the Arctic region. The planned duration of the project is from 5/2017 to 5/2019 (2 years).

**9. Teacher Education for Diversity and Equality in the Arctic** [Co-leads: Finland, Russian Federation, Norway, Canada]

The key actions of the project *Teacher Education for Diversity and Equality in the Arctic* during Finland's chairmanship are divided into four main categories:

- a) Knowledge Exchange: This key action will support networking of teacher education institutions and sharing good practices among them. The activities will include symposia, regular online-seminars, a special issue of a relevant journal and local summits. The topics are, among others: inclusive practices, digital teaching environments and Arctic pedagogy combining Indigenous pedagogical practices, education in sparsely populated areas and community-based education.
- b) Shared Research -- Seeing Education with Northern Eyes: The goal of this key action is to enhance understanding of teaching profession in circumpolar north and to highlight teacher education as means to promote teachers to become creators of the sustainable future in the Arctic. The progress of research activities will be tracked in symposia and conferences in 2017 and 2018. The results will be published as UArctic Report: Arctic Human Development Report at the Arctic Science Summit Week, ASSW, in March 2019.
- c) Cooperation in teacher education: This action will enhance practices of shared teaching across the institutions. The activities will include cooperation in different levels, such as visiting each other's courses via online-connections, teacher and researcher exchange, and investigating possibilities to establish a Nordic Master Program in Teacher Education and piloting it.
- d) Long term continuity (beyond 2019): The thematic network will continue as a UArctic thematic network among teacher education institutions across the circumpolar north. It will focus promoting quality, culturally relevant teacher education for the north.

The UArctic Thematic Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity in Education will lead the project. The project will run from the beginning of 2017 to Spring 2019.

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## **C. Project Proposals under Development**

The following projects represent new projects currently under deliberation within the SDWG.

### **10. Arctic Generation 2030** [Proposed by Norway]

The objective of this project is to forge a strong and globally-connected community of future Arctic leaders through an investment in the human capital of the region with a focus on training, networking, and partnerships led by the region's primary actors in education, research, public policy, and business. The project is based on four fundamental concepts:

- a. Triple helix collaboration between academic, business (including investors) and governance for innovation and knowledge-based growth.
- b. Integration of the Arctic into the global knowledge network, with emphasis on creating economic opportunities in the region and countering brain drain.
- c. Network-based public and scientific diplomacy across northern borders and between the North and the new global observers to the Arctic Council.
- d. Supporting the aims of the Arctic Council in making the Arctic a region of collaboration and peace for generations to come.

The project will implement a series of collaborative activities between key actors in northern business, higher education, science and capacity building that will give a strong boost to the relationship among young northern students, future Indigenous leaders, young scientists, and early career business experts, as well as giving them global connections and confidence.

### **11. Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit** [Proposed by Gwich'in Council International, Aleut International Association, Canada]

The objective of this project is to create a proactive and comprehensive long-term energy planning process for communities in the Arctic, namely, the Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Framework (ASEFF). The Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Framework will provide a community-centric process that brings together stakeholder groups to create more socially-desirable and economically-feasible energy solutions for Arctic communities. There is a three-stage implementation plan for the ASEFF: i) development of the ASEFF Toolkit, ii) ASEFF Toolkit Launch in 6-8 communities, and iii) structuring of the 'Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Fund' to action energy initiatives proposed in the community plans. Each of these steps has been outlined in the 'Long-term Vision' section of the proposal. The proposed project strategically aligns with the SDWG's mandate to advance sustainable development in the Arctic. This project will build practical knowledge and capacity of

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Indigenous peoples and Arctic community members around energy, and will help them seek sustainable benefits and opportunities from the energy sector.

**12. Nomadic Schools (“Children of Nomads”)** [Proposed by Russian Federation, RAIPON]

The nomadic school project is aimed at the analysis and evaluation of educational practices without interrupting the traditional ways of life of Indigenous peoples – children of nomads, providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to function fully as effective members of both their own community and mainstream society. The main objective of the project is the collection of data related to best international practices and their implementation, an optimal curriculum and education process organization, and the creation of arctic nomadic tutoring system.

**13. Solid Waste Management in Small Arctic Communities** [Proposed by Aleut International Association, Finland]

The project goals and deliverables include: 1) an examination of current best practices in solid waste management among the Arctic States; 2) a determination of the potential need for policy actions to address waste management issues; 3) assessing the potential for recycling/reusing plans that will lower waste and provide revenue, building on Indigenous traditions of “nothing wasted, everything used”; 4) an examination of programs to educate communities and raise awareness about waste management and how changes can positively affect them; and 5) an assessment of contaminants issues related to solid waste disposal in the Arctic. This project will operate under the auspices of the SDWG but will also include close cooperation with ACAP which will provide expertise in articulating contaminants issues related to solid waste handling. In addition, the involvement of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) will be invaluable in exploring the potential for public/private partnership approaches to waste management.

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## **D. Possible Follow-On Projects**

The following projects commenced during previous chairmanships, and a follow-on phase may be proposed during the Finnish Chairmanship, pending submission and endorsement of a new project template.

### **14. Arctic Adaption Exchange Portal** [Leads: TBD]

The follow-on work to this project is currently being formulated. During the Canadian Chairmanship of the SDWG (2013-2015), this project established an online portal that promotes community exchange and dissemination of information to support innovative approaches to climate change adaptation. Member States of the Arctic Council will continue to build on their open data policies to consolidate and facilitate access to climate-related Arctic data sets. Other Arctic Council Working Groups are encouraged to submit links to their data sets and/or reports related to adaptation. The Arctic Adaptation Exchange Portal website is at: [www.arcticadaptationexchange.com](http://www.arcticadaptationexchange.com).

### **15. Continuing Circumpolar Collaboration on Mental Wellness and Suicide Prevention (follow-on to RISING-SUN)** [Leads: TBD]

SDWG will continue to support efforts to increase mental wellness and facilitate suicide prevention in Arctic Indigenous communities. During 2017-2019, efforts are likely to include 1) education about and dissemination of the RISING SUN toolkit, 2) use of regional webinars to receive feedback on and improve utility of the toolkit, and 3) discussion of regional efforts to validate measures for outcomes identified through the RISING SUN initiative. The project will continue to build relationships with traditional and local knowledge holders - as well as other stakeholders beyond the SDWG.

### **16. Continuing Circumpolar Engagement on WASH (WASH)** [Leads: TBD]

SDWG will continue to share information and monitor progress towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal of improved water/sanitation service for all Arctic residents. Project participants from the first phase plan to convene a workshop on Arctic water and sanitation and health at the 17th International Congress on Circumpolar Health in August 2018. Previous and new project leads will continue to seek and apply traditional and local knowledge to ascertain which WASH solutions are acceptable to relevant communities.

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## **E. Other Activities**

### **17. International Circumpolar Surveillance (ICS) [Arctic Human Health Expert Group]**

The ICS network is entering its 18th year; it launched as an Arctic Council/SDWG endorsed project in 1999. ICS is a network of public health laboratories for monitoring invasive bacterial infections in the circumpolar North. ICS has added tuberculosis surveillance to the other five bacterial pathogens and is continuing the partnerships to maintain proficiency testing among the network reference labs. ICS research networks have expanded to include invasive bacterial diseases, climate change-related infectious diseases, viral hepatitis, *Helicobacter pylori* infections and tuberculosis. ICS steering groups function under the International Union for Circumpolar Health infectious disease work group and will meet again in September 2017 and August 2018 in Copenhagen. Many of the ICS's members are also active in the SDWG AHHEG, and the results of ICS meetings are reported out to AHHEG. Additionally, the diseases and issues identified through ICS are used to inform AHHEG activities and expert advice to SDWG.

### **18. SECEG Activities in Relation to PAME's MEMA Project [Social, Economic, and Cultural Expert Group]**

PAME is discussing the findings of the MEMA report and considering possible follow-up actions. The nature of possible follow-up actions will be subject to discussions in SDWG but possibilities could include unified and widely applicable guidelines across sectors and marine and terrestrial activities, or a set of principles of meaningful engagement, or an evaluation of the implementation of existing guidance. The SDWG has approved SECEG's continued involvement in the MEMA project.

### **19. Community Use of Heavy Fuel Oils (Lead: TBD)**

PAME has requested collaboration on its heavy fuel oil (HFO) in the Arctic project, specifically related to on-shore use by Indigenous peoples and local communities of HFO as well as the extent to which peoples and communities rely on ships that burn HFO to deliver supplies and provisions.