



Sustainable Development
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

SDWG Work Plan 2019 – 2021

(as of 12 February 2019)

SDWG Mandate

The Sustainable Development Working Group's (SDWG) Terms of Reference were formally adopted at the Arctic Council Ministers' Meeting in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada in September 1998. The goal of the sustainable development program is to propose and adopt steps to be taken by the Arctic States to advance sustainable development in the Arctic, including opportunities to protect and enhance the environment, and the economies, cultures and health of Indigenous communities and of other inhabitants of the Arctic, as well as to improve the environmental, economic and social conditions of Arctic communities as a whole. The *SDWG Strategic Framework 2017* encourages projects and initiatives under twelve thematic priorities.

1. Introduction

The SDWG focuses on the human dimensions of the Arctic, and in accordance with its mandate, pursues activities to protect and enhance the environment, economy, social conditions and health of Indigenous communities and Arctic inhabitants.

The SDWG Work Plan for the period 2019 to 2021 has been developed taking into account the *2017 SDWG Strategic Framework*, including the twelve thematic priority areas contained in it, with a view to promoting initiatives that enhance sustainable development and meaningful understanding in the Arctic region; are applicable and valuable for the communities; long-term in scope; and enhance circumpolar collaboration and engagement of Indigenous and Arctic communities.

2. List of Individual Projects and Activities

The projects identified in this work plan include 1) continuing projects that have already been endorsed by the SDWG; 2) follow-on projects which require an updated project proposal template to describe the next phase of work; and 3) projects that are under development for future SDWG review and possible endorsement. Additional project proposals may be developed and endorsed within the scope of this work plan during the Icelandic Chairmanship (2019 – 2021).

Thematic Priority: Educational Opportunities

Rationale: Develop circumpolar networks and harness innovative technologies to build knowledge and develop skills needed to maintain vibrant communities in a changing region.

Project/Activity: Continue and expand the *Arctic Children - Preschool Education and Smooth Transition to School* project to include the *International Arctic School* project proposed by Russia, RAIPON and Northern Forum.

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include Russian Federation, RAIPON, Canada, Finland, Norway, Northern Forum, IASSA and IASC]

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Objective: Analysis and evaluation of educational practices without interrupting the traditional way 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; enhance all levels of education in the Arctic; understand the conditions for access to quality general education; identify an effective model of high quality education; establish a network for cooperation to create new standards, including language preservation and delivery of education in multiple languages.

Main Activities: Collection of data related to best international practices and their implementation; optimal curriculum and education process organization; creation of an Arctic nomadic tutoring system. A revised, expanded project proposal is under development.

Thematic Priority: Heritage and Culture of Arctic Communities

Rationale: Deepen global understanding of the region's peoples, cultures, traditional ways of life, languages and values and promote traditional and local knowledge. Sustain and celebrate Indigenous languages, traditional lifeways and practices, including knowledge about traditional diets and food security. Support the identification and promotion of heritage sites and areas of particular cultural significance in the Arctic.

Project/Activity: Follow-on to *Arctic Indigenous youth, food knowledge and Arctic change (EALLU)*

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include Norway, Canada, Russian Federation, Sweden, U.S., Arctic Athabaskan Council, Aleut International Association, Saami Council and Association of World Reindeer Herders

Objective: Food security, food empowerment, and understanding Indigenous peoples food systems in the context of sustainable development; utilize the food cultures and systems of Arctic Indigenous Peoples as a foundation for adaptation to Arctic change; strengthen education components and explore new possibilities for local economic development from northern sea routes. Active engagement of circumpolar Indigenous youth is at the core of the project. The project seeks to explore opportunities for Indigenous peoples created by a changing Arctic.

Main Activities: An updated project proposal template is under development.

Thematic Priority: Reduction/Elimination of Inequalities

Rationale: Strengthen and promote the adoption of sound policies for the elimination of inequalities based on age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status at all levels.

Project/Activity: Gender Equality in the Arctic III (GEA)

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Lead/Co-leads: Leads include Iceland, Canada, Finland, (Sweden, Aleut International Association and Saami Council are considering participating as co-leads)

Objective: Promote dialogue on gender equality in the Arctic region by strengthening the network of experts and stakeholders that was launched during GEA phase II (2017-19); secure a permanent platform for networking and consolidating knowledge on subjects relating to gender equality in the Arctic.

Main Activities: Strengthen the network of experts and stakeholders by developing the GEA web portal to provide a permanent platform for cooperation and building knowledge on gender equality in the Arctic; consolidate information and inventories on existing projects and best practices on the web portal; organize sessions on gender equality in conjunction with relevant Arctic events to raise awareness; subject to funding, publish a comprehensive report on Gender Equality in the Arctic. This project was endorsed at the SDWG Meeting in Kemi in February 2019.

Thematic Priority: Human Health

Rationale: Exchange information, assessments and innovations that can support public health systems and health service delivery (including clean energy sources/systems) - with particular emphasis on projects that reduce death and disability from environmental risk factors, suicide, and high-burden infectious and chronic diseases.

Project/Activity: One Arctic - One Health

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include Canada, U.S., and Finland

Objective: Build understanding of the ties between human, animal, plant, and environmental health in the circumpolar region, as a key strategy for adapting to rapid environmental change.

Main Activities: To date the project has emphasized continued knowledge and information sharing; further simulation exercises that identify strengths and areas for further capacity building; cooperative activities to address observed events (such as those identified by the Circumpolar Local Environmental Observers (CLEO) Network); build relationships with traditional and local knowledge holders -- as well as relevant stakeholders in other working groups, such as AMAP, ACAP, and CAFF. An updated project proposal template is under development.

Project/Activity: Follow-on to *Circumpolar Resilience, Engagement and Action Through Story (CREATeS)*

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include ICC, Canada, Finland, and Sweden

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Objective: Support and facilitate international connections and collaboration between circumpolar communities—specifically youth, Indigenous Peoples, health practitioners, researchers, policy-makers and others—towards effective action that reduces suicide and fosters mental wellness.

Main Activities: Building on activities and outcomes under Project CREATEs, follow-on work will include, but not be limited to, a continued focus on participatory arts-based methods (e.g. digital storytelling) as well as opportunities for knowledge and practice exchange emphasizing implementation of suicide prevention and mental wellness initiatives. Research in this realm will also be supported as will communications of all project activities. A formal project proposal is forthcoming.

Thematic Priority: Community Vitality

Rationale: Increase foundational knowledge of human development and the indicators of community vitality and provide tools for constructive solutions to demographic challenges, patterns of human settlement, urban planning and mobility. Promote the linkages between the protection of the environment and wellness, resilience and adaptability of communities.

Project/Activity: *Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic II (SLiCA II)*

Lead/Co-leads: Proposed by Inuit Circumpolar Council; Leads to be determined

Objective: Update and extend the work of the SLiCA project carried out by SDWG from 1998 to 2011.

Main Activities: A project proposal template is under development.

Thematic Priority: Water and Sanitation Services

Rationale: Strengthen the participation of local communities in improving sustainable water, sanitation and waste disposal management with an eye to the unique engineering challenges and environmental risks that the region faces.

Project/Activity: Follow-on to Solid Waste Management in Small Arctic Communities

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include Canada, Finland and Aleut International Association

Objective: Continue SDWG work in this area and increase cooperation with other working groups (e.g. ACAP, AMAP, EPPR, CAFF). In addition, explore cooperation with the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) in relation to public/private partnerships directed at waste management.

Main Activities: Continue to 1) examine current best practices in solid waste management among the Arctic States; 2) determine the potential need for policy actions to address waste management issues; 3) assess the potential for recycling/reusing plans that will lower waste

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and provide revenue, building on Indigenous traditions of “nothing wasted, everything used”; 4) develop programs to educate communities and raise awareness about waste management and how changes can positively affect them; and 5) assess contaminants issues related to solid waste disposal in the Arctic.

Thematic Priority: Infrastructure

Rationale: Provide information to inform responsible and sustainable long-term investments in all forms of Arctic infrastructure while taking into account the present needs of communities as well as the changing environment through independent efforts and in coordination with other subsidiary bodies and task forces.

Project/Activity: Zero Arctic: Concepts for carbon neutral Arctic construction based on tradition

Lead/Co-leads: Leads are Finland and Canada

Objective: Develop regional concepts for Arctic building construction that are carbon neutral over their full life-cycle; utilise both scientific life-cycle assessment and energy simulation methods; learn from and apply traditional knowledge of sustainable construction; explore the potential for compensating anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions through natural and man-made carbon sinks in the context of Arctic construction; enable the capacity for continuous development of Arctic carbon neutral construction.

Main Activities: Establish a network of relevant stakeholders in Arctic countries; benchmark the life cycle energy performance and greenhouse gas emissions of Arctic construction; analyse the traditional Arctic solutions to sustainable and energy-efficient construction; Recognise locally-adoptable, cost-optimal and user-centered service and design innovations for reaching carbon neutrality; develop concepts for regional carbon neutral villages and buildings; arrange stakeholder and expert workshops for key tasks of the project; disseminate the findings through local seminars, reports and media. This is an endorsed project.

Thematic Priority: Sustainable Energy

Rationale: Promote responsible and sustainable management, use and development of energy and resources as well as innovative approaches encouraging renewable energy in even the most remote Arctic communities.

Project/Activity: Arctic Energy Summit 2019

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include Iceland and Finland

Objective: Establish a comprehensive approach to Arctic energy that includes petroleum-related activities, renewable energy potential and projects, energy efficiency and remote

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energy systems; provide a forum to share best practices, emerging technology and process innovation as well as relevant and topical policy issues; respond to the challenges of climate change and sustainable development in the Arctic.

Main Activities: The 5th Arctic Energy Summit is a three-day conference planned to take place in Iceland in 2019. It will produce a summary of findings that encourage consideration of pilot projects, research gaps and best practices. This is an endorsed project.

Project/Activity: Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy II (ARENA II)

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include Canada, U.S., Gwich'in Council International

Objective: Assist capacity building by sharing knowledge and establishing professional networks related to the transition from diesel to hybrid and renewable energy systems.

Main Activities: Building on the successful model of ARENA I, planning for learning opportunities to provide knowledge, skills and tools that facilitate integrating clean energy technologies in the Arctic region with a view to promoting development of community energy solutions. An updated project proposal template is under development and will include an on-site session.

Project/Activity: Maintenance of Arctic Renewable Energy Atlas (AREA) website

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include U.S., Canada, GCI and South Korea

Objective: Provide a tool to visualize renewable energy supply and demand data in the Arctic and to present Arctic-wide local community success stories to inform decision-makers and promote responsible investment.

Main Activities: Complete AREA's online tool to enhance knowledge of the best practices and local adaptation actions on Arctic renewable energy and energy efficiency; store renewable energy data for inclusion in the online atlas; provide a library of online multimedia content presenting the local perspective and highlighting community level success stories.

Project/Activity: Follow-on to Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include Gwich'in Council International, Canada, Netherlands and EU

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Objective: Implement a proactive and comprehensive long-term energy planning process that brings together stakeholder groups to create more socially desirable and economically feasible energy solutions for Arctic communities.

Main Activities: Establish pilot projects in communities, and work to develop an Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Fund to help fully realize the energy initiatives proposed in the community plans. A project proposal template is under development.

Thematic Priority: Transportation Links

Rationale: Promote the development of sustainable transportation infrastructure and traditional corridors that increase the capabilities for efficient movement of people and goods that have implications for Arctic communities, often in cooperation with other subsidiary bodies as mentioned below.

Project/Activity: No projects currently identified.

Thematic Priority: Science and Research for Sustainable Development

Rationale: Facilitate good use of the Arctic region's research institutions and extensive intellectual resources to benefit sustainable development, including through academic exchanges and joint Arctic research.

Project/Activity: No projects currently identified.

Thematic Priority: Economic Assessments

Rationale: Strengthen analysis and joint monitoring of economic trends and activities in the Arctic, to include both cash and subsistence economies, to enhance sustainable and diverse economic development, investments and policies.

Project/Activity: Economy of the North IV (ECONOR IV)

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include Canada and Norway

Objectives: Follow-on work to SDWG projects ECONOR I-III.

Main Activities: During 2019-21, a team of experts, including the prospective ECONOR IV project team, will examine questions of resource wealth and distribution, as well as economic regulation, production, and decision-making, in the Arctic with a view to developing an ECONOR IV proposal to the SDWG. On a broader scale, this group will facilitate continued collaboration between statistical agencies beyond the scope of the Economy of the North report series to date to ensure sustainability of knowledge delivery to where it is needed most both locally and internationally in support of informed decision-making.

Project/Activity: Possible projects arising from the SDWG Thematic Discussion on Sustainable Economic Development —low-carbon, resource-efficient circular economy are under discussion.

Thematic Priority: Sustainable Business Involvement and Development

Rationale: Explore economic development, including in new and emerging sectors, and evaluate its potential benefits, including job creation and promotion of local culture and products. Highlight the sustainable development impacts of such sectors, create new frameworks and provide necessary support to all stakeholders in addressing the challenges and opportunities resulting from a larger and more diversified business presence in the region.

Project/Activity: Arctic Food Innovation Cluster (AFIC)

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include Canada, Finland, Iceland, Russian Federation, USA, Gwich'in Council International, Aleut International Association

Objective: Facilitate the development of a focused approach to food production and regional economic development; respond to global challenges of food production while seeking to define the Arctic's role and contribution to the changing climate and issues of food security locally and around the world.

Main Activities: Food production encompasses traditional, artisanal, and industry-scale production of natural resources into food for own, national, and international consumption. The project will bring together actors in the Arctic food value chain (e.g. Arctic food producers with governments, Arctic Indigenous communities, universities, research centers, vocational training providers and industry associations) to explore ways to increase the Arctic's competitiveness in food industries. This project was endorsed at the SDWG Meeting in Kemi in February 2019.

Project/Activity: *Blue Bio-economy in the Arctic*

Lead/Co-leads: Anticipated leads include Iceland

Objectives: Consider opportunities and possible obstacles in the development of blue bio-economy in the Arctic.

Main Activities: A project proposal template is under development.

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3. Expert Group Activities

Arctic Human Health Expert Group (AHHEG): AHHEG's work focuses primarily on the thematic priority of Human Health and collaborates closely with the AMAP Human Health Assessment Group. AHHEG provides expert advice and support for the above-listed projects on One Health and suicide prevention. Specifically, AHHEG and its members will continue to steer, participate in, and disseminate information within their networks about project activities. In addition, SDWG is considering a new project template on International Circumpolar Surveillance (ICS), which is a network of public health laboratories for monitoring invasive bacterial infections in the circumpolar north.

Social, Economic and Cultural Expert Group (SECEG): During the period 2019-2021 SDWG will continue to enhance SECEG's role as an analytical tool for sustainable development and further implementation of the SDWG Strategic Framework. SECEG will begin shorter, regular knowledge outputs as a first step towards more comprehensive assessments or State of the Arctic reports. Canada is providing funding for a SECEG study entitled *Renewable Resource Economies in the Arctic: A State of Knowledge Report*, in cooperation with UArctic thematic networks that have expertise in this area. SECEG will continue to network with the larger social science and Indigenous knowledge communities.

4. Collaboration with other Working Groups

SDWG continues to examine opportunities to expand its collaboration with other Arctic Council subsidiary bodies. Some matters under consideration by the SDWG are identified below; however, these are not yet endorsed activities under the SDWG Work Plan:

- SDWG is exploring collaboration with ACAP on a range of projects and activities, including:
 - projects relating to solid waste management in small Arctic communities and on activities related to the Indigenous Peoples Contaminants Action Program (IPCAP).
- Through AHHEG, SDWG continues to collaborate with AMAP's Human Health Assessment Group on a range of human health projects and activities.
- SDWG is exploring collaboration with CAFF on a range of projects and activities, including:
 - the implementation of Arctic Biodiversity Assessment goal #4 in respect of the mining industry to develop a user-driven approach for the incorporation of biodiversity considerations in industry operations;
 - CAFF's work on the roles and functions of Arctic wetlands as a resource to support sustainable development and resilience in the Arctic;

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- CAFF's youth engagement work;
 - Other CAFF work that is closely aligned with SDWG work, including Indigenous languages.
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- SDWG is exploring collaboration with PAME on a range of projects and activities, including:
 - the 2nd PAME conference on implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the Arctic (marine).

5. Communications and outreach for 2019-2021

Each SDWG project proposal includes a communications element. The SDWG adopted a communications plan in May 2017 in conjunction with the new *SDWG Strategic Framework 2017*. The communications work plan for 2019-2021 is under development by a SDWG Communications sub-committee. Examples of possible products include reports, education toolkits, social media campaigns, website development, webinar series, scientific posters, video production, workshops, seminars and conferences, presentations at key events, and responding to press inquiries. SDWG materials are translated into other languages when resources allow.

6. Administration

The SDWG secretariat is located in Ottawa. The secretariat is currently operated under a contract funded primarily by Canada, with some contributions from Finland. The executive secretary is under contract until 31 May 2019. Secretariat budget details for 2019-2021 are not currently available. During the Finnish Chairmanship, the SDWG held four plenary meetings. For the period 2019-2021, Iceland will chair the SDWG. The tentative SDWG meeting schedule for 2019-2021 is:

- 11-12 Sept 2019 Ísafjörður
- 22-23 March 2020 Akureyri
- 26-27 October 2020 Egilsstaðir
- 03-04 February 2021 Reykjanes