



Sustainable Development
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

SDWG PROJECT PROPOSAL

<p>Project Title:</p> <p>Blue Bioeconomy in the Arctic Region</p>	<p>Lead Country/Project leader(s):</p> <p>Iceland – Matís ohf.</p> <p>Co-leads: [TBC]</p>
<p>Summary of required inputs:</p> <p>Iceland as lead country will cover the cost of project coordination, editing of desktop study and final report, as well as hosting a workshop in Reykjavík. It is expected that co-leads will provide funding for expert contributions and cover related costs, including travel.</p>	<p>Relationship to other AC Working Groups:</p>
<p>Summary of project objectives and main outcomes:</p> <p>Building knowledge of opportunities, challenges and best practices for the development of the Blue Bioeconomy in the Arctic region.</p>	

Project Objectives

The objective of the project is to consider opportunities and possible challenges for the development of the Blue Bioeconomy in the Arctic region. With a focus on balancing economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection, the project links to the priority area of Sustainable Business Involvement and Development in SDWG’s Strategic Framework.

Utilization of living marine resources is a major economic factor in coastal communities in the Arctic region. However, it has been estimated that only about half of all marine biomass captured or cultivated globally gets processed for human consumption. The other half is either discarded or used to produce low-value products. Innovative methods to improve the utilization of aquatic raw materials and create higher-value products may therefore have considerable potential for driving sustainable economic growth in Arctic coastal communities. For instance, the development of novel products from parts of the catch that were previously thrown away as waste – like fish heads, bones and skin – may enable producers to maximize the value per unit and simultaneously minimize biowaste.¹

¹ See video by project leader Matís: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEp3fFleZc4>



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The Blue Bioeconomy is based on the sustainable and intelligent use of renewable aquatic natural resources, with a focus on improving utilization and creating higher-value products.² Examples of such products include novel foods and dietary supplements, animal feeds, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and even energy. Fisheries and other businesses that catch or cultivate the raw materials for these products, or that extract, refine, process and transform the biological compounds, all form part of the Blue Bioeconomy, as well as companies that work to develop the required technologies and equipment.³

The project aims at mapping opportunities in the Arctic region for the development of the Blue Bioeconomy, collecting success stories and best practices, as well as identifying obstacles that could hamper progress. Findings and conclusions will be brought to the SDWG, including recommendations on possible measures to create a favourable environment for sustainable Blue Bioeconomy growth in the Arctic.

Activities and Outputs

Key project activities include a desktop study and a workshop that will be convened in Reykjavik, Iceland. Findings and conclusions will be summarized in a final report to the SDWG.

- **A desktop study on opportunities, obstacles and best practices** will be carried out under the management of the project leader, with expert contributions from project partners. The desktop study could be executed in a period of around eight months, through collection of existing knowledge and stakeholder interactions. The desktop study should cover such topics as the Blue Bioeconomy and its distinctive features in the Arctic region; identifying and quantifying aquatic biomass in the Arctic with a focus on opportunities for sustainable economic growth (e.g. in marine and freshwater fisheries, aquaculture, micro-algae and macro-algae, underutilized species); Blue Bioeconomy success stories and examples of best practices.
- **A workshop** will be convened in Iceland, where experts and stakeholders are invited to discuss a draft version of the desktop study and its preliminary findings. Participants should include project partners and other experts, business and industry representatives, representatives from indigenous peoples' organizations and Arctic communities, and representatives from the Arctic Council and its subsidiary bodies. The proceedings of the workshop will feed into the final version of the desktop study.
- **The final project report** will summarize the findings and conclusions of the desktop study and workshop, including policy-relevant recommendations.

² Nordic Council of Ministers, 2018: <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/arctic-business-analysis-bioeconomy>

³ European Commission, 2018: http://eumofa.eu/documents/20178/84590/Blue+bioeconomy_Final.pdf



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Partnerships

The Blue Bioeconomy project may have linkages to another project on the 2019-2021 SDWG workplan, the Canadian-led Arctic Food Innovation Cluster (AFIC). Possible synergies between the two projects should be considered.

A partnership could be explored with the Arctic Economic Council, which has decided to establish a Working Group on Blue Economy as a sign of the potential of ocean-related industries.

Timetable and Project Completion

- Project proposal submitted for approval at SDWG meeting in Ísafjörður in September 2019. Co-leads appoint experts to participate in the project.
- Kickoff meeting for project participants in October 2019.
- Desktop study performed by project partners from October 2019 to April 2020. Draft of desktop study circulated in May/June 2020.
- Workshop to gather feedback from stakeholders on the draft document will be convened in Iceland in late August or beginning of September 2020.
- Desktop study finalized by late September 2020, with a possibility of presenting its main findings and conclusions at SDWG meeting in late October 2020.
- Final project report ready by end of December 2020 and submitted in time for February 2021 meeting of SDWG.

Costs

Iceland as lead country will cover the cost of project coordination, editing of desktop study and drafting of final report, as well as hosting the project workshop.

It is expected that other project partners will cover the cost of their own participation, including expert contributions and travel costs.

Integration of Indigenous and Local Knowledge

Indigenous and local knowledge may contribute to better project outcomes and its integration is encouraged.

Communications

Target audiences include policy makers and community leaders, business and industry.

It is expected that the SDWG will bring the conclusions and recommendations from the project to the attention of the Senior Arctic Officials.