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03 Nov: Arctic Demography Index added to table





Direction of Senior Arctic Officials Requested

The SDWG is seeking guidance from SAOs on:

- How the Arctic Council will manage work related to COVID-19 and any issues/topics that should be prioritized by Working Groups
- Guidance on any coordinated efforts to enhance engagement of youth in Arctic Council activities
- Preparations for the 2021 Arctic Council Ministerial

Advancing the SDWG’s 2019-2021 Work Plan

The SDWG held its last Executive and Plenary meetings from 26-28 October 2020. These meetings were held online due to continuing travel restrictions as result of COVID-19. The plenary meeting included 115 participants with all Arctic States and Permanent Participant represented. 10 Observer States, 3 Observer IGOs, 9 Observer NGOs and the European Union were also represented.

Two (2) new projects were endorsed at the October 2020 SDWG meeting – *Digitalization of Linguistic and Cultural Heritage of Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic* (lead/co-lead: Russian Federation and Norway) and *Sustainable Development Goals in the Arctic: The Nexus Between Water, Energy, and Food* (lead/co-lead: Canada and Iceland). The SDWG now has fourteen (14) projects that have been endorsed. Many of these projects are expected to continue as part of the SDWG’s 2021-2023 work plan.

Endorsed Project	Status
SDWG Thematic Priority: Educational Opportunities	
Arctic Children – Preschool and Smooth Transition to School	<p>This project is an assessment of best practices in free pre-school education for children from Indigenous minorities of the Arctic and Subarctic regions. It was endorsed as part of the 2017-2019 work plan and it received support to continue as part of the current work plan. The project leads are currently developing a project proposal to be discussed with co-leads and project partners.</p> <p>Planning of the follow-on project has been delayed. The new phase of the project is now expected to be introduced as part of the 2021-2023 work plan.</p>
SDWG Thematic Priority: Heritage & Culture of Arctic Communities	
Arctic Indigenous Youth, Food Knowledge and Arctic Change (EALLU) Phase II	<p>This project was endorsed by the SDWG at its September 2019 meeting. It is a follow on project to the EALLIN Reindeer Herding Youth Project and EALLU I. The goal of this phase of the project is to maintain and further develop a sustainable and resilient reindeer husbandry in the Arctic in face of climate change and globalisation, working towards a vision of creating a better life for circumpolar reindeer herders. In particular, the project focuses on youth involvement and engagement, seminars and place-based workshops, local capacity building, summer/ winter schools, networking, as well as co-production of project outputs by youth themselves.</p> <p>This project has been delayed due to COVID-19. Most activities are now expected to take place during the Russian Chairmanship. A 2019-2021 project summary report will be provided for the 2021 Ministerial.</p>



<p>Digitalization of Linguistic and Cultural Heritage of Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic</p>	<p>This project was endorsed at the October 2020 meeting. It is focused on preserving and developing Indigenous languages, traditional knowledge and cultures of the Arctic Indigenous peoples. The project will use modern digital technologies, creation of a GIS map and Arctic Indigenous peoples’ knowledge database on a multilingual portal, www.arctic-megapedia.com. The <i>Project</i> will provide access to information, promote better understanding and facilitate adaptation to Arctic changes based on the knowledge and resources of affected communities and peoples.</p> <p>This project is expected to launch in January 2021 and will continue until 2024.</p>
<p>SDWG Thematic Priority: Reduction/Elimination of Inequalities</p>	
<p>Gender Equality in the Arctic III (GEA)</p>	<p>GEA was initially introduced in SDWG’s 2013-2015 work plan. GEA III is part of the Icelandic Chairmanship Program and is a follow on project that was endorsed by the SDWG in February 2019. This project will produce a pan-Arctic report on gender and diversity in the Arctic and publish a digital quarterly newsletter about the status of GEA III and highlight gender-related topics in the Arctic. The Editorial Committee for the GEA report has been established and a youth advisory council has been created. Most authors have been confirmed. The GEA team has also launched a website, newsletter and is planning gender-related sessions at several conferences.</p> <p>Work is on track to deliver the GEA III report for the May 2021 Ministerial. Project leads are currently running a series of webinars to seek input on chapters.</p>
<p>SDWG Thematic Priority: Human Health</p>	
<p>One Arctic – One Health</p>	<p>This project focuses on exchanging 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. One Health was initially introduced in the 2015-2017 work plan.</p> <p>In November 2020, the project leads are planning the virtual knowledge sharing activity “<i>Association between Mental Health, National Identity, and Preservation of Native Culture.</i>” In addition, a circumpolar virtual conference – <i>One Health, One Future</i> – will be hosted by the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the United States in April 2021. Progress is also being made to develop an independent network of “One Health Hubs” to extend circumpolar One Health cooperation.</p>
<p>Local 2 Global</p>	<p>This project facilitates international collaboration and connections between circumpolar communities working to prevent suicide and support the mental well being of Arctic youth and communities, including Arctic Indigenous Peoples who have the highest rates of suicide in the Arctic. This project was endorsed by the SDWG in September 2019 and is a follow on project to series of SDWG mental health and suicide prevention projects that began in 2009 (Hope and Resilience, Sharing Hope, Rising Sun, CREATEs). This project includes digital storytelling workshops, a knowledge exchange study tour, a circumpolar adverse childhood experiences research initiative and a Local 2 Global Circumpolar Forum.</p> <p>Project leads are advancing efforts to transition certain activities online. Project plans and the timelines for activities and deliverables has been impacted by the pandemic.</p>



SDWG Thematic Priority: Water & Sanitation Services	
Solid Waste Management in Small Arctic Communities	<p>This project is a collaborative effort between the SDWG and ACAP. It was endorsed intersessionally by the SDWG in August 2020 and will be considered for PSI approval in November 2020. A projects coping workshop took place in Alaska in February 2020. The SDWG component of the project will involve the development and launch of a web-based community solid waste assessment tool.</p> <p>This project is on-track to launch the community solid waste assessment tool as part of the 2019-2021 work plan.</p>
SDWG Thematic Priority: Infrastructure	
Zero Arctic: Concepts for Carbon Neutral Arctic Construction Based on Tradition	<p>This project was approved as part of the SDWG's 2017-2019 work plan. It focuses on developing regional concepts for Arctic building construction that are carbon neutral over their full life cycle. The project uses both scientific life cycle assessment and energy simulation methods as well as learning from and applying traditional knowledge of sustainable construction.</p> <p>The final Zero Arctic Report was endorsed by SDWG at the October 2020 SDWG meeting. This report will be presented as a deliverable at the Arctic Council Ministerial.</p>
SDWG Thematic Priority: Sustainable Energy	
Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy II (ARENA II)	<p>This follow on project was endorsed by the SDWG in September 2019. It continues the work initiated under the 2017-2019 work plan. ARENA II aims to build knowledge and capacities for the development and integration of sustainable energy solutions for remote Arctic communities. Over the past year, we focused on recruitment, curriculum development, and planning. Thirty-three (33) applications were received and eighteen (18) were selected to join the cohort.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, on-site visits in Canada, the United States and Iceland have been postponed. They are now tentatively planned for 2021, but the project leads will continue to monitor the situation.</p>
Arctic Renewable Energy Atlas (AREA) Website	<p>The AREA project is an online tool designed to enhance knowledge of the best practices and local adaptation actions on Arctic renewable energy and energy efficiency. The project was initiated in as part of the 2015-17 work plan.</p> <p>The website was launched in May 2020.</p>
Arctic Hydrogen Energy Application and Demonstration (AHEAD)	<p>This project was endorsed by the SDWG in June 2020. It involves the design, construction and development of a year-round International Arctic Station (Snowflake Station) based on fully-autonomous hydrogen energy testing and demonstrating bold solutions for life and work in the Arctic.</p> <p>Project planning is now underway and the project is expected to be completed by 2023.</p>
SDWG Thematic Priority: Economic Assessments	
Economy of the North IV (ECONOR IV)	<p>The ECONOR projects draw together and harmonize socio-economic statistical data across national and regional borders. Previous reports were released in 2006, 2008 and 2015. ECONOR IV was endorsed intersessionally by the SDWG in April 2020.</p> <p>This project is on-track to deliver its final report in early 2021.</p>



SDWG Thematic Priority: Sustainable Business Involvement & Development	
Blue Bioeconomy in the Arctic	<p>This project forms part of the Icelandic Chairmanship Program and the SDWG 2019-2021 work plan. It was endorsed by the SDWG in September 2019. This project maps key opportunities for enhancing and further developing the Arctic blue bioeconomy with a focus on balancing economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. The project is collecting success stories and describing best practices, as well as identifying obstacles that could hamper progress. The PAME Working Group is involved with the project and linkages with the AEC's Blue Economy Working Group have also been made.</p> <p>An online workshop to discuss the draft report took place in early October 2020. This project is on track to deliver the report in early 2021.</p>
Arctic Food Innovation Cluster (AFIC)	<p>This project was endorsed by the SDWG in February 2019 as part of the 2019-2021 work plan. This project aims to 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. Links are also being made with SDWG's EALLU and Blue Bioeconomy in the Arctic projects. This project is behind schedule due to issues with securing funding from co-leads and partners. The project may need to shift to a country-specific rather than a pan-Arctic approach.</p> <p>On track to complete project and provide deliverables for Arctic Council Ministerial.</p>
SDWG Thematic Priority: Science and Research for Sustainable Development	
Sustainable Development Goals in the Arctic: The Nexus Between Water, Energy, and Food (WEF)	<p>This project was endorsed by the SDWG in October 2020. This project will examine the nexus between Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 - Ending hunger and achieving Food security for all; SDG 6 – Ensuring the availability and sustainable management of Water and sanitation for all; and SDG 7 - Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern Energy for all. It is the first WEF nexus study to be conducted in the Arctic.</p> <p>The project teams are now being established and work is expected to be completed in 2023.</p>
SDWG Thematic Priority: Community Vitality	
Arctic Demography Index	<p>This project was endorsed by the SDWG intersessionally in August 2020. It examines a number of troublesome demographic trends: restructuring of the population towards less youth share and young adults, ageing decline in labor force for some areas, general depopulation, challenges for sparsely populated areas. The project focuses on 2 natural and mechanical demography parameters (natural decrease, natural increase, migration flows of 4 types) within 19 arctic territories of 5 Arctic Council member states.</p> <p>This project has been initiated and is expected to be completed in 2023.</p>

At the October 2020 meeting, SDWG also received updates on five (5) projects that are still under development, including:

1. Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic II (SLICA II) [ICC]
2. Gas hydrates: Environmental and Economic Impact on Sustainable Development and Climate-driven Transformation of the Arctic (GH4Arctic) – This project is being discussed with AMAP.
3. Sustainable Arctic Shipping [Russian Federation] – This project is being discussed with PAME.
4. Sustainable Arctic Finance [Russian Federation]

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5. Biosecurity in the Arctic [Russian Federation] – This project is being discussed with AMAP and CAFF. Finland has confirmed that it is ready co-lead this project.

SDWG Expert Groups

SDWG is supported by two expert groups – the Arctic Human Health Expert Group (AHHEG) and the Social, Economic and Cultural Expert Group (SECEG). For the duration of the Icelandic Chairmanship, the chairs of these two expert groups are Eydís Kristín Sveinbjarnardóttir, Dean School of Health Sciences and associate professor at the University of Akureyri, and Embla Eir Oddsdóttir, Director of the Icelandic Arctic Cooperation Network, respectively. **The SDWG Expert Groups was central in the preparation of the *Covid-19 in the Arctic: Briefing Document for Arctic Council SAOs* and in work to prepare SDWG's input to SAOs regarding future Arctic Council work related to COVID-19. Their timely mobilization of experts and knowledge holders to contribute to this work demonstrate the important role that these expert groups can play to support the work of the SDWG and the Arctic Council.**

Both expert groups are reviewing their terms of references and discussions will take place with SDWG members about ways to strengthen the relationship and communication between the expert groups and the SDWG.

Collaboration and Partnerships

The SDWG continues to seek opportunities for collaboration and partnership with other Arctic Council working groups, task forces and other institutions. The SDWG welcomes the involvement of Observer states and organizations in its projects and meetings. Current examples include:

- Working with experts and knowledge holders from the SDWG expert groups and Arctic Council Observer organizations to prepare **SDWG's input to SAOs regarding the role of the Arctic Council in work related to COVID-19.**
- Working in partnership with the Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Centre's Arctic Initiative to organize the **Arctic Resilience Forum** (10 webinar sessions running weekly from 7 October to 16 December 2020). Hosted by the Icelandic Chairmanship with the involvement of a broad range of experts and knowledge holders across the circumpolar Arctic.
- **Blue Bioeconomy:** making linkages with PAME and the Arctic Economic Council on the Blue Bioeconomy project.
- **Waste Management in Remote Arctic Communities:** Working in collaboration with ACAP to deliver this joint project.
- **Economy of the North IV:** engaging AEC experts to provide feedback on relevant chapters of the final report.
- **Plastics:** Linking the SDWG's project on waste management in remote Arctic communities with the Icelandic Chairmanship's plastics agenda.
- **Marine litter:** active participation by an SDWG representative (Dr. Catherine Chambers, University Centre of the Westfjords) in PAME's work to develop a Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter in the Arctic (ML-RAP).
- **Youth engagement:** Working with IASSA and IASC to engage young Arctic scholars through an SDWG-IASSA-IASC Fellowship, an Indigenous Youth Leadership session as part of the Arctic Resilience Forum, discussing opportunities to coordinate youth engagement efforts with CAFF and the ACS, and participation of youth in SDWG meetings and activities.



- Working with AMAP, CAFF, PAME and EPPR to identify opportunities for **joint projects** as part of our respective work plans.

Events and Activities

The SDWG continues to look for opportunities to share information and receive input regarding its work. Recent events include:

- Blue Bio-Economy Online Workshop, October 2020: a session organized to seek input and guidance from experts to prepare the project final report
- Gender Equality in the Arctic (GEA) III Report Online Webinars, October-November 2020: a series of sessions organized to seek input and guidance from a broad range of experts and knowledge holders on each chapter of the GEA report.
- Arctic Resilience Forum: A series of weekly online sessions that cover different themes related to Arctic Resilience from 7 October to 16 December 2020. Hosted by the Icelandic Chairmanship and co-organized by the SDWG and the Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Centre's Arctic Initiative.

Future events include:

- Arctic Resilience Forum: Weekly sessions continue.
- Arctic Frontiers Online, 1-4 Feb 2021: Potential sessions related to ECONOR IV report, Arctic Resilience and others as appropriate.

Upcoming SDWG Meetings

The SDWG meetings scheduled for the Icelandic Chairmanship currently include:

- 3-4 February 2021, Reykjanes – SDWG executive and plenary meetings

Communications and Administration

- Canada continues to advance work to establish a secretariat for the SDWG.
- With support from the ACS, SDWG has now launched a new website.
- SDWG has launched a YouTube channel to share videos.
- SDWG remains active on social media and continues to seek opportunities to raise awareness about its work with the public.

Overview

The goal of the sustainable development program of the Arctic Council 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. (Arctic Council Terms of Reference for the Sustainable Development Program, September 1998)

The Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) was established in 1998. In 2017, SDWG adopted a [strategic framework](#) that articulates a vision, guiding principles and identifies twelve (12) priorities areas. This framework, along with the Arctic Council Chairmanship Program and the direction provided by Arctic Council Ministers and Senior Arctic Officials, guides the SDWG work plans that are established biennially. The SDWG's [2019-2021 Work Plan](#) was endorsed at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting on 7 May 2019 in Rovaniemi, Finland.

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