



Sustainable Development
Working Group

**Advancing Arctic Resilience:
Information, capacity, and networks for navigating impacts of permafrost thaw
SDWG Project Proposal**

06 September 2021

SDWG PROJECT PROPOSAL

<p>Project Title:</p> <p>Advancing Arctic Resilience: Information, capacity, and networks for navigating impacts of permafrost thaw</p>	<p>Lead Country/Project leader(s):</p> <p>Arctic States: Russian Federation, Iceland, United States</p> <p>Permanent Participants: AAC (TBC), Saami Council (TBC)</p> <p>Observers: Northern Forum, Association of World Reindeer Herders, IASSA, WWF, UArctic</p> <p>Other Partners: Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center Arctic Initiative, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, The Woodrow Wilson Center – Polar Institute, Icelandic Arctic Cooperation Network, Permafrost Institute of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences</p> <p>Project co-leads welcome additional project co-leads, partners and participants.</p>
<p>Summary of Required Project Inputs:</p> <p>The project will be supported through a combination of funding and in-kind contributions by project leads, Observers and partners.</p>	<p>Relationship to other AC Working Groups:</p> <p>AMAP, CAFF, EPPR</p>
<p>Summary of project objectives and main outcomes:</p> <p>This project will deliver community guidance derived from a Permanent Participant-led tabletop exercise on addressing the impacts of thawing permafrost (Spring, 2022); it will provide a roadmap for developing resilience indicators and monitoring systems useful to Arctic societies (Spring 2022); and it will deliver a summary report from the 3rd Arctic Resilience Forum (ARF), to take place in October of 2022. The tabletop exercise, conducted in collaboration with EPPR, will be patterned after the One Arctic, One Health tabletop exercises from 2017 and 2018. The resilience indicators project will build on past and current work underway within SDWG, CAFF, and AMAP to better understand and measure resilience and the many impacts of permafrost thaw. Both projects will be featured among the sessions of ARF2022. This full suite of work follows directly upon the Arctic Resilience Action Framework, approved by the Arctic Council in 2017, and is organized and led by the team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts who participated in the 10-week Arctic Resilience Forum in fall, 2020.</p>	

Specify SDWG Project Category(ies):

Societies & Cultures	x	Business & Economies	x
Health & Wellbeing	x	Enabling Infrastructure	x

Specify Project Thematic Area(s) (See SDWG Strategic Framework (2018) for descriptions of each):

Community Vitality	x	Infrastructure	x
Economic Assessments		Reduction of Inequality	x
Sustainable Business Development		Science for Sustainable Development	x
Heritage & Culture	x	Sustainable Energy	x
Human Health	x	Educational Opportunities	x
Transportation		Water and Sanitation Services	x

Specify links to SDWG’s 2021-2023 Priorities:

Russian Chairmanship priorities	x	Human Health and COVID-19	x
UN SDGs in the Arctic	x	UN Decade of Indigenous languages	

If linked to UN SDGs, specify which ones and how: Given the multidisciplinary nature of the concept of resilience, this project has the potential to connect to all of the UN SDGs. This project will specifically consider how aspects of resilience cross-cut the SDGs and expose both synergies and conflicts between SDGs in this context. Specific SDG links will be explored further, but the theme of permafrost thaw and specific activities planned can already be seen to provide strong connections to SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being, SDG 4 – Quality Education, SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 13 – Climate Action, and SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

PLEASE NOTE: AMAP, CAFF and EPPR are currently considering this project and may have additional feedback and advice about the scope, tasks, deliverables and timeframes articulated for this project.

Project objective(s)

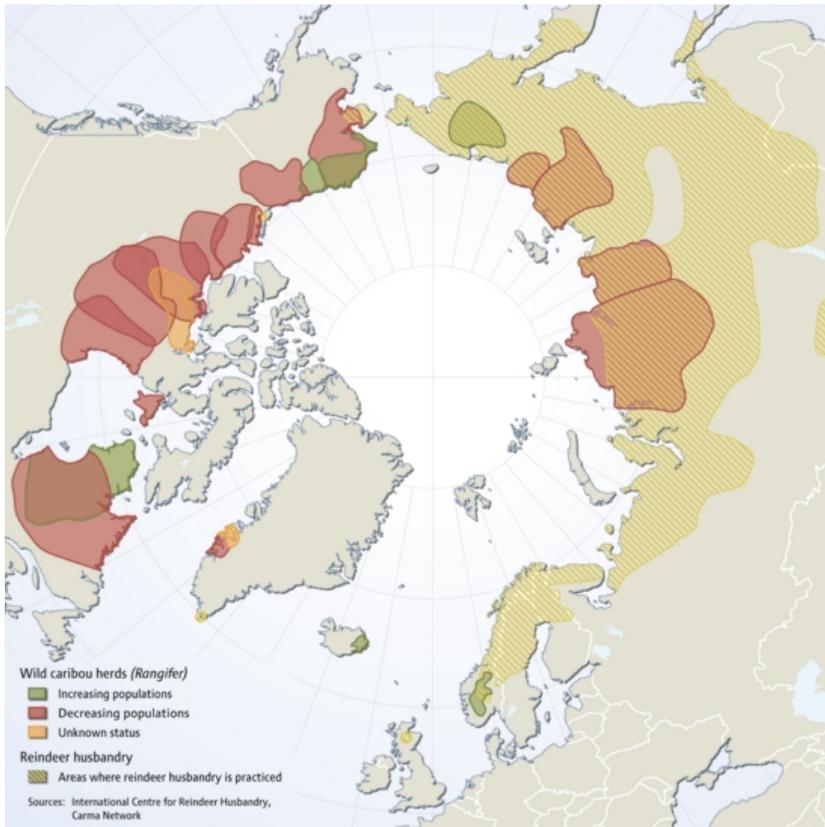
As the world reels from the impacts of a global pandemic, social-ecological resilience – and the enabling conditions that breed resilience and reduce risk – have become everyday topics. The Arctic Council has been a global leader in these topics since initiating the Arctic Resilience Report in 2011, but indeed has operated from a resilience and sustainability footing from the very founding of the Council. By establishing working groups that focus on sustainability, emergency preparedness, scientific knowledge, and ecosystem conditions, the Arctic Council has fostered a 21st century capacity to understand the many interconnected factors that enable the resilience of the Arctic’s linked social and ecological systems.

After the Arctic Resilience Report was delivered in 2016, the Arctic Council acted quickly to move from ideas to implementation by adopting the Arctic Resilience Action Framework 2017 (ARAF), a means to track, coordinate, and evaluate progress fostering Arctic resilience. The ARAF, the first regional resilience framework in the world, focused on knowledge, capacity, governance, and financing as key resilience-enabling conditions. The SDWG’s ARAF Implementation Project (2017-2019) and the 2018 and 2020 Arctic Resilience Forums (ARFs) then facilitated dialogue about what resilience means in the Arctic and enhanced our understanding of resilience-enabling conditions and the many important interactions among them.

The pandemic and the rapidly increasing pace of climate change in the Arctic add urgency to investing in these enabling conditions, and the Arctic Council is well positioned to lead this work. It boasts its own regional resilience framework to guide the work, a strong and diverse community of experts and knowledge holders, and clear momentum established by the efforts of AMAP through its work on resilience indicators, CAFF through its work on wetland resilience and SDWG through the delivery of the Arctic Resilience Forum. In all of these efforts, the concept of resilience has demonstrated its effectiveness as a structured way to break down silos and tackle complicated problems. In fact, this project contributes to four of the goals outlined in the new Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021, including Goal 1 (Arctic Climate), Goal 2 (Healthy and Resilience Ecosystems), Goal 4 (Sustainable Social Development), and Goal 5 (Sustainable Economic Development).

Based on the advice and guidance of a project planning team comprised of co-leads, organizers and speakers from Arctic Resilience Forum 2020, and project partners, this project will focus specifically on the **theme of impacts of thawing permafrost** and explore critical issues including wetland degradation, landslides, coastal erosion, infrastructure deterioration, food and energy security, and contamination of drinking water. As Figures 1 and 2 illustrate, there is a clear connection between the range lands of caribou and reindeer herds, which are critical to many Indigenous societies and the permafrost areas of the Arctic.

Figure 1: Status of Reindeer and Caribou Herds in the Arctic



Source: R. Pravettoni, International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry and Carma (2010).

Figure 2: Permafrost zones in the Arctic.



This thematic approach will:

- Provide a clear focus that grounds project activities,
- Direct attention to pressing issues affecting life in the Arctic in multiple ways, and
- Ensures a means to examine crosscutting issues such as human health, infrastructure, and education, and further understand the enabling conditions for resilience.

This project's goal will be to focus on facilitating the transition from **“ideas to action”** with three core objectives:

- Develop and test solution-oriented, community-led activities and tools that support the resilience of Arctic communities and societies;
- Advance pan-Arctic resilience monitoring, assessment and adaptation capacity; and
- Establish a forward looking strategy that continues to develop, and create spaces for, a community of experts and knowledge holders engaged in understanding the unique conditions and needs of Arctic resilience.

Consistent with the SDWG's Strategic Framework and priorities, this project will benefit from the experience and knowledge of diverse experts and knowledge holders and dedicate specific attention to developing methodologies, approaches and tools that are shaped by the needs and interest of Arctic societies and communities and dedicate specific attention to learning from Indigenous Knowledge and local knowledge. The success of this project will also depend on the expertise and active participation of other Arctic Council Working Groups; CAFF, EPPR and AMAP have already confirmed their interest in contributing to project activities and all Arctic Council subsidiary bodies will be invited to participate in project activities.

Activities and Outputs

To support the goal and objectives outlined above, the project will include the following deliverables:

1. Community Resilience Tabletop Exercise: ARF2020 demonstrated the many interactions among Arctic sectors when faced with a crisis or rapid change – one sector alone cannot solve risk and resilience problems. Permanent Participants, community leaders, experts, youth leaders, and knowledge holders from multiple sectors will participate in a tabletop exercise to simulate an emerging crisis related to permafrost thaw. This activity would build on the best practices of the One Arctic, One Health project and discussions are currently underway with EPPR about their support and involvement to its planning and delivery. A Community Resilience Playbook will be produced to document the tabletop exercise process and report on findings. The exercise will also be featured at the Arctic Resilience Forum 2022, and other opportunities to share the lessons learned from this activity with Arctic communities will be explored, including adding additional exercises to increase geographic and sector relevance.
2. Resilience Indicators and Monitoring: Arctic societies depend heavily upon ecosystems and their knowledge of those ecosystems. As these ecosystems transform, it is important to monitor and assess their resilience and work to anticipate dangerous tipping points. Establishing and monitoring resilience indicators can inform and guide targeted and strategic actions. Like the tabletop exercise, this activity will focus on permafrost thaw and the connections to wetlands

and food and water security needs. It will also take a community-led approach to its planning and delivery. Building on existing CAFF, AMAP and SDWG work and a combination of input from scientific, Indigenous, and community sources, this activity will support development of a set of social-ecological resilience indicators. This activity will be featured at the ARF 2022 with a focus on considering how these indicators could be operationalized within the ARAF and shared among Arctic communities as a functional tool for monitoring resilience across the Arctic. This activity will complement and support related work done by AMAP and CAFF.

3. Arctic Resilience Forum 2022: ARF 2022 will be led by the Russian Chairmanship and organized by the Northern Forum. It is tentatively proposed to take place in fall 2022 at a date and location that is connected to an SDWG, Arctic Council or major Russian Chairmanship event. This will enable engagement of a wide range of officials, community leaders, youth leaders, and other experts. ARF 2022 will showcase issues related to permafrost thaw and present findings from the resilience tabletop exercise and the indicators work described above. In addition, ARF 2022 will profile resilience issues and innovations from the Russian Arctic, which will be supported by several field visits prior to ARF 2022 where small groups (3-4 people) of experts, officials and youth representatives will be hosted by Northern communities in Russia to learn and document their resilience experiences and challenges. Stories, images and findings from these visits will be summarized and presented in multimedia form. The Forum's proceedings will be distilled into guidance and examples that will be used to make the ARAF 2022 more specific and useful for on the ground efforts to encourage investments in resilience actions.

Timetable and Project Completion

Community Resilience Tabletop Exercise: Spring 2022 (Specific date TBC with EPPR). Scoping team has been established and biweekly meetings will begin immediately after the coming SDWG meeting, if approved. After results are presented at ARF2022, feedback will be collected and a final report will be prepared by December 2022.

Resilience Indicators and Monitoring: A scoping team is being established. Deliverable and timing to be coordinated with CAFF & AMAP, with a deadline of June 2022 to enable presentation and discussion at ARF2022.

Arctic Resilience Forum 2022: Fall 2022 (linked to another Arctic meeting or event that has participation from relevant experts and knowledge holders). The Russian Federation and Northern Forum will lead monthly and then weekly planning sessions with the organizing team as the date approaches.

Project reports and products: January 2023

Costs

Community Resilience Tabletop Exercise: Costs for in-person convening will be approximately \$50,000 US.

Resilience Indicators and Monitoring: Primarily in-kind contributions from SDWG, CAFF, and AMAP experts.

Arctic Resilience Forum 2022: Field visits will be hosted by Russian cities and towns, as appropriate. Specific cost for the Arctic Resilience Forum will be determined by the Russian Chairmanship and Northern Forum.

Project Reports and Products: Formatting, publishing and dissemination of products related to project activities TBC

Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge

This project proposal has been developed with Permanent Participant co-leads and is informed by the input of community leaders, youth, and Indigenous Knowledge holders involved in ARF2020. Continuing to prioritize the inclusion of Arctic Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge Holders will remain a critical aspect of the planning and delivery of all project activities to ensure relevant outcomes.

For example, the scoping of the tabletop exercise will be led by Permanent Participants, the indicators work will be co-produced with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and the ARF 2022 will provide opportunities to profile the experiences of Arctic communities and societies.

Communications

See the initial project communications and knowledge mobilization plan (below).

Communications and Knowledge Mobilization Plan

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Instructions

Part One is to be completed with the project proposal for endorsement by the SDWG and should be updated throughout the life of the project, as required.

Part Two and Three are to be completed once the project is endorsed by the SDWG and should be updated throughout the life of the project, as required.

The SDWG secretariat is available to work with project leads to prepare and update the template. Please use plain language and be as clear and concise as possible. The more precise your answers are, the better our communication material will be.

PART ONE: PROJECT INITIATION

Please answer the below the question questions in maximum two sentences. Please use plain language.

Why is your project important?
The Arctic is experiencing the impacts of thawing permafrost now – from landslides and wetland degradation to contamination of drinking water and the deterioration of infrastructure. Bringing community leaders, knowledge holders and experts together to advance the resilience of the Arctic’s linked social and ecological systems during this time of dramatic change is urgent and pressing.
What is the main goal of your project?
Take concrete action to 1) develop and test solution-oriented, community-led activities and tools, 2) advance pan-Arctic resilience monitoring, assessment and adaptation capacity, and 3) support and foster a community of experts and knowledge holder engaged in understanding the unique conditions and needs of Arctic resilience.
How will this project benefit peoples and communities in the Arctic?
By focusing on the distinct impacts of permafrost thaw and taking concrete actions led by Arctic knowledge holders and experts to advance social and ecological resilience.
Specify any key dates, milestones, or events when the project could be profiled
Spring 2022 – delivery of the tabletop exercise. Fall 2022 – leading up to and during the Arctic Resilience Forum Spring 2023 – delivery of project reports and products. Other opportunities will be confirmed as the project progresses.
Identify project contact(s) for communications and media purposes, as required
Tabletop exercise – Joel Clement, HKS Belfer Centre, Actic Initiative - joel_clement@hks.harvard.edu Indicators and monitoring – TBC Arctic Resilience Forum 2022 – Vladimir Vasilev, Northern Forum - vnvasilev@inbox.ru

PART TWO: KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION PLAN

Use the following matrix to plan knowledge mobilization efforts for multiple target audiences. Potential strategies may include: social media posts, SDWG website content, blog posts, podcasts, reports, webinars, conferences, panels, symposiums, or workshops, among others.

Audience	Message <i>What is your message for this audience?</i>	Strategies <i>How will you get your message across? Which strategies work best for this audience? Consider how each strategy links to your intended project outcomes.</i>	Timeline <i>When do you anticipate holding these events or disseminating this information?</i>

<p>Identify three potential occasions to showcase this project (including professional conferences, events, educational forums, panels, presentations etc).</p>

PART THREE: MOBILIZING PROJECT ACTIVITIES USING SOCIAL MEDIA

The following sections will be used to create SDWG social media posts. Please use concise, brief, and simplified language. For examples of successful content, please see the SDWG [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#).

List up to three (brief & simplified) actionable project recommendations, conclusions, results and/or highlights:
Please provide two project quotes or success stories:
Fun Fact / "Did you know?" Fact relating to the project:
True / False or Multiple-Choice Question (including the answer)
Photos and/or video. Please caption them below.