



Sustainable Development
Working Group

SDWG Project Proposal

COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report

6 September 2021

SDWG PROJECT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Project Title: COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report	Lead Country/Project leader(s): Russian Federation, Iceland, GCI(TBC), AAC(TBC), IASSA, WWF.
Total Cost of Project: Cost estimates: TBD, see p. 5.	Relationship to other AC Working Groups: EPPR, PAME and AMAP
Summary of project objectives and main outcomes: <p>This project will result in the development of a report regarding the impacts and lessons learned of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Arctic as well as research that supports pandemic preparedness in the Arctic, as appropriate. It is a continuation of the work led by the SDWG and Arctic Council Secretariat in collaboration with AHHEG and SECEG that was compiled in the <i>COVID-19 in the Arctic: A Briefing Document for Senior Arctic Officials</i> and presented to the SAOs at their meeting on June 25, 2020. The <i>COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report</i> outlined in this proposal will synthesize relevant research into the impacts and lessons learned of COVID-19 and research that supports pandemic preparedness, with the aim of providing policy makers with information and analyses that inform policies aimed at dealing with the ongoing pandemic and future health emergencies.</p>	

Specify SDWG Project Category(ies):

<u>Societies & Cultures</u>	x	<u>Business & Economies</u>	
<u>Health & Wellbeing</u>	x	<u>Enabling Infrastructure</u>	x

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

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

Specify links to SDWG’s 2021-2023 Priorities:

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

If linked to UN SDGs, specify which ones and how: This project will link to the following SDGs: 3 (good health and wellbeing), 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), 10 (reduced inequalities), and 11 (sustainable cities and communities).

PLEASE NOTE: Other Arctic Council Working Groups 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)

This project will provide a timely and comprehensive synthesis of issues and themes related to COVID-19 in the Arctic through the production of a report detailing:

- its impacts on the region,
- lessons learned from pandemic management,
- sharing of experiences and best practices from across the Arctic and transferable jurisdictions, and
- research and recommendations that could inform future pandemic management in the region.

It will detail the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic in the Arctic, with a particular emphasis on its various health, social, cultural and economic experiences and impacts. Particular attention will be paid to how these impacts were experienced by communities across the Arctic.

The report will be organized into 5-6 thematic chapters that will synthesize relevant research and, as appropriate will recommend future research priorities and provide policy advice for pandemic planning and management in the Arctic. The themes addressed in the report will be informed by the *COVID-19 in the Arctic: A Briefing Document for Senior Arctic Officials*, the advice of AHHEG and SECEG, and the availability of relevant research and expertise. Each chapter will detail how issues relating to that theme connect with the health, economic, cultural and social impacts of the pandemic. Given the intersectional nature of the impacts of COVID-19 in the Arctic, some overlap between the chapters is anticipated.

By exploring these themes, the report will provide a nuanced analysis of the impacts of the pandemic and inform recovery and emergency preparedness and management processes. The completed report will also support policy makers by identifying gaps in current research and policy, and inform priority setting in the development of new research and policy. It will also serve as a tool for assessing and monitoring the impacts of any new policies. The final report will provide concrete policy recommendations, following up on Part III of the *COVID-19 in the Arctic: A Briefing Document for Senior Arctic Officials*, Core Themes and Guidance for the Arctic Council. This will include policy relevant conclusions from lead authors in each chapter and a separate *Summary for Policy Makers* document which will provide an overview of the broader policy implications of the report as a whole.

Background

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers and officials have detailed how it is affecting the Arctic. The *COVID-19 in the Arctic: A Briefing Document for Senior Arctic Officials* provided an overview of its various impacts as they were understood at that time, as well as relevant guidance for the Arctic Council work moving forward. The introduction to the document gave historical context regarding the 1918 influenza and other incidences of infectious diseases, and detailed insights that history provides regarding how the pandemic should be dealt with in the present, particularly with respect to the legacy of past diseases for Indigenous Peoples throughout the Arctic. The briefing document also describes existing public health activities in the Arctic in relation to the current pandemic, before addressing COVID-19's health, social, economic, cultural, and environmental impacts.

The *COVID-19 in the Arctic: A Briefing Document for Senior Arctic Officials* provided recommendations for what further Arctic Council work concerning COVID-19 could entail. The subsequent *SDWG's Advice and Analysis for SAOs: Arctic Council COVID-19 Work* gave further recommendations. Following the release of these two documents, a concept note for the *COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report* was circulated in March 2021 to SDWG members for feedback, and their comments informed the development of this proposal. The proposed *COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report* would be complementary to other Arctic Council work concerning COVID-19, including the *Arctic Community Perspectives on COVID-19 and Public Health* (proposed by Canada) and the *Biosecurity in the Arctic* (led by the Russian Federation and Finland) projects. This project would also connect to the *Arctic Resilience Project* that is under development through both the *Arctic Resilience Forum 2022* and *Arctic Resilience Report 2023*.

In addition to these linkages, the assessment report connects more broadly to the stated priorities of the Arctic Council as a whole, as well as those of the SDWG. The recently released *Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021 to 2030* and the *Reykjavik Declaration 2021* both emphasize the importance of sustainable economic and social development, including pandemic preparedness and human health, which will be directly addressed in the *COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report*. The *COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report* would also address established SDWG priority focus areas from the *SDWG Work Plan 2019-2021*, including human health and COVID-19, community vitality, reduction of inequality and infrastructure. It is proposed that the project would form part of the *SDWG Work Plan 2021-2023*.

Activities and Outputs

This project will result in the production of a report detailing the broadly considered themes and issues connected to the impacts of COVID-19 in the Arctic, including recommendations for policy makers based on the findings of the report. These themes and issues will be addressed through work highlighting various examples, experiences, and practices connected to the impacts of COVID-19 in the Arctic. Examples of contributions include:

- Work from GCI detailing the project *Dinjii Zhuh Perspectives of Epidemics: Contemporary Indigenous Concepts of Survival, Community, and Strength in the Northwest Territories*, which aims to document Dinjii Zhuh (Gwich'in) reactions, lifestyles, struggles, and concerns about living through another epidemic using a combination of historical, anthropological, and Indigenous methodologies.

- An assessment from the WWF of the recovery programs of the 8 Arctic Council countries, which examines to what extent the recovery processes of Arctic states will enable a transition to low-carbon societies, provide better and sustainable energy services, and support sustainable and resilient economic activity for Indigenous communities.
- A selection of results from the case studies conducted as a part of the proposed *Arctic Community Perspectives on COVID-19 and Public Health* project, which will provide insights into the impacts that public health measures related to COVID-19 had on communities throughout the Arctic.
- Results from the *Arctic Women and COVID-19 Pandemic: Measuring and Understanding COVID-19 Gender Impacts in the Arctic* project, which will evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on women in the Arctic by developing and examining indicators concerning key domains of gender equality (political/public administration, economic, civic, and personal) in study regions in northern Iceland, Alaska, and Arctic Russia.
- Development of a risk-based approach for assessing the impacts of COVID-19 on health care systems in the Arctic and how those impacts are experienced by various populations and groups throughout the region.

Following the production of the report, disseminating it to relevant Arctic officials and policy makers will allow it to be used as a knowledge base for future policy making and planning efforts. This will go alongside efforts to communicate the report's findings to the public to provide education regarding the unique implications of COVID-19 in the Arctic. The dissemination and communication process will include various activities, such as:

- Production of policy briefs to facilitate communication of the reports key findings to Arctic officials and policy makers.
- Hosting a virtual knowledge exchange in collaboration with the *Arctic Community Perspectives on COVID-19 and Public Health* project to convey lessons learned from the projects and further highlight relevant points of connection between the two projects.
- Collaboration with leaders in various Arctic communities to convey the report's findings to members of the public through presentations and other locally organized events.

Rationale

The mandate of the SDWG is to propose and adopt actions to be taken by the Arctic States to promote sustainable development, and initiatives aimed at providing practical knowledge and

building capacity have characterized the SDWG's work. The *COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report* described in this proposal would be a continuation of these efforts. By addressing the social, economic, and health impacts of COVID-19 on the Arctic, the proposed *COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report* will help provide policy makers and other Arctic officials the knowledge they need to move forward from the current crisis. Addressing these impacts in the context of other pre-existing issues and themes (like infrastructure and mobility) in the Arctic will aid capacity building and help increase the resilience of Arctic communities. This report will also provide a forum for Arctic communities to share their successes and best practices in managing the pandemic.

Through its presentation of a knowledge base concerning the impacts of COVID-19 in the Arctic, the *COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report* would address key goals presented in the *Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021 to 2030* and the *Reykjavik Declaration 2021*. As stated in the background section of this proposal, both documents emphasize the importance of sustainable social and economic development, as well as with community health. The *Reykjavik Declaration 2021* also acknowledges the connection between human health, animals, and the environment (another Arctic Council priority area) as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021 to 2030* and the *Reykjavik Declaration 2021* further emphasize the importance of data in helping Arctic communities adapt to the various changes they are experiencing. Both also frame the collection and communication of relevant data concerning these changes as a means of strengthening the Arctic Council and its work. This includes co-production of knowledge and the articulation of clear policy recommendations, as detailed in the *Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021 to 2030*. The proposed *COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report* would contribute to these goals by collecting relevant data concerning the impacts of COVID-19 in the Arctic in a report containing policy recommendations that would be distributed to relevant officials and policy makers through Arctic Council platforms and networks following the publication of the report.

Timetable and Project Completion

This project will commence following the SDWG meeting in Fall 2021 and run through the end of the Russian Chairmanship in May 2023. The timeline is as follows:

September-November 2021: Establish editorial board, project management team and other governance to support management of the project, preparation of the report and engagement of key experts and knowledge holders (e.g. Indigenous and youth representatives).

December 2021-February 2022: Identify themes to be prioritized in the report, and select leads for each chapter and begin the process of securing funding for chapter leads and/or participation of key experts and knowledge holders as contributing authors and advisors (e.g. Indigenous and youth representatives), where needed.

March 2022-May 2022: Finalize funding as needed, begin the process of compiling research for the report.

June 2022-August 2022: Leads authors continue compiling research for the report and identify contributing authors for each chapter with guidance and support from the project management team as well as SECEG and AHHEG.

September 2022: Lead authors will complete first drafts of their chapters for submission to project management team at the beginning of October.

October 2022: Project management team will review each chapter and provide feedback to chapter authors who will then provide an updated draft to external reviewers at the beginning of November.

November 2022: Review of updated drafts by external reviewers, as well as Indigenous and youth representatives.

December 2022: Chapter authors and the project management team finalize the chapters in response to feedback from the reviewers.

January 2023: Submission of draft to SDWG, begin layout process while awaiting feedback.

February 2023: Edit report in response to SDWG feedback.

March-May 2023: Prepare the report for publication before the conclusion of the Russian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

Costs

This project will be funded using a two-pronged approach, whereby funding for the project management team and other governance will be secured first and funding for chapters and/or participation of key experts and knowledge holders as contributing authors and advisors will subsequently be acquired when and where needed.

The project's budget will cover the following categories:

- Project administration: expenses related to the governance structure of the project, including salaries for project managers, research assistants, and other experts who will contribute to the management and design of the report, and meeting costs.
- Writing and editing: writing expenses such as funding for lead authors or other contributors to the report and editorial costs such as payments to external reviewers and youth and Indigenous representatives, plus fees for proofreading, editing, and translation.
- Dissemination: expenses related to the distribution of the report's findings to the public, such as printing and design costs, as well as funding for events connected with the release of the report.

The following budget details specific costs associated with these categories in more detail.

Preliminary Budget [in USD]

Costs	2021	2022	2023	Total 2021-2023
<i>Project Administration</i>	\$26,000	\$147,000	\$48,750	\$221,750
<i>Research and Writing</i>	\$7,000	\$275,000	\$17,500	\$299,500
<i>Youth and Permanent Participant Engagement</i>	\$2,100	\$9,300	\$24,000	\$35,400
<i>Editing and Review</i>	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000
<i>Design, Layout, and Printing</i>	\$0	\$0	\$64,150	\$64,150
<i>Knowledge Dissemination and Mobilization</i>	\$0	\$0	\$2,800	\$2,800
Total [all categories]	\$35,100	\$431,300	\$207,200	\$673,600
<i>Total [minus Research and Writing]</i>				<i>\$374,100.00</i>

Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge

The insights and involvement of the Permanent Participants will be required in order to present the full scope of COVID-19's impacts on Arctic communities, and this project will incorporate Indigenous Knowledge into each stage of the project, from the design of the project through the presentation of the completed report. This will necessitate an approach to knowledge co-production where Indigenous Knowledge and academic studies are considered as unique knowledge systems that are both essential for developing a better understanding of the Arctic. This project further recognizes the distinction between Local Knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge and will also aim to integrate Local Knowledge into every phase of the report's development.

One of the key lessons from the development of the *Gender Equality in the Arctic* report as a part of Phase III of the ongoing GEA project was the importance of incorporating Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge from the beginning of planning. A youth review process, where local and Indigenous youths were paid to review each chapter of the report, was a key part of the development of that report. A similar review process will be used for this project and will help incorporate Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge into the report.

Communications

The impacts of COVID-19, as preliminarily detailed in the *COVID-19 in the Arctic: A Briefing Document for Senior Arctic Officials*, are varied and intersect with every component of society. As such, the findings of the *COVID-19 in the Arctic* assessment report will be relevant to a wide group of people throughout the Arctic. The target audience of the report itself are policy makers and relevant Arctic officials who can use its findings to inform policy development and other planning efforts. Given the wide-ranging implications of the report's findings, the report dissemination process will also include efforts to provide education to a broader section of the public regarding the unique impacts of COVID-19 in the Arctic. The Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group, through the project co-leads, will also communicate information about the goals and objectives, implementation strategies and final results of this project to the wider community of the Arctic Council, including Permanent Participants, through the various stages of the project.

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

Communications and Knowledge Mobilization Plan COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report

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

Identify your SDWG Project Categories:

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

Identify your Project Themes:

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

Indicate links to SDWG's 2021-2023 priority focus areas:

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

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

Why is your project important?
COVID-19 has had wide-ranging impacts on communities across the Arctic, and policy makers and other Arctic leaders will need information in order plan for the recovery process. By compiling relevant research, practices, and experiences connected with work on COVID-19 in the Arctic, this report will help give policy makers and community leaders the information they need to move forward with recovery efforts.
What is the main goal of your project?
To provide a comprehensive report detailing the impacts of COVID-19 on the Arctic region, lessons learned from pandemic management, shared experiences and best practices from across the Arctic, and research and recommendations that could inform future pandemic management in the region.

How will this project benefit people and communities in the Arctic?
By providing a comprehensive overview of the impacts of COVID-19 in the Arctic, and providing suggestions for policy-makers, this report will help facilitate a sustainable recovery from the pandemic.
Specify any key dates, milestones, or events when the project could be profiled
Publication in May 2023, with dissemination events such as the launch and Virtual Knowledge Exchange to follow during May/June 2023, to be followed with further dissemination events throughout the summer.
Identify project contact(s) for communications and media purposes, as required

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>
Policy makers and other local leaders	Highlight the policy-relevant conclusions of the report.	Usage of SDWG website content, project launch event, and distribution of executive summary, all of which will be used to highlight the policy relevance of the report.	May-September 2023
Members of the public in Arctic communities	Present the information gathered in the report in an accessible way, with particular attention paid to any issues that are especially relevant to the community in question.	Organization of locally focused events aimed at bringing together leaders and members of the public. Events to be held online as well as in-person where possible. These events will highlight the local relevance of the report's findings.	May-September 2023
Arctic Youth	Build on the youth engagement established during the youth review to	Collaborate with various Arctic youth organizations such as the Arctic Youth Network to communicate the report's findings	May-September 2023

	<p>present/highlight the findings of the report that are most relevant to youth in Arctic communities, while highlighting youth experiences of COVID-19 and its ongoing recovery.</p>	<p>to Arctic Youth, in part by ensuring that the events targeted towards the larger public are youth accessible, while also organizing a youth specific online-dissemination event. These events will help communicate the findings of the report which are most relevant for Arctic youth, as well as providing the information in a way which is accessible to them.</p>	
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<p>Identify three potential occasions to showcase this project (including professional conferences, events, educational forums, panels, presentations etc).</p>
<p>Launch event for report, Virtual knowledge exchange with <i>Arctic Community Perspectives on COVID-19 and Public Health</i>, panel at Arctic Council 2023.</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](#).

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

