

ARCTIC COUNCIL SAO MEETING
1 - 2 DECEMBER, SALEKHARD, RUSSIA
MEETING CODE: SAORU201_2021_SALEKHARD

DOCUMENT TITLE

Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) DRAFT Progress Report October 2021

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER

8

SUBMITTED BY

Sustainable Development Working Group (07 November 2021)

DOCUMENT FILENAME

SAORU201_2021_Salekhard_08_SDWG-Progress-Report

NUMBER OF PAGES, NOT INCLUDING THIS COVER SHEET

2





Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) DRAFT Progress Report October 2021

Advancing the SDWG's 2021-2023 Work Plan

The SDWG held its most recent plenary and executive meetings from 26-28 October 2021. These meetings were held online due to continuing travel restrictions as result of COVID-19. The plenary meeting included more than 130 participants with all Arctic States and Permanent Participant represented. 12 Observer States, 3 Observer IGOs, 7 Observer NGOs and the European Union were also represented.

At this meeting, the SDWG **endorsed**:

1. A new **detailed SDWG 2021-2023 work plan** that aligns the SDWG current and potential activities with the direction provided in the Arctic Council Strategic Plan (2021), the Reykjavik Declaration 2021, the SDWG Strategic Framework (2017) and the focus areas identified by the SDWG to guide its work during the Russian Chairmanship.
2. **Three (3) new projects**, including:
 - a. *Preserving Arctic Architectural Heritage* (lead: Russian Federation and Norway),
 - b. *COVID-19 in the Arctic Assessment Report* (lead: Russian Federation, Iceland, Gwich'in Council International), and
 - c. *Advancing Arctic Resilience: Exploring aspects of Arctic Resilience connected to the impacts of permafrost thaw* (lead: Russian Federation, Finland, Iceland, United States, and Arctic Athabaskan Council).

The SDWG now has **sixteen (16) projects** that have been endorsed. **Details about the SDWG's endorsed projects are available in the AMAROK report prepared for SAOs.**

At the October 2021 meeting, SDWG also received **updates on five (5) projects that are still under development**, including:

1. Arctic Children: Preschool and School Education [Russian Federation]
2. Gender Equality in the Arctic IV [Iceland]
3. Sustainable Arctic Finance [Russian Federation]
4. Gas hydrates: Environmental and Economic Impact on Sustainable Development and Climate-driven Transformation of the Arctic (GH4Arctic) [Russian Federation]
5. Arctic Energy Toolkit II [Gwich'in Council International]



The SDWG members also reviewed current and potential **SDWG contributions to Arctic Council-wide initiatives, participation in activities led by other Arctic Council Working Groups and collaborations with other partners**. In addition, the Russian Federation presented several **ideas for additional SDWG projects or collaborations**.

Events and Activities

Upcoming meetings of the **SDWG meetings** include:

- Late January/early February (date TBC) - SDWG Executive Meeting (online or connected to other planned meetings or events)
- June 2022 (date TBC) – SDWG Executive and Plenary Meetings (Yakutia, Russian Federation)

All past and future **SDWG activities and events profiling SDWG initiatives** are now presented on the SDWG website at: <https://sdwg.org/events/>

Communications and Administration

- Canada announced that the Université de Laval (ULaval) will host the new **permanent secretariat** for the SDWG at the Arctic Council Ministerial (May 2021). Discussions between ULaval and SDWG members about the set up of the secretariat were initiated at the October 2021 SDWG meetings and further discussions are being planned.
- The SDWG has now established an **SDWG Activity Tracking Tool** to support planning, monitoring and reporting. The Activity Tracker is available on the SDWG SharePoint site or by contacting secretariat@sdwg.org.
- The inaugural **SDWG-IASSA-IASC Fellowship** was launched in October 2022. The deadline for applications is 16 November 2021 and the first Fellow is expected to be announced early in 2022.

SDWG 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.