



Sustainable Development  
Working Group

# Gender Equality in the Arctic Phase IV

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**SDWG Project Proposal**

**7<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

# SDWG PROJECT PROPOSAL

<p><b>Project Title:</b></p> <p><b>Gender Equality in the Arctic Phase IV</b></p>	<p>Lead Country/Project leader(s):</p> <p>Arctic States: Iceland, Canada, United States, Finland, Norway, Sweden.</p> <p>Permanent Participants: Aleut International Association, Saami Council, Arctic Athabaskan Council.</p> <p>Observers: IASSA, additional observer partners welcome.</p> <p>Other Partners: See webpage for full list of partners and previous sponsors of the GEA project - <a href="#">Partners and Sponsors — Gender Equality in the Arctic (arcticgenderequality.network)</a>. Recently added partner Dartmouth’s Institute of Arctic Studies. Additional partnerships are welcomed and will be sought throughout.</p> <p>The Gender Equality in the Arctic (GEA) project will continue to work with multiple partners throughout the project duration, as required. This may include other WGs, AEC, Observer country institutions etc.</p>
<p><b>Summary of Required Project Inputs:</b></p> <p>Cost items are described in the sections below. ‘Mainstreaming – procedural’ will be funded by Canada (pending final approval). ‘Mainstreaming – data’ will be funded by Canada and Finland (pending final approval). Funding for ‘Aspirational’ and ‘Sharing Wisdom and Knowledges is still pending’. All contributions and suggestions will be welcomed.</p>	<p><b>Relationship to other AC Working Groups:</b></p> <p>Mainstreaming process: all AC WG.</p>
<p><b>Summary of project objectives and main outcomes:</b></p> <p>Building on the GEA III Pan-Arctic report, GEAIV will consist of two main components:</p> <p>1) Mainstreaming gender-based analysis in the work of the Arctic Council to advance gender equality in the Arctic, including both <b>procedural</b> and <b>data</b> related workshops and outputs. A secondary</p>	

objective of this component is **aspirational** and would consist of preparatory work for an AC code of conduct. 2) **Sharing wisdom and knowledge**, an Indigenous led component focusing on thematic online events and interviews for dissemination of topics of particular interest to GEA Indigenous partners.

Outcomes include workshops, documents relating to mainstreaming within the Arctic Council and data availability and compilation of codes of conduct existing in entities comparable to the AC. Further, recorded thematic events and interviews for online dissemination.

Canada and Finland have indicated their interest in providing funding support to the mainstreaming and data initiatives. The aspirational part and the Sharing Wisdom and Knowledge is still pending funding. **See project element planning on pages 6-9.** GEA will continue to emphasize inclusion throughout the project, particularly in terms of Indigenous and youth representatives.

**Specify SDWG Project Category(ies):**

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

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

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

**Specify links to SDWG’s 2021-2023 Priorities:**

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

If linked to UN SDGs, specify which ones and how: The primary SDG relating to the GEA is SDG 5, on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. As issues of gender cut across all spheres of human existence, the GEA project is highly relevant to other UN SDG. According to UNWomen “all the SDGs depend on the achievement of Goal 5.”<sup>1</sup>

**Project objective(s)**

Gender equality in the Arctic is highly relevant to the agenda and role of the Arctic Council (Council) and its Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG), which have emphasized gender equality in previous

<sup>1</sup> [In focus: Women and the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\): SDG 5: Gender equality | UN Women](#)

projects and initiatives. The importance of issues related to gender and diversity has become increasingly evident, the latest example being Iceland's emphasis on gender issues during its Arctic Council Chairmanship. Examples of previous work and valuable input in this field under the Council's auspices include: the Finland led 2002 Taking Wing Conference in Inari that focused on the themes of women and work, gender and self-determination among Indigenous Peoples, and violence against women; the first edition of the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) in 2004, which included a chapter on gender; and the second edition of the AHDR, published in 2014, in which gender issues were mainstreamed into all chapters as appropriate.

Gender Equality in the Arctic (GEA) is an SDWG international collaborative project that has been ongoing since 2013. The purpose and objective of the project is to promote and expand the dialogue on gender equality in the Arctic region. GEA highlights the importance of recognition and appreciation of diversity in terms of discourses, gender, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, governance, education, economies, social realities, sustainability and balanced participation in leadership and decision-making both in the public and private sectors. Further, the project seeks to identify priorities and concrete strategies to increase diversity and gender balance in policy- and decision-making processes, and to provide information to facilitate sustainable policy making for the future.

The proposed phase IV of the project builds on previous phases, in particular the outcome and recommendations from the Conference – *Gender Equality in the Arctic- Current Realities and Future Challenges*, held in Akureyri in October 2014, the phase II follow-up project that ran 2017-2019, and the recently concluded GEA III and its Pan-Arctic Report on Gender in the Arctic, with recommendations, published in May 2021 in tandem with the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting. The GEA III Report provided the three following concrete recommendations for the Arctic Council:

1. "The Arctic Council should systematically engage with and mainstream gender-based analysis across its work and encourage Arctic States to set an example at national and regional levels. The Council could create a small group, composed of experts and representatives from Working Groups and subsidiary bodies to develop a set of guidelines for the systematic inclusion of gender and application of an intersectional approach across the Council's work."
2. "The Arctic Council should encourage and facilitate the development of guidelines for consistent and comparable data and definitions throughout the Arctic. This would entail, at a minimum, gendered and ethnically disaggregated data. The Sustainable Development Working Group could within the next iteration of its project work on gender seek collaboration with national agencies across its Member States, Permanent Participant organisations, other Arctic Council Working Groups, and relevant Arctic Council Observers."
3. "Phase IV of the Gender Equality in the Arctic project, in cooperation with relevant Expert Groups, to analyse, refine, prioritise and operationalise policy relevant highlights, including opportunities for action and research."

The report was welcomed at the Ministerial meeting and was included in the Reykjavík Declaration 2021 where the Council committed to "emphasize the importance of gender equality and respect for diversity for sustainable development in the Arctic and welcome the Pan-Arctic Report, *Gender Equality in the Arctic, Phase 3*, encourage the mainstreaming of gender-based analysis in the work of the Arctic Council and call for further action to advance gender equality in the Arctic". Further, the Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021 – 2030 referred to the topic of gender to "promote gender equality and non-discrimination in the Arctic with the aim of contributing to sustainability and balanced participation in leadership and decision making both in the public and private sectors;"

Development of a concept note for GEA phase IV began with an April 2021 meeting with participation from project partners, lead authors, the editorial committee and youth advisory group. Further, a roundtable on Gender Equality in the Arctic was held at the Arctic Research Centre, Autonomous University of Barcelona

(UAB) in November 2021, including participants from Arctic research, Indigenous representation, Indigenous youth representation, the EU Ambassador at large and other experts. This event produced a summary report highlighting the need to continue the work through the Arctic Council, providing practical suggestions for moving forward as well as topics for further exploration. Participants were informed that the GEA III report was considered in forming the new EU Arctic policy.

In December 2021, the GEA draft concept note was distributed to SDWG Heads of Delegation, Observers and SDWG expert groups in addition to project partners, lead authors of the report, the report's Youth Advisory Group and Editorial Committee, to solicit feedback. Comments provided have – to the extent feasible – been incorporated or considered in the development of a formal project proposal.

Phase IV consists of two major components (see below), taking into consideration specific suggestions made by the project's Indigenous partners, the recommendations made in the report itself and in the Reykjavík Declaration 2021, in addition to referring to the Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021-2030. The project will continue its philosophy of inclusiveness and rely heavily on collaboration between multiple stakeholders including policy makers, researchers, and civil society representatives.

### **Context and focal areas**

The Arctic is going through rapid ecological, social, and economic changes. However, the Arctic is vast and by no means a uniform region, and these changes affect the people of the Arctic in different ways depending on a variety of factors, including gender. Across all chapters in the GEA III report the need for gender-based analysis and gender mainstreaming is identified as a necessary strategy to promote and ensure gender equality. It is a crucial element for achieving sustainable development and the first steps are to fully understand the main issues to be addressed. This requires consistent and comparable data as the very foundation for understanding realities and inequalities across regions, countries, sectors, genders, and peoples.

Authors of most chapters identified the paucity of data and the challenges this presents for analysis and comparisons. In the Migration and Mobility chapter, the lack of data that coupled migration, the Arctic, and gender is particularly problematic. Further, too few studies are grounded in feminist, masculinity, intersectional, LGBTQIA2S+, and Indigenous gender perspectives. The chapter on Gender and Environment points to multiple issues with gendered data and emphasizes how environment-related gender-disaggregated data is crucial for providing decision makers with the knowledge and capacity to develop well informed policies. They also remind us that gender statistics are more than data disaggregated by sex but rather are data reflecting differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men. The chapter on Empowerment and Fate Control reveals that it is critical to point out that gender equality analysis and indicators suffer from severe data limitations. This is perpetuated by standardized and stereotypical reporting of gender data. They suggest developing gender indicators and indexes to capture gender equality and empowerment processes across all sectors and at all levels of politics and government, economy, and civil society. The chapter on Indigeneity, Gender, Violence, and Reconciliation in the Arctic identifies the challenges with gauging social and economic inequalities, levels of gender violence, and impacts from processes of colonization.

This lack of data and persistent gaps in data availability, in addition to a lack of protocols for sharing data, has been flagged in previous reports, such as in the Arctic Human Development Reports and the Arctic Social Indicators reports. This continued lack of gendered and intersectional data, including specific data on Indigenous populations and LGBTQIA2S+ people, severely impedes efforts to adequately understand the

dynamics of gender across the Arctic. Consistent and comparable data is the very foundation for understanding realities and inequalities across regions, countries, sectors, genders, and peoples.

### **GEAIV Component I – Mainstreaming Gender Based Analysis in the Work of the Arctic Council to Advance Gender Equality in the Arctic**

GEAIV will address the recommendations provided in the report, including moving forward gender mainstreaming efforts in the work of the Arctic Council. Gender Mainstreaming is a strategy for promoting gender equality; it is not an end in itself but rather an approach and means to achieve gender equality. It seeks to ensure that gender perspectives, contributions, knowledge, and implications of any planned actions for people of all genders are adequately assessed and considered in all stages of activities (policy development, allocation of funds, research, advocacy, project work, programs, initiatives, legislation etc.)

#### **Procedural – short term**

Examining the Arctic Council’s internal administrative processes and procedures with a gender-lens will be an important first step in supporting gender mainstreaming in the work of the Arctic Council. This will involve engaging with the Council at various levels, including the Senior Arctic Officials and Permanent Participants, the Working Group Executive Secretaries, and the Arctic Council Secretariat. The primary objective for this component of the work would be a list of activities that support gender mainstreaming within the Arctic Council based on an assessment of needs, defining priorities and responsibilities in addition to proposing a timeline for implementation and ways in which monitoring and follow-up of mainstreaming activities can take place. Tasks will include compiling information on how gender mainstreaming has been implemented in other comparable entities, an inclusive workshop with the relevant Arctic Council representatives (SAOs, WG, PP, ACS), in addition to project partners, youth representatives and other interested experts. A summary report with suggestions for next steps in this work will be provided for review. **Canada has indicated potential funding support.**

#### **Data – medium to long term**

The mainstreaming process – in part - depends on the collection and analysis of transparent gender / sex-disaggregated data and is a prerequisite for policy and decision-making processes designed to achieve the goal of equality. The GEA III Report identified the paucity of gendered and ethnically disaggregated data and recommended the Arctic Council seek ways to address this. There is a dilemma where empirical data relating to sex, genders, ethnicity and intersectionality is needed while at the same time there is a need to consider the risks connected with potential uses of such data. While it is understood that gendered and ethnically disaggregated data are problematic for various reasons, it is suggested that a dialogue on the potential for improving the comparability and collection of, and access to, data is necessary to move forward and address data concerns that continue to be flagged, including in the 2004 Arctic Human Development Report.

The GEA project will seek collaboration with national statistical agencies across the Arctic States, Permanent Participant organizations, other Arctic Council Working Groups, and relevant Arctic Council Observers to organize an event that will consider the major obstacles involved. This workshop could be organized in cooperation with UN Women and other interested parties. **Canada and the US National Science Foundation have indicated potential funding support for such an event.** A summary report of such a workshop will feed into a larger study on relevant existing data and challenges to gender and sex disaggregated data in the Arctic region, to be compiled, **pending funding commitment from Finland.**

### Aspirational – long term

International bodies increasingly are introducing codes of ethics and conduct to help guide their work internally and externally (ex. United Nations Development Programme, IASSA, IASC). It is suggested that the Arctic Council consider following suit and develop its own code of ethics. While a very encompassing topic that goes beyond the scope of the GEA project and requiring a broader circle of participation, a secondary objective of the GEA project is to collect and synthesize existing codes of conduct that might form a basis for a code of ethics for the Arctic Council. **Pending funding.**

### Component II – Sharing Wisdom and Knowledges

As part of ongoing efforts to disseminate information from the report published in May 2021, Indigenous representatives and other experts (from Canada and the Youth Advisory Group) suggested the inclusion of themes to further expand on and include in any future dialogue on gender issues in the Arctic. The objective would be to organize a series of online events and interviews where Indigenous and other experts will share their knowledges and wisdom on themes of importance, including a consideration of the Sustainable Development Goals, where relevant. This could provide platforms for Indigenous Peoples to share experiences and exchange ideas and strategies to achieve Gender Equality in the Arctic. This component should be led by Indigenous Experts in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, such as Arctic Council representatives, researchers, Indigenous communities, and youth representatives. The suggested timeframe is two years. The project leads remain committed to securing funding for Indigenous leadership and Indigenous and youth participation in this component, in addition to administrative and technical support.

Themes to be addressed, as suggested by Indigenous Experts, could include:

- Decolonization and Indigenization through Culture (Art, Sport, Film, Music) and Economics
- Governance (responsibility/co-management/decision-making processes)
- Indigenous-State Relations - Circumpolar Gendering Institutions (philosophy and Action); (LGBTQ+ and Indigenization) Arctic Security and Food Sovereignty -Medicine/Ceremony
- Human Rights Interventions/Reconciliation (UNDRIP; SDGs; AID TRCs)
- Indigenous Metaphysics/Metaphysics - wholism/holism; religious domination; mental health/healing
- Social Justice - Hash Tag Movements; Activism/Feminism; Revolutionizing Medicine/health care; cyber violence; Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Build upon the "deepened" relationships with Arctic States commitment to 'gender' with their grassroots cooperation.

Additional ideas include (Canada, Youth Advisory Group):

- Human safety/security in the context of the Arctic and in particular violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, including infrastructure and social supports for abused women in the Arctic.
- Provide spaces for Indigenous Peoples to express themselves in their own languages. Language revitalization and retention.
- Increased consultation with Indigenous Peoples -especially women – on environmental issues and climate change.
- Access to safe and adequate housing and clean water.
- Migration (within an Arctic country, between the Arctic states, outside of Arctic and into the Arctic) and especially laws and regulations developed in the Arctic countries to ensure gender equality at

the workplaces and to promote active participation of migrant women in the social life as well as what could be improved in this regard.

## Activities and Outputs

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

- To prepare, organize and lead an inclusive online Workshop on mainstreaming efforts for the Arctic Council. This will involve pulling together relevant stakeholders within the Arctic Council bodies, such as Working Group Executive Secretaries, representatives from the Arctic Council Secretariat and Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat, the SAO level and the Permanent Participants. Special emphasis will be placed on ensuring participation from Indigenous Experts and youth.
- To collect material for and prepare a document containing advice regarding modifications to internal administrative processes for the Arctic Council and its Working Groups, based also on findings from the proposed workshop above.
- To prepare, organize and lead an inclusive F2F / hybrid Workshop on challenges to gender/ sex / ethnically disaggregated data in the Arctic region. The workshop will seek to include relevant stakeholders, including representatives from National Statistical agencies, researchers, Indigenous experts and youth. This workshop will potentially also include data experts from UN Women.
- To compile and provide a summary report from an event on gender and ethnically disaggregated data.
- To conduct, coordinate and compile a study on existing data and challenges to gender and sex disaggregated data in the Arctic region.
- To compile a document on existing codes of conduct within institutions, organizations or forums comparable to the Arctic Council. (Pending funding)
- To work with Indigenous experts on developing a series of online thematic events and interviews. (Pending funding)

## Timetable and Project Completion

- Preparations for and organization of Workshop on Mainstreaming – January 2022
- Workshop on Mainstreaming – February 2022
- Writing of document regarding modifications to internal administrative processes – March 2022
- Preparations for and organization of Workshop on data challenges – Jan-February 2022
- Workshop on data challenges – March 2022
- Summary report on workshop on data challenges – May 2022
- Study on existing data and challenges to gender and sex disaggregated data in the Arctic region – February 2023
- Document on existing codes of conduct January 2023 – May 2023
- Series of online events and interviews May 2022 May 2024

## Cost items

Mainstreaming - procedural<sup>2</sup>

- Coordination and administrative support for workshop on mainstreaming.
- Support for Indigenous participation in online workshop on mainstreaming and contribution to the final document.

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<sup>2</sup> Original budget in CAD 35.000 - Canada

- Support for youth participation in workshop on mainstreaming and contribution to final document.
- Support for coordinating, compiling, soliciting feedback, writing and preparation for final document.

<b>Workshop and document on mainstreaming</b>	USD
Salaries for coordination & organization and leading of workshop (January, February)	9,480
Indigenous participation in workshop and contributions to final document	6,780
Youth participation in workshop	2,370
Preparation and writing of document (February, March)	6,320
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,950</b>

#### Mainstreaming - data<sup>3</sup>

- Coordination and administrative support for workshop on data.
- Travel support for participation in workshop on data.<sup>4</sup>
- Support for external experts for study on data.
- Support for preparation of summary document, organization and coordination of study on data and editing and preparing final document.

<b>Mainstreaming efforts for the Arctic Council.</b>	USD
<b>Workshop and study on data challenges</b>	
Preparations and organization, preparation and writing of summary, research and writing study on data	16,950
Indigenous participation in workshop and contributions to summary document	4,740
Three external experts for study on data	16,950
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,640</b>

#### Aspirational

- Collect and synthesize existing codes of conduct that might form a basis for a code of ethics for the Arctic Council. Budget to be defined later.

#### Sharing wisdom and knowledges

- Administration and technical support
- Support for Indigenous project coordinator
- Support for Indigenous and youth participation in Executive Committee.
- Budget to be defined in cooperation with Indigenous partners, later.

## Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge

The GEA project will continue to engage and collaborate with Permanent Participant co-leads and other Indigenous representatives throughout phase IV. The concept note and proposal is informed by input from Indigenous Knowledge holders and GEA will continue to seek consultation, advice and input of knowledge from Indigenous Peoples' representatives at all stages. GEA will prioritize inclusion of Indigenous experts in its activity and output and is committed to seek funding for such participation.

## Communications

Dissemination of workshops, compiled documents, study on data, events and interviews will be disseminated through the GEA project's networks, website, social media platforms and the newsletter GEA Times, as relevant. Further, dissemination platforms of the SDWG and the Arctic Council will be used where relevant

<sup>3</sup> Original budget EUR 30.000 & CAD 6.000- Canada and Finland

<sup>4</sup> This budget item is based on potential contribution from Canada. The National Science Foundation may be able to provide additional travel funding support with focus on Indigenous representation.

and possible, in collaboration with the SDWG Executive Secretary and the Arctic Council Secretariat. A copy of the study will be made available and distributed digitally to stakeholders across the Arctic, including national data institutions and policy relevant bodies. Finally, the GEA project organizes and participates in various Arctic related events and will continue to use these platforms to disseminate the work and findings of the project.

Also see the Knowledge Mobilization Plan prepared for this project for more information.