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## Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)

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## **ARCTICSTAT**

### **Socioeconomic database on the Circumpolar Arctic**

**Submitted to the  
Arctic Council  
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## **Socioeconomic database on the Circumpolar Arctic**

### INTRODUCTION

This document aims at a) exposing the ARCTICSTAT project, its objectives, approach, content, and its current status; b) identifying the main challenges ARCTICSTAT is facing; c) defining the collaboration that is wished from statistical agencies; d) and explaining the relevance of the support that is wished from the Arctic Council.

### OVERVIEW

ARCTICSTAT is an open-access web-based circumpolar socioeconomic statistical database. ARCTICSTAT brings together, in a systematic and coherent whole, data dealing with the population, language, health, education, economy, employment and other social realities. ARCTICSTAT covers the Arctic regions of countries members of the Arctic Council : United States, Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Faroe Islands, Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Federation.

ARCTICSTAT was born out of a desire to increase the research capacity by taking advantage of already existing data. There are important impediments to use the rich body of already existing data to quantify social Arctic realities. This data is highly dispersed among countries into several statistical agencies, each of them having its own way to display the data, its own methods, and its own way to ask the users for navigating into their website. As a result, to find the existing data imposes highly time-consuming procedures.

ARCTICSTAT intends to change this situation. It is based on a long experience in database building which has led to major publications and analysis, including some sections of the Arctic Human Development Report. ARCTICSTAT is a university initiative.

### APPROACH

ARCTICSTAT operates mainly as a portal linking users directly to the relevant tables into the statistical agencies web sites; when such procedure is not possible, users have access to tables directly stored into ARCTICSTAT database itself. ARCTICSTAT web site has been conceived as a user-friendly device : all tables are systematically

indexed by countries (and regions), by indicators (and sub-indicators) and by years. Map-based research is also offered through an interactive circumpolar map.

The data included must meet strict criteria: it must be public, produced on a recurrent basis, readily available and methodologically valid. It generally comes from national or regional statistics agencies.

## VALUE-ADDED

The value-added ARCTICSTAT offers is : to greatly facilitate findings throughout the Arctic statistics; to drastically reduce the time required in order to identify sources and to find its way through them, which is often complex and always different from one statistical agency to the other; and to make possible systematic and valid comparisons at the level of the circumpolar regions, such comparisons having been so far very difficult due to the wide dispersion of data.

The simple concept developed for ARCTICSTAT construction resolves the problem of getting multiple data together. Its indexation procedure, which is systematic and exhaustive, offers an important potential, as well as its map-based research device.

ARCTICSTAT will enable national, regional and local governments, as well as the Arctic Council, to rely on updated, valid and comparable information to guide public policies. It is a clearinghouse that may increase information exchanges between Arctic countries in the decision-making process. It will also facilitate research among scientific community.

Moreover, ARCTICSTAT will be used as a pedagogical resource for teaching, research and dissemination, specially for those involved in Arctic programs, such as those universities affiliated with the University of the Arctic.

ARCTICSTAT is not redundant with other SDWG projects, such as the AHDR, SLICA and ECONOR, with which ARCTICSTAT is a partner. Rather it is complementary. ARCTICSTAT will include hyperlinks with the SLiCA database, using the same indexation procedures. ARCTICSTAT is presently used as a repository for the data being gathered and compiled within ECONOR project, and the relevant tables will stay available for the future. Finally ARCTICSTAT may be used for the same purposes in the context of the AHDR follow-up.

## CURRENT STATUS

### PROTOTYPE

Created at Université Laval (Canada), the prototype version of ARCTICSTAT contains some 100 tables with hyperlinks, out of several hundreds that have already been identified. The final version will be fully implemented in 2007, the International Polar Year.

## MANAGEMENT

ARCTICSTAT is led by professor Gérard Duhaime, Chairholder, Canada Research Chair on Comparative Aboriginal Condition. The project leader is also responsible for coordination between ARCTICSTAT and other international initiatives supported by the Arctic Council such as the AHDR, SLiCA and ECONOR.

Andrée Caron is the Executive database director, responsible for the current operations, and for the collaboration with contact persons in all statistical agencies. Nick Bernard is the Research coordinator, responsible for research programs development.

## FUNDING

ARCTICSTAT has been created with the support of Canadian funds. Phase 1 (2003-2007) is being funded by the Canada Foundation for Innovation, that supports the creation of innovative infrastructure into the Canadian universities. An important application for funding has been submitted to the Canada Foundation for Innovation for Phase 2 (2008-2011) and is presently pending. La Fondation de l'Université Laval has committed a long-term support for the creation and the maintenance of ARCTICSTAT.

## COLLABORATION WITH STATISTICAL AGENCIES

So far, most of the challenges have been successfully achieved, such as raising core funding, data identification, indexation procedures, conception and development of a user-friendly web site including a map-based interface, conception and development of a fully functional administrative section.

The principal challenge ARCTICSTAT is now facing is to conduct discussion with all the data providers, mainly the national statistical agencies from the Arctic countries. ARCTICSTAT portal approach implies that the control over the data will stay within each statistical agency; they will continue to update it according to their own policies and programs. However, to make sure that all hyperlinks stay alive, and all tables directly included into ARCTICSTAT database stay accurate, it is necessary to establish information exchanges mechanisms on a permanent basis.

These discussions should lead to agreements on permanent collaboration between ARCTICSTAT and each statistical agency. They should lead also to the creation of an Advisory Board, where ARCTICSTAT managers and participant agencies would meet on a regular basis to discuss the methodological and conceptual orientations of the database. The Advisory Board would be responsible for studying and proposing solutions to the problems of keeping all hyperlinks alive, of keeping all tables updated, of developing collaboration and on-going information exchange agreements.

Through this collaboration, each agency is expected :

1. To create a list of hyperlinks (URL addresses) of all existing tables in its database related to Arctic Regions in the fields of demography, economy, employment, health and education, to be provided to ARCTICSTAT; this list may be expanded over time;
2. To assure these hyperlinks will stay alive, including the cases where the tables are updated or moved to another URL address;
3. To authorize ARCTICSTAT's users to use these hyperlinks;
4. To provide ARCTICSTAT with relevant tables that are not available through its web site, including special compilation of census data for instances, and to allow ARCTICSTAT to make them available directly from ARCTICSTAT;
5. To identify a single contact person to support ARCTICSTAT managers in their work, and to represent the statistical agency he or she belongs to into ARCTICSTAT Advisory Board;
6. To cover expenses related to this collaboration.

#### SUPPORT OF THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

The support of the Sustainable Development Working Group and the Arctic Council itself would greatly enhance ArcticStat capacity to conclude collaboration agreements with the data providers, namely national statistical agencies of the Member States of the Arctic Council. It will facilitate the creation of an Advisory Board composed of representatives of the national statistical agencies, in order to give permanent orientation and support to the management.