

SDWG Progress Report to SAOs

Syktyvkar, Komi Republic, Russian Federation

26-27 April, 2006.

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Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)

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**SDWG Progress Report to SAOs
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Introduction

This progress report is based on the activities of the SDWG since the SAO Meeting in Khanty-Mansiysk in October 2005. The Sustainable Development Working Group held a workshop on 13-14 March 2006 in Salekhard, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Russian Federation and subsequently held a formal SDWG meeting on 15-16 March 2006. Prior to this the Working Group last met in October, 2005, immediately preceding the SAO meeting.

This progress report is based mainly on the outcomes of the formal SDWG meeting of on March 15-16, 2006. However, there are also some reference to the Salekhard workshop.

This report is divided into two parts: 1) a summary of some items for information purposes, and 2) issues that required guidance or decisions by the Senior Arctic Officials.

1. Information Items

New SDWG Website:

Documents referred to in this report can also be found on the new SDWG website (<http://portal.sdwg.org>). This new website has been launched since the last SAO meeting in Khant-Mansiysk and was made possible by funding from Canada. In addition to being a source of information about the SDWG, the Arctic Council and arctic affairs generally, the new site contains a number of advanced tools for communications and collaboration among working group members and Arctic Council participants generally. SDWG Project leaders can use the “work space” tools to allow collaboration among their project members. The Executive Secretary provided an overview of the site during the Salekhard meeting. Arctic Council members are required to register to gain access to the documents in the Members Area. This registration serves to update contact information which is then available to other Arctic Council participants in a directory on the website.

SDWG Salekhard Workshop 13-14 March 2006:

The SDWG conducted a two-day workshop in Salekhard, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Russian Federation on priority actions in advancing sustainable development

in the Arctic. The Workshop was attended by approximately 65 participants and produced many interesting and worthy ideas regarding projects and activities. A copy of the Workshop agenda is attached as **ANNEX 1**.

The proceedings of the Salekhard Workshop 13-14 March 2006 and the recommendations proposed at that workshop were summarized in document entitled “*Recommendations Of Workshop Participants For Consideration Of The SDWG*” dated 16 March 2006. The document was adopted as reference material for consideration in the further work of the SDWG, not as an officially agreed document of the working group. Attached for the information of the SAOs as **ANNEX 2 & 3** are a summary of the recommendations of the workshop participants and a categorization of these recommendations.

Reports Anticipated for the Ministerial Meeting:

Several SDWG projects and activities will be completed by the Ministerial Meeting in October 2006. Following its next meeting, planned for September 2006, the SDWG will provide information and recommendations to SAOs for consideration and possible inclusion in the SAO Report to Ministers. The following is a summary to date of anticipated “deliverables” from these projects and activities:

- ***ECONOR*** (Economy of the North): The SDWG looks forward to the publication by ECONOR of results, analyses and recommendations for the Ministerial in 2006.
- ***Women and Resource Management***: The SDWG looks forward to the publication by Women and Resource Management project of results, analyses and recommendations for the Ministerial in 2006.
- ***Sustainable Model for Arctic Regional Tourism*** (SMART): The SDWG welcomed the recommendations from SMART which will be reported to SAOs for their consideration and approval in their report to Ministers in October 2006. Three specific items were put forward by the project for the consideration of the SDWG:
 - The launch of the Sustainable Arctic tourism label needs the supportive decisions of all the respective Arctic countries (egg. support for the creation of a regional / national tourism label that leads to or is compatible with an arctic-wide certification or standard (Sustainable Arctic tourism label).
 - The support from the Arctic decision makers is highly appreciated in finding creative solutions at their national and regional level for capacity building and promotion of sustainable (tourism) business practices with arctic-wide coordination.

- Each Arctic country is encouraged to make more efforts in developing tourism in a sustainable way in their respective country and to cooperate with other Arctic countries in this area.

There will be further discussion on these three recommendations at the next SDWG Meeting and they are included as information items for the purpose of this progress report.

- ***Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLiCA)***: The SDWG looks forward to the publication by SliCA of results, analyses and recommendations for the Ministerial in 2006.
- ***Product Development and Further Processing in Sustainable Reindeer Husbandry 2002-2005 (Ofelas)***: The SDWG looks forward to the publication by Ofelas of results, analyses and recommendations for the Ministerial in 2006.
- ***The International Circumpolar Surveillance Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Arctic (ICS)***: ICS project deliverables anticipated at 2006 Arctic Council Ministerial meeting will include a comprehensive summary report on invasive bacterial diseases caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Neisseria meningitidis*, Group A & B streptococcus in Arctic populations and the status of preventive measures being undertaken by the public health authorities within each participating country.

Ongoing Projects:

In addition, the SDWG has a number of active and on-going projects. These projects are:

- Arctic Human Health Initiative (AHHI) (Lead: USA)
- Telemedicine Project (Lead: USA)
- The International Circumpolar Surveillance (ICS): Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Arctic (ICS) (Lead: USA)
- Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SliCA) (Lead: Denmark/Greenland/Faroe Islands)
- Arctic Infrastructure: Aviation (Lead: USA)
- Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic (Lead: Canada)
- Sustainable Development of Indigenous Peoples of Russian North (Lead: RAIPON/Russian Federation)

Any additional deliverables for the Ministerial from these ongoing projects will be reported to SAOs following the next SDWG Meeting.

Arctic Portal:

At its meeting in Khanty Mansiysk the SDWG considered the concept of an Arctic Portal and the call for a feasibility study outlined in the document prepared by the CAFF Secretariat in collaboration with others. The SDWG endorsed the concept of an Arctic Portal and would like to continue to have a hand in this work.

Arctic Shipping Assessment:

Mr. Ben Ellis of the Institute of the North and CITF, was requested by the SDWG Chair to represent the SDWG at PAME meetings on the Arctic Shipping Assessment. Consequently Mr. Ellis attended the PAME meeting on 02-04 March 2006 and reported to the SDWG in Salekhard that PAME will request the SDWG to provide to PAME a list of experts on socio-economic matters relating to shipping.

Future Meetings and SDWG Work Plan for 2006-2008

The SDWG is planning another meeting prior to the Ministerial Meeting. This meeting will likely occur in Moscow or St. Petersburg early in September 2006. The elements of a draft SDWG work plan are attached in **ANNEX 4**. Further development of a draft 2006-2008 work plan will occur prior to the next SDWG meeting and it will be finalized at the next SDWG meeting so that it can be brought forward to the Ministerial for approval.

2. Items Requiring Guidance or Decisions by SAOs

Mechanism for implementation of the Sustainable Development Action Plan:

At their meeting in Yakutsk, "SAOs agreed that a simplified version of the document is needed. It is to be reintroduced to SAOs." A document entitled "*Mechanism to Implement the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Action Plan*" dated 15 February 2006 was approved by the SDWG at its meeting in Salekhard (see attached **ANNEX 5**) and is hereby submitted to the SAOs for their review and approval.

The Russian Federation is to be commended for their diligent work on this paper which outlines 6 implementation modalities.

Procedures for submitting, approving and managing project proposals in the Sustainable Development Working Group:

A document entitled "*Procedures for submitting, approving and managing project proposals in the Sustainable Development Working Group*" dated 20 January 2006 was approved by the SDWG at its meeting in Salekhard (see attached **ANNEX 6**) and is hereby submitted to the SAOs for their review and approval.

Sweden is to be commended for their leadership in developing this paper. The paper sets out procedures for submitting project proposals for endorsement, alternatives to project endorsement and management of projects within SDWG.

Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) Follow-up:

With regard to the development of indicators for sustainable development in the Arctic, the SDWG welcomed and approved follow-up on the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) through the development of indicators, for which Iceland has taken the lead. The SDWG agreed as follows:

“With regard to the development of indicators for sustainable development in the Arctic, the SDWG welcomed and approved follow-up on the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) through the Arctic Social Indicators (ASI) project, for which Iceland has taken the lead, and through the parallel Integrated Arctic Social Observation System (IASOS) project, led by the Russian Federation. Integration of results from other projects such as SLiCA, ArcticStat and ECONOR is important, as is the inclusion of the perspectives of both indigenous peoples and other Arctic residents, in the envisaged subsequent elaboration of agreed Arctic Human Development Indicators.”

This matter is hereby submitted to the SAOs for their review and approval.

ACIA Focal Point:

Norway agreed to take on the lead on this item within the SDWG in cooperation with Finland. Norway will represent the group in the Focal Point process. Within a short time after the Salekhard Meeting the SDWG representatives will be invited to supply information on adaptation measures being taken in relation to climate change. Norway will summarize the information received and provide it for review before the next SDWG meeting. For purposes of reporting to the SAO meeting in April 2006 the SDWG Chair will report on projects and other activities of the SDWG which are relevant to the Focal Point process.

This matter is hereby submitted to the SAOs for their review and further guidance.

SDWG Projects and Activities

The following projects and activities were approved by the SDWG at their meeting in Salekhard and are hereby submitted to SAOs for their further guidance and/or approval, as appropriate. Copies of the proposals for new projects are attached as indicated. Copies of documentation on these items can also be found on the SDWG website <http://portal.sdwg.org> :

○ **Arctic ICT Assessment (AICTA) (Lead: USA)**

In Khanty Mansiysk the SAOs and PPs agreed that they expect the ICTN to continue its work towards the Assessment, working in parallel with concrete projects in the field of ICT development (see “Action ICT Arctic” below). The overall goal of the proposed assessment is to increase the human and social capital in the North and to improve the opportunities for living in the Arctic. These goals correspond with the goals of the Arctic Council in order to support the sustainable development in the Arctic in social, economic and environmental issues. Wide participation from the Arctic states, Permanent Participants, Observers, local and regional interests and industry experts has been sought. ICTN has worked transparently for more than 1 year and has developed a plan for an assessment (see attached **ANNEX 7**). The assessment will be completed by May 2008. The SDWG supports the ongoing AICTA work and recommends it to SAOs for approval.

○ **Arctic Action (ICT) (Lead: Sweden)**

In relation to practical ICT projects under Sweden’s Arctic Action proposal (see **ANNEX 8**), the proposed next steps include:

- identifying “unique” Arctic “needs” in relevant research areas. Relevance for an Arctic dimension in research and demonstration is crucial for AA(ICT) project proposals to be accepted within the EU framework programme.
- deciding if further AA (ICT) work should be done within a separate AA(ICT) group or within the “Arctic ICT Assessment” group.
- holding an AA(ICT) meeting in Brussels to present and discuss “unique” Arctic “needs” with relevant decision makers and project officials within the Commission services responsible for the EU Framework Programme.

The SDWG supports the ongoing Arctic Action (ICT) work and recommends it to SAOs for approval.

○ **ArcticStat (Lead: Canada)**

This project was motivated by, and is a follow-up to, the AHDR and received strong approval from the SDWG. It involves creation of a database, accessible through the Internet, to help Arctic researchers quickly and easily access important data from national statistics bureaus. The purpose of the database is to facilitate research on a broad range of matters relating to demographics and the human dimension of the Arctic. ArcticStat supports SLiCA and ECONOR and is not a duplication of this work. It will create a powerful tool which is expandable and will evolve over time. The SDWG supports the proposal for ArcticStat (see **ANNEX 9**) and recommends it to SAOs for approval.

○ **Arctic Energy Summit (Lead: USA)**

The elements of an Arctic Energy Summit proposal for the period 2006-2008 were proposed to the SDWG by the USA. Interested Arctic Council states and Permanent Participants were asked to nominate a representative to serve on an international organizing committee and provide in-kind

support for the implementation of an Arctic Energy Summit. The Arctic Energy Summit is to be designed with a key element of the Arctic Council in mind: “Encourage dialogue among scientists, policy planners, Arctic residents and political level decision-makers,” as it relates to energy development and rural power in the Arctic. The SDWG supported the proposal for an Arctic Energy Summit (see **ANNEX 10**) and recommends it to SAOs for approval.

○ **Research & Action Plan for Human Health Risk Reduction in the Arctic (Lead: Russia)**

This project was initially presented to the SDWG with a somewhat different focus at its previous meetings. The project proponent was asked to meet with the experts of the AMAP Human Health group and AHHI. This has occurred and a more phased approach has been proposed. A letter of support for the project was sent from AHHI to the SDWG Chair. The IPY submission for this proposed project (See **ANNEX 11**) indicates that the lead organizations for the project are the Sustainable Development Working Group and the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program. This proposed project is on the agenda for discussion at the AMAP meeting scheduled for 5-6 April 2006. Therefore, subject to any further outcomes of the AMAP meeting, the SDWG recommends this project to SAOs for their approval

○ **World Urban Forum (Lead: Canada)**

In May 2005 the Twentieth Session of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) called on WUF III to address sustainable community development in the circumpolar north.

As such, they have asked the Forum to: “raise awareness of the sustainable development challenges of the far north and the Arctic region; consult about the sustainable development of human settlements and the promotion of improved shelter infrastructure in the Arctic region, as well as the creation of favourable living conditions for the indigenous peoples of that area; and, compile information on training activities in the far north and Arctic region as a basis of further cooperation between UN-Habitat and relevant partners.”

The Forum’s overarching theme is Turning Ideas into Action with the focus on profiling concrete actions. Canada has proposed to hold a networking session to profile the Arctic Council’s approaches and activities related to sustainable communities for the Third World Urban Forum (WUF III), in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, June 19-23, 2006. The SDWG supports the proposal for the networking session at the World Urban Forum recommends it to SAOs for approval (see **ANNEX 12**).

This concludes the SDWG progress report to SAOS. A summary of the decisions of the SDWG from its meeting in Salekhard is attached as **ANNEX 13**.

ANNEXES to the SDWG Progress Report to SAOS

- ANNEX 1 SDWG Salekhard Workshop agenda
- ANNEX 2 Salekhard Workshop: Summary of Recommendations of Workshop Participants
- ANNEX 3 Salekhard Workshop: Recommendations of Workshop Participants by categories
- ANNEX 4 The elements of a draft SDWG work plan for 2006-2008
- ANNEX 5 SDAP Implementation Mechanisms
- ANNEX 6 Procedures for submitting, approving and managing project proposals in the Sustainable Development Working Group
- ANNEX 7 Arctic Information and Communication Technology Assessment (AICTA): Proposal and Rationale
- ANNEX 8 Arctic Action (ICT)
- ANNEX 9 ArcticStat
- ANNEX 10 Arctic Energy Summit
- ANNEX 11 Research & Action Plan for Human Health Risk Reduction in the Arctic
- ANNEX 12 World Urban Forum
- ANNEX 13 Summary of the decisions of the SDWG Salekhard Meeting 15-16 March 2006