

Arctic Council Secretariat

# Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference of the Arctic Council Secretariat  
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ARCTIC COUNCIL



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# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## of the Arctic Council Secretariat

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### 1. Introduction

The Arctic Council was established in 1996 as a high level intergovernmental forum to promote cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states with the involvement of Arctic indigenous peoples and other Arctic inhabitants. The Arctic Council Chairmanship rotates every two years. The work of the Arctic Council is conducted by the Senior Arctic Officials (hereafter referred to as SAOs) in consultation with Permanent Participants between the Ministerial Meetings.

In order to strengthen the capacity of the Arctic Council it was decided at the 2011 Ministerial meeting in Nuuk to establish a standing Arctic Council Secretariat (hereafter referred to as the Secretariat). The Secretariat will enhance the work of the Arctic Council through the establishment of administrative capacity and by providing continuity, institutional memory, operational efficiency, enhanced communication and outreach, exchange of information with other relevant international organizations and to support activities of the Arctic Council.

The scope of the Secretariat's work, in addition to the organizational setup and the financial arrangements, are described in these Terms of Reference.

The location of the Secretariat will be Tromsø, Norway.

### 2. Scope

**2.1** The Secretariat shall perform secretarial and administrative service within the framework set forward in these Terms of Reference, and such other functions in support of the Arctic Council that are entrusted to it by the Arctic Council.

**2.2** The Secretariat is to perform the following functions:

- Administrative and organizational support, including: arranging and servicing meetings as required; transmitting reports to and from Arctic states, Permanent Participants, Working Groups and Task Forces, other subsidiary bodies and Observers; assisting the Chair in drafting meeting documents including final reports; providing services to Permanent Participants and Working Groups without a secretariat; administrative services concerning general correspondence; and archiving of records.
- Communication and outreach, including: operating the Arctic Council website, including web pages of those Working Groups without a secretariat; facilitating and improving the quality and availability of information on the Arctic Council; recording, maintaining and posting, as appropriate, the records of the Arctic Council; facilitating the exchange of information among the Arctic states, Permanent Participants and Observers; and, at the request of SAOs and Permanent Participants, developing strategic communication and outreach plans and other documents under the direct supervision of the Chair, in support of the Arctic Council.

- Finance and Human Resources, including: managing budgets; recruiting staff; contracting for services and related activities; and liaising with the Host Country.
- Other services and functions as may be required and directed by the Arctic Council and its Chair.
- Recognizing that English is the working language of the Arctic Council, the Secretariat may possess the capability to translate important Arctic Council documents and communications and outreach material to and from the Russian language, but the resources necessary to fund such a capability must be provided outside the administrative budget as established by the Arctic Council.<sup>1</sup>

### **3. Director of the Secretariat**

- 3.1** The Secretariat shall be headed by a Director who shall be appointed by the SAOs from among candidates who are nationals of Arctic states. The procedure for the selection of the Director shall be determined by SAOs.
- 3.2** The Director shall have overall responsibility for the management and administration of the Secretariat.
- 3.3** The Director reports to the SAOs through the SAO Chair. The Director shall receive tasks from and be under the direction of the SAO Chair. The Director shall consult the SAO Chair in all matters of importance.
- 3.4** The Director shall be responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the Secretariat and will represent the Secretariat externally when directed by the SAO Chair.
- 3.5** The Director shall be authorized by the SAO Chair to sign a Host Country Agreement with the Government of Norway. The Director shall also be authorized to sign any subsequent amendment to that agreement as approved by the SAOs.
- 3.6** The Director shall:
- a) prepare and submit to SAOs for their approval a biennial work plan for the activities of the Secretariat;
  - b) prepare and submit to SAOs a draft biennial budget for approval by the Arctic Council;
  - c) prepare and submit financial and other reports to SAOs as requested;
  - d) submit biennial reports to SAOs;
  - e) hire and manage the Secretariat staff;
  - f) enter into and manage contracts regarding acquisition of goods and services as required to perform the functions of the Secretariat; and
  - g) perform such other functions as may be required and directed by the SAOs and its Chair.
- 3.7** The appointment of the Director shall be offered for a period of up to four years with the possibility of prolongation for up to four years.

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<sup>1</sup> Norway will provide resources necessary for Russian translation.

## **4. Staff members**

- 4.1** The Secretariat shall be staffed commensurate to its tasks.
- 4.2** The Director, in consultation with the SAO Chair, shall appoint Staff members essential for the carrying out of the functions of the Secretariat. A geographical balance among the Arctic states should be taken into consideration when hiring the Staff members. The Director and other Staff members shall serve in accordance with the procedures, terms and conditions in the Staff rules.
- 4.3** Appointments for Professional staff members, as defined in the Staff rules, shall be offered for a period of up to four years, with a six month probation period, and with the possibility of prolongation for up to four years.
- 4.4** General staff members, as defined in the Staff rules, shall as a main rule not be given or offered fixed term contracts.
- 4.5** The Secretariat may host secondments from Arctic states. Acceptance of seconded personnel is subject to the condition that the sending government, regional administration or sponsoring institution covers all the expenses except the use of office facilities, which are covered by the Secretariat. Seconded personnel are considered legally employed by the sending entity.
- 4.6** Internships may be offered to young professionals or other individuals, in particular from Permanent Participants.

## **5. Legal personality of the Secretariat**

- 5.1** The legal personality of the Secretariat in the Kingdom of Norway and the privileges and immunities necessary for the exercise of the functions of the Secretariat and its Staff members and their families shall be defined and provided for in the Host Country Agreement.

## **6. Budget**

- 6.1** An administrative budget to cover the operating costs of the Secretariat, including inter alia, salaries, travel costs, web-site related costs and, if applicable, the costs of the Permanent Participant intern(s) is to be established and be determined every second year by the Ministerial meeting. Other costs are to be borne by the Chair as per current practice and the Rules of Procedure, including rooms rented for meetings and interpretation at meetings of SAOs, Deputy Ministers and Ministers.
- 6.2** The Host Country contribution shall be 42.5 % of the administrative budget of the Secretariat and this contribution shall at no time exceed USD 739 130 unless otherwise agreed to by the Arctic states. The balance of the administrative budget will be shared equally by all Arctic states and shall at no time exceed USD 1 million unless otherwise agreed to by the Arctic states. Costs of secondments by Arctic states will be provided outside the administrative budget. In addition to contributions to the administrative budget, an Arctic state may make additional contributions to support approved functions of the Secretariat.

## **7. Amendments to these Terms of Reference**

- 7.1** The Terms of Reference may be amended by decision of the SAOs.
- 7.2** The overall operation of the Secretariat will be reviewed, unless otherwise decided by the SAOs, after 6 years from the date it is operational.