

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT: CIRCUMPOLAR ART COMPETITION

Background and Context

At the 2013 AC Ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, Senior Arctic Officials were requested to recommend ways to strengthen the work of the Arctic Council. Engagement with youth is an important component of these efforts, along with identifying opportunities to engage with other regional and international forums, supporting the active participation of Permanent Participants, developing a tracking tool and supporting the Arctic Council archiving project.

Proposal

A circumpolar art competition for young people could be held in conjunction with the Ministerial meeting in April 2015. Hosting an art competition for youth would provide a unique opportunity to showcase the diverse heritage and cultures of the Arctic to an international audience.

The competition would bring together up to three selected works from each Arctic state and Permanent Participant (PP) organization, for a maximum of 42 pieces. Each Arctic state and PP would be responsible for selecting its respective submissions. Artists between the ages of 18 to 29 would be eligible to participate. Artwork would be limited to drawings, paintings, and mixed media, no larger than 60 centimetres wide by 60 centimetres high and capable of being rolled into a tube for shipping purposes. The theme of the competition would be “Development for the People of the North”.

Canada would cover all costs associated with setting up the exhibition, including framing, judging and prizes. We would also cover the shipping costs associated with submissions from the PPs. Arctic states would be responsible for covering the costs of sending their work to Ottawa.

Following the Arctic Council competition, Canada would exhibit the work at the Department of Foreign Affairs, Development and Trade in Ottawa to enable featured artists to gain more exposure. We would also investigate the possibility of organizing a further exhibit in conjunction with our Embassy in Washington to highlight the transition to the US Chairmanship. Following the exhibitions, all framed pieces would be offered to associated embassies and offices in Canada as a gift.

Communications

A communications strategy would be developed through the Arctic Council Communications and Outreach Contact Group. This strategy would consist of two phases: the first would promote the competition to young artists across the circumpolar north; the second would highlight the competition as a form of youth engagement at the Ministerial meeting.

Milestones

- *October 2014:* Approval of proposal by SAOs.
- *November 2014:* A communications strategy would be developed through the Communications and Outreach Contact Group.
- *November/December 2014:* States and PPs would promote the competition to young artists in their region.
- *End of March 2015:* All submissions received in Ottawa
- *April 2015:* The competition would be held on the margins of the Ministerial, where winners would be selected and announced.
- *Spring/Summer 2015:* Follow-up exhibitions, hosted by Canada, would be held before donating the art to associated offices and embassies in Canada.

Lead

Canada would lead the logistics of the competition. Participation from the other Arctic States and PPs is needed to ensure the competition is circumpolar in nature. The Communications and Outreach Contact Group would help in the development of the communications elements of the project.