

Sustainable Development Working Group Work Plan 2013-2015 Kiruna, Sweden, 15 May 2013



2013-2015 WORKPLAN

In 2011-2013, the SDWG had 17 projects covering six thematic areas including health, socioeconomic issues, adaptation, climate change, energy and communities, management of natural resources, and culture and language.

In 2013-2015, the SDWG will continue working on four projects from the previous work plan and engage in four new individual projects, including gender and equity, and food and water security.

Furthermore, the Canadian Chairmanship priorities of the SDWG will work to promote traditional and local knowledge into the work of the Council; mental wellness strategies; and adaptation best practices.

INTRODUCTION

In 2011–2013 the SDWG has been involved in a total of 17 projects covering six thematic areas including health, socioeconomic issues and adaptation to climate change, energy and communities, management of natural resources, culture and language. SDWG has identified ten projects that have been particularly successful under the Swedish chairmanship. These include: Arctic Social Indicators, Arctic Marine Aviation Transportation Infrastructure Initiative, Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Business in the Arctic, Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic, Electronic Memory of the Arctic and the Arctic Human Health Initiative.

In 2013–2015, the SDWG will continue working on four projects from the previous work plan and engage in four new individual projects, including on gender and equity, and food and water security. Furthermore, the SDWG will work to promote the integration of traditional and local knowledge into the work of the Council, adaptation to change and the development of mental wellness promotion strategies.

MANDATE

The goal of the Sustainable Development program of the Arctic Council is to propose and adopt steps to be taken by the Arctic States to advance sustainable development in the Arctic. This includes opportunities to protect and enhance the environment and the economies, culture and health of indigenous peoples and Arctic communities. The guiding tenet running throughout the work of the SDWG is to pursue initiatives that provide practical knowledge and contribute to building the capacity of indigenous peoples and Arctic communities to respond to the challenges and benefit from the opportunities emerging in the Arctic region.

RESPONSE TO ARCTIC COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Since the Nuuk declaration, the SDWG has made strides in fulfilling its human dimension mandate. Particularly worth mentioning are the completed Arctic Social Indicators II report and the work of the forthcoming Arctic Human Development Report II, which will conclude in 2014. An important development is the establishment of an expert group on Social, Economic and Cultural (SEC) issues, which will be an asset for the entire Arctic Council. The aim is to respond to the demand related to these issues, increase SDWG's capacity and deliver appropriate and relevant information on human dimension priorities.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2011–2013

The SDWG has worked on a total of 17 projects. Moreover, there are a large number of cross-cutting projects, i.e. projects that are led by other Arctic Council working groups, but where important human dimension input is required. The main achievements during the Swedish chairmanship include:

- **Arctic Social Indicators II:** The project tests, validates and refines the indicators across the Arctic. The project is led by Iceland.
- **Arctic Maritime Aviation Transportation Infrastructure Initiative (AMATII):** Provides an inventory of marine and aviation transportation infrastructure. The project is co-led by Iceland and the United States.
- **Social Economic and Cultural Expert Group:** The expert group will enhance the SDWG's institutional capacity and was led by Canada.
- **Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment Recommendation IIc:** Identifies areas of heightened cultural significance that would be affected by increased shipping traffic in the Arctic. The project is led by Norway.
- **Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic part a):** Examines the Arctic Council working groups' assessments and recommendations over the last ten years that inform

adaptation options and actions for Arctic States. In addition, the Arctic Council requested the working groups to review assessments and recommendations over the past ten years and for SDWG to prepare the Adaptation Actions to a Changing Arctic (a) synthesis report to inform adaptation options and actions for the Arctic States. The project is led by SDWG.

- ***Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Business in the Arctic***: Information tool that will be included on the SDWG website. Initiated and led by Sweden.
- ***Arctic Human Health Expert Group (AHHEG)***: Led Circumpolar Health Systems Review, Arctic Human Health Initiative (AHHI) comprehensive summary report of activities 2007–2013, and the ongoing efforts of AHHEG to increase awareness and visibility of the health concerns of Arctic people in the fields of health research, expansion of health and outreach education networks.
- ***Cross-cutting projects***: The SDWG has engaged in and provided input to the Arctic Ocean Review Phase II (AOR-II), the Arctic Resilience Report (ARR) and the Arctic Council's Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) approach.

IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Unlike other Arctic Council working groups, initially the SDWG carried out its mandate based on specific projects approved by Arctic Council Ministers, rather than in accordance with a broad program mandate. At the Salekhard Ministerial meeting in 2006, the Council amended this approach, giving Senior Arctic Officials an open-ended mandate to approve SDWG projects intersessionally, as consistent with the overall work and priorities of the Arctic Council. The SDWG planning and project development will benefit from the SDWG project proposal template and its evaluation criteria, as well as the implementation of the Social, Economic and Cultural Expert Group (SEC). These instruments support the institutional capacity to identify and implement a strategic planning approach to the human dimension activities of the Arctic Council and respond by providing human dimension input into cross-cutting activities.

WORK PLAN FOR 2013–2015

Consistent with the overall work and priorities of the Arctic Council, the SDWG will undertake projects and activities endorsed by delegations and approved by Senior Arctic Officials. There has been a recent shift from single, narrowly focused projects to larger, cross-cutting activities involving a number of working groups.

List of individual projects (continuing into the 2013–2015 period)

- ***Arctic Human Development Report II (AHDR-II)***: This project will provide a second assessment and synthesis report on the state of human development in the Arctic. The AHDR-II will contribute to increased knowledge and understanding of the consequences and interplay of physical and social global change processes for human living conditions and adaptability in the Arctic. The work is scheduled for completion in 2014, ten years after the first report. Co-leads are Iceland, Canada and Denmark/Greenland.
- ***Assessing, Monitoring and Promoting Arctic Indigenous Languages***: This initiative is a comprehensive program of research, communications, networking, advocacy and action. Its stated objectives are to: reinforce the importance of indigenous languages; assess the state of Arctic indigenous languages; lead and facilitate inter-regional, international, and intergovernmental activities in support of languages; and enhance language exchange and youth engagement. This project will be a deliverable for the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in 2015. Co-leads are Canada, the United States and Denmark/Greenland.
- ***A Circumpolar-Wide Inuit Response to the AMSA***: ICC's objectives for this project are twofold: 1) to communicate AMSA findings to Inuit and seek their guidance on moving AMSA forward, and 2) to expand its earlier survey on Inuit use of sea and sea ice. The expanded survey will assess how current use of sea and sea-ice is impacted by Arctic shipping and compares with earlier land use studies. This will be a

- deliverable for the 2015 Ministerial. Co-leads are the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), Canada and the United States.
- ***Electronic Memory of the Arctic (EMA)***: The EMA project is designed to accumulate and represent to the full extent various virtual resources they relate to investigation, operation and development of the Arctic. EMA electronic information resources from libraries, museums and archives of the Arctic Council as well as an expert blog on the EMA portal will allow the expert community to discuss issues on the history of geographical discoveries and exploration of the North, industry, geology, nature, indigenous cultures and literature of the circumpolar world, artistic heritage and ethnography. Progress can be seen on the EMA website: www.emaproject.com. Co-lead by Russia and Norway.
 - ***Reindeer Herding and Youth (EALLIN)***: The main goal of the EALLIN project is to maintain and further develop sustainable reindeer husbandry in the Arctic, while working towards a vision of creating a better life for circumpolar reindeer herders. The project will continue to promote knowledge building and experience exchange in and between local reindeer herding societies in the Arctic, with the emphasis on youth. The project activities have been very successful and will continue into the 2013–2014 period. This project will be a deliverable for the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in 2015. Russia leads the project and is supported by Norway.

List of individual projects (under development for the 2013– 2015 period)

- ***Gender and Equity in the Arctic – conference and network***: This project will build on the 2002 conference (Taking Wing) on gender equality and women in the Arctic. Specific outcomes will include a conference on gender equality and the creation of a cooperation network of stakeholders. Iceland leads the project.
- ***Food and Water Security***: This initiative, under the auspices of the SDWG and AMAP health experts, has produced the

- report entitled Food and Water Security Indicators in an Arctic Health Context. Additional work to assess the food and water security situation in the Arctic is being considered as a combined SDWG and AMAP project proposal.
- ***Traditional and Local Knowledge***: Canada has requested the SDWG, in collaboration with all working groups, to develop recommendations to integrate traditional and local knowledge into the work of the Council.
 - ***Promoting Mental Wellness in Northern Circumpolar Communities***: The project builds on previous efforts of the Arctic Council to promote mental health in Arctic communities, including the recommendations from the SDWG Hope and Resilience Seminar (2009). The objective of this initiative is to promote further research to improve and develop mental wellness promotion strategies and suicide prevention interventions. This will be a deliverable for the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in 2015. The project is co-led by Canada and the United States.
 - ***Facilitating Adaptation to Climate Change***: This project will build on the results of parts a) and b) of the AACA initiative by facilitating the ongoing exchange and dissemination of information.

CROSS-CUTTING PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

- ***Arctic Resilience Report (ARR)***: The Arctic Resilience Report is a science-based assessment that aims to better understand the integrated impacts of change in the Arctic. Its goals are to: (i) identify the potential for shocks and large shifts in ecosystems services that affect human well-being in the Arctic; (ii) analyze how different drivers of change interact in ways that affect the ability of ecosystems and human populations to withstand shocks, adapt or transform and; (iii) evaluate strategies for communities and governments to adapt. There is a human dimension chapter in the ARR. The SDWG is closely following the development of this chapter and the lead author reports to the SDWG on a regular basis.
- ***Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM)***: The integrated work,

- including sharing of information on approaches and experiences with integrated analyses and efforts to consider both traditional and scientific knowledge, will be complex. SDWG must evaluate the capacity and feasibility of potential projects. The SDWG participation will be an increasingly essential element in EBM-led Arctic Council activities.
- **Arctic Ocean Review (AOR):** The AOR follow-up and implementation will necessitate ongoing SDWG participation.
 - **Other cross-cutting projects:** Over the coming two years, there remains the possibility of additional cross-cutting activities identified by another working group which will need to be considered by the SDWG for possible undertaking.
 - **CSR and Sustainable Business in the Arctic:** Sustainable economic development is essential for the Arctic. Sweden, through the SDWG, intends to initiate a discussion with the private sector on how business, as a primary driver of globalization, can help ensure that markets, commerce, technology and finance advance in ways that benefit economies and societies in the Arctic. The project will draw on existing CSR frameworks such as the UN Global Compact, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

The SDWG has adopted a communication strategy and will work to implement it. There will be a new SDWG website but other print and outreach material will need to be developed. During the Swedish chairmanship, the SDWG Chair established a SDWG profile on social media (Twitter) for SDWG activities.

ADMINISTRATION

The SDWG has arranged a number of meetings during the Swedish chairmanship, which has also conducted informal dialogues, one with indigenous peoples and the other with Arctic businesses. The SDWG Secretariat is funded and hosted by Canada with support from Finland. The budget covers Secretariat services for the SDWG.

During the Swedish chairmanship, considerable effort was focused on the Secretariat structure and operational procedures, including document archiving, a reference numbering system, and a new website.