



Sustainable Development Working Group Communication Strategy

Note:

This Strategy is based on:

SDWG Communications Strategy February 2012
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1. Background and Function of the communication strategy

The SDWG communication strategy is in large part based on the Arctic Council's Communication Strategy approved by the Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) in Stockholm, March 2012, and by the Deputy Ministers, 15 May 2012 in Stockholm. Within this overarching framework the SDWG communication strategy should provide a basis for the SDWG Heads of Delegation (States and Permanent Participants) together with the SDWG Chair and Secretariat to undertake their communication activities.

1.2 The basis for the SDWG communication

Long term/short term

A combination of long-term and short-term communication measures is needed if the SDWG is to be perceived as an integral part of the Arctic Council responsible for representing the Circumpolar Human Dimension. The SDWG will strive to remain an *active*, *relevant* and *credible* force in all of its activities. The communication strategy's objectives, messages, target groups and channels should be used in both long-term and short-term communication work. There should be continuity in targeted communication work across and between Chairmanship periods.

Proactive/reactive

The SDWG is a prominent forum whose activities necessitate public communication. A basic prerequisite for proactive and reactive communication is that information on the SDWG is easily accessible and adapted to the target groups. The communication work should demonstrate the SDWG *activities*, how its work is *relevant* and how it is a *credible* source of information for target groups.

2. Communication objective

The overarching communication objective of the SDWG for the period 2012 – 2016 is to support the Arctic Council in all matters related to the Human Dimension of the Arctic. The SDWG will provide pertinent information to the SAO Chair, the Tromsø Secretariat other Arctic Council Working Groups and where appropriate directly to selected target groups.

The priorities of the working group are:

- Arctic Human Health
- Arctic Socio-Economic Issues
- Adaptation to Arctic Change
- Energy and Arctic Communities

- Management of Natural Resources
- Arctic Culture and Languages
- Strategic Planning

Indicators for realization of the objective:

- *Increased recognition* of the SDWG among the target groups.
- *Increased recognition* of the SDWG as an integral part of the Arctic Council.
- *Increased recognition* that the SDWG is a repository of pertinent information on the monitoring, analysis and promotion of the Human aspects of life in the Arctic.
- *Referral* to the SDWG, or its material, in discussions and in connection with decisions affecting the Arctic region.

3. Target groups

The Arctic Council Communication Strategy has identified six overall external target groups. These target groups are relatively broad and there is a need for the SDWG Heads of Delegation to more clearly define the target groups within their areas of responsibility. In addition specific actors within each target group (with their contact information) should be identified. The communication strategy also covers internal target groups.

3.1 External target groups

The great majority of communication with these target groups is intended to be done through the Arctic Council Chairmanship and its Secretariat in Tromsø. The SDWG will provide detailed briefing text and background information on matters related to its sphere of responsibility.

POLICY MAKERS

Political decision-makers who may take decisions that affect developments in the Arctic region are an important target group. They should be aware of the SDWG and the processes taking place in the Arctic region. Decision-makers can be found on three different levels:

- *Regional/local*: regional and local governments and decision-making bodies in regions directly affected by Arctic issues.
- *National*: decision-makers in the Member States, such as relevant ministers and officials in the parliament, ministries, committees and government agencies. Indigenous political organizations.
- *International*: in relevant international organizations and processes.

INHABITANTS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

Member State publics, including indigenous peoples, and people who live in, or in close proximity to the Arctic geographical area, are important target groups and they should know about the SDWG's work so as to better inform policies and strategies they develop for their communities.

NGO'S WITH AN INTEREST IN THE ARCTIC

Both nationally and internationally leading and relevant NGO's, such as the major environment associations, are important target groups as they play a significant role in the debate on developments in the Arctic environment.

THE SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH COMMUNITY ACTIVE ON ARCTIC ISSUES

An important target group is the part of the scientific and research community that addresses issues with a bearing on the Arctic is. Researchers within the areas of environment, climate, energy, transport and indigenous peoples, etc. are important target groups as they contribute to local, regional and global awareness and understanding of the changing Arctic region.

THE BUSINESS SECTOR WITH AN INTEREST IN THE ARCTIC REGION

The part of the business sector that has an interest in the Arctic region is an important target group. This applies primarily to the resource development, energy, environment, transport and tourism sectors. They should be made aware of the responsibilities that come from being active in the Arctic.

JOURNALISTS/MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

Journalists are important both as a channel and as a target group. It is important that the separate communication plans specify which journalists are relevant for each issue, project or event. Read more about the media under the heading 'Channels and activities' below.

3.2 Internal target groups – SDWG actors

The Arctic Council Member States, Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs), the Permanent Participants (PPs), SDWG Heads of Delegation (HoDs), the Working Groups (WGs) and Observers are all internal target groups. Read more about the internal communication under the heading 'Channels and activities' below.

4. Messages

The SDWG's overall message needs to be formulated in a few key messages.

Review and Discussion is required to further develop and clarify an agreed upon listing of four to five key messages for the SDWG.

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5. Channels and activities

Strategic and resource-efficient communication work builds on a combination of communication measures. Priority channels and activities for the SDWG are:

WEBSITE

The website <http://portal.sdwg.org> should function as a hub and umbrella for communication within the SDWG. The website should be continuously updated so that its design, technology, language and content are up to date. The website should be designed according to the target groups' needs and not just according to the organization of the SDWG. The SDWG web address should be publicized and linked with related sites to increase activity and cross referencing.

To profile the SDWG as *active*, *relevant* and *credible*, the website should contain up-to-date information about the SDWG and its activities; provide contact details for the press, offer users guidance on the various SDWG actors and regularly present news, topical issues and events within the work of the SDWG. Regularly updated images/video material should be displayed prominently providing a visual representation of the SDWG activities. The SDWG Secretariat is responsible for ensuring that the website is up to date, but to ensure representation across Arctic regions, all SDWG actors are responsible for providing material regularly.

OTHER WEB-BASED PLATFORMS/MEDIA

The SDWG should regularly review whether there are digital forums and channels on which it should be visible. As resources permit, presence on digital/social channels, such as Youtube, Facebook and Twitter, will complement other media work and the website, when considered useful. SDWG actors should inform and consult the Secretariat in order to coordinate the presence of the SDWG in social media.

Today, SDWG Chair, uses Twitter for commenting on SDWG or Arctic Council related topics (Twitter: SDWG_Chair).

MEDIA

The SDWG would benefit from establishing ongoing contact with journalists. Examples of

the media categories that could be included are:

- o Regional media that reach people living in the Arctic region.
 - o Relevant media in each Member State.
 - o National and international news agencies.
 - o International media with an influence on global debates.
 - o Specialist media in the area of environment and science.
- Information targeting journalists with news stories, current issues and projects, messages, contact details, information about the SDWG and FAQs should be prioritized.
 - The Chair is responsible for information to the media, e.g. press releases, press conferences, interviews, speeches, articles, etc.

INTERNATIONAL MEETING PLACES

The SDWG should be present at meetings where issues concerning the Arctic region are discussed. The Chair is responsible for disseminating information and appearing publicly at relevant conferences, seminars and meetings of international organizations in order to increase the profile of the SDWG. These meeting places should be identified and prioritized in order to support the long-term communication objectives.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The SDWG is a forum made up of several actors who should work together for effective communication within the working group and vis-à-vis selected target groups. Effective internal communication is a prerequisite for proactive communication planning and effective communication measures. Improved internal communication is necessary in order to facilitate cooperation, create synergies and avoid overlap in communication work.

The Chairmanship and the Secretariat have key roles in coordinating the SDWG's communication work and in creating and developing effective routines for internal communication. Heads of Delegation for member States and Permanent Participants are also responsible for creating routines for providing relevant information in an effective and timely manner.

Measures to improve internal communication:

- Coordination of all Media Messages is the responsibility of the SDWG Chairmanship with the support of the Secretariat.
- Newsletter – an internal newsletter will improve information exchange and create an overview of SDWG activities. The newsletter also provides an opportunity for the Chair to report on current activities, processes and progress during the Chairmanship.

The Chairmanship and the Secretariat are responsible for the newsletter, with contributions from other actors within the SDWG.

- Regular dialogue between individual SDWG actors, the Secretariat and the Chair.
- Two-page system – all meetings of the SDWG subsidiary bodies should, within 2 days, submit a two-page summary of highlights to relevant parties, including the Secretariat and the Chair.
- The password protected area on the website should be used for uploading and sharing relevant documents.

6. Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities established in the SDWG Communication Strategy provides the basis for the SDWG's communication work. All SDWG actors are responsible in different ways for implementing the communication strategy and helping to achieve the overarching communication objective.

The **Chairmanship** has overall responsibility for the implementation of the communication strategy and takes its guidance from the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs). The Chairmanship provides the Secretariat with guidelines and cooperates closely with the Secretariat in long-term and short-term communication work. In accordance with the SDWG Communication Strategy, the Chairmanship should communicate on behalf of the SDWG. Without express consent from the SDWG HoDs, the Chair should make clear that he/she is speaking on behalf of the Chairmanship, rather than the SDWG.

The **SDWG Secretariat** has, under the supervision of the Chairmanship, a key role in implementing the communication strategy. An important part of this work is to plan, implement and coordinate internal communication measures carried out within the SDWG. The role of the Secretariat is also to work with the Chairmanship on developing external communication. The work of the Secretariat ensures long-term continuity and short-term efficiency.

In consultation with the Chairmanship and the Secretariat, the HoDs of member States, and Permanent Participants should strengthen and develop communication vis-à-vis the target groups in each country/region in the Arctic. They should assist the Secretariat with information exchange to and from the SDWG vis-à-vis their countries/regions and continuously provide up-to-date information on their activities. The Permanent Participants play an important role in developing and implementing the communication strategy.

7. Language

The working language of the SDWG is English. All SDWG communication should in principle be done in English. It is recognized that a large proportion of people within the target groups do not have English as their first language. Notwithstanding the SDWG does not have the resources to provide translation. All such request should be directed to the Arctic Council Secretariat located in Tromsø.

8. Resources

Resources are needed to realize the ambitions in the SDWG communication strategy. The level of resources has a direct effect on the communication strategy's chances of making a forceful impact. When appropriate the SDWG should review the available resources at its disposal to accomplish the objectives of its communication strategy.

9. Timetable

Making the work of the SDWG more widely known among priority target groups and strengthening the SDWG as an international actor is a long-term project. This communication strategy should apply for the period 2012–2016.

10. Evaluation

The SDWG Communication Strategy needs to be finalized and endorsed by the SDWG HoDs. Once implemented it should be the subject of an annual evaluation with revised targets and objectives approved every two years by the Senior Arctic Officials.