

Target Region Arctic IC Enquiry (TRAICE)*

Outline

Aim

A specific ICT pilot project, to be called the Target Region Arctic IC Enquiry (TRACIE), should be set up within a limited and carefully selected area in the Arctic. The project should identify specific needs of disadvantaged and disconnected local communities and promote implementation of connecting networks, through appropriate infrastructure and ICT access. The project would be established with the objective of possibly reproducing it in other places.

Funding

The possible funding sources for the project can be divided into three main categories, public, private and international. As regards public funding, host countries' contribution would be essential.

If complemented by strong public sector initiatives, the project could be attractive to the private sector. It can also be seen in terms of growth potential, i.e. as a first step towards more extensive networking.

As regards international funds, the project proposal is modeled on award winning projects, including the Barriere Lake Project in Canada, the Hydrogen Society Project in Iceland and the Electrification Model Project in India. Cooperation could be sought with the Nordic Council of Ministers, the European Union and others.

Phases

The project is divided in five phases:

Phase 1; selecting the Site (6 months)

The site should be mapped out with a strong focal center and a radius of communities with varying degrees of ICT-access. The focal center must be reasonably well located, accessible and possessing basic possibilities of becoming the overall nerve-center of the pilot projects, including, for example, manpower and basic infrastructures. It is important that communities with the no ICT access are included, not least indigenous peoples communities. Within the defined radius, a specific ICT-strategy and service would be implemented.

Phase 2; Identifying Criteria and Characteristics (6 months)

An analysis of the composition of the area should be undertaken. This would include aspects like ICT infrastructure (connection and access), legal framework, geo-physical elements, economic realities, social texture, cultural identity, educational levels and special needs.

* Proposed by the Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR)

In addition, it is important to link those efforts with previous studies and projects. Various studies and analyses are available. The Arctic Human Development Report could, for example, be of use in addition to the outcomes of several studies and conferences. The available studies on the Arctic area would contribute to the selection of the site, as well as the possibility for connecting with ongoing projects in the area.

Phase 3; Analyzing the infrastructure (6 months)

Initially, the question of how to connect the defined area through infrastructure would be analyzed through the identification of the most appropriate technological process and infrastructure. To this end, it would be necessary to trace existing examples and evaluate new technologies. In addition, an evaluation of the cost of setting up infrastructure must be undertaken. Following this analysis, the question of how to finance the connection should be addressed, preferably through a combination of public and private funding.

Phase 4; Putting the infrastructure in place (12 months)

This phase would require the implementation of the connecting networks, through the building of appropriate infrastructure and the setting up of ICT access. Implementation of the financing of the infrastructure set-up, including investments in sound business cases, would also be required. Use should be made of different financial resources.

Phase 5; Implementing the overall objectives (18 months)

The project would be carried out on a pilot project scale with the objective of being reproduced elsewhere in order to enhance capacity-building in the circumpolar region. The project offers concrete measures of empowerment within a selected area through the building up of ICT infrastructure and access. The project could also support the development of distance education and telemedicine and the creation and dispersion of culturally and linguistically relevant material.