

Sustainable Development Working Group STRATEGIC PLANNING 2011 Terms of Reference Framework

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In June 2009, the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) established a task force comprised of Arctic State members and Permanent Participant Organizations (PPs) to prepare these terms of reference and to manage the activities related to this initiative including the drafting of the final report for consideration and approval of Ministers in 2011.

1.0 Introduction: Background and context

- This proposed Terms of Reference provides a suggested organization and process for the development of the SDWG Strategic Plan. The goal is to develop a more integrated and inclusive approach to managing and planning SDWG priority-based activities and will be undertaken in collaboration with other Arctic Council (AC) Working Groups (WGs), PPs, Arctic community stakeholders and external partners.
- The SDWG Strategic Plan will allow for a broad based strategic review: to identify areas of common SD interest and priorities; the re-alignment of thematic priorities, and; to develop approaches to respond to AC WG cross-cutting activities including methods to better identify and cluster SD expertise; potential development of an integrated approach for a socio-economic monitoring mechanism; and securing financial sources to undertake priority activities.

2.0 Taking Stock

a) SDWG Programme – Accomplishments to date

Inventory of Existing SDWG Activities and Assessing Gaps

- The SDWG Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR 2004) was the benchmark for its time providing baseline information on the Arctic human condition. The SDWG has over the years adequately responded to the then identified priority gaps and relevant findings. The AHDR however was not intended to be a future looking document nor could it forecast the current drivers of change, more specifically their effects and impacts on the human dimension. This section will cluster past SDWG activities based on AHDR identified gaps up to and including 2009-11 activities within the SDWG thematic areas, to identify priority gaps and incomplete knowledge for action.

Establishing Priorities and Thematic Areas

- How we determine SDWG circumpolar priorities and which projects best respond to those priorities is an important element of our decision making framework. During the 2006-09 timeframe, SDWG identified and organized its work within five priority thematic areas and in 2009-11 there are six. The question the SDWG will have to consider - Are these themes current and reflective of shifting and emerging circumpolar priorities and trends?

Identifying Emerging Cross-Cutting Trends

- The emerging findings and preliminary analysis of the SDWG SDAP demonstrated that all AC WGs, with the exception of EPPR, are actively engaged in activities that have a sustainable development dimension - be it in the area of human health, socio-economic monitoring, or capacity building, and that this is becoming the norm within the AC. During the 2006-09 timeframe, the SDWG was engaged in three cross-cutting activities and based on current knowledge, there will be an increased demand during the next biennium for SDWG input into potentially nine cross-cutting WG activities. Does the SDWG have the capacity to address these new priorities and to bring together the expertise and financial resources required to take on these new challenges?

Knowledge Transfer –Practical Follow-up Activities and Capacity Building

- A tenet of the Sustainable Development programme is that SDWG work plans and activities should be guided by current and emerging priorities and measured on the activity's ability to make knowledge relevant and applicable to Arctic residents. Has the SDWG succeeded in building integrated and relevant knowledge-bases? Has the work of the SDWG contributed to the capacity of Arctic residents to benefit from the opportunities, or to better manage current and future challenges in the circumpolar region?

Adequate Project Funding, including Permanent Participant engagement

- The SDWG has on occasion approved projects that have had to be postponed or left unfinished due to lack of funding. When approving a project proposal, it is to be broad-base supported and the lead proponents have the financial commitments required to carry out the project through to completion. As directed by Ministers, an equally important consideration for proposal approval is that the project provides for the full engagement of PPs. What guidelines can be introduced to ensure a project has the funding required in place to fulfil its stated objectives, and for meaningful engagement of PPs?

b) SDWG Organizational Framework – Do we have what is needed?

Project Management - Coordination and Oversight Procedures

- Building on the 'Draft SDWG Integrated Rules of Procedure' (2008) prepared by the SDWG Executive Secretariat, it is apparent that the SDWG has over the past years developed several instruments to guide its work plan deliberations. The paper also reviewed the procedures and parameters for submitting, approving and managing SDWG activities and initiatives, past and current. It is obvious, based on the 'Draft SDWG Integrated Rules of Procedure' that the SDWG has invested a great deal of time and thought in these matters. However, the SDWG has been challenged in adhering to its own 'rules' and decisions and has at times overextended its capacity when populating its activity portfolio. Are these 'rules' current and adequate? Do we need to exercise more discipline and coherence in our selection of activities?

Organizational Capacity and Outside Expertise

- WG cross-cutting activities and requests for SDWG input may suggest we may not be keeping pace to current Arctic priorities. The primary request for assistance made to the SDWG from other AC Working Groups is for circumpolar socio-economic and human health statistical data. In the area of Arctic Human Health, the SDWG was successful in establishing an Arctic Human Health Expert Group (AHHEG) established to provide guidance on circumpolar human health issues and priorities, as well as to suggest practical responses and activities to acquire knowledge and to build capacity in the region. Do we currently have the capacity in-house to take on this additional work? If not, how can it identify and find additional resources to secure this capacity? Should we establish more thematic experts groups or can we achieve the same end by hosting conferences, seminars, workshops? What type of processes can be established between working groups to facilitate these requests given short deadlines, and scarce resources?

Policy and Procedures

- As previously noted, how the SDWG populates its ongoing and future portfolio of work has been an issue. It has been suggested that the SDWG needs to have a handle on the breadth of the ongoing and proposed projects – when and how to determine when a project graduates? How do we determine the type of projects to advance within the SDWG framework? Should the SDWG consider limiting the number of projects it approves? Would fewer projects translate into more resources being available for those that are approved? Is there a need to streamline project proposals formats based on its ability to be measured objectively against an agreed to criteria?

Cooperation with Other Working Groups

- Ministers have directed WGs to better collaborate and integrate the work of the Council. Can the SDWG support the onslaught of potential work emerging from AMAP, PAME and potentially from CAFF and ACAP? What are the opportunities and challenges to cooperation with other working groups? How can the AC Working Groups create synergies and better integrate their activities to be more effective and efficient?

Engagement and cooperation with external Stakeholders

- How can the SDWG engage outside interested organizations and states in its work? The AC is currently grappling with the issue of observers, their role and their contribution to the work of the council. It is timely and necessary for the SDWG to consider how it could benefit by being more inclusive of external organizations expertise and financial support including discussions on observer organizations and states in its work. How and what would be the role and contribution observers in the work of the SDWG? How would this relationship impact the engagement of PPs in the activities of the SDWG?

Communications and Outreach Activities

- Communications and outreach is an area that the SDWG has not fully explored. These activities could clearly provide the exposure to build stronger relationships, opportunity to profile its work and to more effectively engage Arctic communities, Indigenous Peoples and external stakeholders in the design, the implementation and promotion of its activities. Moreover, in the Senior Arctic Official (SAO) Report to Ministers (Tromsø 2009), SAOs requested WGs to include a communication and information dissemination strategy, including outreach to indigenous peoples and other Arctic residents, as an integral part of WG project proposals. What are the logistics of maintaining a sufficient level of communication and outreach with its partners and stakeholder communities? Would this draw away funding from SDWG approved projects or would this cost be build into approved proposals? Who would be responsible for the messaging of SDWG achievements and activities?

3.0 On a Way Forward – Where do we go from here?

The following topics will be completed once Section 2 is concluded. Section 3.0 will provide an overview of Section 2.0 findings and will formulate responses on each of the areas identified below for SDWG discussion and consideration. Once a completed negotiated draft of the SDWG Strategic Plan is approved in principle, it will be forwarded to SAOs for review and consideration for its approval by Ministers in April, 2011.

- Lessons Learned
- SDWG Priority Setting and Work Planning
- Project Phasing and Milestones
- Funding Strategy
- SDWG Communications/Outreach Strategy
- Measuring Effectiveness and Re-assessment

4.0 Work Plan and timelines for the completion the SDWG Strategic Plan

Timeline	Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lead up to November SDWG meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete the preliminary annotated conceptual outline of the Strat Plan for SDWG presentation, discussion, and decision (and if time permitting advanced for SAOs direction).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Post-November SDWG meeting and lead up to Spring meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Task Force members to identify sections of the strategic plan for drafting; ▪ Develop a timeline consultations and complete first draft of Strat Plan; ▪ Assess the need for a Task Force Workshop to finalize content; ▪ Circulate first draft to SDWG HoDs and PP orgs; and ▪ Submit draft document for review and consideration at Spring 2010 SDWG and SAO meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ April to Fall 2010 SDWG meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete draft Strat Plan for SDWG review and consideration; ▪ Circulate second draft to SDWG HoDs and PP orgs; and ▪ Revise Strat Plan for presentation to SAOs at Fall 2010 meeting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AC Ministerial 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final document tabled for approval of AC Ministers, Spring 2011.