



29 March 2005

To: Senior Arctic Officials, Arctic Council  
Subject: Input from the IASC Executive Committee to the discussion concerning  
**ACIA Follow-up** in accordance with the Reykjavik Declaration

## IASC'S POTENTIAL ROLE IN ACIA FOLLOW-UP

### Purpose

This position paper expresses the preparedness of IASC to continue its partnership with the Arctic Council in the follow-up activities of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA). Its intent is to share some ideas with the Senior Arctic Officials for consideration during its April meeting in Yakutsk. IASC, in its capacity as an Observer to the Arctic Council will be available to clarify its position at this meeting. IASC has plans to discuss ACIA follow-up at its Annual Meeting to be held during Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) in Kunming, China on April 23 and 24, 2005.

### Introduction

In 1999 ACIA was initiated following a joint proposal by AMAP, CAFF and IASC. The success of this cooperation was based on a mutual understanding of some basic principles and making the best use of the strength of each organisation. There was also a clear division of responsibilities with IASC to be involved in all parts dealing with scientific assessment, whereas policy issues totally were the task of IASC partners. IASC has circumarctic research as its main task, and is not and should not be involved in policy issues.

At the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in November 2004 the "Reykjavik Declaration" listed several issues to be addressed as a follow up to ACIA, as well as an ACIA Policy Document.

As stated in the ACIA reports, there is a need for addressing several research gaps identified by the same reports. Climate change research is of critical importance to the well-being of the Arctic peoples and Nations and must continue.

### An Invitation

Following its past positive cooperation, IASC invites the Arctic Council for a continuing joint partnership in addressing and organising further assessment of the impact of Arctic climate change. These joint activities fall into three categories:

- (i) comprehensive research
- (ii) long-term observation/monitoring
- (iii) priority-driven future programme of assessments across numerous topics and scales.

As seen from the science community, such a joint undertaking can capitalize on:

- the working structures established during ACIA,
- the science community at large ((18 countries are engaged in IASC and IASC is a Scientific Associate of ICSU (International Council for Science))
- observation/monitoring networks initiated/operated both through the science community and governmental agencies.

### **A Mechanism for the consideration of the SAOs**

IASC suggests that the Arctic Council may wish to consider an internal consultative forum to address climate policy issues and priorities. IASC proposes to establish a joint ACIA Steering Group for the tasks listed under (i)-(iii) above.

As in the past, membership on the Group would be mutually agreed and balanced and preferably not more than 7-10 persons.

### **Strategy for designing ACIA Follow-up**

ACIA Follow-up should be guided by the same principles that guided the ACIA, i.e.:

- (i) characterized by partnerships among governmental, public and private entities;
- (ii) focused on specific questions and information needed by policymakers/stakeholders who are positioned to implement long-term adaptive and mitigative strategies; and
- (iii) characterized by scientific excellence, openness, full participation, transparency, relevance to decision-making and adequate communication processes.

ACIA Follow-up should ensure that the best scientific knowledge and insights be incorporated, including documentation of long-term observations, to assist both future research and assessments and to evaluate pathways of change.

### **Next steps**

IASC hopes that the SAOs can address this invitation as a part of their deliberations in Yakutsk.

The IASC Council, which is IASC's deliberative and decision making body, will meet at the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) during the last part of April. The Follow-up to ACIA will be on its agenda.

Provided the SAOs can agree to this proposal in principle, the IASC and its Executive Committee stands ready to partner with the Arctic Council on working out the details of moving forward on the next phase of ACIA.