



ARCTIC COUNCIL



Sustainable Development  
Working Group

**SDWG Communications Strategy**  
**(Endorsed 05 May 2017)**

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# 1. Background

The Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) Communications Strategy is derived from both the Arctic Council's Communications Strategy approved by the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) in Portland, Maine in October of 2016 and the Arctic Council Communications and Outreach Guidelines approved by SAO's in Fairbanks, Alaska in March of 2016. Within this overarching framework the SDWG Communications Strategy provides a strong basis for the SDWG Member State and Permanent Participants Heads of Delegation (HoDs) together with the SDWG Chair and SDWG Secretariat, and in partnership with the Arctic Council Secretariat and other Arctic Council Working Groups (WGs) where appropriate, to undertake their communications and outreach activities.

## 1.1 The Basis for SDWG Communications and Outreach

### Long-term/short-term

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

### Accessibility

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

# 2. Communications Objective

The SDWG Communications Strategy sets out the Working Group's plan for increasing awareness of its work inside and outside the Arctic, and for establishing beneficial lines of communications with stakeholders interested in sustainable development in the Arctic.

The overarching communications objective of the SDWG for the period 2017 - 2021 is to support the Arctic Council in all matters related to the human dimension of life in the Arctic. The SDWG will provide pertinent information to the SAO's, SAO Chair, the Arctic Council Secretariat, other Arctic Council WGs, and Task Forces and where appropriate directly to selected target groups.

The SDWG will encourage projects and initiatives that strengthen the resilience and well-being of the peoples of the Arctic and promote the three basic sustainable development pillars (social, economic and environmental). In this regard, the SDWG will undertake projects and activities in a number of priority areas as outlined within the SDWG Strategic Framework.

Indicators for realization of the objective:

- *Increased recognition* of the SDWG among its target groups.

- *Increased recognition* of the SDWG as an integral part of the Arctic Council.
- *Increased recognition* that the SDWG is a leading resource on the assessment, monitoring, and promotion of the human dimension of life in the Arctic.
- *Referral* to the SDWG, or its material, in discussions and in connection with decisions affecting the human dimension of life in the Arctic region.

### 3. Target Groups

The Arctic Council Communications Strategy has identified six overall external target audiences. These same target audiences have been adopted for the SDWG Communications Strategy though the target groups within their areas of responsibility have been elaborated on to suit the SDWG's communications needs. In addition, specific actors within each target audience (with their contact information) should be identified. The SDWG Communications Strategy also covers internal target groups.

#### 3.1 External Target Groups

The great majority of communications with these target groups is intended to be done through the Arctic Council Chairmanship and the Arctic Council Secretariat. 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.

#### **YOUTH AND STUDENTS IN THE ARCTIC**

Youth engagement is a particularly important aspect of strengthening the Arctic Council and a priority for the SDWG. Informing and engaging youth across the circumpolar region helps build awareness of the Council's work and creates a sense of shared community on issues of common concern and interest to young people living in the Arctic.

### **NGO'S WITH AN INTEREST IN THE ARCTIC**

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

### **THE SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH COMMUNITY ACTIVE ON ARCTIC ISSUES**

An important target group is the part of the scientific and research community that addresses Arctic issues. 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 and opportunities that come from being active in the Arctic.

### **3.2 Internal Target Groups – SDWG Actors**

The Member States, SAOs, the Permanent Participants, SDWG HoDs, other Arctic Council WGs and Observers are all internal target groups. Read more about the internal communications under the heading 'Channels, Products and Activities' below.

## **4. Key Messaging**

The SDWG's overall messaging is formulated consistent with the Working Group's priorities and those of the Arctic Council:

- € The SDWG works with Indigenous peoples and other Arctic residents to propose and adopt innovative steps to advance the pillars of sustainable development in the Arctic.
- € The SDWG will promote the vibrancy of the region's peoples, cultures, and values and strengthen the resilience and well-being of the Arctic's richest resource, its people.
- € The SDWG will contribute towards an Arctic with expanded economic activities capable of producing wealth for the people of the region now and in the future, while supporting their well-being, promoting their cultures, and safeguarding their environment.
- € The SDWG will draw upon scientific data, Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and local knowledge to build the capacity of Arctic communities as they to respond to local, regional and global challenges and opportunities.
- € Through its regional leadership, the SDWG contributes to global sustainable development efforts such as the *UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)* which resonate with the past, present and future work of the Working Group.

## **5. Channels, Products and Activities**

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

## **WEBSITE**

The website <http://www.sdwg.org/> should function as a hub and umbrella for communications within and about the SDWG. The website should be continuously updated so that its design, technology, language and content are up-to-date. The website should be user-friendly and 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 and audio material should be displayed prominently providing a 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 all relevant communications material regularly and in a timely manner.

## **OTHER WEB-BASED PLATFORMS/SOCIAL MEDIA**

The SDWG should regularly review whether there are digital forums, web-portals and channels on which it should be visible. As resources permit, presence on digital/social channels, such as Twitter, Facebook, Vkontakte, YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr and Soundcloud 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.

## **FACT SHEETS**

A standard fact sheet template will be used to develop and maintain strategic informational outreach material in alignment with the SDWG's biennial work plans and priority projects. It is the responsibility of the Member State or Permanent Participant leads to maintain the accuracy of the fact sheets which will be kept on file and distributed by the SDWG Secretariat.

## **PHOTO LIBRARY**

The SDWG will develop a virtual photo library for use in internal and external communications efforts. This library will be populated by the SDWG Secretariat in collaboration with HoDs and their respective project teams. In this regard, a photographer should be present at all relevant SDWG meetings and events to ensure the continuous and timely updating of the library.

## **TRADITIONAL MEDIA**

The SDWG benefits from proactively establishing ongoing contact with journalists. Examples of relevant media categories are:

- Regional media that reach people living in the Arctic region.
- Relevant media in each Member State.
- National and international news agencies.
- International media, including those with an influence on global debates.
- Specialist media within the scope of the SDWG's priority areas.

Information targeting journalists with news stories, current issues and projects, messages, contact details, information about the SDWG and FAQs should be prioritized. The SDWG Chair, in

partnership with the SDWG Executive Secretary as required, is responsible for information to the media, e.g. press releases, press conferences, interviews, speeches, articles, etc.

## **EVENTS**

The SDWG should maintain a strong and consistent presence, on par with that of other Arctic Council WGs as resources allow, at events where issues concerning the human dimension of the Arctic region are discussed. The SDWG Chair, in partnership with the SDWG Executive Secretary and HoDs as required, is responsible for disseminating information and appearing publicly at relevant conferences, seminars and meetings of national and international organizations in order to increase the visibility of the SDWG. These meeting places, as well as the appropriate participants, materials and key messaging, should be identified and prioritized in order to support the SDWG's long-term communications objectives.

An SDWG events calendar, to supplement the Arctic Council event calendar and facilitate the tracking and promotion of SDWG project-level events, will be developed for both internal and external use.

## **INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

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

The SDWG Chairmanship and the SDWG Secretariat have key roles in coordinating the SDWG's communications work and in creating and developing effective routines for internal communications. Heads of Delegation for Member States and Permanent Participants are also responsible for providing relevant information and communications-ready material in an effective and timely manner and in accordance with SDWG reporting requirements.

Measures to improve internal communications:

- Coordination of all media messages is the responsibility of the SDWG Chairmanship with the support of the SDWG Secretariat.
- Newsletter/Digest – an internal newsletter/digest will improve information exchange and create an overview of SDWG activities. The newsletter/digest also provides an opportunity for the SDWG Chair to report on current activities, processes and progress during the SDWG Chairmanship. The SDWG Chairmanship and the SDWG Secretariat are responsible for the newsletter/digest, with contributions from other actors within the SDWG.
- Regular dialogue between individual SDWG actors, the SDWG Secretariat and the SDWG Chair including the timely submission of key messages and photos related to ongoing SDWG projects in accordance with SDWG reporting requirements.
- Two-page system – all Working Group and/or project-related meetings of the SDWG and its subsidiary bodies should, within 2 working days after travel home, submit a two-page summary of highlights to relevant parties, including the SDWG Secretariat and the SDWG Chair.

- The password protected area on the website should be used for uploading and sharing relevant documents.
- Annual report on SDWG Communications activities and media coverage analysis.

## 6. Guidelines on Branding & the Use of the SDWG Logo

It is the responsibility of the SDWG Chairmanship and the SDWG Secretariat as well as individual HoDs and project leads to ensure the consistent, up to date and uniform branding of all print and digital SDWG communications and outreach materials, including those associated with individual projects, in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Once a project, conference or workshop reports or other documents have been finalized and approved by the SDWG, it is important to ensure that the SDWG and Arctic Council logo are prominently displayed on the cover and in other parts of the final printed or online documents, as appropriate.
- The SDWG and Arctic Council logos should be displayed prominently on all websites intended for public use that are produced by the AC Chairmanship, the AC Secretariat and where appropriate, those of other Arctic Council WGs, Task Forces and expert groups.
- Should a Member find the SDWG logo on material where this link is not clear, it should inform the SDWG Chair for review and decision.
- The presence of the SDWG and/or Arctic Council logo on public materials does not imply the approval by Members of any material including scientific or expert views contained in the specific document.
- Members should structure their publications so that any policy recommendations are clearly identifiable by the reader (i.e. in a separate section of the document, using different formatting, etc.).

The official SDWG and Arctic Council logos are acknowledged to be the following image (with or without the words (“Arctic Council” or “Sustainable Development Working Group”), which should be the only image used to represent these bodies and should be known as “the Arctic Council logo” and the “Sustainable Development Working Group logo”. High resolution logos can be obtained from the SDWG Secretariat.





## 7. Guidelines on the Use of Disclaimers

Certain SDWG scientific and/or expert reports/documents may contain disclaimers. Some documents might require disclaimers of various sorts, for example with respect to: event reports, views expressed, reports before SAO adoption, data limitations and/or technical interpretation. Examples that serve each of these different functions are available from the SDWG Secretariat.

## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

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

The **SDWG Chairmanship** has overall responsibility for the implementation of the communications strategy and takes its guidance from the Member State and Permanent Participant HoDs as well as SAOs as required. The SDWG Chairmanship provides the SDWG Secretariat with guidelines and cooperates closely with the SDWG Secretariat in long- term and short-term communications work. In accordance with the SDWG Communications Strategy, the SDWG Chairmanship should communicate on behalf of the SDWG. Without express consent from the SDWG HoDs, the SDWG Chair should make clear if and when he/she is speaking on behalf of the SDWG Chairmanship, rather than the SDWG and vice versa.

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

In consultation with the SDWG Chairmanship and the SDWG Secretariat, the HoDs of Member States, and Permanent Participants should strengthen and develop communications vis-à-vis the target groups in each country/region in the Arctic. They should assist the SDWG Secretariat with information exchange to and from the SDWG vis-à-vis their countries/regions and continuously provide up-to-date information and communications-ready material (including photos and key messages) on their activities.

## 9. Language

The working language of the SDWG is English. All SDWG communications and outreach should in principle be done in English. Where possible, these materials should also be produced in Russian by the Arctic Council Secretariat.

It is recognized that a large proportion of people within the target groups do not have English or Russian as their first language. Notwithstanding, the SDWG does not have the resources to provide consistent translation. All such requests will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

## **10. Resources**

Resources are needed to realize the objectives in the SDWG Communications Strategy. The level of resources has a direct effect on the Communications 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 Communications Strategy including collaboration with the Arctic Council Secretariat and other Arctic Council WGs.

## **11. 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 communications strategy is intended for the period 2017-2021.

## **12. Evaluation and Media Analysis**

Once implemented, the SDWG Communications Strategy should be the subject of a periodic evaluation with revised targets and objectives approved every four years by SDWG HoDs.

Media coverage and other reports associated with the activities of the SDWG will be monitored and compiled by the SDWG Secretariat for the analysis of HoDs to assist in evaluation the effectiveness of communications and outreach efforts.