

Questionnaire on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Public Participation in the Arctic

– mapping good practices across the Arctic



Sustainable Development
Working Group



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Background

// To find examples of good practices from projects undertaken across the Arctic circumpolar region.

// To identify areas of good practice, as well as areas for improvement in conducting EIAs in the Arctic

// To inform the work of the project's Editorial Group as they develop good practice recommendations for how EIA should be conducted in the Arctic

// The questionnaire was targeted to all EIA stakeholders:

- Indigenous Peoples and other Arctic residents and communities
- Authorities
- Developers
- Consultants
- NGOs
- Scholars
- Any other interested participant

Good practice is a practice or procedure that has proven to work well, has produced good results, and can therefore be recommended as a model.



Background

// The questionnaire was distributed by the Editorial group members of the Arctic EIA project, representing the eight Arctic states and six Permanent Participants.

// It could be accessed from the Sustainable Development Working Group website from Sept – Dec 2017.

// Analysis of the responses (part I) has been done to identify common themes, as well as particularities from each country. In the report, answers have been modified as little as possible.

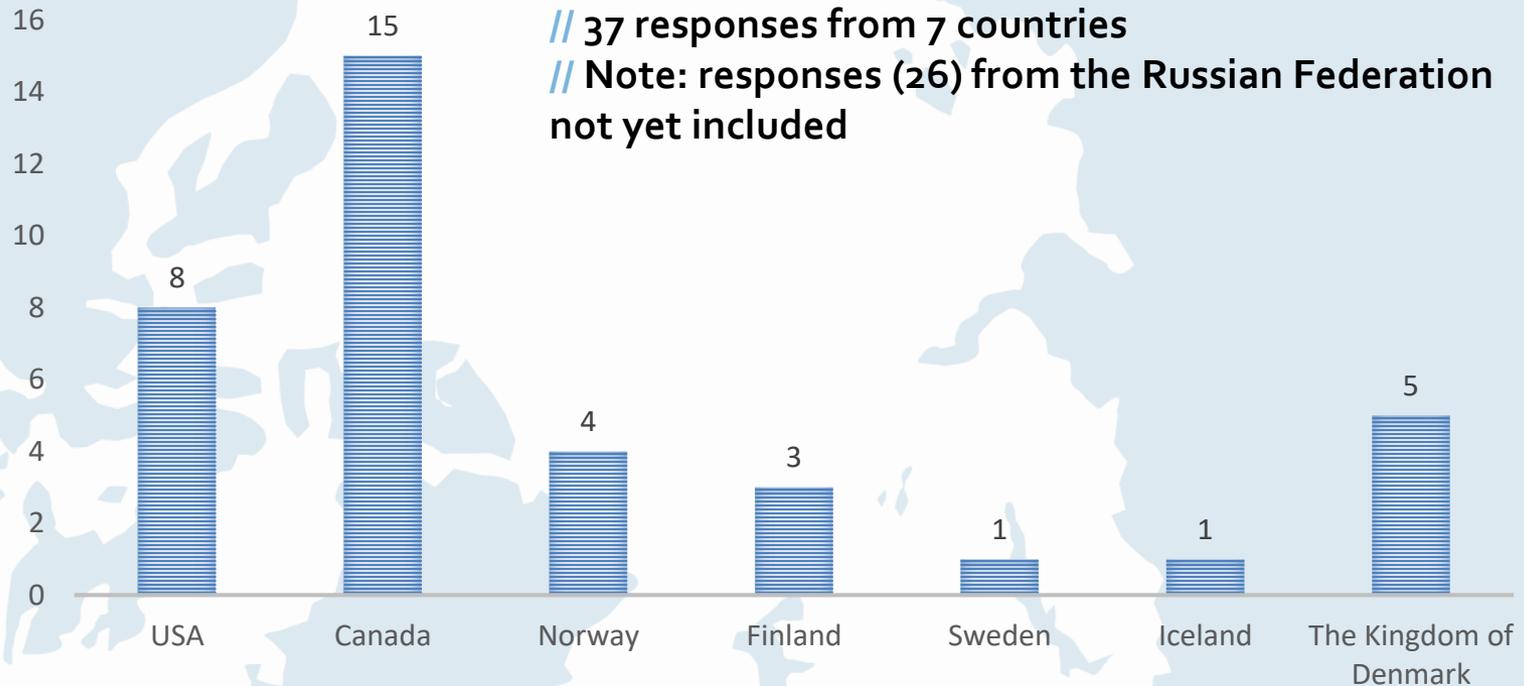
// The analysis was done by Aino Voutilainen, who is a M.Sc. student focusing on EIA as part of her advanced studies.

// Analysis will be further refined as the project develops.

There is a variety in terms that respondents use linked e.g. to public participation.



RESPONDENT'S HOME COUNTRY



// Respondents were experienced with EIAs:

- 13 had experience over 10 EIAs, nearly half had experience at least 5 EIAs
- Answers came mostly from EIA authorities



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Main findings of the questionnaire



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Main findings in the questionnaire

Good practices in use or needed

// Participation and meaningful engagement

- Particular emphasis on Indigenous Peoples and organizations, local populations, and other relevant stakeholders from an early stage, as well as throughout the entire process
- Public and community meetings
- Transparent process where all parties feel there is a real open dialogue and opportunities for mutual learning
- Public participation should result in improved decision-making

// Consultation

- Focus on Indigenous Peoples and affected communities
- Results of consultation should be evident in the final report and taken into account in decision-making

// Recognition and incorporation of traditional knowledge

- A requirement at all levels from research to decision-making and governance
- Should be appreciated to the same degree as scientific knowledge
- Refers mainly to Indigenous knowledge; local knowledge is also seen as important

// Monitoring and follow-up programs



Main findings in the questionnaire

Good practices in use or needed in the Nordic countries

// Carefully adapted public participation and dialogue

- Encouraging all parties for an open dialogue and mutual learning

// Consultation and engagement of Indigenous Peoples

// Recognition of Indigenous Knowledge and livelihoods

- Impact assessments must be prepared by people with knowledge and expertise from local livelihoods, e.g. reindeer herding

// Solid base line studies and monitoring programs

Improvements have been made in how Norway does consultation. Notably, there has been improved contact between the Saami and the governmental bodies.

Arctic specific issues deserving the most attention

- Indigenous Knowledge and nature-based livelihoods
- Local communities
- Climate change



Main findings in the questionnaire

Good practices in use or needed in Canada

// Consultation and meaningful engagement of Indigenous peoples and local communities

- Empowering people to participate

// Recognition and integration of traditional knowledge

- To be given equal weight as to scientific knowledge
- Process applying “best practicable” knowledge, be it scientific, Indigenous or local

// Scoping, monitoring and follow-up programs

- Significant effects
- Using the input of locals and Indigenous Peoples

// Independence of the body conducting EIAs

Arctic specific issues deserving the most attention

- Appreciation of Indigenous Knowledge
- Meaningful participation and Indigenous consultation
- Cumulative effects

Consultation and participation processes are working with regard to the establishment of various territorial review boards and co-management.

Improvements are needed to address capacity gaps and data availability.



Main findings in the questionnaire

Good practices in use or needed in USA

// Consultation with locals and stakeholders

- Local participation
- Early engagement and collaboration
- Consultation and public participation should result in improved decision-making

// Incorporation of traditional knowledge into all phases of the project and decision-making

Arctic specific issues deserving the most attention

- Response time and development of response techniques to oil or other chemical spills
- Safety issues and protective measures such as protecting livelihoods and improving food security
- Local participation and consultations

Good efforts have been made to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge into projects and setting up base line studies, but additional improvements still needed.

