



Sustainable Development
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

SDWG Annex to Arctic Council Common Operating Guidelines

February 2018

ANNEX 4: Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)

1. WG Mandate

The SDWG is mandated to propose and adopt steps to be taken by the Arctic States to advance sustainable development in the Arctic. This includes pursuing opportunities to protect and enhance the environment and the economies, culture and health of indigenous communities and of other inhabitants of the Arctic, as well as to improve the environmental, economic and social conditions of Arctic communities as a whole. Building self-sufficient, resilient, and healthy Arctic communities for present and future generations, while protecting the environment and means of subsistence and creating conditions for the preservation and development of cultural traditions, will continue to be a primary goal of the SDWG. The SDWG focuses on initiatives that provide practical knowledge and contribute to capacity building of indigenous peoples and Arctic communities to respond to local, regional and global challenges and opportunities. The SDWG strives to be a leading force for sustainable development in the Arctic. Through its regional leadership, it contributes to global sustainable development efforts such as the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts such as the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (2015).

The main objectives and priorities for the work of SDWG are outlined in the '*SDWG Strategic Framework*,' the prevailing '*SDWG Workplan*,' and related documents. These documents may be supplemented by new requests from Ministers and SAOs concerning specific work items.

2. WG Chair and Vice-Chairs (2)

In addition to the specification of the SDWG Chair contained in Article 3 of these Common Operating Guidelines (COG), the SDWG shall have two Vice-Chairs (2). One Vice-Chair shall represent either the incoming or the out-going Arctic State Chairmanship. A second Vice-Chair shall be selected to represent the Permanent Participants. The Chair and the Vice-Chairs shall each serve terms of two years. Their terms shall normally begin after the Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council that follows their election.

3. Executive Secretary

In addition to the specification in Article 4 of the COG, the core duties of the SDWG Executive Secretary shall be as outlined in the SDWG's *2014 Core Duties of the Executive Secretary* document.

4. Guiding Principles in WG Activities

In accordance with its Guiding Principles, the Sustainable Development Working Group encourages the advancement of projects that demonstrate significant opportunities for a direct positive impact on Indigenous and local communities in the Arctic, both through the engagement of Permanent Participant organizations and more broadly. The SDWG seeks to create an inclusive environment for both Indigenous and local knowledge and to encourage the continued significant engagement of all Permanent Participants within the Working Group's activities, which to date has been a unique feature and strength of the SDWG.

5. Expert Groups

In the areas of human health and social, economic and cultural issues, the SDWG has currently established the Arctic Human Health (AHHEG) and Social, Economic and Cultural Expert Groups (SECEG) respectively to provide guidance on circumpolar issues, help identify priorities and gaps in knowledge in these areas and create greater collaboration and synergies between SDWG and its stakeholders. The expert groups are comprised of selected representatives from each Arctic Member State and Permanent Participant with no restrictions on the number of specialists who may observe and be called on to provide the Expert Group with technical expertise.

6. Project Development & Management

The SDWG reviews and selects initiatives that advance the broad strategic priorities outlined in the 'SDWG Strategic Framework'. Within the SDWG, Arctic Council Member States and Permanent Participants may propose new initiatives at meetings of the SDWG or intersessionally by using the *SDWG Project Proposal Template* in XXXX {ANNEX}. A minimum of two States must co-lead all SDWG initiatives. Project leads are responsible for regularly informing the SDWG about an initiative's progress through reports at SDWG meetings, communication with the SDWG Chair and Executive Secretary, and other appropriate means. Project leads are further responsible for developing public outreach messaging in accordance with the *SDWG Communications Strategy*.

7. Other

In-person SDWG Working Group meetings are to be held in Arctic States and, when possible, in Northern communities. ~~Efforts are also made to hold in person SDWG Working Group meetings in close proximity to meetings of the Arctic Council's Senior Arctic Officials to ensure efficient use of travel related resources.~~ [edited by SAOs, March 2018]