



Sustainable Development  
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

## **SDWG PROJECT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**

<p><b>Project Title:</b> <b>DRAFT</b> <b>Gender Equality in the Arctic II</b></p>	<p><b>Lead Country/Project leader(s):</b> Iceland, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland, Sweden, Aleut International Association, Sami Council Open to others for participation and co-leads</p>
<p><b>Total Cost of Project:</b> Cost estimates – Estimates: TBD, see p. 3</p>	<p><b>Relationship to other AC Working Groups:</b> Sustainable Development Working Group</p>

### **Objective of Project:**

The purpose and objective of the project is to promote and expand the dialogue on Gender Equality in the Arctic region. Building on previous projects, initiatives and conferences, in particular the outcome and recommendations from the Conference – Gender Equality in the Arctic- Current Realities and Future Challenges, that was held in Akureyri in October 2014. This project proposal aims to continue that work by establishing a formal network of experts in this field that will over the course of the next two years advance the work of the Arctic Council and the SDWG in this area.

### **Background:**

Gender equality in the Arctic is relevant to the agenda and role of the Sustainable Development Working Group. The Arctic Council and the



Sustainable Development  
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

SDWG have placed emphasis on Gender Equality in previous projects and initiatives.

Some examples of previous work and valuable input in this field include the 2002 Conference in Inari that focused on the themes of women and work, gender and self-determination of indigenous people and violence against women. In the first edition of the Arctic Human Development Report in 2004 a chapter on gender was featured. In the second edition, published in 2014, a different approach was taken and gender issues are not addressed in a specific chapter but are mainstreamed into individual chapters as appropriate.

In October 2014 a conference was held in Akureyri, Iceland, under the heading “Gender Equality in the Arctic – current realities, future challenges”. The main organizers of the conference were the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, the Centre for Gender Equality in Iceland, the Stefansson Arctic Institute, and the Icelandic Arctic Cooperation Network in collaboration with the conference scoping committee and with the strong support of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Sweden, Finland, Norway, the Faroe Islands, the Aleut International Association, and the Arctic Council.

The conference was sponsored by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, the Icelandic Government's Equality Action Fund, the Foreign Ministry of Sweden, and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The main objective of the conference was to promote an extensive, policy relevant dialogue on gender equality putting current realities and



Sustainable Development  
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

future challenges into context with climate and environmental changes as well as economic and social developments. Another goal was to raise decision-makers' awareness of the situation of women and men in the Arctic and to strengthen cooperation among different people working with gender issues.

The conference was organized into seven different themes and in the conclusions of the conference the participants identified issues that are relevant to the on-going discussions on gender equality in the Arctic.

At the ministerial meeting in Iqaluit that marked the end of the Canadian Chairmanship in 2015, work in this field was recognized as being very important to economic, social and cultural development in the Arctic and in the ministerial statement the report and outcome from the Conference in Akureyri was welcomed by Foreign Ministers.

It is not foreseen that the cost of this project will be high. Each participant and co-lead is responsible for the cost of their own participation in the project. Cost will therefore depend on the nations and PP's ability and will to fund the relevant participation in the group of experts, through their own budget and/or funds otherwise available for international cooperation on gender issues. For example, Iceland will fund expert participation through funding on Arctic cooperation from the MFA budget as appropriate.

**Rationale:**

One of the outcomes and suggestions at the Conference in Akureyri was to find ways and means to continue the cooperation in this field and



Sustainable Development  
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

move towards establishing a formal cooperation network on Gender Equality in the Arctic. Arctic Council observer participation should be encouraged since many institutions and organizations, for example many Arctic Council states have participated in Nordic Council of Ministers projects in this area. It is also important to make sure that there is no unnecessary overlapping and a duplication of efforts between those that are working on Gender Equality in the Arctic.

Such a network could serve as a facilitator and keep the discussion on Gender relevant in the years to come. Already the participants that took part in the Akureyri conference are a valuable resource and to ensure that this work continues in the context and the under the auspices of the Arctic Council and the SDWG it is important to maintain the momentum in this field.

In the context of SDWG's mandate, the goal of the Sustainable Development Working Group of the Arctic Council is 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 peoples and Arctic communities. Furthermore the guiding tenet running throughout the work of the SDWG is to pursue initiatives that provide practical knowledge and contribute to building the capacity of indigenous peoples and Arctic communities to respond to the challenges and benefits from the opportunities in the Arctic region, as described in the terms of reference in the SDWG's mandate from 1998.



Sustainable Development  
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

This project is therefore relevant to the SDWG agenda and is a logical follow up of the project from 2013 -2015. That project came to an end after the conference. Recommendations from the Conference report are of course still relevant and it is important to follow up on them in the coming years.

### **Anticipated Outcomes:**

- Network of experts established in the field of Gender Equality
- Databases and inventories on existing projects and knowledge in the field established,
- Information published at the end of the two year period on relevant projects, contacts, research and on-going initiatives in this field. Information made available through for example SDWG website and other relevant channels.

### **Integration of Traditional and Local Knowledge:**

Strong participation and contribution from the Permanent Participants is needed in this project. The role of indigenous and local communities in the circumpolar Arctic is very important and their input essential.

### **Timetable and Project Completion:**

Proposal adopted as an SDWG endorsed project at the fall SDWG meeting in Orono, Maine, 1-2 October 2016

November – experts identified by co-leads to take part in the network of experts, co-leads nominate at least one expert in this field to take part in the project and network of experts. At the same time other AC member



Sustainable Development  
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

states, PP's and observers still have opportunities to contribute and participate.

Network of Experts form a steering group and work plan for the up-coming period and share that information in the SDWG meeting in spring 2017.

Focus on developing inventory of previous projects, outcomes and on-going work in the field of Gender Equality. Working together on a circumpolar level to demonstrate the many individual projects and existing collaboration in this field in the Arctic.

### **Communications:**

- Gender Equality is of course only one aspect of the broad SDWG agenda. Expertise in this field resides in experts and institutions around the Arctic. Focus on projects in this field shows that the SDWG and the Arctic Council view Gender and Gender Equality as an important and integral part of the discussion on social and economic conditions in the Arctic.
- Target audiences in this respect are the communities, community leaders, policy makers and researchers in the Arctic that want to exchange views and learn from best practices and other projects that are on-going in this field in the Arctic. Other stakeholders include, civil society organizations, officials working on social-economic issues and business community in the Arctic to name a few.