



Sustainable Development  
Working Group



ARCTIC COUNCIL

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**  
**2017-2019 WORK PLAN**  
(Endorsed by SDWG 08 February 2017)  
(updated 12 April 2018)

---

## **Introduction:**

Pursuant to its new *Strategic Framework (2017)*, the SDWG, through the lens of the human dimension, 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 equity, economic development and environmental protection).

This Work Plan for the period 2017 to 2019 has been developed taking into account the thematic priorities set out in the *Strategic Framework (2017)* and will be implemented in accordance with the principles and guidelines contained in the Framework and related operating documents.

The SDWG requires the integration of traditional and local knowledge in all projects, as appropriate. Project budgets, start dates, meeting schedules, end dates and anticipated deliverables are contained in the project proposals. Co-leads and partners are listed as of the date of drafting.

The projects identified in this work plan consist of both projects that have already been endorsed by the SDWG and projects that are under development for future SDWG review and possible endorsement. Additional project proposals may be developed within the scope of this work plan between 2017 and 2019.

### **A. Continuing Projects**

A number of SDWG projects commenced during the U.S. Chairmanship 2015---2017 will continue into the Finnish Chairmanship under their current templates. The following SDWG projects in this category are summarized below in alphabetic order:

1. **The Arctic as a Food-Producing Region** [Leads: Canada, Norway, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council]

The aim of this project is to assess the potential for increased production and added value of food from the Arctic, with the overarching aim of improving economic and social conditions of Arctic communities. The Arctic or northern areas are already important as a food---producing region, but have potential to become even bigger. By focusing on biological (climate change), industry (commercial resources, infrastructure and industry policy) and market conditions, the project will explore and describe possible paths of development for Arctic food production. The aim is to identify

---

conditions for increased production, new species and last but not least the potential for added value of food from the Arctic.

2. **Arctic Indigenous Youth, Climate Change and Food Culture (EALLU)** [Leads: Canada, Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, Russian Federation, United States, Aleut International Association, Saami Council]

The goal of EALLU is to utilize the food cultures and systems of Arctic indigenous peoples as a foundation for adaptation to Arctic change. Active engagement of circumpolar Indigenous youth is at the core of the project. The project seeks to explore opportunities of a changing Arctic for Indigenous peoples, based on their own terms, their own knowledge and people, and thus from within their respective cultures. The project documents Indigenous Traditional Knowledge on food, through youth engagement, education, training and outreach. The project focuses on food security, food empowerment, and understanding Indigenous peoples food systems, developing recommendations to the Arctic Council on how such systems and knowledge can best be leveraged for sustainable development. The project engages Indigenous trans-boundary knowledge institutions. For the next phase, it is envisioned to strengthen education components, and make efforts to explore new possibilities for local economic development from northern sea routes.

3. **Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy (ARENA)** [Leads: Canada, Finland, Iceland, United States, Gwich'in Council International, Aleut International Association]

SDWG will continue to assist capacity building by sharing knowledge and establishing professional networks related to the transition from diesel to hybrid and renewable energy systems. These goals will be accomplished during 2017-2019 through a combination of a webinar series (covering topics ranging from electrical energy storage to solar energy) and an on-site program. In 2017, 20 Arctic energy "champions" will attend workshops in Canada (Yellowknife, Northwest Territory) and the U.S. (Kodiak and Fairbanks, Alaska), and Iceland, combining classroom instruction, coaching, peer engagement and visits to communities and sites operating microgrid energy solutions.

4. **Arctic Renewable Energy Atlas (AREA)** [Leads: Canada, United States, Gwich'in Council International]

SDWG will contribute Arctic regional sustainable development through AREA, an online tool that enhances knowledge of the best practices and local adaptation actions on Arctic renewable energy and energy efficiency. The initial launch of AREA was in May 2017. This tool will visualize collected renewable energy supply and demand data in addition to Arctic-wide local community success stories. AREA improves the understanding of Arctic investment potential, identifies information gaps, and highlights best practices.

---

5. **Gender Equality in the Arctic II** [Leads: Iceland, Sweden, Finland, Aleut International Association]

Objectives of this project are a) to enhance and foster relations between gender equality experts of Arctic Council member states and Permanent Participants; and b) to create a formal network of experts for information sharing and development of issues relevant to advancing gender equality in the Arctic.

The experts will evaluate the continuation of the project in two years time.

Possible deliverables/outcomes of the project include increased information sharing about the many aspects of gender equality in the Arctic and its social and economic manifestations. The project will engage traditional and local knowledge based on input from Permanent Participants regarding the status, role and history with regard to gender equality in the indigenous communities and within their societies.

6. **Operationalizing a One Health approach in the Arctic, Part 2 (One Health)**  
[Leads: Canada, Finland, United States]

SDWG will continue to build ties between human, animal, plant, and environmental health stakeholders in the circumpolar region, as a key strategy for adapting to rapid environmental change. During the 2017-2019, the project will emphasize: 1) continued knowledge and information sharing, 2) further simulation exercises that identify strengths and areas for further capacity building, and 3) cooperative activities to address observed events (such as those identified by the Circumpolar Local Environmental Observers (CLEO) Network). It will also work to build relationship with traditional and local knowledge holders -- as well as relevant stakeholders in other working groups, such as AMAP, ACAP, and CAFF.

## **B. New Projects**

The following, in alphabetical order, are new projects that the SDWG has endorsed prior to or during the Finnish Chairmanship (2017-2019):

7. **Arctic Children-Preschool Education and Smooth Transition to School** [Leads: Russian Federation, Finland, RAIPON]

The nomadic school project is aimed at the analysis and evaluation of educational practices without interrupting the traditional way of life of Indigenous peoples – children of nomads, providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to function fully as effective members of both their own community and mainstream society. The main objective of the project is collection of data related to best international practices and their implementation: optimal curriculum and education process organization, creation of arctic nomadic tutoring system.

---

8. **Arctic Energy Summit 2017** [Leads: Finland, Iceland, Russian Federation]

The Arctic Energy Summit is a three-day conference that establishes a comprehensive approach to Arctic energy that includes petroleum-related activities, renewable energy potential and projects, energy efficiency and remote energy systems. The Summit responds to climate change and sustainable development, and provides a forum to share best practices, emerging technology and process innovation as well as relevant and topical policy issues. It produces a summary of findings that encourage consideration of pilot projects, research gaps and best practices. The 4th Arctic Energy Summit will take place 18-20 September, 2017. Conference planning and preparations have begun, with great interest from around the Arctic and world. The project will deliver its final report in February 2018.

9. **Arctic Energy Summit 2019** [Leads: Iceland, Finland]

The 5th Arctic Energy Summit will take place in Iceland in 2019. Conference planning and preparations have begun.

10. **Arctic Generation 2030** [Leads: Norway, Finland]

The objective of this project is to forge a strong and globally---connected community of future Arctic leaders through an investment in the human capital of the region with focus on training, networking, and partnerships led by the region's primary actors in education, research, public policy, and business. The project is based on four fundamental concepts:

- Triple helix collaboration between academic, business (including investors) and governance for innovation and knowledge-based growth.
- Integration of the Arctic into the global knowledge network, with emphasis on creating economic opportunities in the region and countering brain drain.
- Network-based public and scientific diplomacy across northern borders and between the North and the new global observers to the Arctic Council.
- Supporting the aims of the Arctic Council in making the Arctic a region of collaboration and peace for generations to come.

The main project will implement a series of collaborative activities between key actors in northern business, higher education, science and capacity building that will give a strong boost to the relationship among young northern students, future indigenous leaders, young scientists, and early career business experts, as well as giving them global connections and confidence.

11. **Arctic Resilience Action Framework** (ARAF) [Leads: U.S., Sweden, Finland]

The Arctic Council Ministers adopted the Arctic Resilience Action Framework (ARAF) in the Fairbanks Declaration (2017). According to the 2017 SAO Report to Ministers, the

---

initial phase of ARAF implementation shall occur in the SDWG, in coordination with all other Working Group Secretariats. Due to the cross-cutting nature of the project, the Arctic Council Secretariat shall support the implementation of the ARAF.

The ARAF provides the Arctic Council with a common frame of reference for building resilience in the Arctic region. It can provide a common set of priorities for the Arctic States, Permanent Participants, Working Groups, and Observers. By adopting the ARAF, the Arctic Council has agreed to track its existing activities that address the ARAF priorities.

Implementation of the ARAF aims to accomplish the following objectives:

- Collect, share and inspire action by the Arctic States, Permanent Participants and Working Groups around the four ARAF priorities.
- Share best practices for building resilience in the region.
- Identify ways to measure progress towards building resilience in the region, and identify additional gaps and challenges.

To achieve these Objectives, the following actions will be taken:

- Collect and share actions, for the 2017-2019 period, that Arctic States, Permanent Participants, Working Groups, and Observers are taking (or will take) that address the ARAF priorities.
- Complete an inventory of existing and emerging measurement protocols – including self-assessment protocols – as well as existing and emerging indicators, in order to measure and compare progress to build Arctic resilience over space and time.
- Organize the first biennial *Arctic Resilience Forum*, which will provide a space to share best practices and identify additional challenges to building resilience. In addition the aim of the Forum is to create conditions to strengthen resilience and adaptability of different stakeholders in the Arctic region.

12. **Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit** [Leads: Canada, Kingdom of Denmark, GCI, Netherlands]

The objective of this project is to create a proactive and comprehensive long-term energy planning process for communities in the Arctic, namely, the Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Framework (ASEFF). The Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Framework will provide a community-centric process that brings together stakeholder groups to create more socially-desirable and economically-feasible energy solutions for Arctic communities. There is a three-stage implementation plan for the ASEFF: i) development of the ASEFF Toolkit, ii) ASEFF Toolkit Launch in 6-8 communities, and iii) structuring of the 'Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Fund' to action energy initiatives proposed in the community plans. Each of these steps has been outlined in the 'Long-term Vision' section of the proposal. The proposed project strategically aligns with the SDWG's mandate to advance sustainable development in the Arctic. This project will build practical knowledge and capacity of Indigenous peoples and Arctic community

---

members around energy, and will help them seek sustainable benefits and opportunities from the energy sector.

**13. Assessing the Use of Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) in Indigenous Communities** [Leads: U.S., Canada, AIA, CCU]

A project in partnership with the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group (PAME) to collect, report and/or review information about on-shore use by indigenous peoples and local communities of HFO as well as the extent to which such peoples and communities rely on ships that burn HFO to deliver supplies and provisions.

This project will provide a greater understanding of the importance of HFO to Arctic communities. As nations and the IMO consider phasing out the use of HFO as a fuel by ships in the Arctic in order to protect the marine environment, it is important to understand whether such actions might have unintended impacts on Arctic residents. By surveying Arctic communities and asking how they generate electricity, heat their homes, and move goods in and out of their communities, this project will help Arctic States make better-informed decisions regarding the regulation of HFO.

In particular, this project will:

- Contribute to building an integrated knowledge-base by establishing the importance of HFO to indigenous Arctic communities, which will help inform future decisions regarding HFO regulation.
- Foster a better understanding of the human dimensions of HFO regulation in the Arctic.
- Assist with PAME's efforts at mitigating the potential effects of HFO use by ships on the Arctic marine environment by expanding the knowledge-base regarding current uses of HFO.
- Help achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 (conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources). The project will contribute to Goal 14 by analyzing reliance on HFO—a fuel that is near impossible to clean up in the marine environment if spilled—in order to inform efforts to curb or eliminate HFO use.

**14. Circumpolar Resilience, Engagement and Action Through Story (CREATes)** [Leads: Canada, Finland]

Project CREATEs aims to support community and youth engagement towards effective action that reduces suicide and fosters mental wellness among Arctic Indigenous youth and communities. This project sustains and builds on circumpolar efforts in suicide prevention through ongoing collaboration across Arctic states and builds on the SDWG's *Sharing Hope* project (2013-15) and the *RISING SUN* initiative (2015-17). In the last of the RISING SUN workshop participants highlighted the need for further engagement at the community level, and community-based action, complemented by a strong endorsement for youth empowerment. Project CREATEs is responding to this feedback by emphasizing engagement with communities and youth as the foundation and

---

impetus for ongoing implementation of suicide prevention and mental wellness initiatives of the SDWG. This engagement also provides an opportunity for knowledge translation, informing youth and communities about the ongoing activities of the SDWG in the areas of suicide prevention and resilience. The objectives of this project are:

- To create an opportunity and methods for community engagement and knowledge translation to support the suicide prevention and mental wellness efforts of the Arctic States.
- To sustain the circumpolar network that has been established through the Arctic Council so that we can continue to collaborate and share best practices in suicide prevention. In addition, broaden the circumpolar network to include more community members and youth.
- To support and promote capacity building that will foster research by and with circumpolar Indigenous Peoples (e.g. training opportunities to build capacity in digital storytelling that can be brought back to their communities).

The importance of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge systems to increase and expand knowledge and understanding of suicide and mental wellness is at the core of this project. Furthermore, this initiative is an important step forward on a course of healing and reconciliation as it aims to provide the insight from Indigenous youth needed to develop policy that leads to a stronger future for Indigenous people and the Arctic more broadly.

Digital Storytelling (DST) is the chosen method for this work as it is an ideal process to achieve our objectives and deliver outcomes of community engagement, youth empowerment, and move knowledge-to-action. Elevating and empowering community and youth voices through the creation of stories or narratives in which they share their experiences and ideas on building strengths and resilience will contribute crucial perspectives in the dialogue and solutions for suicide prevention. This engagement and empowerment is an important next step in moving forward SDWG's mental health and suicide prevention efforts.

**15. Good Practice Recommendations for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Public Participation in EIA in the Arctic** [Leads: Finland, the Kingdom of Denmark, Canada]

The objectives of the Arctic EIA project are: a) to improve the utilization of EIA as a tool to combine economic activities and environmental aspects; b) to increase the weight of environmental issues in project planning and decision making; c) to strengthen public participation and inclusion of indigenous, traditional and local knowledge in EIA processes; d) to identify good practices within Arctic region by sharing experience and learning from each other through networking; and e) to reach developers and to learn about Arctic-specific issues in EIA (in cooperation with the Arctic Economic Council).

The project will produce Good Practice Recommendations on EIA and Public

---

Participation in EIA in the Arctic. It will build a network of national and regional EIA authorities and other actors in the Arctic region. The planned duration of the project is from 5/2017 to 5/2019 (2 years).

**16. Solid Waste Management in Small Arctic Communities** [Leads: Canada, Finland, AIA]

The project goals and deliverables include: 1) an examination of current best practices in solid waste management among the Arctic States; 2) a determination of the potential need for policy actions to address waste management issues; 3) assessing the potential for recycling/reusing plans that will lower waste and provide revenue, building on Indigenous traditions of “nothing wasted, everything used”; 4) an examination of programs to educate communities and raise awareness about waste management and how changes can positively affect them; and 5) an assessment of contaminants issues related to solid waste disposal in the Arctic. This project will operate under the auspices of the SDWG, but will also include close cooperation with ACAP which will provide expertise in articulating contaminants issues related to solid waste handling. In addition, the involvement of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) will be invaluable in exploring the potential for public/private partnership approaches to waste management.

**17. Teacher Education for Diversity and Equality in the Arctic** [Co-leads: Finland, Russian Federation, Norway, Canada]

The key actions of the project Teacher Education for Diversity and Equality in the Arctic during Finland’s chairmanship are divided into four main categories:

- Knowledge Exchange: This key action will support networking of teacher education institutions and sharing good practices among them. The activities will include symposia, regular online-seminars, a special issue of a relevant journal and local summits. The topics are, among others: inclusive practices, digital teaching environments and Arctic pedagogy combining indigenous pedagogical practices, education in sparsely populated areas and community-based education.
- Shared Research ----- Seeing Education with Northern Eyes: The goal of this key action is to enhance understanding of teaching profession in circumpolar north and to highlight teacher education as means to promote teachers to become creators of the sustainable future in the Arctic. The progress of research activities will be tracked in symposia and conferences in 2017 and 2018. The results will be published as UArctic Report: Arctic Human Development Report at the Arctic Science Summit Week, ASSW, in March 2019.
- Cooperation in teacher education: This action will enhance practices of shared teaching across the institutions. The activities will include cooperation in different levels, such as visiting each other’s courses via online-connections, teacher and researcher exchange, and investigating possibilities to establish a Nordic Master Program in Teacher Education and piloting it.

- 
- Long term continuity (beyond 2019): The thematic network will continue as a UArctic thematic network among teacher education institutions across the circumpolar north. It will focus promoting quality, culturally relevant teacher education for the north.

The UArctic Thematic Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity in Education will lead the project. The project will run from the beginning of 2017 to Spring 2019.

#### **18. Zero Arctic: Concepts for carbon neutral Arctic construction based on tradition** [Finland, Canada]

The focus of the *Zero Arctic* project is to develop regional concepts for Arctic building construction that would be carbon neutral over their full life cycle. The aim is to utilise both scientific life cycle assessment and energy simulation methods as well as to learn from and apply traditional knowledge of sustainable construction.

Key tasks of the *Zero Arctic* project include:

- Establish a network of relevant stakeholders in Arctic countries
- Benchmark the life cycle energy performance and greenhouse gas emissions of Arctic construction
- Analyse the traditional Arctic solutions to sustainable and energy-efficient construction
- Recognise locally-adoptable, cost-optimal and user-centered service and design innovations for reaching carbon neutrality
- Develop concepts for regional carbon neutral villages and buildings
- Arrange stakeholder and expert workshops for key tasks of the project
- Disseminate the findings through local seminars, reports and media
- Enable the capacity for continuous development of Arctic carbon neutral construction.

Reaching carbon neutrality requires balanced optimisation of energy efficiency of buildings and their systems, generation of renewable energy, consideration of embodied impacts of building materials and anticipatory service life planning. The aim is to study how various applications of traditional knowledge in Arctic construction have supported the environmental sustainability of buildings and how these principles can be applied in the development of modern construction technologies. Furthermore, the potential for compensating anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions through natural and man-made carbon sinks in the context of Arctic construction needs to be explored.

### **C. Project Proposals under Development**

The following project proposals or project concepts represent activities currently under deliberation within the SDWG that have not yet been endorsed:

- 
1. **Arctic Network on Occupational Health in the Arctic** [Project proposal by Finland]: endorsement is subject to identification of a second lead country.
  2. **Arctic Food Innovation Cluster** [A concept paper entitled has been presented by Canada.]

#### **D. Projects Removed from the SDWG Work Plan**

At its meeting in Levi, Finland on 19-20 March 2018 the SDWG decided to remove an inactive former project from its work plan: the **Arctic Adaptation Exchange Portal**. Data from the portal will be preserved pending possible migration of the site for purposes of implementing the web-based aspects of the **Arctic Resilience Action Framework (ARAF)**.

#### **E. Other Activities**

1. **International Circumpolar Surveillance (ICS)** [Lead: Arctic Human Health Expert Group]

The ICS network is entering its 18th year; it launched as via an Arctic Council/SDWG endorsed project in 1999. ICS is a network of public health laboratories for monitoring invasive bacterial infections in the circumpolar North. ICS has added tuberculosis surveillance to the other five bacterial pathogens, and is continuing the partnerships to maintain proficiency testing among the network reference labs. ICS research networks have expanded to include invasive bacterial diseases, climate change-related infectious diseases, viral hepatitis, Helicobacter pylori infections and tuberculosis. ICS steering groups function under the International Union for Circumpolar Health infectious disease work group and will meet again in September 2017 and August 2018 in Copenhagen. Many of the ICS's members are also active in the SDWG AHHEG, and the results of ICS meetings are reported out to AHHEG. Additionally, the diseases and issues identified through ICS are used to inform AHHEG activities and expert advice to SDWG.

2. **SECEG Activities in Relation to PAME's MEMA Project** [Lead: Social, Economic, and Cultural Expert Group]

PAME is discussing the findings of the MEMA report and considering possible follow-up actions. The nature of possible follow-up actions can be subject to discussions in SDWG, but possibilities could include unified and widely applicable guidelines across sectors and marine and terrestrial activities, or a set of principles of meaningful engagement, or an evaluation of the implementation of existing guidance. The SDWG has approved SECEG's continued involvement in the MEMA project.