



ARCTIC COUNCIL

*Sustainable Development Working Group*



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP  
2011-13 WORK PLAN  
MARCH 2011**



## SDWG WORK PLAN FOR 2011-13

### A. OVERVIEW OF THE SDWG MANDATE

The goal of the sustainable development program of the Arctic Council is to propose and adopt steps to be taken by the Arctic States to advance sustainable development in the Arctic, including opportunities to protect and enhance the environment and the economies, culture and health of Indigenous Peoples and Arctic communities, as well as to improve the environmental, economic and social conditions of Arctic communities as a whole.

The guiding tenet running throughout the work of the Sustainable Development Working Group 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 benefit from the opportunities emerging in the Arctic Region.

### B. RESPONDING TO MINISTERIAL PRIORITIES AND DIRECTIONS

Unlike other Arctic Council Working Groups, the SDWG carries out its mandate based on specific projects approved by Ministers, rather than in accordance with a broad program mandate. At the Salekhard Ministerial Meeting (2006), this structural difference was alleviated to some degree by through the adoption by Ministers of a mechanism giving SAOs an ongoing mandate to approve SDWG projects consistent with the overall work and priorities of the Arctic Council during inter-session.

### C. COOPERATION WITH OTHER WORKING GROUPS AND EXPERT BODIES

In addition, the SDWG is increasingly required to contribute to Arctic Council priority areas being carried out by other working groups and subsidiary bodies. The SDWG continues to seek more effective structures to bring together the requisite expertise on issues and activities within its mandate. Further development on the aforementioned is planned during the next biennium. During the Swedish Chairmanship, the SDWG has been approached to participate in projects currently under development with the Protection of Arctic Marine Environment, Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna and Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme working groups.

### D. SDWG WORK PLAN 2011-13

The purpose of the SDWG Work Plan below is to provide a framework for the work and priorities of the SDWG during the period 2011-13 that complements the existing Ministerial Declarations, *Sustainable Development Terms of Reference*, *SDWG Operating Guidelines*, *The Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Action Plan* (SDAP) and other emerging priority issues.

## I. Thematic Areas for SDWG Projects and Activities

In addition, consistent with the overall work and priorities of the Arctic Council, the SDWG carried out projects and activities, as approved by SAOs, in the following thematic areas:

1. Arctic Human Health: *To broaden the scope and strengthen the integration of human health activities within the Council by developing concrete initiatives to improve the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and other Arctic residents.*
  2. Arctic Socio-Economic Issues: *To advance on a better understanding of the human influences on the Arctic environment and the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples and Arctic communities*
  3. Adaptation to Climate Change: *To strengthen the work of the Council by reducing vulnerability and implementing adaptation initiatives related to climate change in the Arctic, including practical community-based actions.*
  4. Energy and Arctic Communities: *To consider future projects and activities in relation to the Arctic region as energy consumer, and the importance of environmentally friendly economic activity in the energy sector to ongoing social and economic development in the Arctic region.*
  5. Management of Natural Resources: *To consider that Indigenous Peoples and Arctic communities rely on the sustainable use of natural resources for their health and economic well-being; increases in shipping, petroleum activities, fishing, mining as well as external influences such as climate change and variability, require that the management of resources is based on a holistic perspective.*
  6. Arctic Cultures and Languages: *To support Arctic cultures; to reduce the loss of Arctic Indigenous languages and to follow-up on the Arctic Indigenous Languages Symposium.*
- Strategic Planning: *To develop a more integrated and inclusive approach to managing and planning SDWG priority-based activities undertaken in collaboration with other Arctic Council Working Groups, Permanent Participants, Arctic community stakeholders and external partners.*

## II. 2011-13 SDWG Ongoing Projects by Thematic Area

### 1. ARCTIC HUMAN HEALTH

#### **a) Comparative Review of Circumpolar Health Systems Report (CircHSR)** (AHHEG/Canada/Greenland)

The purpose of this AHHEG project is to highlight different responses to similar challenges and focus on the effects of differing governance and organization. The first phase of this larger, multi-year project entails assembling national and regional profiles of the different health systems in Arctic countries.

**b) Arctic Human Health Initiative (AHHI)** (USA) Originally an SDWG/IPY project, AHHI succeeded at: serving as focal point for human health research, education, and communication and outreach activities. It also increased awareness and visibility of human health concerns; fostered research; and promoted strategies to improve the health and well being of Arctic residents. Ongoing AHHI projects are now integrated into the Arctic Human Health Experts Group's (AHHEG) portfolio of human health activities.

**c) International Circumpolar Surveillance (ICS)** (USA) The ICS established an infectious disease surveillance network of hospital and public health laboratories and authorities throughout Arctic regions to monitor emerging and infectious disease problems. The network collects and shares data between Arctic countries and assists in creating prevention and control strategies and is also an activity of the AHHEG.

## 2. ARCTIC SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

**a) Arctic Social Indicators (ASI)** (Iceland) ASI Phases I and II are follow-up activities to the AHDR (2004) to facilitate tracking and monitoring of key aspects of human development in the Arctic over time. The ASI Phase I, completed during the Danish Chairmanship, addressed data challenges and requirements for an Arctic Social Indicators monitoring system. Phase II involves the measurement and testing of the indicators identified within Phase I.

**3. ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE**  
No ongoing project proposed

**4. ENERGY AND ARCTIC COMMUNITIES**  
No ongoing project proposed.

**5. MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**  
No ongoing project proposed.

## 6. ARCTIC CULTURES AND LANGUAGES

**a) Assessment of Cultural Heritage Monuments and Sites in the Arctic** (Norway) The primary objective for the Expert Group established to undertake this initiative is to develop criteria, in line with the World Heritage standard for the protection and management of World Heritage Sites, and to inform/guide the assessment of Cultural Heritage Monuments and Sites in the Arctic. This project is ongoing and will be completed during the Swedish Chairmanship.

**b) Areas of Heightened Cultural Significance AMSA Recommendation II c)** (Norway) PAME has requested the advice of AMAP, CAFF and the SDWG on follow-up to the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA IIc) report recommendation: the identification of areas of heightened ecological and cultural significance and their vulnerability towards marine shipping in light of changing climate conditions and increasing multiple marine use. SDWG experts have met and have completed a first draft on areas of heightened cultural significance. The project will be completed by December 2011.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

**SDWG Strategic Planning - On a Way Forward** (Canada/ SDWG Strategic Planning Task Force)  
The proposal for the SDWG to undertake a strategic planning exercise was submitted as part of its 2009-11 work plan. A first step, completed during the Danish Chairmanship, was the SDWG Strategic Plan Phase I report *Taking Stock*. The SDWG strategic planning process will be completed during the Swedish Chairmanship.

## III NEW PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES CURRENTLY UNDER DEVELOPMENT

The projects listed below are to be reviewed and considered for possible endorsement by SDWG and subsequent approval by SAOs.

**a) Arctic Human Development II (AHDR II)** (Iceland/Canada/Denmark/Greenland) The AHDR-II aims to provide a comprehensive overview of human development in the Arctic that can be used to assess progress toward sustainable human development; to educate the public and provide valuable material for educational instruction; and be a handbook for policy makers. The project will also provide a circumpolar assessment of human development and quality of life in the Arctic with a completion date of 2015.

**b) Arctic Indigenous Languages Symposium follow-up** (Canada) This project addresses an identified need for an in-depth language assessment and the development of a long-term plan to maintain, preserve and/or revitalize Arctic indigenous languages. The projected outcomes include: assessing the state of Arctic indigenous languages and reinforcing their importance; leading and facilitating inter-regional, international, and intergovernmental activities in support of Arctic indigenous languages and enhancing language exchange and youth engagement.

**c) ICC Response to AMSA Recommendations follow-up** (Canada) This proposal consists of two actions: 1) Communicating AMSA findings to Inuit & seeking guidance to move AMSA forward, and 2) Realizing an Expanded Survey on Inuit Use of the Sea and Sea Ice. The goal is to carry out an expanded survey in Inuit communities to assess their current use of the sea and how it compares to that recorded in earlier land use studies. The activities proposed in this plan would cover the three additional regions -Chukotka, Alaska, and Greenland within the Inuit homeland.

**d) Reindeer Herding and Youth** (Russia/ Association of World Reindeer Herders (AWRH)) this project aims to build on the IPY EALAT project and the SDWG EALAT-Information project. With reindeer herding youth as a focal point for its activities, the project will seek to adopt and test new information and communication technologies, facilitate a more regular dialogue through community-based workshops and exchanges between the young reindeer herders normally separated by vast Arctic distances on matters of land use change, industry, and shared experiences.

**e) Electronic Memory of the Arctic (EMA)** (Russia) The EMA Project is designed to accumulate and represent various information resources in an Internet environment as they relate to the circumpolar world. EMA will allow the expert community to discuss issues on the history of geographical discoveries and exploration of the North, industry, geology, nature, folklore and literature, artistic heritage and ethnography.

**f) The Arctic Maritime and Aviation Transportation Infrastructure Initiative (AMATII)** (USA) This project will assess the infrastructure deficit in the Arctic by developing guidance for a robust, effective transportation system in the North. By setting benchmarks for what capacity and capability should look like and establishing a current baseline of Arctic maritime and air transportation infrastructure, the Initiative will be able to produce a gap analysis that more efficiently facilitates the application of resources by federal, regional and local governments, as well as international bodies.