



# Arctic EIA

## Good Practice Recommendations for Environmental Impact Assessment in the Arctic – in short, Arctic EIA – State of Play, September 2018

### Background

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a procedure for assessing beforehand the impacts of large-scale projects on the environment and the people potentially affected by the projects. It is aimed at preventing and mitigating adverse impacts by identifying these impacts already in the early stages of planning and decision-making. Public participation is an integral part of this procedure. EIA is in use in all of the Arctic countries, each one having their own national legislation related to EIA. However, the general EIA principles of each country are not necessarily sensitive enough to the specific Arctic conditions.

The Arctic EIA project intends to provide Arctic-specific EIA recommendations that can be applied in the vulnerable and changing Arctic environment, taking into account the indigenous peoples and other inhabitants living there. It aims to make the Arctic matter in project planning. Mapping good practices, sharing experiences, learning from each other and creating solutions together form the core of the project. Since economic activities are likely to increase in the Arctic, the role of EIA in the project planning will be increasing, too. That is why Finland took an initiative of creating good practice recommendations for EIA and related public participation as a project of the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) of the Arctic Council.

### Organization of the project

- SDWG endorsed project started in May 2017 and it is running the same period as the Finnish chairmanship of the Arctic Council 2017-2019.
- Lead: Finland – Ministry of the Environment
- Co-leads: Kingdom of Denmark – Greenland Institute of Natural Resources; Canada – Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada – and Gwich'in Council International
- Steering committee consists of the representatives of the lead and the co-leads.
- Editorial (working) group consists of nominated Country and Permanent Participant coordinators of each member state and Permanent Participant. In addition there is representation of the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland and the Arctic Economic Council.
- Other working groups of the Arctic Council have nominated a contact person to facilitate communication and search of synergies with the work of the Arctic EIA project and the other working groups.

## Expected outcomes

- 1) Good Practice Recommendations for EIA in the Arctic to be delivered to the Ministerial meeting in 2019
- 2) Network of Arctic EIA actors

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- A questionnaire on good EIA practices in the Arctic was closed December 2017. 37 answers were received + 20 answers from Russia separately.
- There's been three regional workshops: in Alaska November 2017, a Nordic workshop in Finland December 2017 and in Northwest Territory, Canada April 2018 – with altogether about 150 participants.
- A Russian workshop is planned to take place December 2018.
- Draft I of the Good Practice Recommendations for EIA in the Arctic is under construction. Draft's base is on the material received from the questionnaire, the workshops and the input of the Editorial Group of the project. Two themes in the material have raised up above others: Meaningful engagement of Indigenous Peoples and other public and the utilization of Indigenous Knowledge.
- Draft I is presently circulated within the Editorial group for comments and contributions.
- Arctic EIA webpages will be updated in September along with publishing the next Newsletter.



*Participants of the Nordic workshop in Rovaniemi Dec 2017*

## Contact information

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<https://www.sdwg.org/activities/sdwg-projects-2017-2019/arctic-eia/arctic-eia-new/>

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