



Photo: Lisa Hupp/USFWS



# ARCTIC RESEARCH PLAN 2022- 2026 FIRST ENGAGEMENT PHASE OVERVIEW

December 2020

The Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) is a committee of the U.S. National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). It aims to enhance scientific monitoring and research on local, regional, and global environmental issues in the Arctic through coordination of federal agencies and domestic and international collaborators. By law (the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984), IARPC develops and implements an Arctic Research Plan every five years. The plan is developed in consultation with the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, the governor of the state of Alaska, Arctic residents, the private sector, and public interest groups and aims to improve the collective impacts of federal agencies in Arctic research.

The development of the Arctic Research Plan 2022-2026 includes two public input periods. One prior to the drafting of the plan (October 2019–September 2020) and one will be held following an initial draft (February–June 2021).

Throughout the engagement process, IARPC operated under three key overarching principles:

1. Sustained Engagement: Ensure that engagement with Indigenous and Tribal organizations, northern communities, federal agencies, the state of Alaska, and all partners is respectful, responsive, and continuous.

2. Inclusion & Equity: Ensure that equity and inclusion are a key component of all activities by ensuring that everyone has the tools they need to succeed, and that they are welcomed and treated fairly and respectfully.
3. Transparency & Accessibility: Ensure activities conducted and decisions made are transparent and communicated clearly in an accessible format.

IARPC will continue to operate under these principles throughout the drafting and implementation of the plan.

### **First Public Input Period (October 2019–September 2020)**

From Oct 2019 to Sept 2020, IARPC collected public input to inform the development of the plan. IARPC strove to offer multiple and varied ways for the public to provide input and continues to issue a monthly newsletter update on plan progress. During this time, IARPC worked to engage with:

- Federal agencies via direct agency input to IARPC Staff Group.
- Indigenous Peoples via targeted outreach to Indigenous community members, regional Indigenous entities, and Indigenous organizations.
- Academia via listening sessions and three external workshops coordinated by academic partners.
- The state of Alaska via direct outreach and conversations with contacts in relevant departments.
- Private sector organizations and nonprofits via personal outreach and directed invites to public webinars.
- International organizations via listening sessions and outreach to relevant international bodies.
- Early career researchers via an information session and outreach to support and encourage early career involvement.

Additional engagement activities included a radio interview on [Talk of Alaska](#) to answer questions about the plan and discuss how Alaskans can get involved, and a monthly newsletter with plan development updates and ways to engage in the process. The Plan Development Director also conducted three interviews with journalists that resulted in one published article in the science journal *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*. In total, IARPC convened 29 externally facing events, including conferences, meetings, listening sessions, and webinars. An additional three events were hosted by academic partners.

A variety of mechanisms were used to collect input and comments throughout the public input phase. Mechanisms included:

- A Federal Request for Information Notice;
- A form on the IARPC website;
- Two IARPC-wide informational webinars;
- Collaboration team listening sessions;
- Regular reserved time during Coastal Resilience Collaboration Team meetings;
- A session specific to plan development at the 2020 Collaboration Team Leaders' Workshop;
- Verbal comments at workshops, conferences, and webinars; and
- Direct federal agency input to IARPC Staff Group.

In addition to receiving input from 11 federal agencies, 120 comments were [submitted](#).

To inform plan development, aid workshop participants, and communicate to the public the input received during the public engagement phase and [six synthesis documents](#) were created. These included: (1) an overview of research needs and priorities identified in recent, public facing strategic documents from the state of Alaska, international organizations, northern communities, and federal departments and agencies; (2) a synthesis of comments submitted by federal agencies<sup>1</sup> to IARPC Staff Group; and (3) a synthesis of comments submitted specific to the public input phase. The synthesis of comments included input received via the engagement mechanisms listed above. The syntheses of federal and public input were used to create an initial list of priority areas that was considered and further prioritized by workshop participants.

### **IARPC Plan Development Workshop:**

To conclude the first public input phase, a virtual IARPC Plan Development Workshop took place from September 14-17, 2020. The purpose was to identify potential priority areas as the focus of the next Arctic Research Plan.

Over 100 representatives from academic institutions (22%), Indigenous organizations, private sectors, and nonprofits (21%), federal agencies (38%), the state of Alaska (5%), and from IARPC collaboration team co-leads (14%). Participants worked collaboratively in a series of facilitated breakout groups and plenary sessions to identify four foundational activities and five priority areas, which were forwarded to the IARPC Staff Group for further consideration. A full workshop report will be available on the IARPC Collaborations website.

---

<sup>1</sup>Department of Defense; Department of Energy; Department of Interior; Department of Transportation; Department of Health and Human Services; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; Department of Commerce; National Science Foundation; Smithsonian; US Arctic Observing Network Board; and U.S. Coast Guard.