

ASSW 2023: Social & Human Working Group (SHWG) summary

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Session 1 (08:30-10:30)

Review and reporting:

The meeting took place with representatives both in the room and on Zoom. The current Chair, Dr Susan Chatwood, led from Zoom, and the current Vice-Chairs Dr Barbora Halašková and Dr Catherine Chambers were in-person and online, respectively.

Following reporting and reviewing minutes, we had a brief update on a couple of the funded activities, “A collaborative Arctic research community assessment of interactions between global change drivers, societies and subsystems through space and time” (PPT slides), “Justice in the Arctic Workshop” (Dr Corine Wood-Donnelly), and the “Permafrost Atlas” (Prof. Peter Schweitzer). [We also had a presentation from “Gender in Arctic Research” (Dr Otto Habert) in session 2].

Session 2 (11:00-12:30)

Countries’ Arctic priorities:

The agenda was shifted somewhat due to technical issues, so the WG meetings continued – with the IASC Cross-Cutting meeting moved after lunch – so we picked up where we left off, discussing different countries’ current Arctic policies and strategies.

We went around the room, and I (Ingrid) noted briefly the newly published UK Arctic Policy Framework “Looking North: The UK and the Arctic” (Feb 2023). While primarily an update to the 2018 framework in light of the Integrated Review (2021) and the new global geopolitical situation following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, among other things it highlights the UK’s commitment to science. It notes that science lies at the heart of UK foreign policy, and under the second of four priority areas (‘Protecting the Climate, People and Environment’) it mentions both that the new IASC President is Henry Burgess and that ASSW will take place in Edinburgh in 2024 – as well as a number of other activities going on.

Some general issues that were raised as part of this discussion included the importance of Truth and Reconciliation processes across most Arctic strategies and science – potentially something to share experiences of. Several also noted the role of multidisciplinary; and tourism was a new addition to some written priorities (e.g. Finland).

ICARP IV process:

We then moved on to discuss ICARP IV – the fourth of these, which take place every 10 years. A single summit for this will be held in 2025 in Boulder, Colorado. The process is just getting underway, including at ASSW2023 where WGs are consulted. Dr Andrey Petrov (past WG Chair) highlighted the importance of including social sciences also in this ICARP, as in its third iteration. We discussed how the WG might be able to coordinate input to this process.

It was recognised that linking the ICARP IV to the IPY process (which happens only every 25 years) and keeping dialogue directly with national funding agencies; and the importance of “indigenising” the process – including Indigenous peoples in the priority-setting for Arctic science.

Session 3 (14:00-15:30)

Cross-cutting meeting:

This session was the Cross-Cutting meeting for all WGs. In brief, we had presentations from some previously funded cross-cutting projects; an update on the ICARP VI process; an update on the International Polar Year (IPY) process for 2032-33; an introduction to next year’s Arctic Observation Summit (AOS) in Edinburgh. Please see the separate agenda for details.

Worth noting, the ICARP IV process will likely be high on the agenda in the next few years, and is something the SHWG will work on to collect priorities from different groups. At this stage, different modes of generating input are encouraged and welcomed. Please see: <https://icarp.iasc.info/engagement>

Session 4 (16:00-18:00)

Funding:

The final session was a closed session in which we discussed the SHWG budget from the previous and current year, and this year's funding proposals. The WGs have a new reviewing system in place, and it was the first time the group used this – which in turn created some challenges. The session included those in the reviewing committee sharing their views of the process, which highlighted that this was something that required more time; and it showed that the process itself needs some more attention. This will be a topic for a future meeting.

[Note that following the meeting, Chair Susan emailed the reviewers and invited them to a follow-up meeting online on Tuesday, in which the committee agreed: 4 the full amount requested, 2 a partial amount, and 3 a partial amount while also requiring mentorship]

Strategy:

The SHWG's Strategic Plan was on the agenda, but there was little time to discuss this in depth here. The group met earlier in 2022 to discuss priority areas, which has now taken the form of a number of WG areas and a further number of Cross-cutting issues. As these require further attention, a future meeting will be organised to this end. The plan is to identify Arctic social & human research priorities until 2025, after which the ICARP IV process will offer priorities for the coming decade.

Executive committee:

This was Susan Chatwood's last meeting as Chair, and so the WG elected a new executive committee: Former Vice-Chair Catherine Chambers becomes Chair, Barbora Halašková remains Vice-Chair for her second term, and I (Ingrid Medby) join as second Vice-Chair.



Group photo of the IACS Social & Human Working Group, Sunday 19/02/2023 (Photo: Federica Scarpa, IASC)