

Arctic Science Summit Week 2026

Social and Human Working Group (SHWG) Summary

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The Social and Human Working Group (SHWG) met on Thursday 26th March in Aarhus and online. The group hosted three open sessions (8:30-9:30; 10:00-12:00; 13:30-15:30) and a closed session (16:00-18:00), all of which were hybrid.

The meeting was attended in-person and virtually by SHWG members from Austria, Belgium, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, France, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Portugal, the UK, and the USA. The meeting was chaired in-person by the new chair Monika Szkartat (Poland) with Vice-Chair SU Ping (China) joining remotely for the whole day. SHWG Secretary Anna Varfolomeeva (Finland) was in-person for the duration.

- **Fellows:** We heard presentations from this year's SHWG Fellows: Sophie Roher on *Community-Partnered Health Research in Northern Canada*, Mariel Kieval on *Islands of Autonomy*, and Haliehana Stepetin on *Smoked Salmon as Pedagogy*. Seira Duncan, Fellow ('25-26) also delivered a presentation on her recent SHWG-funded workshop on *Exploring Arctic-Ainu Connections in northern Japan*.
- **Projects:** Presentations were delivered on previously funded ('25-26) projects. These included Annette Scheepstra's *Science Under Pressure* Workshop; Billy Starkey's workshop on *New Insights into Polar Law*; Olga Povoroznyak's *Arctic Infrastructure Research in the Next Decade*; and Peter Schweitzer's *Arctic Transportation Forum*.
- **Presentations:** Hyunkyo Seo (Korea) gave a presentation on the newly established Korean Arctic Research Initiative. Isabelle Gapp (UK) delivered a short presentation that shared an overview of UK-based arts, humanities, and social sciences research priorities and centres. Gosia Smieszek-Rice (Norway) gave a presentation on the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP). Vera Kuklina (USA) also shared the successes of the first Indigenous pavilion at ASSW 2025, which aligned with its second iteration at ASSW 2026 in Aarhus.
- **ICARP IV:** An overview of the ICARP IV final report was delivered by Gosia Smieszek-Rice, Co-Chair of the ICARP Research Priority Team 4. This highlighted the involvement of SHWG members in the ICARP IV workshops at ASSW 2025, and their contributions to RPT 3,4, and 7.
- **IPY5 national committees:** The focus of the next year, in the lead up to ASSW 2027, is on developing the next SHWG strategy. As part of this, the open session concluded with a discussion of where each country represented in the meeting was at in its IPY5 planning. This was brief and largely focused on which countries had assembled national committees.
- **Funding:** The closed session focused on discussing the impressive range of Cross-Cutting and SHWG-specific proposals for funding. After several hours of reviewing the reports to each proposal, we had a short list that was later presented to the IASC Steering Committee. Further recommendations were made on how to streamline the assessment process, standardise the financial parameters, and ensure that the workload was evenly distributed.