

WYCOMBE MODEL ARCTIC COUNCIL

RESEARCH GUIDE

JANUARY 2024



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1. The Arctic and the Arctic Council

Why WYCOMAC? Having taken up the challenge of simulating the work of the Arctic Council, you likely already have your own answer to this question. For Polar Aspect, the answer has to do with the special place the Arctic represents in today's world, and the special role that the Arctic Council plays in encouraging dialogue and cooperation across the circumpolar North.

The Arctic

Once on the periphery of international affairs, the Arctic is now very much at their centre. Many people view the Arctic as the bellwether of climate change, and the health of its environment as a yardstick against which to measure the sustainability of our global community. Others view it as an emerging resource frontier that powerful countries and industries are 'scrambling' to claim. And yet others view it as a potential theatre of military conflict between NATO and Russia. It is no exaggeration to say that the Arctic is 'hot', both climatically and politically.

Yet these popular images of the Arctic—as a pristine wilderness to be protected, a global treasure chest to be exploited, or a military front-line between nuclear-armed enemies—tend to miss its most important aspect. For the Arctic is also an ancestral homeland whose Indigenous inhabitants have occupied and used its land, waters and ice to sustain themselves since time immemorial. These peoples now live in eight different states whose territories extend into the Arctic, and whose governments, industries, cultures and settlements are now planted there.

Defined politically, this human Arctic includes all or part of the states of Canada, Denmark (in respect of Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the USA. The many culturally unique Indigenous peoples of the Arctic include the Inuit, Saami, Gwich'in, Dene, Yupik, Aleut, Chukchi, Sakha, Evenk, Nenets and others. Four million people, both Indigenous and settler, live in the Arctic today. Contrary to the typical conception of the Arctic as the same all the way around the North Pole, it can be said that there are as many Arctics as there are distinct peoples who call it home.

The challenges that Arctic peoples face are principally challenges of sustainable development and human security—fragile ecosystems, uncommonly high concentrations of pollutants, poor community infrastructure, limited access to public goods, narrowly based local economies, dependence on natural resource extraction,

vulnerable Indigenous cultures and so on. The legacy of colonialism is entwined with many of these challenges. And looming over them all is the problem of climate change, which is affecting the Arctic much faster than anywhere else on the planet.

Climate change is a global emergency for all of us. But for Arctic Indigenous peoples in particular, whose cultures are based on millennia of living with ice, snow and cold, it is an existential threat. As the climate warms, traditional livelihoods on the land, ice and sea are less viable, and traditional knowledge of the environment less accurate. Contemporary Indigenous society is also in danger, as melting permafrost damages infrastructure, and the encroaching sea threatens entire communities.

All the same, it would be a mistake to think that climate change is the only challenge that Arctic peoples face. The problems of economic development and human security listed above are equally pressing. The Arctic Council brings Arctic states and Indigenous peoples together to tackle these problems of human development, alongside the wicked problem of climate change.

The Arctic Council

The Arctic Council, established in 1996, is devoted to international cooperation and good governance across the Arctic. Around its table sit the eight Arctic States—Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the USA—each of which chairs the Arctic Council for two years on a rotating basis. Unique amongst international organisations, the Arctic Council also involves the permanent participation of six Arctic Indigenous peoples' organisations—the Aleut International Association (AIA), Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC), Gwich'in Council International (GCI), Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), Saami Council (SC), and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON).

Unlike other international organisations, all decisions of the Arctic Council must be made by full consensus of its members, the Arctic States. Indeed, until Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and the subsequent fifteen-month pause in Arctic Council activities, the Arctic Council had a reputation for collegiality and collaboration even in times of tension elsewhere in the world. Whilst the Indigenous Permanent Participants are not technically members of the Arctic Council, they are entitled to full participation in all discussions, and the Arctic Council does not normally take decisions without their agreement as well.

Whilst the Arctic Council is prohibited by its own rules from discussing matters of military security, it considers a broad range of Arctic policy issues, especially issues of

human security, sustainable development and the environment. Its six Working Groups—the Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP); Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP); Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF); Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR), Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), and Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)—together with *ad hoc* Task Forces and Expert Groups, conduct the technical, scientific and programmatic work to support its discussions.

Operationally, the Arctic Council’s work is overseen by Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs)—the ‘Arctic Ambassadors’ of the eight Arctic States, together with high-level representatives from the six Indigenous Permanent Participant organisations. The SAOs meet every six months to review reports from the Working Groups and other relevant matters, and ultimately to draft a political declaration for the Arctic Council to adopt. This declaration is signed at a biennial Ministerial meeting involving the foreign ministers of the eight Arctic States, and the leaders of the six Indigenous Permanent Participant organisations.

As WYCOMAC delegates, it is important to remember that the Arctic Council is a high-level international forum where Arctic States and Arctic peoples come together to discuss issues of mutual concern. It is not an ‘Arctic government’—and indeed unlike the United Nations for example, it lacks its own legal personality or budget. All Arctic Council initiatives must be funded by the Arctic States, and it is typically the Arctic States that take action within their own national jurisdictions to implement, as appropriate, the Arctic Council’s declarations. The Arctic Council is more a *policy-shaping* than a *policy-making* body.

2. Research brief

Current Arctic Council priorities

The current Chair of the Arctic Council is Norway, having received the rotating Chairship from Russia in May 2023 and holding it until May 2025 when it passes to Denmark. In addition to carrying forward existing Arctic Council work, Norway's Chairship programme establishes four priority themes for these two years:

- The oceans
- Climate and environment
- Sustainable economic development
- People in the North

Norway's Chairship programme also establishes two cross-cutting priorities, applicable to all of the themes above:

- Arctic youth
- Arctic Indigenous peoples

In addition to these themes and cross-cutting priorities, Norway's Chairship programme specifies many initiatives and activities that Norway intends to undertake, together with the other Arctic States and the Indigenous Permanent Participants. All together, these themes, cross-cutting priorities, initiatives and activities have informed the selection of the issue for discussion at this year's WYCOMAC conference:

- Marine Protected Areas in the Arctic

This issue will be initially discussed in the Protection of the Marine Environment (PAME) Working Group. A research brief follows, to help delegates begin to prepare for discussions.

Marine Protected Areas in the Arctic (PAME)

The Arctic Council's Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) Working Group defines Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as 'clearly defined geographical [marine] spaces recognized, dedicated, and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values'. As an ocean surrounded by continents, warming at a rate four times faster than the rest of the globe, the Arctic is a marine environment under

special threat. Its ice-covered waters are also vitally important to regulating the climate of the whole planet.

But the Arctic is also an Indigenous homeland, and many of its peoples depend on marine resources for their livelihoods. These resources are huge, and they have long attracted ‘southern’ interests as well—in fishing, sealing, whaling, shipping, offshore oil and gas, and so on. These activities offer both opportunity and threat to Arctic communities, and they raise questions of environmentally sustainable development. Any programme to introduce or expand MPAs in the Arctic must grapple with these overlapping environmental, economic, social and cultural concerns.

At the 2021 UN Global Biodiversity Conference, the international community pledged to create full MPAs protecting 30% of the world’s oceans by 2030. To qualify as a full MPA, there must be a complete prohibition on extractive activities—e.g. fishing, aquaculture, dredging, mineral extraction—and the infrastructure supporting those activities. At the same time, even a full MPA is meant to make some allowance for the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities. How MPAs would best work in the Arctic, then, where the development of culturally unique and often economically disadvantaged communities is at stake, remains an open question.

It is the role of state governments, not the Arctic Council, to create MPAs. Indeed, the most vulnerable marine areas are located within the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of coastal states—*i.e.* waters within 200 nautical miles from shore, over which states have sovereign rights and jurisdiction according to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. But the Arctic Council could have an important role in facilitating the development of a sound network of Arctic MPAs.

This facilitating role could include establishing a cooperative mechanism between Arctic States for planning and erecting MPAs, taking into account various geographical, environmental, economic and cultural factors. It could also include creating a strategy for the protection of Arctic marine areas beyond national EEZs—*i.e.* the ‘high seas’ of the central Arctic Ocean. Indeed, by definition, protecting the ‘high seas’ beyond national jurisdiction requires international cooperation.

The benefits of MPAs are clear. By protecting a marine area from most human activities, its ecological productivity and resilience are either preserved, or given a chance to recover. Because there are no physical borders underwater, these benefits can also spill out of the MPA into surrounding areas. And if the right balance is struck with the interests of local communities and Indigenous peoples, MPAs can preserve the natural resources on which they depend for their livelihoods and cultures.

However, establishing MPAs is a difficult affair. Not only do coastal states themselves have final jurisdiction over the creation and enforcement of MPAs within their EEZs, clashes between different stakeholders—those who wish to use or extract resources from the area, and those who wish to sequester those resources—must be managed. Without some degree of community and industry support, the already daunting task of defining, maintaining and policing an MPA becomes insurmountable.

Moreover, establishing MPAs in the Arctic presents special additional challenges. First, Arctic seas are often frozen for long periods, and the differences between ice and liquid water must be considered. For example, sea-ice can serve as an extension of the land, providing a platform for economic activities, especially in the traditional Indigenous economy that centres on hunting, sealing, whaling and fishing. Sea-ice can also serve as a platform for travel, connecting communities that are otherwise separated by liquid water for part of the year.

Indeed, not only is international law mostly silent on the difference between ice and liquid water, but it is also mostly silent on the extent to which Indigenous and local community rights extend offshore. It is normally assumed that marine areas are ‘state spaces’, and the idea that individuals or groups could have special rights over marine resources is controversial. Yet marine resources are crucial to life and culture in many parts of the Arctic, and Arctic Indigenous and local communities have a vast wealth of knowledge about their oceans that could help to inform a sound and equitable network of MPAs there.

The soundness of any Arctic MPA network matters enormously to Arctic peoples. Any MPA limits the use of the oceans, which would impact not only the food security and cultural expression of Indigenous communities, but also their livelihoods. To take but one example from past marine conservation, the 1980s prohibition on the sale of seal-fur products in Europe and the USA devastated Inuit communities in Canada and Greenland. Similarly, Indigenous communities in Nunavut lack proportionate access to fishing quota in adjacent waters, and therefore fail to reap the full benefits of commercial fishing. It seems imperative to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge, and actively to engage with Indigenous and local interests, in the creation of Arctic MPAs.

A further question arises from the Arctic’s delicate environment, which requires a long time to recover from disturbance. It may be sensible to consider whether more than 30% of the Arctic should be protected by MPAs, either fully or partly. This consideration extends to the ‘high seas’ of the central Arctic Ocean as well, whose permanent sea-ice cover serves as a sort of planetary cooling system. While there are

over 60 MPAs protecting 4.7% of the marine area within Arctic State EEZs, there are no MPAs in the central Arctic Ocean. Nor could any such MPAs be established without the agreement of non-Arctic states, especially states with naval, merchant or fishing fleets capable of sailing there.

There is precedent for this sort of cooperation, however. In 2018, the five Arctic States bordering the Arctic Ocean, plus China, Iceland, Japan, South Korea and the European Union, agreed a temporary moratorium on fishing in the central Arctic Ocean. Nevertheless, this agreement did not cover any other economic activities there. It also did not include Arctic Indigenous groups, whose rights to the 'high seas' beyond the jurisdiction of any state are not contemplated in international law.

At the Arctic Council, PAME has special responsibility for understanding MPAs in the Arctic context, including how best to integrate Indigenous and Western scientific knowledge about the marine environment. In 2015, PAME set out a vision for a pan-Arctic network of MPAs, which remains at least an aspirational goal. At the same time, several Arctic MPAs are nearing the end of their legal terms, including Canada's Tuvaijuittuq MPA, the largest Arctic MPA. With expiry dates for existing MPAs approaching, but with international efforts to protect 30% of global marine areas lagging, the question of how best to use MPAs in the Arctic remains as vitally important as ever.

Questions to consider

Even considering the projects that PAME and the Arctic Council have already undertaken regarding MPAs, much more work remains to be done to understand how MPAs could work best in the Arctic, what the Arctic Council could do to advance marine conservation through MPAs, and how the rights and interests of Arctic States, Indigenous peoples, communities and industry can be balanced in Arctic waters.

When researching the issue of the future of Arctic cooperation, delegates may wish to consider the following questions:

- How should Arctic States cooperate to ensure that at least 30% of the Arctic is protected by MPAs in the most geographically, environmentally and economically sound way?
- What role can the Arctic Council play in ensuring that the interests and livelihoods of Arctic Indigenous peoples and local communities are incorporated into MPAs?

- What economic activities are vital to community development in the Arctic, which MPAs should permit—e.g. fishing, sealing, whaling, hunting, tourism, mineral extraction, etc?
- What differences between ice and liquid water—especially in respect of Indigenous or local traditions and economies—should be accounted for in creating Arctic MPAs?
- Does the crucial global importance of the Arctic Ocean necessitate protection beyond the UN MPA target of 30% of the world’s oceans?
- How could the Arctic Council play a role in the negotiation of a wider international agreement regarding MPAs in the ‘high seas’ of the central Arctic Ocean?

3. Preparing for WYCOMAC

Good preparatory research for WYCOMAC, and indeed for any other Polar Aspect MAC, often follows this sequence:

1. The Arctic in general
2. Your Arctic State or Permanent Participant
3. The issues to be discussed
4. Current international cooperation on the issues
5. Position of your Arctic State or Permanent Participant on the issues

Researching the Arctic in general

It is difficult to define the Arctic categorically. It can be defined astronomically (lands and waters north of the Arctic Circle, where there is at least one 24-hour period of day and one of night), climatically (lands and waters north of the 10°C isotherm, where average July temperatures do not exceed that limit), biologically (land north of the treeline, where trees cannot grow), geographically (the waters of the Arctic Ocean basin and the surrounding coastal regions), and even politically (the specified 'northern' jurisdictions of the eight Arctic states). All of these definitions are valid in some way or another, but they do not completely overlap.

As you begin your WYCOMAC research, you should spend some time getting to know the Arctic in all its diversity. General information is relatively easy to find on the Internet, and you can begin with the general research links listed below. As you familiarise yourself with the Arctic, however, you should take care to avoid thinking about it in a one-dimensional manner. This will take some effort! The Arctic has long been a place of imagination and fantasy, and you should beware of common clichés about the Arctic, such as imagining the Arctic as nothing but:

- A harsh and empty wilderness inhabited mostly by animals
- An inhospitable place for human beings or modern civilisation
- A heroic proving ground for (mostly male) explorers
- An unclaimed no-man's land waiting to be annexed
- A global resource frontier full of hydrocarbons, minerals, fish, etc
- A military frontier between nuclear-armed enemies
- . . . and so on!

Researching your Arctic State or Permanent Participant

Once you have a good sense of the Arctic in general, it is important to gain a similarly good sense of the Arctic State or Permanent Participant that you will represent at WYCOMAC. You might start with the following sorts of questions:

| Example research questions | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Theme | Arctic State | Permanent Participant |
| Geography | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is your state? • What part of its territory is located within the Arctic? • What is the physical geography like there? • What other states does your state border? • How many people live in your state? In its Arctic territory? • Where are the major Arctic settlements? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is (are) the homeland(s) of your people(s)? • In which Arctic State(s) do they live? • What other people(s) live nearby or amongst your people(s)? • What is the physical geography like there? • Where are the major settlements, and are they accessible by road, sea, air? |
| Politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of government does your state have? • Who are its leaders? • How does it govern its Arctic territory? • What agreements does it have with its Arctic peoples, if any? • Do any special laws apply to Indigenous peoples? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are your people(s) organised politically? • Who are their leaders? • What relationship do they have with the state(s) they live in? • What are their rights to land, wildlife, natural resources, etc? • Do they have any rights to self-government? |
| Economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your state's economy like? • What are its main imports and exports? • What role does its Arctic territory play in its economy? • What impact has climate change had on its economy? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the traditional basis for the economy of your people(s)? • In what modern industries have your people(s) become involved? • What standard of living do your people(s) have? • How has climate change affected the economy of your people(s)? |
| Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major elements of your state's culture and heritage? • What languages are spoken, and which have official status? • How are Indigenous people viewed in your state? • What part does the Arctic play in your state's identity? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organisation represent one or many peoples? • What are the major elements of their culture and heritage? • What language(s) do they speak, and are they widely spoken? • How have your people(s) been impacted by the experience of colonisation? |

You might find that websites such as Wikipedia, which summarise basic information in an easily digestible format, are useful for beginning to answer these sorts of questions. Take care with such websites, though, as they are not always accurate or complete. Use them as a springboard from which to undertake more detailed research, or rely instead on general publications that undergo rigorous content-review and editing, such as the online version of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Researching the issues to be discussed

Once you have a good understanding of the Arctic State or Permanent Participant you will represent at WYCOMAC, you should investigate the issues you will discuss during the conference. You should begin this investigation by reading (or re-reading) the research brief about the issue in the section above, by thinking about the stimulus questions listed there, and by exploring the issue for yourself on the Internet or in printed sources. You should also keep the following sort of general questions in mind:

- **Why is this issue a matter for concern?** It is crucial to understand the concerns that an issue raises, and the impacts it may have, if you are to identify effective solutions. It will also help you to justify an approach or action that you wish the Arctic Council to take, and to convince others of it.
- **What are the causes of the issue?** You should clarify whether human activity or natural processes—or both—are at the heart of the issue, and what its specific causes are. Without an understanding of the origins of an issue, it becomes very difficult to define the most appropriate approach to solving it.
- **Where does the issue arise?** Some Arctic issues originate from elsewhere in the world, such as certain forms of pollution, and some issues originating in the Arctic affect the rest of the world. You should think about the wider context of the issue, and how this context might shape any proposed solutions.
- **Whom does the issue impact?** If you are to reach consensus, it is important to understand which Arctic States and which Permanent Participants have more at stake, and which less. Whose voice should be heard as a priority, and which delegations must be committed to any proposed solution?
- **How long has this issue been a matter for concern?** Understanding whether the issue has been a matter of concern for many years, has only just recently emerged, or will likely emerge in the future will help you decide whether to propose a solution focusing on research, mitigation or action.

Researching current international cooperation on the issue

Once you have researched the issues to be discussed at WYCOMAC in the round, you should follow up by learning about any steps that the Arctic Council, individual Arctic states or peoples, or the international community as a whole, have taken to address it. You should avoid approaching issues as though it has not been considered before. Build upon existing ideas rather than trying to ‘reinvent the wheel’.

In doing so, you should search for relevant international treaties, conventions, agreements, projects, and so on. The research links below should help, and the Arctic Council’s own document archive should perhaps be your first port of call. You should also explore the related activities of other international organisations, such as the United Nations and its many different agencies and programmes.

This research is important for two reasons. First, current international cooperation will form a basis for the content of the draft declaration that you negotiate together with other delegates. Indeed, it is typical for the preambulatory clauses of declarations (see Section 5 below) to refer to pre-existing international cooperation on an issue. Second, if you are representing an Arctic State, that state might already be party to certain international arrangements that you should therefore avoid contravening!

Researching the position of your Arctic State or Permanent Participant on the issues

Having completed the research stages above, you are now ready to research the specific position of your Arctic State or Permanent Participant on the issues to be discussed at WYCOMAC. You may be tempted to begin your preparatory research at this final stage—after all, why not immediately begin to learn about the position you will actually take at the conference? You must avoid this temptation! Without having conducted at least some of the four stages of research above, it is likely you will lack the background knowledge you need fully to understand that position.

One useful way to conduct your research into the position of your Arctic State or Permanent Participant is to ask the following questions:

- What does my Arctic State or Permanent Participant wish the final declaration to say about the issues?
- What does my Arctic State or Permanent Participant wish the final declaration explicitly not to say about the issues?

- On what aspects of the issues is my Arctic State or Permanent Participant willing to compromise?
- On what aspects of the issues is my Arctic State or Permanent Participant not willing to compromise?

Again, the list of research links below should help to get you started. Try to find information about what your Arctic State or Permanent Participant has actually said publicly on the issues—at previous meetings of the Arctic Council, in other international forums such as the United Nations, or in the news media. The websites of the foreign ministries of the Arctic States, or of the Permanent Participant organisations—often available wholly or partially in English—are also excellent sources.

Finally, whilst not absolutely critical, it can be helpful if you have time briefly to look at the positions of other Arctic States and Permanent Participants. If you know something about the positions of the other delegations around the table before the conference begins, you will have a rough idea how negotiations might develop. Each delegation should also have prepared brief discussion papers on the issues, which will be circulated to you ahead of the conference.

Useful sources for research

Many WYCOMAC delegates have very limited prior exposure to the Arctic and Arctic issues, or to Indigenous peoples and their rights. Fortunately, the Arctic has long fascinated explorers, scholars and commentators. Today the voices of Arctic peoples can also be heard. There is a large literature on the politics, economics and societies of the Arctic, a useful part of which can be found on the Internet.

The following small selection of links provide a starting point for discovering more about the Arctic:

- Arctic Portal (<https://arcticportal.org/>) – an online gateway to a vast amount of Arctic-related information, data, maps, publications, websites and other resources
- Discovering the Arctic (<https://discoveringtheartctic.org.uk/>) – an interactive introduction to the Arctic region, from wildlife and science through Indigenous peoples and Arctic governance

- Polar Aspect MAC Research Library (<https://vlt.is/course/view.php?id=4>) – curated by Polar Aspect and hosted by Arctic Portal, an online library designed specifically for MAC-related research—please log in as a guest to access it.

Delegates will also find it extremely useful to keep abreast of Arctic-related news, which can often be a good source of information about the challenges the Arctic and Arctic peoples face, as well as the positions of the Arctic States and Permanent Participants on those issues:

- Arctic Today (<https://www.arctictoday.com/>) – a US-based independent news-media partnership focused on the circumpolar North
- Eye on the Arctic (<http://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic/>) – a Radio Canada International news-media partnership focused on the circumpolar North—also available as a mobile app (<http://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic/app-promo/>) and as a weekly cybermagazine (<http://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic/cybermagazine/>)
- The Arctic This Week (<https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/the-arctic-this-week/>) – a comprehensive weekly newsletter aggregating the previous week’s news articles, op-eds and commentaries from around the Arctic

The websites associated with the Arctic Council itself are also ideal research sources with which every delegate should be familiar:

- Arctic Council (<https://arctic-council.org/>) – an excellent springboard for further research, featuring links to the Arctic policies and webpages of the Arctic States and Indigenous Permanent Participants, information about current projects of Working Groups and Task Forces, and a large official document archive
- Apart from the Arctic Contaminants Action Program, the six Arctic Council Working Groups also maintain their own websites:
 - Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (<https://www.amap.no/>)
 - Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (<https://www.caff.is/>)
 - Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (<https://eppr.org/>)
 - Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (<https://www.pame.is/>)
 - Sustainable Development Working Group (<https://sdwg.org/>)
- Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (<https://www.arcticpeoples.com/>) – an independent entity within the Arctic Council Secretariat established to facilitate the participation of the Indigenous Permanent Participant organisations in the work of the Arctic Council

Delegates should also explore the relevant websites of the Arctic States and Permanent Participant organisations, including (websites in English where available):

- Canada (https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/arctic-arctique/index.aspx?lang=eng)
- Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands) (<https://um.dk/en/foreign-policy/the-arctic/>, <https://naalakkersuisut.gl/en/About-government-of-greenland> and <https://www.government.fo/en/foreign-relations/the-faroe-islands-in-the-international-community/>)
- Iceland (<https://www.government.is/topics/foreign-affairs/arctic-region/>)
- Finland (<https://um.fi/arctic-cooperation> and <https://um.fi/finland-s-arctic-strategy-and-northern-policy>)
- Norway (<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/high-north/id1154/> and <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/svalbard-and-the-polar-areas/id1324/>)
- Russian Federation (<https://www.mid.ru/en/arkticskij-sovet>)
- Sweden (<https://www.government.se/contentassets/85de9103bbbe4373b55eddd7f71608da/swedens-strategy-for-the-arctic-region>)
- USA (<https://www.state.gov/key-topics-office-of-ocean-and-polar-affairs/arctic/>)
- Aleut International Association (<https://aleut-international.org/>)
- Arctic Athabaskan Council (<http://www.arcticathabaskancouncil.com/>)
- Gwich'in Council International (<https://gwichincouncil.com/>)
- Inuit Circumpolar Council (<https://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/>)
- Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (<http://raipon.info/>)
- Saami Council (<https://www.saamicouncil.net/en/home/>)

Delegates should be aware that, in addition to the Arctic Council, there are other international organisations and governance mechanisms concerned at least in part with the Arctic, Arctic peoples and Arctic issues. Some of them include (websites in English where available):

- Barents Cooperation (<https://www.barentscooperation.org/en>)
- European Union Northern Dimension (https://eeas.europa.eu/diplomatic-network/northern-dimension_en)
- International Whaling Commission (<https://iwc.int>)
- Nordic Cooperation (<https://www.norden.org/en>)
- Northern Forum (<https://www.northernforum.org/en/>)

- West Nordic Council (<https://www.vestnordisk.is/english/>)
- The United Nations System (<https://un.org/>), including:
 - International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (<https://www.itlos.org/>)
 - UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (<https://unfccc.int/>)
 - UN Official Document System
(<https://documents.un.org/prod/ods.nsf/home.xsp>)
 - UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
(<https://un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/unpfii-sessions-2.html>)
 - The UN Treaty Depository (<https://treaties.un.org/>)

Finally, delegates should remember that this list of sources for research is by no means exhaustive. There is a wealth of other Arctic-related resources on the Internet and in libraries. Diligent research and preparation will enrich your WYCOMAC experience.

4. Writing discussion papers

Before the WYCOMAC conference begins, each delegation must submit a discussion paper on each issue to be discussed. Writing a clear, concise and informative discussion paper is an integral part of preparing for WYCOMAC, and of getting the most from your WYCOMAC experience. Delegations should submit their discussion papers to the WYCOMAC Secretariat by email at wycomac@polaraspect.com no later than one week prior to the conference, so that they may be circulated to other delegations in good time.

Your discussion papers serve two important purposes:

- It helps you to define your delegation's approach to the issues more precisely, by requiring you to structure and focus your preparatory research. It will also act as a resource to which you can refer during the conference, in order to ensure you remain aligned to your delegation's views.
- It helps other delegates to understand your delegation's views. A good discussion paper will facilitate progress towards the goal of building consensus, either by pointing in the direction consensus might take, or by highlighting areas of potential disagreement that will need to be overcome.

Discussion papers are typically between 500 and 1,000 words in length. Whilst that length might seem daunting at first, a discussion paper is relatively easy to write if you have done thorough preparatory research. The content of discussion papers is not prescribed, but it can be very useful to organise them into the following sections:

| Recommended structure for WYCOMAC discussion papers | |
|---|---|
| Section | Content |
| Introduction | A description of your delegation's approach to the issue in broad terms. You may find it helpful to draw on the appropriate parts of your delegation's Arctic strategy, or other relevant policies, if available. |
| Perspective | An explanation of why your delegation views the issue as described above. Aim to give specific reasons or justifications for your view, and mention any relevant qualifications. Include any supporting evidence here, too. |
| Concerns | An explanation of any major points of concern that the issue raises for your delegation. Include any negative impacts from the current approach to the issue, or from solutions that have already been proposed or adopted. |
| Objectives | An explanation of the constructive outcomes that your delegation wishes to achieve by discussing the issue with other delegations at WYCOMAC. |
| Constraints | An explanation of any outcomes that your delegation will not be able to accept as part of a joint agreement with other delegations on the issue. |

Please also bear in mind the following few additional guidelines as you write your discussion papers:

- You may disclose in your discussion papers as much or as little of your delegation's negotiation strategy as you wish. It is worth remembering, however, that building consensus is the aim of WYCOMAC, and good discussion papers will make a constructive contribution towards that goal.
- Proofread your discussion papers carefully, as they will not be edited before they are circulated to other delegates. Some WYCOMAC delegates may have English as a second language, so allowances will certainly be made, but you should take care to express yourself as clearly and well as you can.
- All uses of another author's work should be properly cited using author-date format and reference list, which will not count against the word limit.

At the WYCOMAC conference, your discussion papers represent the considered view of your delegation. Once written and submitted, you should make sure that you stick to them. As the conference progresses, the persuasiveness of other delegations, as well as the requirements of reaching consensus, may lead you to modify your views. Ideally, if you have done good research and thought ahead, these modifications will be along the lines you already sketched out in your negotiating objectives and constraints.

If you must deviate sharply from the views you have set out in your papers, you should be able thoughtfully to explain and defend your change of mind. One sure way to lose influence with your fellow delegates would be to surprise them by adopting a contentious position about which you did not forewarn them in your papers. You should also avoid simply 'folding' under the pressures of negotiation. Rise instead to the challenge of finding the solution that bridges the gap between your position and the emerging consensus, but without abandoning the spirit of either!

Exemplar discussion paper

The following exemplar discussion paper is an actual paper written by a delegate playing a representative of the Inuit Circumpolar Council at a Polar Aspect MAC some years ago. It is included here to show how a clear, concise and informative WYCOMAC discussion paper can be structured and written, but not necessarily to suggest or endorse a particular view on an issue. It has been only very lightly edited, principally for grammar and format.

THE GROWTH OF ARCTIC SHIPPING

Discussion paper submitted by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)

For Inuit, the sea is an integral part of life, being necessary as a source of food and as method of transportation. The Inuit people, therefore, will be the first to bear the brunt of any environmental or ecological disasters caused by the growth of Arctic shipping.

We ask then that the growth in Arctic shipping must be undertaken according to the Inuit definition of sustainability—that is, it must support the continuation of the Inuit way of life for thousands of years to come.

Perspective: We are reliant on the marine environment for:

- *Food:* Despite changes to Inuit eating habits, marine country foods such as seal, walrus and whale still make up a large part of our diets. We manage marine food-stocks carefully however, only taking so much as not to disrupt the delicate ecosystem, thereby allowing future generations of Inuit to enjoy the same convenience. Therefore, the protection of Arctic marine ecology is essential for Inuit survival.
- *Mobility:* The seasonally ice-covered sea acts as a highway for Inuit people, connecting communities and providing access to animals we depend on for food. Recently, climate change and receding sea-ice has affected the migration patterns of mammals and fish, and sea-borne transportation has become even more vital as we must travel further to hunt food.
- *Global connections and supply:* The Inuit way of life has changed dramatically over the past century. We are no longer insular communities, but globally connected, and we rely on the outside world for the modern commodities we receive by shipment. With this in mind, we hope increased Arctic shipping will reduce the high cost of Arctic living, and raise the living standards of all Inuit people.

Concerns: We have observed the following issues caused by Arctic shipping, and we expect further unregulated growth to continue to:

- *Impact food stocks:* Arctic shipping threatens to disrupt the delicate Arctic ecosystem, on which we depend vitally. Large ships not only scare away mammals by their noise, but they also prevent Inuit fishermen from laying down nets. This harms Inuit communities, which depend on a reliable source of food from marine fish and mammals.
- *Increase Arctic pollution:* Pollution is an inevitable consequence of shipping and marine traffic, with most oil spills not occurring because of large accidents, but instead by intentional discharge. Pollution threatens not just to kill marine life, but also to poison Inuit who consume contaminated marine foods. It is therefore paramount that shipping pollution is minimised and contained.
- *Limit Inuit mobility:* Increased shipping traffic will increasingly limit Inuit mobility. During the summer, when there is little sea-ice, Inuit vessels will have to contend with and navigate around dangerous larger vessels.

Furthermore, when the sea-ice returns, vessels breaking the ice for shipping will create long open-water barriers that hunters will have to find ways to cross to reach hunting areas or return to their communities. Inuit survival is therefore threatened by the growth of shipping, which threatens to close off free and open access to, and across, the sea and sea-ice.

Objectives: The ICC proposes:

- Active participation of the ICC and other Inuit organisations in the mapping and management of shipping corridors;
- Integration of shipping and ice data with wildlife migration routes, and Inuit use and travel;
- Classifying shipping corridors according to risk to encourage investment in infrastructure and services management in high-risk areas, thereby reducing chance of accidents;
- Prohibiting trans-Arctic tanker traffic, and regulating other large vessels;
- Equipping coastal settlement and Inuit communities with emergency equipment for first response to oil and chemical spills;
- Legal protections for Inuit and other Indigenous communities against any social, economic or ecological damages to the Arctic environment or communities from shipping.

Constraints: The ICC will not accept any proposals that do not:

- Adequately take into account the environmental and ecological impact of increased Arctic shipping and of new Arctic shipping routes;
- Provide adequate resources for protection against eventual discharges or accidents that occur as a result of increased Arctic shipping;
- Involve Inuit organisations in the management of Arctic shipping;
- Adhere to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

[681 words]

5. Drafting declarations

As an WYCOMAC delegate, your principal aim is to play a central role in negotiating a well-drafted declaration that other delegates wish to support. WYCOMAC declarations are drafted jointly during SAO meetings. They are then forwarded up to the Ministerial level for a final decision.

WYCOMAC declarations should follow certain guidelines:

- Declarations should normally contain no more than about 10 preambulatory clauses and sub-clauses, and 10 operative clauses and sub-clauses, but no maximum number of clauses is imposed.
- Suggested preambulatory and operative introductory words for declaration clauses are listed in the annex below, but this list should not limit delegates.
- Declarations must be formatted using Arial, Helvetica or Helvetica Neue 11pt font, and structured in the manner of the exemplar declaration below.
- Consider wording carefully—small differences in choice of words or phrasing can make a great difference to meaning and, ultimately, to consensus.

As mentioned above in Section 1, delegates should bear in mind that the Arctic Council is a high-level international forum for cooperation between Arctic States and peoples, not an ‘Arctic government’. It is more a *policy-shaping* than a *policy-making* body. It would be more realistic, and more in keeping with the Arctic Council’s reputation for collegiality, if you were to avoid composing declarations that mandate compliance with rules that could not be enforced.

Similarly, you should also bear in mind that the Arctic Council does not have its own legal standing as an international organisation, such as the United Nations does. There is no Arctic Council counterpart to the UN Security Council—whatever agreements the Arctic Council may reach must be put into effect by willing Arctic States. The Arctic Council also has no budget of its own, and all projects undertaken under its auspices—usually in Working Groups, but sometimes through special Task Forces or Expert Groups—must be funded separately by Arctic States, whether some or all of them. (Permanent Participants normally depend on funding from Arctic States to contribute to the work of the Arctic Council.)

For these reasons, WYCOMAC declarations should not normally ‘demand’ or ‘proscribe’, nor require action that the Arctic Council has no power to require. Even such introductory words such as ‘direct’ or ‘instruct’ can realistically only be used of

SAOs, Working Groups or other elements of the Arctic Council's own structure. Instead, declarations should set the tone for action by highlighting important facts, issues or challenges, and by calling for a common approach to them.

What that common approach might be, and how it might be realised in practice, could range widely—from establishing a Task Force or Expert Group to investigate an issue further, to launching a project administered by one of the Working Groups to address an issue in whole or in part, to constructing a binding agreement between the Arctic States in an attempt to mitigate or solve an issue. Ultimately, the plausibility and strength of the declarations developed at WYCOMAC is down to your preparedness and persuasiveness as delegates!

Introductory words for declarations

The following lists record all introductory words that the Arctic Council has used in its declarations since its inception, from the 1996 Ottawa Declaration to the 2023 Salekhard Statement. These lists are not intended to limit delegates, but rather to give a sense of the set of introductory words the Arctic Council has found sufficient to express its purposes thus far.

Preambulatory: Accepting, Acknowledging, Affirming, Approving, Calling upon, Celebrating, Concerned (Deeply concerned), Confirming, Conscious of, Desiring, Emphasising, Expressing concern, Extending, Noting (with appreciation/ pleasure), Reaffirming, Recalling, Recognising, Reconfirming, Referring, Regarding, Reiterating, Stressing, Taking into account, Underlining, Underscoring, Welcoming

Operative: Accept (with appreciation), Acknowledge (with appreciation), Adopt, Affirm, Agree, Announce (Are pleased to announce), Applaud, Appreciate (Express appreciation), Approve, Ask, Bear in mind, Call (for/ on/ upon), Commit, Confirm, Congratulate, Consider, Continue, Cooperate, Defer, Decide, Declare, Desire, Determine, Direct, Emphasise, Encourage, Endorse, Establish, Express appreciation, Facilitate, Favour, Instruct, Intend, Invite, Look forward, Note (with appreciation/ concern (deep concern/ utmost concern)/ satisfaction), Offer, Pledge, Promote, Reaffirm, Reassert, Recall, Receive (with appreciation), Recognise, Recommend, Reconfirm, Reiterate, Request, Stress, Support (Fully support), Take note, Thank (Extend

thanks), Underline, Underscore, Undertake, Urge, Welcome
(Strongly welcome; with appreciation/ appreciation and support)

Exemplar declaration

The following exemplar declaration is based on the 1996 Ottawa Declaration, which established the Arctic Council. All draft declarations formulated or discussed at WYCOMAC should follow its typographic form. The WYCOMAC Director will format and publish the final 'Wycombe Declaration' separately after the conference.

ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ARCTIC COUNCIL

We, the Ministers representing Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States of America (hereinafter the 'Arctic States');

1. **Affirming** our commitment to the well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic, to sustainable development in the Arctic region, and to the concurrent protection of the Arctic environment;
2. **Taking note** of the importance of traditional knowledge of the Indigenous people of the Arctic and their communities, as well as of Arctic science and research, to collective understanding of the circumpolar Arctic;
3. **Recognising** the special relationship and unique contributions to the Arctic of Indigenous people and their communities;
4. **Desiring** to promote cooperative activities to address Arctic issues requiring circumpolar cooperation, to ensure full consultation with and the full involvement of Indigenous people and their communities, and to provide a means for regular intergovernmental consideration of and consultation on Arctic issues;

HEREBY:

5. **Establish** the Arctic Council as a high-level forum to:
 - a. Provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction amongst the Arctic States, with the involvement of Arctic Indigenous people and their communities, on common Arctic issues;
 - b. Disseminate information, encourage education and promote interest in Arctic-related issues;
6. **Exclude** from the remit of the Arctic Council any matters related to military security;

7. **Designate** the Arctic States as Members of the Arctic Council;
8. **Require** consensus of the Members for all decisions of the Arctic Council;
9. **Create** a category of Permanent Participant within the Arctic Council to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic Indigenous representatives, including:
 - a. The Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North and Saami Council;
 - b. Other organisations of Indigenous peoples with majority Arctic Indigenous constituencies, comprising either a single Indigenous people resident in more than one Arctic State, or more than one Indigenous people resident in a single Arctic State;
10. **Limit** the number of Permanent Participants within the Arctic Council to less than that of Members;
11. **Invite** non-Arctic states, other international organisations, and non-governmental organisations to become Observers of the Arctic Council, provided that the Arctic Council determines they can contribute to its work;
12. **Agree** that the Arctic Council should normally meet on a biennial basis, with more frequent meetings of senior officials to provide for liaison and co-ordination.

6. Further reading

WYCOMAC delegates wishing to deepen their understanding of the Arctic and its peoples, as well as of the Arctic Council and Arctic politics, might find this very brief bibliography a useful starting point.

Introductory books on the Arctic:

- Dodds, Klaus, and Mark Nuttall, *The Arctic: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2019)
- Dodds, Klaus, and Jamie Woodward, *The Arctic: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2021)

Introductory books on Arctic peoples and cultures:

- Lincoln, Amber, Jago Cooper and Jan Peter Laurens (eds), *Arctic: Culture and Climate* (Thames & Hudson and The British Museum, 2020)
- McGhee, Robert, *The Last Imaginary Place: A Human History of the Arctic World* (University of Chicago Press, 2007)

Introductory books on the Arctic Council:

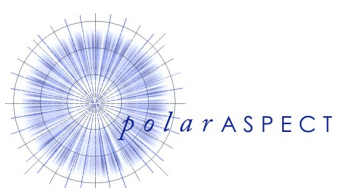
- English, John, *Ice and Water: Politics, Peoples, and the Arctic Council* (Allen Lane, 2013)
- Nord, Douglas, *The Arctic Council: Governance within the Far North* (Routledge, 2016)

Introductory books on Arctic politics:

- Emmerson, Charles, *The Future History of the Arctic: How Climate, Resources and Geopolitics are Reshaping the North and Why It Matters to the World* (Vintage, 2011)
- Hough, Peter, *International Politics of the Arctic: Coming in from the Cold* (Routledge, 2015)

Introductory books on Arctic politics by Arctic Indigenous people:

- Lynge, Finn, *Arctic Wars: Animal Rights, Endangered Peoples* (University Press of New England, 2002)
- Watt-Cloutier, Sheila, *The Right to be Cold: One Woman's Story of Protecting Her Culture, the Arctic and the Whole Planet* (Penguin Canada, 2015)



WYCOMBE MODEL ARCTIC COUNCIL IS AN EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE OF POLAR ASPECT
IN COLLABORATION WITH AND HOSTED BY WYCOMBE ABBEY