

IAIA06 Stavanger, Norway: Theme Forum on Circumpolar Issues. Wednesday 24th May 09:00-18:00

Dear IAIA06 Conference delegates



Photo: Michael Carroll

Background

During the IAIA06 in Stavanger in May this year, a one-day thematic forum on circumpolar issues within EIA is being arranged on Wednesday, 24th May. During this session, high-level professionals and experts having experience in environmental assessments from the circumpolar areas will be presenting assessments and topics of relevance to the circumpolar Arctic.

Why focus on Circumpolar Issues?

Worldwide attention is being increasingly focused on Arctic issues, partially because the circumpolar environment is undergoing profound changes in a variety of ways. And at the same time, human activities, particularly industrially-related ones, are increasing dramatically.

The global warming is gradually expected to cause large changes in climatic, biological and socio economic life conditions in the Arctic. A large share of the worlds remaining fossil energy reserves are located in the Arctic region, and the pressure to explore and exploit these is growing with the economic growth in densely populate countries like China and India.

Indigenous cultures all over the Arctic are being subsumed by the larger communities, with the result being a loss of indigenous and traditional lifestyles and cultures. This trend is perhaps accelerated by contamination of the traditional subsistence food supply through long-range transport of pollutants from industrial areas and biomagnification in the food chain. The need for preservation of

biological and cultural diversity in the Arctic in an era of changing climate regime and industrial activity presents large and complicated issues. This is the case not only in political speeches and fora, but on all levels of decision making, from strategic assessments to design and development of specific projects.

What benefits can a focus on circumpolar issues in an IA context provide?

The Circumpolar environment recognises few if any national borders, and most Arctic ecosystems are circumpolar in nature. This calls for a holistic or at least comparable way of describing, assessing and implementing environmental considerations and assessments. Through a carefully selected panel of international speakers, IA will be presented on Circumpolar, regional and local level, and identification of differences in approach and outcome of assessments and project design will be an initial step in defining scope for and tools to implement future IA's

The circumpolar Antarctica

Circum-polarity is also a topic for Antarctica – currently a remote and sparsely researched and focused area of the globe. The TFCI will briefly address ongoing initiatives and challenges concerning Antarctica, for instance IA's of tourism and research, which presently are major local activities in Antarctica

Target group for the TFCI

Hopefully the TFCI will attract the attention of managers, researchers, NGO's and other professionals with interest and concern for Circumpolar Issues.

Technical information

The official language of the session is English. Simultaneous translation service to Russian will be available.

Contact information

The organisers hope that you will find it interesting to attend this Theme Forum Session, and become inspired by the speakers, comment upon the presentations and actively participate in the plenary discussions. For further information, the organizing committee can be contacted: Gunnar Sander (gunnar.sander@npolar.no) Lars-Otto Reiersen (Lars-otto.reiersen@amap.no) Lars-Henrik Larsen (lhl@akvaplan.niva.no)