

ARCSUS+SDG: Governing Arctic Urban Sustainability through
the lens of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

**Sustainability in resource-dependent cities in the Nordic Arctic
An Arctic Circle Assembly 2024 pre-event on 16 October 2024**

Location: **Nordic House**, at the University of Iceland Campus
Sæmundargata 11, 102 Reykjavík
<https://nordichouse.is/en/opening-hours-and-accessibility/>

ARCSUS+SDG: Governing Arctic Urban Sustainability through the lens of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals is a three-year project, with each year dedicated to a sub-theme under this overarching umbrella.

The three focus areas are as follows:

- 1) strengthening region-building through multilevel governance and interregional cooperation through the Arctic Mayors' Forum;
- 2) discussing urban sustainability in resource-dependent and single industry cities in the Nordic Arctic;
- 3) advancing Arctic urban sustainability through inclusion.

By exploring these salient questions through the lens of the UN's SDG 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11>), we hope to advance the aims of SDG 11 by calling attention to their relevance even in the Nordic Arctic that is defined by prosperity, highly developed welfare states, and wealth in natural resources. That the Nordic Arctic regions are well-off compared to cities in the global South does not preclude that governance of Arctic cities are necessarily "inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" for all.

This year we our aim is Focus 2. Exploring urban sustainability in resource-dependent and single industry cities in the Nordic Arctic. This is the theme of our pre-event to the Arctic Circle Assembly 2024.

We question how local and global trends shape and transform (un)sustainability and sustainable development in resource extraction territories with a special focus on the urban Arctic region. Our goal is to analyse resource territories with a transdisciplinary perspective that touches on infrastructure development, urban planning, and economic development filtered through SDG 11. How can cities make planning for growth and economic sustainability more inclusive, socially and environmentally sustainable, and democratic? By exploring deeply the dependence of Arctic cities such as Kiruna and Kirkenes on resource extraction, and by contrasting them to cities such as Tromsø, Akureyri, and Luleå that have managed to diversify their economies, we may be able to advance strategies of social, economic, cultural, and population sustainability outlined in SDG 11.

Seminar and Rountable 16:00-18:30

16:00-16:50 Part I

Welcome: Introduction of the ARCUS+SDGs project

By Dr. Aileen A. Espiritu

Opening talk 1: Business Index North (BIN) and the UNSDGs

By Alexandra Middleton, Assistant Professor, University of Oulu and Andrey Mineev, Associate Professor, Nord, Bodø,

Opening talk 2: Sustainable tourism in the Arctic

Niina Pietikäinen, COO, Norwegian Travel, *Sustainability in Arctic Tourism*

Opening talk 3, Sustainable energy in Iceland

Dr. Ingunn Gunnarsdóttir, Senior Business Analyst at Landsvirkjun

16:50-17:05 Coffee break

17:05-18:30 Part II

17:05-18:25 Moderated roundtable discussion

Leading Questions:

- How can industry ensure community, economic, and social sustainability in the urban Arctic?
- Do industry stakeholders consider the UN Sustainable Development Goals when they consider economic development and profits?
- Is the “green shift” that many municipalities, companies, and countries have promoted over the last decade enough to lead us towards sustainability and also towards the mitigation of climate change?
- How can local residents have a say in how industry advances sustainability in their cities?
- What kinds of collaborations are necessary among local governments, industry, and community members to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, notably Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable?
- How relevant is the UN Sustainable Development Goals? Is it just a tool to measure the progress (or not) of sustainability or can it be a tool **to advance** Arctic urban sustainability and sustainability in all its forms?
- Is there a relationship between Arctic and sustainability initiatives?
- How is sustainability and the SDGs communicated?

Participants

| Industry | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Irina Zhilina | Arctic Economic Council |
| Ik Icard | True North Global Networks LP/Far North Digital LLC/connectivity and sustainable development of Arctic communities |
| Bjørn Rønning | Norwegian Data Centre Industry |
| Helene Lyberth Steffensen | Greenland tourism |
| Ragnar Atli Tómasson | Co-Founder, Nordic Wasabi / Jurt Hydroponics |
| Dr. Ingunn Gunnarsdóttir | Senior Business Analyst at Landsvirkjun |
| Elva Rakel Jónsdóttir | CEO Festa Center for Sustainability |
| Kolbeinn Óttarsson Proppé | CEO of Grænafi |
| Niina Pietikäinen | Norwegian Travel |
| Rannveig Grétarsdóttir | Owner and CEO of Elding Whale Watching |
| Audur Nanna Baldvinsdóttir | Co-Founder and CEO IðunnH2 |
| Academia | |
| Pavel Tkach | Arctic Centre, ULapland, Rovaniemi, Finland |
| Andrey Mineev | Nord University, Bodø, Norway |
| Alexandra Middleton | University of Oulu, Finland |
| Jan-Oddvar Sørnes | Nord University, Bodø, Norway |
| Ossi Pesamaa | Luleå University of Technology, Sweden |
| Taro Mori | Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan |
| Lára Jóhannsdóttir | University of Iceland |

Project partners

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| Aileen A. Espiritu, Lead | The Barents Institute, UiT The Arctic University of Norway |
| Kamrul Hossain | Arctic Centre, The University of Lapland, Finland |
| Kristín Ingvarsdóttir | The University of Iceland |
| Ekaterina Mikhailova | The Barents Institute, UiT The Arctic University of Norway |
| Gregory A. Poelzer | Luleå University of Technology, Sweden |
| Juha Saunavaara | The Arctic Research Centre, Hokkaido University |

18:25-18:30 Closing remarks

Gregory A. Poelzer, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden

18:30-20:00 Seminar Dinner

At Restaurant Sónó in the Nordic House, by invitation only (free for invited guests)

<https://www.sonomatseljur.is/>



Photo: Nordic House <https://nordichouse.is/en/about-the-house/>

For further information please contact:

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ARCSUS+SDG: Governing Arctic Urban Sustainability through the lens of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals is funded by The Nordic Council of Ministers' NAPA - The Nordic Institute in Greenland's Nordic Arctic Co-operation Programme.

Our funders:



In kind:



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