

“Global Change and Co-production of Knowledge for the Circumpolar North: Establishing a New Community of Practice”

Statement from an International Workshop held 27-29 September 2012, Paris, France
Organized by UNESCO and the National Museum of Natural History

Unprecedented changes are occurring in the circumpolar North. These changes are creating both challenges and opportunities for Indigenous peoples and northern residents, as well as for researchers.

In order to fully understand and respond to these many interconnected changes that are transforming territories, resources and communities, there is a need for heightened collaboration and partnership among these groups.

During an experts meeting* hosted by UNESCO and the French National Museum of Natural History in Paris, September 27-29, 2012, an *ad hoc* and open-ended group was established, involving circumpolar indigenous peoples and natural and social scientists, with the purpose of advancing innovative tools and methods, and engaging in activities that bridge across knowledge systems, disciplines, actors, networks and institutions.

Knowledge co-production refers to the complementary and joint work of bringing together indigenous knowledge holders and scientists. This new paradigm is attracting a great deal of interest in international discussions, for example relating to climate change, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Knowledge co-production goes beyond interdisciplinarity (coming together of scientific disciplines) or transdisciplinarity (bridging between science and other knowledge systems).

This ‘Community of Practice’ will foster knowledge co-production among and between Indigenous and scientific knowledge holders that generates robust responses to global change, including climate change, for the circumpolar North.

*The international workshop was held in advance of a meeting of the Sustaining Arctic Observing Network (SAON) Board, to discuss opportunities for strengthening community-based and social science components, as a complement to the existing bio-physical monitoring capacities.