

Data-driven Subnational Decision-making in the Arctic: The power of Indigenous voices and data supporting the green transition

Pavel Tkach & Adam Stepien
Arctic Centre University of Lapland
firstname.lastname@ulapland.fi



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The full policy paper summarizes the current status of consultations with decision-makers at the sub-national level and its leading institutions implemented by the University of Lapland as part of Arctic PASSION's actions to support coherent policy- and decision-making. The policy paper, can be found at the following link.

[Full Policy Paper \(CLICK\)](#)

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Policy Brief

This Policy Brief summarizes the preliminary findings of the Arctic PASSION project's work related to enhancing evidence-based decision-making at the local and regional level in the Arctic, with respect to **two themes**:

1

The state of inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in sub-national decision-making (*including the patterns of interactions between Indigenous Peoples and local/regional policymakers*)

2

Data availability, needs and gaps with respect to managing and planning green transition

Insights

The insights presented in the Policy brief and paper emerge from over 30 semi-structured in-depth interviews with a sample of Arctic and sub-Arctic subnational decision-makers, stakeholders and rightsholders.

Interviews:

1

Municipalities of Rovaniemi, Kemi, Kuusamo (Finland)
Luleå, Stockholm municipalities (Sweden)
Municipalities of Harstad, Tana, Vardø, Kvænangen (Norway)
Reykjavik municipality (Iceland)
Avannaata municipality (Greenland)
City & Borough of Juneau, Anchorage Municipality (Alaska, USA)

2

Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada

3

Norwegian Centre for Climate Services (Norway)
Environment and Climate Change (Canada)

4

The Governments of Yukon, NWT, Nunavut (Canada)
Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development of Norway



Kiruna, Sweden (c) Gregor Kallina





1. Indigenous voices and Indigenous Knowledge in Subnational Decision-making in the Arctic

The Arctic PASSION project emphasizes the importance of involving Indigenous Peoples and local inhabitants in the Arctic in the process of enhancing and improving an Arctic observing system. Among the Arctic PASSION's top priorities is to include international scientific observations, community-based monitoring, and Indigenous and local knowledge within observing systems covering the Arctic.

(c) C. Sarmik



2

Indigenous Peoples have certain power - differing between Arctic jurisdictions - to compel regional, local or territorial authorities to include Indigenous priorities in decision-making and planning, especially in Canadian Arctic and Alaska. In the European Arctic, a collaboration between various levels of government and Indigenous communities is defined by the requirement to consult with the Sámi on topics that have potential implications for Indigenous cultures, livelihoods, lands and interests.

Tasiilaq, Greenland (c) J.Robert-Lamblin



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The University of Lapland team, based on conducted interviews, emphasised that cooperation of Indigenous Peoples, science and governance could benefit from:

Facilitating

Facilitating awareness among subnational policymakers of the specific issues and challenges Indigenous populations face in specific regions.

Inclusion

Inclusion of three parallel perspectives - Indigenous, local, and scientific - becomes a normal approach to developing risk assessments, reports, plans, and policies.

Ensuring

Ensuring a better understanding of Indigenous communities' relations to land and water and facilitating further knowledge exchange between Indigenous communities, scientists/researchers and policymakers on practices of including Indigenous perspective to policies and plans.

Providing

Providing results of scientific research transparently and concluding with activities that should be performed and how they would benefit the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population.

Increasing

Increasing the number of persons with Indigenous identity in administrative bodies.

Summaries from the interviews

1

The general framework of cooperation with Indigenous communities in countries and jurisdictions with a non-indigenous majority (all territories except Greenland and Nunavut) is similar: national, regional, and local governments have an obligation to consult with Indigenous communities or their representative organisations when developing a project, measure, or legal act that has potential implications for Indigenous communities.

[Arctic PASSION \(CLICK\)](#)

3

Governance, especially in the North American Arctic, actively employs in decision-making and planning three-perspectives assessment: Indigenous, local, and scientific.

[Full Policy Paper \(CLICK\)](#)

4

Indigenous Knowledge requires a high level of local knowledge and expertise to be properly interpreted, and as a result, cannot be easily retrieved and effectively used in decision-making.



2. Data and Knowledge for governance and planning of green transition in Arctic subnational decision-making

In the context of Arctic communities, green transition refers primarily to the expansion of renewable energy production, extraction of critical minerals necessary for a global low-carbon economy, as well as the electrification of transport, extractive industries and processing activities. In addition, circular economy and waste management play a critical role. Local and regional governments are important actors in pursuing the green transition, including by adopting and implementing climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

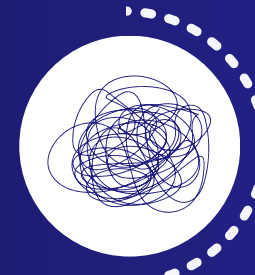


1 Understanding local/regional adaptation needs

Limited administrative capacities – human, knowledge and financial – hinder the possibilities for conducting evaluations and assessments.



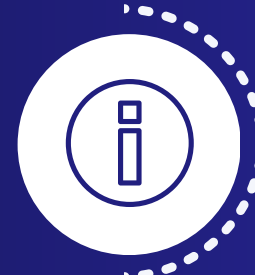
Information on impacts and adaptation needs is too often scattered, making it difficult to elaborate a comprehensive approach. There is also poor coordination with the private sector in that regard.



Local and regional evidence-based decision-making is hindered by the insufficient spatial resolution of climate models.



There is not enough information flowing to citizens and to the private sector, especially to local micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, which hinders planning, investment, and behavioural adjustment.

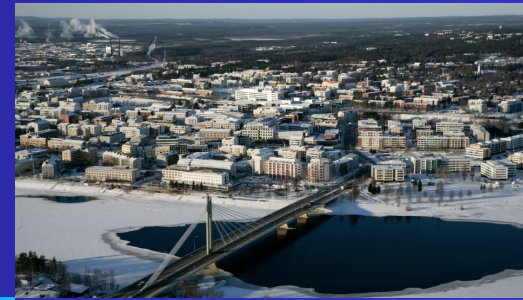


There are numerous initiatives at the local level which aim at building a stronger and long-term knowledge base for adaptation planning, including assessments of risks and opportunities, new data portals, and cooperation with national data providers.



2 Information needs: local mitigation actions and low-carbon economy opportunities

Specific Arctic features are rarely considered in national or federal climate, energy and transport policy-making



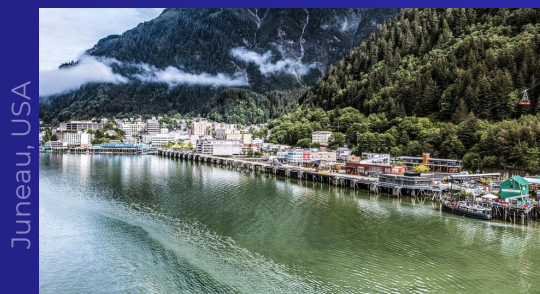
The capacity to plan for local emission reductions in the long-term is often limited by problems with acquiring information from the private sector

Local and regional governments would like to obtain better information about the current state of technological development and opportunities with respect to the green transition within industries that are key to local and regional development



Pursuing local/regional policies aimed at limiting overconsumption in small, remote communities is a major challenge. It is unclear what data/information could support related actions.

There are limited technical capacities within administrations to plan green transition actions.



The development of data tools, indicators and local modelling may be supported by participation in networks (such as the Covenant of Mayors)



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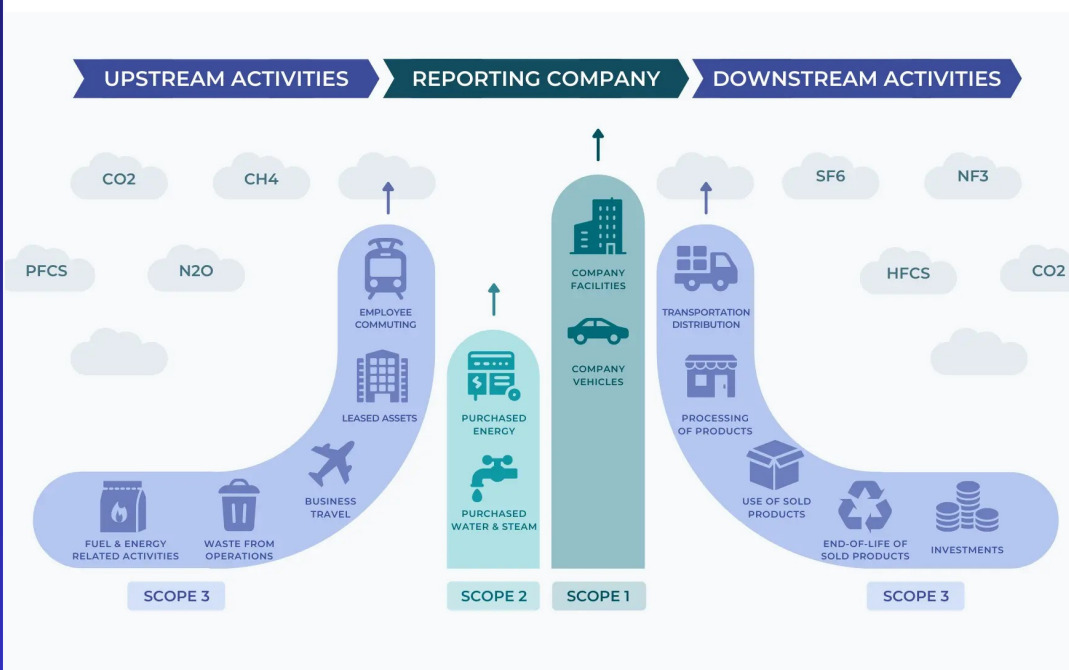


4 Challenges in assessing local/regional GHG emissions

National data providers across the circumpolar Arctic gradually offer municipalities and regions better tools for carrying out emissions accounting.

There are specific technical limitations observed, including: evaluating emissions originating from construction sites, off-road equipment, fishing vessels, and sea transport. Political or legal barriers may prevent the collection of data on fossil fuels.

Scope 3 (picture below) emissions are the most challenging to assess, predict and monitor at the local level.



Scopes explained (CLICK)

First steps towards recommendations

There is a need to develop better tools for assessing local and global impacts of green energy investments (e.g., evaluating global vs. local impacts and benefits).

There is a need to invest more in generating data and aggregating information related to social indicators linked directly to green transition projects.

Comprehensive databases capturing green transition planning information and data are needed, reflecting the need for more holistic policy-making.

National and EU policymakers could consider supporting cooperation between Arctic municipalities and regions with respect to climate mitigation and adaptation. Such collaborations should focus on concrete actions and the exchange of specific models, tools, and processes, rather than on abstract sharing of good practices.

Full Policy Paper (CLICK)

3 Indigenous Peoples with respect to the green transition

In the North American context, the issue of transitioning away from diesel power generation is among the key questions for the local green transition.

Many Indigenous governments in North America are currently developing their own climate strategies based on their priorities related to culture and traditional livelihoods.

Achieving a green transition in a way that does not interfere with their culture and traditions becomes one of the key challenges for Indigenous communities and their livelihoods.