

Appendix B: Arctic Research Plan 2022–2026 Engagement Overview

The Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) is a committee of the U.S. National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). It aims to enhance scientific monitoring and research on local, regional, and global environmental issues in the Arctic through the coordination of federal agencies and domestic and international collaborators. By law (the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984), IARPC develops and implements an Arctic Research Plan every five years. The plan is developed in consultation with the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, the governor of Alaska, Arctic residents, the private sector, and public interest groups and aims to improve the collective impacts of federal agencies in Arctic research. The development of the Arctic Research Plan 2022-2026 included two public engagement periods. One engagement period was held prior to the drafting of the plan (October 2019–September 2020), and a second one was held to collect input on an initial draft of the plan (March–June 2021).

Throughout the engagement process, IARPC operated under three key overarching principles:

1. **Sustained Engagement:** Advance respectful, responsive, and continuous engagement with Indigenous and Tribal organizations, Arctic communities, federal agencies, the state of Alaska, and non-federal partners.
2. **Inclusion and Equity:** Encourage diversity and ensure that everyone is treated fairly and respectfully and promote access to the tools needed to succeed.
3. **Transparency and Accessibility:** Commit to activities and decisions that are transparent and communicated clearly and in an accessible format.

First Public Engagement Period (Oct. 2019–Sept. 2020)

From October 2019 to September 2020, IARPC collected public input to inform the development of the plan. IARPC offered multiple and varied ways for the public to provide input and continues to issue a monthly newsletter update on plan progress. During this time, IARPC worked to engage with:

- Federal agencies via direct agency input to IARPC Staff Group.
- Indigenous Peoples via targeted outreach to Indigenous community members, regional Indigenous entities, and Indigenous organizations.
- Academia via listening sessions and three external workshops coordinated by academic partners.
- The state of Alaska via direct outreach and conversations with contacts in relevant departments.
- Private sector organizations and nonprofits via personal outreach and directed invites to public webinars.
- International organizations via listening sessions and outreach to relevant international bodies.
- Early career researchers via an information session and outreach to support and encourage early career involvement.

Additional engagement activities included a radio interview on [Talk of Alaska](#) to answer questions about the plan and discuss how Alaskans can get involved. The Plan Development Director also conducted three interviews with journalists that resulted in one published article in the science journal *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*. In total, IARPC participated in 29 externally facing events, including conferences, meetings, listening sessions, and webinars. An additional three events were hosted by

academic partners.

A variety of mechanisms were used to collect input and comments throughout the first public engagement phase. Mechanisms included:

- A Federal Request for Information Notice (April - August 2020).
- A form on the IARPC website.
- Two IARPC-wide informational webinars.
- Collaboration team listening sessions.
- Regular reserved time during Coastal Resilience Collaboration Team meetings.
- A session specific to plan development at the 2020 Collaboration Team Leaders' Workshop.
- Verbal comments at workshops, conferences, and webinars.
- Direct federal agency input to IARPC Staff Group.

In addition to receiving input from 11 federal agencies, IARPC [received](#) 120 comments.

To inform plan development, aid workshop participants, and communicate to the public the input received during the public engagement phase, [six synthesis documents](#) were created. These included: (1) an overview of research needs and priorities identified in recent, public facing strategic documents from the state of Alaska, international organizations, northern communities, and federal departments and agencies; (2) a synthesis of comments submitted by federal agencies¹ to IARPC Staff Group; and (3) a synthesis of comments submitted specific to the public engagement phase. The synthesis of comments included input received via the engagement mechanisms listed above. The syntheses of federal and public input were used to create an initial list of priority areas that was considered and further prioritized by workshop participants.

IARPC Plan Development Workshop

To conclude the first public engagement phase, a virtual IARPC Plan Development Workshop took place from September 14-17, 2020. The purpose was to identify potential priority areas as the focus of the next Arctic Research Plan.

Participants included over 100 representatives from academic institutions (22%), Indigenous organizations, private sectors, and nonprofits (21%), federal agencies (38%), the state of Alaska (5%), and from IARPC collaboration team co-leads (14%). Participants worked collaboratively in a series of facilitated breakout groups and plenary sessions to identify four foundational activities and five priority areas, which were forwarded to the IARPC Staff Group for further consideration. A [full workshop report](#) is available on the IARPC Collaborations website.

¹Department of Defense; Department of Energy; Department of Interior; Department of Transportation; Department of Health and Human Services; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; Department of Commerce; National Science Foundation; Smithsonian; US Arctic Observing Network Board; and U.S. Coast Guard.

Second Public Engagement Period (March–June 2021)

IARPC released a draft plan and invited public comment during a four month period March to June 2021. This second engagement period invited input on the priority area goals, justifications, and potential partners; the foundational activities; and implementation and metrics for measuring success. IARPC accepted comments through the Federal Register Notice, email, hardcopy, and voicemail.

During the second engagement period, IARPC offered five webinars about the draft plan. Each information session provided an overview of IARPC, the timeline for developing the Arctic Research Plan 2022-2026, the contents of the draft plan, and how to submit comments on the draft. In addition to this information, each webinar included a deeper dive into one of the plan priority areas or the foundational activities.

Webinars included:

- [Foundational Activities](#)
- [Priority Areas 1 & 3 \(Community Resilience and Health; Sustainable Economies and Livelihoods\)](#)
- [Priority Area 2 \(Arctic Systems Interactions\)](#)
- [Priority Area 4 \(Risk Management and Hazard Mitigation\)](#)
- [Implementing the plan](#)

A total of 174 public comments were received in addition to input from six federal agencies.

Additional engagement activities included a teleconference session for those with low internet bandwidth, a radio interview on [Talk of Alaska](#) that discussed the draft plan and how to comment, and a continuation of the monthly newsletter. Members of the IARPC community held a community meeting at the 2021 Arctic Science Summit Week conference, and the IARPC Collaborations Diversity & Inclusion Working Group held a listening session about the draft plan. In addition, the Marine Ecosystems Collaboration Team and Coastal Resilience Collaboration Team held information sessions. IARPC also provided a [media kit](#) that included sample text and images that could be shared broadly in newsletters and on social media channels.

IARPC also conducted targeted engagement to Indigenous communities through an Indigenous Engagement Coordinator, a short-term contract specific to this engagement period for the draft Arctic Research Plan. Outreach included email updates sent to federally recognized Tribes and EPA Indian Environmental General Assistance Program coordinators and flyers with information about the draft plan sent to subsistence regional advisory councils and to the Northern Latitudes Partnership. IARPC plan drafters presented to the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission and the Yukon River Panel, at the Western Alaska Interdisciplinary Conference & Forum, and as part of the Strait Science Series. Indigenous communities could also request hard copies of the draft plan and other materials.