

Concept paper (version 3.0): Exploring Common Solutions for the Arctic Environment Arctic Environment Ministers Meeting

1. THEME OF THE ARCTIC ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS MEETING

Finland will organize Arctic Environment Ministers Meeting between the eight Arctic Council Member States in October 11th-12th, 2018, in Rovaniemi. The objective of the meeting is to enable the Ministers to discuss topical environmental issues in the Arctic and to share and provide solutions to them. The output of the Ministerial Meeting will be Chair's Summary which will feed into the Arctic Council Meeting in May, 2019 and further planning and focusing of the work of the Arctic Council, as appropriate.

Inclusive cooperation and exploring common solutions to common challenges is the point of departure for the Finnish Chairmanship.

Climate change and sustainable development form a broad framework for the Chairmanship program. As global warming is expected to have considerable impact on the Arctic, it is necessary to continue working to mitigate climate change and strengthen resilience and adaptation, and to raise awareness on Arctic issues in global climate talks. Sustainable development is at the core of the Arctic Council mandate. Accordingly, Finland proposes to explore how the Agenda 2030 framework can be used in Arctic cooperation for the benefit of humans and nature.

Environmental protection is one of the four priorities of the Finnish Chairmanship program.

As stated in the Finnish Chairmanship Program for the Arctic Council:

“Environmental protection lies at the core of Arctic cooperation. The Arctic region is often equated with a clean environment and plentiful natural resources. Healthy ecosystems and human well-being in the Arctic require effective environmental protection measures. Finland invites the Arctic Council to further focus on biodiversity conservation and pollution prevention, as well as mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

The Arctic Council and its Working Groups have produced a wealth of top-quality assessments on the state of the Arctic environment, along with recommendations for action. Finland encourages Member States to put the recommendations into practice and to communicate the results also in global forums. Finland proposes intensified exchange of information on best practices and emerging technologies to promote sustainable and responsible development in the Arctic.”

We propose the Meeting of the Arctic Environment Ministers to focus on the main environmental challenges in the Arctic and solutions to them. Each country/Minister may :

- * select 1-3 themes of the environment focus areas of the Finnish chairmanship program: 1) biodiversity conservation, 2) pollution prevention, 3) climate change, and;**
- * explore best practices and proposals for common solutions, which he/she presents at the Meeting.**
- * indicate possible specific topical theme (if any) of interest for discussion. As for Finland, we are considering among other topics addressing solutions on black carbon**

2. PREPARATION PROCESS (see Annex I)

The discussions at the Ministerial Meeting will be based on input collected from the Arctic Council Member States, Permanent Participants and the Working Groups. These inputs will serve as background material for the preparations (not to be approved at the Meeting).

Working Groups

The Arctic Council Working Groups are asked to provide input on the above mentioned environment focus areas [1-3 themes of relevance for their work, 1 paper/theme] identifying the main environmental challenges and issues which will require common solutions in the Arctic. The Working Groups are asked to back-up their papers especially reflecting the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals

Deadline: by the end of February 2018

Permanent Participants

As part of the ministerial meeting, a Dialogue and Dinner with the Ministers and representatives of the Permanent Participants will be organized. Permanent Participants are asked to provide input on the above mentioned environment focus areas [1-3 themes of relevance for them, 1 paper/theme] identifying the main environmental challenges and issues which will require common solutions in the Arctic, as well as explore best practices and proposals for common solutions to be presented and discussed at the meeting. Permanent Participants could link their papers with the relevant products of the Arctic Council and with the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, as a normal working procedure in the Arctic Council, the Permanent Participants representatives can contribute to the discussions on the inputs from the Working Groups (see above).

Deadline: by the end of May 2018

Member States

The Member States are invited to provide their input on thematic area(s) of their choice to be presented and discussed at the meeting. The Member States may focus their input on exploring best practices and proposals for common solutions to be presented and discussed at the meeting. The papers of the Working Groups will be delivered to the Member States to be utilized as appropriate in preparations and drafting their papers.

Deadline: by the end of May 2018

Chairmanship

The Chair will produce two documents for the Ministerial Meeting:

- as an input for the meeting: Background/synthesis document of the above mentioned inputs (WGs, PPs, MSs) for ministerial segment with orientation questions for discussion/debate
- as an output from the meeting: Chair's Summary. This document will not include issues to be negotiated, but it will feed into the discussions of the AC ministerial meeting (May 2019) as background material, as well as into the further planning and focusing the work of the Arctic Council, as appropriate.

3. OUTLINE OF THE ARCTIC ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS MEETING

Invited participants/delegates

Member state delegations: Minister +3

Permanent participants: one participant per organization

Working groups: one participant per group

Observers states (not at the Ministerial level) and observer organizations: one participant / observer

Place: The meeting will take place in Rovaniemi, where the Arctic Environment Ministers met first time in 1991. Venue: [Arktikum](#),

Time: October 11th-12th, 2018.

The program of the Ministerial Meeting will include:

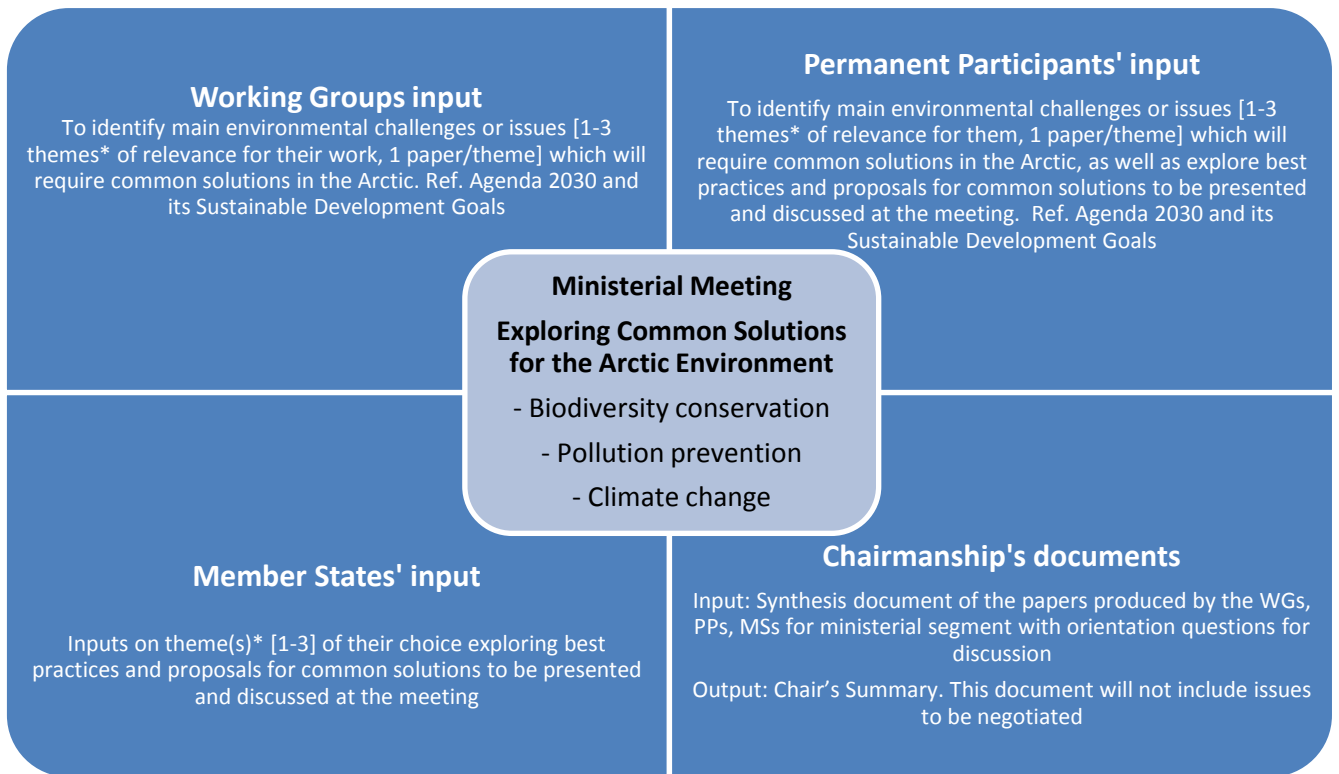
- Science-policy dialogue
- Dialogue on "common solutions"
- Closed session for Member States and Permanent Participants delegations only
- Press Conference

Other events in Rovaniemi:

- The Arctic Biodiversity Congress will take place in Rovaniemi in October 9-11. The synchronized timing with this biggest environmental event of the Finnish Chairmanship will enable dialogue between the Ministers and the Arctic environmental experts.
- Possible other Arctic events taking place in Rovaniemi during the same week (tbc)

ANNEX I

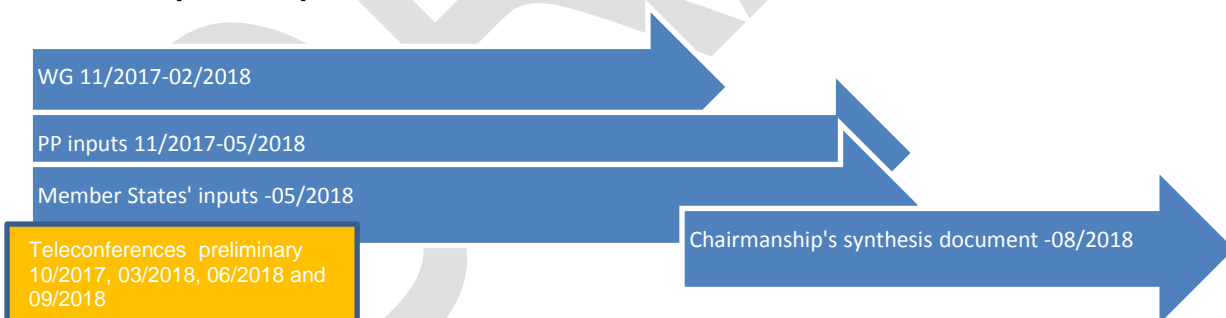
Preparation of the inputs for the Ministerial Meeting



* Themes of the environment focus areas of the Finnish chairmanship program: 1) biodiversity conservation, 2) pollution prevention, 3) climate change

Timing of the preparation process

INPUT: Preparation process



OUTPUT: Ministerial meeting

