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Nominated member to IPY ICSU/WMO JC Sub-committee on observations (SCOBS)
Member of the IPY PPS Arctic #151 Steering Committee
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Possibilities of Socially-oriented Observations within IPY PPS Arctic # 151 and long-term period

Presentation at the Sustained Arctic Observation Network (SAON) Workshop during SCAR/IPY Open Science Conference, 7 July 2008.

The aim of socially-oriented observations is to monitor changes on the way to better (or worse) quality of life and sustainability, increase knowledge of trends in socio-economic, political and living conditions of northern residents under the impacts of happening changes in climate, biodiversity, character of human impacts, globalization, socio-economic and political changes and human responses. These social and cultural observations have been started to be carried out at several sights in Russia, Canada, Scandinavia within the multidisciplinary IPY PPS Arctic # 151 project under the leadership and coordination of Norway (Annika Hofgaard, NINA) and IASOS-CASEAS # 899, National Russian Federation IPY project developing within Institute of Geography, RAS (IG RAS) and linked to PPS Arctic. Socially-oriented observations are based on methodology and common protocol developed by Canadian (Carleton University), and Russian (Institute of Geography, RAS) researches. This protocol on socio-cultural observations are included in the PPS Arctic Manual edited by Annika Hofgaard (Norway, NINA) and Gareth Rees (UK, Scott Polar Research Institute) which is available now at the web-site http://pps- Arctic.sres.management.dal.ca/pps_Manual.pdf.

In order to observe, the general set and procedure of key quantitative and qualitative variables are developed in this protocol based on listed below 5 principles: 1) Key variables (both quantitative and qualitative) should be closely tied to issues (limits to quality of life), driving forces (human and environmental stresses) and human-defined targets set up to achieve better quality of life and sustainability; 2) Participation of arctic residents, different stakeholders is of primary importance; 3) Integration of methodologies and tools used in humanitarian (semi-directed interviewing, statistics, maps, etc.), natural disciplines (ecosystem approach, etc.) and remote sensing; 4) Multi-scale approach to key variables identification, from circumpolar to local; 5) Observation of time trends. At the local level (settlement, community), taking into account that key quality of life indicators may differ from one locality to another, a special procedure of key indicators of quality of life identification is established involving Local and Traditional Knowledge (see Tatiana Vlasova presentation at the SAON workshop, 7 July 2008).

In 2008 socially oriented observations based on PPS Arctic Manual have started in Russia, Canada and Scandinavia. In North-West Russia such sites for socially-oriented observations are being established now by IG RAS in Kola Peninsular (with a great help from the Khibiny educational and scientific station of Moscow State University and Kola Branch of RAS), in Archangelsk Oblast (Ustiansky region and Kolguev Island-NAO) and Komi Republic (Izhemsky region). These sites of a special Integrated Arctic Socially-Oriented Observation System network (IASOS) being in the process of construction are situated in diverse natural and socio-economic regions of the Russian North. The construction of such a network has been supported by the RAS, Institute of Geography and Norwegian Research Council project "BENEFITS", supporting the IPY PPS Arctic project development.

The participation of the IASOS in SAON and its directions should be further discussed and approved by:

IPY PPS Arctic Steering Committee (meeting April, 2009)

Ministries of Russian Federation and Federal Services such as Roshydromet

Institute of Geography, RAS (a special agreement should be signed)