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ICARP IV Research Priority Team (RPT) 5

Final Report

Co-Production and Indigenous-led Arctic Research

March 2026



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Marie Bulinova

1. Executive Summary

Purpose and Vision of RPT 5: Rooted in Indigenous Futures

RPT 5 builds on the foundational work of earlier reports by focusing on the co-production of knowledge and Indigenous-led methodologies. This report responds to the commitments established during the International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP) III and the strategic priorities of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) aiming to strengthen Indigenous participation across all dimensions of Arctic research. It outlines specific strategies for researchers, funding agencies, and policymakers to prioritize Indigenous leadership, working collaboratively with knowledge holders to ensure that research practices remain accountable to Arctic communities.

The vision guiding this work is of mutual respect and shared responsibility. It recognizes that scientific excellence in the Arctic must emerge from relationships, where Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge systems shape research questions, methods and outcomes. Co-production is not a checklist or afterthought. It is a practice of being in relation, grounded in trust, reciprocity and long-term commitments to the well-being of Peoples and places. It honours and upholds mutual respect and responsibility in Actionable outcomes through all aspects of research.

We begin with a vision. As Indigenous scholars, educators, knowledge keepers, and allied community members and academics, we are not simply responding to research frameworks and paradigms, we are reshaping and creating them. Guided by our respective self-determining practices, laws, languages, and ways of knowing, we assert that:

- As part of their self-determination, Indigenous Peoples have the right to their own knowledge creation and participate in sharing and creating knowledge as they deem appropriate.
- Indigenous Peoples are Rightsholders.
- Indigenous governance in knowledge production is non-negotiable.
- Data sovereignty and ethical research practices are essential.
- Research must lead to tangible, community-directed outcomes.
- Indigenous Knowledge systems must shape, not just inform, Arctic research.

Indigenous Peoples have sovereign authority and inherent expertise to generate knowledge, fundamentally shaping epistemologies and research paradigms. Their knowledge systems are dynamic, authoritative, and central to understanding and addressing complex Arctic realities and building Arctic futures. Indigenous Knowledge is a powerful, legitimate and indispensable source of insight and innovation. Indigenous-led research is rooted in generations of wisdom that stems from a deep understanding of the Land.

ICARP IV is a forum for scientific priorities, including a place where science and Indigenous Peoples meet, reclaim space and redefine knowledge. This report asserts that true co-production of knowledge at most research tables requires Indigenous leadership at every level—defining priorities, leading methodologies, owning data, and determining the outcomes.



Vitaliy Zemlyanskiy

ICARP IV is a call to action: to reimagine Indigenous research inclusion as an act of humanity, Indigenous sovereignty and to ensure that knowledge co-production reflects the futures Indigenous people are building. Indigenous Peoples are continually pushed into systems that often do not align with our knowledge, responsibilities, or ways of being. We assert inherent authority within our systems of knowledge as knowledge holders and protectors while carrying responsibilities to safeguard, regenerate, and rearticulate our ways of knowing. We establish this through continuity and relational accountability to both our knowledge systems and Western knowledge.

My university is my land,
my waters, my home

My professors are my elders, my aunts,
my uncles, my relatives

My curriculum are the stories, the patterns,
the ornaments, the language and the songs

My books are the trees,
the lakes and the mountains

My degree is my life,
and whatever I will be able to pass on

My knowledge will not fit in any book

And it is all beauty, it is all art

With art as a tool

As a knife

We can shape the future

We can carve the culture

We can dig in to the past

And we can cut the colonial marionette strings

If we wish

Successful implementation of ICARP IV's recommendations will transform the Arctic research space in the following ways:

1. **Strengthen and broaden dedicated funding for Indigenous-driven research.**

   Strengthened and expanded funding streams are set aside specifically for Indigenous-driven research, with Indigenous organizations, governments, and communities in the lead as applicants and decision-makers. These funds support projects where Arctic Indigenous Peoples define the questions, methods, partnerships, and timelines. For example, a regional Indigenous government could receive multi-year funding to run its own research office, hire community researchers, and commission studies on language revitalization, land use, climate adaptation, or youth well-being that respond directly to local priorities. Funding rules, reporting requirements, and evaluation criteria are redesigned so that community benefits, cultural safety, and knowledge sovereignty matter as much as academic publications.

2. **Community-defined priorities at the center of Arctic research.**

   Arctic research prioritizes projects that clearly and directly address needs, concerns, and aspirations identified by Arctic communities, including moral, cultural, and ethical dimensions. This means that research proposals must show how they were developed with communities, how they respond to community-identified issues, and how the work will uphold local values and protocols. For example, a health study might be funded only if it emerges from a community-led process that identifies specific mental health concerns related to colonial trauma, and if the project's methods are guided by Elders, local healers, and community ethics guidelines. Similarly, wildlife research might proceed only when it respects harvesting practices, sacred areas, and community decision-making, and includes clear plans for sharing results in local languages and formats that are meaningful and useful to the people most affected.



Lionel Favre

3. Bridging, Weaving, Creating Knowledge that is Deeply Co-Productive.

Bridging, braiding, weaving, and creating deeply co-productive knowledge are everyday, expected practices in Arctic research. They are not just exceptions. For example, a sea-ice study might combine satellite data with Inupiat or Inuit ice terminology and travel stories, with Elders and hunters named as co-authors and co-leads, rather than "participants." Researchers routinely plan projects so that Indigenous and Western knowledge systems are in genuine partnership from the start. For instance, monitoring programs may be designed in community workshops, where Indigenous Knowledge holders decide which indicators matter (like animal behavior or shorefast ice changes) alongside scientists' measurements.

4. Critical research as healing (decolonizing) work.

Critical research activities inside the research system are used deliberately to challenge, change, and heal from colonial practices. For example, universities and research institutes may run regular internal reviews that examine who gets funding, who is cited, whose knowledge is valued, and then change their policies when they find bias. These activities might include ethics board reforms, mandatory anti-colonial training for reviewers, and audits of data ownership that lead to shifting control of data back to Indigenous organizations. In this way, "research about research" becomes a tool for accountability and repair, not just an academic exercise.

5. Decolonized research spaces.

Decolonizing research spaces allows Arctic Indigenous scholars and others to fully participate in research while staying rooted in their home communities and responsibilities. For example, an Indigenous PhD student might be able to join seminars online from their community, have fieldwork count as core research time, and schedule academic deadlines around hunting seasons or cultural obligations.Institutions adapt policies, funding, and infrastructure so that Indigenous scholars do not have to leave their language, land, or community relationships behind to succeed. This can look like community-based research hubs, flexible residency requirements, and hiring practices that recognize community leadership and land-based expertise as scholarly excellence.

Key Research Needs

- Ensure dedicated funding for Indigenous-led research. Within each Arctic research funding opportunity, there needs to be separate dedicated streams to strengthen and protect Indigenous-led research, where Indigenous communities and/or organizations or Indigenous researchers working with Indigenous communities and/or organizations are eligible. Funding design and evaluation must be done in partnership with Indigenous governing bodies to ensure equity and avoid tokenism.
- Prioritize Arctic research that meets Indigenous community-identified needs and priorities. There is an urgency to solving problems through research activities in urban centers (where most academic work is based), but that same urgency is not yet extended to rural residents of the Arctic. Prioritizing Arctic community-defined needs can be achieved through Indigenous-led initiatives, collaborative research guided by Indigenous leadership, and/or co-productive approaches that share decision-making and responsibility.
- Bridge, weave, and create knowledge that is deeply co-productive. Co-productive approaches include a commitment on the part of Western systems to adapt, requiring their flexibility and willingness to embrace a paradigm different from the Enlightenment era in which they originate.
- Use research activities (within and about the research industry) as a means to decolonize and heal from colonial practices. Western researchers have a unique opportunity and responsibility to advocate within their system to address past and ongoing harms to Indigenous communities. Decolonizing research spaces will be beneficial to all professionals that inhabit intersectionally oppressed bodies and lived experiences, not just Indigenous individuals, as improving the understanding of artificial limitations upheld in the status quo would allow the research industry to be more broadly inclusive and whole. Scholars should engage in critical reflection of policies and practices to make obvious to policymakers when these remain tools of oppression.
- Identify steps non-Indigenous professionals can undertake to decolonize research spaces, allowing Arctic Indigenous researchers to remain integrated in their communities, self-government practices, and access the research community. Research professionals should identify steps that non-Indigenous professionals can undertake to decolonize research spaces, with the advice and validation of the identified actions by (compensated) Indigenous professionals and/or organizations. Creating safer, more inclusive environments that enable meaningful Indigenous participation are also beneficial for other research professionals from varied backgrounds.

Terminology to be aware of:

- **Indigenous Knowledge Systems**
  Indigenous Knowledge Systems are rigorous knowledge systems. Each Indigenous Knowledge System integrates social, ecological, cultural, spiritual, physical sciences as well as humanities and all other aspects of experienced life Each with its own epistemology and functional, complete, cohesive structure to create, organize, store, and maintain knowledge. These systems include empirical observations, and are generated and refined by Indigenous Peoples across generations. An Indigenous Knowledge System is fundamental for interpreting, adapting to, and managing its local environments. There is no single definition of Indigenous Knowledge, so researchers must utilize the definition used by Indigenous partner(s). Indigenous Knowledge systems are rooted in millenia of lived experience, oral traditions and relational practice throughout the Arctic regions and beyond.
- **Academically Trained Knowledge Systems**
  Coined by Denaakk'e Scholar Nikoosh Carlo as a preferred term over "Western science." It captures the pluralism of disciplines and education systems, while recognizing that Indigenous Knowledge Systems are rooted in experiential and relational ways of learning and knowing. In addition, it recognizes that concepts of expertise within academia and policy decision-making contexts are often rooted in academically trained knowledge systems degrees.
- **Indigenous Research Methodologies**
  Indigenous methodologies are based on practices that Indigenous Peoples have conducted prior to colonization and continue to do so today. They are based on relationality and embedded in the knowledge systems of each Indigenous People. Indigenous research methodologies may include cultural, social, political, linguistic, community, spiritual, and interspecies relations, and come with their own practices, criteria and processes of rigor, credibility, and legitimacy.
- **Co-Production of Knowledge (CPK**)
  Co-producing knowledge means working together through all phases of research: identifying the problem, shaping the questions, implementing the work, analyzing results, and collaboratively disseminating and evaluating the outcomes (Ellam Yua et al. 2022). It is a process to bring together more than one way of knowing and being in the world (knowledge system) for creating new understanding. For research in the Arctic, it usually means non-Indigenous researchers closely collaborating with Arctic Indigenous Peoples. (See Section 6.1 for examples)

- **Indigenous-led Research**
  Indigenous-led research is initiated, directed, and primarily governed by Indigenous Peoples, communities, or organizations, ensuring that Indigenous perspectives, priorities and ways of knowing are central at every stage. Indigenous-led research stems from the lifelong relations the Indigenous researcher(s) carry forward with them and can be conducted using only Indigenous methodologies and methods, and/or the co-production of knowledge (engaging Indigenous and non-Indigenous Knowledge Systems). Indigenous-led research validates Indigenous Knowledge systems, privileges ethical engagement and cultural safety. It requires that research outcomes directly benefit and build capacity within the relevant communities. Also, ensuring respectful handling of data, long-term accountability, and adaptation of methodologies while honoring Indigenous protocols, values and governance structures.
- **Indigenous-informed Research Perspectives**
  Indigenous-informed research perspectives are approaches to research that center Indigenous worldviews, knowledge systems, values and lived experiences at every stage of inquiry, whether or not the research is fully led by Indigenous Peoples. This includes projects and methodologies where an Indigenous person or group operates as an advisor to a research team, such as partner, collaborator or colleague.



Wenkai Guo

- **Indigenous Peoples**
  Indigenous Peoples are self-identified groups who have historical continuity with the original inhabitants of their lands, predating colonization or the formation of current states. Indigenous Peoples are not a homogenous group but consist of diverse Nations, societies, cultures, languages, governance systems and territories. They should be referred to by their proper names (for example: the Inuit, Tlicho, Sámi, Iñupiat, and Yup'ik, etc.) and as proper nouns.[1]
- **Indigenous Self-Determination and Self-Government**
  Self-determination is the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples to freely make decisions about their political status, economic, social and cultural development as well as the internal affairs of their communities, without external coercion or domination. This includes governing their own institutions, safeguarding and revitalizing culture and languages, managing land and resources in accordance with their values and priorities.
  Self-government is a way of operationalizing the right to self-determination and varies significantly from one Indigenous People to another. In general, it refers to the recognized authority of Indigenous Peoples to exercise internal decision-making and autonomy over matters such as law, education, health, economic development, social services, cultural affairs and territory. Indigenous researchers participating in RPT5 emphasize that all Indigenous Peoples have processes in place to examine and discuss issues and priorities. Indigenous Peoples' laws and protocols are distinct and take into account how to govern and uphold relations with their histories, lands, waters, people, other species, and cultural aspects.

The colonial history and present across Arctic countries has led to unequal recognition and underrepresentation of Indigenous Knowledge in academia and this needs to change. A key step involves shifting the practices of non-Indigenous researchers and institutions to actively recognize the legitimacy of Arctic Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and integrate it into mainstream scientific regimes.

[1] Younging, G. (2018). Elements of Indigenous style: A guide for writing by and about Indigenous Peoples. Edmonton, AB: Brush Education.



Sarah Evans

2. Definition of the Focus of RPT 5

Co-Production

Co-production of knowledge requires a shift in the way research is imagined, funded and evaluated. It is a relational approach that brings together distinct knowledge systems, Indigenous and Western, into an equal relationship. Dissemination of Indigenous Knowledge must be understood as a collaborative and interactive process that goes beyond conventional academic outputs. Scholars are asked to confront their own biases and engage with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Holders, youth and families in processes grounded in reciprocity, respect, and community responsibility.

Authentic co-production of knowledge in Arctic research is contingent upon the establishment of enduring, reciprocal relationships between Indigenous Peoples and the research community; approaches limited to consultation fail to realize the depth of trust, mutual learning, and shared agency that define transformative research partnerships.[2] Effective knowledge dissemination requires creating opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples to review, interpret, and decide collectively how results are presented, shared and upheld. This ensures that the findings remain accountable to the contributors and knowledge holders, especially those living within Arctic communities.

Frameworks of Arctic research must ensure that Indigenous Rights Holders are engaged at every stage of research, from setting priorities and designing research to managing data, analysis and dissemination. This approach upholds self-determination, addresses historical inequities and fosters mutual capacity within research communities and institutions.[3] It also aligns with international and national legal obligations, ensuring Indigenous Rights to maintain, control and develop their own knowledge systems.

RPT 5 identifies key principles of co-production drawn from Indigenous teachings and experiences of Arctic researchers and communities. The principles guide researchers toward equitable, rights-based collaborations that respect and honour Indigenous sovereignty and advance co-production as the transformative foundation of Arctic science.

Key Principles of Co-Production

- *Foundation: Rights and Self-Determination*
- *Relational Accountability*
- *Co-Design and Shared Agenda Setting*
- *Consent, Community Leadership, and Equitable Processes*
- *Knowledge Stewardship*

Foundation: Rights and Self-Determination. Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic are recognized as Right Holders with inherent sovereignty over lands, waters, and knowledge systems. The realization of meaningful co-production in research requires strict alignment with international and domestic frameworks affirming Indigenous Rights.

1. Acknowledge Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic as Rights-holders.[4]
2. Recognize that Indigenous Peoples' self-determination is the basis for any meaningful co-production of knowledge.
3. Ensure all research processes align with international and national legal obligations that affirm Indigenous rights, including the right to maintain, control, protect, and develop knowledge systems.

[2] Ellam Yua, E., Raymond-Yakoubian, J., Daniel, R. A., & Behe, C. (2022). A framework for co-production of knowledge in the context of Arctic research. Ecology and Society, 27(1). Metz, A., Jensen, T., Farley, A., Boaz, A., Bartley, L., & Villodas, M. (2022). Building trusting relationships to support implementation: A proposed theoretical model. Frontiers in health services, 2, 894599. https://doi.org/10.3389/frhs.2022.894599

[3] Gordon (Iñupiaq), H. S. J., & Around Him, D. (2025). Conducting research "in a good way": Relationships as the foundation of research. Arctic Science, 11, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1139/as-2023-0078

[4] Bull, J., Beazley, K., Shea, J., MacQuarrie, C., Hudson, A., Shaw, K., ... & Gagne, B. (2020). Shifting practise: recognizing Indigenous rights holders in research ethics review. Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, 15(1), 21-35.

Relational Accountability. The engagement between knowledge systems is premised on equality and complementary of Indigenous and Western sciences.[5] Researchers and institutions are accountable to Arctic communities whose lands and waters they access, and must demonstrate sustained relational accountability through every stage of partnership. In research, we are in a partnership that reflects our collective commitment as equals within the co-production of knowledge and research.

1. Equality of knowledge systems where Indigenous Knowledges and Western knowledge are distinct, valid, and complementary.
2. Understanding that Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) ensures that engagement with Indigenous Peoples occurs through their voluntary, and informed and fully consensual agreement.[6]
3. Relational accountability ensures that researchers and institutions are accountable to the communities whose lands, waters, and knowledges they engage with.

Co-Design and Shared Agenda Setting.

1. Research priorities are jointly identified with Indigenous Peoples, guided by cultural values, languages, and collective priorities.
2. Ensure early and continuous involvement of Indigenous Peoples in research agenda design, planning, and implementation.
3. Provide formal roles for Indigenous Peoples within Arctic research bodies such as ICARP and IASC, with permanent structures for Indigenous governance.

Consent, Community Leadership, and Equitable Processes

1. Indigenous Knowledge Holders, Elders, and community researchers are equitably compensated for their contributions.
2. Training, mentorship, and leadership of Indigenous youth in Arctic research is supported.
3. Barriers such as compressed timelines, language challenges, and procedural exclusions to ensure genuine participation and inclusion are addressed.

Knowledge Stewardship

1. Indigenous Peoples have authority over how their knowledge, data, and cultural information is stored, shared, and used.
2. The interconnectedness of knowledge with Indigenous languages, identities, arts, and governance systems is protected.
3. Ethical guidelines, rooted in Indigenous protocols and laws, are established.

As political sovereigns, Tribes, First Nations, "Indigenous Peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions." (United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007)

This Declaration is in part intended to ensure Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge are put in positions of strength, leadership and equity in United Nations research and decision-making processes. As a minimum standard for inclusion, Arctic Indigenous Peoples have the rights and abilities to conduct research, practice stewardship of all their resources, including their knowledge.

RPT 5 was brought together by IASC to focus co-productive approaches as well as embedding Indigenous-led methodologies and support for inclusive processes into Arctic research as a human right and a reconciliation imperative for ICARP IV.

Indigenous-led Arctic Research

Indigenous-led Arctic Research places Arctic Peoples as the drivers of research design, data sovereignty, and knowledge mobilization. This approach honours the Land as teacher, centres languages, and prioritizes intergenerational learning. RPT 5 calls on research institutions and funding agencies to:

- Recognize and fund Indigenous-led research as a primary mode of Arctic science.
- Support the development of Indigenous research ethics boards and data governance protocols, including OCAP, CARE and other community-driven standards.
- Respectful research practices and ethics
- Education and capacity sharing (mutual capacity building)
- Collaboration and co-production as core competencies for Arctic researchers
- Integration of Arctic Indigenous Research Ethics and Protocols

[5] Holmberg, A., Morin, E., Chahine, A. S., Doering, N. N., Dudeck, S., Fisher, C., ... & van der Schot, J. (2023). Towards Arctic Research Upholding Indigenous Peoples' Rights: Recommendations for ICARP IV, the International Conference on Arctic Research Planning.

[6] Osakada, Y. (2025). Pitfalls of the green transition: Towards a genuine understanding of the right to free, prior and informed consent of the Indigenous Peoples. Polar Science, 44, 101119.

Ethics are an enduring consideration for ICARP IV:

- Research must uphold the principle of "do no harm," ensuring that all practices, methods, and outcomes respect and protect Indigenous Peoples, their communities, lands, and knowledge. This includes honouring cultural protocols, sustaining relational responsibilities, and avoiding actions that could exploit, extract, or misrepresent Indigenous Peoples and knowledge systems.
- "Nothing about us without us": Indigenous inclusion is essential in research. Meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples strengthens scientific outcomes by ensuring that projects are culturally informed, ethically grounded, and aligned with community priorities.
- Respect for Knowledge Sovereignty: Indigenous Knowledge belongs to the communities that hold it. Researchers must seek permission, ensure proper attribution, and avoid extracting or misrepresenting information.
- Consent as an Ongoing Process: Consent is not a one-time form. It is a continuous dialogue. Communities must understand the research, its methods, potential impacts, and retain the right to withdraw or adapt their participation at any stage.
- Reciprocity and Benefit: Research should provide tangible benefits to the communities involved, whether through capacity building, sharing results in accessible ways, or supporting local priorities.
- Cultural Safety: Researchers must recognize and mitigate the risk of imposing external frameworks or worldviews that may conflict with Indigenous values, ensuring community members feel respected, heard, and safe.
- Transparency and Accountability: Decisions, findings, and dissemination must be transparent. Communities should have access to data and a role in how it is interpreted or shared.
- Respect for Land and Place: The Land is a teacher and holder of knowledge. Research practices must honour and protect the Land, acknowledging its centrality in Indigenous ways of knowing.
- Decolonizing Practices: Researchers should critically examine their methods, assumptions, and institutional structures to avoid perpetuating colonial practices, prioritizing co-creation, and Indigenous-led frameworks.

The reflections that follow arise from long-standing teachings carried by our Elders, wisdom keepers and advocates who understand that knowledge is rooted in relationships with the Land, waters and all beings. In this work, it is our responsibility to acknowledge generations who continue to protect their governance systems and ways of knowing. This is a reminder to each of us that research must begin with trust, respect for sovereignty of Arctic Indigenous Peoples and a commitment to approaches grounded in consent, reciprocity and community leadership.

The role of knowledge and history:

"The history of colonialism within Indigenous Peoples' homelands has included land dispossession, epidemics, forced settlements, violent removal of children to boarding schools, racism, and cultural and spiritual suppression," (Napoleon 1996).

The Arctic Athabaskan perspective perpetuates research highlights from Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow, Yukon First Nations must decide what is researched, choose who does the researching, be involved and have opportunities to enhance capacity to do their own research, and be owned by Yukon First Nations (Council of Yukon Indians, 1977).

The status quo of Arctic research on these lands, waters, and (human and more-than-human) communities based from institutions disconnected from these areas by both distance and ways of thinking perpetuates the inherently harmful systems developed external to the Arctic and reflective of the colonial spirit. Who has the power to create knowledge (Tom Goldtooth, COP 30)?

The role of listening:

- *"We often forget to listen and that listening takes practice"* - Elder Tim Lennie, Pehdzeh Ki First Nation
- *"That the heart is an ear, an extra ear, with which to listen"* - Lucy, Aqqaluk Trust

The role of relationships, the pace of relationships:

- *"When community members tell you "no" should be perceived as a measure of trust - the community is trusting you and trusting in the relational processes when you are told "no" with regards to research activities."* - Cana Uluak Itchiakiya



Aleksandra Osika

3. Priorities and Needs in Arctic Research for the Next Decade

3.1. Needs and Priorities specific to the RPT 5 topic area

3.1.1. Research Needs for the RPT 5 topic area

Research Need	Description of the Research Need	Rationale why included in this report
1. Dedicated funding for Indigenous-led research	Within each Arctic research funding opportunity, there needs to be separate dedicated streams to strengthen and protect Indigenous-led research, where Indigenous communities and/or organizations or Indigenous researchers working with Indigenous communities and/or organizations are eligible.	Most research projects in the Arctic are dominated by Western knowledge, methods, and researchers. To open new possibilities for solutions, we recommend separate funding streams and opportunities that support research projects based on the knowledge of Arctic Indigenous communities and support of Indigenous-led research.
2. Priority of Arctic research meeting Indigenous community-identified needs and priorities	Too often, research practices are an extractive industry wherein local communities are used in the descriptions. Principal Investigators (PIs) submit to funders and often little to no benefit returns to the community subjected to research. There is an urgency to solving problems through research activities in urban centers (where most academic work is based) however that same urgency is not yet extended to the rural residents of the Arctic. Prioritizing Arctic community-defined needs could be Indigenous-led, ethical non-Indigenous researchers, and/or co-productive approaches.	This is a matter of ethical practice and recognition by those established in the research/academic community of their own privilege to engage in what could be meaningful work in a way that serves the subjects of research by taking steps to acknowledge the autonomy of human and more-than-human communities in the Arctic.
3. Bridging, Weaving, Creating Knowledge that is Deeply Co-Productive	Arctic and other researchers recognize the validity of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Indigenous methodologies for data collection, analysis, and application, and are (sometimes) ready to engage work that is capable of blending Western and at least one Indigenous way of thinking. Co-productive approaches include a commitment on the part of Western systems to adapt, requiring their flexibility and willingness to embrace a paradigm different from the Enlightenment era in which they originate.	The urgent challenges humans are facing and will face, in the Arctic and other regions, are not surmountable by relying upon the schools of thought that have led us to a place of human-caused global instability. In order to use research activities as a means of making life markedly better, research must reach and grow beyond Western thought. To misunderstand or deny the gravity of this situation is a privilege not afforded to Arctic residents who already bear the brunt of rapidly shifting environments on top of the intergenerational impacts of colonialism.
4. Research activities (within and about the research industry) as a means to decolonize and heal from colonial practices	The long-term effects of colonization are poorly understood by the colonizing powers that be, which in combination with a culture of limited self-reflection and accountability leads to continued harms in policy and practices enacted on Indigenous Arctic Peoples who are subject to globalized systems as secondary citizens to colonial nations. Western researchers have a unique opportunity and responsibility to advocate within their system to address past and ongoing harms to Indigenous communities. Decolonizing research spaces will be beneficial to all professionals that inhabit intersectionally oppressed bodies and lived experiences, not just Indigenous individuals, as improving the understanding of artificial limitations upheld in the status quo would allow the research industry to be more broadly inclusive and whole.	Researchers that engage in work on or about the Arctic from outside the Arctic are benefitting from (employed within) a system that denies its own role in maintaining a status quo of disparity for Arctic residents. To address this, researchers can and should engage in their own education (at a personal level but more so at the level of understanding and reporting within Western systems) about the long-term effects of colonization and engage in the critical reflection of policies and practices to make obvious to policymakers when these remain tools of oppression.
5. Identify steps non-Indigenous professionals can undertake to decolonize research spaces, allowing Arctic Indigenous researchers to remain integrated in their communities, self-government practices, and access the research community	Research professionals should identify steps that non-Indigenous professionals can undertake to decolonize research spaces, with the advice and validation of the identified actions by (compensated) Indigenous professionals and/or organizations.	Creating safer, more inclusive environments that enable meaningful Indigenous participation are also beneficial for other research professionals from varied backgrounds.

3.1.2. Priorities for Arctic Research for the RPT 5 topic area

Priorities for Research	Reason why this should be an ICARP IV Priority
1. Dedicated funding for Indigenous-led research	This is an area of persistent concern, identified many years ago and has gone unaddressed; it touches all areas of research and is applicable to all Arctic research topics.
2. Arctic Research prioritizes projects that meet Arctic community-defined needs	When research is practiced as an extractive industry, wherein local communities and the disparities they experience are used as rationale to fund projects, where these communities bear the costs and risks of research activities, yet little to no benefit returns to the community subjected to research, it is inherently unethical. ICARP IV is an opportunity to recognize this history and depart from practices that continue to denigrate the autonomy of Arctic communities.
3. Bridging, Weaving, Creating Knowledge that is Deeply Co-Productive	The urgent challenges humans are facing and will face, in the Arctic and other regions, are not surmountable by relying upon the schools of thought that have led us to a place of human-caused global instability. Co-productive research practices and the creation of new understanding and knowledge arising from more than Western ways of thinking is necessary for all peoples to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing landscape. This priority too speaks to all topics of research in the Arctic and about the Arctic. Indigenous researchers have social capital in addition to insider knowledge - however that needs to be used judiciously- necessitating the best use of this limited intellectual resource by the Arctic research community.
4. Research activities (on the research industry) as a means to decolonize and heal from colonial practices	Colonial practices harm not just Indigenous Peoples whose homelands have been overtaken and inhabited by external populations seeking to escape poor conditions in their homelands, but also all members of those populations who do not fit the idealized (and frequently imagined) physical and social normed archetype; Arctic Researchers, spurred to action by Arctic Indigenous Peoples have an opportunity in ICARP IV to assert the need for better conditions within the industry of research. We can and should develop mutual respect and shared responsibility for the spaces we inhabit and work.
5. Decolonize research spaces, allowing Arctic Indigenous researchers to remain integrated in their communities, self-government practices, and access the research community	Indigenous inclusion, and the inclusion of other diverse perspectives, enriches and improves science outcomes. Engaging in open science practices while ensuing Indigenous data sovereignty will further enable decolonization of data spaces.

3.2. Cross-Cutting Needs and Priorities

3.2.1. Cross-Cutting Research Needs

RPT 5 focused on Co-Productive and Indigenous-led Research and was formed as an inherently cross-cutting effort and so all research needs listed are cross-cutting. We also committed to the serious review and advising on reports produced by all other RPTs to look for enhancements of identified priorities to align with Indigenous perspectives on the ways all Arctic research can be more co-productive and/or driven by Indigenous leadership.

We find all of the recommendations to be feasible, dependent on the will and commitment of the research industry.

3.2.2. Cross-Cutting Priorities for Arctic Research

This RPT focused on Co-Productive and Indigenous-led Research, formed as an inherently cross-cutting effort and so all priorities listed are cross-cutting. We also committed to the serious review and advising on reports produced by all other RPTs to look for enhancements of identified priorities to align with Indigenous perspectives on the ways all Arctic research can be more co-productive and/or driven by Indigenous leadership.

4. Recommendations to Implement the identified Priorities for Arctic Research

Strengthening Indigenous Leadership in Science and ResearchEnhancing Indigenous participation and leadership within scientific institutions requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both structural barriers and opportunities for Indigenous self-determination in research. Key strategies include: Building Indigenous Capacity in Science and Research

Expand education, training, and mentorship opportunities for Indigenous individuals in scientific fields to support equitable representation and leadership across disciplines. Supporting Indigenous Research Networks

Develop and sustain Indigenous-led networks that promote collaboration, knowledge exchange, and the advancement of self-determined research priorities. Dedicated funding is vital for these initiatives. One effective model is the Summer Internship for Indigenous Peoples in Genomics (SING) consortium, which integrates genomic science with Indigenous Knowledge and ethics through annual workshops (SING Canada; 2025 Workshop). Investing in Indigenous-Led Research Platforms

Provide sustained funding for Indigenous-led research initiatives that strengthen governance and leadership in areas such as conservation, health, and sustainability. For example, Ărramăt: Strengthening Health and Wellbeing Through Indigenous-Led Conservation and Sustainable Relationships with Biodiversity is a Canada-funded project with a budget of CAD 24 million (Ărramăt Project). Establishing Dedicated Support for Indigenous Scholars

Create dedicated funding streams and institutional supports for Indigenous scholars within universities and research organizations. At the same time, it is essential to ensure accountability and prevent identity fraud or misrepresentation, which can undermine authentic Indigenous scholarship and leadership

As TallBear argues, Indigenous identity fraud and race-shifting constitute a serious threat to Indigenous nation sovereignty and require institutional responses that defer to Indigenous governance and citizenship criteria rather than relying on self-identification alone.

Within Sámi communities, it is important to recognize the presence of internal dynamics and power relations that shape representation and identity politics. In some cases, specific Sámi families have exerted considerable influence in ways that marginalize or exclude other Sámi groups. This tendency has been particularly noted within the Finnish Sámi territories, although similar patterns occur in Norway and Sweden. These internal tensions underscore the need for careful attention to the distinct historical trajectories, social contexts, and diverse perspectives that exist across Sámi communities. Understanding Indigenous identities, therefore, requires sensitivity to intra-community differences as well as interregional variation. Analyses and engagements must consider historical circumstances, contemporary institutional arrangements, and the political aspirations related to land rights and governance.

The European Union should introduce specific funding that takes into account Indigenous perspectives and expertise, it is not available today as a discipline nor area.

The European Union should recruit scholars/evaluators that are Indigenous, learning from development in Canada, the US (earlier), Australia and Aotearoa.

Universities and research institutions in the Arctic should support Indigenous scholarship.

- What changes are needed in current research practices to address the priorities?
  - Arctic Indigenous Peoples must be permanent members of high-ranking committees of ASSW/ICARP, POLAR YEAR, and the like.
  - ASSW/ICARP and other science conferences which impacts Arctic Indigenous Peoples must give and support conference space for Indigenous research and ideas to grow amongst Indigenous researchers, scholars, participants
- What changes are needed in current funding structures to address the priorities?
  - Increased funding opportunities to help Indigenous Peoples define what is Indigenous Knowledges by and for Indigenous Peoples
  - Increased funding opportunities to help Non-Indigenous People experience what is Indigenous Knowledges by and for Indigenous Peoples
  - Increased funding for co-production activities, programming and research support.
- What opportunities can the RPT identify for potential new alliances and collaborative partnerships to address these priorities?
  - Direct engagement with Arctic Indigenous Peoples towards co-articulating what is Arctic Science research done in a good way alongside Indigenous Peoples.
  - Transparency- healing, Transparency in leadership, Arctic Research Processes, leadership cycles, funding processes etc.

4.1. Implementation of the RPT 5-specific Priorities

Priority 1: Dedicated funding for Indigenous-led research		
Spatial scale:	Local to regional; cross-regional (international investment)	
Time scale:	Now and ongoing	
Funding requirements and potential sources:	Funding that is flexible & sustainable, not tied to shifting political winds. Private foundations; NGOs; Governments.	
Infrastructure needs and requirements:	n/a (the technology exists, operable organizations exist)	
Data needs and requirements:	Agreements with Indigenous Peoples on what constitutes Indigenous-led	
Implementation: Implementation actions:	**How to implement the actions:**	**Who to address the actions:**
Establish dedicated funding streams for Indigenous-led Arctic research	Build relationships with Indigenous Peoples' organizations (Permanent Participants and Tribal or other governing organizations); Advertise existing funding opportunities to them; Invite research led by (operated or contracted) Indigenous leaders; Support Indigenous-led Peer Reviews	All funders of research
Co-develop grant criteria with Indigenous leadership	Convene a workshop series or working group with Indigenous leaders, scholars, and evaluators to develop review metrics and grant criteria. Participants should be paid an equivalent amount to that of scientists' expert participation. With varying funding structures within countries, the work would also have to support within-country co-development criteria.	IASC, or other funders, can open a funding call for this project. IASC can host a pan-Arctic knowledge sharing at ASSW- Indigenous scholars to lead the project.
Ensure multi-year commitments	In recognition of the continuity required to implement any project in the north, focus investment on research that builds on relationships of trust (which take multiple seasons to establish); Allow for relationship-building grants which focus on in-region and in community time as well as but distinct from planning grants that focus investment in university infrastructure	IASC can start and advocate other research organizations do the same as a matter of modern ethical practice
Joint International funding efforts require partnership (or at least consent) with relevant Indigenous organization(s)	Similar to CINUK program (case example explained below) Joint international funding efforts require partnership with, and where appropriate consent from, relevant Indigenous organizations. International Arctic research funding schemes must mandate meaningful collaboration with Indigenous governing bodies or community research institutions at the earliest stages of project design and proposal development. For example, funding calls under the Nordic collaboration on Sustainable Development of the Arctic now include explicit expectations of Indigenous perspectives and partnership as central elements of project evaluation, with Greenland participating as a funding partner alongside Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Canada, and the United States through NordForsk and associated councils. Indigenous knowledge and leadership are highlighted as integral to project legitimacy and success across the call's thematic areas. In Norway, the Research Council of Norway (RCN) supports programs where Indigenous Sámi organizations are formal partners in research on Sámi language, culture, and community priorities, and Sámi representatives sit on portfolio boards for climate and polar research, ensuring that projects affecting Sámi lands and knowledge systems are co-developed and stewarded. These frameworks demonstrate how ethical research in the Arctic must move beyond token consultation, embedding Indigenous led governance and consent as conditions of funding and research practice, ensuring research outcomes are accountable to Indigenous Peoples and uphold Indigenous rights to self-determination in knowledge production.	All official IPY projects must engage with and at minimum have consent from impacted Indigenous Tribes, Nations, First Peoples

Priority 1: Dedicated funding for Indigenous-led research		
Implementation: **Implementation actions:**	**How to implement the actions:**	**Who to address the actions:**
Include holistic goals for all topics of Arctic research, especially considering the health and wellness for Indigenous human and more than human communities	In understanding the long-term effects of colonization, including trauma, land dispossession, mental health, economic, access and other disparities, research calls should highlight the purpose of research that first does no harm and second seeks to heal from past and ongoing effects of colonization. Increase investment in land-based healing practices as a response to systemic health inequities.	Entire research industry
Promote Indigenous-led research across Arctic communities and knowledge systems	Noting that co-production methods may be employed by two or more Indigenous ways of thinking (whether or not they have a Western research partner), support for collaborative and mutually beneficial research projects should be enhanced in terms of cross-Arctic learning opportunities (growing beyond the current modes of supporting Arctic/mid-latitude efforts). Establish a network that facilitates the coordination of communications related to Arctic Indigenous research ethics, engagement, and practices. Create a central Indigenous e-hub to communicate essential messages in research and the co-production of knowledge processes and research. Establish a living e-journal that is connected to the Indigenous Pavilions of ISSW/ICARP.	IASC, other research and Indigenous institutions and organizations
Dedicated, funded work on Indigenous data storage, licensing, and sharing methodologies	Where needed, create workforce and capacity for Indigenous-led data initiatives. Expand capacity of technical teams to support Indigenous-led data efforts through intensive trainings. Use Indigenous methodologies to mobilize knowledge gained from these activities, popularizing and strengthening these types of activities across the Indigenous world. Sustain funding over long durations to ensure continuity and momentum.	IASC, other research and Indigenous institutions and organizations



Irek Sobota

Priority 2: Arctic research prioritizes projects that meet Arctic community-defined need(s)		
Spatial scale:	pan-Arctic	
Time scale:	Now and ongoing	
Funding requirements and potential sources:	No change to funding levels, but a shift in their priorities and criteria in evaluating projects for suitability	
Infrastructure needs and requirements:	Establish a network that facilitates the coordination of communications related to Arctic Indigenous research ethics, engagement, and practices	
Data needs and requirements:	Research culture shifts to ask communities what they need; document and archive those priorities.	
Implementation: **Implementation actions:**	**How to implement the actions:**	**Who to address the actions:**
Shift expectation in research project funding to focus on research that meets a defined community need	All funders should be conscious of the investments they choose to make and intentional in ensuring that collective intellectual work is not wasteful. (The wasted effort in the status quo leads to duplicative work and research fatigue which would be significantly reduced with this change in practice.) This change would also empower communities to have their own priorities met, which enhances the relevance of work done on their homelands (and air, space, waters) and increases	PIs as well as funders have a responsibility to be aware of and responsive to community needs when planning research
Research/academic community regularly engages with Arctic communities and Indigenous Peoples (formal organizations) to update local and regional research priorities so external researchers are guided by known community needs	PIs and funding organizations could prioritize this immediately and into the future, which would take a commitment to acknowledging the wisdom and expertise that exist in those living in and rooted in Northern places, and then literally asking them what the community needs are instead of assuming from faraway places (urban centers in the mid-latitudes primarily).	PIs and funders (government and otherwise)
Research upholding Indigenous rights (UNDRIP) as they operate on Indigenous lands (*including subsurface lands and all waters, air, and space connected to Indigenous lands*)	Arctic research occurs on Arctic Indigenous lands, therefore all research should 1. conform to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent 2. tangible benefit to local Indigenous communities 3. findings and data made available to local Indigenous communities 4. follow ethical protocols regarding land use and data sovereignty	All researchers Funders to implement funding requirements
Create deliverables in partnership with local Indigenous communities	Project findings should be made accessible for use by local Indigenous communities, which could include formats directed toward policy decision-making contexts such as national or international governing bodies. These could be policy briefs, maps, web tools, newsletters, films, art, and many other communication mediums.	All researchers

Priority 3: Bridging, Weaving, Creating Knowledge that is Deeply Co-Productive		
Spatial scale:	Global	
Time scale:	Now and ongoing	
Funding requirements and potential sources:	No change to funding levels needed but a shift in the criteria and expectations	
Infrastructure needs and requirements:	Shifts in dominant research culture and infrastructure at all levels to engage in co-productive approaches	
Data needs and requirements:	Non-Indigenous researchers must be open to learning new-to-them methodologies (at a minimum)	
Implementation: **Implementation actions:**	**How to implement the actions:**	**Who to address the actions:**
Increase the direct involvement of Indigenous Peoples (governance organizations) and Indigenous researchers (individuals) in Arctic research	Invite them (and pay for their time) Develop expectations for the ratio of Indigenous scholars in programs, projects, conferences, and initiatives (like ICARP) with transparency of their involvement (or lack of involvement)	Research industry wide
Address knowledge gaps by strengthening methodologies for true co-production of knowledge, especially in the area of human health and wellbeing.	Non-Indigenous researchers trust that Indigenous Knowledge-holders have valid and legitimate contributions; this will take self-education on the Indigenous ways of knowing and doing research by non-Indigenous professionals	Research industry wide
Co-develop frameworks that bridge knowledge systems, ensuring Indigenous leadership in Arctic research moves beyond tokenistic (or box-checking) inclusion.	Build off of co-production of knowledge and other engagement frameworks to co-develop a relevant framework within project/program; Or mutually agree to adopt one or a few of the established frameworks.	All PIs engage in, funders assess/evaluate with input from Indigenous leadership to validate their findings
Expand research activities (aka funding for) Indigenous land-based monitoring, resilience practices, and climate change mitigation.	Fund Indigenous-led long-term in situ monitoring (using academically trained and Indigenous methodologies) with a focus on supporting climate adaptation and land/resource stewardship	Government and other funders
Invest in Indigenous-led environmental governance models, including those focused on water, ice, and biodiversity protection.	Document existing models and map policy changes necessary to implement Indigenous governance models that have and could again sustain humans within the Arctic (and other environments) as part of thriving and functional ecosystems.	Research industry
Develop practical guidance on how knowledge systems can be bridged and translated into meaningful recommendations in support of decision-making without eroding their uniqueness or legitimacy.	If climate adaptation and natural resource management is to be informed equitably and meaningfully by Indigenous Knowledge Systems, local knowledge systems, and scientific knowledge, practical guidance on bridging knowledge systems is essential. Otherwise, efforts to connect different forms of knowledge are likely to remain no more than isolated academic exercises. Source: Danielsen, F., et al. (2026). Bridging Knowledge Systems to Guide Natural Resource Decision-Making. Trends Ecol. Evol. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2025.12.009 In press 19 Jan. 2026. (preprint: https://ecoevorxiv.org/repository/view/10333/)	Researchers, especially by professional association(s) such as IASC
Support the transmission of Arctic science knowledge and Indigenous language revitalization as a means of safeguarding Indigenous Knowledges necessary to engage in deep co-production, encompassing scientific, ecological, ethical, and cultural aspects.	Pay for translations of research projects into local languages; Support the human infrastructure of maintaining those languages and the inherently local ecological and other knowledge systems they contain; Fund projects that specifically target understanding the ways language is taught and maintained so data-driven policy choices may be made	Research industry

Priority 3: Bridging, Weaving, Creating Knowledge that is Deeply Co-Productive		
Implementation: **Implementation actions:**	**How to implement the actions:**	**Who to address the actions:**
Collaborate with Arctic Indigenous Peoples (governance) and address gaps in ethical research protocols that safeguard Indigenous intellectual property.	Trust is required for productive collaborations and healing from colonial-practice injuries to Indigenous communities must have time and space before Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers can at scale engage in the co-production necessary to use research as a means to correct global harms- enacting robust data governance in respect of Indigenous data sovereignty is one tool to aid in that healing process.	Research industry, especially PIs in addressing project data management plans and adapting any university or institute language to uphold Indigenous Data Sovereignty
Create space for genuine dialogue and collaboration across cultural backgrounds, including mentorship opportunities and strengths-based growth for researchers	This encompasses changes to research project timelines (generally longer than the status quo), expectations for relationship building (more time in community for researchers to move beyond transactional which current funding calls may be inadequately structured for), and valuation of researcher time engaged in these activities (such as university tenure processes recognizing mentorship and relationship building as at least as important as the production of minimally novel publications). This also looks like credentialing Indigenous Knowledge-holders with academic equivalencies to recognize their contributions in mentoring non-Indigenous researchers towards better practices of co-production.	Industry, focus on research institutions (funders, academic centers, universities)
Promote land-based education and research practices in Indigenous and other Arctic communities	Similar to above, likely to require changes to research organizations/institutions in the ways they incentivize researcher activities.	Industry, focus on research institutions (funders, academic centers, universities)
Related to both above, created spaces that foster growth to increase strengths (skills) of researchers and promote land-based education, Indigenous-led teaching of Indigenous constructs for non-local research staff	Support, fund, and promote Indigenous faculty within academic settings to create and maintain curricula and coursework for local and non-local (and Indigenous and non-Indigenous) students; these classes might look like technical credentials, continuing education, certificates, minors, majors, and/or graduate level	Research orgs and universities
Decolonize education systems in the Arctic to reduce attrition of Indigenous students and increase recognition of capable research partners	Researchers could seek to understand the “leaks” in the academic “pipeline” that result in a disparity of academically credentialed Indigenous persons and seek to address those by either changing the educational environment over which they have significant influence (through documenting and creating data used by policymakers for all levels of education) and advocate directly for decolonial changes, such as their own institutions recognizing equivalencies for Indigenously educated partners.	Industry, focus on research institutions (funders, academic centers, universities)
Meaningfully involve community members in all aspects of research projects, from design to analysis, including application and archiving of data and output materials	Researchers start or continue to meaningfully involve community members in all aspects of research projects, from design to analysis, including application and archiving of data and output materials	Research professionals, especially PIs; funders could incentivize this
Emphasize transparency, accountability for researchers as white-collar professionals.	Metrics of researchers that engage in various degrees of co-production should be published and part of their promotion and tenure within academic systems; Research industry recognition of both professionals that engage in and fail to engage in ethical research practices should be the norm, as is customary with other professionals. This is another tool to build trust with community members and is necessary to engage with Indigenous Peoples who have been harmed by past unethical practices and activities conducted by the research industry.	Research professional organizations; research institutions/universities

Priority 3: Bridging, Weaving, Creating Knowledge that is Deeply Co-Productive		
Implementation: **Implementation actions:**	**How to implement the actions:**	**Who to address the actions:**
Inclusion of diverse Indigenous perspectives	Remember, co-production of knowledge is just two or more knowledge systems. Further, each Indigenous People has a complete cosmology, epistemology, and fully functional knowledge system on which to draw, meaning that external researchers should not simply import or expect Indigenous perspectives from other places to replace engagement with local Indigenous partners (though external Indigenous perspectives may be welcome and helpful to any given project)	PIs, primarily
Recognize and respect the timelines necessary for collaboration and the approaches to timing (ways of considering time) that vary across knowledge systems	See trust-building, relationship-building, also recognizing that Indigenous Knowledge Systems may be on a significantly longer scale than most status-quo Western trained researchers who are within the modern paradigm that shortchanges long-term understanding with too much emphasis on the immediate.	Funders, PIs, academic institutions
Develop policies that ensure Indigenous entities' control over data governance, and as a minimum standard, ensure alignment with the OCAP principles (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession)*. *and others	This is in support of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and ethical research practices, and is a necessary step in building genuinely co-productive relationships that rely on trust to function.	Research institutes and organizations

Priority 4: Use critical research activities (on the research industry) as a means to decolonize and heal from colonial practices		
Spatial scale:	Local, regional, global, pan-Arctic	
Time scale:	Now	
Funding requirements and potential sources:	Status quo funding but shift in practices (change what is incentivized)	
Infrastructure needs and requirements:	Existing systems/institutions	
Data needs and requirements:	Western researchers have knowledge gaps, but must be the parties to identify what they don't know.	
Implementation: **Implementation actions:**	**How to implement the actions:**	**Who to address the actions:**
Individual researchers are expected to have a baseline of knowledge in the history of colonization of the Arctic and its past and ongoing impacts on Indigenous nations broadly as well as local residents of any area they wish to research	Minimum education requirements for engagement in Arctic research;	Funders could require education/experience minimums before funding PIs to engage in Arctic work; Research institutions could institute continuing education requirements on their staff prior to approving their proposals to seek funding for Arctic projects.
Individual researchers engage in critical reflection of the colonial systems within which they operate and which Indigenous communities are subject to.	Support for researchers engaging in critical reflective work.	Funding support and institutional support for academically trained researchers who engage in critical theory work.
Research institutions recognize and respect the work of critical theorists who seek to illuminate and advocate for changes to systems that create or maintain harm to Indigenous communities, especially in the Arctic.	Validate and value critical systems analysis.	Funding support and institutional support for academically trained researchers who engage in critical theory work.

Priority 4: Use critical research activities (on the research industry) as a means to decolonize and heal from colonial practices		
Implementation: **Implementation actions:**	**How to implement the actions:**	**Who to address the actions:**
Research institutions contribute to the advocacy to policymakers on updating system approaches to reduce harm and no longer maintain disparities for Arctic communities.	Promote and enhance communication about work that is critical of harmful systems.	Funding support and institutional support for academically trained researchers who engage in critical theory work; incentivize those who are effective at reaching policymakers and broader communities outside the Arctic.
Research activities shift towards practices of non-harm and then ethical engagement with Indigenous communities such that research is not an extractive industry.	Introduce ceremony into research activities, at least moments to set good intentions for gathering. Set meeting agreements and code of conducts. Practice being in relation that prioritizes trust, reciprocity (give without expectation of receiving), and long-term commitments.	Research and meeting conveners.



Marie Bulinova

Priority 5: Decolonize research spaces, allowing Arctic Indigenous researchers to remain integrated in their communities, employ self -government practices, and access the research community.		
Spatial scale:	Pan-research community	
Time scale:	Now and continuous	
Funding requirements and potential sources:	Concerted effort from research leading orgs, like IASC, to engage in this work	
Infrastructure needs and requirements:	• Collaborative space for non-Indigenous researchers to come together and help each other take steps to decolonize the research industry • Validation processes of research priorities, practices, evaluation of improvements from Indigenous Peoples organizations	
Data needs and requirements:	Western researchers have knowledge gaps, but must be the parties to identify what they don't know.	
Implementation: **Implementation actions:**	**How to implement the actions:**	**Who to address the actions:**
Non-Indigenous researchers analyze the systems within which they work to identify barriers to the inclusion of broad perspectives or use of co-productive approaches.	Critical self-reflection to identify existing challenges for those from diverse lived experiences to participate in all aspects of the research industry and/or highlights of ways that the research industry has been inclusive from an intersectional lens. This should include those with expertise being able to participate without giving up connection to full lives in relationship with their homelands and communities.	Those with the most privilege (access, prestige) in the existing system have the most responsibility to engage in this work;
Non-Indigenous researchers analyze the systems within which they work to identify elements of policy and/or practice that exclude those from backgrounds other than the majority.	Critical self-reflection to identify existing challenges created by the research industry that drive away individuals who have experiences and values that differ from the colonial norm, or exclude them completely. E.g. policies that limit payment for contributions to those with a western degree.	Those with the most privilege (access, prestige) in the existing system have the most responsibility to engage in this work;
Research organizations promote and incentivize the equitable representation of professionals with diverse backgrounds and perspectives (including lived experiences and educational choices) at all levels of the research industry (decisionmaking, planning, working on projects, etc.)	Conversely, leading research organizations could disincentivize research entities (from professional orgs to individual projects) that bring only narrow experience, accounting for lived and educational backgrounds.	Research industry professionals, esp. Professional organizations
Consider and weigh (count, value) the role of interdisciplinary and intergenerational knowledge transfer in research proposals for ensuring and strengthening healthy and vibrant communities.	Adjust criteria for grading and funding research proposals to include these considerations and the expertise needed to be successful in providing for the communication and stewardship of produced knowledge.	Research industry professionals, esp. Professional organizations
Develop policies that ensure equitable recognition for the contributions of all research partners, including valuing the time and expertise shared in all aspects of the research process, the risks and opportunity costs undertaken by partners, and consensual use and management of all created data and products.	Investment of time in improving the structures of research activities, such as authorship, compensation, and other methods to recognize contributors. This would protect intellectual property, enable appropriate access, and support ethical practices at all stages of the research process.	Research professionals.

4.2. Implementation of the Cross-Cutting Priorities

Note: RPT5 is an inherently cross-cutting effort and as such does not have a separate list of cross-cutting priorities. We have, however, reviewed all other RPT reports to advise and develop appropriate cross-cutting priorities informed by the perspective of Indigenous scholars working within Arctic research.



Mariasilvia Giamberini

5. Recommendations on how to track the Implementation of the ICARP IV Outcomes over the next decade

Implementation action	How to track?	Who to track?	How to include in the IPY-5 planning?
1. Increasing, in amount and source, dedicated funding for Indigenous-led research and strengthen the legal protection of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge	Count what is available at baseline and record if/when dedicated funding for Indigenous-led research in the Arctic is created or added.	ICARP/IASC	Set an expectation in published ICARP IV priorities that this metric be present in all IPY-official projects.
2. Arctic Research prioritizes projects that meet Arctic community-defined needs	Survey/evaluation in partnership with Arctic communities, such as Arctic mayor's forum or other selection of leaders of Arctic communities.		Arctic research should prioritize projects that address needs defined by Arctic communities themselves. Community-defined prioritiesProjects are selected and designed based on priorities set by Arctic Indigenous Peoples and local communities, not only by external scientific agendas. Funding, methods, and outcomes are aligned with community wellbeing, rights, and long-term relationships to land and ice.
3. Bridging, Weaving, Creating Knowledge that is Deeply Co-Productive is normalized in Arctic research practice.	A practical way to track implementation is to build a structured, five-year monitoring and learning framework linked to ICARP priorities, ASSW governance, and emerging IPY5 principles on co-production of knowledge. Define goals and indicatorsStart by translating "Bridging, Weaving, Creating Knowledge that is Deeply Co-Productive" into a small set of concrete objectives (e.g., Indigenous leadership, co-designed projects, community benefit, data governance, and long-term relationships). For each objective, define a few qualitative and quantitative indicators, such as proportion of projects co-designed with Indigenous partners, number of Indigenous-led research grants, presence of Indigenous governance bodies in projects, and documented community outcomes. Embed monitoring in ICARP/ASSW structures Use the ICARP implementation/steering structures to require periodic reporting (e.g., every two years) on these indicators from IASC working groups, partner organizations, and major Arctic programs. At ASSW, dedicate a recurring implementation session where networks present progress, challenges, and course corrections, with a synthetic "state of co-productive Arctic research" report published at year 5 to feed directly into IPY planning. Center co-production and Indigenous rights Align tracking criteria with current guidance on co-production in Arctic research, including early co-design, shared governance, Indigenous evaluation methods, and benefit to Arctic rightsholders rather than only to science. Involve Indigenous organizations as co-owners of the monitoring process itself (e.g., co-chairing an implementation advisory group), so that "bridging" and "weaving" are assessed against Indigenous-defined standards and rights-based frameworks, not only institutional metrics.		

Implementation action	How to track?	Who to track?	How to include in the IPY-5 planning?
4. Research activities (on the research industry) as a means to decolonize and heal from colonial practices	Create a matrix showcasing research as a means to decolonize and heal		Research on the research system can itself be a decolonizing and healing practice when it exposes and transforms colonial power relations in knowledge production. Decolonizing researchStudying research institutions, agendas, and funding can reveal how colonial logics are reproduced and support shifts toward Indigenous governance, rights, and co-production as norms.Healing through transformationWhen led or co-led by Indigenous scholars and communities, this work helps name harms, validate experience, and redesign research practices to support relational accountability, land, culture, and community wellbeing.
5. Decolonize research spaces, allowing Arctic Indigenous researchers to remain integrated in their communities and access the research community	Honor the inherent collective rights of Indigenous Peoples		Decolonizing research spaces means reshaping structures so Arctic Indigenous researchers can stay rooted in their own communities while fully participating in academic and research networks.Decolonize research spacesTransform institutional norms, governance, and ethics so that Indigenous languages, protocols, and land-based relations are treated as core to research, not peripheral.Shift power and resources toward Indigenous-defined priorities, ensuring that research timelines, methods, and outputs are accountable to Arctic Indigenous communities.Support integrated participationCreate flexible positions, funding, and mobility schemes that allow researchers to live in or regularly return to their home communities while accessing labs, infrastructures, and networks.Build partnership models where community institutions and universities are co-equal hosts of research, enabling Indigenous researchers to move easily between both worlds without being forced to “leave home” to do science.

6. Best Practices for Co-Production of Knowledge and Indigenous-led Arctic Research

Best practices for co-production of knowledge and Indigenous-led methodologies in the Arctic are rooted in equitable partnership, respect for relational accountability, and recognition of both knowledge systems as complementary. Indigenous-led methodologies in Arctic research prioritize self-determination, cultural safety, and equitable partnerships.

Below is a set of best practices and examples derived from current initiatives across the circumpolar North, supported by collaborative frameworks and case studies.

Foundational Principles

- Centering Indigenous Leadership: Research must be directed by Indigenous communities, with projects like BIRGEJUPMI exemplifying strong Indigenous leadership in setting objectives, methodologies, and outcomes. (Silan, 2025)
- Self-Determination: Land claims treaties (e.g., Canada) institutionalize co-management, ensuring Indigenous control over resource governance and knowledge integration. (Zellen, 2025)
- Creating ethical space through learning from Indigenous methodologies. Two-Eyed Seeing: Combining Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, as practiced in co-production frameworks, enriches understanding while respecting cultural integrity. (Marshall & Bartlett, 2010; Silan, 2025)
- Two-Eyed Seeing in Fisheries Research and Management (has great resources) (Reid et al., 2021)

Methodological Approaches

Prerequisite: Building Relationships

Relationship-building is widely recognized as a foundational step for genuine knowledge co-production in Arctic research. Co-production of knowledge in the Arctic refers to equitable, collaborative processes that bring together Indigenous Knowledge Systems and (often Western) science to address shared challenges. Achieving “true” co-production requires more than simply integrating different knowledge sources – it demands deep partnership grounded in trust and mutual respect. This is especially important given the history of extractive and colonial research in the Arctic, which fostered mistrust by sidelining Indigenous Peoples’ perspectives (Ellam Yua et al., 2022).

In response, Arctic communities and researchers now emphasize that building strong relationships is a prerequisite to any meaningful joint research. “Before any work can start, a relationship needs to be established and trust needs to be built to allow for a meaningful partnership to develop over time,” advises the engagement protocols developed by ICC Alaska.

In other words, researchers must invest time in listening, learning, and establishing trust with Indigenous partners before launching co-produced projects. This upfront commitment to relationship-building helps ensure that knowledge co-production efforts are ethical, reciprocal, and grounded in mutual understanding rather than repeating past imbalances (ICC Alaska).

Sample Co-Production Protocols

- Co-Planning: Jointly define research questions and methods (e.g., Arctic Rivers Project's Indigenous Advisory Council). https://www.colorado.edu/research/arctic-rivers/indigenous-advisory-council#:~:text=The%20Council%20is%20an%20advisory,it%20is%20intended%20to%20serve.
- Co-Delivery: Engage communities in data collection, as seen in permafrost research where local knowledge identified critical sites missed by remote mapping. (Barnard & Archambault, 2024)
- Co-Assessment: Evaluate outcomes collaboratively to ensure usefulness and ethical alignment 5.
- Co-Production Framework for the Arctic (Ellam Yua et al., 2022)
- Glossary of Yup'ik, Inupiaq, and St. Lawrence Island Yupik terms for research, science, policy and management concepts (Kawerak, 2019)

Community-Led Practices:

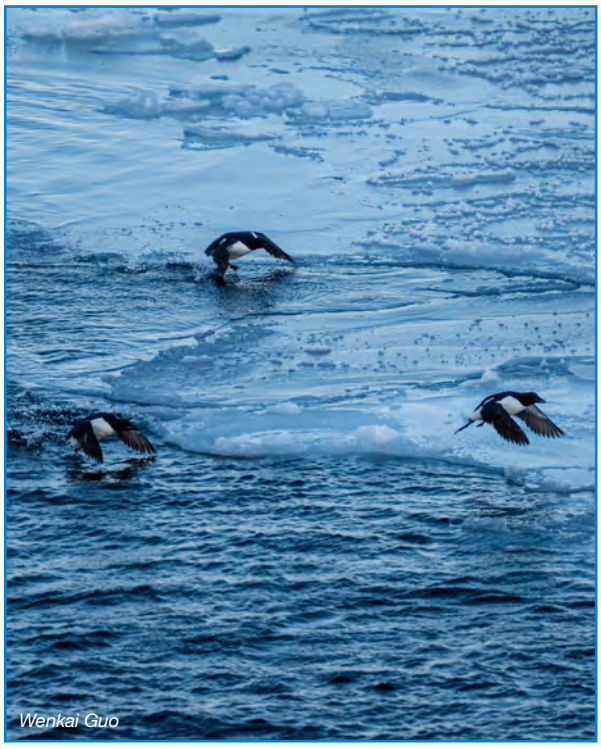
- Revitalizing Traditional Knowledge: Projects like river restoration by the Skolt Sámi demonstrate how Indigenous ecological knowledge drives effective conservation.(Weichenrieder, 2024)
- Youth Engagement: Prioritize youth voices in climate adaptation planning, as in BIRGEJUPMI's focus on intergenerational visioning. (Silan, 2025)
- Art-Based Methods: Use Indigenous art and handicraft for environmental coping and knowledge transmission. (Silan, 2025)
- The Canada-Inuit-Nunangat-UK Arctic Research Program (CINUK), a collaboration between the UK and Canadian Government funding and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami was built upon an innovative memorandum of understanding ensuring equitable and appropriate outcomes to the funded research. Given ITK was engaged from the start it enabled Indigenous leadership to guide the funding proposal call. ITK was influential in guiding the research in Inuit Nunangat to align with the National Inuit Strategy on Research (NISR; ITK 2018) that has 5 priority areas to support Indigenous self-determination in research. It centered Indigenous leadership at each stage of the research process from proposal development to project implementation and dissemination. All 13 CINUK projects have representation from multiple disciplines of research, including environmental, social, cultural, health, design and engineering. Sharing learnings across funding agencies is important to provide understanding of the resources and processes required to operationalise these collaborative funding calls. Website link: https://www.cinuk.org/about/

Challenges and Solutions in Arctic Research

Challenge 1: Non-Indigenous researchers often lack protocols for ethical engagement.

Solutions:

- Adopt models like the NSF's co-production guidelines, requiring Indigenous involvement at all research stages4. / Action at the national level - example from Canada
  - As recommended in the Truth and Reconciliation Committee summary report: Provide necessary funding to post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal schools to bring Indigenous Knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms [Actions 62.2 and 62.3] (Government of Canada, 2015)
  - Require researchers/teams to align with guidance documents such as the National Inuit Strategy on research: which presents priority areas to support self-determination in research. (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018)
  - Design



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Challenge 2: Power Imbalances: Historical marginalization in conservation.

Solution: Shift to Indigenous-led conservation, where communities define priorities (e.g., Kalaallit Nunaat initiatives)7. (Buschman & Sudlovenick, 2023)

Case Studies

- Co-production across Indigenous nations, between two or more Indigenous Peoples is still co-produced, regardless of the engagement of Western trained thought. While academic research supports fewer of these works to reference (so far), future academic work should recognize these cross-worldview examples of co-production.
- Alaska/Siberia Ethnographic Exchange: Indigenous anthropologists developed localized methodologies by translating hunting/herding partnerships into research collaborations8.
- Sámi River Restoration: Community-led habitat revival using traditional knowledge improved biodiversity and food security 1.
- Indigenous-led community-based monitoring: community-based environmental monitoring program co-developed to monitor environmental contaminants through an approach that fostered Indigenous-leadership in the research process over time 12 (Mercer et al., 2024)

Future Directions

- Support Arctic Indigenous youth and Elders, Indigenous scholars, and early career researchers in reducing barriers to engage in this work (training, funding, networking opportunities → relationship building, scholarships)
- Global Indigenous Youth Summit on Climate Change 2024 (https://futureearth.org/event/global-indigenous-youth-summit-on-climate-change-2024/)
- Diversify funding sources, a regional coalition of funders (national, international, private, foundations, etc.) supporting Indigenous-led and co-produced methodologies, allow time for relationship building – Recommendation for IASC to lead this drive and provide/fundraise dedicated sources of funding separate from politics and other barriers to participation. Funding community-led monitoring/research.
- Highlight and celebrate the successes of Indigenous-led and Co-produced Methodologies in the Arctic → Examples for other regions, particularly in the Global South – and across environmental & climate sciences, conservation and management.

Indigenous-led co-production transforms research from extraction to empowerment, advancing resilience through self-determined knowledge systems. Success hinges on honoring sovereignty, fostering intergenerational dialogue, and institutionalizing equitable partnerships.



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Wenkai Guo

Appendix 1: About RPT 5

1.1. Approaches / Methods used to complete the RPT 5 tasks

RPT5's work began at the ASSW 2024 in Edinburgh, Scotland. This work was grounded in Indigenous methodologies, including relational, land-informed, and community-centred approaches. The workshops were guided by principles of ceremony, protocol and Sharing Circles, ensuring respectful dialogue, collective responsibility, and the honouring of all voices and knowledges shared. Anita Lafferty, Harmony Wayner, Norma Shorty, Stacey Lucason, Louise Mercer, Chelsea Koch, and Amanda Young planned and hosted the ASSW 2024 workshop. Stacey Lucason and Amanda Young took detailed notes grounded in these relational practices, while Tracey Skillington and Sophie Weeks, in addition to the co-chairs and secretaries, supported the preparation of the workshop report. Sophie Weeks also helped organize presentation opportunities for RPT5.

The in-person workshops at ASSW 2024 included the production of a workshop report, from which early and emerging research needs and priorities were drawn. These priorities reflected collective insights shared through Indigenous-centred dialogue and were validated over two years through presentation, discussion, and refinement at various Arctic research boards, meetings, and gatherings. Primary responsibility for presenting to co-chairs of other ICARP IV RPTs and IASC staff supporting the process was undertaken by Stacey Lucason.

In 2025, RPT5 continued these conversations in Boulder, Colorado, during ASSW 2025. Collectively, we held a workshop titled Strengthening Indigenous Voices in Arctic Research: Progress and Future Directions for Indigenous-Led Projects and Co-Produced Knowledge [HYBRID]. This gathering again centred Indigenous methodologies and relational accountability, bringing participants together in respectful dialogue about engagement with Indigenous Arctic communities. Sessions focused on applying Indigenous methodologies, IASC's role in enhancing Indigenous representation, and identifying future research priorities through breakout discussions. The workshop concluded with a collaborative session to refine recommendations and chart next steps, reflecting a sustained commitment to ethical collaboration, reciprocity, and Indigenous leadership in Arctic research.

Additionally, the ICARP IV Summit, part of ASSW 2025, included a Town Hall hosted by RPT5, along with many individual scholar and project sessions relevant to this RPT. Nearly 70 sessions at ASSW 2025 and the ICARP IV Summit identified their content as relevant to RPT5. Notes, reflections, and comments from these sessions were gathered by RPT5 members and respectfully considered in the writing of this report, with care taken to honour the contributions and insights shared.

An ICARP IV Indigenous Peoples' Coordination Group was established with the support of IASC in early 2024 as an informal body composed of Arctic Indigenous individuals engaged in the ICARP IV Research Priority Teams and or the ICARP IV International Steering Committee. Their work is distinct from this report and should be read alongside materials produced by RPT5. Similarly, the Navigating the New Arctic Community Office supported the development of an Indigenous Caucus and Pavilion during the ICARP IV Summit. Reports and materials from these efforts should also be read alongside RPT5 outputs as part of the broader landscape of Indigenous scholar and community feedback informing ICARP IV.

1.2. Overlaps and Synergies with other RPTs

This RPT focused on Co-Productive and Indigenous-led Research is formed as an inherently cross-cutting effort and so all priorities listed are cross-cutting. We have also committed to the serious review and advising on reports produced by all other RPTs to look for enhancements of identified priorities to align with Indigenous perspectives on the ways all Arctic research can be more co-productive and/or driven by Indigenous leadership.

1.3. RPT 5 Membership

Co-Chairs and Secretaries served from the ASSW 2025 through the writing of the ICARP IV Report. Indigenous Co-Chairs: Anita Lafferty (Dene, member of Liidlii Kue First Nation), Stacey Lucason (Yup'ik, citizen Ninilchik Tribe), Norma Shorty (Arctic Athabaskan Council and Tlingit, member of Kwanlin Dun First Nation), Non-Indigenous Secretaries: Chelsea Koch, Louise Mercer, Amanda Young.

Members and contributors to the RPT report: Vanessa Raymond, Margaret Rudolf, May-Britt Öhman, Christine Ingemann, Tracey Skillington. Poetry contributed by: Niillas Beaska.

RPT5 Members* who were selected by IASC ahead of ASSW 2024 and/or opted-in during in-person attendance at ASSW 2024 and/or the ASSW 2025 workshop hosted by RPT5; Seven ICARP IV Research Priority Teams (RPTs) were created after an open nomination process that currently include 209 members from 28 countries (per IASC website).

Total participation in RPT5 workshops was nearly 100 individuals across the two years;

ICARP IV online survey and Summit Townhall attendance feedback were also used to inform this report (participation may have included individuals also in workshops and numbers nearly another 100 individuals).

*Only those included on the IASC website and attending either a workshop or online meeting are noted here:

Name	Affiliation	Country
Co-Chairs		
Anita Lafferty	University of Alberta	Canada
Stacey Lucason	Kawerak, Inc.	United States
Norma Shorty		Canada
Secretaries		
Chelsea Koch	American University	United States
Louise Mercer	Northumbria University	United Kingdom
Amanda Young	University of Alaska Fairbanks	United States
Members		
Christine Ingemann	Centre for Public Health in Greenland, University of Southern Denmark & Ilisimatusarfik - University of Greenland | Greenland	Denmark / Greenland
May-Britt Ohman	Uppsala University	Sweden
Andrey Petrov	ARCTICenter, University of Northern Iowa	United States
Vanessa Raymond	Arctic Data Committee	United States
Tracey Skillington	University College Cork,	Ireland
Harmony Wayner	International Arctic Research Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks | Alaska	United States
Sophie Weeks	Scott Polar Research Institute, Polar Educators International	United Kingdom
Tatiana Degai	University of Victoria	Canada
Heather Sauyaq Jean Gordon	Sauyaq Solutions, LLC	United States
Eben Hopson	Eben Hopson Media | Inupiaq	United States
Laurie-Ann Lines	Yellowknives Dene First Nation | University of Alberta	Canada
Annette Scheepstra	University of Groningen	Netherlands
Viacheslav Shadrin	The Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North, Siberian Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences	Russian Federation

Appendix 2: Results from ASSW 2024 workshop

Research as Relationship – Moving beyond extractive models to research that is reciprocal, accountable, and rooted in trust.

Indigenous Governance in Knowledge Production – Prioritizing Indigenous-led research, Indigenous and co-productive methodologies, data sovereignty, and decision-making power.

Healing Through Knowledge – Recognizing research as a pathway for resurgence, language revitalization, land protection, and community well-being.

Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer – Ensuring that research is not only shaped by Indigenous youth, Elders, and scholars today but strengthens future generations.

Action-Oriented Research – Knowledge must lead to tangible benefits for Indigenous communities, shaping policies, education, and governance structures.



Sigurður Árnason



ICARP IV Research Priority Team (RPT) 5. Final Report: Co-Production and Indigenous-led Arctic Research

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