

UArctic Congress (Online)  
May 15-18 2021

## Session Description

### Time

Monday May 17, 2021, 17.00 - 18.00 GMT (Iceland time zone)

### Theme/ Title

***Local environmental change and planning for resilience across the Arctic***

### Co-Chairs/ Co-Conveners

- Jeff Birchall, School of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Alberta, Canada  
TN Lead, Local-scale Planning, Climate Change and Resilience  
- Primary contact: [jeff.birchall@ualberta.ca](mailto:jeff.birchall@ualberta.ca); 780-248-5758
- Sigridur Kristjansdottir, Planning and Design, Agricultural University of Iceland, Iceland

### Overview

Climate change is one of the most critical and complex challenges facing local government decision-makers. With models projecting additional increases in global temperature, the need for adaptation to minimize the risks of climate change is pressing and urgent.

Adaptation is particularly important at the local scale, where decision-makers represent both the level of government nearest to the impacts, and the communities directly affected by the changing climate. Indeed, community, local, and regional leaders have an opportunity to improve their community's resilience through incorporation of adaptation thinking with policy tools such as strategic plans, zoning and regulations. Yet, as climate change garners local government attention, evidence suggests adaptation efforts are often fragmented, and/or reactionary, instead of anticipatory or forward thinking in nature.

This session aims to contribute to the priority theme ***People and Communities in the Arctic (resilient communities)***. In particular, this session will explore local climate stressors (impacts) from across the Arctic, and discuss the decision-dynamics around why and how communities incorporate (or fail to incorporate) planning for adaptation into strategic policy and practice. This lens will help unpack the role of decision-makers and institutions in facilitating an adaptation agenda, the influence of leadership and knowledge, and how historical policy decisions have contributed to the current state of climate action, and what this may mean moving forward. Further, this session will highlight the importance of meaningful engagement of local communities and key stakeholders throughout the policy and planning process.

## **Structure**

### **Part 1 - Opening remarks**

- **Jeff Birchall** (University of Alberta, Canada)
  - *Local environmental change and planning for resilience across the Arctic*

### **Part 2 - Presentations**

- **Karin Buhmann** (Copenhagen Business School, Denmark)
  - *Adapting Arctic communities to local-scale environmental resilience through involvement of local communities and stakeholders: insights from regulatory theory and environmental planning law*
- **Tristan Pearce** (University of Northern British Columbia, Canada)
  - *Traditional knowledge and adaptation to climate change in the Canadian Arctic*
- **Svetlana Kuznetsova** (Northern Arctic Federal University, Russia)
  - *Environmental change and resilience planning in the Russian Arctic*
- **Gunn-Britt Retter** (Saami Council, Norway)
  - *Meaningful engagement of Arctic Indigenous Peoples in resilience planning*

### **Part 3 - Audience Questions**

### **Part 4 – Closing remarks**

- **Sigrídur Kristjansdóttir** (Agricultural University of Iceland, Iceland)
  - *Pros and cons of future planning in the Arctic*