



CHARTER EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP

Deliverable 7.10

Grant Agreement Number: 869471

Project Acronym: CHARTER

Project title: Drivers and Feedbacks of Changes in Arctic Terrestrial Biodiversity

Starting Date: 01/08/2020

Project Duration: 48 months

Project Officer: Alberto Zocchi

Project Coordinator: Bruce Forbes / LAY

Author: LAY

Contributing partners: LAY



Co-financed by the Connecting Europe Facility of the European Union



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Due Submission Date: 31/07/2021

(was extended until the beginning of September after discussing with CHARTER PO)

Actual Submission Date: 7/09/2021

Status	
Draft	x
Final	

Type		
R	Document, report	x
DEM	Demonstrator, pilot, prototype	
DEC	Websites, patent fillings, videos, etc.	
OTHER		

Dissemination level		
PU	Public	x
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (incl. the Commission services)	

Revision history:

Date	Lead author(s)	Comments
30/08/2021	Sirpa Rasmus	1 st draft version
01/09/2021	Markku Heikkilä	2 nd draft version
07/09/2021	Coordination team / LAY	Final version 1.0, submitted



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CHARTER Expert Advisory Group

The need for an advisory body for CHARTER was acknowledged and potential members consulted already during the project planning phase.

The Expert Advisory Group (EAG) was officially established during the three first project months (1.8.-31.10.2020). The potential members were contacted again and confirmed, and CHARTER Steering Committee approved the EAG in the first SC meeting on 8.10.2020.

The EAG consist of selected experts who have understanding of the project content and can discuss the interests of stakeholder groups and how the project can benefit the society and communicate with it. In the beginning of the project, the EAG had representatives from following institutes / regions. The experts represent, among others, ministries and reindeer herders:

- Science Communications unit at the Arctic Centre, Univ. of Lapland, Finland
- Saami Reindeer Herders' Association, Norway
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland (reindeer husbandry related issues in Finland and Nordic ministerial level collaboration)
- Ministry of the Environment, Finland (Biodiversity related issues)
- Saarivuoma sameby, Sweden/Norway
- Administration of Inter-Regional and Scientific Activities, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Russia (Dept. for the Coordination of Scientific Activities)
- Div. of Environmental Communication, Swedish Univ. of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden

The EAG is chaired by Markku Heikkilä, the Head of the Science Communications unit at the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland.

During this first year two replacements of members happened. The original EAG member from Russia (from the Department for the Coordination of Scientific Activities and Vice-Director of the Administration of Inter-Regional and Scientific Activities, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug) was replaced with a representative from Arctic Research Station in Labytnangi, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug. This change was made in mutual understanding with the Yamal administration. The Environment Counsellor from the Ministry of the Environment, Finland, retired, but her successor with similar responsibilities was introduced to the EAG.



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Activities of the CHARTER EAG during the first project year

As the first task, CHARTER coordination (LAY) drafted a **non-disclosure agreement** (NDA) between the project partners and the EAG members. This was done to record the terms upon which the project and EAG members are prepared to make any confidential information available to each other. The NDA was approved and signed by all CHARTER partner institutes and all EAG members. New or replacement members also sign an accession document to the NDA.

Some members of the EAG attended the First **European Polar Science Week** (organised online by the European Space Agency and the European Commission, with support from EU PolarNet) in October 2020 and contributed to the whitepaper, related to this event

The CHARTER EAG has organized two meetings so far. The COVID-19 -related health concerns and travel restrictions have not allowed physical meetings so far. Remote meetings have been organized using the Zoom video conferencing tool.

The agenda of meetings has been drafted with the CHARTER lead and the EAG chair, and input has been asked from CHARTER WP-leaders and EAG members. In the meetings, EAG members have reported their CHARTER-related activities, experiences, policy processes and such. The EAG has been briefed by the project leader and manager about the ongoing CHARTER work and plans, and these have been discussed. Meeting minutes have been circulated within the EAG soon after each meeting and discussions can be had through email also between the meetings. CHARTER WP-leaders have been briefed shortly about the EAG discussions and comments and recommendations have been forwarded to relevant WPs / researchers.

The first EAG member was organized 10th November 2020. CHARTER project lead introduced the CHARTER project and the EAG members introduced themselves.

The chair explained the planned role of the EAG. The EAG will maintain close contact with the project and it can raise critical questions, comments and recommendations to the project partners. The EAG acts also as a bridge between the actual project and wider society, thus also enhancing the dialogue with policy makers. CHARTER lead explained why he picked this kind of group and what he is expecting: the group is diverse and CHARTER wants to learn from it. Constructing feedback and



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stakeholder perspective is hoped for; regular advice and iterative process between the project and stakeholder groups / society. Reindeer husbandry works in multi-use landscape and climate change is an issue that cannot be avoided any more. Project needs to hear experiences from siida level to ministerial level.

The EAG members commented and raised some questions:

- CHARTER work described sounds relevant for the future work in reindeer sector in Finland. Government wants to develop sustainable, culturally viable reindeer sector, here considering different grazing regimes and climate feedback loops are important. CHARTER can provide useful knowledge for the ministry work. The member from Sweden also asked about possibilities to participate in the ongoing process on reindeer herding act in Sweden.
- Building on existing data / synthesizing is a good approach. Key issue is that herders are not part of herding policy issues. Also in CHARTER this will be a challenge - problems are not easily framed (like over-grazing), there is need for broader, political, critical perspective. What sustainable trajectories might look like? What is sustainable from herding perspective? Values are not necessarily shared, and it is difficult to address certain world views.
- CHARTER should not forget its media profile and outreach to wider audience.

The second meeting was organized 15th April 2021. The EAG members shared relevant news, updates and information. Future of reindeer husbandry working group in Finland has been delayed due to bad winter 2019-20, difficult winter conditions and COVID-19 led to financial difficulties in herding districts, ministry has been working on this. The group will start the work soon. Finland's new arctic strategy will soon become public in May and Finnish CAFF chairmanship will start in May 2021 (with linkages to CHARTER work).

After this, the project lead went through a presentation about CHARTER progress. Work package leaders had sent short updates about the work carried out and planned, as well as some illustrative maps.

One discussion point was collecting snow data from Northern Fennoscandia. Rain-on-snow events and icing of the snow cover is one important aspect of CHARTER. For satellite data interpretation, snow observations are needed. Because



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researchers have not been able to do field work as planned, a simple snow observation protocol has been developed and shared with colleagues, friends, and some reindeer herders living in CHARTER region.

Project summaries were also mentioned, these are available in many languages (including two Saami languages and Nenets): <http://www.charter-arctic.org/suomi-sami-nordic/>

The EAG members were pleased to hear that many activities are already being carried out. There were some comments and questions:

- Summer/winter migration impacts, and policy options will be interesting to the Ministries. In Finland, herding communities will be preparing their management plans after 2 years or so. Ministries need advice when planning these new tools.
- Reflection on biodiversity variables. Are there connections to other concepts or framings, such as “healthy herds” or “healthy lands”, these can help to bridge and improve the development of future scenarios. CHARTER has the opportunity to make a novel contribution in terms of the concept of “biodiversity” narrative. The policy-discourse about biodiversity, this does not necessarily resonate how herders see it, it would be good to make this shown.
- What is a beautiful herd vs. the one that the government wants you to have, i.e. one focused on yearling animals, or the how many animals are artificially fed with supplementary nutrition. What is the herder to do when they want to stop the supplemental feeding? How does the politician (deciding on feeding subsidies, possibilities for alternative pastures etc.) receive and process this information? How does the reindeer herding practices now affect the biodiversity, compared to earlier decades?

The EAG discussed the risks with regard to requesting input to CHARTER, which becomes an “invited space”? Whose opinions are missing? How to plan or organise the co-productive workshops in the current COVID situation? Comments by the EAG members:

- Which legitimacy and actors are needed? What kind of indigenous representatives do we want, depends on what is needed.
- Policy in research projects, which herding communities will be involved. Good to have variety in herding communities.



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- Social media can be a useful tool. Try to reach out beyond the organizations.
- Important to inform what is the value and relevance of the work, and how does it translate to a more general, i.e. public way of knowing. Not just to recruit, but also spread news and content.
- After COVID more can be done in digital form, but this is limited with regard to sensitive and complex issues, which require in-person meetings, “physical trust”. Mapping workshops can work well remotely. Digital workshops have the benefit that they can be flexibly re-scheduled for example according to the weather.

The EAG also agreed that collaboration with the Nordic ministerial level may be challenging but important.

About the EAG working methods it was concluded that regular EAG meetings are the best way to receive advice from the EAG. The EAG members prefer getting updated during the meeting (presentation describing concrete WP-level work, open questions), not by getting plenty of written material before the meeting.

Plans for the CHARTER EAG activities later during the project

CHARTER plans to continue biannual meetings with the EAG. The EAG is highly interested to follow the CHARTER work. Also CHARTER Work Package leaders and researchers see the value of the EAG and motivated to share the plans and concerns regularly with the group, and get feedback from the group.

Collaboration with the members of the EAG will be especially valuable towards the end of the project, when dissemination of project results is most active and contacts to various experts and stakeholders needed.

CHARTER PO has repeatedly reminded that the EAG advice will be an important contribution and he will follow the EAG work that is recorded in the minutes of the EAG meetings.

The EAG has discussed should there be a Northern American person in the EAG as well, to bring additional viewpoint into the discussions. Need for this and potential members will be discussed again with the CHARTER Steering Committee and the



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EAG during the autumn of 2021. After this CHARTER lead can contact the potential member.

Physical meetings will be organized after it becomes possible. On the other hand, remote meetings have certain advantages: members from several countries can more easily gather together, links and ideas shared also using a chat tool (and saved for further use) and attending the meetings is easier also for practitioners of reindeer herding, perhaps unable to travel to meetings easily.

The next EAG meeting is planned to take place after the CHARTER General Assembly, early October 2021, in Helsinki. Travel costs of EAG members will be covered by the project. For those who will not travel, there will be virtual meeting connections. The EAG can also follow the CHARTER General Assembly talk and meetings virtually or in place.



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