



## **First Annual meetings of the Steering Committee and the Expert Advisory Group**

Deliverable 7.11

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(s): CHARTER coordination team / LAY

The first CHARTER General Assembly was arranged as a hybrid meeting in the Helsinki congress center Paasitorni and in Zoom, 5th-7th October 2021. The GA was followed by a Steering Committee meeting for SC members (Thu 7th Oct 2021 afternoon) and Expert Advisory Group meeting (Fri 8th Oct 202).

This deliverable consists of Steering Committee (SC) meeting minutes and EAG meeting minutes.

## **CHARTER**

### **4<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee (SC) meeting minutes**

**Time:** 7.10.2021, 14-15:30 (Finnish time)

**Place:** Paasitorni (Paasivuorenkatu, Helsinki) and in Zoom

**Participants:** Nominated SC members

#### **1. Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda**

The meeting was opened at 14. There were no objections to the agenda.

#### **2. Quorum of the meeting**

*SC shall not deliberate and decide validly unless two-thirds of its Members are present or represented (quorum). Decisions shall be taken by two-thirds of the votes cast.*

There was quorum; these members were present in-person:

BGEOS/Annett Bartsch  
LAY/Bruce Forbes  
UCL/Julienne Stroeve  
UHAM/Otto Habeck  
UiT/Dorothee Ehrich  
UOXF/Marc Macias-Fauria  
UTU/Nora Fagerholm

These members were present remotely:

AWI/Heidrun Matthes  
FMI/Jouni Pulliainen  
LBHI/Isabel Barrio  
NINA/Cathrine Henaug  
NMBU/Andrei Marin  
NTNU/James Speed  
UEF/Timo Kumpula  
UH/Jussi Eronen  
ULIV/Richard Bradshaw  
Umu/Johan Olofsson  
UZH/Gabriela Schaepman-Strub  
WSL/Christian Rixen

UEDIN/Isla Myers-Smith and AU/Signe Normand were the only partners not represented. Karol Kowalski and Sirpa Rasmus from the CHARTER coordination team also attended the meeting.

### 3. CHARTER funding and person month use

LAY / CHARTER coordination had collected together the information about the funding and person month use by partner after project month 12. The tables showing the funding and person month use (during CHARTER months 6-12, and total for 1-12) had been shared one week prior to the meeting with the SC members. Consortium level funding and person month use, compared to planned total, had also been discussed during the CHARTER General Assembly days 5th-7th October 2021, prior to the SC meeting.

Funding and person month use was discussed. Some partners had not started to use the CHARTER funding, although work on tasks had been started using other funding sources (for example work done by permanent staff, or by post doc researchers getting salary from CHARTER but also from neighboring projects of the institute in question). Only some travelling money and money allocated to participatory work has been spent so far, because of remote work and all other COVID-related restrictions.

UmU and UTU informed the SC that their CHARTER post docs have started their work during recent months and this does not show yet in the 12m figures. Also, some other new post docs have started to work in CHARTER or collaborate with us. COVID-related restrictions and difficult work conditions have also caused problems: some post docs have left the consortium for one reason or another.

FMI confirmed that their fund use has been for infrastructure.

ULIV raised some concerns: they had already used significant fraction of the budget; they have actively worked on WP4 tasks and work will continue throughout the project. Bruce reminded that other partners will contribute to tasks as well, and there are ongoing plans within the consortium to apply further funding as well.

AWI has not started to use CHARTER funds for salaries yet (are meant for WP5 work). Bruce reminded that significant number of PMs will become available to WP5 through LAY China collaboration, hopefully during year 2022.

Partners with small funding shares need to plan their fund use schedule wisely, and they are doing this. Some have already used more than one fourth of their total budget, because the tasks were planned for this early period of project. Some others will contribute to tasks later during the project.

There was discussion about using the funds differently (moving funds one budget category to another) than in the CHARTER plan. Karol Kowalski confirmed this is acceptable but needs to be justified when doing reporting. Sub-contracting is an exception – new sub-contracting arrangements need the amendment of the Grant Agreement and we need to avoid this. In most cases buying services goes under budget category “other goods and services” and short-term salary arrangements - for example

with students - either under “personnel costs” or “other goods and services”. All employment contracts and arrangements need to be legal, of course, and follow the legal requirements of the country in question.

Also, it was discussed that the PM allocation (among partners and among Work Packages) will change from the originally planned allocation. Small (around 15%) deviations are acceptable and do not require actions. Larger ones need to be discussed with CHARTER PO. It was clear that most partners can get more than planned PMs, with wise planning of their budget use. This is only a positive thing and does not require actions.

Karol Kowalski stated that it is ok not to have used funds and person months during the first CHARTER year, if there is justification and planning behind this decision. But the fund and PM use needs to be planned, keeping in mind the schedule of tasks and WPs, linked to these funds and PMs. CHARTER will do the first periodic reporting after project month 18 (after Jan 2022) and here the fund and PM use will be inspected by the funder.

It was also decided, that LAY / coordination asks partners about their needs regarding moving funds one budget category to another, and also regarding changes in PM use / allocation. These will be collected together and discussed with our PO during October 2021.

Funding and person month use were approved by the SC; there were no objections.

#### **4. CHARTER progress**

Bruce Forbes and Sirpa Rasmus quickly went through the status of CHARTER deliverables and milestones. The progress of the project had been presented (especially the work carried out and planned by WPs) and thoroughly discussed in the CHARTER General Assembly 5th-7th October 2021 prior to the SC meeting. The GA minutes will be shared also with the SC members.

During the GA meeting it had become clear that all WPs have progressed – a lot of field work has been possible and also work on existing data sets etc. has progressed. On the other hand, some tasks are delayed or need to be carried out differently compared to the original work plan. Partners made it clear that quality of the work comes first – if we need to change the deliverable schedule or even content/form, we should do this if changed circumstances require this.

It was decided that LAY / coordination discusses these with all WP-leaders and then with our PO during October 2021. This way the deliverables and/or milestones needing postponement or other changes can be postponed or otherwise changed in time.

Some deliverables / reports consist of several parts, different partners responsible of these. It is ok to get some parts ready earlier than planned – or the whole deliverable / report ready earlier than planned. LAY / Coordination takes care of submitting the deliverable or informing the funder that certain milestone has been reached.

Non-cost extension of project period is possible (at least 6 months) but this needs to be discussed bit later (next GA?). In any case, Karol Kowalski advised partners and WP-

leaders to collect together justifications for extension already now. General postponement of all planned deliverables and milestones is not possible, every single one need to be discussed and agreed separately. But our PO is very flexible as long as there are reasons for changes.

CHARTER progress was approved by the SC; there were no objections.

The SC discussed about the dissemination of results and keeping consortium informed. The Grant Agreement and the Consortium Agreement state, to protect the interests of researchers involved: "Prior notice of any planned publication shall be given to the other Parties concerned at least 45 calendar days before the publication, together with sufficient information on the results it will disseminate."

There was discussion about what this means in practice, and what is the adequate mechanism to notify the partners. It was decided that partners keep this shared document (about manuscripts being written) updated:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1WKkdMbTkRi4J5AUQ9M6ZHlp6\\_o4EetAD/edit#gid=1933934213](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1WKkdMbTkRi4J5AUQ9M6ZHlp6_o4EetAD/edit#gid=1933934213)

Idea is to keep manuscripts as open as possible, so that the expertise within the consortium is fully utilized, and so that also early career researchers have possibility to join interesting manuscripts. Partners should send a mail to CHARTER researchers mailing list before the submission of the manuscript (give at least lead author name and abstract). This allows plenty of time for internal commenting as well, because the publication process is slow.

CHARTER deliverables are shared in Eduuni and after the funder has approved them, they are openly available through European Commission as well.

- 5. Next meeting** will be organized as an email meeting before the 18m reporting to the EC (most probably March 2022).

## **6. Other/Announcements**

Replacements in EAG were reported by Bruce Forbes. 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. The new members have signed the Non-disclosure agreement (NDA). Steering Committee had no objections.

Bruce Forbes also explained that LAY / CHARTER coordination is refreshing some old collaboration agreements and drafting new ones – trying to keep them to a minimum in any case.

Agreements will be signed with Russian collaborators. There will be two field work campaigns next summer, requiring service contracts and also more general about research collaboration (between CHARTER and Yamal Archaeological Expeditions Ltd, Salekhard, YNAO or LAY and the Komarov Botanical Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg). UiT mentioned that they have a general agreement (with Arctic Field Station, Labytnangi, YNAO) and will check if this is enough for CHARTER field work purposes

Also, our collaboration partner in China may require an official agreement for example about data rights and data sharing; LAY CHARTER coordination team discusses this further later this year.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting ended 15:15 local time.

## CHARTER Expert Advisory Group - Meeting minutes

Time: Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021, 10-12 local time

Place: Helsinki, Hotel Paasi and zoom

**The meeting was opened 10:05 local time.** Participants introduced themselves. Markku Heikkilä (chair), Bruce Forbes (CHARTER lead), Sirpa Rasmus (CHARTER project management), Lotta Manninen (Ministry of the Environment, Finland) and Tapani Sirviö (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland) attended in-person. Inge Danielsen (Saami Reindeer Herders' Association, Norway), Niklas Labba (Saarivuoma sameby, Sweden/Norway), Alexander Sokolov (Arctic Research Station, Labytnangi, Russia) and Annette Löf (Division of Environmental Communication at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden) attended on-line. This meant that all EAG members were present in the meeting; this was the first time the Russian member was able to participate the EAG meeting.

The EAG meeting was organized just after the CHARTER first General Assembly. The GA had more than 40 researchers attending in-person and more than 20 on-line. Updates of research work (field work, utilizing existing data sets, etc.) and plans were discussed for three days. **Bruce Forbes and Sirpa Rasmus gave a presentation summarizing the CHARTER work** during the first project year, giving some examples about the fieldwork done, early consultation discussions carried out, and work in progress and at planning stage. The presentation is attached. Attached there is also a report about early consultations, sent to European Commission early September.

EAG members thanked for summarizing the work and were impressed about the field work and group building achieved so far. They also raised some points.

Co-production of knowledge is important – CHARTER snow protocol being a good example.

EAG commented on findings of early consultations, carried out in CHARTER core research regions. One finding stated that “reindeer-herding communities have not yet developed consistent strategies to deal with such situations [rain on snow and other extreme climatic events]; rather, they are experimenting with different strategies or tactics.”

It was noted that researchers need to be careful with wording. Herders have adaptation strategies, but implementation may not be possible. Or solutions are good in short-term but the long-term consequences are difficult to evaluate.

There is tendency to think that herder problems and solutions are internal problems and solutions in the herding community, excluding the presence of external pressures. For example, pasture management plans are useful only if also other land-use is acknowledged and there is systemic rather than sectoral view.

On the other hand, sometimes the emphasis can be on environmental changes, when in practice the burning local issue may be an internal conflict.

The future oriented work of WP5 and WP6 were seen as crucial, especially the future narratives and pathways co-developed in WP6. EAG members acknowledged that this work is at planning stage and found it positive that EAG discussions and ideas can affect the methodology and content of this work.

It was noted that there are economic problems in herding communities and knowledge needs. For example, how supplementary feeding affects, especially in the long run? Decision makers and researchers can have too simple and too short-term logic when discussing changes and one should try to explain the linkages and long-term consequences.

EAG members also acknowledged the problems of working with umbrella institutes. Minority views and divergent views don't necessarily get heard. Tapani explained about the new future-oriented working group in Finland in which balanced representation of stakeholders has been aimed at. Dialogue with research is also hoped for; CHARTER representation is in the group. Finland has also permanent negotiation process with Saami parliament and sometimes there are agreements, sometimes disagreements.

Annett asked if herder should be seen as a stakeholder or as a right holder. EAG members explained about recent court decisions on reindeer herding across SWE-NOR border. These decisions are giving more rights on pasture use to herders and at the same time bringing more responsibility. Governmental policy has now vast knowledge needs. What if there are no long-term strategies related to land-use rights, in this new situation? Can we challenge the ways we see reindeer herding?

EAG members reminded that when external pressures are high, also internal dynamics change. Division of money within a herding district may cause conflicts, for example. Can these new pasture management plans take all these into account, will they become tools to see various external and internal pressures? And will they include also the minority views within herding districts?

Related questions are who uses the voice of a herder in the future oriented work, whose desired future is described in project reports, whose sustainability is it about? Also individual power and choice is very limited because of governmental decisions. Herders are dependent on money and the romantic view about herders is not realistic. Again, is it economically wise to feed reindeer – and is this possible without governance support? What are the strategic choices, who influences and guides the processes?

Inge pointed out different legislation in different countries, affecting herding in many ways. Markku asked is there enough expertise on law in the CHARTER consortium? Legislation seems to be a key component, when present day challenges and future pathways are discussed. CHARTER needs to collaborate with other EU-project JUSTNORTH and also build on earlier work on different governance regimes (ReiGN-



project). One example: Ildikò Asztalos from the JUSTNORTH project is arranging a workshop where predator compensation is in focus.

In ideal situation herders, hunters, fishers together with administration and research could discuss and learn from each other, not concentrating on differences only. And there could be dialogue between land-users and governance, without need to go to the court.

Practical question raised by Bruce Forbes was that larger multi-stakeholder workshops have already been postponed and replaced by one-to-one interviews and remote work. Workshops may not be possible very soon (especially in Russia). This affects the discussions about preliminary scenarios developed by researchers with local communities (about climate and biodiversity, and also taking earlier work on regional narrative building into account) as well as discussions on desired futures and pathways with local communities.

Some small-scale get-togethers are planned during late spring and summer 2022 (Bruce Forbes is planning travelling to Yamal himself, for example, and there have been plans about “mobile workshop” in northern Sweden), but are these enough when biodiversity changes and policy processes are moving fast?

EAG gave some ideas getting around these problems.

New technology can be utilized: information sharing is happening much more and much faster nowadays. An example could be collecting information on extreme weather events and their impacts, using hashtags? This way project could get visibility and share / collect stories and material. It can also map hotspots where to concentrate fieldwork. Alexander asked people to check Instagram: @arctic\_lab\_yamal.

EAG also talked about capacity building and whose views we hear if using social media or if in some kind of physical gathering in tundra, or in official meeting room.

Niklas: Saami needs for knowledge and education was acknowledged already in 1960s. Still now more education is needed and it has to be considered who (from herding community) is willing and able to meet in official settings, in a meeting room. On the other hand, can researchers or decision makers come to tundra, to forest? Perhaps best idea is to meet in the middle.

Alexander: Meeting in the middle is not a solution at least in Russia. Researchers should spend much more time in tundra, meeting people when they are living their everyday life. Interviews can be made using phone calls or such, but results are different when the discussion has been experienced in-person.

It was seen that meetings in-person and gathering people together is needed also if remote tools and social media are used. Different methods and places lead to different views, to collect diverse views on desired futures many need to be combined.

It is needed to build the framework and think about tools so that communities can do the future oriented work also themselves.

It was asked if perhaps CHARTER could provide protocols, platforms, methods – for capacity building – how to develop strategies.

If this kind of protocols, frameworks, protocols, exercises are developed and they are interesting and easy to use, schools and communities could use them even without a facilitator. CHARTER could reach out to organizations who already work with people?

If different actors (youth organizations, people linked to certain positions and roles) are onboard, responsibilities and agencies in these different roles come visible.

But scenarios used in these (as basis for discussions on strategic choices, desired futures within certain boundaries, pathways to those futures) need to be concrete and understandable. A positive thing is that many relevant scenarios have already been developed, we can build on those.

In many places there is no competence and no support for this kind of discussion. Someone needs to come and initiate and facilitate the discussion - provide the questions and arena.

In Russia there are always same people in committees, and they have too many meetings and no knowledge on real life. It was asked what methods to use to make justice to diversity. Researchers need to spend long time in the tundra, stay in families, visit the reindeer herding day etc.

Methodological ideas included: Back-casting method, thinking about how to reach desired futures. Structurally constrained system. Critical dialogue method, challenging what is taken for granted.

Towards the end of the project there is the challenge that narratives need to be turned into policy briefs while having some degree of diversity found in desired futures and pathways included – and results need to go back to tundra, with understandable language to tell to people.

It was seen that future-oriented work is the most important and also the most challenging part of the project. In this, further discussion and planning with EAG members is needed. This can be an iterative process.

Markku asked also who is the end user of the results? These are local communities, but also decision makers at several levels, including EU / Brussels. Dissemination and outreach need to be diverse and well-planned. Very interesting ideas were presented during the CHARTER GA, one example being virtual reality -experiences, getting the images of changing tundra literally “into the policy makers heads”.

**As a last agenda point, there was a roundtable about relevant legislation and Arctic policy developments, as well as take-home messages.**

Markku mentioned the new EU Arctic Policy which will be published in a short time.

Lotta explained about the ongoing CAFF-AMAP processes and about the Finland's chairmanship of CAFF. Key point is co-creating biodiversity strategy. Presentation attached.

Annett has been appointed as an expert in the government commission working on reindeer husbandry legislation in Sweden (for example interpretation of indigenous rights in relation to reindeer herding).

Tapani will take home the message that herding communities need long-term adaptation strategies and support for implementation. The working group on future of reindeer husbandry in Finland will start before Christmas and for example define new plans for herding districts, about their pasture management.

Alexander stated that his aim is to unite all research projects in his region, because this way better understanding on ecosystem changes can be gained.

#### **Any other business?**

Having a meeting in linked with a GA is not an ideal solution for EAG members not participating to the meeting but the linkage was valuable for the project itself. Next meeting will be an independent one, on late spring 2022. Information will be provided on how to be prepared and which concrete questions could be discussed. It was recommended to focus much on WP6 in one of the upcoming meetings.

Bruce Forbes and some other CHARTER researchers are planning the Russian field expeditions for the summer 2022 and will contact Alexander again about collaboration agreements and practical arrangements.

CHARTER WP5 and WP6 researchers will contact the EAG already before this about the planning for the future oriented work.

**Meeting finished bit after 12 o'clock.**