

Project information

Project title

Arctic Futures

Year

2011/2012

Project leader

Peter Arbo, UiT

Participants

- Peter Arbo, UiT (project leader)
- Maaïke Knol, UiT
- Audun Iversen, Nofima
- Toril Ringholm, Norut
- Eirik Mikkelsen, Norut
- Gunnar Sander, NPI

Flagship

Arctic ocean

Funding Source

Fram Centre

Summary of Results

The project seeks to analyse and learn from the ways in which the future of the Arctic has been envisaged in future-oriented studies that focus on the socio-economic and political aspects of climate change. The four aims of the project are:

2. 1. To make an inventory of the relevant studies. What kinds of studies have been performed and what are the topics they are covering?
3. To scrutinise the methodological foundation of the future-oriented Arctic studies. Which methods and tools have been applied? On which types of evidence and approaches do they rely?
4. To gain insight from the content of the various studies. What are considered to be the driving forces shaping the future of the Arctic? What are the main elements of uncertainty? What kinds of futures do they depict?
5. To draw lessons for subsequent Arctic related foresight activities in the Fram Centre. What can we learn from the studies that have been undertaken? How should such activities be followed up in the context of the Fram Centre?

After an extensive search for relevant literature, we identified more than one hundred possibly relevant publications. These were briefly examined, and we ended up with some 40 books, reports and articles that satisfied the criteria we had defined. The studies have all been reviewed and summarised, following a standard template developed for the project (an average of 2-4 pages on each publication).

Our main findings are presented in a report that will be made available on the website of the Fram Centre, including a bibliography and links to the summaries of the source documents. We are currently considering the right format of this presentation. Hopefully, it will be ready to the Arctic Frontiers conference. The report gives an overview of the studies, categorised according to their main topics. Next, it looks at the origin and purpose of the studies. It then analyses their methodological approaches. Finally, the driving forces and images of the future are explored, and strengths and weaknesses of the studies are discussed.

Published Results/Planned Publications

The project has organised a workshop on Arctic future studies, which will be held as a side event to the Arctic Frontiers conference. Here members of the project team as well as invited keynote speakers will contribute. Other papers will also be presented.

After the workshop we will prepare an article for publication in an international journal. The article will be based on the report and the discussions at the workshop.

Communicated Results

See above

Interdisciplinary Cooperation

The project is inter-disciplinary but limited to the social sciences. The different experiences and professional backgrounds of the participants has been an advantage.

Budget in accordance to results

The funding from the Fram Centre has been decisive for the realization of the project. Until now the Fram Centre constitutes the only source of funding.

Could results from the project be subject for any commercial utilization

No

Conclusions

The project is an extensive survey and analysis of future-oriented studies relating to the Arctic. The mapping of relevant literature has, as such, been valuable. The project has also given us insight into the ways such studies have been carried out and ideas to how they can be performed in the future. This will be discussed more in detail in the coming article.