



Northern Research Forum

## Summary on the NRF Theme Project Groups

The Northern Research Forum (NRF) has started a new kind of activity and created the so-called ad-hoc project groups of experts which cover both relevant northern fields and global themes such as legation, economics, energy, transportation, climate change, cooperation and security.

The main idea of these NRF Theme Project Groups is to build a special kind of expertise for the NRF in general and particularly NRF Open Assemblies in order to have more continuity in between these biennial Assemblies. The expertise in Theme Project Groups consists of as a combination of experts coming from academia, politics, administration, business and civil society; and hence, these groups can be interpreted to act like an epistemic community in their field.

Correspondingly, the main aim is to build and develop expertise on relevant fields of Northern studies and politics as well to draw up a more holistic picture on Northern geopolitics. At the first stage the Theme Project Groups have the following tasks: first, to promote the preparation of each NRF Open Assemblies, and consequently, feed the discussions and dialogues in these meetings; second, to recruit potential Position Paper authors on the themes of, and potential panelists for, NRF Open Assemblies; and third, to prepare short, policy-oriented reports on the field(s) of each group.

The titles and the coordinators of the first Theme Project Groups are the following ones:

- 1) Future of Northern Cooperation: Legal and Political Issues –Natalia Loukacheva, PhD., Director, Polar Law Program, University of Akureyri ([natalial@unak.is](mailto:natalial@unak.is)).
- 2) Economies in the North – Lee Huskey, PhD., Department of Economics, University of Alaska Anchorage ([aflh@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:aflh@uaa.alaska.edu)) and Zaneta Ozolina, Head of Department of Political Science, University of Latvia ([Zaneta.ozolina@lu.lv](mailto:Zaneta.ozolina@lu.lv)).
- 3) Energy Issues – Academic Director Dr. Björn Gunnarsson, School of Renewable Energy Science ([bjorn.gunnarsson@res.is](mailto:bjorn.gunnarsson@res.is)) and Peter G. Johnson, PhD, Arctic Scientist, Ottawa ([peterj@uottawa.ca](mailto:peterj@uottawa.ca)).
- 4) Northern Sea Routes - Ragnar Baldursson, Senior Arctic Official of Iceland ([ragnar.baldursson@utn.stjr.is](mailto:ragnar.baldursson@utn.stjr.is)) and Steven Bigras, Executive Director Canadian Polar Commission ([bigrass@polarcom.gc.ca](mailto:bigrass@polarcom.gc.ca)).
- 5) Climate Change - Northern Security/ies –Lassi Heininen, PhD., University of Lapland ([lassi.heininen@ulapland.fi](mailto:lassi.heininen@ulapland.fi)) and Susan A. Crate, Assistant Professor, George Mason University, Fairfax ([scrate1@gmu.edu](mailto:scrate1@gmu.edu)).

As a launch of this new activity each Theme Project Group will organize the first roundtable discussions on its theme(s) at the 5<sup>th</sup> NRF Open Assembly in Anchorage, Alaska, U.S.A. in September 24-27, 2008. These roundtable discussions are a keen part of the program of the 5<sup>th</sup> Open Assembly, and therefore, they are open for all participants of the Open Assembly.



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