

## Chapter 2

# Arctic Connectivity for Sustainable Development: Major Actors, Policies, and Approaches

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### ABSTRACT

*The Arctic possesses about one-quarter of the world's untapped energy resources and abundant deposits of minerals. The region has always been in the focus of geopolitical interests of the USA, Russia, countries of Northern Europe, and Canada. However, with an opening of the previously ice-jammed waterways, new potential sites with vast resources have been identified and explored. Diversified transportation routes are of paramount importance to the economic and energy security of energy importing countries, particularly non-Arctic ones. As the Arctic becomes a focus of interest of many regional and non-regional actors, it is crucial to identify the dangers such a boom may bring. This chapter reviews the history of the Arctic policies of major actors in the region, overviews the contemporary approaches to the development of the Arctic, and discusses how varying interests and policies can be translated into the effective international regulations for the benefit of the entire Arctic region, its people, environment, and sustainable development.*

### INTRODUCTION

The Arctic's total land area consists of the northernmost territories of the eight Arctic states: Canada, Finland, Greenland (an autonomous territory under Denmark), Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. Russia and Canada account for nearly 80% of the land; countries of Northern Europe – 16%; and the United States – 4%. The Arctic Ocean occupies about one-third of the region (Figure 1).

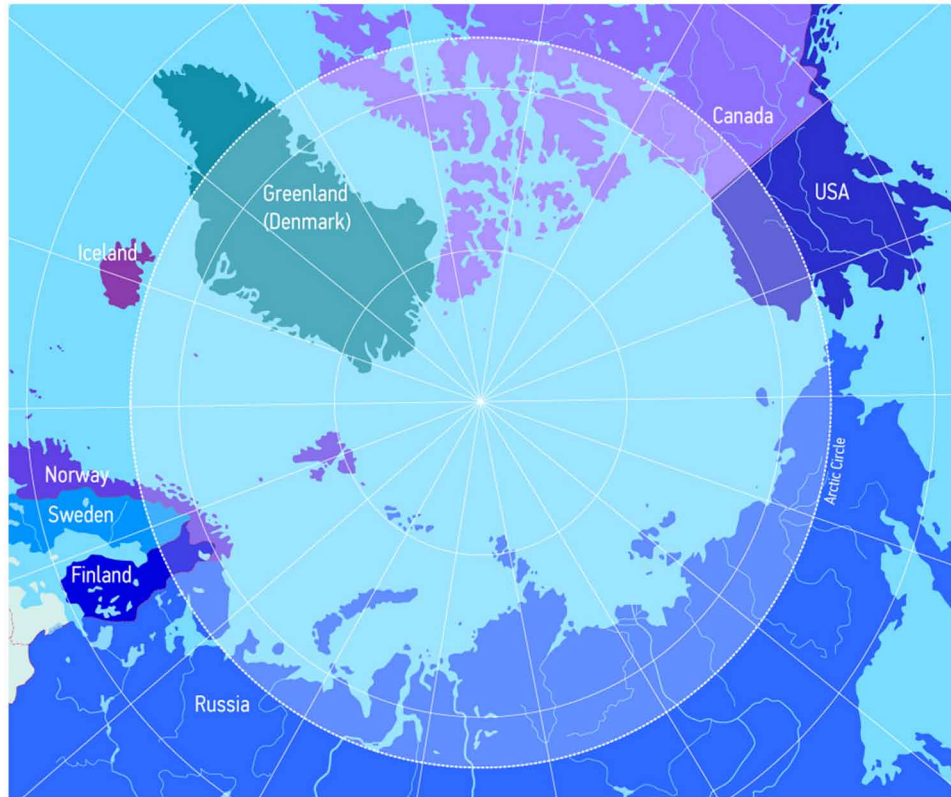
Institutional framework for international collaboration in the Arctic consists of two interrelated organizational clusters: sub-regional and international. The former one comprises a network of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations oriented on the development of integration and expansion of transborder collaboration in Northern Europe. The international cluster is an integrity of international

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## Arctic Connectivity for Sustainable Development

Figure 1. Arctic territories of the eight Nordic countries

Source: <http://arctic.ru/geographics/>



bodies involved in the collaboration on the global problems of the Arctic zone. The cluster has two core organizational centers: the Arctic Council and the Nordic Council.

The Nordic Council is a geo-political inter-parliamentary forum for cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden (Figure 2).

The five countries as well as the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and the Aland Islands collaborate in the spheres of environmental protection, ensurance of sustainable development, rational use of natural resources, and promotion of economic cooperation between countries. The Council does not have any formal power on its own and provides recommendations, suggestions, and declarations to the governments of the member countries (or one particular country) or to the Nordic Council of Ministers (intergovernmental body for the coordination of Nordic collaboration). Following on from the recommendations, each government is free to implement any decisions through its national legislature.

The Arctic Council is an intergovernmental forum of eight countries with circumpolar territories under their jurisdiction: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. Observer status in the Arctic Council is open to non-Arctic states, along with inter-governmental, inter-parliamentary, global, regional, and non-governmental organizations. So far, thirteen non-Arctic states have been approved as observers to the Arctic Council: China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (Figure 3).

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