

## Navigating the New Arctic Community Office

# Process for Convergence Working Group Activities

## DRAFT Document with Invitation for Community Comment and Discussion

### How to Understand & Interact with this Document

**What this is:** As a key part of NNA Community Office (NNA-CO) funded activities, the NNA-CO will facilitate the formation, implementation, and outputs of four Convergence Working Groups. The NNA-CO has established an initial set of Convergence Working Group functions and goals, but many design elements of the Convergence Working Group (CWG) process are intentionally not yet fully defined to allow for community input. The thematic foci of the CWGs have also not yet been identified to allow for co-design of the working groups across the NNA community. Here, the NNA-CO outlines the current foundational aspects of the CWG design, provides a potential roadmap for elements yet undefined, and invites open community comment for finalizing the CWG process. We invite community discussion on all aspects.

**How to interact and comment:** **To inform the CWG development process, the NNA-CO seeks targeted input on the ideas presented in this document during February 15 - April 1.** There are multiple ways to share your input:

- Provide your comments via this [Google Form](#).
- Email comments with the heading “CWG Input” to [contact@nna-co.org](mailto:contact@nna-co.org).
- Comment directly on the document with [this link](#).
- Attend an open comment and discussion session:
  - Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 12-1pm AK / 2-3pm MT / 4-5pm ET. [Register](#) to attend.
  - Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 8-9am AK / 10-11am MT / 12-1pm ET. [Register](#) to attend.

## What does 'Convergence' mean?

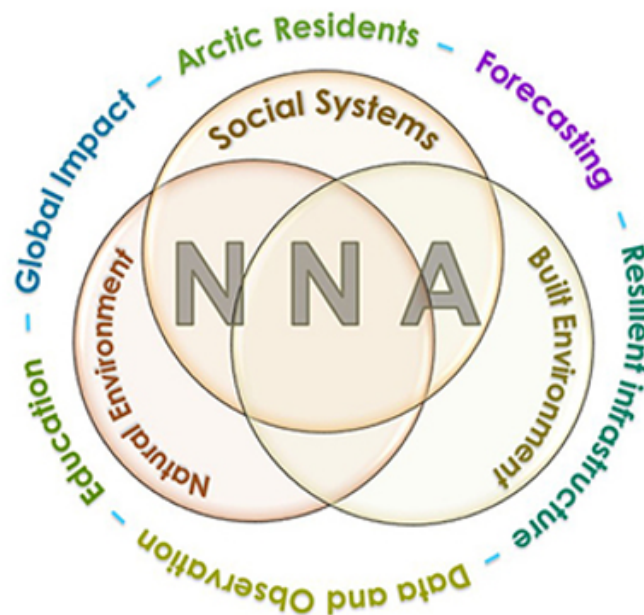
Based on the U.S. National Science Foundation definition, Convergence Research is:

- Driven by a vexing and complex challenge, developed from societal need or pivotal scientific significance.
- Formed from deep connections across disciplines and knowledge systems.

The Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) similarly defines Convergence Research as:

- Investigations driven by a specific and compelling problem that requires deep integration across disciplines.

For the NNA program, convergence is meant to happen across expertise in the built environment, social systems, and natural environment.



## Purpose

NNA-CO Convergence Working Groups (CWG) will:

- Bring together NNA projects and key partners around a thematic convergence challenge/problem to create broader impacts.
- Provide a forum for documenting and sharing collaboration processes and best practices.
- Develop usable information, datasets, and tools that can be applied to challenges at multiple scales, will support effective future investments in convergent research, and share and spread findings throughout and beyond the NNA community.

## Structure

Each CWG will:

- Include at least one representative with the following expertise: social science, Indigenous Knowledge, natural science, and the built environment
- Be supported by 1-2 Early Career Fellows, who will be funded by the NNA-CO
- Have 8-12 participants, each playing an active role in CWG functions.
- Conduct activities over a 2-year period, with two CWGs engaged during 2023-24 and two during 2024-25.

Recognizing that the work of convergence can be difficult and by definition requires building new landscapes of communication and understanding, leadership and facilitation will be critical for CWGs. Each newly formed CWG will work with the NNA-CO to determine a leadership and facilitation plan. Options may include:

- Each working groups has 2-3 co-leads, likely to include the Early Career Fellow
- Each CWG has a permanent facilitator
- Each CWG does not have a permanent facilitator, but has a period of facilitation provided by an external person (e.g., at the start of the work period or at regular intervals)
- An expert is engaged to observe, provide feedback, and summarize the process of building convergence research

Participation in a CWG will require time and effort. Compensation for participation in a CWG will depend on the participant's job duties and needs for compensation to allow participation. For example, NNA project PIs should not expect to receive compensation for time given to CWG efforts, while an Arctic community representative may need compensation to allow participation. Early Career Fellows for each CWG will be funded by the NNA-CO. Compensation needs will be assessed at the point of membership application or invitation, and final compensation for CWG members will be determined with the NNA-CO at the time of participant selection.

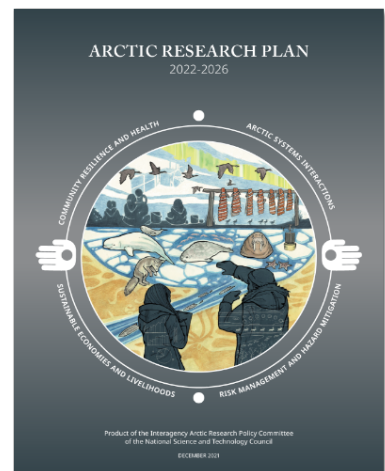
The NNA-CO intends to evaluate the CWG work and may have limited support for additional evaluation efforts co-designed with each CWG.

## Themes

CWG themes will be born out of NNA community discussion and link to the IARPC policy drivers and priority areas:

IARPC Policy Drivers:

- Enhance the well-being of Arctic residents (*Well-Being*)
- Advance stewardship of the Arctic environment (*Stewardship*)
- Strengthen national and regional security (*Security*)
- Improve understanding of the Arctic as a component of planet Earth (*Arctic-Global Systems*)



IARPC Priority Areas:

- Community resilience and health
- Arctic system interactions
- Sustainable economies and livelihoods
- Risk management and hazard mitigation

NNA-CO is interested in casting a wide net to brainstorm, evaluate, and finalize CWG themes. We propose the following process for identifying CWG themes:

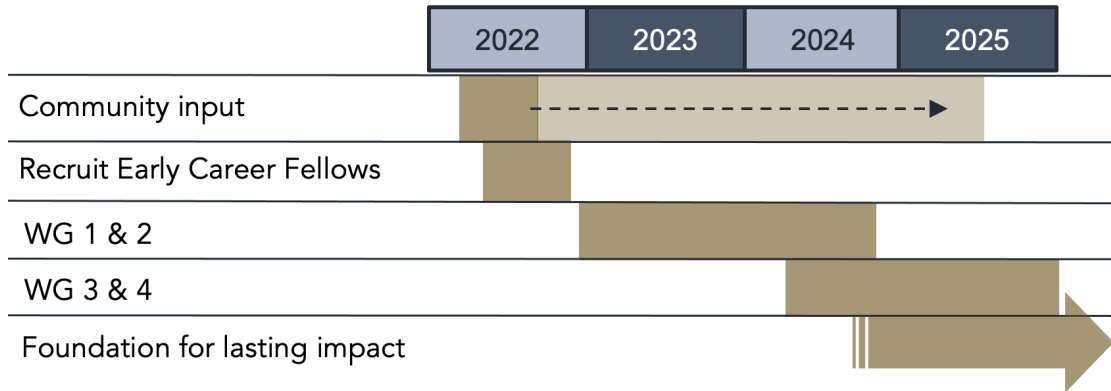
1. NNA-CO is completing some analysis on NNA project themes of interest. Based on these outcomes, NNA-CO will create an initial list of potential CWG focus themes.  
[Projected date: April 2022](#)
2. NNA-CO will establish a Google Form for all interested individuals and groups to (a) comment on the NNA-CO produced themes and (b) recommend other themes for CWG focus. [Projected date: May-June 2022](#)
3. In conversation with NNA project participants, NSF, and Arctic community members, the NNA-CO will finalize four CWG themes. At this time, it will also be established which two themes will be addressed within the 2023-24 CWGs and which will be addressed within the 2024-25 CWGs. Elements to be considered for theme selection include:
  - Fit as a convergent theme
  - Demonstrated societal need
  - Fit with existing funded NNA projects and other initiatives or activities

Elements to be considered regarding timing include:

- Urgency of outcomes
- Projected difficulty in recruiting members for each theme
- Ability of 2023-24 CWGs to inform 2024-25 CWGs

[Projected date: July 2022](#)

4. Preceding the 2022 NNA Annual Community Meeting, the NNA-CO will solicit interest in co-leading CWGs under each of the four themes. [Projected date: August-September 2022](#)
5. In parallel to soliciting interest in co-leading CWG, NNA-CO will recruit the Early Career Fellows via a competitive application process. [Projected date: August-October 2022](#)
6. An initial CWG-produced vision for activities will be presented at the NNA Annual Community Meeting.



## CWG Member Selection

CWG members will be identified through an open nomination process (including self-nomination) that is shared widely and encourages formation of diverse CWG membership. Members should demonstrate interest and availability for participation over the full two-year period. Individual member effort and time requirements will be defined before finalizing membership and may vary across members. Final CWG membership will be determined via an evaluation committee that includes at minimum a NNA project lead, Arctic community member, and NNA-CO representative.

Projected benefits of participation in a CWG include:

- Building relationships with other NNA community members.
- Testing and refining successful pathways to convergence research discussion and activities.
- Increasing future success in convergence research for yourself individually and for the NNA community more broadly.

## Early Career Fellows

Every CWG will have as a member one or more Early Career Fellows. Early Career Fellows will have some financial support and will be a primary point of contact for their working group and play a substantial, and likely leading, role in organizing and managing working group activities. The Fellows are expected to be at the graduate student or postdoctoral career stage (or equivalent), and will be determined via a competitive search.

Fellows should be able to participate in a cohort model that includes professional and personal development. The NNA-CO will provide the foundational structure for cohort development, to include:

- Hosting introductory meet and greets for the Early Career Fellows group.
- Outlining opportunities and encouraging completion of NNA-CO and related training courses, with themes that may include: developing community relationships, decolonizing Arctic research, improving Broader Impacts, creative and transdisciplinary collaboration skills, science communication, conducting feedback analysis, etc.

## Activities & Outcomes

Each CWG is planned to engage in activities together over two years. Two CWGs are expected to be active during 2023/24 and two during 2024/25. The activities and outcomes for each CWG will be defined by the CWG membership in consultation with the NNA-CO. CWG activities and outcomes should be clearly defined within the first four months of the CWG existence.

The NNA-CO is able to support a wide range of potential activities and outcomes, including at least one in-person gathering for each CWG. Potential CWG activities include, but are not limited to:

- Evaluating and documenting the work and process of the CWG as a case study for undertaking convergent discussions and activities.
- Hosting community workshops.
- Creating shared data portals hosted by the Arctic Data Center.
- Documenting best practices for convergence research.
- Facilitating community-generated recommendations for undertaking work on the CWG theme.
- Developing science policy briefs.
- Creating science storytelling or infographic products for Broader Impact.
- Contributing to a planned special journal issue in 2024/25.

In designing their activities, CWGs will be asked to consider: What legacy do we wish to leave with Arctic communities and with the broader NNA community as the outcomes of the CWG?

## Resources for Convergence Research

Along with comments on the CWG process, the NNA-CO welcomes community sharing of resources available to support any portion of the CWG activities. Please share convergence research resources via [this form](#).

- Example of Convergence Research Resource:
  - Article: [Weaving Indigenous knowledge into the scientific method](#)
- Example of Best Practices for Convergence Research Resource:
  - Report: [ICC ethical and equitable engagement synthesis report](#)

## Complementary Efforts

CWG structure and activities should be done with awareness of the broader ecosystem of efforts across the community. Example efforts include the Study of Environmental Arctic Change (SEARCH) Co-Production Working Groups, the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) Collaboration Teams (both formal and self-forming), and International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) Working Groups. Please share information on complementary efforts via [this form](#).