

# LOVISA

2019 WORKSHOP REPORT

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE IN ENVIRONMENTAL  
AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



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Title: Local Knowledge in Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from a workshop that was held in December 2019 in Nuuk, Greenland, as part of a project that focused on inclusion of local communities and Indigenous peoples, and their knowledges and experiences, in relation to social and environmental impact assessments in the European Arctic. The project was titled: 'LOVISA' (Lokal Viden og Oprindelig Viden i Sociale Konsekvensvurderinger i Europæisk Arktis).

The LOVISA project was formed in light of the increasing need for including impacted communities in the decision-making processes with regards to large-scale projects in the Arctic. The growing economic activity and increasing numbers of large-scale projects in the Arctic underline the importance of including the voices, knowledges, and experiences of Arctic peoples and communities. Indigenous peoples, such as the Sámi and Inuit, have lived in the Arctic regions for millennia and have advanced their ways of life and knowledge systems in close relation with the Arctic environments. Governments and developers increasingly recognize that it is thus of utmost importance that Arctic Indigenous peoples and local communities are adequately and meaningfully engaged in the decision-making processes and assessments of proposed projects (see for instance the conclusions from a recent Arctic Council project, the Arctic EIA Project from 2019<sup>1</sup>). The material rights to property and culture, as well as the procedural right to influence decisions, are by now also clearly sanctioned in international law. One key example is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that, whilst not binding on signatories, expresses widely accepted views on the individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples to determine and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. In this light, environmental impact assessments (EIAs) arise as legal arenas in which Indigenous and local people in the Arctic can influence the decisions on projects that impact their lives and well-being.

Important steps are currently being taken by governments and developers to consider and engage Indigenous voices and visions on the present and future development of the Arctic. Meanwhile, studies also show that there is space for significant improvements. This is, for instance, reflected in research that served as a pilot study for the LOVISA project, about recent experiences from Greenland on inclusion of Inuit knowledge in impact assessments (IAs). The findings of the preliminary study are presented in the scholarly article by Parnuna E. Dahl and Anne M. Hansen: 'Does Indigenous Knowledge Occur in and Influence Impact Assessment Reports? Exploring Consultation Remarks in Three Cases of Mining Projects in Greenland'<sup>2</sup>. Through analyzing public consultation documents in relation to three mining projects in Greenland, the study found that Inuit actors occasionally contributed with their Indigenous knowledge through the consultation processes. Yet, their level of influence on impact assessments and project adjustments was still

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1 Karvinen, Päivi A. and Rantakallio, Seija (eds.) (2019). Good Practices for Environmental Impact Assessment and Meaningful Engagement in the Arctic – Including Good Practice Recommendations. Arctic EIA project. Available at: [https://www.sdwg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ArcticEIA\\_Screen-revised.pdf](https://www.sdwg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ArcticEIA_Screen-revised.pdf)

2 Dahl, Parnuna P. E. and Hansen, Anne M. (2019). Does Indigenous Knowledge Occur in and Influence Impact Assessment Reports? Exploring Consultation Remarks in Three Cases of Mining Projects in Greenland. Arctic Review on Law and Politics, 10, pp. 165-189.

low. This finding testifies to a general trend globally, including the marginalization of Sámi perspectives in impact assessments and project approvals in Sweden<sup>3</sup>. The LOVISA project's pilot study also found that there is a general expectation in Greenland that participation processes will inevitably lead to inclusion of Indigenous knowledge – but there is little consideration of whether the processes are actually suited to facilitate this inclusion. Thus, experience with how to utilize Indigenous knowledge in impact assessments in Greenland is yet to come. This pilot study underlined the project's objective of learning from the existing experiences of utilizing Indigenous and local forms of knowledge in impact assessments in the Arctic, and ensuring their influence in the decision-making processes.

In recognition of these challenges, the LOVISA project aspired to facilitate an exchange of knowledge and experiences between Indigenous and local actors in the European Arctic with a focus on developing the existing impact assessment frameworks. This exchange took place during the workshop in Nuuk in December 2019 with participants from Finland, Greenland, Sweden, and Denmark. The workshop gathered actors who hold experiences with how extractive projects impact the lives of Arctic Indigenous peoples and local communities, and how these groups have sought to obtain influence in assessments and decisions. Facilitating experience-based dialogues and discussions on this topic, the hope was to develop new ideas and guidelines that can inspire current assessment practices. This was also intended to inspire other Arctic communities in their local assessments, planning, and strategizing in the event large-scale projects.

This report describes the LOVISA workshop framework, presentations, and discussions between the participants, and the main conclusions and recommendations that arose as part of these. In the first section, the report introduces the workshop objectives, components, and discussion themes. This section also includes descriptions of the composition of participants and the individual workshop presentations. The main body of the report is based on the workshop discussions and the participants' responses and conclusions on these. This is divided in three sections which are based on the discussion themes: 'Impact assessments and community participation' (section 3), 'Indigenization of impact assessments' (section 4), and 'Visioning and revisioning impact assessments' (section 5). The last section of the report summarizes the main conclusions from the workshop discussions and the project's outcomes.

The LOVISA project was led by Aalborg University (Denmark), in partnership with Ilisimatusarfik (University of Greenland) and Stockholm Environmental Institute (Sweden). It was funded by The Nordic Council of Ministers and AAU Arctic at Aalborg University.

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence, R. and Kløcker Larsen, R. (2019). *Fighting to Be Herd: Impacts of the Proposed Boliden Copper Mine in Laver, Älvsbyn, Sweden for the Semisjaur Njarg Sami Reindeer Herding Community*. SEI Report, April 2019. Stockholm Environment Institute, Stockholm. Available at: <https://www.sei.org/publications/fighting-to-be-herd-impacts-copper-mine-sami/>

## 2. WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Organization

The LOVISA workshop was held on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, at Ilisimatusarfik (University of Greenland) during Greenland Science Week. The workshop hosted participants from Finland, Greenland, Denmark, and Sweden, including representatives from the Smi Parliament in Finland, the Greenlandic Self-government, and Indigenous peoples' organizations.



**Photo 1.** Workshop presentation. (Photo by Naja Dyrendom Graugaard).

### 2.2 Objectives

The LOVISA project sought to facilitate a cross-Arctic exchange that was based on local and Indigenous experiences and knowledges regarding impact assessments of large-scale projects in the European Arctic. This project was founded on two main objectives:

1. To create a workshop forum for Indigenous and local actors from the European Arctic in which there was space and time to engage in meaningful dialogues and mutual exchanges. The objective was, furthermore, to assist the capacity- and network building of each participant which can strengthen and inspire their individual work with IA processes.
2. To identify 'attention points' in the existing IA processes and to develop ideas for future improvements of IAs in the European Arctic.

2.3 Participants

The workshop gathered different actors who have experience with impact assessment procedures through their everyday activities, trades, or professions. The majority of the workshop participants were local and/or Indigenous representatives. Many of the participants have experienced the influences of mining, or other extractive industrial projects, in their own lives and communities.

Alfred E. Rosing Jakobsen	Oceans North Greenland
Anni-Helena Ruotsala	Sámi Parliament, Finland
Ellen K. Frederiksen	Ilunnguujuk Bed & Breakfast, Qassiarsuk, Greenland
Kristine Lynge-Pedersen	Greenlandic citizen
Mathias Barfod	Ministry of Mineral Resources, Naalakkersuisut (Government of Greenland)
Niila Inga	Laevas reindeer herding district, Sweden
Tukumminnguaq Nykjær Olsen	Inuit Circumpolar Council Greenland
Tungutaq Larsen	Ministry of Mineral Resources, Naalakkersuisut (Government of Greenland)
Vivi Vold	Department of Culture and Social History, Ilisimatusarfik (University of Greenland)
Anne Merrild Hansen	Department of Planning, Aalborg University & Ilisimatusarfik (University of Greenland)
Naja Dyrendom Graugaard	Department of Planning, Aalborg University

2.4 Overview of workshop program and components

Welcome:	by project lead, Anne Merrild Hansen
Introductions:	Round-the-table
Presentation:	Experiences from Southern Greenland by Ellen K. Frederiksen
Presentation:	Experiences from Swedish Sápmi by Niila Inga
Discussion session:	Impact assessments and community participation
Sum-up:	Social impact assessment practices in Greenland by Anne Merrild Hansen
Discussion session:	Indigenization of impact assessments
Plenary:	Visioning and revisioning impact assessments

2.5 Presentations: Two cases of experience

**Ellen K. Frederiksen** gave a workshop presentation on the Kvanefjeld mining project in Narsaq. Frederiksen is a teacher at Qassiarsuk primary school and co-owner of a sheep farm and Ilunnguujuuk Bed and Breakfast in southern Greenland. She has been actively engaged in raising debates on the public consultation processes between the mining companies, the Greenlandic government, and her community.

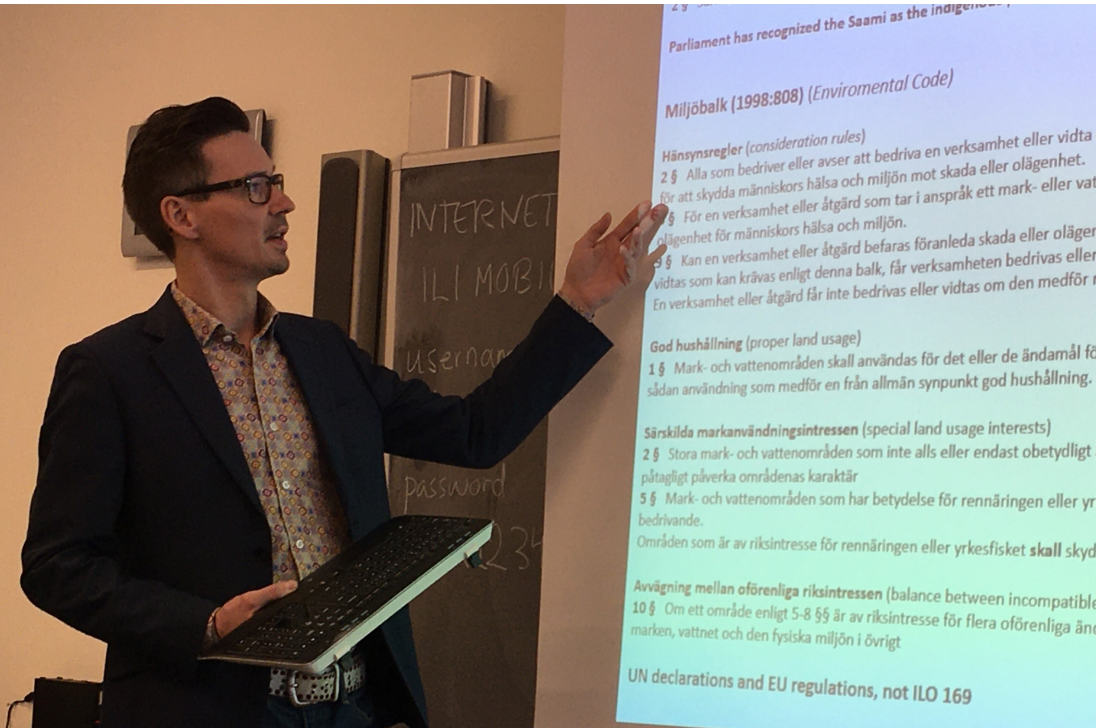


Photo 2. Presentation by Ellen K. Frederiksen. (Photo by Naja Dyrendom Graugaard).



Frederiksen presented insights on the meaning and role of the southern Greenlandic farms in relation to the overall Greenlandic food production. She pointed out the relations between southern Greenlandic cultural identity, food production, and farming culture. The presentation raised some concerns regarding the social and environmental impacts of the Kvanefjeld mining project, extracting uranium as a bi-product. The presentation also raised some questions and concerns about the impacts of exploration licenses in the areas around Frederiksen's community, and the lack of information regarding these from the government.

Among other things, Frederiksen stressed the importance of transparent governmental decisions, inclusion of the local community in decision-making processes, and considerations of the long-term effects of mining on the cultural identity of southern Greenland.



**Photo 3.** Niila Inga during his presentation. (Photo by Naja Dyrendom Graugaard).

**Niila Inga** also gave a workshop presentation on Sámi experiences with the Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara Aktiebolag (LKAB) mining project in Kiruna in Sweden. Inga is a Sámi reindeer herder from Laevas reindeer herding district and has many years of experience with impact assessments of large-scale projects in relation to Arctic Indigenous communities (among other, having formerly served as chairperson of his reindeer herding district and as chairperson of the Swedish Sámi Association, SSR).

The presentation shared insights on Sámi practices of reindeer herding in the Kiruna area, and it pointed out some of the social and environmental impacts of mining on Sámi reindeer herding communities. The presentation also touched on the relations between Swedish environmental legislations and impact assessments of the mining project.

Inga shared the experiences of conducting a Sámi-led impact assessment of the mining project in the Kiruna area. This assessment broadened the framework of current assessments by, for example, looking at the whole of community lands around Kiruna, understanding the cycles and migrations of reindeer, and including the perspectives of Elders and youth on both history as well as the future. While the Swedish EIA regulation requires only 'environmental' impacts to be assessed, this Sámi-led assessment stressed that it is not viable to divide between 'the environment' and 'the social' as reindeer herding includes a more holistic view on the connections between nature and culture.

### 2.6 Discussion themes and process

After the introductory presentations (as listed in 2.4 and described in 2.5), the workshop participants were divided into two groups, formed by the project team. In the first discussion session, the groups discussed theme 1: 'Impact assessments and community participation'. After discussing in groups, each group presented the main points from their discussion session in plenary. These points were then unfolded and explored further in a plenary discussion. The questions for this discussion session were:

1. Impact assessments and community participation.
  - What are your experiences with impact assessments and community participation?
  - What works, what doesn't work?

After a lunch break, Anne Merrild Hansen held a short sum-up presentation on social impact assessment practices in Greenland. This sum-up worked as the basis for the second discussion session which focused on theme 2: 'Indigenizing impact assessments'. The second discussion session followed the same procedure as the first discussion session. The discussion questions for this session were:

2. Indigenizing impact assessments.
  - How can Indigenous knowledge be brought to the forefront in impact assessments?
  - How can impact assessments be Indigenized?
  - What would it look like, and what would it take?

The third and last discussion session was based on theme 3: 'Visioning and revisioning impact assessments'. This theme was engaged as a plenary discussion, and it focused on what was learned through the workshop exchanges and how these learnings can inform current impact assessment practices. The discussion questions for this session were:

3. Visioning and revisioning impact assessments.
  - What would the ideal impact assessment look like?
  - How can we rethink the existing assessments?
  - Can we gather and sum-up statements and guidelines, based on our workshop discussions? What would those be?

The three workshops discussion sessions, their messages and findings will be unfolded in the report sections 3-5.

### 3. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This section presents the main points and messages of the group discussion that were based on the questions: *"What are your experiences with impact assessments and community participation? What works, what doesn't work?"*

The general experience expressed by workshop participants is that, despite changes in government and corporate policy commitments, there is very little engagement with the impacted communities throughout impact assessment (IA) processes. The workshop discussion called for more local involvement from the beginning of the assessment process. This pointed to the importance of impact assessment processes ensuring adequate time for community members to be part of the assessment. However, in the experiences of the participants, companies often conduct short assessment processes based on draft reports that are produced before the actual assessment process begins. The discussion session therefore underlined that it is important that companies consult the impacted communities early in the process, and before an impact assessment is undertaken.



**Photo 4.** Alfred E. Rosing-Jakobsen, Tukumminnguaq Nykjær Olsen, and Niila Inga. (Photo by Anne Merrild Hansen).

The groups also discussed the importance of considering the terms, framework, and 'who' is involved and participating in the assessment. Workshop participants pointed out that public consultations by mining companies often fail to reach community members effectively, and these consultations seldomly initiate mutual dialogues and exchanges of views between community members and mining consultants. In order

to make community participation meaningful, it was suggested that consultation processes should not only provide a platform for community members to ask questions and be heard, but they should include them as part of the decision-making process. It was raised as a concern that 'community participation' may be interpreted as being the same as 'consenting' to a project; It was therefore stressed that it is important to formulate assessment processes that allow critical engagement of community members.

The language in the communication process was also raised as a point of concern. The participants found that public consultations, as well as the actual impact assessments, are often conducted in a technical or scientific language that is difficult for members of the impacted community to comprehend. In Greenland, the translations of IAs into Greenlandic are often experienced to be inadequate and of poor quality.

The group discussions questioned why governments mandate the companies to control the impact assessments, since the interests of the companies may complicate an impartial outlook on the potential impacts. Furthermore, the companies may not have the cultural prerequisites or knowledge about local contexts to conceptualize which aspects and impacts are important for the local community to assess. In these discussions, the question was raised: *When* companies hire an external consultant, will the consultant be willing to criticize the project?

In consequence of the above, impact assessments are experienced by workshop participants as a formality that primarily focuses on how to compensate and mitigate undesired impacts, not seriously considering the rejection of undesirable projects as an option. Meanwhile, some impacts can be difficult to measure and compensate, for example, cultural identity. The workshop discussions also pointed out that impact assessments are conditioned by the legal frameworks, and these frameworks often limit the scope for Indigenous and local actors to influence impact assessments. It was suggested that the existing legal frameworks implement a wider perspective on impacts. It would, for example, be meaningful if impact assessments included perspectives on the how the future of the affected communities is envisioned.

The workshop participants found that the zero alternatives (i.e. the future *without* the planned project) are seldomly presented in IA reports as realistic options. It was pointed out that IAs lack descriptions of alternatives to the (mining) project and the future prospects for the community, in areas like farming, herding, tourism, or other possible developments.

Workshop participants called for an IA model in which those who are affected by large-scale projects are the ones who also undertake the impact assessment, i.e. in some form of community-led study. In this view, it is meaningful to let the local communities define the impacts and tipping points – like disturbance zones for reindeer or sheep – and to address the level of influences and cumulative impacts held up against the carrying capacity. Allowing affected communities to do their own assessments can also bring in

perspectives on the history of the area and the future aspirations of the local community. As it was suggested, such assessment would also contribute to the capacity building in the impacted community. Yet, it was pointed out that impacted communities do not necessarily have the resources to engage in IA processes, and are not given resources to cover the costs of engaging, assessing, or monitoring impacts. It was therefore noted that it is important to balance the financial burden; This may also be approached as an investment of the community to, for example, engage in creating local assessment reports which may be reused later.

Collaboration between researchers and communities are experienced by workshop participants to have potential positive effects. Collaboration can offer a way to connect scientific data with questions regarding present land use and cultural protocols; This research can be used in the IA process itself, as well as in negotiations with companies and governments.



## 4. INDIGENIZING IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

This section presents the main points and messages of the discussion groups, based on the questions: *“How can Indigenous knowledge be brought to the forefront in impact assessments? How can impact assessments be Indigenous? What would it look like, and what would it take?”*

It was stressed in the discussion groups how important it is that IAs are informed by the local and Indigenous knowledge of the impacted community and area. It was recommended that IA consultants work in collaboration with the community to define the scope, to choose the methods, and collect data, *and* to co-write, analyze, review, and reach the conclusions of the assessment, together. The workshop participants agreed that it could be beneficial to the assessment process if consultants spend considerable time in the communities and their environments. This was suggested because community members’ input to the assessment may be difficult to articulate or write in words; They may have to be experienced through the daily engagements in the social, cultural, and environmental landscapes of the impacted community and surrounding areas.



**Photo 5.** Anni-Helena Ruotsala and Tukumminnguaq Nykjær Olsen. (Photo by Anne Merrild Hansen).

The group discussions underlined that there are differences between local knowledge and Indigenous knowledge. Workshop participants pointed out that IA guidelines tend to focus on ‘local knowledge’ (i.e. IA guidelines in Greenland), but in effect they neglect the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems in the impacted communities. The

understanding of the workshop participants is that the inherited, ancestral knowledge about the interrelations between land, animals, and people is crucial for assessing the possible impacts of large-scale projects in Indigenous communities. As a first step to acknowledge this, it was recommended that IA guidelines and their legislative frameworks reassess their vocabularies, terms, and definitions towards articulating and highlighting the importance of Indigenous knowledge and rights.

The workshop participants agreed that such reassessment should underscore a consultation process that considers Indigenous knowledge as central to the formulation of the impact assessment. The workshop participants pointed out that this involves formulating culturally appropriate approaches to the assessment process in which cultural protocols, as well as the seasonal cycles of local activities are respected. In the view of the workshop participants, this requires efforts towards creating spaces in which Indigenous community members and representatives feel comfortable to speak and engage in dialogues; It also calls for an assessment process that avoids work, meetings, and negotiations during busy periods of, for example, herding, slaughtering, and hunting.

The workshop participants also suggested that an impacted community should have the possibility to undertake their own impact assessment, and possibly also to monitor the impacts. In this sense, direct engagement in the process can be a central step towards Indigenizing impact assessments. Yet, it was also noted that IAs take a lot of time and resources, which community members do not necessarily have. It was suggested that it could be a solution if the companies cover the costs of a community-led impact assessment..

The workshop discussions underlined that representatives in and of a community – whether they are local representatives or external consultants, policy makers or researchers – should always consult the community members and knowledge holders and agree on the content, insights, and arguments to be shared and represented elsewhere.

## 5. VISIONING AND REVISIONING IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

This section is based on a plenary session that focused on rethinking the current frameworks for impact assessments and envisioning ideal assessments practices. The plenary was based on the discussion questions: *“What would the ideal impact assessment look like? How can we rethink the existing assessments? Can we gather and sum-up statements and guidelines, based on our workshop discussions? What would those be?”*

It was discussed in plenary that it is important to assess the vocabulary in the guidelines and legislation, and consider which words are the most appropriate ones. For example, it was pointed out that it is important to include and highlight ‘Indigenous knowledge’ in the assessment criteria, and that this requires discussions between the involved actors about the definition of concepts and the expectations related to the use of the words – and what those words include and exclude in the assessment process.



**Photo 6.** Niila Inga and Ellen K. Frederiksen. (Photo by Naja Dyrendom Graugaard).

In the plenary discussion, the workshop participants stressed how important it is that IAs are undertaken with the perspective of the impacted communities and include the criteria that the communities find relevant. Identifying these criteria also require that IA consultants are present in the community and surrounding areas and partake in dialogues with community members. The workshop participants agreed that an ideal IA process implies that those who are impacted are the ones who describe and assess the



impacts and their possible significance or severity. In the experience of the workshop participants, undertaking a community-led impact assessment can be recommendable, if and when the (mining) project is already determined and an impact assessment appears to be the best platform for community influence. It was suggested in the plenary discussion that IAs should cover longer periods of time in order to assess the cumulative and long-term effects of impacts, as well as their interactions with climate changes, extreme weather events, storms, fires, rain, and snow. It was therefore also pointed out that IAs should include a future plan for the impacted communities and address the interrelations with other current development projects in the area.

It was suggested in the plenary that a 'light' environmental impact assessment (EIA) should be made prior to giving companies exploration licenses. As it was mentioned by workshop participants, it can be difficult to turn down a production license if an exploration license has been awarded, and it is therefore important with an early and 'light' version of an EIA.

Workshop participants also pointed out that the government has a responsibility of setting up criteria to the companies, making it a requirement that independent consultants with adequate knowledge and competence are hired for the IA assessment.

In the plenary discussion, it was also pointed out that it can be recommendable to have social impact assessments (SIA) undertaken in Greenland checked by a professional with expertise in Indigenous rights and knowledge about the culture and local area. As it was mentioned, this can help securing that Indigenous rights are met in the assessment, prior to the decision-making process. Furthermore, this mirrors the existing requirement that environmental experts are consulted to check the environmental impact assessments (EIA). In the plenary, this was envisioned as a kind of review board with selected representatives, similar to those in Nunavut.



**Photo 7.** Kristine Lynge-Pedersen and Anni-Helena Routsala. (Photo by Anne Merrild Hansen).

The workshop participants agreed that it is crucial to consider the relations between the legislative frameworks and actual practices. Even though frameworks and guidelines may seem ideal on paper, they are not necessarily translated into practice. It was therefore noted that it is important to assess how legislations work in practice.

The workshop participants also agreed that IA processes should be transparent for all involved actors, and the process and terms should be agreed on. As it was articulated in plenary, there should be 'no shocking news' to the impacted communities. In this regard, it was also discussed that it is important to consider whether written reports are the best practice of communication. It was suggested by the workshop participants that current communication practices could instead reflect the cultural practices in Indigenous communities which are often more verbal, and based on meeting, talking, and sharing stories about the land. To the workshop participants, it is essential that IA processes respect cultural differences and acknowledge the need for building more bridges for communication between the involved actors. The example was brought up: 'No responses' from community members in hearing phases are often mistaken as being reflective of their consent – and this is not necessarily the case.

The workshop participants also stressed that it should not be left up to the impacted communities to protect their rights. As it was mentioned, individuals and communities have social, economic, work-related, and private responsibilities, and they should not be required to spend their time and resources on ensuring that their rights are upheld in the event of large-scale projects. Meanwhile, workshop participants also encouraged that more members of impacted communities seek information on the projects themselves and partake in hearings and consultations.

It was recommended that local (and national) communities articulate their own visions of their lands and the environmental and social well-being of their community. This entails common agreements on local and national land-use plans. As it was stressed by workshop participants, this would also back up the political task of protecting these visions and agreements.

# 6. WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

With an objective to initiate a cross-Arctic exchange based on the experiences of local and Indigenous actors with IAs in the European Arctic, the LOVISA project created a platform for informative and inspiring dialogues and discussions. The LOVISA workshop became a forum for knowledge exchanges and network building amongst the participants which may support the participants' individual, community, or governmental work with impact assessments.



**Photo 8.** Plenary. (Photo by Anne Merrild Hansen).

As part of this exchange, it was also the objective of the LOVISA workshop to identify 'attention points' in the existing IA processes as a basis for developing ideas for future improvements of IAs in the Arctic. Through the procession of workshop presentations, groups discussions, and plenaries, it was possible to identify 'attention points' with regards to the existing challenges to and the future possibilities of: Improving community participation in decision-making processes regarding IAs (discussion session 1)<sup>4</sup>, including Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge in IA processes (discussion session 2)<sup>5</sup>, and rethinking the current frameworks for IAs (discussion session 3)<sup>6</sup>. As the workshop proceeded, it was clear that the three discussion sessions interrelate and build on each other. This section therefore focuses on summarizing the main conclusions and attention points that came out of the workshop discussions. Some of these 'attention points' are relevant for the impacted communities, some are relevant for policy makers, con-

4 Described in section 3 of the report: 'Impact assessments and community participation'.

5 Described in section 4 of the report: 'Indigenizing impact assessments'.

6 Described in section 5 of the report: 'Vision and re-visioning impact assessments'.



sultants, and companies, and some are relevant for all involved actors. The key attention points selected here are based on the workshop discussions and their overall messages; They are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Attention points in IA processes, as pointed out in the LOVISA workshop:
It is important that governments uphold their responsibility in assuring an appropriate legislative framework, and in protecting the rights and the land-use plans of the impacted community.
It is recommended that the overall terms and content of an IA are defined by those, who are affected by the project in question.
It is important to ensure collaboration between IA consultants and the impacted community on defining the scope of assessment, choosing the methods of data collection, and reaching the conclusions together.
It is recommended that IA processes allow critical engagement and descriptions of alternatives to the project and future perspectives.
It is recommended that an IA should be transparent at all stages of the process. When companies hire consultants for the IA process, it is important that the consultants are impartial and recruited with consent of the impacted community.
It is recommended that the longitude of an IA framework is extended, both prior to and during the assessment period. This could involve pre-consultations and 'light' versions of IAs before exploration licenses are given.
It is important that both local knowledge <i>and</i> Indigenous knowledge are acknowledged and prioritized as part IA guidelines and legislative frameworks.
It is recommended that an impacted community should have the possibility to undertake their own impact assessments, and possibly also monitor the impacts.
It is recommended that communities articulate their own visions of their lands and make common agreements with regards to local and national land-use plans, prior to the arrival of mining or other development projects.

While the experiences and views of workshop participants are different and diverse, the discussions on community participation reflected a shared concern about a lack of engagement with local communities and Indigenous peoples throughout impact assessment processes. The workshop discussions called for developing IA models in which the terms and content of assessment are defined by those who are affected by the project in question. This would entail collaboration between IA consultants and the local community on defining the scope of assessment, choosing the methods of data collection and analysis, and reaching the conclusions together. Yet, community participation in assessment processes should not be mistaken as 'consent' but should also allow critical engagement and descriptions of alternatives to the project and future perspectives. The need for more transparent assessment processes and the importance of impartial consultants were also stressed.

The workshop discussions highlighted that it is important that IAs are informed by the local knowledge and the Indigenous knowledge of the impacted community and area. However, knowledge inputs by community members may not necessarily be communicated through, for example, public hearings or written statements. Community inputs and knowledge may need to be experienced through the daily engagements in the community and surrounding environments. It is therefore suggested that consultants engage in assessment processes over a longer period of time, and spend considerable time in the impacted communities and their environments.

In this sense, the workshop discussions have highlighted the importance of considering the duration of an IA process and they recommended that the longitude of existing assessment frameworks is extended, both prior to and during the assessment period. This could involve pre-consultations and 'light' versions of IAs before exploration licenses are given to companies. When IA processes are hastened, the cumulative and long-term effects of impacts, and their possible interactions with climate changes may be overseen. Assessing the future plans and visions of the impacted communities should be part of assessing the long-term impacts of large-scale projects.

Importantly, it is pointed out that there are differences between local knowledge and Indigenous knowledge. When IA frameworks focus on 'local knowledge', they risk to neglect the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems in the impacted communities. In Greenland, the public government – comprised of mainly Inuit politicians – has no particular emphasis on Indigenous rights and knowledges, even though the majority of the population is Inuit and recognized as an Indigenous people. However, Indigenous knowledge and perspectives on the interrelations between land, animals, and people are experienced as crucial to assessing the possible impacts of large-scale projects in Indigenous communities. It is therefore suggested that IA guidelines and legislative frameworks reassess their terms and articulations, towards considering the importance of Indigenous knowledge.

Direct community engagement in the IA process can be a central step towards formulating impact assessments that are informed by both local and Indigenous knowledge systems. It is therefore recommended that an impacted community should have the possibility to undertake their own impact assessments, and possibly also to monitor the impacts. A community-led impact assessment can broaden the existing frameworks to include local perspectives on historical experiences as well as future visions of the community. This can also bring into play aspects of impacts that are difficult to measure, but are still important to assess, such as the influences on the culture and identity of an impacted community. Acknowledging Indigenous knowledge and experiences in the assessment process necessitates recognition and respect of cultural protocols, as well as the seasonal cycles of local activities with regards to herding, slaughtering, and hunting.

It has been pointed out that ensuring community influence in the decision-making processes, with regards to large-scale projects, may also require community planning prior to an impact assessment. It was recommended that communities articulate their own visions of their lands and make common agreements on local and national land-use plans.

Importantly, it was also pointed out that community-led assessments require excessive time and resources that a community may not have. Covering the costs of a community-led assessment should therefore not be left up to the impacted community, but could be covered by the company with the project proposal. Furthermore, it was stressed that the government carries responsibility in upholding and assuring an appropriate legislative framework, and in protecting the rights and the land-use plans of the impacted community.

At the end of the workshop, the participants expressed their wishes to continue building on and developing the dialogues and ideas. The aspiration is therefore to follow up on the exchange with a subsequent workshop in another locality in the Nordic region. As another important outcome of the LOVISA project, at least one journal article will be produced based on the workshop and its findings. This article will be developed and written in co-authorship with interested workshop participants.



