

The Arctic Six Position on the EU's Future Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10)

Executive Summary

The Arctic Six, a consortium of six leading Arctic research universities from Finland, Norway, and Sweden, advocates for a strong, dedicated Arctic research component in the EU's Framework Programme 10 (FP10). The European Arctic is undergoing rapid environmental, societal, and geopolitical changes impacting EU priorities, including the green transition, strategic autonomy, and regional security. We call for sustained investment in Arctic research to ensure science-based decision-making, societal resilience, and Europe's continued leadership in global Arctic affairs. Our recommendations align with the European Polar Board's parallel position and highlight the strategic value of research embedded in and responsive to Arctic realities.

Recommendations for EU's Framework Programme 10

The Arctic Six recommends that FP10 include a dedicated Arctic research programme as part of the EU's 2028–2035 Multiannual Financial Framework. To ensure Arctic research maximizes its societal and strategic impact, we propose that the European Union:

1. Adopt a comprehensive approach to Arctic research

- **Integrate interdisciplinary methods across natural and social sciences**
- **Prioritise knowledge co-production with Indigenous and local communities**

2. Address green transition opportunities and conflicts

- **Fund research on land-use governance, Indigenous rights, and environmental justice**
- **Support innovation in green and blue technologies suited for Arctic conditions**

3. Include holistic security and preparedness as a research priority

- **Advance civil and digital security systems in Arctic contexts, this includes food security, climate adaptation, health preparedness, and infrastructure resilience**
- **Build Arctic-informed strategies for EU resilience and autonomy**

4. Enhance science diplomacy and cross-border cooperation

- **Support platforms for EU-Arctic engagement and Arctic Council collaboration**
- **Promote Arctic science as a tool for peace and stability**

5. Leverage Arctic universities as regional development engines

- **Fund university-led initiatives for community resilience and innovation**
- **Expand education programmes tied to regional labour and security needs**

These priorities align with the European Polar Board's parallel call for targeted FP10 investment in polar research. By investing now, the EU can lead the way in adapting to and mitigating the impacts of Arctic change, benefiting Europe and the world.

About the Arctic Six

The Arctic Six (A6) is a strategic alliance of six research universities in the European Arctic: the University of Oulu and the University of Lapland in Finland; Nord University and UiT—The Arctic University of Norway; and Luleå University of Technology and Umeå University in Sweden. Together, we represent over 10,000 researchers and 106,000 students. Embedded in Arctic communities and integrated into stakeholder networks, we form the EU's most comprehensive Arctic research and education infrastructure.

With decades of collaborative, cross-border research, A6 delivers the knowledge and innovation needed to address pressing European and Arctic challenges. We support regional development, strengthen international competitiveness, and contribute directly to EU goals in green industry, digital transitions, and social cohesion.

Researchers from the A6 universities have led or been partners in many EU-funded Arctic research projects, Horizon 2020 and others (e.g., CHARTER and JustNorth), and have played active roles in the EU Polar Cluster and other networks.

Why the European Arctic Matters

The Arctic is warming faster than any other region, with cascading effects on climate, biodiversity, and European societies. The European Arctic has unique ecosystems, Europe's only Indigenous peoples, a rapidly warming Arctic ocean and strategically essential resources.

Key drivers of change include:

- Accelerating climate change and global teleconnections
- Biodiversity loss on land and in marine environments
- Arctic ocean acidification, warming, and melting sea ice
- Rising demand for critical minerals and renewable energy
- Industrialisation, digitisation, and mobility expansion
- Geopolitical instability and militarisation

These forces shape ecosystems, infrastructure, economies, and societies. Investments in Arctic research are essential to balance opportunities with challenges and ensure evidence-based, sustainable development.

A Strategic Hub for a Just Green Transition

The European Arctic is central to Europe's green industrialisation and energy transition ambitions. The region offers abundant renewable energy, key minerals, and technological innovation potential.

However, green growth brings local challenges:

- Land-use conflicts with Indigenous communities (e.g., reindeer herding)
- Environmental degradation
- Labour shortages in remote regions
- Integrated Ocean Management to balance between resource demands and environmental conservation.

Research must support the capacity to navigate these tensions and co-create solutions with affected communities. Multi- to transdisciplinary approaches are crucial for enabling a just transition.

Arctic Security is European Security

There is no European security without Arctic security. Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the geopolitical landscape in the Arctic has dramatically shifted. Sweden and Finland's accession to NATO has further altered regional dynamics.

Key security concerns include:

- Monitoring of land, sea, and air in northern Europe
- Resilience of Arctic infrastructure and communities
- Climate-related threats to food, water, and energy systems

The EU must invest in research and education that enhances civil preparedness and total defence, incorporating cybersecurity, communication systems, and health care delivery.

The Changing Role of Arctic Universities

Universities in the Arctic are knowledge producers and key societal partners. Public-private partnerships, education, innovation, and local engagement help reverse population decline and contribute to resilient, vibrant communities.

We support expanding universities' roles in:

- Regional preparedness and risk reduction
- Lifelong learning, re-skilling, and upskilling
- Inclusive science diplomacy and policy co-creation