



ARENA 2020

Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy



ARENA UPDATE AND POSTPONEMENT OF NUNAVUT ON-SITE SESSION

April 1, 2020

The Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy (ARENA) was approved for a second cohort by the Sustainable Development Working Group in September 2019. The project is co-led by Gwich'in Council International, Canada, the United States, and Iceland, and aims to bring participants from the circumpolar Arctic together for learning, knowledge sharing, mentorship, and community site visits to build energy projects in their own communities and regions.

Over the past six months, we have focused on recruitment, curriculum development, and planning. There were more than thirty applications, and we thank everyone who took the time to apply. After many interviews, we are inviting 16 participants from Arctic States and Permanent Participant organizations to join the ARENA-II cohort, and recognize the efforts that they, their community partners and sponsors, and their employers have made to support their involvement.

There were three on-site sessions planned for 2020: Nunavut in May; Fairbanks and Kodiak Alaska in July; and Iceland in October. However, no one predicted COVID-19 and the pandemic is impacting program delivery. Our plan of bringing people together in May is not realistic given the continued increase in daily cases, travel restrictions, and uncertainty about when the pandemic will end; the Nunavut session will be postponed. The July in-person session in Alaska has not been postponed yet but we are monitoring the situation in the coming weeks and will provide an update when available. The Iceland session is on schedule but will be reviewed.

We are committed to delivering ARENA, and the in-person networking, mentoring, and community site visits are integral elements of the program. We will be working over the next month to identify options and a revised delivery schedule.

Our greatest resource, and top priority, is the people who live in Arctic communities; their health, safety, and well-being are paramount. We are not prepared to take any actions that would risk spreading COVID-19 to participants or community members welcoming the ARENA cohort.

ARENA is about effectively achieving balance between economic viability, energy security, environmental and public health concerns in the circumpolar Arctic region. COVID-19 is already demonstrating that we need to not only protect those in small and remote communities but ensure there are the necessary supports and infrastructure in place. Renewable and secure energy options are a part of sustained improvements and we look forward to sharing the ARENA cohort, projects, and news in coming months.

We thank everyone for their patience and support.

Mahsi', thank you.

Project leads:

