

UArctic research and education support related to larger projects.

Only 1% of existing Arctic research projects / grants are funded by Private foundations, including philanthropy¹. UArctic has a philanthropy program aiming at increasing the total available private funding for relevant Arctic Research and Education initiatives.

This document describes the practical sides of how such support is organized for larger projects. Donations for mobility and general program support follow normal UArctic budgeting and decision-making processes.

Initially the focus will be on the UArctic plan for Identification and support of Polar research projects related to Grand Climate Challenges (separate document).

Identification of large projects

The term project is here used to cover support to develop and test important ideas, new concepts, as well as traditional projects that are new or outside the common funding agencies priorities.

It is a primary goal to ensure that UArctic identifies and supports projects that address important topics, are of high quality, are novel, and support the purpose of UArctic. An important way to ensure quality, and a particular strength of UArctic, is to have projects implemented through collaboration among institutions and utilize structures like the UArctic Thematic Networks and UArctic Chairs. Choice of larger project thematic focus and implementation teams, is ensured through normal quality criteria and includes active search for ideas, including ideas out of the ordinary. In each case quality is ensured by use of independent expert reviewers.

Projects for consideration are developed in two phases. This is done to reduce development cost for project at a stage when funding is not in place (ref the Funding Frameworks) ;

- 1) A concept note, which is a pre-proposal application that explains the problem, how it will be addressed, with budgetary and managerial details defined only on a very general level.
- 2) A full proposal is invited and will be evaluated when full, or partial, funding is secured.

Both will be subject to appropriate evaluation and quality control before decision. Board approved concepts and full project proposals will be supported through continued fundraising as needed throughout the life of the project. UArctic supported projects will be subject to regular review for quality, progress, financial, and adherence to UArctic values.

The UArctic Advisory boards will be engaged to help identify relevant independent review experts able to ensure proper independent review of concepts, full proposals, as well as work underway, and at closure.

¹ Thematic Network on Research Analytics and Bibliometrics, [Arctic Research Trends - External Funding 2016–2022](#)

Funding framework

The UArctic Philanthropic Fundraising plan defines some general possible paths towards funding of a project. This set some bearing on how UArctic identifies and works with given projects. The following represents the primary ways a project gets identified and funded with related decision making.

A) UARCTIC ORGANIZES AN OPEN CALL IN A BROAD AREA AND WILL FUNDRAISE FOR THE PROJECT IDEAS SELECTED (THE PRESENT REALITY).

In these cases UArctic will run a process to identify project concepts. It can for example be a call for concepts within a broad area. Concepts are evaluated, and the best are chosen. When a concept is chosen, the project owners (consortium) is pretty much defined. A consortium will most often be based on UArctic Thematic Networks and Chairs and have some leading UArctic member institutions as supporters.

For the concepts selected UArctic cannot promise the project owner funding, but UArctic must promise to work with them to find funders. This implicitly set some of the UArctic fundraising priorities to focus on the selected concepts.

According to our fundraising plan this will be the most common situation. This allows UArctic to promote an identified concept or project, with known actors to various possible donors.

To stimulate good concepts in a situation UArctic can not promise funding up front, seed funding to develop ideas will be valuable. UArctic will fundraise for project development grants, including actions like high level seminars. This can be combined with setting aside part of the “overhead” from other projects for stimulations and project development grants. National UArctic funding should also be reprioritized to support development of project ideas and concepts.

B) UARCTIC ORGANIZES OPEN CALLS IN AN AREA AND HAS FUNDING TO FINANCE ALL OR MAJOR PARTS OF THE PROJECT (THE PERFECT FUTURE REALITY).

In these cases funding exists and UArctic can identify priority projects freely. The project lead and partners are defined via open calls that also identify the best projects. The Board will normally identify some strategic areas of focus. (e.g. , Grand Climate Challenges).

The most realistic strategy to be able to do this will be to build an endowment of tens of millions of euros. With that the UArctic board can dispense annual project funding of a reasonable size. F.x. 4% for distribution on a 10 mill endowment allow granting of 400k€ / year. According to the UArctic fundraising strategy, such endowments can be a named donation or a broad topical donation with multiple donors.

It may also be possible for UArctic to fundraise for specific projects where there is no specific guidance from the donor on purpose. However, as philanthropic funders tend to prefer to fund specific projects and project groups, this will likely be a modest source until we identify some larger donors with general trust in UArctic. The establishment of the UArctic Trustee Council is our present strategy towards this.

In any case under this funding framework UArctic runs the process to choose a project independently and agrees with the project implementers on all parameters.

C) UArctic IDENTIFIES A VERY SPECIFIC PROBLEM THAT NEEDS ATTENTION, DEVELOPS THE CONCEPT, AND FUNDRAISES FOR IT (A REALISTIC APPROACH TO IMPLEMENT NOW)

UArctic develops a fully formed concept for a strategically important area (e.g. research on nature based approaches to save permafrost from thawing). When the (majority of) funding is in place, UArctic organizes open calls for the best concrete proposals on how to implement this concept. The best project proposal(s) are selected based on external evaluation. This approach resembles some EU grant calls where the purpose is very precisely defined.

This approach may work well with some funders and should be a priority to develop. It will require a good team to develop relevant concepts, and UArctic Chairs are the most likely group to do this.

In any case under this funding framework UArctic runs the process to choose both concept (topic) and then the concrete project implementers independently and agree with the project implementers on all parameters. The challenge will be to convince the funder to support an idea, without knowing precisely who is doing the job.

Basics operation principles for UArctic large Projects

This applies proposals when (part or full) funding is in place.

1. All activities shall follow UArctic Values and rules of conduct (anti corruption, anti slavery, ... etc.)
2. Activities are carried out in work packages (or similar) each led by a UArctic Member and normally within the framework of one or more Thematic Networks and Chairs and can include UArctic partners.
3. One of the involved UArctic member institutions is the lead and shall oversee the work of all involved partners, and their work packages. The lead also ensures that necessary reporting is carried out.
4. UArctic may disperse all funding to the lead, or direct to the various work package partners. This will be agreed for each project separately.
5. Academic and communication output from projects shall be credited to the relevant UArctic member institutions, and involved persons, but also recognize UArctic.
6. The need for further fundraising for a project shall be declared up front and a work plan is agreed with UArctic when relevant.
7. UArctic Board will be regularly updated based on progress reports from larger projects.