

**Progress Report, Action #59**  
**2018-2020 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions,**  
**Circumpolar Action Plan:**  
**Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear**



<b>Action</b>	The Communications Working Group will create a report which strategically identifies appropriate messages regarding climate change threats to polar bear bears and the means to communicate these messages to the global audience.
<b>Point(s) of contact or Lead country</b>	Communications Working Group/Norway Lauren Schmuck, Bridget Crokus, Andreas Benjamin Schei, Karen Lone <a href="mailto:lauren.schmuck@canada.ca">lauren.schmuck@canada.ca</a> , <a href="mailto:bridget_crokus@fws.gov">bridget_crokus@fws.gov</a> , <a href="mailto:andreas.benjamin.schei@miljodir.no">andreas.benjamin.schei@miljodir.no</a> , <a href="mailto:karen.lone@miljodir.no">karen.lone@miljodir.no</a>
<b>Partner countries</b>	n/a
<b>Timeline Description as per 2018-2020 implementation table</b>	Task partially completed under the 2015-2017 plan; task for current 2-year cycle is expected to continue beyond the Meeting of the Parties in March 2020. Further implementation of the Action will be carried into next 2-year cycle and through 2025.
<b>Baseline Status</b>	No Range States communications plan exists.
<b>2018 Status</b>	An internal communications strategy was completed in 2017 with climate change components specified for a suite of actions; no external communications plan exists.
<b>Planned Outputs</b>	The <i>Proposal: Climate Change Communication Activities Implementation Plan</i> was presented to the Heads of Delegation (HoD) during the HoD call on September 10, 2019. The Circumpolar Action Plan Implementation Team (CAP IT) will consider the Proposal during their midterm review.
<b>Modifications</b>	Action 59 was partially combined with action 55 in an effort to have a single communications plan which outlined, in one place, how the Range States would communicate about climate change and what steps would be taken for targeted outreach (i.e., the <i>Range States—Internal CAP Communication Strategy</i> adopted in 2017). Under this plan, the Communication Product “RS document describing guidelines for and potential contents of communications actions in order to address climate change threats to polar bears” is identified for the Communications Activity “Communications guidelines for communications on polar bears and climate change.”
<b>Progress Report Date</b>	September 30, 2019

**Progress Report on Activity**

The component of Action 59 that has been rolled into the communications plan is completed and was approved with the communications plan by the HoD in late March 2017. To achieve the remaining tasks under Action 59, the Communications Working Group presented the *Proposal: Climate Change Communication Activities Implementation Plan* to the HoD in September 2019. Under this proposal, a Climate Change Communications Working Group (CCCWG) will be formed consisting of representatives from each of the government agencies which are signatory to the CAP, representatives from the Polar Bear Specialist Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and representatives from outside entities, such as zoos, academia, and Indigenous organizations. The CCCWG will work to develop messages about the impact of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on polar bears and their habitats, and will ensure that northern and Indigenous perspectives regarding climate change are represented (i.e., they will work to produce the Communication Product identified for the Communications Activity “Communications guidelines for communications on polar bears and climate change” in the *Range States—Internal CAP Communication Strategy*).

The HoD requested the CAP IT consider this Proposal during their midterm review of CAP actions.

**Next Steps**

During their midterm review, the CAP IT will consider the following recommendations presented by the Comms WG in the *Proposal: Climate Change Communication Activities Implementation Plan*:

To carry out the Communications Activity “Communications guidelines for communications on polar bears and climate change,” the Comms WG recommends the HoD, under Section 11 of the Polar Bear Range States Rules of Procedure, establish an ad hoc Climate Change Communications Working Group (CCCWG) with the Terms of Reference contained in Annex II of the proposal. The Comms WG also requests that the HoD make a formal request to the PBSG to provide scientific support by having a member of the PBSG join the CCCWG, as their knowledge and expertise would be invaluable to this initiative.

The Comms WG recommends the membership of the CCCWG should consist of, at a minimum, one member per RS from the following existing working groups: Comms WG, Circumpolar Action Plan Implementation Team (CAP IT), Conflict Working Group (CWG), Traditional Ecological Working Group (TEK WG); and the scientific advisory body to the RS, the International Union for Conservation of Nature/Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG). It is highly recommended that members

from outside the RS (e.g., Indigenous rights holders [or their representatives], academia, NGOs, zoos, or similar) also be considered for inclusion on the CCCWG, as they will also bring important perspectives to the table. This Working Group will be tasked with the development of messages about the impact of GHG on polar bears and their habitats, and will ensure that northern and Indigenous perspectives regarding climate change are represented (i.e., the Communication Product identified for this Communications Activity).

This Communication Product will be shared with policy makers and climate change communication partners (NGOs, zoos, etc.) and will contain messages, illustrations, figures, or other material easily understood and intended for policy-makers, climate change communicators, and the public. To produce this document, it is recommended the CCCWG hold six monthly teleconferences and finalize the draft document during a two-day face-to-face meeting. This Communication Product will be a “living” document and specific intervals for update will be determined by the CCCWG. The completed document will be made publically available on the RS website.

The recommended timeline for the CCCWG to complete their work on the Communication Product is presented in the following table:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
First teleconference of CCCWG	Date to be determined by HoD and CAP IT
Remaining five teleconferences of CCCWG	Will occur monthly following initial meeting
Face-to-face meeting to finalize products	Will occur following the conclusion of the six monthly meetings
CCCWG presents draft work products to the HoD	Within the 30 days following the CCCWG face-to-face meeting
Public release of final CCCWG work product	Within 30 days of the presentation of draft work products to the HoD

The Comms WG recommends the following Communications Activities also be carried out by the CCCWG during the course of their work to produce the Communications product:

- Produce educational materials related to bear biology and status,
- Website content creation and maintenance,
- Compile and identify key publications,
- Compile maps, and
- Raise awareness at meetings, e.g., UNFCCC meetings

After the Communications Activities are addressed by the CCCWG, the Comms WG recommends that they (the Comms WG) continue the work on the Activities.

If the CAP IT accepts these recommendations, the Comms WG will continue to use and update the products created by the CCCWG throughout the 2020 - 2022 period, as well as the entire timespan of the CAP.

**Considerations Going Forward:**

It is recommended that action item 59 should be retained as a priority action. The hope is that by making information pertaining to the impacts of climate change on polar bears and their habitats available to federal policy makers, changes to federal policies regarding GHG emission (and other causes of climate change) will be made and will benefit polar bears and their habitat. In addition, communication of Indigenous and northern perspectives on the impact(s) of climate change on polar bears is vital, though this information is often not relayed to members of the public.

Going forward, rather than a global target audience, the Communications Working Group recommends that federal policymakers in each of the Range States should be the target audience of this climate change messaging. The Range States are uniquely positioned to be able to communicate both scientific and Indigenous knowledge-based climate change messages directly to their respective federal governments and policymakers. The most effective use of scientific and Indigenous knowledge-based climate change messages is to provide them to policymakers to help them arrive at informed decisions related to managing greenhouse gas emissions. These informed decisions will result in beneficial outcomes for the sea ice habitat upon which polar bears depend.