



UARctic Assembly Meeting / Quebec City, Canada / May 2023

Agenda item: 8.2

Proposal – Approval of new Thematic Networks 2023

Proposal: The Executive Committee (Toyon) proposes that the Assembly make the decision to support the evaluation by the UArctic Thematic Networks Leadership Team and approve the provisional establishment of the following networks:

- ***Thematic Network on Arctic Cultures and History***, hosted by University of Faroe Islands, Faroe Islands
- ***Thematic Network on Blue Economy and the Arctic***, hosted by Nord University, Norway
- ***Thematic Network on Collaborative Online International Learning and Biodiversity Education across the Arctic Circle (COIL@UARctic)***, hosted by Robert Gordon University, Scotland, UK
- ***Thematic Network on High Latitude Dust***, hosted by Agricultural University of Iceland, Iceland
- ***Thematic Network on Microtomography of Arctic Marine Organisms***, hosted by UiT Arctic University of Norway, Norway

References: [UARctic Constitution](#) / Articles 8 – Association Assemblies; 10 – Annual Assembly

[UARctic Bylaws](#) / Section 3.2 – Meetings of the Assembly

[Guidelines for establishing new Thematic Networks \(2023\)](#)

Background:

UARctic Thematic Networks are independent and thematically focused networks of experts in specific areas of northern relevance. A Thematic Network may focus its activities on one or several of the following: research cooperation, knowledge sharing, curriculum development, or forming the basis for larger project development. Thematic Networks consist of individual experts from at least three UArctic member institutions and should have partners from different regions for including diversity of its members. In addition, a Thematic Network may have members from non-UArctic member institutions, but representatives from UArctic member institutions shall have majority in any internal decision-making structure.

The Thematic Networks guidelines state that any individual expert(s) at UArctic member institution(s) can propose to UArctic, the establishment of a new Thematic Network. The lead is responsible for submitting a proposal to the UArctic Thematic Network Coordination Office, along with a support letter signed by the head of the host institution. Proposals for new Thematic Networks must include details on the focus, goals, membership, planned activities, and structure of the network.

Application, Evaluation and Approval process:



By the application deadline of February 28, 2023, the Thematic Networks Coordination Office received five thematic network applications. Members of the Thematic Networks Leadership Team evaluated the applications, and afterwards each thematic network was given the opportunity to edit their proposals based on the feedback given, which are presented here (below).

The evaluation of proposals included the review and assistance for improvements by the Thematic Network leadership team and a review by UArctic vice-president Indigenous was invited to evaluate that proposals reflect UArctic's principles and values, including the key role of Indigenous Peoples for the development of the north.

For the 2023 Meeting of the Assembly of UArctic, and the benefit of members of the Assembly who are to vote on the approval of new Thematic Networks, each proposed Thematic Network leader presents the proposal on-site (this can be done by proxy) or has produced an online presentation of their respective proposed thematic network. These are also provided below.

Once approved, a thematic network is given provisional status for a period of one year. In the second year, if the new thematic network has shown that activities have been planned and/or initiated, then their endorsement will become final. The endorsement proposal at that point is done by the Thematic Networks Coordination Office. In the second year, following final endorsement by the Assembly, a Memorandum of Understanding between the lead institution(s) and UArctic must be signed within six months after Assembly endorsement.

Proposed New Thematic Networks for 2023:

Applications for the following proposed four Thematic Networks were submitted to the Thematic Networks Coordination Office, and subsequently reviewed and supported by members of the Thematic Networks Leadership Team.

Note: On the following page, the title of each proposed network is hyperlinked to the application proposal and signed letter of support received are provided below.

1. [**Thematic Network on Arctic Cultures and History \(ARCH\)**](#)

Hosted by: University of Faroe Islands, Faroe Islands
Lead: Bergur Djurhuus Hansen

2. [**Thematic Network on Blue Economy and the Arctic**](#)

Hosted by: Nord University, Norway
Lead: Andreas Raspotnik

3. [**Thematic Network on Collaborative Online International Learning and Biodiversity Education across the Arctic Circle \(COIL@UARctic\)**](#)

Hosted by: Robert Gordon University, Scotland, UK
Lead: Izzy Crawford

4. [**Thematic Network on High Latitude Dust**](#)

Hosted by: Agricultural University of Iceland, Iceland
Lead: Pavla Dagsson-Waldhauserova

5. [**Thematic Network on Microtomography of Arctic Marine Organisms**](#)



Hosted by: UiT Arctic University of Norway, Norway
Lead: Andreas Altenburger