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Thematic Networks

Year In Review

Thematic Network on Blue Economy and the Arctic

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Blue Arctic Expands Global Collaboration in Arctic Blue Economy

TN *Blue Arctic* continued to strengthen Arctic collaboration on Blue Economy education, outreach, and research throughout the past year. The network's key event, an intensive one-week Summer School on the Blue Economy in the Arctic, was held at Nord University in Bodø and gathered more than 40 participants, including 30 students, from countries such as the US, China, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Croatia, Spain, and many other countries. The course has since become a permanent part of Nord University's curriculum, a significant milestone for the project. Members also contributed to the Arctic Council-endorsed project proposal BlueConnect, presented at conferences worldwide, and advanced two forthcoming books alongside journal chapters and policy pieces. Looking ahead, Blue Arctic will keep expanding cross-border collaboration on sustainable ocean economy development and pursue further funding and dissemination for its research and educational work.

Impact Highlights

- The BlueConnect proposal's endorsement by the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group gives the network's research an important linkage to Arctic Council policy processes on sustainable ocean economy development.
- Student feedback shows the Summer School shifted participants' thinking: Hanna Sylta (University of Alaska Anchorage) said the course helped her connect Blue Economy principles to "Alaska's resource management and development challenges", while Kristoffer Funk (University of Gothenburg) described the course as a unique environment for exchanging perspectives on sustainability and the future of our oceans.
- The course's establishment as a permanent Nord University offering embeds Blue Economy education institutionally, ensuring continued training of students and early-career professionals beyond the network's own activities.
- Presentations across Europe, North America, and Asia (including Korea) raised international awareness of Arctic Blue Economy issues well beyond the Arctic region itself.
- The policy guidelines for Alaska, Greenland, and North Norway translate network research directly into recommendations usable by policymakers in those regions.

Key Activities

- Summer School course Sustainable Blue Growth in the High North (Blue Economy in the Arctic), Nord University, Bodø, Norway, 20 June – 4 July 2025 and 29 June–3 July 2026 — now a permanent course
- Project proposal BlueConnect: An Ocean Economy Collaboration Platform for Arctic Communities, endorsed by the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group, spring 2025
- Presentations and participation at Arctic Circle Assembly 2025, Arctic Frontiers 2026 (Tromsø), Arctic Partnership Week 2025 (Busan), the 11th Korea Arctic Academy, Arctic Encounter Summit 2025, and the Global Conference of Economic Geography 2025 (Worcester, MA)
- Two books in production: a policy-focused volume, *A Blue Economy Agenda for the Arctic* (Bristol), due spring 2027; and an academic edited volume, *Blue Economy and the Arctic* (Routledge), due autumn 2027
- Book chapter: Navigating the Blue Economy Concept: Lessons from Fisheries and Aquaculture Governance in Alaska and Northern Norway, in *Handbook of Sustainable Blue Economy* (Springer, 2025)
- Policy guidelines: Strengthening the Blue Economy in Alaska, Greenland, and North Norway
- Press articles in High North News and Avisa Nordland on advancing Norway's High North policy through the Blue economy collaboration across the Arctic

Looking Ahead: Future Outcomes

The forthcoming policy-focused book is expected to give policymakers a practical, evidence-based agenda for coastal community prosperity across the Arctic. As the Summer School continues as a permanent course, Blue Arctic expects a growing, cross-national cohort of graduates equipped to work on sustainable ocean economy issues. Continued development of the BlueConnect platform is expected to deepen long-term, cross-border cooperation among Arctic communities on ocean economy knowledge-sharing.



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