

# The Álgvu FUND

*Empowering the First Peoples of the Arctic*



**Álgvu in the Saami language means “beginning.” We believe that this effectively reflects our goal: a new beginning for our organizations to fully take advantage of and contribute to the unique opportunity that comes with Indigenous participation within the Arctic Council.**

The Arctic Council provides a platform for Indigenous peoples to add their voices to international issues. The Permanent Participants share the perspectives and priorities of the indigenous peoples of the North, so that the research and decisions being made about the Arctic are shaped by those who are affected most by them, and are inclusive of their Indigenous culture, traditions, and knowledge.

Permanent Participants, who sit at the Arctic Council table and contribute substantially to its authoritative status in the region, are challenged to maintain active and robust involvement without an increase in and stability of funding. We are committed to ensuring continued participation in the deliberations of the Arctic Council, sustained and robust consultation with indigenous communities, traditional knowledge-informed research and collective decision-making.

Each Arctic Council Ministerial declaration in the organization’s 20-year history has given recognition to this

challenge and support for an appropriate funding mechanism to better enhance the resource needs of Permanent Participants. The vehicle to do this, we argue, is the recently-established Álgvu Fund, a capacity-building endowment. On January 23, 2017, representatives from the five Permanent Participants will have come together in Tromsø, Norway, to formally establish The Álgvu Fund, which will be a charitable foundation established under Swedish law, with the aim to provide stable, predictable, and reliable funding on an equitable basis to each of our organizations.

Even as the Arctic Council has across its history argued for better support of Permanent Participants, they have also written into the criteria for Observers (agreed to during the Kiruna Ministerial) the need for Observers to “have demonstrated a political willingness as well as financial ability to contribute to the work of the Permanent Participants...”. While this may not present a legal obligation, we have taken the initiative to provide the opportunity for the fulfillment of that criteria in the



establishment of the Álgu Fund. The Álgu Fund is the mechanism by which Observers and other interested Arctic stakeholders may contribute to the resilience of the region, and correspondingly to the Indigenous peoples living therein.

What better way to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Arctic Council than to finally overcome this hurdle, so that the next twenty years are marked by robust collaboration with the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic? The Álgu Fund is the vehicle to ensure that is the case.

The Álgu Fund will facilitate Permanent Participants' ability to contribute to the Arctic Council by:

- Expressing and protecting the interests of northern Indigenous communities;
- Facilitating the inclusion of traditional indigenous knowledge, as well as understanding and respect for this knowledge, and Indigenous cultural traditions;
- Actively partnering on Arctic Council projects by providing experts and facilitating local involvement, so that projects are more reflective of the communities they are intended to serve;
- Promoting cross-border cooperation amongst Indigenous peoples and the jurisdictions in which they live; and
- Supporting local initiatives undertaken by affiliated Indigenous organizations.

The Álgu Fund will also provide sustained and predictable funding for the following kinds of activities:

- Access to expertise in specialized research areas, consistent with Arctic Council projects and areas of interest, as a result of increased operating support;
- Attractiveness to leading experts within communities and the next generation of leaders to ensure our organizational strength and ability to participate in the Arctic Council over the long-term;
- Ability to work collaboratively amongst and between Permanent Participants;
- Coordination amongst the supporting Indigenous organizations, and the pursuit of shared interests in a strategic manner at all levels of jurisdiction;
- Knowledge about Permanent Participant work and that of the Arctic Council in communities; and
- Presence at the Arctic Council overall.

Following a year of research, collaboration, and negotiation, The Álgu Fund is now able to accept contributions from around the world. Our goal is to raise an endowment of \$30,000,000 USD, the interest of which will be distributed annually between Permanent Participant organizations. Funds will be distributed at a sustainable level, so that the principal of the endowment remains untouched and there is inflation proofing and administration costs covered. In this way, we seek to ensure the long-term viability of the Fund.

The Álgu Fund has a robust administrative structure in place that will meet the highest standards of both governance and ethics. We are confident that local and international laws can be employed and obeyed within the chosen structure. In addition, The Álgu Fund has put in place a gift acceptance policy; a conflict of interest regime; and communications protocols.

While fundraising for the endowment remains the primary goal in 2017, The Álgu Fund will also help us to partner with each other and other organizations on Arctic Council projects through a separate Project Fund.

A full-time Executive Director will maintain a tight focus on the goals of The Álgu Fund, helping Permanent Participants to not only reach the fundraising target, but also ensure the highest quality of oversight and administration.

We are excited by the opportunities offered by The Álgu Fund to ensure that indigenous voices continue to be a defining feature of the Arctic Council, contributing to its future success and that of the region.

**For more information, contact**

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