

ARCTIC TRANSPORTATION FUTURES

Reconciling Local Needs and Global Drivers

Workshop · University of Vienna · September 25, 2025

Organized by



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WORKSHOP · UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA ·
SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

About the Workshop

Arctic Transportation Futures is a one-day workshop taking place on September 25, 2025, at the University of Vienna, following the international conference “Beyond Infrastructure? (Un-)built Environments in the Anthropocene.”

It brings together invited participants—Arctic community members, transport professionals, researchers, policymakers, and others whose work or experience is connected to Arctic transportation. The group will explore how routes to, from, and within the Arctic can better reflect both local needs and global dynamics.

Purpose and Background

Arctic transport systems are increasingly shaped by climate change, geopolitical tensions, and economic shifts. While many initiatives are planned at national or international levels, they often overlook the lived realities and priorities of Arctic communities.

The workshop provides space for meaningful exchange—bringing together local experience, practical knowledge, and research and policy perspectives to support more inclusive and grounded approaches to Arctic transport futures.

Connection to ICARP IV

The workshop contributes to the 4th International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP) to define future priorities for Arctic research and policy. Workshop insights will inform discussions, helping ensure Arctic transport planning reflects real-world expertise and community perspectives.

Outcomes and Impact

A short summary of key messages and shared insights will be submitted to the ICARP IV process. This contribution helps ensure that local concerns and professional knowledge are reflected in shaping future Arctic research and infrastructure strategies. It is one step toward more responsive, inclusive, and regionally informed transport systems in the North.

Format and Participation

The workshop will take place in person at the University of Vienna. Online participation will be available for selected invitees, particularly those based in North America or remote Arctic regions.

Travel support is limited and prioritized for Europe-based participants, as shorter travel distances allow more people to be supported. Organizers are committed to making online participation meaningful and well-integrated.

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ARCTIC TRANSPORTATION FUTURES

Reconciling Local Needs & Global Drivers

Organization: The InfraNorth Project (ERC Advanced Grant, No. 885646)

Venue: Erika-Weinzierl-Saal, University of Vienna, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Vienna & Online

Date & Time: September 25th, 2025, 09:30–18:30, all times in Central European Time (CET)

PROGRAM

9:30–9:45 **Welcome and Introduction of the InfraNorth Project**

Speaker: **Peter Schweitzer** (InfraNorth)

9:45–11:15 **Panel 1: Regional Transport Issues in Arctic Europe**

Speakers:

1. **Kaisa Kinnunen**, *Lapland's Transport strategy 2050* (Regional Planner, Regional Council of Lapland), in-person
2. **Teitur Samuelsen**, *Faroe Island*, (Sandoyartunnenlen, CEO), online
3. **Viola Ukkola**, *Finnish Lapland* (Reindeer Herder, Researcher), in-person

Discussion with contributions from Svalbard incl. **Stein-Ove Johannessen** (Pole Position Logistics, CEO) and Sweden (Nordregio).

Moderation: **Peter Schweitzer & Olga Povoroznyuk** (InfraNorth)

11:15–11:30 **Coffee Break**

11:30–13:00 **Panel 2: Broader Issues & Future Visions for Arctic Europe**

Speakers:

1. **Kjell Stokvik**, *Kirkenes* (High North Logistics), in-person
2. **Mikko Tervo**, *New North: Cross Border Co-operation and Security*. (Project Manager, Regional Council of Lapland), in-person
3. **Timothy Heliak**, *Overview of Arctic Transport Infrastructure* (Nordregio, Stockholm), in-person

Discussion. Moderation: **Alexandra Meyer & Ria-Maria Adams** (InfraNorth)

13.00-15.00 **Extended Lunch Break due to Time Difference with North America**

15:00–16:30 **Panel 3: Regional Transport Issues in Arctic North America & Greenland**

Speakers:

1. **Representatives of the Arctic Gateway Group**, *The Arctic Gateway Group and the Arctic Trade Corridor in Manitoba, Canada*, online
2. **Thomas Cousins** (Government of Nunavut), online
3. **Steff Nielsen** (Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Outer Districts, Government of Greenland) online

Discussion. Moderation: **Philipp Budka & Katrin Schmid** (InfraNorth)

16:30–16:45 **Coffee Break**

16:45–17:45 **Panel 4: Historical Issues & Future Visions for Arctic North America & Greenland**

Speakers:

1. **Andreas Mentrup-Womelsdorf**, *Transport and Energy in the Western Arctic: A Historical Perspective* (University of Augsburg), in person
2. **Lawson Brigham**, *Arctic Marine Shipping* (University of Alaska Fairbanks), online

Discussion. Moderation: **Philipp Budka & Katrin Schmid** (InfraNorth)

17:45–18:30 **Summary, Conclusions & Recommendations**

Draft by Peter Schweitzer, the InfraNorth Team & all Participants

Moderation: Timothy Heleniak (InfraNorth & Nordregio)

18:30 **End of Workshop**

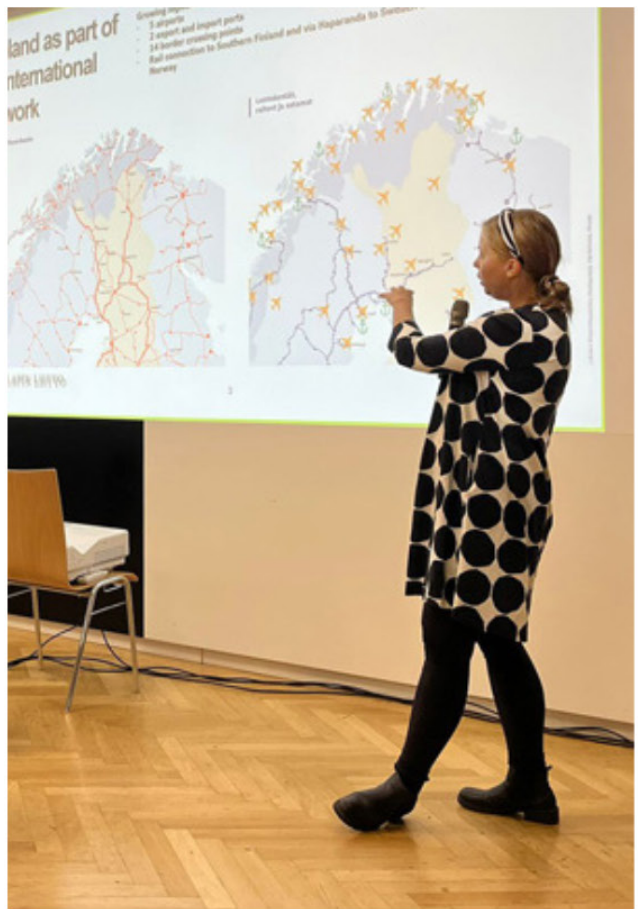
The discussions will be guided by the following questions:

Concerns & opportunities: *From your perspective, what are the main concerns and opportunities related to transport infrastructure in your region?*

Drivers of development: *What factors are driving transport infrastructure development in your region? Which of these do you see as internal drivers, and which as external influences?*

Conditions for desirable development: *What do you think is needed to guide transport infrastructure development in a desirable direction (e.g. research, funding, political support)?*

Message to decision-makers: *If you could convey one key message to decision-makers about transport infrastructure in your region, what would it be?*





ARCTIC TRANSPORTATION FUTURES

Workshop Statement and Recommendations

Arctic transportation futures are at a crossroads. Increasing global connectivity, climate change, geopolitical tensions, tourism and resource extraction are reshaping mobility and access across the region. At the same time, Northern communities depend on transportation systems that are essential to sustain local livelihoods and cultural practices, yet these systems have historically reflected external interests more than local priorities. Reconciling these global drivers with local perspectives is both a strategic necessity and a governance challenge – one that the 4th International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP IV) must address to inform future Arctic research planning.

Recognizing the need to address this challenge, the European Research Council (ERC) project InfraNorth convened the workshop “Arctic Transportation Futures: Reconciling Local Needs and Global Drivers” on September 25, 2025, at the University of Vienna (Austria) with financial support from the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC). Invited online and in-person participants represented government organizations, regional planning authorities, private businesses and research institutions from Arctic and non-Arctic countries, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous voices. Acknowledging the relevance of ATS for the quality of life in the North, at the conclusion of the one-day workshop, participants identified a set of recommendations to guide more inclusive and sustainable ATS research planning:

- » The overarching principle and priority should be that ATS **benefit local communities**. We understand that the development of ATS is increasingly driven by national and international interests, be they military or economic, including moves toward a “green transition.” Still, **meaningful engagement and co-creation with Indigenous and local rights- and stakeholders should be the norm**. This includes **greater transparency and accountability** of all the actors. While we need to acknowledge **conflicts of interest** where they exist, the goal should be **informed consent through dialogue**.
- » The **cumulative impacts of ATS on environments and societies** need to be considered. This should include the monitoring of **post-construction** impacts and effects, as well as mechanisms in place to address **unintended consequences**. Notwithstanding the importance of ATS for people, the **non-human aspects** of the environments impacted by ATS must not be neglected.
- » There should be increased **international collaboration**, such as **regional cross border planning** for ATS or their use in **search and rescue (SAR) operations**. While regional and international transport planning should result in mutual benefits for regions and countries, it should not be used to the detriment of local communities.
- » ATS are closely tied to **economic development**, including the development of **tourism**. The example of tourism shows the **interconnectedness of different forms of Arctic infrastructures**, as it is not enough to have expanded ATS, if there are no capacities to house tourists (or workers) arriving with them. From a local perspective, ATS need to provide **supply security**, which points to the fact that ATS need to contribute to the **preparedness of the logistic system** of a given community or region.
- » ATS are an exemplary field where more **transdisciplinary knowledge co-creation**, through a **dialogue between science and society**, is needed. We need to strengthen co-operation between planners, society and science, based on **open communication and the free dissemination of research results**. A precondition for such relationships is **mutual trust**, which can only be achieved through ongoing engagement.

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Landing page and video

<https://infranorth.eu/arctic-transportation-futures-workshop/>

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Arctic Transportation Futures: Reconciling Local Needs and Global Drivers



Arctic Transportation Futures: Reconciling Local Needs and Global Drivers

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Statement and recommendations for future Arctic transportation research planning, following a one-day transdisciplinary workshop at the University of Vienna and online, September 25, 2025.

[Workshop Statement and Recommendations \(PDF\)](#)

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