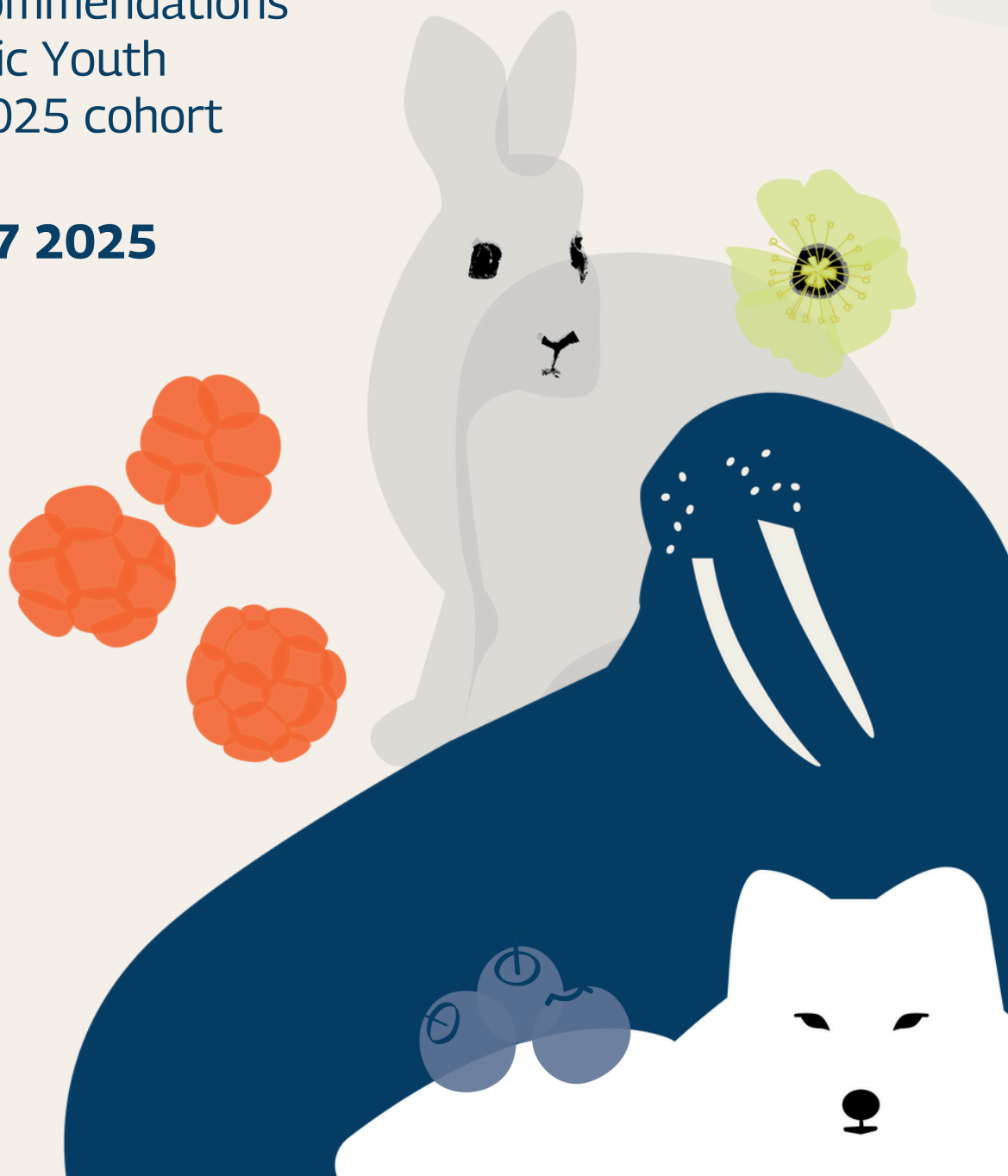


# Youth Needs-Based Suggested Actions for a Just and Sustainable Transition

Policy Recommendations  
by the Arctic Youth  
Dialogue 2025 cohort

**June 23-27 2025**





The EU-Arctic Youth Dialogues are held as part of the EU Arctic Forum and Indigenous Peoples' Dialogue. The Arctic Youth Dialogue is an initiative of the European Union and a deliverable under the EU's Arctic policy. It is implemented under different workstreams, of which the EU-funded project Youth Together for Arctic Futures is a major contributor. The project is delivered by a consortium led by the WWF Global Arctic Programme (WWF Sweden), in cooperation with the Arctic Youth Network, the European Youth Parliament, the Saami Council, Arctic Mayors' Forum, Tromsø municipality, UiT the Arctic University of Norway, and the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists. In the four days leading up to the EU Arctic Forum, 36 youth came together to co-create these policy recommendations across four key themes.

These recommendations reflect the collective work and discussions of the Arctic Youth Dialogues 2025 cohort. While the recommendations represent shared visions, they do not encompass the individual views of every participant.

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# How can sustainable industries develop in harmony with the Arctic environment and communities?

With increasing pressures to develop resilient societies, there remains a lack of full and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples and affected communities in developing and expanding industries. Exploiting Arctic resources often comes in conflict with development of sustainable livelihoods for residents and the protection of Arctic cultural and environmental values.

## We recommend:



That the EU and Arctic states implement legally binding mechanisms by 2027 to ensure Indigenous Peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent in decisions regarding their culture and livelihoods, as well as just and open consultations with affected communities.



That the EU and Arctic states, in line with the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and relevant environmental directives, ban destructive extractive practices in Arctic ecosystems — including deep-sea mining, bottom trawling, toxic waste dumping, and harmful aquaculture — while ensuring at least 30% of land and sea areas are strictly protected. In addition, new industrial development in mostly intact natural areas, as defined by relevant international conventions, should be prohibited.



That the EU mandates, and the Arctic Council recommends, just and transparent revenue-sharing mechanisms by 2030 to ensure an equitable share of project profits from large scale industrial developments are returned directly to impacted Indigenous Peoples' communities and directly affected communities for their own determined use.

## Example

Redistributive taxation, Arctic Indigenous livelihood funds, and local employment guarantees are examples of just and transparent revenue-sharing mechanisms.

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# How can we create a more interconnected Arctic through sustainable and accessible transportation?

There is a lack of reliable access to critical and general services for Arctic communities. Major infrastructure projects are imposed unilaterally, without local involvement. Existing infrastructure is not environmentally considerate or resilient. Arctic communities deserve safe, reliable and secure transportation designed and operated in a sustainable manner.

## We recommend:



That the Arctic states, in consultation with the Arctic Council Permanent Participants and Working Groups, create a mitigation hierarchy for infrastructure projects that is followed throughout project planning and execution. This should prioritise avoiding biodiversity loss, with mitigation as a second priority, and restoring and/or offsetting as a last resort. Impact assessments must be made accessible to affected parties.



That the EU encourages member states to prioritise local corporations in the bidding process for transportation infrastructure, to ensure local Arctic ownership and agency. Existing EU and national fund-matching programs should be fully utilised and made easily accessible to encourage new locally-owned transportation businesses.



That Arctic states implement standards mandating maintenance of existing transport infrastructure and resilience-increasing repairs; costs of this should be shared with relevant corporate actors who benefit from these structures.



# What do youth need to drive sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship in the Arctic?

Policy does not adequately support youth-led, sustainable, and innovative entrepreneurship in the Arctic. There is also insufficient awareness of the untapped potential of youth entrepreneurship and of the opportunities that support it. Communities in the Arctic lack sustainable and culturally grounded initiatives, which in turn limits self-sufficiency, development, and local economic growth. Arctic and Indigenous youth face systemic barriers in driving sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship due to inadequate access to education and information about economic opportunities.

## We recommend:



That relevant Arctic policy makers at an international, national and local level partner with Arctic and Indigenous Peoples' communities and their youth leaders to create promotional campaigns for sustainable innovation funding opportunities, also in Indigenous Peoples' languages. This would improve accessibility and awareness of existing initiatives, thereby promoting local economic growth and development.



Creating a digital platform and an annual forum for young Arctic and Indigenous entrepreneurs to gather and exchange ideas, skills, and products. This would improve collaboration between young entrepreneurs, increase access to opportunities, and help overcome systemic barriers.



That the EU and Arctic states amend current and tailor future legislation to support small-scale, ethical, and sustainable entrepreneurship, and identify barriers to this entrepreneurship through active dialogue with Arctic and Indigenous Peoples' communities. There should be exemptions to accommodate economic opportunities that serve the traditional and basic needs of communities. Current policies are too generalised, hindering the success of small-scale Arctic and Indigenous entrepreneurs and their progress towards sustainable economic development.

### Example

The Sámi Lávdan Arena, organised by the Saami Council as a meeting place for Sámi civil society organisations, institutions, and politicians to gather and exchange ideas, could provide a framework for a similar platform for Arctic and Indigenous youth entrepreneurs, organised and led by Arctic communities.

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# What does sufficiency mean to youth, and how can we work towards finding balance in consumption to address impacts of overconsumption?

Overconsumption is a global issue that affects Arctic regions through resource exploitation and climate change. The lack of an officially endorsed definition and collective pursuit of "sufficiency" perpetuates overconsumption, harming the Arctic. Actions taken at the corporate and societal level, under a new collective understanding, would minimise the negative impact in the Arctic and the rest of the EU.

## We recommend:



Anchoring EU policy in sufficiency as a guiding principle, respecting the planetary boundaries defined in the framework of the Stockholm Resilience Centre, to facilitate access to housing, land, resources, and community well-being — in particular for Arctic Indigenous Peoples and Arctic inhabitants.



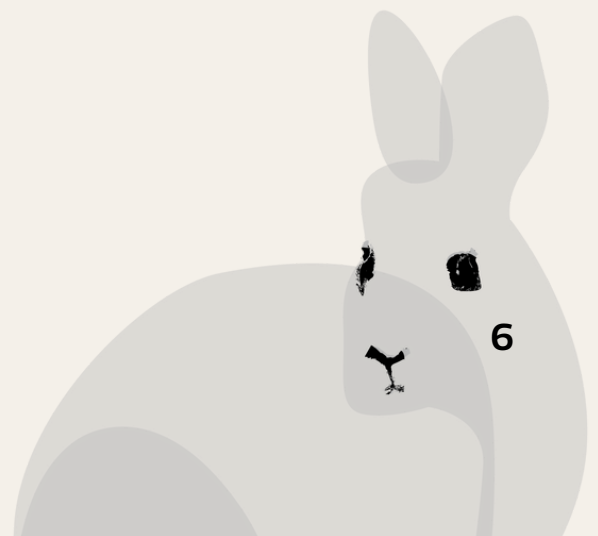
That the EU further strengthens and develops existing sustainability regulations by simplifying certifications and enforcing the use of labels, aiding consumers in making sustainable choices. Reporting should be expanded to cover all stages of production, including activities outside the European Economic Area.



That national governments impose targeted taxes on damaging practices, such as extractive activities, based on assessment of environmental and social harm by independent expert panels. These taxes would steer production, distribution and consumption patterns toward equitable sufficiency within planetary boundaries.



That the EU bans marketing that uses greenwashing or promotes overconsumption of environmentally harmful products, such as fossil fuels and fast fashion, as defined by Life Cycle Assessment. Stricter penalties should be enforced on companies that produce environmentally harmful products, to reduce resource exploitation threatening the Arctic and to support a shift towards consumption based on sufficiency.



# Youth Together for Arctic Futures



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