

ISGP Climate Change Arctic Program (ICCAP)



ISGP – Lindblad Project (ILP)

# “The Reality of Climate Change”



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#### Preface

Many of the most significant geopolitical and security issues currently challenging societies, both developed and developing, are directly connected to the remarkably rapid and profound scientific and technological (S&T) advances of our time. At the outset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, most societies are having difficulty deciding which of these dramatically new S&T opportunities to embrace and which to reject. Such challenges are especially complex when there is significant public and private sector disagreement about even the existence of the problem, as well as its source(s).

Of the seemingly innumerable challenges associated with S&T being debated (e.g., sustainable energy sources, infectious diseases and pandemics, food safety and security, radicalization of cultures), those connected to “climate change” are among the most intractable. The often-irrational discourse and public uncertainty about climate change defines how complex and challenging such issues can become. While public and political disagreements rage over the existence of climate change, and certainly its relationship(s) to human activities, there are increasing physical indications that changes in climates (local, regional and global) are occurring with a rapidity and severity not anticipated by many credible scientists. The need to accurately characterize climate change and its relationship to human activities is especially urgent given the worldwide decisions now being made concerning the use of different sources of energy (and their respective impacts on climates).

There is a need to more effectively engage the average citizen in the increasingly contentious discussions concerning the reality of climate change and its potential significance in their lives. While acknowledging the difficulty and almost quixotic nature of engaging the average citizen on such a complex topic, it is evident that a new, more effective effort is required to reconcile opposing views in order to obtain practical policies that can be implemented and publicly supported.

To ensure that the societal debates of climate change issues lead to effective governmental and private sector policies, two types of engagements are needed:

1. It is critical that well-informed, credible scientists and technologists candidly communicate the advantages and risks of practical options for producing environmentally compatible energy to those governmental and private sector policy makers who are currently responsible for these decisions. Such efforts are underway in many forums including those organized and convened by the Institute on Science for Global Policy (ISGP), see Appendix below.
2. Average citizens must be able to evaluate recommendations based on the predictions from climate change models against often expensive and difficult alterations in their personal lifestyles. Since citizens legitimately have concerns regarding the credibility of information provided to them from multiple sources, they deserve the opportunity to question specific recommendations based on their own perspectives. The political environments needed to meet the challenges of climate change cannot be created without broad, sustained public endorsements. While the public is rarely convinced to support change in large numbers, persuading that portion of the public (perhaps 15%)

that routinely influences policy decisions through candid, rational assessments of the choices available could be an achievable goal. This is the audience on which the project proposed here focuses.

Eventually, the outcomes of such candid debates depend on what degree of certainty citizens attribute to the relationship(s) between climate change and specific human activities. As important, to what extent do citizens believe the remaining uncertainty justifies their accepting the costs and risks associated with the policy, societal, and business decisions that are demanded? Since these decisions often require retrenchments in the lifestyles of average citizens (e.g., higher fuel efficiency transportation, reduced energy consumption, different choices for food and housing), sustained public support is essential to motivate those involved in the policy process to act.

Before acting, policy makers have historically sought a degree of certainty concerning climate change that is unrealistic given current S&T understanding. Finite and often large uncertainties are a part of most scientific analyses and, in contrast to the optimism of many researchers, it is rare that all possible positive outcomes in S&T models are realized. Nonetheless, it is necessary to recognize that significant consequences can be reasonably anticipated **if no proactive decisions** concerning climate change are made and implemented. Such decisions, of course, must balance the often-contradictory goals of public and private sector policy makers (e.g., maximizing economic prosperity while acknowledging the need to reflect cultural sensitivities concerning any change).

The ICCAP seeks to help accurately define these uncertainties and lead policy makers, both governmental and private sector, to recognize practical pathways forward concerning the mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

### **ISGP Climate Change Arctic Program (ICCAP)**

ICCAP is designed to provide citizens unique opportunities to both (i) learn from presentations from and debates with internationally credible scientific and policy experts concerning how climate change is relevant to them as individuals as well as to their respective communities and (ii) experience firsthand how climate change is altering the Arctic environment, one of the most vulnerable parts of the earth.

The ICCAP is comprised of two related and coordinated stages:

1. A series of community-wide meetings, organized by the ISGP and convened using the debate and caucus format pioneered by the ISGP, are to be held in about 15 US communities throughout 2015. These meetings focus on issues of specific importance in each community concerning how climate changes can be anticipated to directly both individuals and community decisions. Each two-day meeting provides a wide range of US citizens with diverse views on climate change opportunities to review policy position papers prepared by highly credible and well-informed experts and then to question and debate them concerning their recommendations. Attention is given to how climate change impact may be relevant to individual and community choices, especially those focused on mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.
2. The ISGP Lindblad Project (ILP), a collaborative effort the citizens of the United States and Norway, involves a voyage on a Lindblad-National Geographic vessel sailing for one week in Arctic. Of the 148 individuals invited to join this expedition, approximately 100 are citizens representing diverse group of communities in the United States and Norway. The vessel sails in the summer of 2016 and provides U.S. and Norwegian citizens with opportunities to learn directly how climate change is altering the Arctic and to learn how

these changes demonstrate the importance of climate change in many areas of the globe. The expenses of the citizen participants are underwritten by a variety of governmental and nongovernmental entities, private sector enterprises, and their local communities.

The target audiences for ICCAP involve citizens who are uncertain as to how recent weather events translate into serious climate change issues and if these events have a clear relationship(s) to man-made activities. Independent of their uncertainties, this group generally remains open to rational debates with credible S&T experts and political figures that focus on answers to their specific questions.

ICCAP debates can provide nonspecialist citizens access to a cross section of views based on credible S&T understanding and international perspectives in environments that emphasize rational thinking, minimal political posturing or lobbying, and ample opportunity for disagreement.

Uniquely, the ICCAP would use a series of television programs based on recordings of the critical debates and caucuses (format used in the ISGP model, see below for details) during the ILP onboard a Lindblad-National Geographic Expeditions vessel while it visits the Arctic. These onboard debates and caucuses would include the climate-change scientists and policy makers invited by the ISGP to prepare the policy position papers being debated, and a mixed group of average citizens (about 65 comprising the majority of the 110 total), policy makers, well-known public figures, and an international cross section of S&T experts. Questions and comments would be taken from the entire audience on board the Lindblad-National Geographic vessel while it is in the Arctic.

These exchanges would be recorded together with the real-life experiences that normally constitute an expedition in the Arctic (naturalist presentations in conjunction with the zodiac trips from the vessel to the shore to examine the changing landscape and environment and to view animal life and habitat). The production companies involved would be responsible for blending the video and audio recordings into a compelling series of television programs that emphasize the views of citizens.

This ICCAP collaboration would combine the expertise and strengths of several groups:

1. The debate/caucus format pioneered in invitation-only ISGP conferences would be used for the candid, critical debates and caucuses. This format emphasizes identifying areas of consensus and actionable next steps.
2. The activities onboard the Lindblad-National Geographic Expeditions vessel provide all participants with access to real-world experience of climate change in the Arctic, a part of the world most affected by climate change.
3. Those experienced in television broadcasting would provide the video, audio, and production expertise needed to capture both the intellectual content of the onboard debates and caucuses as well as the real world excitement of the zodiac/onshore expedition experiences in the Arctic. The overall production would seek to develop captivating television presentations connecting the viewing public to the reality of climate change as understood from the perspective of credible scientific understanding.

### **Concluding remark**

It is important to note that as a nonprofit organization, the ISGP expresses no independent opinions on any of the topics being addressed through its programs and does not lobby on any issue except rational thinking.

## Appendix

### **Institute on Science for Global Policy (ISGP)**

The ISGP is a not-for-profit organization that does not lobby on any scientific or technological issue or policy position, but does promote rational thinking.

The ISGP has pioneered a new, robust design for invitation-only forums using not-for-attribution (Chatham House Rule) environments that foster vigorous, candid debates and caucuses. Such environments are well suited for addressing the challenging issues related to the influence of scientific and technological (S&T) advances on the choices made by individuals and the decisions made by their respective communities. The current S&T understanding of such potential impact is presented in a few (typically eight) concise (three pages) policy position papers prepared by distinguished, highly credible subject-matter experts. These authors' views are debated by a group of S&T experts, policy makers, and stakeholders in these not-for-attribution environments. All material debated reflects international perspectives and focuses attention on effective global solutions. Invitations to the eight authors of the policy position papers are based on extensive (100s) interviews by ISGP staff to establish the debate topics and to identify individuals who can articulately engage those nonspecialists who are often responsible for formulating and implementing public and private sector policies. The approximately 60 invitations to join the audience at each ISGP conference are extended by the ISGP to representatives from governments, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations in 12 to 15 countries.

ISGP conferences are distinct in a variety of ways. First, complex topics are examined through a series of conferences convened in different venues over a 2-year-plus period. The focal points for each ISGP conference are intended to systematically consider specific aspects of these complex, increasingly global issues. The ISGP approach recognizes that one conference with a few exceptionally qualified individuals is unlikely to successfully address such complicated issues. Given the remarkably rapid advances in S&T, as well as the broad international sources from which these S&T advances emerge, the effectiveness of any policy decision critically depends on incorporating the global perspectives held by multiple generations. The ISGP debates and caucuses focus on identifying viable areas of consensus and specific actionable next steps. ISGP conference participants do not solely debate options, but in addition, identify specific next steps that they agree can be practically implemented. In recognition of the cultural and political diversity found in most societies, ISGP conferences seek to identify next steps that can garner the broad support for both public and private sector decisions.

The ISGP has successfully examined numerous S&T topics of critical interest in 21<sup>st</sup> century policy decisions. These include (i) Emerging and Persistent Infectious Diseases (EPID) and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Borders (21CB), (ii) Food Safety Security, and Defense (FSSD), (iii) Environmentally Compatible Energy (ECE), and (iv) Science and Governance (SG).

### **ISGP Conference Format**

The unusual, if not unique, structure at each ISGP conference is designed to ensure candid, productive debates and caucuses. The authors of the policy position papers are asked to identify the current realities, the credible S&T options, and the policy issues they view as critical to making effective public and private sector decisions. Each policy position paper is debated for 90 minutes of which the author is provided 5 minutes to summarize the essential points. The remainder of the 90 minutes is provided to the audience to ask questions, make comments, and engage in the critical discussions that would lead them to support or reject the

recommendations made in the policy position paper. All of the eight authors are part of these debates.

The eight 90-minute debates are followed by two caucus sessions designed to have all authors and participants identify areas of consensus and actionable next steps to be recommended to the domestic and international policy communities. First, all participants are divided into groups of about 12. The authors caucus separately. The results from these smaller caucuses are summarized for discussion the following day in a plenary session involving all authors and participants.

All the policy position papers, not-for-attribution summaries of the debates (prepared by the ISGP staff), areas of consensus, and actionable next steps are published within about four months of each ISGP conference in a book that is available to the public at no cost.

Finally, upon request, the ISGP provides detailed briefings on the results from its conferences to government agencies and departments, private sector entities, the nongovernmental advocacy community, and the public in general. All of these activities are conducted while preserving the nonadvocacy position of the ISGP that focuses on developing and communicating the views of credible subject-matter experts and influential public and private sector policy makers.



**Institute on Science for Global Policy (ISGP)**  
**ISGP Climate Change Arctic Program (ICCAP)**  
**2014–2016 Program Agenda**

**Introduction**

The ICCAP is designed to provide a broad cross-section of U.S. citizens with unique opportunities to learn how climate change might be relevant to their personal lifestyle choices and to the collective decisions made by their respective communities. Given the diversity of current U.S. viewpoints as well as the myriad climate related issues facing different U.S. communities, it is essential that the national and global characterizations of climate change normally provided in scientific and policy discussions be understood in terms of personal, local, and regional decisions.

ICCAP events focus on the citizen's questions, concerns, and perspectives that reflect specific personal and community decisions (e.g., while the consequences of drought are of critical importance in some U.S. communities, rising sea levels are of significantly more importance in others, and the potential for the increasing severity and frequency of harmful weather events impact yet others). The ICCAP provides citizens with two type of engagements: (i) the opportunity to question and debate highly credible experts who are well versed in the scientific and policy issues related to climate change and (ii) the ability to join their fellow citizens and subject matter experts in caucuses focused on what areas of consensus can be identified as well as the actionable next steps that can be supported. These exercises seek to help individuals and communities to identify the anticipatory, proactive decisions (i.e., actionable next steps) that might be beneficial in mitigating and adapting to the consequences of climate change.

**The ICCAP is being implemented in three stages.**

**Stage 1**

**The U.S. Department of State support for Stage 1 of the ICCAP focuses on identifying and nominating specific individuals from a representative group of U.S. and Norwegian communities for participation in the ISGP Lindblad National Geographic Expedition (ILP) on board a vessel as it sails in the Arctic.** Of specific importance is the collaboration between the U.S. and Norwegian communities and the evaluation of the methodologies used to engage the public in both countries while emphasizing public accessibility and an egalitarian approach.

The ISGP collaboration with Lindblad/National Geographic Expeditions (ILP) is being joined by the Public Broadcasting System (PBS), NOVA, and WGBH in Boston, all of which are in discussions regarding how to video record the activities during the Arctic sailing for presentations on television and through social media. The centerpiece of Stage 1 focuses on identifying a representative group of U.S. and Norwegian citizens who will be nominated by their



respective communities to experience the impact of climate change while on an expedition vessel as it sails in the Arctic, one of the world's most vulnerable regions to climate change.

In partnership with Norwegian government and the private sector and public advocacy groups in Norway, the ISGP has been organizing publicly accessible programs with a diverse group of U.S. communities to identify a representative group of US citizens who are to be nominated by their communities to represent them on the ILP vessel.

The ISGP has identified and organized the initial five (5) U.S. Working Groups (US/WGs) located throughout the United States: Tucson, AZ (T/WG), St. Petersburg, FL (SP/WG), Whittier, CA (W/WG), Alpena, MI (A/WG), and Toms River, NJ (TR/WG). A list of the membership for each WG is attached.

These communities were selected to represent a diverse cross section of the U.S. populations and the diverse views on how citizens might consider the potential impact of climate change on their lives and their communities. Initially, each US/WG is focused on developing and evaluating the publicly accessible methods for informing citizens and for selecting the 15 individuals to be nominated to participate in the ILP as representatives of their respective communities. All U.S. citizens are eligible to nominate themselves through an application process that is accessible online and involves a brief questionnaire focused on their general background and experience and their views concerning how climate change may affect them. A sample questionnaire is attached.

Each WG is responsible for nominating a group of citizens holding a broad range of views on climate change (e.g., concerned, unaware, dismissive, hostile) to represent the commonly held views from within their community. The analogous effort is underway in Norway through the Norwegian WG.

Selected members of each WG will participate in the ILP WG Conference being held in Oslo on September 8–12, 2014. Conference participants will describe those procedures that have been used as well as a critique on their effectiveness. Participants will also exchange views with their counterparts to ensure a successful joint effort in both the U.S. and Norway. These Stage 1 activities have been organized in cooperation with U.S. Embassy on Oslo and a variety of Norwegian governmental, private sector, and community organizations.

### **Stage 2 (15 months from Oct. 1, 2014 through Dec. 31, 2015).**

The next steps in the ICCAP involve efforts to engage a broad cross section of the U.S. public in discussions concerning how the potential impact of climate change might be directly relevant to individual lifestyle choices and the decisions made collectively by their respective communities. The results from the September 2014 conference in Oslo provide the foundation for both of the two goals comprising Stage 2:

1. **The expansion of the number of WGs to a total of about fifteen to more accurately reflect the diversity of viewpoints about climate change and to involve a wider range of potential impacts** (e.g., droughts and wildfires in the West to sea level rise on the coasts to the damage from increasingly intense storms and tornados in the Midwest and South). Specifically, the ISGP and the initial five WGs collaborate to identify and organize a second group of 10 US/WGs representing broad geographical and diverse viewpoints concerning climate change that more fully represent existing U.S. attitudes. This expansion of US/WGs depends on both the leadership of the ISGP and the ability

to share those practices already found to be successful by the members of the original five US/WGs (members of the initial five US/WGs have agreed to assist the ISGP staff in this effort).

- 2. The initiation of community-wide discussions in a wide range of U.S. communities concerning the significance of climate change with respect to their specific lifestyles, both as individuals and as communities *writ large*.** In collaboration with the WGs in each U.S. community, the ISGP would organize and convene community-wide, publicly accessible conferences using the format of debates and caucuses pioneered by the ISGP. Typically, these two-day ISGP conferences use three policy position papers written by internationally credible scientists and policy makers for the nonspecialists. Initially, the ISGP would focus on convening these conferences in each of the 15 U.S. communities participating in the ICCAP. The specific topic of importance to a given community will vary (e.g., sea level rise, storm intensities, droughts, environmental impact of energy production such as fracking).

These ISGP community conferences would be based on scientifically credible views of the major evidence characterizing climate change on the national and international level as presented by distinguished subject matter experts (scientist, technologists, political leaders, and economists). These presentations would be made both in writing (concise, three-page policy position papers written for the nonspecialist) and defended orally in debates and caucuses featuring questions from citizens. Emphasis is placed on rational thinking and a diversity of credible views. Individual citizens, public officials, and representatives from advocacy groups and the private sector from each community are able to directly question these subject-matter experts in both small groups and in plenary sessions to which the press is invited. The goal in each conference is to identify areas of consensus and actionable next steps that are relevant to each community as defined by their respective citizens. The focus in all these conferences is on how individuals and their local and regional communities might mitigate and/or adapt to the consequences of climate change.

These ISGP conferences help communities identify why climate change concerns often described in national or global terms are relevant to them both as individuals and as communities. The diversity of U.S. communities ensures that a wide range of issues will be discussed (e.g., while the consequences of drought are of critical importance in some communities, rising sea levels are of significantly more importance in others, and the potential for increasing the severity and frequency of severe weather impact yet others). These ISGP conferences would seek to help individuals and communities to recognize how anticipatory, proactive lifestyle decisions might benefit them.

The ISGP would publish a book from each community-wide conference containing the policy position papers, not-for-attribution summaries of the debates, areas of consensus, and actionable next steps. The book would be freely available to the public.

### **Stage 3 (10 months from January 1, 2016 through October 31, 2016)**

While the community-wide ISGP conferences convened throughout the U.S. (and Norway) in 2015 seek to initiate a national public discussion of how climate change might impact individual lifestyle choices and specific communities, they also provide the foundation needed to optimize

the discussions conducted by those citizens returning to their respective communities following their participation in the ILP Arctic expedition.

The major decisions to be taken in Stage 3 focus on the selection of those individuals nominated by each WG who will receive invitations to actually sail on the ILP expedition. These decisions will be made by a committee comprised of stakeholder and WG members at a conference to be convened in Tucson, Arizona, in January, 2016. The timing of the conference is selected to be compatible with the sailing of the Lindblad National Geographic Expedition vessel in the Arctic in the early summer of 2016. This timing is also consistent with the requirements associated with preparing the television presentation covering the entire ICCAP that will be broadcast in the fall of 2016.

Several major issues would be addressed at the conference:

1. Who are the specific citizens nominated by each WG in the 15 U.S. and five Norwegian communities to be invited to join the ILP for the summer 2016 expedition sailing in the Arctic?
2. What are the final logistical details and distributed responsibilities for communicating with citizens, WGs, and the press?
3. What are logistical details concerning travel, housing, and recoding arrangements for all organizers and expedition participants?
4. What are the distributed responsibilities and deadlines among the organizers (ISGP, Lindblad/National Geographic Expeditions, the television broadcast/social media communities, and WGs)? These responsibilities pertain to the roles of citizens and WGs before, during and after the ILP expedition.

Following the Tucson conference, invitations to all participants would be issued in the U.S. and in Norway. The ISGP, in collaboration with other stakeholders, would be responsible for implementing the logistical arrangements and financial commitments associated with the ILP expedition.

The ISGP would collaborate with the television broadcast and social media partners to ensure that all stakeholders were engaged in the preparation of the publicly available information from the ILS expedition.

The ISGP would prepare a final report for all funding groups describing the ICCAP and ILP activities overall and an evaluation of the outcomes and their impacts.