

Application for an IPA Action Group 2026/2027

Frozen Facts and Stories: Permafrost Visuals for impactful Communication

Action Group Principal Investigator (PI):

This Action group will be led by two equally responsible co-PIs.

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Title/Position	PhD, Science Communication Coordinator	PhD, Senior Scientist for permafrost coastal hydrochemistry
Institution	Alfred Wegener Institute, Potsdam, Germany	
Relevant Expertise/ Experience/ Involvement	Science Communication Coordinator in PDG and PeTCaT Projects, member of IPA Standing Committee on E&O	Frozen Ground Cartoons, ILLUQ EU-project coordination team, IPA Council member for Germany

Objective and Scope of Action Group

Effective science communication is an essential part of research - as Sir Mark Walport aptly noted as UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser in 2023, "science isn't finished until it's communicated". Permafrost-related issues have become increasingly relevant to human wellbeing, climate stability and infrastructure safety. However, effectively communicating research findings, societal risks and response options remains a significant challenge. There is a need to strengthen

this connection and improve how complex permafrost-thaw related processes, uncertainties, and impacts are communicated to non-specialist audiences, including decision-makers, educators, northern communities and the media.

This Action Group brings together international experts in permafrost research and science communication. The group draws on the **combined expertise of three major initiatives** - the EU-funded [ILLUQ](#) project, the Google.org-funded [Permafrost Discovery Gateway](#) and the recently started [PeTCaT](#) project funded by Schmidt Sciences. Together they will develop **clear, coordinated, innovative and impactful communication products** using audience-specific approaches to improve the clarity and accessibility of permafrost science.

Through coordinated communication efforts, the Action Group will contribute to the **IPA mission of disseminating scientific findings** to decision-makers, educators and the wider public, and will contribute to improved climate literacy, informed decision-making, and societal resilience in permafrost regions and beyond. Indirectly, it will also raise awareness of the need for further (funding) permafrost research.

Communication activities will have a **storytelling approach** at its core, as most people understand the world through anecdotes and stories, rather than statistics. A storyline approach is especially important for the non-scientific audiences, above all in Arctic local and Indigenous communities, where knowledge has traditionally been shared in narratives rather than in data and figures.

The Action Group will develop a range of communication materials designed to make the findings of permafrost research accessible and engaging for diverse audiences. Products will include **factsheets, interactive story maps, and educational materials**, tailored for different target audiences. Additional outputs may encompass **infographics**, and **visual datasets** that highlight the latest findings from ILLUQ, the Permafrost Discovery Gateway and PeTCaT, as well as a **presentation package for educators and decision-makers**, aimed at raising awareness of the risks associated with permafrost thaw and available mitigation and adaptation options. The presentation will be adaptable for national, regional, and international policy fora (in-person or online). It will translate key permafrost

science findings into **clear, concise, decision-relevant messages**. The presentation will be designed as a **modular, reusable resource**, supported by clear visuals and explanatory notes, allowing IPA members and partners to use it consistently across different contexts and audiences. All such products will be credited with IPA support.

Dissemination will take place across multiple platforms: **Digital formats** (via collaborative project websites, social media channels, and open data portals) and **printed materials** distributed at conferences, exhibitions, as well as educational events involving kids, youth and educators. The group will also leverage **media partnerships** and piggy-back on **public outreach campaigns** to maximize awareness of permafrost change and its implications.

To foster collaboration and ensure consistent progress, funds will support **one in-person workshop per year**, ideally aligned with existing project meetings. These workshops will serve as opportunities to coordinate and produce communication activities, exchange expertise, and evaluate the effectiveness of outreach materials.

The coordination through this Action Group will ensure that we avoid duplication of efforts such as the production of similar products on the same issue or the creation of stakeholder fatigue through uncoordinated consultation and communication efforts. Instead, we will **leverage the capacities of several existing projects, reusing infrastructure, expertise, and partnerships** to accelerate the new initiative and to **maximize impact**. By integrating existing workflows, resources and partnerships, the Action Group reduces risk, optimizes costs and delivers the anticipated outcomes faster while building on demonstrated success across teams and timelines.

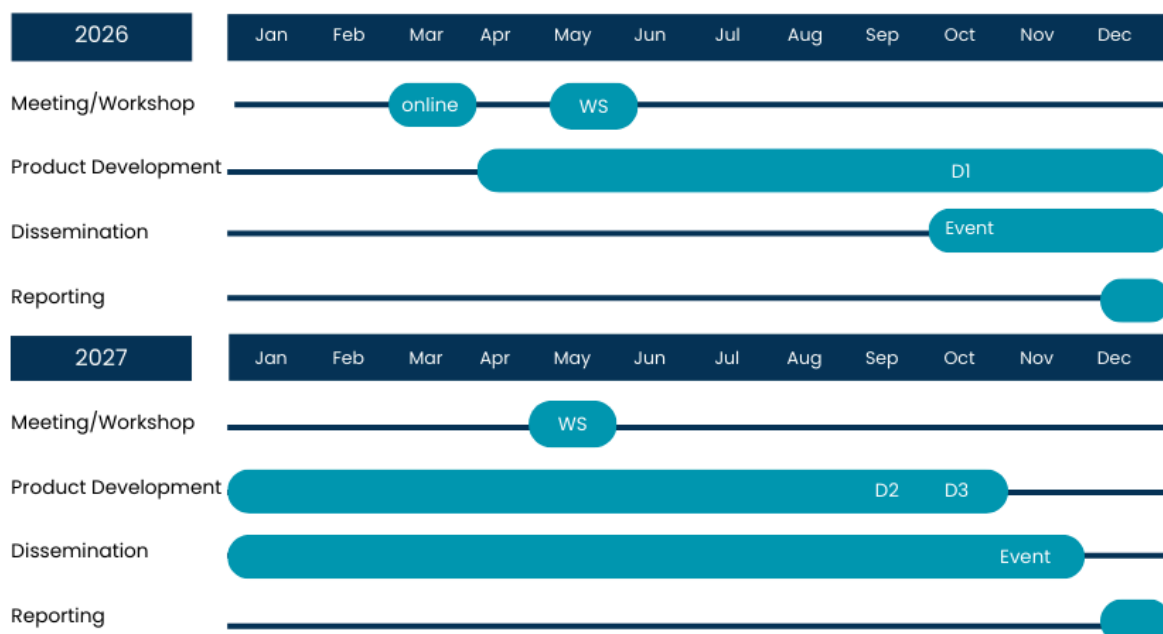
Timeline

This Action Group requires a two-year timeframe (2026–2027) for effective production and completion of the deliverables and dissemination activities (Figure 1). Regular online meetings will ensure progress monitoring. The annual workshops (WS) and dissemination events will mark important milestones, with the Arctic Circle Assembly (8–10 October 2026) and a high-level event at the European Parliament in Fall 2027 serving as cornerstones for reaching policy- and

decision-makers. Dissemination events involving kids, youth and educators will be conducted throughout the two-year project period on a rolling basis, while engagement with local rights holders and other stakeholders will take place during the summer field seasons. Deliverables (D1, D2, D3) are related to the tangible products developed and completed over the course of the Action Group. Reporting and financial administration to the IPA Secretariat is foreseen at the end of each calendar year. Further reports to the IPA Council and Executive Committee will be provided on demand.

Frozen Facts & Stories

Project Timeline



Year 1:

- 1 March 2026: Start of Action Group (Online Kick-off Meeting, defining synergies, refining timeline and tasks)
- 18-22 May 2026: Action Group Workshop under the umbrella of the ILLUQ General Assembly in Spetses, Greece
- Product development of Factsheets (D1: October 2026)
- October 2026: Dissemination at the Arctic Circle Assembly, Reykjavik, Iceland. The Arctic Circle Assembly is an annual forum that convenes a broad spectrum of participants, including governmental bodies, academic institutions, NGOs, Indigenous representatives, and private-sector

stakeholders, to engage in inclusive dialogue on Arctic issues. There might be the option for an exhibition.

- December 2026: Reporting and financial administration

Year 2:

- Product development on Story maps and Presentation package (D2: September 2027, D3: October 2027)
- Spring 2027: Action Group Workshop, place and dates to be determined
- Fall 2027: Dissemination event at the EU Parliament in Brussels, dates to be determined
- December 2027: Reporting and financial administration

Deliverables

D1: Series of factsheets about the risks and impacts of thawing permafrost (October 2026)

D2: Interactive story maps highlighting the interconnectedness of the processes associated with permafrost thaw and their impact on ecosystem services and human wellbeing (September 2027)

D3: Presentation package for educators and decision-makers about risks associated with permafrost thaw and available mitigation and adaptation options (October 2027)

Other Action Group Members

Action Group Member	Affiliation, IPA member country	Relevant Expertise, Involvement
Tina Schoolmeester and Oda Mulelid	GRID-Arendal, Norway	Communication Experts, Arctic Permafrost Atlas, ILLUQ EU-project, AMAP
Anna Liljedahl	Woodwell Climate Research Center, USA	Permafrost Expert, Permafrost Discovery Gateway
Ylva Sjöberg	University of Umea, Sweden	Permafrost Expert, UArctic (EduPermaGR, PermaIntern, SEDNA), IPA Standing Committee on E&O, Frozen Ground Cartoons

International Dimension

This Action group is strongly rooted in the international research domain. Three international research consortia form the core expertise within the Action Group, which are the EU-funded [ILLUQ](#) project, the Google.org-funded [Permafrost Discovery Gateway](#) and the [PeTCaT](#) project funded by Schmidt Sciences. Excellent ties to the IPA Standing Committee on Education and Outreach, as well as to the UArctic Thematic Network on Permafrost are realized through Action Group members. Each Action Group member will leverage existing partnerships from their consortium and further institutional partnerships to maximize the visibility and reach of our products: ILLUQ has ties to the EU Commission, the EU Polar Cluster and the European Polar Board and is partnering with 16 institutions and organizations in the EU and in Canada. PeTCaT has 5 partners in North America and the EU and collaborates with the Virtual Institute for the Carbon Cycle by Schmidt Sciences. The Permafrost Discovery Gateway, hosted by the Arctic Data Centre, is partnering with 6 institutions in North-America. Further, GRID-Arendal has strong ties to the UN framework with long-standing connections into UNEP, UNESCO and the UN-endorsed Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences.

We aim at transferring the Action Group results and products to different target audiences so that they can be taken up and used to create societal value in the form of new knowledge and geographically relevant policy support and adaptation actions.

Target audiences include:

- Local stake- and rightsholders, primarily in the study areas of the consortia
- Scientific community, especially working on permafrost and having a holistic understanding of change in the Arctic
- Key international and EU stakeholders (Indigenous organizations, EU Polar Cluster, European Polar Board)
- International and climate policy organizations interested in the Arctic and permafrost research (e.g. IPA, UNFCCC, COP, AMAP, IASC, UArctic)
- General public, youth and educators

Budget

With a proposed duration of two years we request financial support of 3,000 EUR per calendar year, totalling 6,000 EUR for the lifetime of the Action Group. Parts of the funding will be allocated to support travel to workshops and dissemination events, where no funding can be raised by Action Group members. Material costs, venue subsidies or registration fees may apply for the planned dissemination events (see budget plan below) and shall partly be covered through Action Group funds.

Year	Action	Budget
2026	Workshop at ILLUQ General Assembly, 18-22 May, Spetses, Greece	2,000 €
2026	Dissemination at Arctic Circle Assembly, 8-10 October, Reykjavik, Iceland	1,000 €
2027	Workshop, TBD	2,000 €
2027	Dissemination event at EU Parliament in Brussels, fall 2027	1,000 €
		<hr/> 6,000 €

Secretarial support

We request secretariat support from the IPA towards a) the implementation of the Action Group website as a subpage of the IPA website, and b) the financial administrative support of the action group funds at the end of each calendar year. Any assistance through IPA channels to maximize the range of our efforts will be appreciated.