

# Arctic Entrepreneurship and Supply Chain Strategy Integration as Part of Creative Economy

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**Abstract.** The Arctic regions with their rich but almost inaccessible natural resources are in the focus of attention of nation states and global business. Problems and potential of sustainable socio-economic development are determined by national priorities, the economy and infrastructure of the Arctic. Interaction of the supply chain strategy and entrepreneurship can unlock the potential of the Arctic through the stimulation of supply chain management and entrepreneurship as a key objective in the development of the region. In this regard, it is crucial to create conditions for developing the labor market based on creative competencies and digital technologies, and the solution of this task will increase the income of the indigenous people. Doing this research, the authors used the results of the studies on the economy of the Arctic regions and the data on the Russian Arctic of the State Statistics Committee of the Russian Federation. Its economic structure includes traditional sectors: reindeer husbandry, hunting, and fishing. Industrial, transport, and energy development of the territories have a negative impact on traditional activities, so that the peoples of the Arctic have to search for new forms and ways of employment, conservation of the environment, and ethno cultural development. The results of expert questionnaires and surveys of the people living in the Arctic regions of the republic indicate the interest of the Arctic population in self-employment and working in tourism as a way of earning their living.

**Key words:** *Arctic regions, creative economy, entrepreneurship, supply chain strategy, ethno cultural development, self-employment, income.*

## 1. Introduction

A serious problem for the economy of the Russian Arctic is a narrow focus on extractive industries and extending supply chain strategies. This has a negative impact on the living conditions of the indigenous people whose main source of income is traditional activities, and the unemployed people have to migrate in search of work. From 2000 to 2017, the number of people who left the region increased by more than 20%. Since 2010, the population of the Arctic uluses (settlements) has decreased by almost 8% and currently estimates only 67,000 people [1]. In this respect, the development of entrepreneurship within creative

economy in the context of supply chain strategy would enable the local population of the Arctic region to join in the business sector of the national economy [2]. The idea is to develop financial products suitable to expand financing for the creative industries; credit is expected to be extended to viable and profitable companies in order to finance supply chains and promote mergers.

## 2. Literature review

The problems and prospects for sustainable socio-economic development of the Arctic have been considered in the reports presented by the institutions of international cooperation—the Arctic Council, the Arctic Economic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the OECD, as well as governments and organizations of the Arctic states. These papers are devoted to human development issues (Human Development Reports in the Arctic), supply chain strategy (SCS), northern sparsely populated areas (OECD Territory Reviews), socio-economic factors of changes in the Arctic (The Monitoring and Evaluation Program of the Arctic), the economy of the North (the ECONOR reports), sustainable business development in the Northern Arctic (Nordregio, Northern Spatial Development Center) and Europe [3]. Global change processes, economic and geopolitical transformations, and the increasing integration of the Arctic region with global markets are determined by global economic and strategic resource interests. Changing conditions of supply and demand for commercial resources in the Arctic have an impact on both market and non-market economies of the North. All this makes it harder for the northern inhabitants to do their traditional activities that are important for their identity and lifestyle [4]. The transformation of the economy of the Arctic regions is associated with the emergence of new industries in the extractive sector aimed at creating a solid economic platform for future development. However, it is hard to forecast the future prospects and participation of the indigenous people of the Arctic in the implementation of new projects [5]. A

growing number of companies under their socio-environmentally corporate responsibility schemes are committed to upholding the highest environmental standards throughout their supply chains by sourcing most of their raw and base materials worldwide from small and large farms, cooperatives and cultivation projects [6]. The focus on innovative economic development, the revival and updating of the Northern Sea Route, the introduction of modern communication technologies, new logistics schemes implying the construction of the railway to the city of Yakutsk are the areas where the Arctic regions may develop within a creative economy [7]. In addition to this, the labor market in the Arctic should be developed on the basis of the creative competencies of the indigenous population. The creative economy is a product of a developed economic society demonstrating new factors of economic growth. It reflects the quality of the economy and can act as an indicator of the social transformation. According to J. Howkins, creative industries include advertising, architecture, art, crafts, design, fashion, cinema, music, performing arts, publishing, R&D, software, toys, games, TV, radio, and video games [8]. The technology has reached such a level that development requires not physical, but intellectual resources, the creative potential of people. Globalization and technology have changed the labor market. On the one hand, globalization has put labor at a disadvantageous (regarding capital) market position [9]. On the other hand, it has made manual labor more valuable. The change in this ratio is due to the expansion of the creative industries. The institutional environment and customs are one of the factors of economic growth. The endogenous theory of growth includes a wide range of models that are based on the impact of alternative factors, such as capital, innovation, population growth, institutional structure, and the dissemination of knowledge [9]. A specific feature of the creative economy that distinguishes it from the traditional is the fact that its main tool is knowledge, information is a resource, and innovation is a product. The concept of the creative economy combines such different concepts as "information economy", "knowledge economy", and "innovative economy". If we divide the cost of production into the intangible and tangible components, and single out the creative element from the intangible component, then a creative product is a product with a prevailing creative component (more than 50% of its value) [10]. The

market for creative services, where "knowledge" transforms into the productive component, depends on the intensity of consumption, especially in the service sector. The isolation of the Arctic regions helped to preserve the original culture, special social relations, and formed a unique northern culture that clearly manifests itself in folk art. Creativity itself is not an economic activity until its product becomes an object of market relations. Acting as a service or a product, creativity becomes an economic good. The Arctic is becoming a popular tourist destination. The increased interest in tourism in the Arctic has facilitated the construction of the required infrastructure, whereas its inhabitants got an opportunity to develop and gain more income from the cultural identity and traditional activities [11]. Thus, currently the region is forming the basis for the implementation of tourism and applied art projects using new technologies. Production with new materials, computer design, building houses with technologies and design of the northern "smart" home can improve the situation in the labor market of the Arctic regions. A study of the labor market of indigenous peoples shows that the qualifications necessary for the industrial development of the Arctic do not meet the current requirements, which leads to social stratification since not everyone is able to solve modern problems [12]. Modernization and, in a way, sustainability of the Arctic economy depends on solving such a priority task as the development of the social sphere. This is important for attracting labor resources, especially the youth, and will enable people to fully meet their personal and social needs by providing various kinds of goods and services. At the same time, the social sphere is connected with "fiscal", investment and political aspects [13] and acts as the material basis for the reproduction of the population, its spiritual and physical development. The Arctic is mostly developed by people working on a rotational basis. So, papers on the labor force discuss their influence in the northern labor market [14]. The creative economy will expand the range of services provided. Regarding the economic development of the Arctic, tourism, along with globalization and climate change, creates both opportunities and threats to the Arctic communities. The effects of climate change are more serious for communities that depend on natural resources. Tourism in the Arctic is closely connected with the nature and is the basis of the economy of small Arctic communities. Tourism and the adaptation of

communities are important research issues that can provide information on the impacts of climate change on local lifestyle and problems that may arise in the future [15]. The effective development of the Arctic regions can be based on intellectual property and new ideas in folk crafts. Such an approach opens up new prospects for economic growth and social development, shaping the structure of the region's economy. The research of scientists from Iceland, Norway, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Sweden, and Finland on the future perspectives on the Nordic Arctic youth in rural areas presented a vision of the further development of the Arctic communities, their preferences in education, employment opportunities and cooperation [16]. In the Arctic, most people are employed in the traditional industries and in the public sector. Shortage of jobs and unprofitability of entrepreneurship in the traditional industries lead to the situation when incomes of the indigenous local population do not grow as fast as prices and tariffs for goods and services. For instance, the number of small and medium enterprises in the Arctic region of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) remains the same, but their profitability and turnover are decreasing [17]. If we compare the wages and the subsistence minimum for the working-age indigenous population, we can see that the Arctic is the region with the highest poverty (17% of poor people in the Arkhangelsk region and 14% in Yakutia). According to statistics, the lowest level of poverty was registered in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (2.6%) [18]. At the beginning of 2015, the total unemployment rate in Yakutia was 7.6%, in the Arctic regions—8.5%, while the highest unemployment rate was registered in Bulunsky and Eveno-Bytantaysky districts (15.6% and 13.7%, respectively) [19]. Entrepreneurship training is a tool for changing and developing society. Promotion of entrepreneurship training is based on the economic belief that the Arctic regions need more entrepreneurs and creative employees to increase the number of jobs, new enterprises, and productivity. This is especially true for remote areas and islands in the North [20]. Corporate Arctic studies conducted by the Center for the Economy of the North and the Arctic showed that three groups of entrepreneurs were identified among 23 respondents—reindeer herders:

a) Completely self-sufficient who do not rely on government agencies or state support and

independently and often single-handedly make major decisions on nomadic routes;

b) “Dependent” entrepreneurs who need state support and instructions of the district authorities and heavily rely on the information from their neighbors on nomadic routes (they borrow advanced technologies and practices from their neighbors);

c) Entrepreneurs whose behavior model is between these positions [21].

This structure is typical of the creative economy industries in the Arctic regions.

In 2018, the authors conducted a study “Arctic Tourism”. In total, 100 respondents were interviewed.

### 3. Method

The hypothesis of the study states that the modern labor market in the Arctic region of Yakutia should be based on the creative competencies of the indigenous people through self-employment in the tourism sector. It can be developed by the supply chain strategies for improving the economy performance and resources management. We carried out an online survey, analyzed the statistical data, publications and recent research results on the economy of the Arctic territories. The online survey was conducted among the residents of the Arctic regions (uluses). The questions implied that even working locals could spend their leisure time doing activities for which they have required creative skills and which are aimed at the tourism development.

### 4. Results

Most of the respondents were young people under 20 years old—41.0%. They had complete secondary education (including undergraduates)—52.2%. The majority of the respondents were women (58%). As for their status and occupation, 44.3% were students, and 39.8% were employed.

1. The respondents' age:

**Table1. The participants in research**

Respondents' Age	Number of the respondents (people)	%
below 20 years	41	41.0
21-30 years old	26	26.0
31-40 years old	10	10.0
41-50 years old	14	14.0
51 years old and above	9	9.0
Total:	100	100.0

Of the respondents, 12.5% said that they did some creative activity, and this was the second most popular answer after playing sports and reading (13.6%). The prospects for ecological and cultural tourism are highest in Abyisky, Verkhoyansky, Nizhnekolymsky, Anabarsky, and Oleneksky districts (uluses). Next, we found out whether the respondent could organize tourist activities. A visit to unique cultural places and objects was named by 21.6% of the respondents as the most probable.

The following options were proposed by the respondents as an example of such a place:

- Alaas Muru;
- Bulus;
- Verkhoyansk Ridge;
- Permafrost;
- Group routes along the paths of the ancestors;
- The Kisilyakh Mountains;
- Namtsy Village of Masters;
- The Olonkho House;
- The Bison Reserve;
- Kolymskoe Village;
- The Lena Pillars;
- I like to visit museums and theaters;
- The Friendship Museum and Natural Reserve;
- The Mammoth Museum;
- The Open Air Museum;
- The Museum of the North and a club;
- Museums and monuments;
- The Paleontological Museum;
- The First Lensky Prison;
- The Lena River, Amga;
- The Sacred Tree and guardian trees;
- The Dirin-Urah Encampment;
- Syzny Yar;
- The Tukulaan Dunes;
- The Tuostaakh River;
- The Kychchygyy Aan Tourist Camp;
- Ulakhan and Kyra Suullar;
- Urun Taas;
- Us Khatyn;
- Uyandina;
- The Kingdom of Permafrost.

A similar number of the respondents (26.1%) named fishing and hunting as the most promising activity, that

is, a quarter of the respondents can participate in organizing visits to unique cultural places and objects, hunting and fishing. The list contains natural monuments that are hard to reach in terms of transport, but these routes present the unique features of the area. The second most popular answer was organization of picking mushrooms and berries, or walks in the forest (25.0%). These activities have become extremely popular due to the growing interest in the recreation in the places of unspoiled, wild nature. The following options of an organized event are given in a descending order:

- Meeting local folklore groups—11.4%, the 4th place;
- Meeting masters at work—15.9%, the 5th place;
- Meeting old residents, local historians, or bright and interesting people—14.8%, the 6th place;
- Trying on original folk costumes—14.8%, the 7th place;
- Accommodation in a traditional house due to the lack of modern amenities—19.3%, the 8th place.

In addition, the following activities not listed in the questionnaire were proposed:

- Volunteer work;
- Trying national cuisine;
- A cultural evening;
- Basics of survival in the forest;
- Camping;
- An overnight hike;
- Sports events;
- The traditional lifestyle of the peoples of the North and the Arctic includes picking berries, haymaking, stocking up ice, firewood, etc.
- Participation in traditional picking up berries, setting hunting traps, a trip to farmlands.

The respondents named the skills that they could teach another person (several options could be chosen):

**Table2. Teaching efficiency in region development**

What could you teach another person?	Number of the respondents (people)	%
Making a fire	52	59.1
Cleaning fish	54	61.4
Dressing skins	30	34.1
Making crafts from natural materials	41	46.6
Riding deer and horses	18	20.5
Surviving in the tundra	16	18.2
Singing traditional songs and using national instruments	35	39.8
Other	19	21.6
Not indicated	3	3.4

Other options included:

- Driving a car in the tundra;
- Surviving in winter in the tundra at minus 50 degrees;
- Playing the guitar;
- Playing the khomus;
- Mowing hay, net fishing in winter, and hunting;
- Slicing frozen fish (stroganina);
- Sewing national costumes and horse gear;
- Dancing national dances;
- Playing traditional northern games;

- Picking, processing and storing berries and mushrooms;
- Swimming;
- Drawing and sewing;
- Kayaking on the river;
- Disposing of waste;
- Respecting and preserving traditions;
- Using a lasso.

Answering the question “What innovations have you had recently that make your life easier and promote communication?”, the respondents named the following (several options could be chosen):

**Table3. innovation and supply chain managing effects**

What innovations and suppliers have you had recently that make your life easier and promote communication?	Number of the respondents (people)	%
Mobile phone	13	14.8
Mobile connection	17	19.3
The Internet	24	27.3
Social networks (Instagram, VKontakte, Facebook, and YouTube)	3	3.4
Wi-Fi router	4	4.5
GPS navigator	3	3.4
Computer and digital technologies	5	5.7
Digital television	1	1.1
Modern household appliances	1	1.1
Equipment (a car, a snowmobile, and agricultural machinery)	6	6.8
Other	5	5.7
Not indicated	27	30.7

Other options included:

- A hair straightener and a portable blender.
- A home cinema.
- Subscription to the electronic library of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).
- Time management, daily routine, keeping notes.
- Snowboarding skills

Creative industries are characterized by interlocking and flexible networks of production and service systems spanning the entire supply chain. Thus, notwithstanding the asymmetric competition between the small and larger creative firms, the available evidence suggests that smaller creative firms do gain

from the presence of larger firms in the industry to the extent that these larger firms and multinationals are an important source of commissions and capital whether through subcontracting and outsourcing arrangements or joint ventures.

## 5. Discussion

A stable connection and high-speed Internet are crucial for the Arctic regions (uluses), as they provide communication and enable to remotely organize the services aimed at the development and promotion of the Arctic culture, original lifestyle, and traditional economy. More than a half of the respondents (60.2%) evaluated their potential for participating in ethnographic, ecological and cultural tourism as average, which is a high value, in our opinion. +The

tourist routes of the republic are mostly connected with environmental, sports and recreational activities. An exception is the tourist route “Suntar is the Birthplace of Museums.”[22] In a creative economy, inbound tourism programs can include meetings with old residents, local historians, bright and interesting people, craftsmen at work, local folklore groups, accommodation in a traditional house of the Arctic peoples, and trying on original folk costumes. Inbound tourism will expand the potential of the labor market in the Arctic regions (uluses). By creating tourism infrastructure and engaging the local population in the Arctic tourism services, the government will increase employment and income of the population, and the quality of traditional crafts. Expanding the range of tourist routes in addition to visits to cultural and natural attractions will promote the culture and life of the peoples of the Arctic. The listed competencies are directly connected with the sectors of the creative economy. The older generation does not have competencies necessary to work in industrial sectors. Such people often find themselves in a “qualification gap”. Possessing competencies in the field of a creative economy, they can become self-employed. The younger generation should obtain entrepreneurship competencies.

## 6. Conclusion

On the whole, the supply chain of creative industries in many developing countries appears to exhibit a number of gaps and fragmentation. In particular, there is an absence of intermediaries who play an important role as gatekeepers. The development of a creative economy will have a positive effect not only on the cultural image of the Arctic region: gifted people will enter the labor market, and their creativity will help them to become self-employed and make profit. The Russian education system, with its fundamental nature of general education and the formation of the competencies necessary for a creative economy, aims to create conditions for the development of entrepreneurship in the Arctic regions. Since 2014 the number of state and municipal vocational educational organizations that provide secondary education in the Arctic regions have increased from 181 to 265, and the focus has shifted towards promoting secondary vocational education. In the republic, the number of such educational institutions has almost doubled—from 29 to 53 [23, 26]. We believe that it has become possible to develop the necessary competencies of the local population. However, it is not easy to persuade older people to enroll in secondary educational institutions. This is confirmed by the pilot program “Training of workers for the socio-economic

development of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)” for 2014-2019 [27- 31]. The achievements in the training of the indigenous peoples include the courses “Reindeer husbandry”, “Coastal fishing”, “Reindeer herder-mechanic”, “Production of leather and fur”, “Hunting”, “Fishing”, “The technology of production and processing of agricultural products”, and “Fur farming”. State and private-partner support for educational institutions that train indigenous workers in the areas with the high concentration of the indigenous people, for example, the Arctic College of the Northern Peoples in the village of Chersky, Nizhnekolymsky ulus, will provide training programs in the production and processing of venison and fish products [32]. This will help preserve the traditional lifestyle of indigenous peoples and develop entrepreneurship, especially in the field of Arctic tourism.

## 7. Recommendations

The interest of the state and the private sector is necessary for the commercialization of the creative economy. The authorities should provide benefits to promote self-employment in the Arctic regions and develop entrepreneurship. The financial support of the state for education, health, culture and the environment of the Arctic regions should be seen as an investment that can bring a return.

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