



Four Canadian Teams Take Home First Annual \$1 Million Arctic Inspiration Prize

Vancouver B.C. (December, 13, 2012) — The first annual \$1M Arctic Inspiration Prize has been awarded and will be shared amongst four Canadian teams whose projects address pressing issues facing Canada's Arctic and its Peoples. The Arctic Food Network, the Nunavut Literacy Council, Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit and the Thaidene Nene Initiative, were awarded the honour at the 8th ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting in Vancouver tonight.

"The motivation behind creating the prize was to recognize excellence and encourage collaboration and teamwork amongst diverse groups in both Canada's North and South," said Arnold Witzig, co-founder with his wife Sima Sharifi, of the S. and A. Inspiration Foundation that funds the Arctic Inspiration Prize. "The winning teams have developed comprehensive plans for the benefit of the Canadian Arctic, its inhabitants and therefore Canada as a whole. We look forward to seeing these projects excel further and come to life," said Martin Fortier, Executive Director of the Arctic Inspiration Prize and of ArcticNet that voluntarily manages the Prize.

Issues such as human health, literacy, housing, food security and the sustainability of ecosystems and wildlife were priority areas for the Arctic Inspiration Prize's selection committee, which is composed of distinguished individuals such as former Governor General Michaëlle Jean, Nobel Prize Nominee Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Juno-award winning singer-songwriter Susan Aglukark, former Commissioner of the Yukon Geraldine Van Bibber and CBC News anchor Peter Mansbridge, who are known for their commitment to Canada's Arctic. The Arctic Food Network received \$360,000 of the prize money to help with its food-gathering system that enables communities to strengthen traditions of hunting and sharing.

"With this support, our Network will seek to nurture new and existing connections with the land and with each other to harvest country foods, as well as foster human creativity and potential," said Mason White, team leader of The Arctic Food Network. "The Prize and award generously enables our project to embody the transformation of knowledge into real and applicable expressions addressing community integration, celebration of culture, access to healthy food, and stewardship of land for Nunavummiut."

The Nunavut Literacy Council received \$300,000 for its project to embed literary skill development in non-formal education programs for youth. Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit received \$240,000 for its book project –*What Inuit Have Always Known to be True* – which will describe Inuit culture and traditional knowledge and will serve as a resource for academics, researchers, educators and the next generation of Inuit. The Thaidene Nene Initiative received \$100,000 of the prize money to help with the stewardship, protection and co-management of a 33,000km² national park reserve in Canada's North West Territories, which has great cultural and environmental significance to the Lustel K'e Dene First Nation. For more information on the Arctic Inspiration Prize and its winners visit: www.arcticinspirationprize.ca. Interviews with prize winners are available upon request.



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ABOUT THE ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE

The Arctic Inspiration Prize is made possible through the generous endowment of the S. and A. Inspiration Foundation, the commitment of the ArcticNet Network of Centres of excellence to voluntarily manage the Prize, as well as the contribution of numerous volunteers and partners.

The Prize recognizes and encourages teamwork and collaboration among diverse groups and organizations in addressing the causes rather than the symptoms of issues of importance to the Canadian Arctic and its Peoples. To be considered for the prize, teams must propose knowledge to action applications having a direct impact on the Canadian Arctic and its Peoples.

A selection committee composed of distinguished individuals known for their commitment to the Canadian Arctic and its inhabitants will select from one to five prize winners annually, with associated awards totaling \$1 million. Current members of the selection committee include Inuit Nobel Peace Prize nominee Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Inuit Juno award winner Susan Aglugark, CBC's Chief correspondent Peter Mansbridge, Rhodes scholar and founder of Dechinta, Erin Freeland Ballantyne and Queens University professor and Chair of the IPY2012 International Conference, Peter Harrison.

ABOUT ARCTICNET

ArcticNet is a Network of Centres of excellence of Canada that brings together scientists and managers in the natural, human health and social sciences with their partners from Inuit organizations, northern communities, federal and provincial agencies and the private sector to study the impacts of climate change and modernization in the Canadian arctic. Over 150 ArcticNet researchers and 700 graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, research associates and technicians from 30 Canadian universities and 20 federal and provincial departments and agencies collaborate on 36 research projects with more than 100 partner organizations from 15 countries.

The ArcticNet administrative Centre is hosted at Université Laval, Quebec City, Canada. For more information visit: <http://www.arcticnet.ulaval.ca>.