**Chairperson's Report for 2024**

We look back at 2024 as a year of major changes – most notably, the new airport in Nuuk has opened. We can safely say that this has been met with sadness, especially in Kangerlussuaq.

After the opening, it became even clearer how strong the work culture and skill level in Kangerlussuaq truly are. We can tell because running the airport there seemed so effortless – something that hasn’t been the case in Nuuk. That’s why it’s crucial we preserve and support the strong work culture and competence by continuing to promote and support business development in Kangerlussuaq.

But change hasn’t just been about infrastructure. 2024 has also been a year of major legislative changes in the business sector. The new tourism and fisheries laws have especially stood out.

Tourism law, in particular, has taken up a lot of our time. As it’s a whole new legal area, we hosted workshops across the region to help as many people as possible understand what the law entails and ensure their voices – either through us or directly – were heard by the Ministry of Business.

There’s no doubt that both laws sparked big debates and strong emotions, and it’s been important to get those issues out in the open. Even though this year’s election made it clear that the laws were unpopular and need adjustment, the public discussion has been healthy.

The debate around ownership has been especially heavy. It’s vital that business development benefits locals, but also that we can attract investors – after all, we’re part of the global community. Investments and trade across borders help build connections and bring in valuable knowledge and expertise, something we definitely want more of so our local businesses can grow stronger in global markets.

We’re really talking about a fundamental shift in Greenland’s growth structure. With RAL’s new route with Eimskip and the switch to Aarhus Port, new airports, and new laws – we need to be sharp and make sure our region taps into this new growth potential.

Internally, we’ve also seen big changes. We had to say goodbye to our long-time colleague and director, Jesper Schrøder, who, along with his family, decided to move to Denmark. Jesper was a huge part of ACB for many years, so we spent quite a bit of time finding the right person to take over.

That’s why I’m happy to announce that we found a competent successor in Naasunnguaq Beck. She brings solid political experience and knowledge – which is exactly what we need right now. At the moment, we’re the only region in Greenland not receiving or about to receive billion-kroner investments.

2024 also brought quite a few staff changes. Our Innovation Manager, Karl Kasper, moved to Aalborg with his family, and we welcomed Ivalu, who has already made a big impact in her area.

Our Destination Manager, Tupaarnaq, moved to South Greenland to be with her family, and Taatsi took over the role. With great passion, he helped complete the marketing strategy for Destination Arctic Circle, which he is now implementing.

Our Marketing Manager went on maternity leave around the same time our intern Micha finished his internship – so naturally, he stepped into the temporary role.

All these staff changes have been tough on our small organization, and it’s meant we couldn’t follow through on as many projects as usual. But we’ve stayed on top of the big tasks – especially the new laws – and ACB has fought hard, had a clear voice in debates, and shown up to meetings with decision-makers.

As members, we can be proud that ACB remains the leading regional business council.

Our efforts in Maniitsoq, focusing on generational shifts and boosting investment, are now bearing fruit. This is largely thanks to stronger partnerships with Vestnorden Fonden and Nalik. Vestnorden Fonden’s loans to Maniitsoq now make up nearly a quarter of their total loans in Greenland.

We also brought Nalik along on our settlement tours in the Maniitsoq area and hosted events for locals. This effort has been ongoing for three years, and it's clear Maniitsoq has gotten a fresh boost from new businesses, new faces, and a renewed belief in the town.

We also hit 85 entrepreneurship consultations – our highest number ever outside the COVID support period. ACB is clearly the best in Greenland at supporting entrepreneurs – we do it in a structured, down-to-earth way, always with the goal of nurturing entrepreneurship.

Sisimiut has always had strong entrepreneurial spirit, and once again, the Entrepreneurship Award (for the third time in a row at Future Greenland) went to Sisimiut – this time to our board member Ulloriaq.

2024 also marked the end of our time with Fablab. The project was made possible thanks to support from MP Aaja Chemnitz. We received funding for 4 years, and when that ended, we decided to donate Fablab to the upcoming campus, Ilinniarfeqarfik, a shared campus for DTU, KTI, and MSK.

The donation is our way of helping students have better facilities and ensuring the space remains open to the public. Fablab gave locals – especially the youth – a space to be creative, and it was amazing to see them build and create. We’re confident that once the campus is up and running, Fablab will play a key role in connecting students, building relationships, and fostering creativity.

The handover happened during DTU’s 25th anniversary in Greenland, where we also had the chance to give a presentation to much of DTU’s leadership, together with the municipality.

Later in the year, we traveled to Iceland to take part in the Arctic Circle Assembly, where we presented alongside DTU, Visit Greenland, and Qeqqata Kommunia – with a focus on the Arctic Circle Road.

We also gave a presentation at the Arctic Circle Assembly Business together with Visit Greenland, Qeqertalik Business Council, and Innovation South Greenland – this one focused on spreading tourism across all of Greenland, not just around the new airports.

This was ACB’s first presentation at the Arctic Circle Assembly, the largest Arctic networking event. The presentation about Arctic Circle Road drew a full house and strong interest.

(Side note – it was actually at this event that we first met Naasunnguaq Beck!)

We also continued our usual webinars about research in Kangerlussuaq and the Arctic Circle Trail, as part of our marketing for scienceservice.gl and arcticcircletrail.gl. The latter hit over 100,000 visits in 2024, highlighting its value to the region.

Tourism continues to grow in importance – both for Greenland and our region. That’s why we made it a priority to develop a new marketing strategy for Destination Arctic Circle, in partnership with Group Nao.

We’ve now presented the strategy, and it’s Taatsi’s main task this year to bring it to life. If the strategy is successful, we should see more local businesses benefiting from increased tourism – improving local quality of life and boosting the economy.

We’re also really pleased that the Danish Parliament (via Aaja Chemnitz) and the Self-Government (via Nauja) have secured a micro-infrastructure fund to support tourism – something we’ve long been calling for.

This funding led to a new bridge in Itinneq, made to withstand the heavier rainfall and climate changes we’re seeing. Locals are also enjoying the new trail around Ulkebugten.

Both projects benefit locals and tourism alike – and were funded through the pool with ACB’s help.

Another new fund this year from the Self-Government was for self-sufficiency projects, which we had to get to know.

Through the Business Development Fund, which we manage on behalf of the Self-Government, 12 businesses received project funding and 27 received voucher-style support – totaling around 1.1 million DKK in grants.

Our handling of this fund has been effective, and ACB was even asked to share our processes with Nalik. That’s part of why we now have a permanent contract, instead of just a pilot period.

ACB also suggested, via Nalik’s advisory board, that production halls or containers be built, and we did some groundwork that led to the Self-Government earmarking several million kroner over the next 3 years to make that happen.

Last but not least – our 10-year strategy with USAID was finalized and translated. But we decided to wait until our new director had started before wrapping it up. It’s important to us that Naasunnguaq has had a chance to give input and can see herself leading the implementation.

2024 has truly been a year of change – not just for ACB, but for all of Greenland. These many changes took up a lot of ACB’s time, and with all the staff turnover, we didn’t get as many concrete projects off the ground as usual.

Still – I think we can be proud of the results we’ve achieved, and of being a respected organization that’s stayed clear and vocal throughout the changes.

I hope you, our members, have been satisfied and will continue to stand with us – and bring in new members to Arctic Circle Business. Because together we are stronger. A strong business community means a stronger welfare society for us all.

Qujanaq – Thank you very much.