

**BRIEFING NOTE #6: 18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017**

**FIELDWORK IN EAST GREENLAND**



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In August 2017 we travelled to Tasiilaq, East Greenland to meet with local people to discuss their hopes, aspirations and fears for development in the area, in particular, as regards the role of the extractive industries. There are no active mines or hydrocarbon projects located close to Tasiilaq in 2017. There are, however, five active hydrocarbon exploration licenses offshore Northeast Greenland and a number of onshore hydrocarbon exploration licences on Jameson Land, further north. There are also fifteen exclusive exploration licenses active mostly in the area near Ittoqortoormiit and in [Mestersvig and Citronenfjord](#) where the company Ironbark is targeting base metals such as zinc and lead.

In respect of Tasiilaq we met with twelve people, including representatives of the municipality Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq, the Greenlandic Parliament, the tourism industry, education, culture, health services and other members of the local community.

We found that the people we met were cautiously optimistic regarding local development, especially in the tourism sector. Confronted with the question of the role of extractive industries in relation to local development, people emphasized that mineral extraction was not something they would normally talk about or think about in their everyday lives. They did not oppose mining in principle but support is conditional on projects being environmentally and socially sustainable. People want to ensure that extractive industries are managed without detriment to the tourism sector, which is considered the major pillar of the local economy. They are also looking for potential synergies between the two sectors.

Many of the persons we talked to asked for more information, especially on the natural resources in the vicinity and one suggested a role for Ilisimatusarfik in communicating the results of geological studies to people in East Greenland. An interest was expressed in learning about geology and licensing in order to explore the potential for small-scale mining by local companies and further for combining small-scale mining activities with existing businesses such as tourism and handicrafts.

The people with whom we talked in Tasiilaq displayed a high degree of self-reliance and an entrepreneurial attitude, for example, considering ways in which they could benefit from an expanding natural resources sector. People seemed in general active in looking for opportunities and not waiting for either the self-government or the municipal government to take initiatives in relation to business development.

Tasiilaq continues to experience some socio-economic challenges, for example, with poor housing stock and limited educational and employment opportunities. Nevertheless, we encountered a society with strong social and familial bonds that is moving forward as a community.