

Outcome of the EU-PolarNet White Paper Workshop (24th – 28th September in Miraflores de la Sierra) – Five white papers touching upon the most pressing issues in the Polar Regions

The EU-PolarNet white paper workshop was an important milestone towards an integrated European Polar Research Programme and the outcomes will be the pillars towards the description of polar issues of high societal relevance. The objective of the workshop was therefore to develop several white papers with topics of high interest to the European society, and where the outcomes of future research will have benefits that are economic, social or cultural. It brought together thoroughly chosen international polar experts within five key areas: *People; Climate and Cryosphere; Sustainable Management of Resources and Human Impacts; Polar Biology, Ecology and Biodiversity; and New Technology*. These overarching key areas are based on the results of the EU-PolarNet deliverable D2.1 on prioritised objectives in polar research.

EU-PolarNet convened a team of 50 experts, from 16 countries, to debate, identify and draft the white papers. This team drew participants from many areas of polar research:

- Climate, oceanographic, cryospheric and geological sciences.
- Social, historical and cultural research
- International policy development, environmental regulation, resource management and governance.
- Behavioral, ecosystem and evolutionary biology
- Satellite, communications, instrument and autonomous technologies.



They were accompanied by representatives from business, and Arctic indigenous peoples. Following a specially-prepared methodology involving several stages of refinement, the teams identified a topic of a white paper for each of the above mentioned key areas and began the preparation of these white papers.

The experts were challenged to identify polar research topics with a clear societal relevance and a specific importance for Europe which makes them suitable for future EU funding. The identified topics will, if adopted, further enhance EU research excellence, increase efficient use of European resources and expertise, and lead to a step change in data availability, access and interoperability. The topics will further increase the scale of polar research cooperation in Europe, and by entraining non-EU partners will improve global cooperation. Each of the five topics employ a strongly multi-disciplinary approach to deliver benefits in the complex and multi-faceted real-world issues: some papers describe approaches that completely step outside traditional discipline boundaries, offering a transformational, 'post-disciplinary' approach designed to deliver tangible benefits to problems that arise in the polar regions from the complex interactions of a changing physical environment, stressed ecosystems, complex issues of sovereignty and governance, and layered cultural and social structures.

The breadth of expertise available within the workshop team, the retreat-style approach and the 'safe-house' approach to debate, allowed topics identified in the white papers to have a truly multi-disciplinary framework to emerge. The topics themselves are issue-focussed, and their implementation could prove to be transformational in polar research.

The EU-PolarNet consortium, wish to acknowledge the major contribution of this team, whose generous contribution of their time and expertise was the most important contribution to the success of the workshop.