



Version 6. 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009 FINAL

## Memorandum of Understanding

of a

### 'European Polar Framework'

#### Parties to the MOU:

- **Fonds Zur Förderung der Wissenschaftlichen Forschung (FWF)-Austria Funding Agency**
- **Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO)-Belgium Funding agency**
- **British Antarctic Survey-(BAS) United Kingdom-National Operator**
- **Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (F.R.S.-FNRS)-Belgium- Funding Agency**
- **Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen (FWO) -Belgium-Funding Agency**
- **Agency of Culture, Education, Research and the Church Affairs (KIIIA) Greenland- Agency**
- **Bulgarian Antarctic Institute-centre for Polar Studies-National Operator**
- **Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy České republiky (MSMT)-Czech Republic-National Programme Authority**
- **Sihtasutus Eesti Teadusfond (ETF)-Estonia-Funding Agency**
- **L'Institut Polaire Français Paul-Emile Victor (IPEV)-France-National Operator**
- **Alfred-Wegener-Institut für Polar- und Meeresforschung (AWI)-Germany National Operator**
- **Programma Nazionale di Ricerche in Antartide (PNRA), Italy - National Antarctic Programme**
- **Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO)-The Netherlands-Funding Agency**
- **Norsk Polarinstitutt (NPI)-Norway- National Operator**
- **Norges forskningsråd (RCN)-Norway- Funding Agency**
- **Ministerul Educației, Cercetării și Inovării - National Authority for Scientific Research (ANCS) Romania-National Programme Authority**
- **Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (MICINN)-Spain-National Programme Authority**
- **Vetenskapsrådet (VR)-Sweden-Funding Agency**
- **Swedish Polar Research Secretariat-National Operator**
- **Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)-United Kingdom-Funding Agency**
- **Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT)-Portugal-Funding Agency**
- **Romanian Antarctic Foundation (FAR)-Romania-National Operator**
- **European Polar Board-European Science Foundation (EPB-ESF) International Non-Governmental Organisation**
- **Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR)-Luxembourg-Funding Agency**
- **Istituto Nazionale di Oceanografia e Geofisica Sperimentale (OGS), Italy - Marine Polar Operator**
- **Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR), Italy - National Arctic Operator**



**Note on the composition of the participating organisations of the MOU\***

The parties to this MOU are national polar programme authorities, funding agencies and national polar operators who are involved in financing, managing or operating Polar research activities in the Arctic and Antarctic and have no conflict of interests in regard to the launching of competitive calls for proposals to the science community at the European level. The agreement is open for new parties or countries to join at any stage in consultation and agreement with the European Polar Board Plenary as long as the general principles and spirit of the MOU are respected and that the organisations fulfil the this general description as a participating party with the goal of enhancing European Cooperation of Research in the Polar Regions.

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## **Introduction and objectives of the 'European Polar Framework' MOU**

Based on the results and experiences of the EC EUROPOLAR ERA-NET\* project It has been recognized that the optimal form of cooperation and coordination of European national polar programmes would be through a memorandum of understanding implemented by the European Polar Board. In general terms the undersigned national polar programme authorities, national funding agencies and national polar operators therefore agree on the following aspects of general cooperation under a Memorandum of Understanding forming the basis of a 'European Polar framework'.

This flexible and open framework encourages variable geometry cooperation in areas of strategy, programmes, infrastructures, and the general and convergence of activities. The national polar programme authorities, national funding agencies and national polar operators as parties to this agreement will encourage and utilise this framework as much as possible in the context of developing multi-country programmes and engagements in the future although it does not in anyway reduce or provide a barrier to bilateral cooperation and agreements outside of this framework agreement.

The general strategy and usage of this 'European Polar Framework' will be overseen by the participating organisations of the MOU connected with the activities of the European Polar Board and with a central coordinating function by the European Polar Board Unit of the European Science Foundation.

The MOU should be reviewed every three years to ensure appropriateness of the content and operation of the MOU.

### **Role of the Parties to this MOU:**

The parties of this European Polar Framework MOU recognize that is a flexible and open cooperation framework which is not a legal or contractual undertaking. However the parties commit to working together as much as possible to realize the general areas of the MOU through cooperation between their national programmes and by the coordinated usage of their research infrastructures on a case specific initiative or defined transnational programme call.

### **The background context of EUROPOLAR ERA-NET and the ESF European Polar Board:**

This MOU was developed as a deliverable from the EC project EUROPOLAR ERA-NET\* which lasted from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2005 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2009. The final deliverable has been passed to the European Polar Board (an international non-governmental strategic committee of European Polar Programme Directors and Managers which is hosted under the legal entity of the European Science Foundation). The ESF European Polar Board will focus on the implementation of the MOU in the context of the European Polar Boards scientific and strategic activities. The MOU on a 'European Polar Framework' will therefore form a core flexible instrument of the European Polar Board facilitating and enhancing cooperation between countries in launching joint calls, coordination of polar research facilities and increased joint

planning of activities where appropriate and between the national programme authorities, funding agencies and national polar operators who are party to this agreement.

## **Areas of the European Polar Framework:**

### **1. General Strategy and Funding Coordination:**

The parties to this MOU recognize the importance of strategic discussions on the coordination of national funding, the development of joint programmes and strategies in European Polar Research. The partners to this MOU should discuss and agree on issues of joint strategic relevance to the coordination of funding mechanisms and Infrastructures as part of the work of the ESF European Polar Board. The structure and supporting functions of the 'European Polar Framework' MOU should be carried out inside the existing ESF European Polar Board organization and that the organizations participating in the MOU (if not already) should be encouraged to become full members of the Board.

The parties of this 'European Polar Framework' MOU are committed to ensuring continued cooperation in terms of enhancing efficiency, cost effectiveness and sustainability of national polar programmes or national polar activities in the context of the post-IPY environment. The importance of this mechanism of engagement to discuss high-level funding and strategic infrastructure issues is recognized by all participating agencies of this 'European Polar Framework' MOU. National programme authorities, funding agencies, and national polar operators as partners to this European Polar Framework MOU should as far as possible work towards convergence of strategies and priorities (scientific and technical) through examples of multilateral programmes or mutual access to research infrastructures.

### **2. Programmes and Joint Research Calls:**

A mechanism for joint programme calls has been tested and implemented through the PolarCLIMATE programme. New areas and themes for joint research programme calls should be identified and encouraged to be generated within the context of this 'European Polar Framework MOU' and implemented using a streamlined method of peer review and coordination of joint funding to address and support high-level European research objectives in the Polar Regions. The research programme calls should be operated in a variable geometry mode and should address large-scale scientific questions of importance at the European and/or global level where there is a critical mass of interested funding agencies and ministries. Topics should be agreed on by the participating funding agencies and national polar programme authorities in close cooperation and consultation with their constituent scientific communities and should fully utilize research facilities, observation platforms and logistics owned and operated by the participating organizations of this 'European Polar Framework' MOU.

### **3. Infrastructure Coordination and Access:**

The parties under this 'European Polar Framework' MOU recognize that cooperation and aligning of observations between European and international research stations in the Arctic and Antarctic is becoming more essential in terms of high quality research, monitoring and cost effectiveness of access. The development of networks of research observatories in the Arctic and the Antarctic will have strong impact on the development of future coordinated polar programme activities.

The parties are encouraged to facilitate access to their own facilities and infrastructures for scientists from different European countries. The recommendations of the European Polar Consortium EUROPOLAR ERA-NET\* EC Project propose that networking of relevant facilities and increasing standardization of observations should be addressed. As much as possible participating ministries and agencies to this MOU should seek to find opportunities for collaborative clustering of facilities in relation to the projects implemented under the joint calls launched under the European Polar Framework as part of the ESF European Polar Board and its ongoing initiatives such as INFRAPOLAR and other polar infrastructure initiatives where appropriate. The development of coordinated observation networks in the Arctic and Antarctic is a core element of such cooperation between the owners and operators of research stations and observatories in these regions.

### **4. Convergence of National Polar Activities of European Scale and Scope:**

Mechanisms on the medium to long-term support and structuring of Polar (Arctic and Antarctic) research activities at the European level should be addressed through programmatic and joint funding instruments. The parties to this European Framework MOU will work towards enhanced coordination and integration of programme and infrastructure activities where there is an identified need or initiative which requires a common approach. This collaboration should remain an open and flexible framework for cooperation. National polar programmes can benefit from the critical mass generated by a collective approach to planning and implementation of research activities and opportunities for such collaborative efforts should be actively proposed and implemented with adequate national resources commensurate with the scale of the activity on an open and variable geometry basis.

Signatures of senior authorized representatives of the national polar programme authorities, national funding agencies and national polar operators participating in this Memorandum of Understanding of a 'European Polar Framework':

FINAL

- Fonds Zur Förderung der Wissenschaftlichen Forschung (FWF)-Austria **Funding Agency**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Authorized Representative**

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**Signature**

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- Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO)-Belgium **Funding agency**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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**Signature**

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**Date**



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- British Antarctic Survey-(BAS) United Kingdom-**National Operator**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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FINAL

- Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (F.R.S.-FNRS)-Belgium- **Funding Agency**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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**FINAL**

- Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen (FWO) -Belgium-**Funding Agency**

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**FINAL**

- Agency of Culture, Education, Research and the Church Affairs (KIIIA) Greenland- **National Programme Authority**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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- Bulgarian Antarctic Institute-Centre for Polar Studies-**National Operator**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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FINAL

- Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy České republiky (MSMT)-Czech Republic-  
**National Programme Authority**

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- Sihtasutus Eesti Teadusfond (ETF)-Estonia-Funding Agency

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**FINAL**

- L'Institut Polaire Français Paul-Emile Victor (IPEV)-France-**National Operator**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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- Alfred-Wegener-Institut für Polar- und Meeresforschung (AWI)-Germany **National Operator**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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- Programma Nazionale di Ricerche in Antartide (PNRA), Italy - **National Antarctic Programme**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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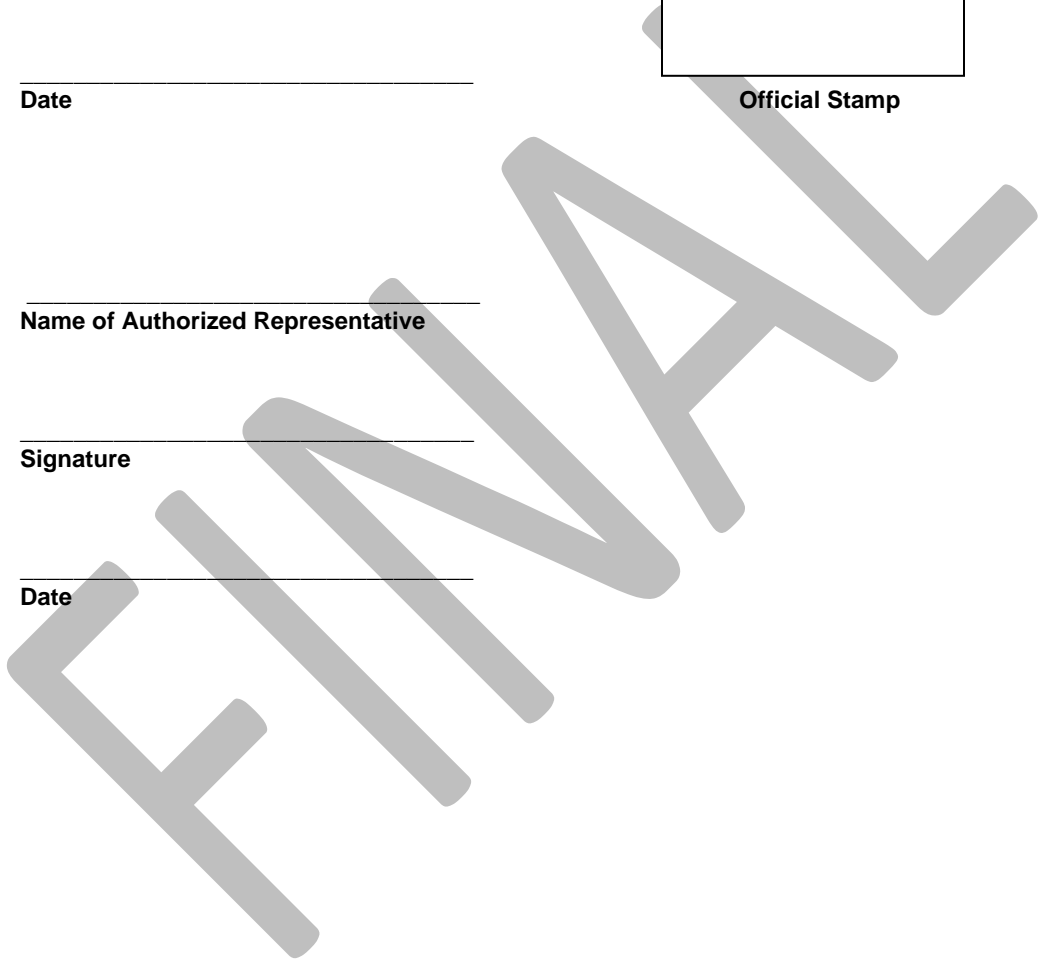


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- Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO)-The Netherlands-**Funding Agency**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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- Norsk Polarinstitutt (NPI)-Norway-**National Operator**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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- Norges forskningsråd (RCN)-Norway- **Funding Agency**

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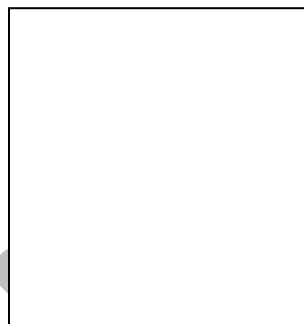
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- Ministerul Educației, Cercetării și Inovării - National Authority for Scientific Research (ANCS) **Romania-National Programme Authority**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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- Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (MICINN)-Spain-**National Programme Authority**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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- Vetenskapsrådet (VR)-Sweden-**Funding Agency**

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- Swedish Polar Research Secretariat-**National Operator**

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- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)-United Kingdom-**Funding Agency**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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- Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT)-Portugal-**Funding Agency**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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- Romanian Antarctic Foundation (FAR)-Romania-**National Operator**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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**FINAL**

- European Polar Board-European Science Foundation (EPB-ESF) **International Non-Governmental Organisation**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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**Date**



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FINAL

- Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR)-Luxembourg-**Funding Agency**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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**Signature**

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**Date**



**Official Stamp**

**FINAL**

- Istituto Nazionale di Oceanografia e Geofisica Sperimentale (OGS), Italy - **Marine Polar Operator**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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FINAL

- Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR), Italy - **National Arctic Operator**

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**Name of Authorized Representative**

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