



European Polar Board Constitution

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1. Mission and Priorities

The European Polar Board is an independent and strong voice of European Polar Research. The general task of EPB is that of a think tank and coordinating body. EPB members realize the advantages provided by this European Board and support it actively.

EPB is the central body to advance coordination in polar research and infrastructure effectively and foster multilateral collaboration in European polar research.

The strengths of the European Polar Board are:

- Bipolar vision (Arctic and Antarctic)
- European context
- Composite comprehensive membership (a mix of scientific competence and managerial skill)
- Actions to support scientific cooperation, networking of polar facilities and field operations.

The EPB aims to deliver to its member organizations:

- the highest quality service in line with their expectations and
- added value to their national polar programmes through their investments in EPB.

1.1 Role of the European Polar Board in Europe

The European Polar Board (EPB) has the principal role to be the voice of European polar research and to facilitate cooperation in all fields of polar science in its member states across Europe.

Provide a forum for the comprehensive inclusion of all relevant partners in Europe and the broad coverage of all scientific fields of polar research.

Promote polar research to the European Community based on its bipolar vision.

Provide a central organisational structure supporting European polar science. This has been codified in an Memorandum of a European Polar Framework between European partners and is outlined in the 2010 Strategy Paper "European Research in the Polar Regions: Relevance, strategic context and setting future directions in the European Research Area".

Support development of joint scientific programmes, in optimized use of European research infrastructures and in representation of polar issues within European research framework programmes.

1.2 Mission of European Polar Board

The general mission and role of EPB within European polar science encompasses:

- **Identifying future scientific areas and strategic priorities of polar science for Europe (Foresight Workshops and Papers)**

Based upon global science priorities and challenges EPB shall work together with international polar organizations to promote polar science. Also to work towards implementation of scientific initiatives at the European level to identify areas and challenges where European scientists, organizations and infrastructure are particularly well poised to make strong contributions. EPB will also identify issues of specific interest to its member countries, with relevance at the European and international level. This work will be summarized in the EPB Strategic Position Paper, to be revised and updated every 3 years to reflect the progress of polar science in a global context. It needs to have impact on the European polar developments and polar institutions within Europe.

- **Coordinating scientific agenda setting and represent it in European Policy Formulation (policy information and briefs on topics of common interest of members).**

EPB shall create and maintain strong links to European and international decision makers and funding agencies, in order to provide timely and relevant information on strategic scientific issues and scientific needs, to highlight important results, and to provide forward-looking perspectives on polar research. Such activities will be based on the Strategic Position Paper, and regular and open discussions between the EPB members.

- **Representing European Polar Research in the global context**

EPB will work with international organizations involved in polar research to promote topics of joint relevance for Europe.

- **Developing or supporting concepts for joint use of polar infrastructure**

EPB shall foster and support bottom-up (operator and science driven) initiatives on multilateral collaboration by creating and supporting fora (workshops, seminars) for discussions on infrastructure and project collaborations, by giving European level endorsement of prioritized initiatives and by networking and capacity building for the use of EPB members.

1.3 Support of Scientific Areas

Scientific priorities have to be of common interest for the members. They should be identified in a foresight process and can be further developed by specific working groups. The promotion of scientific areas can be supported by:

- Information to policy makers and briefings.
- installing and organizing working groups that develop multilateral, internationally recognized collaboration (but with limited financial support by EPB).
- initiating joint projects in collaboration with IASC, SCAR if possible^{1.4}

1.4 Optimizing Use of Polar Infrastructure

Polar science depends heavily on the use of adequate infrastructure, such as polar stations, ice breakers or ice-strengthened vessels, airplanes, and monitoring stations. With accelerative demands for advanced technological support, ever increasing costs of fuel and operations, and enhanced competition from emerging polar nations, Europe must master well-coordinated and effective research infrastructures to maintain a strong position in polar and climate research.

Strengthening the shared use of infrastructure within the EPB members and promoting proper joint initiatives would be a major advantage for European polar science. This can be achieved by:

- developing concept/rules for increased sharing of available infrastructure
- promoting projects for flagship research infrastructure

1.5 Cooperation with other Organizations

Polar science is by nature global science and needs close contact with international organizations and committees that address partially polar themes. While individual nations or research institutions are generally represented in these organizations, EPB should be the European voice on issues related to joint EPB projects or activities.

2. Governance and Funding

Recognizing the mission and priorities of the European Polar Board it agrees on the following governance and financial model to support the activities and development of the European Polar Board (EPB).

2.1 Membership of Organizations and their Representatives

Joining of new members: All European countries can apply for membership. A member organization shall represent the national polar research activities of its country and be a major national operator or programme. Normally, one or two organizations per country can participate, unless there are particular reasons to consider.

Each member organization is entitled to a representative, and each country has one vote. If a country is unable to send any representative, voting can be made by proxy based on a written statement by the absent member organisation formally to be registered by the chair stating who is entitled to vote on his/hers behalf.

EPB member representatives do not serve terms. They represent their organizations as long as they hold appropriate national positions. They may, on occasion, send a designee when they are unable to attend.

The board shall operate under the EPB decision principles. It will respect all its members, and thus strive to reach compromise and consensus decisions. If no consensus can be reached, decisions will be based on statutory majority votes, i.e. two thirds majority.

The gender and age balance of the Board's representatives should be constantly reviewed, and nominations from national members should take this aspect into consideration.

Withdrawal of members: One year notice is required for an organization to cease its membership.

The Plenary Assembly is composed by the member organization representatives. The Plenary will meet at least once a year, to oversee the governance and budgets of the EPB and provide strategic decisions for implementation by the ExCom and the secretariat. The members take all reasonable steps to make themselves available to participate in the face-to-face meetings of the EPB.

The EPB-members will pay their own costs (travel etc.) for attending the meeting. The EPB Executive Secretary and other persons whose presence is required shall participate in these meetings at the invitation of the EPB chair.

The Plenary can form action groups for certain tasks.

Observer Organizations are accepted during open sessions. The criteria for such status should be strict, to ensure that the informal and cooperative spirit of the EPB is kept alive.

Applications or invitations for membership or permanent observer status shall be presented to the EPB Plenary. Applications or invitations for temporary observer status shall be presented to the EPB ExCom. New member organizations and observers are accepted by statutory majority vote of the Plenary.

Criteria for accepting or inviting observers are:

- representing key top level organizations active in polar research, infrastructure and/or policy
- representing indigenous Arctic peoples
- representing or are in a key coordinating way involved in EPB's top priority polar programmes, e.g. chairs of working- or actions group or so-called taskforces.

The inclusion of observers representing indigenous Arctic peoples and key Arctic and Antarctic organizations is prioritized.

2.2 Composition and terms of the Executive Committee

The rules on the composition and terms of the ExCom are formalized in the following way:

- Size: the maximum amount of ExCom members should be four, plus the chair,
- Length: the length of their term is two years,
- Reelection: reelection for one second term of two years is possible,
- A rotation scheme aims at reelecting two ExCom members every other year

- The Excom members cannot be substituted at the ExCom meetings by alternate persons.
- The Chair may invite temporary observers to the ExCom meeting.

The EPB will seek in its composition a balanced distribution over time of organizations, countries, regions and gender.

2.3 Election and terms of the EPB Chair

The Chair can be elected from any of the members of the Board, following nomination by another EPB member. The term of the Chair is two years and may be extended by a maximum of a further two years by voting of the Plenary.

The nomination process and election will be overseen and managed by the secretariat.

The chair sets the date and location for the meeting and finalizes the agenda, in consultation with the secretariat.

In the event that the chair is not able to attend a meeting, the meeting shall be opened by the longest serving participant of the EPB ExCom who shall immediately invite the EPB to select an acting-chair for the meeting while the chair is absent.

2.4 Legal entity of operations

The legal entity of EPB operations will be a European or (inter)national organization with appropriate financial means and legal personality.

It must provide an independent European Environment for the Board's operations and not exert any national preference into the work of the secretariat. It must have the possibility for yearly independent auditing of accounts, accounting on a continuous basis and support for Human resources. The legal entity collects the EPB funds.

2.5 Funding Model

The funds to support the Board's activities shall be collected from the member organizations every year by the legal entity hosting EPB.

The level of membership contribution for each country is based on broad weighting of GIP (Gross Internal Product) and reasonable considerations of the scale and activities of the Polar Programme (appendix 1).

The financial model with five base levels allows for differences between countries while keeping the number of levels reasonably low. Where needed, a transitional period of two years is allowed for to adjust contributions from member organizations to the required fee level.

The yearly fees may be adjusted by statutory (two-thirds) majority vote of the Plenary.

Irrespective of contribution level, each country has one vote.

2.6 Appointment of the EPB staff (Secretary and secretarial staff)

The secretariat should be managed by a core staff, initially equivalent to up to two full time positions, with an Executive Secretary with a direct responsibility to the Board for running the EPB Secretariat and coordinating its activities, and administrative staff to support clerical tasks and communication.

There are possibilities for secondment from an EPB member organization, on the premise that the secretariat's independence from national preferences and priorities is honoured.

The Executive Secretary must lead the Secretariat in the development and implementation of the Board's work. The Executive Secretary provides overall strategic guidance and management, develops and implements an annual work programme, best meeting the combined needs of the membership.

The Executive Secretary oversees the Board's budget and expenditure, and reports this to the plenary meetings, for approval by the Board. Under the responsibility of the Executive Secretary, the Secretariat prepares reports to the plenary, on the Secretariat activities and the overarching science policy developments.

A review of the secretariat's work should be carried out every year to ensure delivery and productivity in line with the Board's strategic and operational objectives.

The core staff shall be supported by the core budget and is not to be reliant on contract activities. This does not preclude the possibility to hire temporary staff for particular purposes, following approval by the ExCom. External contracts can be developed only if within the Board's development priorities.

All permanent and temporary staff of the EPB shall be recruited by the host organization, after approval by the Chair and ExCom.

3. Transparency and Information flow

The support and guidance of policy makers to help reach decisions in educational, financial and governance issues is a vital component within the portfolio of communication dedicated to polar issues. There is an increasing need to extract important and validated results from polar research programmes to transfer advice to policy makers, and alerting key constituencies on emerging threats. In this respect it is necessary that the polar research community should seek to speak with one voice. A suitable platform for this exchange and coordination must be provided by the European Polar Board.

Within the EPB there must be a clear distribution of tasks and transparent processes for decisions.

3.1 Duties of the ExCom

EPB mission shall each year be broken down into actions organized into separate dossiers. Each of these will be led by an identified member of the ExCom, which can organize work together with other EPB members. The Secretary and the secretariat will provide support to achieve the goals within each dossier. A plan on deliverables and status of completion will be presented annually by the responsible ExCom member to the Plenary for advise and approval.

Key dossiers are to be connected with the mission of the EPB.

Within ExCom key dossiers are:

- Support of scientific areas
- International collaboration
- Cooperation on infrastructures;
- Information flow and outreach.

Other dossiers will be organized as needed. One person can be responsible for more than one topic.

The EPB mission shall be evaluated after three years with respect to results of these actions.

3.2 Information flow inside the EPB

Fast and regular information flow, transparency and representativeness within the EPB are essential for its success and must be top priorities in all EPB decisions. This will be a way to encourage member engagement in the activities of the Board.

Internal Report - A quarterly report on progress of activities, upcoming EPB events and upcoming funding opportunities of potential interest will be circulated to all members. This will be an internal (but not confidential) information channel, in a simple report format.

Priority Internal Note (PIN) - For urgent actions by the ExCom needing input from members (e.g. international partnerships involving the name of the EPB, coordinated project proposals by the EPB, etc.) an internal and confidential note, in simple format is to be circulated to all members. This note will clearly state the feedback needed from members and deadlines. PINs have no periodicity and should be only used for important and urgent matters.

Intranet – The intranet includes all documentation prepared by the EPB and a special section containing the Internal Reports and Priority Internal Notes. The structure will be organized so that members will immediately understand the hierarchy of documentation. Essentially, a reorganization of the structure of the existing webpage with documentation for members is proposed here.

3.3 Communication, Education and outreach

The EPB Strategic Position Paper on European Research in Polar Regions emphasizes that "Dedicated polar communication must touch all societal levels and age groups by bringing together the input of polar scientists, educators, teachers, media and stakeholders and the public". EPB should find ways of promoting a coordinated European-based strategy for dissemination of polar science and activities, while not repeating existing resources. A light, flexible and manageable structure is needed to manage existing resources, optimize the outputs and maximize the impacts of EPB supported actions.

Dissemination activities shall be targeted towards:

- providing the public administration with a better basis for decision making,
- encouraging better utilization of research results in order to make sound management decisions,
- communicating findings to the general public and to stimulate an interest in scientific training and research in the new generations.

It is recommended that the EPB will maintain or implement:

- Newsletter – A newsletter as a way to keep member bodies, national and European (political) agencies and the public informed about recent and ongoing EPB activities.
- EPB Strategic Position Papers – Focusing at identifying future scientific areas and strategic priorities of polar science within Europe. To be revised and updated every 3 years.
- Maintain the EPB website.
