

The Arctic System - an Outreach, Communication and Education Project

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Principal objective

The objective is to make a public presentation of the Arctic as an integrated system based on findings from natural sciences and selected IPY projects. The ultimate aim is to enhance the public's understanding for and interest in polar science.

Sub-goals:

- a) To highlight the global role of the Arctic system and show how it is tightly linked with processes going on in other parts of the world, with special focus on climate and exotoxicology
- b) To show why the Arctic is regarded a reference area
- c) To show why it is important to conduct research and environmental monitoring in this region
- d) to present the role of the Arctic in an integrated management of the eco-system (re. Managementplan for the Barents Sea) and
- e) address the new geo-political role of the Northern regions.

Project summary

The Arctic system can be described as a contradiction. It is multifaceted and robust, yet very vulnerable to environmental influences from the rest of the world. It has been described as one of Europe's last wilderness areas and has, as such, an intrinsic value. It is also a natural laboratory for science and an early warning area for climate change where the ecological system is facing severe challenges. We want to shed a light on the biotic and abiotic systems of the Arctic in a co-ordinated presentation.

The Norwegian Polar Institute represents the knowledge base of the project. Partners are the Institute for Marine Research and TVIBIT Youth Centre and relevant IPY research projects such as IAOOS, COPOL, MEOP, Bear Health, Bird Health and SciencePub.

The project will continuously be presented as part of the IPY Outreach, Education and Communication activities.

The general public, including youths 14-16 years of age, are the main target group. The media's role will be intermediate in bringing the message through to the target groups. The project leader has established contact with several national media channels. There are a number of interesting Internet sites focusing on the Arctic or parts of it. However, there are none which present the Arctic as an integrated system. Also, there is need for an easily accessible booklet presenting the Arctic biotic and abiotic systems, which can be handed out to Norwegian and foreign media, pupils and students,

decision makers and the general public. These will be two of the pillars of this project. Other outputs will be film stock shots, works of art and graphic illustrations which will be made available for the same target groups. School presentations in motivating surroundings are also instruments which will be used to create awareness about the Arctic system.