

The Vienna Symposium on Polar Tourism

October 22nd - 25th 2008, Vienna University of Technology



Intention

The Vienna Symposium on Polar Tourism will provide an opportunity to combine knowledge of research specialists and institutions related to the Arctic and Antarctic with interests related to polar tourism opportunities. The intention is that participants can jointly apply for available funding programs to increase the level of the research in the field of polar tourism. At the same time the general level of awareness will be altered. Countries like Austria, not situated in the polar region, can provide many analogies and broad experience from mountain tourism. Therefore we welcome the participation of interested parties from non polar countries.

The symposium, to be held as part of the International Polar Year 2007-2009 (IPY), will become an opportunity to develop research topics and to discuss trends and industry requirements in the field of polar tourism, that roughly exists since a quarter of a century.

Polar tourism - a growing industry

Polar tourism is continuously rising. The expected climate changes are not supposed to act adversely in this context and even opening new opportunities or changing the price ratio to the cheaper. So far, the Polar tourism was mainly connected to expedition cruises to the High Arctic and Antarctic, but increasingly stretches further down from 90° to approximately 65° or the level of the polar circle.

The upper core zone of polar tourism still remains restricted for exclusive guests due to lacking resources, like water, or because of restriction in access. A joint Russian- Austrian program during the IPY in Franz Josef Land failed as the access even for researchers was not granted. This is in line with new international conflicts in expectation of exploitable resources. Polar tourism with educated tourists could contribute by resolving such conflicts and creating a critical mass of a concerned public.

The lower extended zone became more diversified offering a wide range of products, from land-based safaris in the backcountry to cultural experiences in urban and semi-urban environments. In this way, polar tourism increasingly gets a mean of regional development of economically disfavored, periphery cold regions. An example for success is the ice-hotel in Jukkasjärvi, allowing a whole village with 300 employees to prosper.



Partners

- Vienna University of Technology (AT)
- Albertina Museum (AT)
- Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (IT)
- Luleå University of Technology (SE)
- Maastricht University (NL)
- Ovidius University Constanza (RO)
- Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences (RU)
- Lomonosov Moscow State University (RU)
- Shirshov Institute of Oceanology, Russian Academy of Sciences (RU)
- others to be confirmed

Contact

Meinhard Breiling: meinhard.breiling@tuwien.ac.at
Participation is free of charge and only upon invitation!

