



# Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators

## Station Managers' Forum

Melissa Nacke

**AECO.NO**

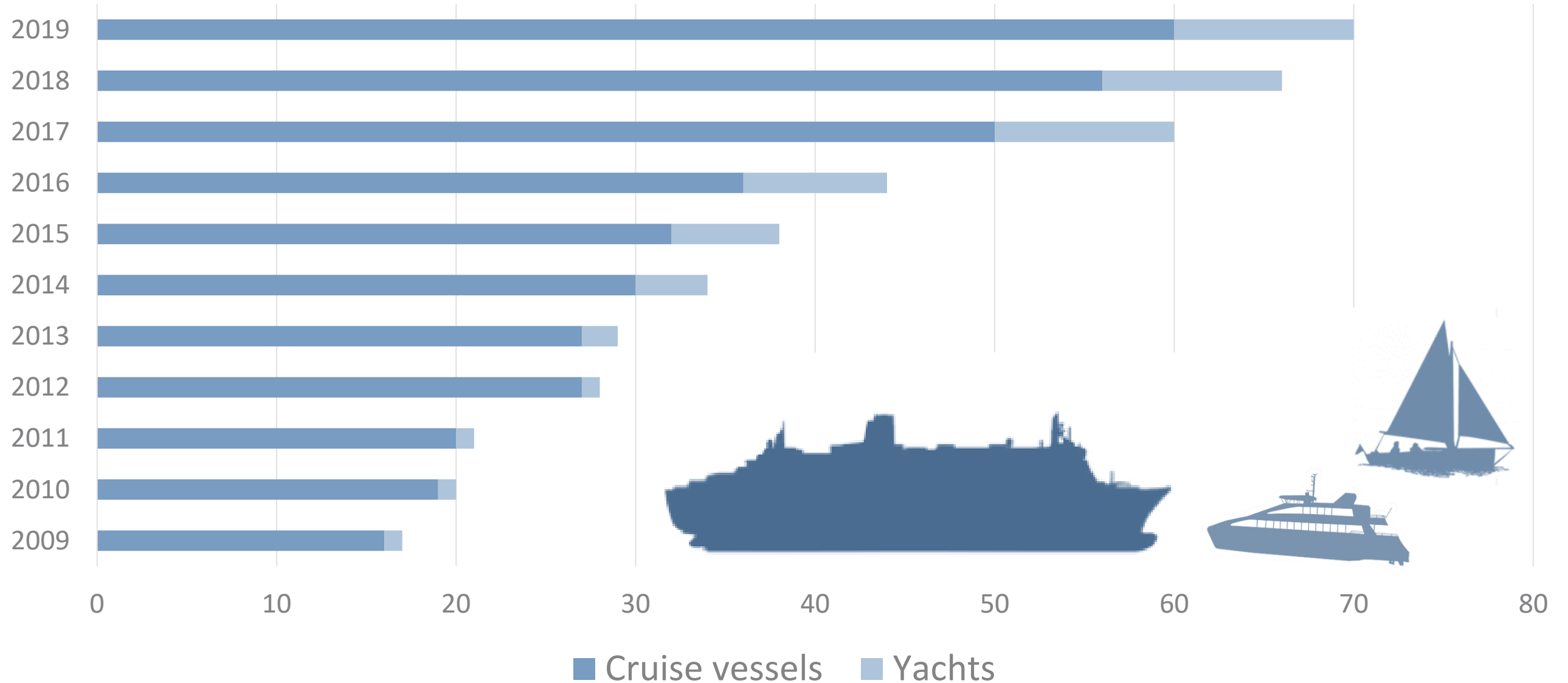
# Who are we?

- 70+ international members and represents the majority of the industry
- Ensure environmentally friendly, responsible and safe cruise tourism in the Arctic
- Advocate for the expedition cruise industry and AECO's members' interests

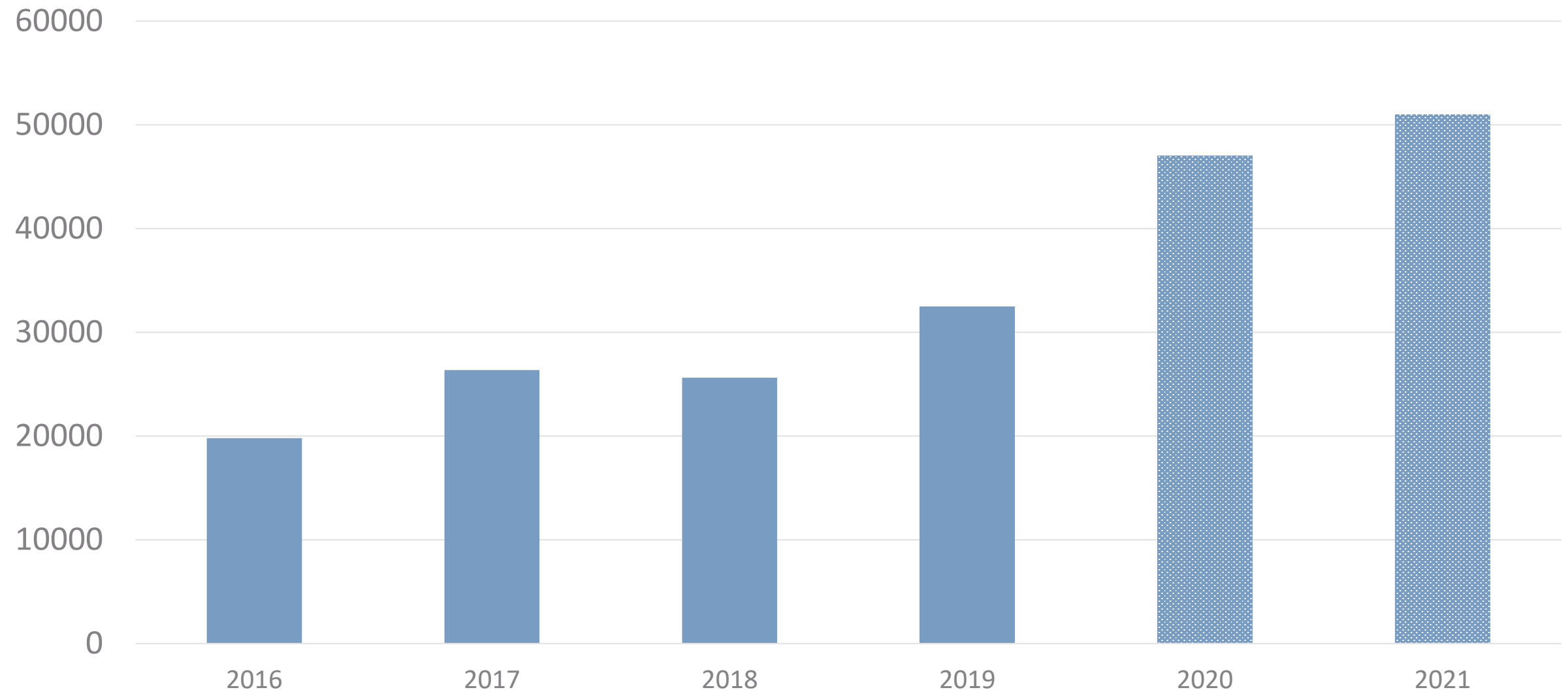




## Vessels operated and managed by AECO members



## AECO Passenger Projections





# How does AECO manage sustainable growth?



Environment



Safety



Community

# AECO's standards and guidelines

- Guidelines and standards are the backbone of AECO's work
- Members decide which guidelines and standards should be made mandatory during AECO's Annual Meeting



**Polar Bear**  
 Lutfi Olsson, Malin  
 Olsson, Fredrik  
 Olsson, Fredrik  
 Olsson, Fredrik

**Biosecurity guidelines**  
 for visitors to the Arctic

**Community Specific Guidelines**

**AECO's Site Specific Guidelines for Svalbard**

- Sites where operators are legally required to use site specific guidelines, and AECO have developed guidelines that have been reviewed by the Governor of Svalbard (three sites).
- Sites where site specific guidelines will become a legal requirement if the proposed management plan for this area is approved. AECO has developed guidelines for these sites (nine sites in total – seven of these have been reviewed by the Governor, two have yet to be reviewed).
- Sites where operators are legally required to use site specific guidelines, where AECO has not developed guidelines (two sites).
- Other sites where AECO has developed guidelines that are mandatory for AECO members (nine sites).

Many of the countries and regions in the North Atlantic and the High Arctic are characterized by vast wilderness areas and a diversity of nature, culture, and traditions. These are well

known for their natural beauty and are a fundamental element of the strong tradition for outdoor recreation and use of renewable natural resources.

# AECO's guidelines

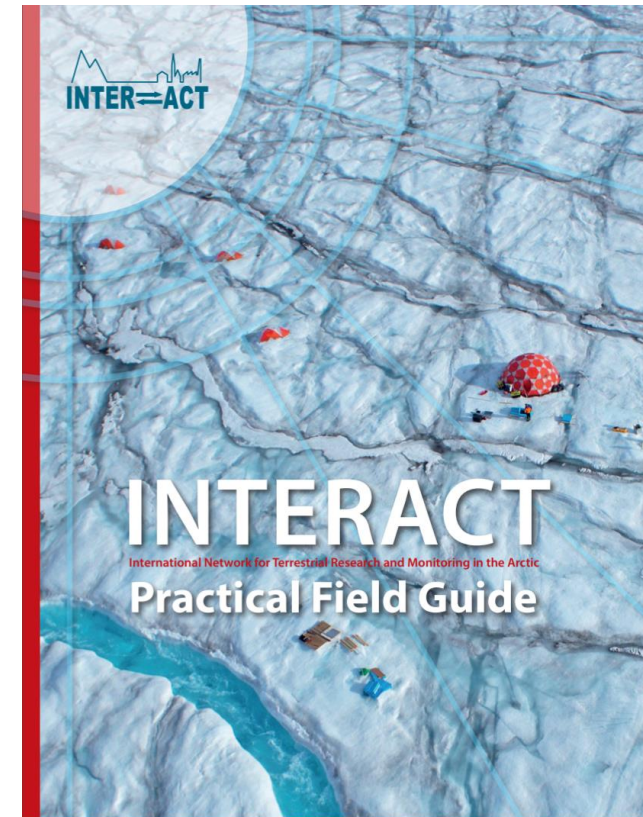
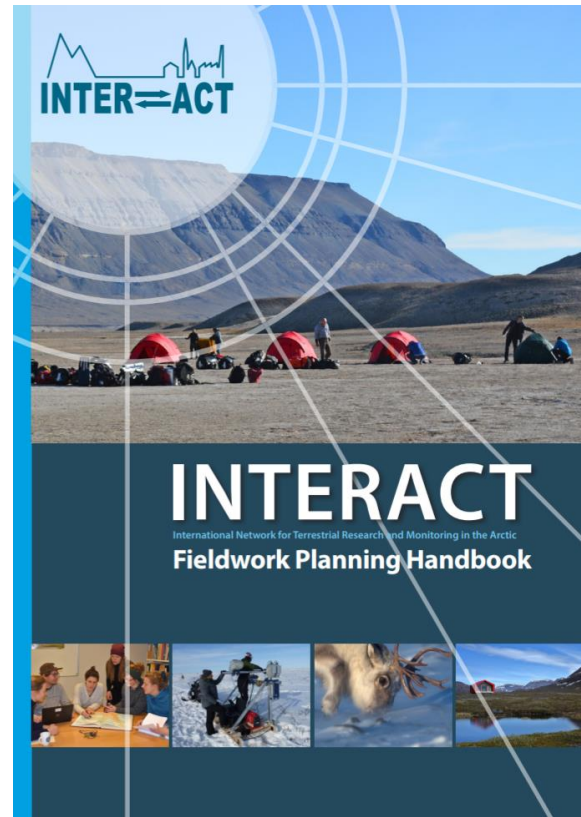


- Wildlife Guidelines (Arctic Fox, birds, cetaceans, polar bear, reindeer, seals, walrus)
- Community Guidelines
- Visitor Guidelines
- Cleanup and Clean Seas Guidelines
  - (Potential overlap with D2.11: Pocket guide on how to reduce plastic consumption and pollution)
- Operational Guidelines
- Biosecurity Guidelines
- Site Specific Guidelines



# INTERACT guidelines

- Similarities and overlap with INTERACT's guidelines
- What new value can AECO provide?



# Community Guidelines



- Supported by NORA – Nordic Atlantic Cooperation
  - Developed by local communities
  - Detailed instructions on how to carry out considerate visits
  - Mandatory for AECO members
- 
- Greenland: Nuuk, Paamiut, Ittoqqortoormiit, Tasiilaq, Sisimiut
  - Svalbard: Longyearbyen, Ny-Ålesund
  - Iceland: Seyðisfjörður
  - Coming soon: Canada – Pond Inlet and Grise Fiord



# Site Specific Guidelines

## Method

- Site visits by AECO and relevant experts
- Assessment of site using the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA)'s method for site vulnerability assessment
- Detailed guidelines to prevent disturbance of wildlife, vegetation, natural features and cultural remains
- Guidelines are reviewed by the Governor of Svalbard



## SVALBARD SITE GUIDELINES

## KROSSFJORDEN

79°7.3'N 011°50.9'E

# Fjortende Julibukta

Nordvest-Spitsbergen National Park  
Named after the National Day of France.



Photo: Yan Ali Tolstov

## The Hanging Gardens of Svalbard

Very few places near 79° North can offer more opulent vegetation than this very special site. Here you can enjoy the rich diversity and colors of Arctic vegetation and nice smells at close range. The bay close to the glacier offers one of the most beautiful beaches in the Arctic. The water temperature may not be impressive but the view is!

## SVALBARD SITE GUIDELINES

## FJORTENDE JULIBUKTA



## GUIDELINES

Remember to always approach a landing site calmly and carefully.

Walk around the wetland areas as they have very low-trampling tolerance.

In June and July, stay along the shore to avoid disturbance of breeding and foraging geese. Keep the group of visitors together and walk slowly. Do not approach the if eiders and geese are present on the shore.

Avoid trampling on the loose vegetation on the slope.

The breeding areas for Brünnich's guillemot, Atlantic puffin and razorbill can be observed from the small ridge to the east of it. Avoid walking into the breeding area.

In June and July, we recommend that the breeding area is observed from the water, but beware of shallow waters.



# AECO's Site Specific Guidelines for Svalbard



- Sites where operators are legally required to use site specific guidelines, and AECO have developed guidelines that have been reviewed by the Governor of Svalbard (12 sites).
- Sites where operators are legally required to use site specific guidelines, where AECO has not developed guidelines (two sites).
- Other sites where AECO has developed guidelines that are mandatory for AECO members (nine sites).

# INTERACT III: task 9.1

## Educating the tourists and tourist operators (Lead: AECO)

- a) Generate greater awareness of the sensitivity of the Arctic to disturbance;
  - b) Value this unique environment; and
  - c) Ensure sustainable tourism.
- 
- Work with tour operators to identify what additional educational resources would be beneficial and to identify and potentially refine any existing best practices for reducing impacts on the environment.
  - Consider if measures and tools used to ensure sustainable tourism can be applied to research activities to ensure sustainable practices in station management (in collaboration with WP2).
  - Delivery date: week 36

# INTERACT III: subtask 2.6.1

## Sustainable practices in station management

- Consult with station managers to determine actual and potential opportunity for tourism at their sites in order to develop sustainable tourism at INTERACT research stations by:
  - i. Assessing best practices for handling the impact of tourism at research stations and in their study areas to contribute to WP9 (D2.12);
  - ii. Implementing best practices for how research stations can make tourists respectfully aware of station operations, science and local communities with input from WP9 (D2.13); and
  - iii. Identifying with WP9 mechanisms to better educate tour companies and tourists.

# Information gathering and brainstorming

## What is the current state of tourism at stations?

Which station:

- Currently have tourists – what is working and what is not working?

## How can AECO best contribute?

- Potential project idea: Develop station-specific guidelines for tourists visiting INTERACT field stations
  1. Identify stations that have tourism and are interested
  2. Pilot project with a few stations – AECO could support a workshop at the station
  3. Develop a template for the guidelines
  4. All interested stations could use the template to develop their own station-specific guidelines





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Arctic Expedition Cruise  
Operators **AECO** 

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