Diversity in Polar Science Initiative:   
Polar Horizons

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***Information paper submitted by the United Kingdom***

As part of a series of activities and initiatives to mark the 200th anniversary of the discovery of Antarctica, the UK established a Diversity in Polar Science initiative. For at least the first 150 years of Antarctic exploration, visitors were overwhelmingly men. Given that Antarctica drives global systems and that the impact of climate change on the continent has global consequences, which will affect everyone, the initiative was developed to deliver a more diverse and inclusive future for UK Polar science, that better reflects British society.

Over the past two years, Diversity in Polar Science has delivered a range of activities, events and resources aimed at celebrating the existing diversity within the UK Polar community, and promoting and enhancing Antarctic science opportunities to under-represented groups, including women, people from ethnic minorities, people with a disability, and LGBT+.

“Polar Horizons” events took place in 2020 and 2021 to bring together early career researchers (ECRs) from under-represented groups, primarily in science, technology, engineering and maths disciplines. Twenty-two ECRs participated in early 2020, when the event was initially hosted in-person at the British Antarctic Survey, but with the necessity of hosting online in 2021, over 100 ECRs were able to participate. ECRs were immersed in an intensive and varied overview of Polar research, and also paired with established Polar researchers from their field of study for more detailed discussions, mentoring and career advice. Polar Horizons alumni were then invited to ongoing online seminars and events and encouraged to join the established UK Polar Network (of ECRs), which has also increased its focus and engagement on the promotion of diversity in the UK polar community.

In response to a number of inquiries about the Polar Horizons initiative, the British Antarctic Survey has put together a ‘How to’ guide. This is attached to this Information Paper (and also available along with other resources developed and compiled through the Diversity in Polar Science initiative at <https://www.bas.ac.uk/project/diversity-in-uk-polar-science-initiative/diversity-in-uk-polar-science-resources/>) for ATCM colleagues.