Promoting Diversity and Inclusion among Antarctic operators and expeditions

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**Working Paper submitted by the United Kingdom**

***Summary***

Following a successful pilot of a Code of Conduct to encourage all British Antarctic operators and expeditions during the 2022/23 season to make a voluntary commitment to promote equity, diversity and inclusion issues, the United Kingdom proposes the ATCM considers further options to promote its desire that everyone working on Antarctic matters was safe, welcomed, respected and free from discrimination. In addition to encouraging Parties, Observers and Experts to continue to share information and best practices about relevant activities and initiatives, the UK also proposes that the ATCM’s commitment to promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) be reflected on the Antarctic Treaty System public website, and that Parties consider developing EDI plans.

***Context***

Last year, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting expressed its desire to ensure that everyone working on Antarctic matters was safe, welcomed, respected and free from discrimination (ATCM XLIV Final Report, paragraph 259). In recent years, a number of Parties have submitted information about activities designed to promote diversity and inclusion among those working on Antarctic matters, and the ATCM expressed a desire for further information sharing on this issue.

The UK shared information about some of the activities delivered through its *Diversity in Polar Science Initiative* (DiPSi)in XLIII/IP45. DiPSi was inaugurated in 2019 with the aim of 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+.

As part of DiPSi, during the 2022/23 Antarctic season, a voluntary Code of Conduct was included alongside all Antarctic permits issued to those travelling to Antarctica with a British operator or on a British expedition. This noted that inclusive environments tend to be safer, healthier and have a more proactive approach to addressing risk. The Code of Conduct invited permit holders to indicate their commitment to encouraging everyone involved in their visit to:

* Act and behave respectfully and honestly, and ensure there is no unfair or discriminatory effect on others;
* Contribute to a safe operating environment that is based on trust, cooperation and mutual respect;
* Uphold a zero tolerance to any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination or hate speech directed at a minority group, including comments about a person’s gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, physical appearance, body size, ethnicity, religion, belief or national origin;
* Respect the authority of those in positions of leadership; and
* Be informed about how to raise any concerns relating to health, safety or environmental protection.

The Code of Conduct is attached at Annex A.

Initial feedback on the Code of Conduct has been positive, with most UK operators affirming their commitment to supporting efforts to enhance and support diversity and inclusion issues.

***Recommendation***

The UK proposes that the ATCM discusses further ways to operationalise the desire it expressed last year to ensure that everyone working on Antarctic matters was safe, welcomed, respected and free from discrimination, including through:

* Continuing to encourage Parties to share experiences and best practice on equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives;
* Inviting Parties to consider developing EDI implementation plans, to describe measures being taken, or planned, to deliver the ATCM’s desire, as expressed last year; and
* Including a new topic on the ATS website, under ‘About’ on ‘Equity, Diversity and Inclusion’ to publicly confirm the ATCM’s commitment to supporting equity, diversity and inclusion. Once established, this page could be regularly updated as the ATCM continues to discuss these important issues, as well as provide links to the work of SCAR, COMNAP and others in this field.

**ANNEX A**

Imagen que contiene Interfaz de usuario gráfica

Descripción generada automáticamente

**Travelling to Antarctica: Code of Conduct**

Antarctic Treaty Parties have expressed their desire to ensure that everyone working in Antarctica is safe, welcomed, respected and free from discrimination. Inclusive environments tend to be safer, healthier and have a more proactive approach to addressing risk.

You have been issued with a British permit to travel to, or undertake specialist activities in, Antarctica. You have a legal obligation to ensure that everyone travelling to, or operating in, Antarctica under your permit complies with the conditions therein, to ensure the protection of the Antarctic environment and the safety of others operating in the region. As part of our commitment to embracing and enhancing diversity and inclusion, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) invites you, in addition to ensuring compliance with any applicable legislation that may include obligations relating to equality or non-discrimination, to also indicate your commitment to encouraging everyone involved in your visit, particularly those who will be working in Antarctica, to:

* Act and behave respectfully and honestly, and ensure there is no unfair or discriminatory effect on others;
* Contribute to a safe operating environment that is based on trust, cooperation and mutual respect;
* Uphold a zero tolerance to any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination or hate speech directed at a minority group, including comments about a person’s gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, physical appearance, body size, ethnicity, religion, belief or national origin;
* Respect the authority of those in positions of leadership;
* Be informed about how to raise any concerns relating to health, safety or environmental protection.

If you are happy to subscribe to these values, you are encouraged to sign the attached certificate and share with all those travelling with you, or display prominently, as you consider appropriate.

Thank you and we wish you safe and environmentally responsible travels to Antarctica.

***Polar Regions Department***

*FCDO*

*September 2022*

**Code of Conduct in Antarctica**

As the permit holder for the following Antarctic [*voyage/expedition/activity*]

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

During the period …………………………….. to …………………………………….

I am legally responsible for ensuring all of our activities are conducted in a safe and environmentally responsible way, in accordance with the Antarctic Treaty and its Protocol on Environmental Protection.

In addition, I am committed to ensuring that everyone engaged in this [*voyage/expedition/activity*] feels safe to be themselves, welcomed, respected and free from discrimination. As well as ensuring you comply with relevant laws on equality and non-discrimination, I also encourage everyone to:

* Act and behave respectfully and honestly, and ensure there is no unfair or discriminatory effect on others;
* Contribute to a safe operating environment that is based on trust, cooperation and mutual respect;
* Uphold a zero tolerance to any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination or hate speech directed at a minority group, including comments about a person’s gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, physical appearance, body size, ethnicity, religion, belief or national origin;
* Respect the authority of those in positions of leadership;
* Raise any concerns relating to health, safety or environmental protection, through your organisation’s reporting mechanisms [or] by [*insert appropriate details of how or to whom any concerns should be raised* ……………………………………………………………………………………………………..……………………………………………………………………………………..]

Signed: ……………………………………

