

International Polar Decade Initiative



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International Polar Decade is WMO's initiative

The idea to launch an International Polar Decade (IPD) was expressed and supported by the sixtieth session of the WMO Executive Council (June, 2008).

Council felt that success of first year IPY implementation, great investments of the governments to this international campaign, growing requirements of scientific and local communities in the period of drastic changes in Polar Regions environment motivate the nations to continue sustain and high-quality observations and research for more extended period of time.

Support of IPD initiative

IPD initiative has been presented at:

- ✓ EU Conference “The Arctic: Observing the Environmental Changes and Facing their Challenges” (Monaco, November, 2008),
- ✓ IPY Celebration Event and the eighth session of the IPY Joint Committee (Geneva, February, 2009),
- ✓ Conference on IPY Legacy organized by UNESCO (Monaco, March, 2009)
- ✓ International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) (Bergen, March, 2009)
- ✓ Sixth Ministerial Meeting of Arctic Council (April, 2009) which decided to consider the proposal to arrange an International Polar Decade.

Decision of EC- LXI (June, 2009)

Noting the positive response to IPD idea expressed by the international polar community, the EC-LXI (June, 2009) requested Panel on Polar Observations, Research and Services to consider modalities and plans for the IPD, focusing on decadal needs and issues of long-term character based on lessons learned during IPY, and to make recommendations to the sixty-second session of Council to be held in June 2010.

IPD Objectives (as formulated by EC-LXI)

- Long-term monitoring and studies of critical climate changes in polar regions discovered during the IPY that have an impact on the rest of the globe, the ecology of polar environment and quality of life of the Arctic circumpolar communities;
- Integration of these observations using modern data assimilation systems, and their use in weather, climate and environmental prediction systems up to seasonal and longer time scales;
- Development of concrete recommendations to governments for adaptation to these changes, with special attention to strengthening the adaptive capacities of Arctic residents.

IPD scientific background sources

- ICSU/WMO Joint Committee Statement “The State of Polar Research” - some of IPY preliminary scientific advances are summarized;
- WCRP documents - description of relevant scientific issues and recommendations on climate research in Polar Regions, including polar climate predictability issue (*more in presentation by V. Ryabinin, STG5, item 11*);
- Joint Committee Report on IPY 2007-2008 (under preparation) together with scientific papers related to IPY achievements and presentations at IPY Oslo Science Conference (8-12 June, 2010).

IPD Observing Structure

IPY 2007-2008 has showed the feasibility of addressing key environmental and social issues in the Polar Regions, but their nature requires **a systematic and sustainable approach.**

A long term approach, such as the IPD will be a decisive step in this direction. It should address critical long term issues for developing and improving international cooperation in polar research and observations, including data and information management, and environmental prediction.

IPD Observing Structure (cont)

All these requirements are consistent with several major initiatives which form the composition of the IPY observing systems legacy:

- Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON) with an Integrated Arctic Ocean Observing System (iAOOS) and Arctic-HYCOS,
- Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS),
- The Global Cryosphere Watch (GCW),
- Polar Satellites Constellation (PSC),
- Polar Climate Outlook Forum (PCOF)
- WWRP/THORPEX IPY

IPD could be considered as an umbrella under which all IPY legacy initiatives would be developed.

Organizational steps

To involve all potential IPD stakeholders to define scientific basis of IPD, its observing and organizational structure:

- **WMO, ICSU, UNEP, UNESCO and its IOC** have strong scientific interests and some of them run comprehensive observing networks in Polar Regions;
- **AC and ATCM** as regional governmental organizations together with **IASC and SCAR** should play a leading role in organization and development of long term strategies for polar research, monitoring, and management.

Organizational steps (cont)

One of the lessons from IPY is coordinated funding problem.

One possible solution is to bring funders together with a view to identify common themes that meet their priorities and to consider mechanisms for coordinated funding (consortia etc.)

A broad 'marketing effort' will be needed for IPD, as well as for polar research in general.

IPD Workshop (Autumn 2010?)

- EC–LXI requested the Secretary-General to organize a workshop with participation of representatives of Arctic Council, Antarctic Treaty, IASC, SCAR, ICSU, UNEP, UNESCO, its IOC and other international organizations concerned to develop a concept and structure of the IPD;
- It is important to invite representatives of the International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA);
- EC Panel on PORS should prepare a draft of consolidated view paper on concept, structure, modalities, probable timeframe and organisational mechanisms of IPD and presented to workshop as basic document for discussion.

Organizational Mechanisms

Some of them are already in place:

- **WMO EC Panel on PORS,**
- **IASC/SCAR Bipolar Action Group,**
- **AC SAON International Steering Group,**
- **SOOS Working Group**
- **Association of Polar Early Career Scientists.**

PORS outcome on IPD

PORS-I (Ottawa, 13 –15 October 2009):

- a) noted (among other arguments in favour of IPD) that IPY helped enlist the attention of space agencies and IPD would further our desire for more robust and sustained polar missions and help us bring the agencies on board;**
- b) recognized sound arguments to pursue the IPD, but was inconclusive in expressing its views on next steps or preparing for a possible workshop;**
- c) pointed out that there is need to further scope this with other relevant Organizations and submit for consideration at EC-LXII in June 2010. A protocol like the Charter on the Polar observations could be promoted.**

Be ready!



Thank you!

