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## Collection of valuable polar data and increase in nature awareness among travellers by using Expedition Cruise Ships as platforms of opportunity

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Hurtigruten Expeditions, a member of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) and the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) has been visiting the fragile polar environments for two decades, witnessing the effects of climate change. Tourism and the number of ships in the polar regions has grown significantly. As a stakeholder aware of the need for long-term protection of these regions, we promote safe and environmentally responsible operations, invest in the understanding and conservation of the areas we visit, and focus on the enrichment of our guests.

For the last couple of years, we have supported the scientific community by transporting researchers and their equipment to and from their study areas in polar regions and we have established collaborations with numerous scientific institutions. In parallel we developed our science program with the goal of educating our guests about the natural environments they are in, as well as to further support the scientific community by providing our ships as platforms of opportunity for spatial and temporal data collection. Participation in Citizen Science programs that complement our lecture program provides an additional education opportunity for guests to better understand the challenges the visited environment faces while contributing to filling scientific knowledge gaps in remote areas and providing data for evidence-based decision making.

We aim to continue working alongside the scientific community and developing partnerships. We believe that scientific research and monitoring in the Arctic and Antarctic can hugely benefit from the reoccurring presence of our vessels in these areas, as shown by the many projects we have supported so far. In addition, our partnership with the Polar Citizen Science Collective, a charity that facilitates interaction between scientists running Citizen Science projects and expedition tour operators, will allow the development of programs on an industry level, rather than just an operator level, increasing the availability and choice of platforms of opportunity for the scientific community.