

Progress Report, Action #19
2015-2017 Bilateral and Multilateral Actions,
Circumpolar Action Plan:
Conservation Strategy for the Polar Bear



Action	Establish working relationships with tourism organizations
Timeline	2015-2017
Description of Activity from 2017 Implementation Table	Each Range State will identify key tourism operators and engage in discussions with them about their current practices to minimize the impacts of their activities on polar bears and the risk to humans of tourism in areas where polar bears are present.
Baseline status	Existing information about the tourism sector has not been analyzed.
Planned Outputs	Range States will develop a baseline of information about tourism operators, while building a working relationship with them, in their respective countries and begin discussions at the Range State level to help inform Best Management Practices (BMPs).
Modifications	Content and timeline of action has been modified. Action 19 and action 20 of the Circumpolar Action Plan (CAP), both concerning tourism, will be integrated into one process at the circumpolar level, with the 2-year period of 2018-2020 as a timeframe. The actions are seen as potentially more efficient when viewed together, not separately.
Progress Report Date	November 24, 2017

Progress Report on Activity

Norway has conducted a successful pilot of the process described in Actions 19 and 20 in 2016, where the governor of Svalbard invited all tourism organization and operators on Svalbard, including the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO), to a series of workshops. The current practices of operators in tourism activities near polar bears or in polar bear habitat were presented, the needs for careful planning and conduct in order to minimize the potential impacts on polar bears were discussed, and the participants produced an agreed, shared set of rules of conduct, or a BMP, that would be used in Svalbard. Norway has not yet started the process to expand this action to a circumpolar level, or to share these experiences among the Range States.

Next Steps

There is a plan to take this work to a multilateral level in the coming months, and to describe this work as a planned action, combining Actions 19 and 20 in the CAP, for the 2-year period 2018-2020.