

Contribution from the POLARIN project to the European Ocean Research and Innovation Strategy

POLARIN welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the European Ocean Research and Innovation Strategy. As a Horizon Europe project, POLARIN brings together a network of leading European polar research infrastructures and provides coordinated transnational access to research vessels, icebreakers, marine and terrestrial research stations, observatories, core repositories and remote research services across the Arctic and Antarctic. The consortium also includes research infrastructures and partners from beyond Europe, reflecting the global nature of polar and ocean science.

The Call for Evidence highlights the need to strengthen coordination across the European ocean research and innovation landscape, improve ocean observation systems and enhance international cooperation.

Based on the experience gained through POLARIN, we believe that coordinated research infrastructure networks can make a significant contribution to achieving these objectives by connecting distributed capacities, facilitating access and services, and making better use of existing investments. Access is a key element of this approach.

The first POLARIN access calls demonstrated strong demand from the scientific community for access to unique research infrastructures and services that are often beyond national capacities.

Continued support for transnational access programmes will maximise the scientific return on existing European investments, strengthen collaboration across countries and enable excellent science. For ocean research in particular, access to research vessels, icebreakers and other marine research infrastructures is fundamental to collecting observations and samples in some of the world's most remote and rapidly changing environments. These observations underpin our understanding of ocean circulation, climate change, biodiversity, the carbon cycle and

sea-level rise, and provide the evidence needed to support European and international ocean policies. The value of these observations increasingly depends on digital services that enable data to be discovered, accessed and reused across research communities.

Continued support for common standards, FAIR data practices and integration with European marine data ecosystems maximises the impact of European investments in ocean observation and facilitate evidence-based policymaking.

The future European Ocean Research and Innovation Strategy should also fully integrate the polar dimension. The Arctic Ocean and the Southern Ocean are integral components of the global ocean system, and processes occurring in these regions influence climate, ocean circulation, biodiversity and sea level far beyond the polar regions.

Based on the implementation of POLARIN, we recommend that the future Strategy:

- recognise European research infrastructure networks as effective mechanisms for coordinating distributed marine and polar research infrastructures;
- continue supporting transnational access programmes that enable researchers to access unique research infrastructures, services and scientific expertise beyond national capacities;
- promote common standards, FAIR data practices and interoperable digital services that maximise the value and reuse of ocean observations; support sustained ocean observing capabilities, particularly in remote and ice-covered regions, where long-term observations are essential for understanding environmental change;
- promote international scientific cooperation while strengthening European leadership through coordinated research infrastructure networks and shared access to unique research capacities.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/16392-European-ocean-research-and-innovation-strategy/F33508467_en