



Polar View

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Polar View's Success Leads to Three-year Extension and Continued Support from European Space Agency

Polar View – an international consortium of companies, government agencies and research institutes across Europe and North America providing satellite earth observation monitoring and forecasting services in the Polar Regions and other areas affected by snow and ice – has recently received recognition from the [European Space Agency \(ESA\)](#) as a valuable service worthy of continued funding under the [GMES \(Global Monitoring for Environment and Security\)](#) programme.

Since 2005, Polar View has been a “one stop shop” for a wide variety of earth observation products which monitor sea ice cover, glacier runoff, snow cover, snow melt, icebergs, river ice and lake ice. Products are delivered in an automated and timely manner to meet the specific needs of its growing number of diverse end users, which include government hydrological services, merchant vessels and icebreakers, the tourism industry in the Polar Regions and beyond, indigenous Arctic communities, and even long-distance yacht races.

This new round of ESA funding will provide additional support to sustain Polar View's activities from late 2009 until late 2012. However in the next few years the consortium intends to incorporate and become a self-sustaining legal entity independent from ESA and GMES funding. Costs of the services Polar View provides will be paid either directly by the end user or through local, national or international funding schemes. At the moment a majority of its services are entirely self-sustainable, with a view to becoming fully sustainable by 2012.

The Key to Polar View's Success

PolarView's success lies in its ability to forge connections between administrative and scientific networks, filling in gaps in observational capabilities. This approach has allowed the conglomerate to expand from just over 20 service providers and end users to more than 80 today.

The high level of feedback Polar View receives from its end users has also made it possible for the conglomerate's services to evolve and improve over time. “From the very beginning, Polar View has embraced the idea of being a needs-centred initiative...which ensures that our services will improve over time and better meet the needs of our end users,” said Thomas Puestow, Polar View Project Manager.



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Accomplishments

Some results of Polar View's unique and proactive approach to finding solutions to a wide range of specific user needs include:

- Establishing the first ice charting service in Antarctica to offer high-resolution real-time images, which has provided much-needed navigational assistance to tourism and scientific research vessels in Antarctica;
- Establishing the first publicly available service for both short-term and long-term sea ice forecasts in the Baltic Sea region, which has made travel by ships in the Baltic Sea easier and safer;
- Making the latest ice charts for both the Arctic and Antarctic available in one place by creating the Ice Logistics Portal – Polar View's contribution to the International Polar Year (IPY) 2007-08 – at the request of the International Ice Charting Working Group (IICWG), making it simpler for ships travelling on long distance voyages to switch between ice charting services as they move from one coverage area to another;
- Expanding and improving the quality of monitoring river and lake ice in northern regions, making it easier to monitor and predict costly natural disasters such as ice jam floods;
- Bringing together various stakeholders to set up the award-winning Icebergfinder.com service, which helps tourists and tour boat operators locate scenic icebergs to see off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Providing snow cover maps to IPY research projects such as the EALÁT project, which is studying how Sámi reindeer herders in northern Scandinavia are being affected by and adapting to climate change;
- Acting as a catalyst to establish a new cooperation forum for snow service providers, the International Snow Services Working Group (SSWG).

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