



Input to IAP-Arctic Summit Workshop

Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO)

Responsible, environmentally-friendly
and safe expedition cruise operations in
the Arctic.



AECO

- Established in 2003
- 23 members, with approximately 20 vessels take 12 - 320 passenger

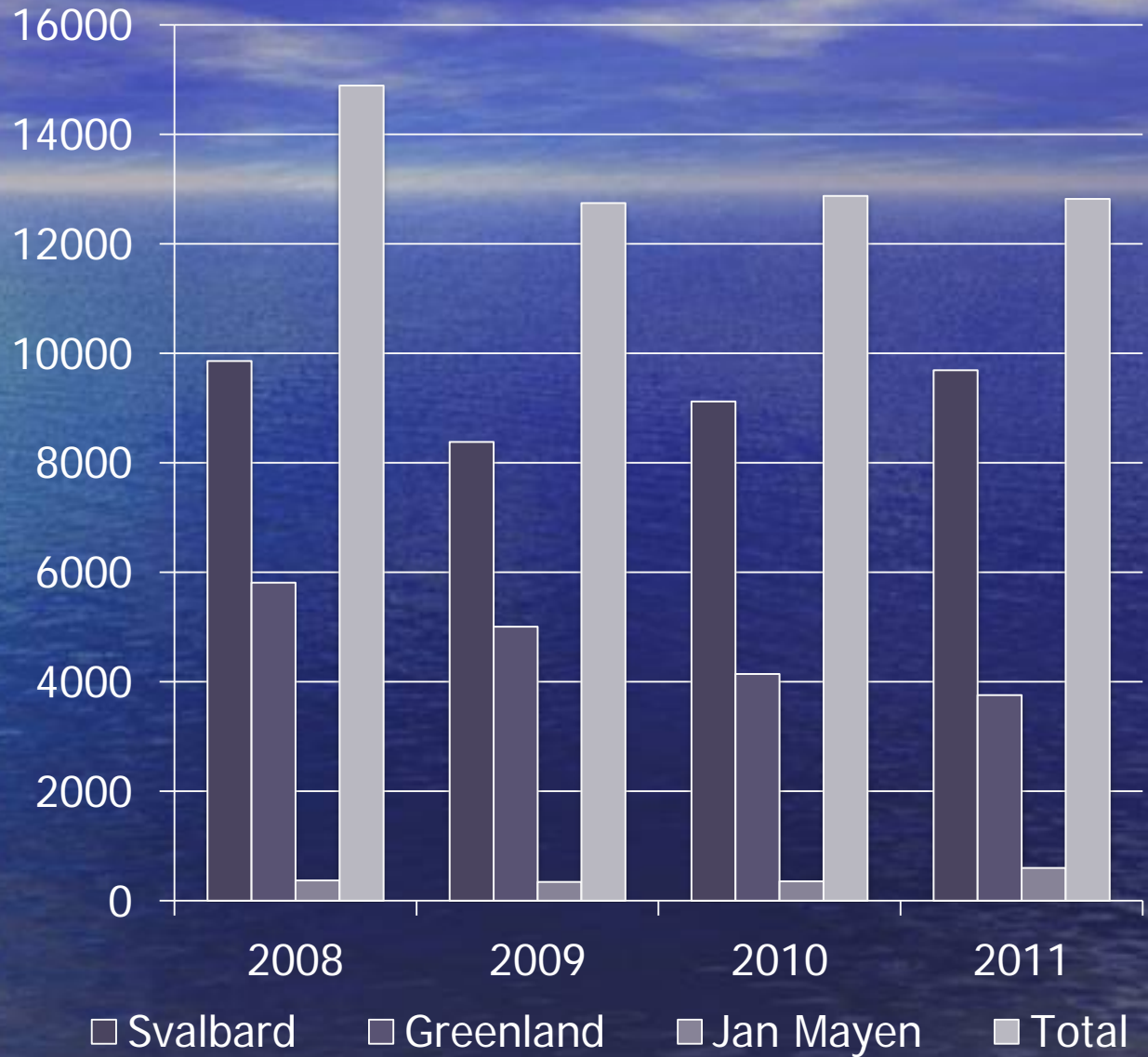


AECO

- Organize a majority of the expedition cruise operators in the Arctic
- Headquarter is located in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway
- Since 2012 new office in Copenhagen, Denmark



AECO passengers





AECO is dedicated to manage responsible, environmentally-friendly and safe expeditions cruise tourism in the Arctic.



AECO's overall objective is to ensure that expedition cruises and tourism in the Arctic is carried out with the utmost consideration for the vulnerable, natural environment, local cultures and cultural remains, as well as the challenging safety hazards at sea and on land



AECO has developed a comprehensive set of guidelines that AECO- members are obligated to operate in accordance with in addition to the international and national laws and regulations regarding the area.



AECO has become an important stakeholder representing the concerns and views of the Arctic expedition cruise operators.

AECO takes part in a number of hearings and regulation-processes

AECO has close contact and co-operation with authorities



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What we do

- Operational guideline for Members
- Guidelines for Visitors to the Arctic
- Coordinated landing-schedules
- Site-guidelines
- Annual Arctic Cruise Conference
- A number of other cruise related projects



Many reasons for cruise guests to go to the Arctic

- untouched nature
- small settlement
- interesting towns
- local culture
- unique wildlife
- history
- hiking
- fjords
- icebergs
- glaciers
- midnight sun
- northern light
- untouched nature
- small settlements
- national parks
- arctic flora
- exotic animals (whales/polar bears/birds)
- ruins (the Norse, trappers, Inuit etc.)
- traditional craftsmanship and local food



Expedition cruise tourism vs. ordinary cruise tourism

Ordinary cruise tourism

- The vessel is an important part of the experience – often just as important as the places you see.
- Large vessels
- Need harbor facilities to go ashore

Expedition cruise tourism

- The vessel is primarily for transport
- Most important are the places you see.
- Focus is on your local experiences
- Zodiac or small boats used for cruising and tendering ashore
- Often higher number of guides/lecturers



Operational Challenges

- High general prices in connection to operations in the Arctic
- Limited infrastructure such as access to international airports
- Limited harbor facilities
- Limited facilities in small communities
- Limited access to hospitals and specialized doctors



Operational Challenges

- Sparse and inaccurate sea charts
- Reliability of meteorological Data
- Limitation in vessel communication systems
- Sparse data about the character and movement of ice
- New regulations about piloting
- Uncertainty about future regulations



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