



Statement from the European Polar Board workshop “Minimising plastic use and waste in polar research and logistics”

16th June 2018, POLAR2018, Davos, Switzerland

On 16th June 2018, on the occasion of POLAR2018, the major international conference bringing together over 2000 Arctic, Antarctic and alpine researchers, policymakers and professionals from around the world, organised jointly by the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) and the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) in Davos, Switzerland, the European Polar Board (EPB) held a workshop, titled “Minimising plastic use and waste in polar research and logistics”. The following statement comes from the workshop participants:

Noting that plastic pollution is a global issue causing a range of adverse environmental impacts, the scale and impact of which are increasingly being understood.

Recognising that, as with any activities where plastics are used, polar research and logistics contribute to the global plastic problem and thus have a responsibility to minimise this contribution, and the impacts, from local to global scales, of plastics.

Recognising the challenge to reduce current use of plastics in polar research and logistics, and acknowledging that plastics are in some cases necessary, beneficial, unavoidable, and currently without viable alternatives.

Stating that efforts are needed to identify the plastics used, their advantages and disadvantages, and a simple guidance system developed for possible alternatives and ways to reduce their use in polar research and logistics, for example, using a “traffic light” coding system to help clear and quick choices to be made.

Realising that awareness of the role of individual choices needs to be promoted, and recognising that personal behaviour and decisions can be guided by policies on the use of plastics, leading to better outcomes overall.

The workshop participants recommend that the polar research and logistics communities seek opportunities to reduce their use of plastics in all possible areas, including transport and packaging, scientific equipment and consumables, field equipment, and domestic uses at stations and on vessels.