



Association of
Arctic Expedition
Cruise Operators

This is AECO

About AECO

The Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) was established in 2003 and is one of the largest cruise organizations globally, advocating for the interests of its members.

AECO is dedicated to ensuring that Arctic expedition cruise tourism adds value to AECO's geographical area, while prioritizing concerns for the natural environment, cultural preservation, local communities, and safe operations both at sea and on land.

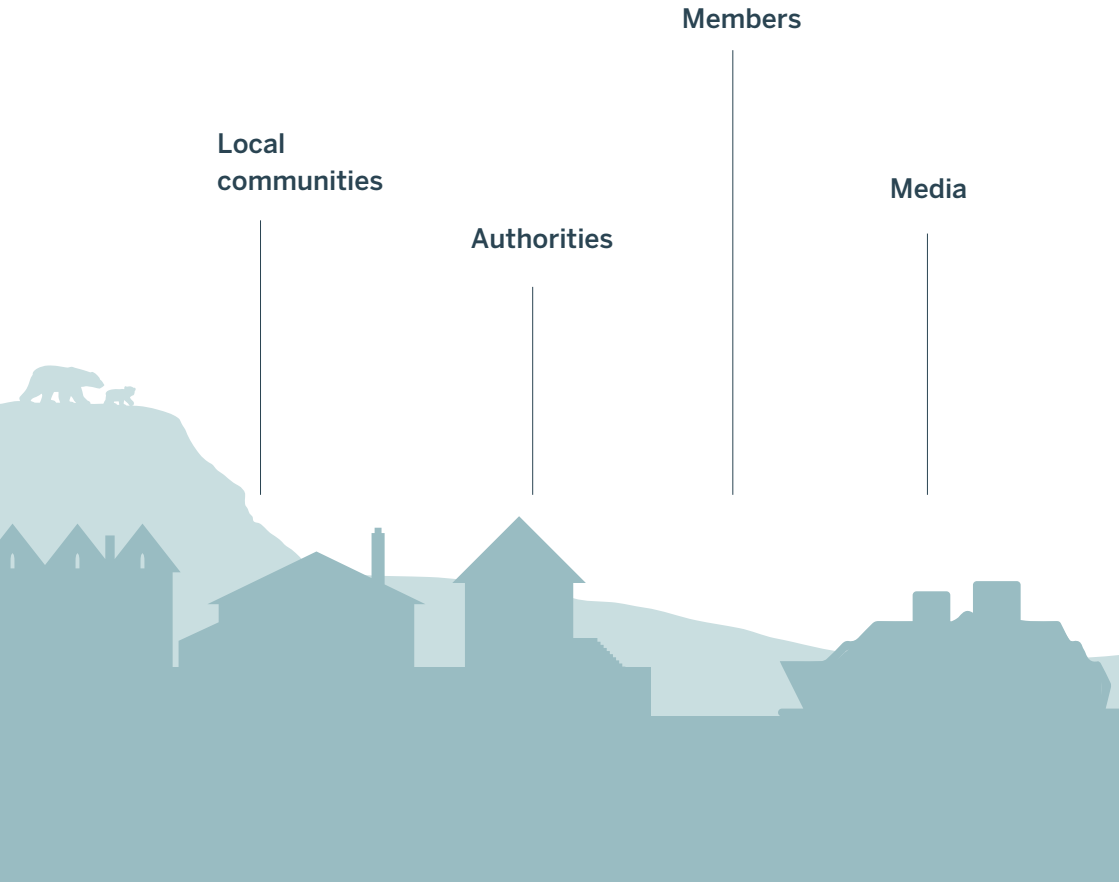
Members of AECO, shape the work and focus of the organization by participating in committees and working groups, consultations, meetings and projects.

AECO has guidelines, standards and measures that are mandatory for members.





AECO works closely with many different stakeholders



AECO has an extensive external stakeholder engagement. In addition to working towards AECO's objectives and representing our members' interests, these engagements gather input and help ensure that AECO's decision aligns with the broader interest in the Arctic region.

Suppliers

Research
communities

Educational
institutions

NGOs




SAR entities

Industry
organizations



AECO
Established
by 8 operators

Photo: AECO



2003




Guidelines
First mandatory
guidelines

Photo: Adam Rheborg

2005

Observers
Scheme
mandatory vessel
operation observers

Photo: AECO



2010



Vessel tracker

Photo: AECO

2014

Drones
Prohibits
passenger use
of drones

2015

2004

Clean up
Svalbard

Photo: Christian Enggleke



2008

HFO
Ban

2013

Cruise
Database

Photo: AECO



2015

Search and
Rescue

Photo: Jonas Skotnes and Martin Jystad





Community Guidelines

Photo: Mads Pihl, Visit Greenland

2017



2018

O-VRAT



Energy
Globe
Award

2020

Svalbard Cruise Forum

Photo: Visit Svalbard



2023

50 Guidelines

2017

2018

Community engagement program

2019

Field Staff Online assessment

Photo: AECO



MOU with Government of Nunavut

Photo: AECO



2019

JASA

Joint Arctic
SAR Arena

AECO 2030

Value through
knowledge and
partnership

2023

AECO's hallmarks

Members of AECO are committed to AECO's overall objectives to ensure sustainable and responsible tourism in the Arctic.

In addition to being committed to legal frameworks with international, national and local regulations, members are also committed to AECO's guidelines, standards, tools and measures and must:










-  Carry observer (from time to time)
-  Register in AECO's cruise database and ship scheduler
-  Submit Post Visit Reports (PVR)
-  Require guides and mariners to pass an annual assessment
-  Comply with all guidelines
-  Not use Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO)
-  Ban recreational use of drones
-  Run a vessel tracker
-  Report incidents to AECO



Photo: John Bozinov, Poseidon Expeditions

AECO is a membership organization and dependent on members involvement and support to AECO's work.

To meet our objectives and to work for the members' interests AECO's strategy includes programs, projects, partnerships, targeted efforts and engagements.

Members of AECO support and engage in:

- The Clean Seas and Clean Up program
- Community and stakeholder engagements
- Crowd sourcing
- Research support and Citizen science
- Search and rescue (SAR) exercises and activities



Photo: AECO

Member Value and Resources

Through two decades of dedicated work promoting responsible and sustainable tourism, AECO has built a strong reputation as a **responsible, reliable, and relevant** association.

We work and advocate for our members' interests.

AECO

- is a “trademark” communicating committed and responsible operators dedicated to sustainable operation
- is a stewardship for sustainable tourism
- is consulted and regarded as a trusted partner in tourism policy -, regulatory- and management issues
- represents the views and the concerns of the industry with a collective voice
- is a platform for collaboration, networking and partnership
- is a sought-after partner and collaborator for many different stakeholders
- open doors
- provides members with operational tools
- offers training and educational resources
- assists in crisis management
- gathers members and partners in meetings and events
- issues information and updates
- initiates projects and activities

Member resources

- Extensive set of guidelines
- Cruise database and Ship scheduler
- O-VRAT
- Vessel tracker
- Field Staff and Mariners Online Assessment
- Crowd sourced depth soundings
- Clean Seas and Clean Up Toolkit
- Incident reporting system

Field Staff and Mariner's Online Assessments

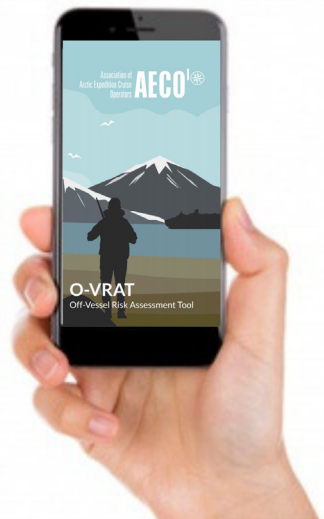
Field staff and mariners are some of the most important decision makers in our industry. The effectiveness of AECO's guidelines relies on the competence and judgement of the people in the field.

AECO's mandatory Online Assessment aims to test field staff and mariners competence in regulations and guidelines, and must be passed annually.

Off Vessel Risk Assessment Tool (O-VRAT)

In order to enable cruise operators and their staff to do a systematic risk assessment in connection with e.g. landings ashore, AECO has developed an Off-Vessel Risk Assessment Tool (The O-VRAT).

This innovative application for mobile devices has brought risk assessment for nature landings to a new level.



Certificate of Achievement



The certificate holder has demonstrated knowledge of the rules and regulations governing Arctic field operations, as well as AECO's principles and guidelines.

The holder is committed to applying this knowledge to conduct responsible, environmentally sustainable, and safe activities in the Arctic.

Frigg Jørgensen

Frigg Jørgensen
Executive Director

Guidelines

Part of AECO's backbone is our more than 50 mandatory guidelines, that our members have agreed to follow, to ensure that operations are in accordance with our objectives.

AECO ensures
environmentally
friendly, safe and
responsible Arctic
expedition cruise
tourism.



Enviroment

Photo: AECO

AECO is dedicated to carry out expedition cruises with the utmost consideration for the natural environment and cultural remains, and ensuroperations without negative impacts.

We do this through guidelines, tools and standards and we initiate and carry our environmental projects such as developing a climate change strategy and continue our efforts through AECO's Clean Seas program



Safety

Photo: Jonas Skotnes and Martin Jystad

AECO works to ensure that expedition cruise tourism in the Arctic is carried out with the utmost consideration for safety on land and at sea, through evaluation and mitigation of risks to practice safe operations.

We do this through ensuring that the resources of the Arctic expedition cruise industry are recognized as assets in Arctic Search and Rescue preparedness and response, and work through cooperating with SAR entities across the region to exchange knowledge, information and exercise.



Community Engagement

Photo: Visit Greenland

AECO works to ensure that expedition cruise tourism is responsible and adds value to the areas we visit.

AECO's Community Engagement Program enhances efforts for sustainable tourism related to people and communities. We work through dialogue and partnership with visited communities, promoting economic opportunities and other benefits.



Knowledge

AECO's aim is to be the preferred point of contact for Arctic expedition cruise tourism, and the expert knowledge resource.

We inform public and political discussions and decision making, through gathering and processing cruise tourism statistics, data, and knowledge for partners and stakeholders, engage in citizen science and engage in relevant research.

Member Involvement and Influence

AECO is owned by its members and operated with a high level of members' involvement.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is AECO's highest decision-making body in the association. Representatives from member organizations gather annually to discuss and make key decision. During these meetings, members may vote on significant matters such as changes to the Bylaws and Terms of Reference, implementation of new standards and tools, budget approval, elections and strategic direction.

The Executive Committee (EC) is elected by the AGM and is responsible for overseeing the organizations operations and making decisions between AGMs. The EC is responsible for the activities of AECO's Secretariat, while providing guidance, advice and support. The EC decides on priorities, manages finances and implements policies.

AECO's standing committees are elected by the AGM while Working groups may be elected by the AGM or established during the operational year. They are focused on specific areas or tasks such as field operations, maritime issues, guidelines, membership issues, compliance and dispute resolution, as well as nominations and elections.



Photo: AECO

AECO values Member input and members have the opportunity to provide feedback, raise concerns, and propose initiatives or changes that can be discussed and potentially adopted. Member input is vital for shaping the organization's direction and policies.

The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day operations. The ED also manages AECO's secretariat, administration and implementation of decisions made by the EC and the AGM. The team works closely with committees and working groups to carry out the organizations' mission and initiatives.



