

## EWA-WMCC in Spitsbergen – practical information

We are warmly anticipating your arrival to Norway and Longyearbyen, the Norwegian capital of Spitsbergen. This letter outlines some important practical issues.

### A brief introduction to Spitsbergen

**Spitsbergen** is the largest and only permanently populated island of the Svalbard archipelago in northern Norway. Spitsbergen covers an area of 39 044 km<sup>2</sup> and has 2100 inhabitants. The administrative centre is Longyearbyen, and the Russian mining community of Barentsburg and the research community of Ny-Ålesund are the only other settlements. No roads connect the settlements; instead snowmobiles, aircraft, and boats serve as local transport. Svalbard Airport, Longyearbyen provides the main point of entry and exit.

The island was first used as a whaling base in the 17th and 18th centuries, after which it was abandoned. Coal mining started at the end of the 19th century and several permanent communities were established. The Svalbard Treaty of 1920 recognised Norwegian sovereignty and established Svalbard as a free economic zone and a demilitarized zone.

The island has an Arctic climate, although with significantly higher temperatures than other places at the same latitude. The flora benefits from the long period of midnight sun, which compensates for the polar night. Svalbard is a breeding ground for many seabirds, and also supports polar bears, reindeer and marine mammals. Six national parks protect the largely untouched, yet fragile environment. The island has many glaciers, mountains and fjords.

### Entry permits – Visa

Everyone may, in principle, travel to Svalbard, and foreign nationals do not need a visa or a work or residence permit from Norwegian authorities in order to settle in Svalbard. However, the main path of entry to Svalbard is through Norway, which requires a visa to Norway/Schengen. Thus, you do not need an additional visa, but **you will have to show your passport** at the immigration control.

Norwegian citizens may confirm their identity using a Norwegian driving licence – but it is advisable to carry your passport with you.

**Remember, 4-8°C in Longyearbyen, no snow on the ground now but it is still cold.**

- warm clothes (hat, scarf, gloves etc),
- passport (Norwegians too).



## Registration

You will receive the registration package in Oslo if you are also attending the IWA conference. Others will receive it at the Oslo airport on the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> June.

## Transfers and flights

Busses to the airport **will leave at 19:00, 24<sup>th</sup> June**, from Radisson Scandinavia hotel. You will receive your flight ticket (which is also your boarding pass) with your conference bag (or by email if you are coming directly to the airport). Each passenger can check-in 2 bags of 23 kg with this ticket.

We will board the Norwegian Air flight DY 396 to Longyearbyen, which departs at 22:30 from Oslo airport. It is a 3 hours direct flight.



## Dinner on 24<sup>th</sup> June

To use our time more efficiently we have arranged a light dinner at the airport restaurant before departure. Dinner will be served at the Monolitten café, which is situated AFTER the security control. You can choose among three warm dishes (beforehand; please reply via QuestBack web-response), one drink is included. It is a normal cafeteria where you can buy additional food or drinks.

We will meet at the **cafeteria from 20:00**, and it is open until 21:30. The **flight leaves at 22:30** from the International terminal - about 5-10 minutes' walk from the cafeteria, inside the airport.

## Arrival in Longyearbyen and hotel check-in

We arrive at Longyearbyen airport 01:30 at night. However, you will still find yourself surrounded by the midnight sun! Upon arrival, there will be busses to take you to the hotels. In the conference bag you will find details about your hotel. Everyone is accommodated either at the Radisson Blu Polar hotel, or within walking distance at another hotel.

Radisson Scandinavia hotel claims that their Barentz pub is the world's northernmost bar. It usually closes at 02:00, but we hope it will remain open for a few minutes for those who want a late night get together.

## The first working day – Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June

All are invited for breakfast at the Restaurant Nansen, Radisson Blu Polar hotel, which is open 07:00-10:00.

Considering the late arrival, we will start the working day at 10:00. We do have a very tight program, so please be present at the auditorium a few minutes before 10:00! The conference is at the UNIS main auditorium, [which is a 10 minutes walk](#) from the restaurant!

The lunch and coffee breaks are according to the program. We plan to finish the working day latest by 18:00, so you will have time for a quick wash and a change, should you need that, before the dinner. You can also use that time to take a short walk around the hotel. It is safe to walk around the area - no risk of polar bears! Or you can visit the Spitsbergen museum, which is in the premises of the conference.

## Welcome reception and dinner

We hope you can join us at the welcome reception, starting at 19:00 by the UNIS entrance. The dinner will be served in the main restaurant from 20:00.

The award winning [Svalbard museum](#) will be open for all participants and accompanying persons between 18:00-20:00 and the entrance is pre-paid.

## Sunday- the day of excursions and project meetings

We are glad to inform you that all are invited to join [the excursion to Barentsburg](#), which is the Russian capital in Svalbard. The bus leaves [at 08:30](#) from the Radisson Polar hotel and we will travel by speed boat (catamaran) for about 1 hour to Barentsburg. We have arranged 1.5 hours of guided tour. Tea/coffee will be free on board and you can purchase other drinks and snacks.



On this trip, travelling through Billefjorden, you are presented with the opportunity to observe the distinct arctic wildlife, in a surely magnificent landscape, containing an

incredible industrial heritage. On the return part of the trip we come up-close with the Nordenskiöldbreen glacier, which presents the chance to view the enormous blue walls rising up from the sea. This part of the trip can be observed either from the deck on the outside, or if you prefer, from inside the vessel's warm and cosy saloon, surrounded with panoramic windows.

On our way back, we will have lunch on board around 12:00. It will be a simple lunch- and lunch packets will be distributed.

After arrival in Longyearbyen, on the way to our hotels, we will visit the drinking water treatment plant and the water distribution systems in Longyearbyen. With the freezing temperatures (sub-zero temperatures over 8 months/year), you can imagine the challenges in keeping water flowing through the pipes... We are many and the space inside the plant is limited, so we have to find a way to group ourselves.



We plan to arrive at the hotel around 14:00. Afterwards, a couple of project meetings are planned for some participants:

*15:00 -18:00: WaSo Asia & Africa project & 17:00 -19:00: Water Magic project meetings*

Dinner will be served at the UNIS restaurant (or BBQ outside, weather permitting) from 20:00 onwards.

## **Second working day – Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June & check-out**

Breakfast will be served at the Radisson Polar hotel from 07:00. We encourage you to check out after or on your way to breakfast – there will be a special luggage room for guests both at Radisson Polar and at the other hotels.

We start the program at 08:30! Please be punctual.

We conclude the conference by 18:00 – and go straight to the dinner at the UNIS restaurant, starting at 18:00.

The busses to the airport leave at 19:45 and the flight to Oslo leaves at 21:30.

## Arrival in Oslo

We arrive in Oslo at 00:30 (past midnight). Many of you will be staying at Radisson Airport hotel, a 5 minute walk from the terminal. For others, there will be a bus to Oslo city centre and then to Ås.

## Additional excursions – accompanying persons

We have quite a few accompanying persons, and most of you will also have time for an additional excursion on Sunday 14:00-19:30. You may choose from [a range of options](#) and we will request a travel agent to be present at the conference venue/Radisson hotel to help you. Fossil hunting and a trip on dog sledges are some of the more exotic experiences. Please note that these excursions are not included in the package fee, to keep the package fee at a minimum.

## Publication of papers in peer reviewed journals

We have specifically printed the proceedings without an ISBN number, and will not make them available in the public domain via our webpages. This is to ensure the possibility of publishing them elsewhere, as confirmed by the IWA publishing office. We will be sending the selected papers to

- (1) Water Science & Technology
- (2) Water Science & Technology: Water Supply
- (3) Water Practice & Technology

Please inform the secretariat if you wish to submit your paper for publication, and please indicate which journal is preferred.

## Weather and clothing

Longyearbyen is still cold. The weather forecast shows 4-6°C, cloudy and no rain (although one cannot rule out some raindrops..) with light breeze.

It is strongly advised to dress in warm and windproof clothing. Remember to bring a hat, scarf, gloves or mittens to help you stay warm. They do have a limited supply of thermic overall suits on board of the catamaran, which you can borrow if you do get cold.

## Safety in Svalbard

Svalbard's nature is astonishingly beautiful – but also very unpredictable and full of surprises. The climate is rough, weather changes rapidly and the polar bear threat is an ever present factor. A trip into the arctic wilderness therefore requires good preparations to minimise the risk of severe consequences and injuries. The following is an opportunity to become familiar with advice on how to behave:

Use the professional tour operators if you want to go into the vast wilderness of Svalbard. The guides are well qualified to take care of the guests through experienced



evaluation of the weather conditions, avalanche risk, ice conditions, polar bear threat, etc. They also bring along the required equipment for more or less all thinkable situations, including communication systems for places where no cell phones will do.

**If you enter the wilderness on your own: Think safety and environmental protection in all your planning and preparations. Here are a few tips:**

- Have adequate clothing and equipment for the trip; wool, many layers, windbreaker, food, hot drink, etc. Ask for advice at any of the shops selling sports equipment.
- Always tell where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Check the weather forecast – and bear in mind that there are huge local variations and rapid changes in the Arctic.
- Cell phones will not function outside of Longyearbyen, so a satellite phone and a distress beacon is a must. These can be rented at local shops or tour operators.
- Polar bear protection is required; flare, gun, etc might be rented at several shops and tour operators.
- Be sure to know the laws and regulations regarding where you can go and what you can and cannot do to ensure the caretaking of nature and protection of cultural remains. The tourist information and the Governor's Office might be able to advise you.
- The Svalbard Rules of Common Sense provides a brief overview on what you should take into consideration before leaving the settlements.
- Ask for advice!

