



XXXIX ANTARCTIC TREATY  
CONSULTATIVE MEETING  
SANTIAGO - CHILE 2016  
25 YEARS PROTOCOL ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Agenda Item: ATCM 17  
Presented by: IAATO  
Original: English  
Submitted: 26/04/2016

# **Towards Developing a Strategic Approach to Environmentally Managed Tourism and Non-governmental Activities: an industry perspective**



## **Towards Developing a Strategic Approach to Environmentally Managed Tourism and Non-governmental Activities: an industry perspective.**

### **Background:**

ATCM XXXVIII agreed to establish an Intersessional Contact Group on “Working Towards Developing a Strategic Approach to Environmentally Managed Tourism and Non-governmental Activities in the Antarctic”, convened by New Zealand and India, tasked to:

*“...identify priority questions and gaps with respect to Antarctic tourism, on the basis of which a focused discussion on identifying a limited number of priority questions and gaps could take place at ATCM XXXIX.”*

IAATO followed the discussions closely and believes some useful points were raised. With the submission of WPXXX *Report of the Intersessional Contact Group ‘Developing a Strategic Approach to the Environmental Management of Tourism and Non-governmental Activities*, IAATO would like to offer the following perspectives, which may contribute to ATCM XXXIX in their deliberations on this topic.

### **Identifying priority questions and gaps with respect to Antarctic tourism**

IAATO’s perspective, reflecting comments from the Association’s membership, is that there are some clear gaps and questions with respect to Antarctic tourism and non-governmental activity, which we would welcome the ATCM to consider.

As stated in previous IAATO ATCM interventions and ATCM XXXIX during the Competent Authorities Workshop, IAATO believes that cooperation and collaboration are crucial to the successful environmental management of Antarctic tourism given the unique circumstances of Antarctic governance. Within that context we see the following as key issues:

- Implementation of ATCM agreements into national legislation is critical to ensure that:
  - There is a reaction to non-compliance, for example, in the case of repeated violations of unauthorised visitation to the Antarctic. There have been commendable steps taken to address this issue, but there are a number of instances, which appear to fall between the jurisdiction of Competent Authorities
  - Measures, such as Measure 4 (2004) and Measure 15 (2009) that have the potential to have a substantial influence on the strategic environmental management of tourism and non-governmental activities, are ratified and brought into force as soon as possible.
- IAATO operators agreed in 2005 that they would not only commit to ensuring that their activities – both singular and collectively, will have no more than a minor or transitory impact. Additionally, as stated in ATCM XXI IP85 *Land-Based Tourism and the Development of Land-based tourism infrastructure in Antarctica: An IAATO Perspective* IAATO operators have expressed that they do not support the development of permanent land-based infrastructure solely for the purposes of tourism and non-governmental activities. Agreement within the ATCM to support these intentions would be a useful strategic response to manage future tourism. Resolution 7 (2009) General Principles of Antarctic Tourism approaches these points but does not consider all non-governmental activity. Several aspects could be strengthened by adopting elements of the Resolution into a Measure.

- IAATO believes that the rapid evolution of technology and its impact on society will make it almost impossible to predict every potential development in tourism and non-governmental activities (for example Unmanned Aerial Vehicles). Consequently, IAATO believes that there is value in using a broad-brush approach to ensuring that any “new” activities are carefully assessed prior to taking place. Within that context, consideration as to a review and update of Recommendation XVIII-1 (1994) Tourism and non-governmental activities “*Guidance for those Organising and Conducting Tourism and Non-governmental Activities in the Antarctic*” should be considered.
- Finally, we also offer the suggestion that there may be value in conducting a full “Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis” of tourism and non-governmental activities within Antarctica. IAATO believes this will strengthen the development of a strategic approach to the environmental management of tourism and non-governmental activities.