

Press release from AECO - Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (for immediate release):

AECO hires environmental agent

The Arctic expedition cruise industry steps up efforts to combat marine plastic pollution as AECO hires seasoned polar tourism professional Sarah Auffret as AECO's new environmental agent.

The Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) has hired an environmental agent who will be to lead AECO's efforts drastically cut back on single-use plastics on Arctic expedition cruise vessels, as well as enhance cruise passengers' involvement in regular beach cleanups.

Sarah Auffret, who has a background as a G Adventure expedition leader on cruises in Svalbard, East Greenland and the Antarctic Peninsula and as base leader of Port Lockroy, was selected from a pool of highly qualified candidates. Auffret's extensive experience from polar tourism will come in handy in her new role as environmental agent, where she will lead the work to collect, systematize and share best practices to help reduce plastics consumption on expedition cruise ships.

According to Frigg Jørgensen, executive director of AECO, the expedition cruise industry can make a big contribution in the fight to combat marine plastic litter

"Marine litter is one of the biggest environmental challenges of our time. An opportunity for the Arctic expedition cruise industry to involve presented itself when AECO received an invitation from Erik Solheim, UN Environment Executive Director, to join the Clean Seas Campaign. AECO highly supports UN Environment's Clean Seas campaign and will be taking actions to beat plastic pollution. Now, our commitment has been given additional momentum by the fact that we have been able to secure external funding to further develop our Clean Seas initiatives," says Jørgensen.

The new project position has been made possible by funding from the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund and the Norwegian Environmental Directorate, who have granted a total of NOK 2.4 million to AECO's clean seas efforts.

In addition to working on preventive measures, the environmental agent will help coordinate beach cleanups carried out by expedition cruise passengers and crew. Auffret, who initiated a coastal cleanup movement in Naruto, Japan in 2010 and has a long-standing passion for environmental issues, looks forward to spearheading AECO's Clean Seas efforts.

"As Arctic tourism grows, I strongly feel we have the opportunity, duty and responsibility to examine, study and implement the best possible practices to ensure we have the lowest possible impact on the environment and communities we visit. I was excited to hear about the environmental agent position and I am delighted to take on this important job," says Auffret.

Auffret will work from Tromsø but will also have work periods in Svalbard.

Suggested illustration photos



Photo caption: Sarah Auffret will help combat marine plastic pollution as AECO's environmental agent (Photo: AECO).

High resolution illustration image can be downloaded here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/a3u321g2tir9m7t/AABFwV5xPz0G9fPBAaw_Yi83a?dl=0



Photo caption: AECO will contribute to engaging more expedition cruise passengers in cleanups efforts, such as this cleanup of a beach in Svalbard. (Photo courtesy of Oceanwide Expeditions. Photographer Arjen Drost).

High resolution illustration image can be downloaded here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/a3u321g2tir9m7t/AABFwV5xPz0G9fPBAaw_Yi83a?dl=0

AECO - Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators

Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators is an international organization for expedition cruise operators and associates in the Arctic, dedicated to managing environmentally friendly, safe and considerate cruise tourism. With close to 70 international members – including 40 vessel operators, owners and management, and 50 expedition cruise vessels that are organized by the association – AECO represent the great majority of these operations in the Arctic. Website: www.aeco.no.

Svalbard environmental protection fund

The Svalbard environmental protection fund was established under the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act. The fund's resources will be used to initiate and stimulate projects with the purpose of protecting Svalbard's environment. The fund is financed by dues and allocation, including the environmental fee paid by all visitors to Svalbard.

Website: <https://www.sysselmannen.no/en/Svalbard-environmental-protection-fund/News/2012/07/Svalbard-environmental-protection-fund/>

The Clean Seas campaign

UN Environment launched #CleanSeas in February 2017, with the aim of engaging governments, the general public, civil society and the private sector in the fight against marine plastic litter. Over the next five years, the campaign will address the root-cause of marine litter by targeting the production and consumption of non-recoverable and single-use plastic. By connecting individuals, civil society groups, industry and governments, UN Environment aims to transform habits, practices, standards and policies around the globe to dramatically reduce marine litter and the harm it causes. Website:

<http://www.cleanseas.org/>