



POLAR SYMPOSIUM **FROM ARCTIC TO ANTARCTIC**

Enabling the Legacy: Translating Polar Research into Action

25|27 FEBRUARY 2026
OCEANOGRAPHIC MUSEUM • MONACO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OUTCOME REPORT

RESEARCH TO ACTION

Why this report, why now?

From 25 to 27 February 2026, the third Monaco Polar Symposium *Enabling the Legacy: Translating Polar Research into Action*, brought together 170 participants spanning polar science, governance, conservation and finance, including representatives of Indigenous Peoples' organisations.

Jointly organised by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) and the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), in collaboration with the Oceanographic Institute, Prince Albert I of Monaco Foundation, this international event aimed to help prepare the Fifth International Polar Year (IPY5, 2032–2033). It was structured around the principle Research to Action: moving from accumulated knowledge to coordinated decisions, sustainable funding, implementable initiatives and international action.

The timing matters. IPY5 follows the fourth International Polar Year (IPY4) by 25 years: polar systems are changing faster than research can track, geopolitical pressures are weakening cooperation, and polar conditions increasingly shape coastlines, climate, food, water and infrastructure worldwide.

The Symposium's three workshops built on one another, progressing from findings and ambitions, through funding models, to flagship initiatives. A fourth part, developed after the event, identifies three cross-cutting levers required to translate these outcomes into action. The report is not only a record of the event, but a roadmap for building the coalitions, mechanisms and financing frameworks required before 2032.

For further information, please consult the full Monaco Polar Symposium 2026 Outcome Report.

THE REPORT AT A GLANCE



THE EVENT

- 170 Participants
- 31 Countries & Territories
- 3 Workshops
- 1 Horizon: IPY5 2032–2033



THE RESULTS

- 7 Findings & Ambitions
- 5 Funding Models
- 17 Flagship Initiatives



THE ANALYSIS

- 5 Pillars Of Action
- 3 Cross-Cutting Levers
- Towards Coordinated Global Action



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Monaco Polar Symposium 2026
OUTCOME REPORT

7 FINDINGS & AMBITIONS

SHAPING IPY5 · Part I

1

PLANETARY RISK

Polar change is already reshaping planetary risk, requiring sustained observation and modelling

Rapid changes at both poles are altering sea level, ocean circulation, weather and ecosystems worldwide. Some models indicate potential sea level rise of up to 2.5 metres by 2100, while major observational and modelling gaps remain — gaps that only decades of continuous, coordinated measurement can close.

AMBITION FOR IPY5 Protect continuous bipolar observation and convert uncertainty into decision-ready risk information.

2

COOPERATION PRESSURE

Scientific cooperation endures, but needs active protection

Geopolitical fragmentation is opening gaps in polar data and participation. Yet the Antarctic Treaty System and Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) continue to function, as do the Arctic Council and the Central Arctic Ocean fisheries agreement — showing that established institutions and open science remain a basis for cooperation at both poles.

AMBITION FOR IPY5 Maintain scientific channels, shared data and political investment before further ruptures.

3

RIGHTS AND CO-LEADERSHIP

Indigenous Peoples' rights and Knowledge must shape IPY5

Indigenous Knowledge is a co-equal, autonomous evidence base; Indigenous Peoples are rights holders and central actors in the polar future, whose sovereignty over the production and ownership of knowledge is a scientific prerequisite in its own right. IPY5 must institutionalise the standard set at ICARP IV: co-production from the formulation of research questions onwards.

AMBITION FOR IPY5 Institutionalise co-leadership, fund participation at its real cost and protect knowledge sovereignty.

4

GOVERNANCE GAP

Conservation governance must be strengthened across both poles

The Antarctic has durable multilateral instruments, but their coordination and political resilience need reinforcement. The Arctic has no equivalent conservation treaty; sectoral agreements and Indigenous Peoples' governance offer foundations, while co-management and a unified protection framework remain incomplete.

AMBITION FOR IPY5 Strengthen Antarctic mechanisms and build an Arctic architecture suited to regional realities.

5

FUNDING MISMATCH

Polar funding architecture must be reformed for IPY5

Three- to five-year grants cannot sustain decadal observations, infrastructure, continuous modelling or expertise. Fragmented national programmes, unequal access and the lack of a permanent multinational coordinating body leave implementation underfunded.

AMBITION FOR IPY5 Finance continuity, coordination and application, not only short-term research projects.

6

TRUST DEFICIT

Trust in science determines whether evidence can influence political action

Science denial and politicisation weaken funding, public support and policy uptake. Permanent science-mediation capacity is needed to translate uncertainty into audience-specific risk parameters without overstating certainty.

AMBITION FOR IPY5 Treat trust-building and professional translation as programme infrastructure.

7

GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE

IPY5 must build a global governance infrastructure, not another scientific campaign

IPY4 expanded research but left gaps in data management, resources and links to decision-makers. IPY5 must move from studying the poles to governing shared risks through protected observations, interoperable data, durable institutions and a bipolar policy interface.

AMBITION FOR IPY5 Build the operating architecture before IPY5 begins.

Together, the seven findings & ambitions point to one requirement: polar science must be treated as an operating component of planetary security, international cooperation and global governance.

5 FUNDING MODELS FOR IPY5 · Part II

Complementary components of one architecture, not mutually exclusive choices.

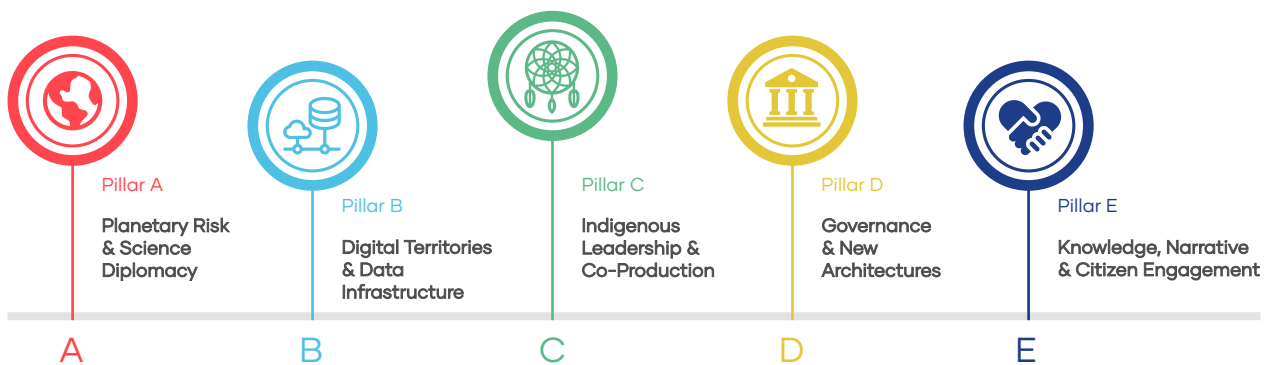
1 Progressive funding: from pilot to programme	MECHANISM Fund national pilots, scale the strongest through transnational collaboration, and redirect high-quality unfunded proposals to alternative funders.	STRATEGIC VALUE Creates a credible route from experiment to durable programme.	CONDITION FOR SUCCESS Transparent selection and continuity between stages.
2 Polar Horizon: dedicated funding instrument	MECHANISM Pool public and private resources through shared criteria, multinational consortia, common peer review and multi-year cycles insulated from national politics.	STRATEGIC VALUE Aligns programmes and reduces fragmentation.	CONDITION FOR SUCCESS Neutral governance and rigorous independent review.
3 Blended finance: hybrid architecture	MECHANISM Combine public, philanthropic, industrial and insurance-sector contributions around agreed priorities.	STRATEGIC VALUE Broadens the capital base and connects funding to direct risk exposure.	CONDITION FOR SUCCESS Ethical governance, transparency, scientific independence and no substitution for public funding.
4 Building on existing frameworks	MECHANISM Use existing routes, including the high-seas biodiversity agreement, World Meteorological Organisation-style membership funding and future European frameworks.	STRATEGIC VALUE Can advance faster than creating a new framework.	CONDITION FOR SUCCESS Early alignment of mandates, criteria and budget cycles.
5 Non-traditional actors: broadening the base of support	MECHANISM Engage coastal cities, reinsurers, space agencies, polar tourism and corporate philanthropy, while building broader public and political support.	STRATEGIC VALUE Extends support beyond traditional research agencies.	CONDITION FOR SUCCESS Partnership-specific safeguards, a clear link to durable funding rather than visibility alone, and a framing of polar science in terms of concrete risks.

The problem is not funding volume alone, but duration, fragmentation, accessibility and the absence of trusted intermediaries between science, finance and decision-making. **These funding models will only converge into action if held together by a shared architecture: a dedicated coordination instrument, carried by a trusted intermediary, aligning criteria, cycles and contributions under a common scientific mandate. Public funding remains the essential base.**

17 FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES ACROSS 5 PILLARS OF ACTION

Part III · 1/2

Developed through the workshop process, the seventeen initiatives form an interdependent portfolio, not a list of confirmed projects or a single maturity pipeline. They connect observation, data, Indigenous co-production, governance, education, citizen engagement and reformed funding — each strengthening the reach of the whole. Readiness varies: some require further design and coalition-building; others identify near-term steps.



Initiative 1
Reducing Uncertainties Around Sea Level Rise from Antarctica
Coordinate Antarctic interior observations and modelling to narrow projections for coastal planning.

Initiative 2
Poles to Coasts
Translate polar ice-loss projections into locally usable information for exposed coasts and communities.



Converts bipolar science into risk intelligence, adaptation tools and diplomatic cooperation.

Initiative 3
Ocean Stability & Planetary Health Under Bipolar Pressure
Connect bipolar ocean dynamics to ecosystem, food-security, health and blue-economy decisions.

Initiative 4
Polar Early Warning System for Global Action
Integrate critical polar signals into an anticipatory system for coordinated global response.

Initiative 5
Polar Knowledge for All: An AI-Compatible Inventory
Create an open, rights-aware inventory linking science, Indigenous Knowledge and citizen observations.

Initiative 6
AI for IPY5: The Polar Twin
Develop ethically governed artificial intelligence tools for interoperable analysis of bipolar observations.



Builds ethical, interoperable infrastructure linking observation, modelling, knowledge and public understanding.

Initiative 7
Antarctic Digital Twin: A Public Engagement Tool
Translate Antarctic data into an interactive public model of planetary consequences.

17 FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES ACROSS 5 PILLARS OF ACTION

Part III - 2/2

Initiative 8

Pan-Arctic Community Research: Methodological Co-Production of Knowledge

Establish rights-based methods for research questions, protocols and outputs co-produced with communities.

Initiative 9

Pan-Arctic Community Observation Network: Sustained Community-Led Monitoring

Build community-led monitoring that strengthens climate models, territorial safety and local decisions.



Makes Indigenous rights, Knowledge and authority structural to research, monitoring and governance.

Initiative 10

Indigenous Peoples' IPY5 Secretariat

Create a recognised mechanism safeguarding Indigenous Peoples' rights, co-leadership, funding access and accountability within IPY5.

Initiative 11

Antarctic Conservation: Ross Sea MPA and Circumpolar MPA network

Coordinate science for Ross Sea renewal and a wider circumpolar marine protected area network.

Initiative 12

Science Diplomacy & Bipolar Governance: Towards an Integrated Framework

Create a permanent mechanism to link bipolar scientific cooperation, diplomacy and international decision-making across geopolitical divides.



Builds conservation, diplomatic and financing arrangements that endure beyond project cycles.

Initiative 13

Polar Science Funders-Investors Summit

Establish a permanent forum convening public, philanthropic, private and Indigenous funders to co-design ethical and durable blended financing.

Initiative 14

Permanent Polar Funding Architecture

Create mechanisms for sustained funding, project matching, early-career support and safeguards for scientific independence.

Initiative 15

Putting a Human Face on Polar Change

Connect evidence with lived polar experience to strengthen trust and public understanding.

Initiative 16

IPY5 Education Programme: Towards a Global Polar Culture

Embed polar science in education systems, building informed planetary responsibility.



Strengthens trust, learning and participation to sustain political and social support.

Initiative 17

Global Citizenship for the Poles

Co-create citizen science with Indigenous Peoples and northern communities to monitor polar change and mobilise the general public.



THREE CROSS-CUTTING LEVERS OF TRANSFORMATION · Part IV

The initiatives can deliver only if 3 cross-cutting levers shape the entire portfolio from design through implementation.

3 CROSS-CUTTING LEVERS

IPY5 COORDINATED ACTION

1

Recognise Shared Responsibilities to the Polar Regions

Polar dynamics affect every continent: IPY5 must adopt a bipolar, planetary frame linking polar evidence to adaptation, infrastructure, conservation, security and global governance, while involving the most exposed nations and communities in priorities, financing and decisions.

2

Build the Architecture of Transformation

IPY5 requires permanent, ethically governed structures that connect scientific priorities with finance and policy and carry promising initiatives from early-stage development to sustained implementation. They must be designed, tested and resourced during 2026-2032, not deferred to IPY5.

3

Ensuring Equity and Inclusion as a Condition of Legitimacy and Effectiveness

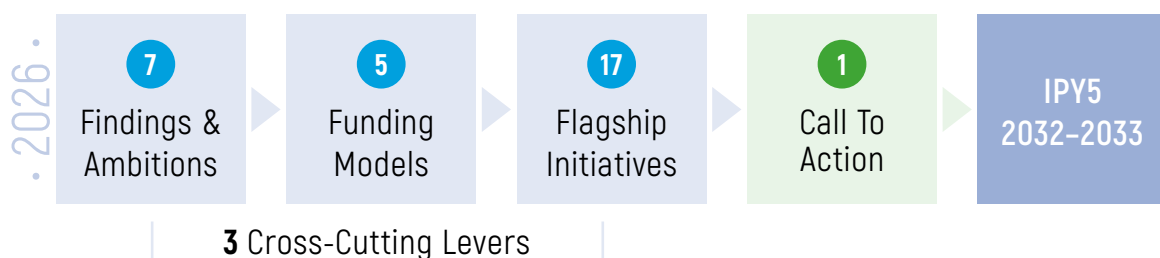
Equity and inclusion are conditions of scientific quality and delivery, not a parallel inclusion agenda. Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and co-architects, the Global South, early-career researchers and citizens as co-producers: participation must begin early, be compensated, institutionally protected and linked to accountability.

THE 2026–2032 WINDOW FOR ACTION

The importance of the poles no longer requires demonstration. The decision is whether the 2026-2032 window will convert knowledge into durable institutions, accessible finance and verifiable decisions, so that IPY5 can begin with its delivery coalitions and operating mechanisms already in place rather than spend its opening years creating them. The International Geophysical Year of 1957–58 showed that a major scientific gathering could give rise to a lasting legal architecture; IPY5 unfolds in a more constrained context and carries a planetary responsibility of an altogether different magnitude.

This report goes beyond taking stock: it sets out an operational architecture at the confluence of science, finance and policy, and identifies the first steps for setting it in motion.

With this contribution, the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, SCAR and IASC issue a Call to Action, inviting all those who share the conviction that polar science must inform the decisions shaping our common future to become champions, funders or advocates for the seventeen initiatives at its core.



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An initiative by



THE PRINCE ALBERT II OF MONACO FOUNDATION

In partnership with



THE INTERNATIONAL ARCTIC SCIENCE COMMITTEE



THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON ANTARCTIC RESEARCH



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