

The Tara Ocean Foundation is back in the Arctic with a new drifting scientific polar base: *Tara Polar Station*

Fifteen years after a first 500-day expedition in the Arctic, the Tara Ocean Foundation is preparing to launch a new scientific exploration in the heart of the Arctic Ocean. This mission aims to strengthen French and international research on this environment, among the most extreme on our planet, to better understand the impact of climate change on biodiversity and adaptive abilities of endemic species. This new expedition will contribute to the deployment in the Arctic of France's Polar Strategy for 2030: "Balancing Extremes".

The Tara Ocean Foundation is about to launch the construction of a new vessel specifically designed to be locked in ice for the purpose of observation and scientific research. The polar station will be dedicated to the in-depth study of the Arctic, from its atmosphere to great depths, to understand the impact of climate change on the unique marine life it shelters.



Tara Polar Station is scheduled to be trapped in the Arctic ice by 2024.

As a complement to the presentation of the French Polar Strategy, on April 5, 2022, Olivier Poivre d'Arvor, ambassador for the poles and maritime issues, declared: "We are going to deploy an innovative French presence in the Arctic based on scientific exploration and cooperation. We were committed to give our full financial and scientific support to the project led by the Tara Ocean Foundation to conceive an Arctic mission involving the construction of Tara Polar Station."

An unprecedented scientific and human adventure at the North Pole

The drifting scientific polar base entitled *Tara Polar Station*, designed in collaboration with the architect Olivier Petit, will embark scientists from all over the world on multiple successive drifts until 2045. Climatologists, biologists, physicists, glaciologists, oceanographers, artists, physicians, journalists and sailors will collaborate and cohabit aboard *Tara Polar Station* to conduct observations and *in situ* measurements in temperatures ranging between -20 and -45°C in the heart of the polar night in winter.

This French mission already brings together the CNRS, CEA and CNES (France), the French Polar Institute Paul-Émile Victor, Laval University in Quebec (Canada), the University of Maine (United States), the Swiss Polar Institute, the Alfred Wegener Institute: Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (Germany), and the Arctic Research Centre (Denmark). These institutions will develop a multidisciplinary scientific approach to explore the many secrets of this environment, still poorly known and yet so decisive in understanding the causes and consequences of climate change. The main lines of research will be:

1. The migration of marine organisms to the Arctic and their future
2. The impact of climate change on the functioning of Arctic ecosystems
3. New discoveries in biotechnology and biomedicine, and the adaptation abilities of life forms in extreme conditions
4. The mechanisms of climate change in the Arctic.

Tara Polar Station is a project contributing to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

***Tara Polar Station* will join the research schooner *Tara* to advance the knowledge of the Ocean**

The Tara Ocean Foundation aims to be present on all the oceans and seas of our planet to contribute to oceanographic exploration and scientific discovery. In the wake of Nansen's *Fram* expedition, *Tara*'s missions and the MOSAiC expedition of German research icebreaker *Polarstern*, the Foundation is now building a unique tool specifically designed to support extreme conditions and study the North Pole over long periods of time, at controlled costs. The polar base is designed to accommodate a crew of 12 to 20 on 18-month missions, and to promote international cooperation essential to our common future.

"This ocean on the edge of the world, covered with ice and difficult to access, remains a mystery for science and, in particular, for biologists. Many missions took place in summer, but few remained there over several seasons in order to thoroughly study the biodiversity it hosts. Thanks to this tremendous support from the French government, we have the ambition to extend the boundaries of Arctic polar scientific exploration over the next 3 decades. Hopefully, this mission will contribute to discovering major knowledge on climate change before its consequences are fully perceptible throughout the world," says Romain Troublé, executive director of the Tara Ocean Foundation.

Partners already embarked on *Tara Polar Station*'s adventure

Some institutional partners have pledged to support the construction of *Tara Polar Station*. On the occasion of the presentation of the French Polar Strategy, the government confirmed its "immediate

public financial support” within the framework of the “Investissements d’avenir” investment program. In addition to this contribution, the Brittany and Normandy regions are major partners in this project.

The Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and the Monaco Explorations, a platform supporting H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco’s commitment to knowledge, sustainable management and protection of the Ocean, committed funds at an early stage to this new ambition. Dr. Frederik Paulsen was also one of the main supporters to initiate this outstanding project.

Alongside these institutions, companies are mobilizing to help us make this project a reality, in the form of financing or decisive skills: Capgemini Engineering, the Veolia Foundation, BNP Paribas, Bureau Veritas and Agnès Troublé known as agnès b.

The Tara Ocean Foundation will make no further comments than this press release.

We will meet you in June for a press conference presenting in more details the construction of Tara Polar Station and the scientific mission.

Contact

Carole Balducci-Helfer - Tara Ocean Foundation
Director of Communication
carole@fondationtaraocean.org - Ph.: + 33 6 23 76 06 81

About

The Tara Ocean Foundation is the first public interest foundation in France dedicated to the Ocean.

For the past 19 years, we have conducted high-level scientific research in collaboration with international laboratories of excellence to explore, understand and anticipate changes associated with climate and environmental risks. Our two key missions are exploring and sharing. To preserve the Ocean and make it a collective responsibility, the Tara Ocean Foundation raises awareness and educates young generations to protect this vital ecosystem.

www.fondationtaraocean.org