



## NORSK POLARINSTITUTT • NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

The Commonwealth Parliament  
 Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and  
 External Territories  
 Parliament House  
 Canberra ACT 2600  
 Att.: Senator Ross Lightfoot.



<b>Your ref.:</b>	<b>Our ref.:</b>	<b>Official in charge</b>	<b>Date</b>
	2004/381-1/JGW/ak/379	Tlf.: +47 777 50 620	10.06.2004

"Dear Senator Ross Lightfoot,

### INQUIRY INTO THE ADEQUACY OF FUNDING FOR AUSTRALIA'S ANTARCTIC PROGRAM

By an administrative error the answer to your inquiry has been delayed, and perhaps it now is not of use. However here follows our comments.

In the following I briefly outline the structure of the Norwegian Antarctic Programme in accordance to the areas that you indicated in your letter. Before doing so, I would shortly like to give some general information about my institute. The Norwegian Polar Institute is the principal supplier of scientific information on Norwegian polar regions for the central government administration, acting as its consultant on polar matters and helping to ensure that the environment is managed as efficiently as possible, in keeping with international efforts to promote sustainable development. The Institute is the main Norwegian institution concerned with mapping and scientific and environmental investigations of Norwegian polar regions in the Arctic and Antarctica. The institute has the status of a directorate, and is responsible to the Norwegian Ministry of Environment.

Now, turning to the specific points in your letter:

- 1) The Norwegian Polar Institute (NPI) is responsible for Norwegian operations and research in Antarctica. While operations are fully managed by NPI, we make use of the evaluation and selection resources of the Research Council of Norway for the selection of research projects. Research proposals are normally submitted from a wide variety of institutions, e.g. universities, governmental agencies and in some cases from the private sector. Further, NPI is the national authority and responsible for the regulations implementing the provisions of the environmental Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty.



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- 2) The Institute consists of four departments; administration, research, management and operations/logistics. All departments are all heavily involved in managing our Antarctic activities. For example, these days we are upgrading our summer station in Dronning Maud Land to a winter station. In parallel, we are establishing a blue-ice runway for intercontinental flights between South Africa and Antarctica. This major effort requires strong co-ordination of personnel with competence in administration, economics, logistics, environmental management and research.
- 3) International collaboration is promoted through active involvement of foreign scientists on Norwegian expeditions to Antarctica and through strong Norwegian involvement in international processes and fora such as COMNAP and SCAR. In addition, NPI is part of the Norwegian delegation to ATCM-meetings.
- 4) Historically, Norway has not had separate budgets for logistics and research. After the selection of research projects, logistics needed for supporting scientific activities have been provided. However, we are currently exploring if a separation of the budget into an operational one and another related to scientific activities is more appropriate. This process has been activated since Norway from 2005 will have year-round activity in Antarctica.

Regarding the question of "new science": We have a science plan describing our priorities in Antarctic science, normally spanning a 5-years period. Such a science plan constitutes the basis for Norwegian priorities in Antarctic science. Thus, "new science" should preferably be identified in the science plan in order to be given high priority in the evaluation process. As an example, we are now in the stage of finalizing our next science plan for 2005-09. In this plan the topic of genomics is included.

I hope this information meets your requirements. If not, please do not hesitate to get back to me.

With kind regards,

Olav Orheim  
Director