

THE CONSORTIUM



The **European Research Icebreaker Consortium (ERICON)**, managed by the European Science Foundation and the Alfred Wegener Institute, currently comprises 19 partners from eleven European nations. The partners are committed to provide scientists with a unique platform, enabling them to decipher the intricate Polar connections of the Earth's past and future climate.

The members of ERICON are establishing in six work packages (WP) the strategic, legal, financial and organisational frameworks for a state-of-the-art research facility: the **ice-breaking, drilling, multi-disciplinary research ship AURORA BOREALIS**.

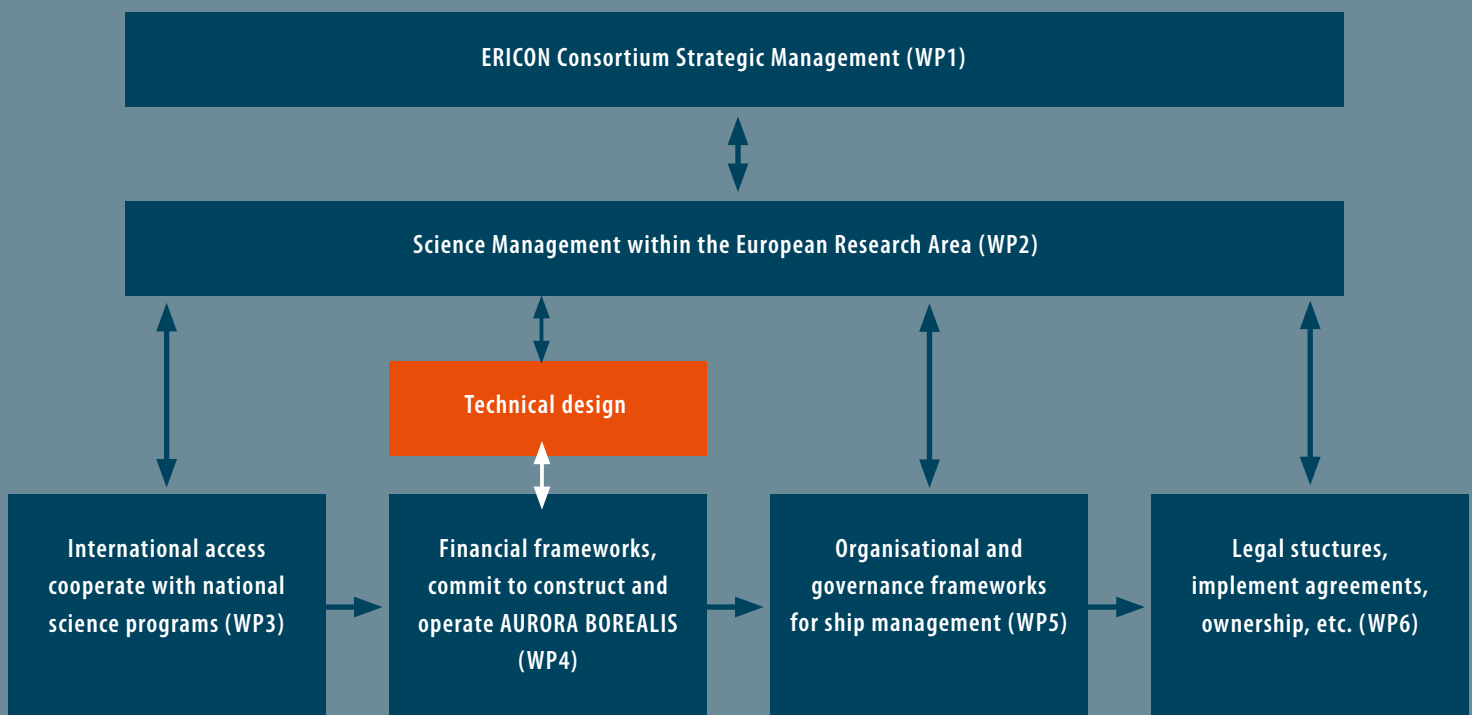
The vessel will be operated as a large-scale research infrastructure by European nations, and the consortium partners are generating the basic conditions for joint ownership and operation of the ship: Legal frameworks are developed and connections deepened with existing research facilities such as polar stations, satellites, etc.

Scientific management structures are presently discussed that will be established to handle large-scale, **single-ship, all-year research expeditions**. Ultimately, an agreement is to be reached with partner nations committing to construct and operate the vessel.

The joint, international construction of the AURORA BOREALIS will result in an **abundance of scientific breakthroughs with considerable impact on societal decision processes**. Thus, the participating nations will coordinate and intensify their Polar research programs.

AURORA BOREALIS will contribute as a Polar environmental observing platform to integrated Earth system science. Its capacity for deep-sea drilling in ice-covered Arctic and Antarctic oceans is bound to make AURORA BOREALIS a powerful European research platform.

ERICON-AURORA-BOREALIS: INTERRELATION AND PROGRESSION



ACTIVITIES

THE ERICON–AURORA BOREALIS PREPARATORY PHASE CONSISTS OF SIX WORK PACKAGES (WP)

WP1 – Comprises consortium management. AURORA BOREALIS technical design study completed (funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany).

WP2 – Integrate vessel strategically into the European Research Area. Plan updated longterm science plan 2015–30, technical research services and operational schemes.

WP3 – Ensure international access to vessel in the Arctic based on scientific excellence. Draft possibilities for non-stakeholder nations and third parties to use ship.

WP4 – Business plans for construction and operation costs, including models for cost sharing and participation (please check website).

WP5 – Agreement on organisational structures and decision making processes.

WP6 – Models on legal structures, generation of an intergovernmental agreement between participating nations.

All of these combined actions shall enable a framework to decide on the implementation of the vessel.

ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ERI-AURORA BOREALIS LARGE-SCALE FACILITY 2008-2016

2008*	2009*	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
PHASE 1		PHASE 2		PHASE 3		PHASE 4		PHASE 5
Framework FP7 proposal	External audit of business plan	Financing secured	Management structures of European research icebreaker operational					
Implementation of AURORA BOREALIS Consortium ERICON	Funding agency: review of business plan	Tender for construction of AURORA BOREALIS	Construction of vessel (2 years)	Sea trials				Start of AURORA BOREALIS' polar expeditions
Start of business plan and cost-benefit analysis	New science plan		Scientific proposal submission and review system operational					
Start preparing of management and legal structures			Integration into FP8 and Joint Programming					

* 4th International Polar Year 2007– 09



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