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SVALGEOBASE II: Tectono-thermal evolution of Svalbard, geological workshop, Svalbard 2024

# SvalGeoBase Geological Workshop in the Context of Polish Polar Policy

Geological research on the Svalbard Archipelago began in the first half of the 19th century and intensified in the second half. Polish researchers joined these studies in the 1930s. In 1934 the first Polish scientific expedition to southern Spitsbergen occurred, involving two outstanding Polish polar geologists—Stefan Różycki and Stanisław Siedlecki. One of the key outcomes of this pioneering expedition was the development of a geological map of the then-unexplored and scientifically unknown areas of northwestern Torell Land. To this day, this work remains a cornerstone of Svalbard's geological literature.

The intensification of Polish scientific research on Spitsbergen, including geological studies, took place during the International Geophysical Year (1957–1958) under the leadership of the legendary Polish polar geologist Stanisław Siedlecki. These studies were focused on the Hornsund fjord region. Subsequent Polish scientific expeditions, initiated in the early 1970s and including geological research, concentrated on the northern areas of the Hornsund fjord, particularly in Wedel Jarlsberg Land and Torell Land in the southern part of Spitsbergen. Since 1978, these studies have been conducted continuously, based at the Polish Polar Station named after Prof. Stanisław Siedlecki in Hornsund, which has been continuously modernised and expanded. For many years, the station has been managed by the Institute of Geophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw.

In the following decades, Polish geological research on the Svalbard Archipelago intensified, initially focusing on the southern part of Spitsbergen. The early 21st century saw the expansion of these studies into other areas of Svalbard, along with the progressive development of research collaboration with scientists from different countries. One example of such cooperation is the SvalGeoBase International Geological Workshops, coordinated by the Institute of Geophysics of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The first edition took place in 2013, followed by another in 2024. In both cases, the research and training vessel m/s Horyzont II, operated by the Maritime University of Gdynia, provided an excellent platform for theoretical lectures while serving as a safe and convenient means of transport for workshop participants.

Since 2020, Polish research in the Arctic and Antarctic has been conducted within the framework of the Polish Polar Policy, a document approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland. The Polish Polar Policy Task Force, operating continuously under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, oversees its implementation, while the Committee on Polar Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences defines the key directions for scientific work in this field. The primary objective of the Polish Polar Policy is to ensure Poland's sustained and active presence in global polar dialogue, cooperation, and policy-making. One of its specific goals is

to strengthen Poland's presence in polar regions, particularly by fostering the development of scientific research activities in a highly multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary manner.

The SvalGeoBase Workshop plays a crucial role in fulfilling these objectives, particularly in geological research. It is hoped that this format of international cooperation in geological research on the Svalbard Archipelago will continue and develop further.

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