UNUSUALLY WARM WEATHER HITS PEA WHILE THE TEAM GETS TO WORK



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The team enjoyed pleasant weather as they started working on the first major tasks of the season.

Warm for November

The Princess Elisabeth Antarctca station recently enjoyed pleasant weather with clear skies, minimal wind, and abundant sunshine. However, The team noticed the temperature hitting -0.6°C on Saturday, November 18th which is very unusually warm for this time of the year.

The station benefits from protection against katabatic winds, thanks to the surrounding mountains. Typically, summers are comfortable, ranging between -10°C to -5°C in December and January. However, temperatures rarely get close to 0°C in the part of the Queen Maud Land in East Antarctica where the station is located, and certainly not in November. It is unusual to have such a warm spell in this part of Antarctica, at least as far back as consistant weather data has been taken.

Thsi isn't the first time the team experienced unusual weather events, over the past few years the climate has become more and more unpredictable in Antarctica, likely due to climate change.

First expedition to the coast

A team led by Alain Hubert, along with Tim, Jan, and Jacques, headed to the coast to do an initial reconnaissance of the coastline in order to see where the ship carrying cargo will dock this year. This process is not easy to define as the ice at the coast is constantly moving every year. They also took the opportunity to move all the containers that were left last year at Breids Bay to 0° Longitude, a central point from which you can reach most of the landing sites more easily. This will help to speed up logistics when the cargo ship arrives in January or February.

Work at the station

At the station, the team have been making minor repairs to the garage wall and have started the gradual process to lift up the station's annexes to keep them level. The movement of the glacier on which the annexes have been constructed required the IPF to create a system of hinges and pistons that allows the team to raise the station's annexes twice a year: when they first arrive at the station and right before they leave at the end of the season

IPF engineers, Aymar de Lichtervelde, Nicolas Herinckx along with expert plumbers Siméon and Bernard Polet are continuing where they left off last year with setting up the station's new water treatment system. Previously, the station used a WTU designed for 16 people. But with the station hosting as many as 45-50 individuals, an upgrade became necessary. Most parts for the new water treatment system were delivered to the station and an entire room at the station was adapted to accommodate the larger tanks required for the upgraded system.

The team has also been repairing the flags and pathways around the station. The harsh weather conditions of last week caused damage to routes leading to the Airstrip, the Winter park, and the coast. It's crucial to ensure these areas continue to be well-marked for safe navigation.

Next week we'll talk about some of the first scientific activity at PEA this season!