

MARIA EN ROUTE TO WORLD TITLE

British adventurer Maria Leijerstam flew to Cape Town yesterday on the first leg of her journey to claim a world title for cycling to the South Pole from the edge of the continent.

Maria will be carrying all her food and equipment on her unique three wheeled polar cycle, built by Inspired Cycle Engineering (ICE Trikes) of Cornwall.

"The first five days will be tough, but I am well prepared. Then it will be the hardest climb of my life up the Leverett glacier that rises to 2,941 metres above sea level which will slow my progress down considerably, especially as the weather conditions are so unpredictable. The weight of my kit will be approximately 50kg on top of the weight of the Polar cycle and my body weight which I have to be able to peddle up the glacier," said Maria.

After two years of intensive training and trials in Siberia, Norway and Iceland Maria, 35, from the Vale of Glamorgan is determined to beat the competition for the title from Spaniard Juan Menendez Granados and American Daniel Burton. Even though they have set off over two weeks prior to Maria, Maria's cycle choice, route choice and expedition planning means her journey could be achieved by early January.

She is due to leave Cape Town for Novo Airbase in Antarctica on Friday. Then she will await a good weather window to start her epic cycle to the South Pole.

To follow her progress www.whiteicecycle.com
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