



Ny-Ålesund Science Managers Committee

Ny-Ålesund Science Managers Committee
(NySMAC)

Strategy Plan 2026-2030

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Introduction

Ny-Ålesund Research Station is the world's northernmost year-round research station that hosts and facilitates long-term observations and international research activities.

Ny-Ålesund Science Managers Committee (NySMAC) was established in 1994 by the researchers in Ny-Ålesund to enhance cooperation and coordination between the Norwegian and international institutions on site. NySMAC is an international body and consists of institutions with long term commitments in Ny-Ålesund¹.

NySMAC is contributing to the development of Ny-Ålesund as an outstanding site for Arctic research and environmental monitoring, through advancing cooperation between institutions, scientists and research projects, facilitating the coordination of infrastructures, and contributing to information sharing. NySMAC also serves as an adviser regarding the development of research and infrastructure in Ny-Ålesund.

The four **Ny-Ålesund research flagships** were created by NySMAC and Svalbard Science Forum in the time period 2008-2011 to promote international research collaboration among scientists. The flagship programmes are networks and arenas for contact and cooperation in science.

The Norwegian government's White Paper on Svalbard (Meld. St. 26 (2023–2024)), *Strategy for Research and Higher Education in Svalbard* (2018), and the Research Council of Norway's *Research Strategy for Ny-Ålesund Research Station* (2019) both emphasize the importance of NySMAC and provides expectations for the work of the committee.

NySMAC works alongside several other organisations in Svalbard engaged with different roles and responsibilities regarding research cooperation and coordination:

- **Kings Bay AS** owns Ny-Ålesund, and is providing all services such as flights, housing, lodging, etc. as well as research logistics, and it develops and maintains research infrastructure for common use in Ny-Ålesund. Kings Bay is also responsible for the overall safety in Ny-Ålesund.
- **Svalbard Research Office (SRO)**: *A new text on SRO will be included when the structure for the new SRO and how it will collaborate with NySMAC are in place. SRO will replace SSF role in Svalbard research coordination. [Svalbard Science Forum (SSF) is responsible for the data portal Research in Svalbard, and they provide funding for research activity and projects through the grants Arctic Field Grant and Svalbard Strategic Grant.]*
- **Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System (SIOS)** optimizes observation of earth system science from research infrastructure located at Svalbard. SIOS also focuses on data sharing and access to data and facilities.

Moreover, **Norwegian Polar Institute (NPI)** is leading the Ny-Ålesund Research Station and has the on-site responsibility for optimizing research planning and for facilitating day-to-day activity through the weekly meeting with all the institution representatives present in Ny-Ålesund.

Close cooperation between all the above-mentioned organisations is essential for the further development of Ny-Ålesund. Kings Bay, SRO, SIOS and the four Ny-Ålesund flagship chairs are invited to the NySMAC meetings as observers.

Building on earlier NySMAC documents as listed below² this strategy outlines the ambitions for the further development of NySMAC:

¹ In 2025 NySMAC consists of 18 member institutions from 11 countries.

² All documents are available in the online document archive at <https://nyalesundresearch.no/document-archive/?sft Document category=nysmac>

- [Founding Articles](#) (from 1995)
- Mission Statement (from 1997)
- Previous Science Plans (from 2006, 2010, 2015)
- NySMAC Charter documents
- [NySMAC handbook and agreements](#) (from 2021)
- NySMAC [Terms of Reference](#) (from 2020)
- The previous NySMAC Strategy Plan (2021-2025)

This strategy document consists of three parts:

- I) The core roles of NySMAC
- II) NySMAC priority areas
- III) Specific tasks for NySMAC during the strategy period.

The strategy with the specific tasks is to be reviewed and updated every five years.

I: The core roles of NySMAC

NySMAC promotes cooperation and coordination in research and monitoring in Ny-Ålesund. NySMAC provides advice and comments on both scientific and non-scientific activities. NySMAC promotes collaboration, mutual understanding and friendship.

NySMAC as an advisory body

NySMAC gives advice to the Norwegian Polar Institute, Kings Bay AS, Norwegian authorities, and scientific institutions engaged in Ny-Ålesund, and acts as an advisory body to the research organisations with ongoing or planned activities in the Ny-Ålesund area regarding cooperation and priorities.

NySMAC gives advice to avoid negative impacts on research programmes from other scientific or non-scientific activities in Ny-Ålesund and to minimize and mitigate environmental impacts of activities.

NySMAC shall work to

- contribute to hearing processes from the Norwegian Authorities.
- give advice to the Norwegian Polar Institute and Kings Bay regarding the development of the Ny-Ålesund Research Station.
- encourage and foster strategic discussions about research areas and topics at NySMAC meetings.
- encourage the four Ny-Ålesund Flagship Programs to organize themselves such that they also can provide advice to NySMAC regarding science questions.

NySMAC as a coordinator

The extent of research activity in Ny-Ålesund makes it necessary to strengthen the interaction and coordination between institutions from the various countries present to ensure efficient and safe use of the unique local resources.

NySMAC shall work to

- promote better integration of research programmes and thereby work to prevent negative competition between scientific institutions.

- minimize possible negative impacts on research programmes from other scientific or non-scientific activities in Ny-Ålesund.
- minimize and mitigate environmental impacts.
- strive for radio silence and focus on keeping the use of radio transmitters at a minimum
- share information within NySMAC and make sure project information and activities are updated in the Research in Svalbard portal.

NySMAC as an arena for science cooperation

The international community present in Ny-Ålesund has a history of extensive cooperation, and continued international cooperation is a prerequisite for maintaining the creative, innovative and world-class scientific environment. Ny-Ålesund should be known for its outstanding professional and social environment, building on trust and transparency.

NySMAC has the key role in developing the cooperation between the institutions present in Ny-Ålesund. NySMAC will work to strengthen co-operation with other research communities in Svalbard and the Arctic.

NySMAC shall work to

- support the four Ny-Ålesund Flagship Programs as arenas to advance research collaboration and data sharing between researchers.
- contribute to the Svalbard Science Conference as an arena for dissemination of Svalbard research.
- encourage the increase of knowledge on global issues from an Arctic perspective
- encourage institutions conducting environmental long-term measurements in Ny-Ålesund to become a member of SIOS and contribute to the observing system for Earth system science in Svalbard.

II: NySMAC priority areas

Developing advise, helping coordinate activity and promoting cooperation are broad, long-term ambitions for NySMAC. NySMAC has in addition identified seven priority areas.

1. Quality in research

Research and monitoring activities in Ny-Ålesund should make use of the area's distinctive characteristics of unique infrastructure and field possibilities.

Ny-Ålesund is a central reference station with important long-term climate and environment data series. NySMAC will contribute to developing Ny-Ålesund even further to ensure its status as a world leading observation and research platform, by focusing on high-quality observation systems and being a community with the highest quality in research.

NySMAC and its members are strongly encouraged to:

- maintain long time-series and ensure they follow international standards and protocols.
- ensure research projects are quality-assured before start-up and ensure high professional standards throughout the project

- contribute towards further development of the four Ny-Ålesund Flagship Programs as arenas for scientific discussions and priorities.
- promote participation in and contribution to the Flagship activities by researchers from their own institutions.
- use new technology and innovation in research aimed at reducing the overall environmental impact of the activity.
- aim at publishing new research results and findings in high-quality international peer-reviewed journals in English.
- place the Ny-Ålesund research, whenever possible, in a pan-Arctic or global context.

2. Research infrastructure

Ny-Ålesund has a wide range of research infrastructure and laboratory services available for shared use, most of these owned and operated by Kings Bay, but some supported and managed by NySMAC members.

NySMAC and the four Ny-Ålesund Flagship Programs are key arenas for discussing, identifying and prioritising research infrastructure needs in Ny-Ålesund, based on present and planned research and monitoring activity as identified by the international research community. While the flagships are uniquely equipped to identify “flagship specific” priorities, NySMAC should develop an overall (i.e. across flagships) priority list of research infrastructure development in Ny-Ålesund.

NySMAC and its members are strongly encouraged to:

- ensure equal opportunities and access to shared research infrastructures.
- promote the optimal use of advanced infrastructure.
- contribute to the development plan for the research infrastructures in Ny-Ålesund.
- where possible, interact with SIOS to facilitate sharing and optimal use of research infrastructure in Svalbard and beyond.

3. Open data access and data sharing

International research policies emphasize that research data should be made openly and freely accessible when no legitimate considerations prevent its accessibility. Open data access makes it easier to validate and assess findings, reuse data in new ways, reduce duplication, increase efficiency, reduce environmental footprint – all the above to strengthen the quality of research.

Strong metadata, i.e. information about collection, delineation, definition, and other factors relevant for further use, is a prerequisite for being able to find, access and interpret data.

NySMAC and its members:

- shall encourage their researchers to publish and share research data from Ny-Ålesund in line with FAIR principles to strengthen the quality of research in Ny-Ålesund.
- shall encourage their researchers to adhere to standards for measurements and provide strong metadata, in line with the FAIR-principles.
- are strongly encouraged to keep metadata on monitoring and projects updated in relevant administrative systems like the Ny-Ålesund GIS.
- are strongly encouraged to contribute to the SIOS Data Access Portal.

4. Safety precautions

Ny-Ålesund Research Station should be known as a station with the best routines for Arctic safety, and NySMAC will focus on improving safe operations both in the field and in the laboratories.

NySMAC and its members:

- shall promote safe operations
- shall work out common recommendations for safe operations.
- are encouraged to share best practices in the field and in the laboratories.
- are encouraged to discuss accidents and incidents to learn from them and improve procedures.

5. Education and recruitment

Internationally there is a need for recruitment of a new generation of polar researchers. Ny-Ålesund is a unique learning site, with its advanced infrastructure and easy access to the natural environment. Ny-Ålesund can contribute to the recruitment of a new generation of polar researchers by hosting master's students and doctoral fellowship-holders in connection with research project.

NySMAC and its members are encouraged to:

- include master's students and doctoral fellows in their research projects and field work in Ny-Ålesund.
- have their visiting scientists to Ny-Ålesund contribute with popular scientific lectures for the research community.
- support and contribute to UNIS courses taking place in Ny-Ålesund.

6. Environmental protection and green initiatives

Local impacts on the environment must be kept at the lowest possible level to maintain the Ny-Ålesund area as a near pristine environment. This has been clearly stated as a goal from the Norwegian government and was also adopted by NySMAC in the Mission Statement for Ny-Ålesund.

Research and other activity in Ny-Ålesund must take environmental concerns into account and be conducted within the framework of the Kings Bay land-use plan and the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act, as the area around Ny-Ålesund can be thought upon as a limited resource.

NySMAC and its members are strongly encouraged to:

- promote a responsible and environmentally friendly behaviour by individuals and groups.
- work to minimize local pollution in Ny-Ålesund.
- take steps to protect the local environment whenever needed.

7. Promoting the research station

Ny-Ålesund is a unique site for Arctic research, and among the most important locations for monitoring of the Arctic environment and climate change.

Measurements from Ny-Ålesund feed into and contribute with data and results to numerous international programmes and networks. The Ny-Ålesund scientific community will benefit from making Ny-Ålesund and data from Ny-Ålesund even more visible in these.

NySMAC will contribute to the further development of Ny-Ålesund Research Station as the foremost research station for Arctic natural sciences, known for its high-quality international research community, with open access to research data and infrastructure.

NySMAC members facilitate media visits as part of their overall communication strategies to stimulate political and public engagement in the important scientific research carried out from Ny-Ålesund.

NySMAC and its members are strongly encouraged to:

- contribute to the further development of Ny-Ålesund as an internationally recognized site for Arctic research and promote Ny-Ålesund in the international scientific community.
- promote Ny-Ålesund by convening regular seminars, in particular by contributing actively to the (biennial) Svalbard Science Conference
- make the research infrastructure in Ny-Ålesund known and available for new scientists to Svalbard.
- contribute to the website www.nyaalesundresearch.no as the central hub for information and contribute with news content.

III: Specific tasks for NySMAC during the strategy period 2026-2030

While part I and II in the strategy plan outline NySMACs core role and priority areas which are general and long-term, NySMAC has identified specific tasks to focus on during the strategy period 2026-2030. NySMAC operates within the Svalbard research environment and several of the tasks will be carried out in close collaboration with other bodies.

The task coordinator is the body responsible for initiating the work and for setting up task-forces if needed. The work will be carried out together with the collaborators. The result and implementation will (in most cases) remain the responsibility of NySMAC.

Task no³	Description	Timeline (start-end)	Coordinator	Collaborators
1.1	NySMAC shall ask the four Ny-Ålesund Flagship Programmes to update/develop their flagship strategy.	2026-2028	Flagship chairs	Researchers in the flagships
1.2	NySMAC and its members shall be proactive in planning for Ny-Ålesund activities during the next IPY. NySMAC shall collect information on plans from NySMAC members and try to identify collaboration opportunities.	2026-2030	NySMAC/NPI	NySMAC members
4.1	NySMAC shall ask the Field Safety Working Group (FSWG) for an updated module on field safety to be included in the online "Introduction programme to Ny-Ålesund Research Station".	2026-2027	FSWG	SRO, SIOS, KB

³ The tasks are numbered in line with the seven priorities in part II.

4.2	NySMAC shall ask the FSWG to plan for and carry out a mandatory field safety webinar for Ny-Ålesund Research Station that will be arranged annually and where each NySMAC institution must send at least one representative.	2026-2028	FSWG	KB
6.1	NySMAC are encouraged to contribute to the development of a strategy for reduction of local pollution.	2027-2028	NPI & KB	NySMAC
7.1	NySMAC and its members are encouraged to contribute to develop the format of the new Ny-Ålesund Research Station annual report on scientific activities and research results.	2026-2028	NPI	NySMAC