Strategy of the Arctic Centre
University of Lapland

2020
University of Lapland 2020

For the North – into the World

The University of Lapland is committed to promoting sustainable development, well-being and equality at the local, regional and international levels through research, artistic activity and teaching.

Core Values

- learning that draws on both the individual and the community
- research that is critical and emancipatory
- scholarship that is marked by creativity and impact

Vision for 2020

In 2020 the University of Lapland will be an international institution with a distinctive academic and artistic profile.

The University will have a profile distinguished by high-quality, international research on the people, societies and environment in the Arctic and the North and on the interaction of these elements. Crucial to this role as a site of cutting-edge research will be cooperation between the faculties and the Arctic Centre.

A second underpinning of the University’s profile will be its international research on tourism. Spearheaded by the multidisciplinary Lapland Institute for Tourism Research, this work will draw its strength from cooperation between the university, universities of applied science, institutes of vocational education, research institutions and the business community.
Strategy of the Arctic Centre 2020

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The Arctic Centre is Finland’s national institute for Arctic international expertise that is located in the Arctic. The Arctic Centre is based at the University of Lapland and it plays a key role in the University’s excellence on Arctic and Northern research. The Arctic Centre is committed to research in order to better understand the natural, physical and social environments in the Arctic. Such research and education spans several disciplines and its products take many forms, from scientific papers and monographs, teaching in the classroom, field courses and supervising PhD students, to books, exhibitions, audiovisual material, artworks and films.

The Arctic Centre is a place where researchers, doctoral students, planners, artists and architects collaborate within and outside the University. The community of researchers within the Centre derives from diverse scientific, national, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The Centre has strong local and regional orientation and provides an international research environment that fosters a multidisciplinary approach.
Vision 2020
The Arctic Centre envisions becoming Finland’s leading centre of excellence for the Arctic. The Arctic Centre will become a leading European expert on sustainable development, global change, and minority and environmental law. The Arctic Centre will establish itself as the main research institute for social and environmental impact assessment in Lapland and the Barents Region, producing information that is highly relevant for local and national authorities, politicians and the public. The Arctic Centre will increase its visibility as the key producer of Arctic and Antarctic information that is accessible in different formats for all.

Mission 2020
The Arctic Centre’s mission is to undertake locally and regionally oriented and globally relevant research, PhD student supervision, undergraduate education and science communication about the Arctic and the Antarctic. The Arctic Centre is in constant dialogue with Arctic indigenous peoples, local residents and regional stakeholders. The Arctic Centre engages in international and multidisciplinary scientific research whilst also maintaining high quality standards within single disciplines. The Arctic Centre synthesizes scientific information in an understandable format for the public, pupils, authorities and policy makers within and outside the Arctic.

Goal 2020
The Arctic Centre’s goal is to address pressing social and environmental issues that are of broad concern to both Arctic and non-Arctic peoples, institutions and communities. The Arctic Centre aims to increase knowledge and awareness based on sound scientific information and in this way to support sustainable development, environmental protection and social, cultural and biological diversity in the Arctic and the North.
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ARCTIC CENTRE

- Sustainable development
- Global and climate change
- Environmental and minority law

MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

ARTKIS GRADUATE SCHOOL

ARCTIC STUDIES PROGRAM

SCIENCE CENTRE EXHIBITION

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

ARCTIC LIBRARY

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ASSESSMENT AND INVENTORY SERVICES
Framework

Acute environmental changes and vast natural resources have rapidly made the polar regions a focus of global scientific interest. This presents the Arctic Centre with significant challenges and opportunities that will be met through participation in various networks.

The Arctic Centre studies the natural and social environment in the Arctic and seeks answers to such questions as:

How do Arctic physical, ecological, social, cultural, political, legal and other systems function?
What are the current and future developmental trends?
How do these processes and trends relate to the Antarctic and other corresponding regions?
What are the direct and cumulative impacts of the ongoing changes in the Arctic?
What makes the Arctic physical environment, ecosystems, peoples and communities resilient or vulnerable to changes?
How can Arctic ecosystems, peoples, communities and institutions cope with changes?
What capacities and means do these communities and institutions have to adapt to or mitigate the consequences of these changes and how can they be enhanced?
What are the determinants of continuity in Arctic socio-cultural-economic systems, and under which conditions can they accommodate outside pressures to their physical and social environment without surrendering their distinct characteristics?
What is the role of research, education and outreach in tackling these challenges?
How can local and traditional knowledge be combined with modern scientific and political contexts?
The Arctic Centre aims to become a top quality international science institute that attracts scholars from around the world. The Centre will seek official status as a centre of excellence within its established and widely networked fields of research expertise.

The Arctic Centre carries out multi-disciplinary research. This concept allows the Arctic Centre freedom of creativity that fosters new and experimental forms of research co-operation. Multidisciplinary research contributes to the development of each specific field of research to which the individual researchers belong. The Arctic Centre conducts multidisciplinary research without compromising high quality specialization. The research by the Arctic Centre is highly relevant for authorities and political decision-making.

The Arctic Centre aims to become a regional centre for sustainable development in Lapland and the Barents region. Due to its geographical location in Rovaniemi, the “Capital of Finnish Lapland” on the Arctic Circle, the Arctic Centre has always been innovative by keeping up to date with and analyzing international research policy in parallel with local and regional needs and taking them into account in its research plans. The Arctic Centre has a long tradition of co-operation in Arctic Russia. These assets will be strengthened further.
The research by the Arctic Centre plays a key role in implementing the Strategy 2020 for the University of Lapland, which has faculties of art and design, law, social sciences, education and tourism and business as well as tourism research and education institute. The strategic profile of the University of Lapland is research on Arctic and northern societies as well as on the environment.

The research by the Arctic Centre is implemented by three thematic research groups. Each research group is led by a research professor, and the groups include research professors, senior researchers, researchers and PhD students. They co-operate flexibly and they are closely interlinked in that the research is implemented through multidisciplinary research and problem-oriented projects.

The Global Change group encompasses the biological and physical sciences, with emphasis on applied socio-ecological and geographical studies. It addresses the impacts of land use, the use of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, tourism, long and short-term climate change, and UV radiation. Special emphasis is placed on the cumulative impacts of resource and industrial development and related infrastructure. The group has special expertise on the multidisciplinary impacts of energy industry development in the Arctic. It includes an international glaciology group specialized in climate change and modelling the impacts of climate change on Arctic and Antarctic ice masses, extreme events and global sea level.

The Sustainable Development group draws on perspectives from the social sciences in order to address international environmental politics, economics, community adaptation and vulnerability, indigenous and local knowledge and identities, and social impact assessments. The group coordinates research on indigenous issues through the Centre’s Arctic Indigenous Peoples and Sámi research office, and it is also strongly involved in research on the non-indigenous majority of the human population in the Arctic.

Environmental and Minority Law focuses on legal issues, such as international environmental treaties on Arctic conditions, regulations and the implementation of environmental, social and strategic impact assessments, the environmental rights of Arctic indigenous peoples and indigenous peoples’ participation in environmental management. The Arctic Centre has a specialized unit on legal expertise, the Northern Institute for Environmental and Minority Law.
The Arctic Centre hosts Finland’s multidisciplinary Arktis Graduate School, which focuses on the environmental and social impacts of modernization and climate change in the Arctic. Arktis carries out bipolar research by also operating in the Antarctic. Almost one third of Arktis students are from other countries and half of its students are women. The Arktis Graduate School leads the international Barents Arctic Network of Graduate Schools. The school is a central activity, which supports the research by the Arctic Centre. It will be expanded and internationalized still further with foreign graduate schools as an important multidisciplinary graduate school on sustainable development in Finland.

In co-operation with University of Lapland, the Arctic Centre provides an undergraduate multidisciplinary Arctic Studies Program (ASP) that also includes Arctic Governance and Arctic Indigenous Studies programmes. The ASP has been strengthened with co-operative networks and curriculum development through the University of the Arctic and it is being constantly updated from the current research being conducted by the Centre. The ASP attracts students from around the world, many of whom may become PhD students on Arctic Centre projects. The work of graduate students is important to the research of the Arctic Centre.
Science Communication and Outreach

The Arctic Centre prioritizes providing, popularizing and visualizing scientific results for use by decision makers and communicating actively with the Arctic Council, the Barents Council, ministries, and regional and local stakeholders.

The Arctic Centre disseminates information to the public through its excellent Science Centre Exhibition, Science Communications (whose activity is based on the internet), the Arctic Library (which is used both by scientists and the public at large), public lectures and school cooperation. The Arctic Centre provides national and international media with Arctic research results.

The outreach activities by the Arctic Centre concretely implement the principles of sustainable development that are acutely important in the rapidly changing Arctic region.
The Arctic Centre will continue research that supports environmental impact assessments, including social and strategic impact assessments especially in Lapland, Arctic Russia and within the Arctic Council. For these policy applications, the Arctic Centre will further develop its well-established practice of participatory research.

The Arctic Centre participates in and closely follows the work of the Arctic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council as well as Arctic and Northern Dimension Policies by the European Union, and takes their views into account when planning research. The Arctic Centre is also active in international Arctic organizations such as the International Arctic Science Committee, the International Arctic Social Sciences Association, the US Arctic Research Consortium, UNEP Grid Arendal and the European Polar Board.
The scope of the Arctic Centre’s research embraces the Circumpolar North, with specific emphasis on Fennoscandia and Arctic Russia. The Centre also carries out research in Antarctica, the Alps and other corresponding high latitudes and altitudes as well as in sparsely populated regions. Nordic and North American networks will be strengthened. Due to its close proximity to Russia, the Arctic Centre has developed a long tradition of co-operation in Arctic Russia.

The research community at the Arctic Centre comprises resident senior scholars, students and young professionals, and the community is enhanced by visiting senior researchers and students. Permanent key senior positions and staff are vital for the continuity and success of the Centre’s mission. Adequate office staff is required to fulfil this mission. To further meet its goals, the Arctic Centre is committed to collaboration that will sustain its international reputation. New avenues for career development are being sought through co-operation and common posts with other universities, research institutes and companies.
The Arctic Centre continuously develops its research and exhibitions in new scientific and geographical areas. At the same time, the Arctic Centre is aware of the heterogeneity of its activities and that the idea of the Centre needs to be clear. The multifunctional nature of the Arctic Centre is an asset that is used actively.

The Centre will continue to seek funding from Finnish, Nordic, and European funding sources. Other external sources will be explored.

The Arctic Centre is aware of its limits, and the stability of its core functions takes priority over rapid growth. The Arctic Centre co-operates with the faculties at the University of Lapland and supports them in their efforts to strengthen their multidisciplinary research. Internal competition within the Arctic Centre is minimal, which fosters a creative and exciting atmosphere. The working spirit will stay fresh when people have the opportunity to vary the focus of their work.
The Arctic Centre aims to publish its scientific results in high quality peer-reviewed journals. It is also successful in obtaining external funding in an atmosphere of increasingly strong national and international competition, which demonstrates the quality of its research programmes. In this context, the Centre is dedicated to the quality assurance process led by the University. The Centre periodically reassesses its research strategy.
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Arctic Centre Strategy 2020

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