

Understanding nature's diversity

Strategic plan 2020–2030



UiO • **Natural History Museum**
University of Oslo

Contents

Part 1 – Introduction	2
Background	2
Social mission	2
Strategic role	2
Ambitions	3
 Part 2 – Goals for 2030	 4
The collections as a foundation	5
Knowledge building and research profile	6
Dissemination	7
Working and learning environment	8
Internal and external interaction	9

In addition, an action plan has been drawn up that will be updated regularly at:
nhm.uio.no/english/about/strategy/



The Systematic Garden is widely used to teach school classes and students learning about plant families, pollination and seed dispersion. Photo: Guri Dahl

Part 1 – Introduction



The Natural History Museum's strategy up to 2030 is to contribute to a sustainable world through research, education, collection management and dissemination of natural diversity knowledge. Natural diversity encompasses both geological and biological diversity through time and space. The museum's activities are based on research in natural diversity in the past, present and future. The natural history collections in biology and geology and the living plant collections in the Botanical Garden are the foundation for activities within research, teaching and dissemination to the public.

Background

The Natural History Museum (NHM) has a history dating back to 1814 and manages an extensive history of knowledge in the natural sciences. For many, the exhibitions and the Botanical Garden are their first meeting with the University of Oslo (UiO). The Botanical Garden occupies a significant place in the cityscape and is central to the city's population. The museum has broad public relations and plays an important role in communication between UiO and society. Through outreach, we bring knowledge and experience to the public, schoolchildren, public administration and other target

groups using exhibitions, lectures, debate meetings and digital platforms.

Social mission

The role of the museum has changed throughout its history, but active use and development of the collections have always been the basis of its operations. Based on UiO's regulations, we understand the museum's social role as the following: The Natural History Museum shall develop knowledge, educate students and disseminate knowledge about the diversity of nature. The museum shall develop, secure and manage the scientific collections for new generations. The museum's outreach about natural diversity shall create understanding, wonder, engagement and be relevant. The connection between research, education, collections and outreach shall be the basis for the museum's activities

Strategic role

NHM is internationally oriented both in its research and collection activities. At the same time, the museum plays a national role related to public administration by providing collection data, knowledge of species and education of students with key expertise in natural diversity, particularly taxonomy and systematics.

“NHM shall contribute to the achievement of joint goals for UiO and shall strengthen its position as an arena for research, learning and experiences.”

The advantage of a museum to other research institutions lies in its collections, which are a scientific archive of natural diversity and serve as an infrastructure for research. The collections represent verifiable data. They provide irreplaceable reference material for Norwegian and global nature and underpin the work of identifying and describing species and their variety. The collections allow us to understand how diversity is being impacted by change, and guide society to preserve the diversity of nature for the future, as described in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Ambitions

NHM shall strengthen its position as an arena for research, learning and educational experiences. The museum shall continue to develop the quality of research and education in the museum's academic programmes, and push forward the boundaries of knowledge within the museum's research disciplines. The research at NHM shall be further developed to qualify as a Centre of Excellence by 2025. The museum shall provide national leadership in the development of natural history collections and be a link to international museum networks and collection infrastructures.

The museum's ambition is to create attractive outreach displays that are

clearly visible, easily accessible and that strengthen the dialogue with society. Major new exhibitions will be established from 2020 to 2030. In 2020, the new Climate House opened with a new climate garden, and by 2022 seven new exhibitions in the fully renovated Brøggers building will be ready for the public. In addition, a new Stone Garden and a new greenhouse are planned.

Loss of habitat is one of the world's greatest challenges. The museum shall be the most important source of natural diversity knowledge in Norway, and shall set the agenda for issues related to evolution and diversity. The dissemination shall be relevant to different target groups. NHM shall be an arena for debate about exploitations of natural resources, climate change and the loss of natural diversity. In this context, the museum has a special role as a disseminator of research-based knowledge.

All employees shall contribute their expertise and experience so that together we can ensure that we are relevant and successful in our social mission. NHM shall be a good place to be, for visitors, staff and students alike. The museum shall have appropriate facilities that support its strategic objectives.

Part 2 – Goals for 2030

The strategic plan is divided into 5 main areas with goals and overall measures.



Lid's house houses Norway's most extensive botanical collections. Photo: Guri Dahl



The collections are preserved in the laboratory. Photo: Karsten Sund, NHM

1. The collections as a foundation

NHM shall secure, preserve and develop the scientific collections as a foundation for future research, education and outreach. The strategic objective entails that:

- all collections shall be properly protected
- all objects shall be satisfactorily preserved and curated
- the collections shall be digitised and digitally available for research and to the general public
- the collections shall be further developed according to a clear collection strategy and will be developed in accordance with the museum's academic programmes
- biological collections shall be available for DNA barcoding, genome sequencing and other molecular analyses
- living collections that can be used for conservation work shall be prioritised
- research, exhibitions and teaching that use or add objects to the collections shall be prioritised

The museum manages important parts of our national and international memory, and has a special responsibility to preserve, renew and make the scientific collections available. The museum shall work systematically to improve competence, infrastructure and routines in its collection work.



The collections are preserved in the laboratory. Photo: Karsten Sund, NHM

2. Knowledge building and research profile

NHM shall explore the unknown natural diversity and the processes that shape it. The research shall be strongly integrated into teaching, and NHM shall train highly qualified candidates. A clear academic profile entails that:

- the research shall be concentrated in academic programmes where education and collection development are well integrated
- NHM shall prioritise the externally funded research projects that strengthen the museum's academic programmes
- NHM shall contribute to nature management authorities with its scientific expertise in methodological development and taxonomy
- NHM shall be active in UiO's strategic initiatives
- employees in recruitment positions at NHM, such as PhD and Postdoc fellows, shall be well qualified both for permanent academic positions at natural history museums and to positions in society as a whole
- NHM shall actively contribute to UiO's teaching in natural diversity, taxonomy and systematics
- research at the NHM shall be further developed to qualify as a Centre of Excellence (CoE) by 2025.

The research at NHM is based on a long tradition of evolution, biosystematics and the systematic parts of mineralogy. This includes both the description of natural diversity and how natural diversity is affected by environmental change. Our research and education shall contribute knowledge to solve important social tasks.



Opening of the exhibition "Tree of Life". Photo: Karsten Sund, NHM

3. Outreach

Through outreach, NHM shall actively contribute to making its collection and research-based knowledge available to society. Outreach events shall instil wonder, understanding and knowledge about evolution and natural diversity. Climate change and challenges associated with the biodiversity crisis are making this increasingly relevant. The museum's outreach means that:

- the museum shall be one of the country's most attractive destinations
- the museum shall be a place that delivers a positive experience to visitors
- digital outreach and events shall have high attraction value for the public
- the basic exhibitions shall cover the museum's breadth of knowledge in the natural sciences
- teaching of school classes shall be offered
- NHM shall become a key research-based educator on climate and environmental changes based on the Climate House
- the connection between the museum's research and collections shall be evident in outreach events

The museum is a well-known and well-established source of knowledge. Professional quality is the mainstay of educational outreach. The museum has a unique opportunity to reach a wide audience. By arousing interest in science and research in young people, the museum can help increase the commitment to natural diversity and contribute to long-term recruitment to higher education. Regular public surveys and collaboration with relevant academic communities will be the basis for the further development of NHM as a place that delivers a positive and engaging experience to visitors.



Internal review of collection routines in the depositories at Økern. Photo: Karsten Sund, NHM

4. Working and learning environment

A safe, enjoyable and improving working environment is a prerequisite for enabling each of us to do our best. Focusing on the staff means that NHM shall:

- have a good working environment and employees with high competence
- be inclusive and facilitate an appreciation of all individuals
- have effective and professional recruitment processes that secure the best candidates
- have a leadership that is professional, clear, supportive and inclusive
- have good cooperation between management, trade unions and safety officers
- have training and lifelong learning as an integral part of personnel follow-up
- have a work culture characterised by team spirit, a “stronger we”
- have a working environment that will be systematically mapped and continuously followed up
- work for gender equality, gender balance and diversity
- work to reduce temporary positions in all job categories

The competence of its employees is NHM's most important resource. Taking good care of the staff and students is essential to succeed with our social mission. Everyone shall be included in a stimulating professional environment that brings out the best in individuals. This entails an active equal opportunity policy and recruitment practices that create diversity and ensure equal rights.



The new Climate House at the museum was funded by UMOE AS with a donation of NOK 70 million. Its operation is based on collaboration and support from the public and private sectors. Photo: Karsten Sund, NHM

5. Internal and external interaction

NHM is part of UiO, a broad-based university. NHM's research, education and outreach shall take place within UiO's objectives. The museum shall interact with the public administration, the public, NGOs and the private sector. Organisation and internal interaction shall ensure that NHM manages its overall resources effectively. This will mean that the NHM shall:

- be a relevant social actor with high professional integrity
- collaborate with other natural history museums and botanical gardens, nationally and internationally
- collaborate with public administration, and provide knowledge and relevant services
- collaborate with the business community and sponsors within our priority areas following regulations and code of conduct
- have close cooperation with NGOs and active friends associations, which complement our activities and objectives in priority fields
- be an important partner for the City of Oslo
- support UiO's strategic interdisciplinary initiatives
- have close cooperation with other units at
- UiO on dissemination of knowledge within our disciplines
- be active in international networks and bodies for natural history museums

NHM has both the space and expertise to reach out into society in new ways and invite people into the university. Interactions with biological and geological associations is a driving force for mutual development of skills and knowledge. The museum is also a repository of knowledge and competence for nature management.

“The Natural History Museum shall develop knowledge, educate students and disseminate knowledge about the diversity of nature.”

