

*Strategy 2023–2030*

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# University Museum of Bergen



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN



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# University Museum of Bergen

**Vision:** *The University Museum is to be amongst Europe's leading museums, known for high quality research, management, and communication. Through knowledge and dissemination of our cultural and natural heritage, the museum contributes to identity, insight and understanding of the past, present and future – an important basis for sustainable and democratic development*

University Museum of Bergen (originally 'Bergens Museum') was founded in 1825 and will mark its 200th anniversary during the strategy period. From the very beginning, collections were established in the fields of cultural history and natural history, where public education was also central. The strong scientific environment of the museum laid the foundations for the establishment of the University of Bergen (UiB) in 1946.

The University Museum is a significant research, management and communication institution that safeguards our cultural and natural heritage and contributes knowledge needed to meet future challenges. The museum is a professional, diverse, and inclusive workplace that conforms to high ethical standards based on national and international guidelines. Our research is linked to our collections, while the museum has the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration in the pursuit of knowledge. We manage and develop collections and make them accessible to students, research organisations, administrative bodies, and the general public. By fostering an understanding of the methods and significance of research, knowledge can be democratised. In the interaction between research, collection management, and dissemination, the University Museum develops research projects, communicates with the public, and contributes to fulfilling the University of Bergen's strategy 'Knowledge that shapes society'.

The University Museum's cultural history building will be closed to the public during the strategy period. En route to a renovated museum building, cultural heritage will be made available to the public through digital platforms and exhibitions in other buildings and arenas. Our natural history museum building was reopened in 2019 as a university museum of high international standards. In the same way, a newly renovated cultural history museum building will become an arena for dissemination of our cultural history and research into our cultural heritage. With this, the museum area in the centre of Nygårdshøyden will be developed into a knowledge centre for the city and the region.



**Until 2030, the University Museum will:**

- strengthen its role as an internationally recognised university museum with research, management and dissemination of high quality
- be a leading university museum and an attractive collaborator based on our professional expertise and the quality of our collections
- develop a future-oriented cultural history museum building
- be an important social actor who contributes with an understanding of global social challenges through publications, exhibitions, digital platforms, and arenas for debate
- further develop cooperation between disciplines of cultural history and natural sciences, and between research, collection management, and research communication
- further develop the museum buildings and the botanical gardens as important knowledge centres and arenas for research communication and dissemination



# Research

*Through research at a high international level, in and across disciplines, the University Museum will generate knowledge about the natural and cultural world and contribute to sustainable societal development*

Research at the University Museum is founded on existing scientific collections and research-based collection. It is based on modern methods and a good research infrastructure that results in publications at a high international level. The research can be long term, it is free and independent, and it embraces the breadth of the museum's subject areas. Research into natural diversity and cultural heritage contributes to insight into the biodiversity crisis and the importance of cultural history for society. Our strong academic environment in biosystematics, especially within marine organisms, as well as in archaeology and palaeobiology, are central academic fields at the University Museum that will be strengthened and further developed. With climate change and method development our collections are increasingly important research archives. The University Museum contributes to strengthening UiB's initiatives in ocean, climate, and global societal challenges, and actively participates in UiB's medieval cluster.

The museum's research is complementary to research at the faculties, and we contribute research-based teaching within our subject areas to the faculties' study programme. We are co-organizers of the research school in biosystematics (ForBio) and supervise MSc and PhD candidates. The University Museum's Ph.D. and post-doc positions are important for our research and contribute to the renewal of our academic disciplines.



**Until 2030, the University Museum will:**

- publish research of high international quality and with a high ethical standard across the breadth of the museum's disciplines
- further develop interdisciplinary research with particular emphasis on collaboration between archaeology and palaeobiology
- further develop biosystematics, especially within marine organisms
- through research, contribute to sustainable development that safeguards diversity, natural and cultural heritage
- leverage our advantage as a university museum to develop ground-breaking research projects and increase competitiveness for larger externally funded projects
- have strong research disciplines that contribute to high quality collections and research-based growth
- exploit the research potential of contract and heritage management archaeology
- have an important role in the development and establishment of research infrastructure within both cultural and natural heritage through the sharing of knowledge and analytical facilities



# Regional responsibility

## *The University Museum is a national knowledge centre with regional responsibility*

The university museum's location, in a region with sea, coast, fjord and mountains, presents a unique basis for research and international cooperation. With the coast as a point of contact with the world, the region and the city of Bergen have a long international cultural history, knowledge of which the museum manages, researches, and disseminates. The University Museum with its extensive collections is the region's most important museum.

The University Museum is part of the public administration with a regional responsibility according to the Cultural Heritage Act. Archaeological excavations in Vestland and on Sunnmøre, together with palaeobiological material, provide insight into the region's prehistory placed in an international context. Much of the University Museum's archaeological material from the Middle Ages, including the medieval city of Bergen, is exhibited at Bryggens museum in collaboration with Bymuseet (the City Museum).

As a natural consequence of the museum's international research in biosystematics, the region's species are documented in the museum's collections. The University Museum's botanical gardens have an important role in safeguarding endangered species and disseminating knowledge about them, as well as disseminating knowledge about invasive species that are a threat to natural diversity in the region and worldwide.



**Until 2030, the University Museum will:**

- strengthen the digital dissemination of our collections and of the region's natural and cultural history
- strengthen the role as UiB's and the region's leading manager of cultural and natural heritage material for research, dissemination, teaching and public administration
- exploit the potential of archaeological excavations for innovative research and dissemination projects and strengthen their interdisciplinary profile
- provide knowledge-based policy proposals for cultural heritage and management of nature
- develop the cultural history museum building into the region's most important exhibition arena for research-based knowledge about our shared cultural heritage
- create attractive meeting places and be a source of knowledge for the city's and the region's school classes and the rest of the population in museum buildings, botanical gardens and in the field
- contribute to strengthening Ocean City-Bergen ('Havbyen Bergen'), Knowledge City-Bergen ('Kunnskapsbyen Bergen'), the Medieval Cluster, and the region's world heritage sites



# Management of scientific collections

*Sustainable collection management at the University Museum will ensure knowledge about our past and present for future generations*

The University Museum's collections, built up over 200 years, form the foundation of the museum's activities. The collections have an important role as a historical archive, research infrastructure, and as a basis for the museum's dissemination mission. They include close to five million items and objects, archives, photographs and living collections in the botanical gardens. The basis of our activities lies in a professional and transparent safeguarding, documentation and conservation of our collections and archives. The museum's collections form a knowledge bank for the future and ensure scientific reproducibility.

Scientific collection, documentation, conservation, and secure storage of the collections are core activities at the museum. A large increase in archaeological and natural science material provides knowledge about society and the environment in the past and present. Identification and documentation of species through research-based collection and management provides a knowledge base for sustainable development. The museum has an active role in making the collections available through national digital platforms.

The University Museum's collection management is based on national and international standards that ensure good databases, storage conditions and conservation at a high scientific level.



**Until 2030, the University Museum will:**

- have research-based collection management where the collections are developed as knowledge banks and archives in line with national and international standards
- strengthen the collections' national and international importance as research infrastructure
- strengthen the work with digitisation of the museum's archive, photo and artefact collections, in order to secure and make these available for research, management and dissemination
- strengthen the use of national digital solutions within collection management, to ensure robust data storage systems and accessibility
- secure and preserve the collections in the best possible way based on up-to-date conservation science
- have ethically sound collection management with a critical eye on collection history
- base the growth of the collections on scientific assessments and statutory activities



# Research communication and dissemination

*The University Museum is to be one of Norway's leading knowledge museums. By arousing curiosity and providing insight into research processes and the acquisition of knowledge, the museum shall contribute to the democratisation of knowledge and to sustainable social development*

Research communication and dissemination at a high national and international level makes the University Museum an important voice in society. The university museum is a central bridge builder between academia and society. We communicate our own collections, research, and research processes, and the museum is a central arena for research communication for all academic disciplines at UiB. Through research-based exhibitions and dialogue with the public, the public is given insight into knowledge development and critical reflection.

The university museum's newly renovated natural history museum building conveys knowledge about nature's diversity, history, processes, and threats in society today. Through regularly renewed high-quality exhibitions, current topics from ongoing research at UiB are brought up to date and discussed.

The university museum has a particular responsibility for the dissemination of knowledge to schools and the general public. By updating and making available newly acquired knowledge, the museum contributes to highlighting the role of research in societal development, creating trust in academia, and recruiting tomorrow's researchers. Our museum buildings and botanical gardens are actively used in communication and teaching aimed at various target groups and are important experience and recreation areas for the public.

**Until 2030, the University Museum will:**

- strengthen its role as a leading institution for research dissemination
- convey our natural and cultural heritage in a regional and international perspective based on the University Museum's unique collections and important research results
- further develop professional collaboration across the organisation in connection with exhibition production
- contribute to increased trust in research and a knowledge-based debate through publication, research-based exhibitions and digital interfaces
- develop new methods to create understanding and insight into research processes, research ethics and to build trust in scientific knowledge production
- based on museology, work innovatively, to facilitate curiosity and critical reflection
- facilitate diversity and lifelong learning by offering broad, research-based, teaching for different target groups
- through the museum buildings and the University Gardens, create physical meeting places for academia and a wide audience, and be a central arena for research communication for the entire UiB



# The University Museum as a workplace

*As a workplace, the University Museum must be a space where employees thrive, are included and have the opportunity to develop*

The employees are the University Museum's most important resource. High competence contributes to quality in a variety of roles and tasks. The University Museum is characterized by a strong academic environment, curiosity, and professionalism, where committed employees inspire each other with shared high ambitions for the good of the museum. We will be an attractive workplace with room for professional and personal development where everyone takes part in the community. Our work must be inclusive and interdisciplinary, where competence, integrity, creativity, and collaboration create the best possible synergy across the organisation. Diversity and equality, safety and generosity will characterize the University Museum.

## **Until 2030, the University Museum will:**

- further develop an organisational culture that emphasises openness, collaboration, participation, and development of the museum's subject areas
- strengthen professional collaboration across the organisation in order to succeed in research, collection management and communication
- emphasise a good, inspiring and inclusive work environment where employees respect each other and recognise each other's professional expertise
- work systematically and purposefully with health, environment, and safety throughout the organisation
- develop good and future-oriented areas for employees and the public, with the highest possible degree of collocation
- to be a sustainable organisation with responsible operations and an emphasis on a reduced climate footprint
- have good meeting places that promote social belonging and development of professional competence



# Buildings and infrastructure

*The University Museum will work to revitalise the entire museum area centrally at Nygårdshøyden as a knowledge centre*

Today's natural history museum building at Muséplassen 3 was completed in 1865 and in 1927 the cultural history museum building opened at Haakon Shetelig's plass 10. A museum-related knowledge centre was thus established with the botanical garden from 1898 as a natural central point. A strong research, collection and dissemination environment at Bergens Museum laid the foundation for the establishment of the University of Bergen in 1946. In 1996, the new botanical garden at Milde opened in connection with the Norwegian Arboretum. In 2004, both gardens at Milde were included in the University Museum. Both the Museum Garden with the Glasshouse from 1901 and the two museum buildings are now under statutory protection.

With the opening of a newly renovated natural history museum building in 2019, UiB acquired a modern museum. The cultural history museum building was closed to the public in 2023, while the Glasshouse has been closed since 2015. In connection with the renovation of the buildings, the University Museum aims to establish a strong and professional museum community centrally located at Nygårdshøyden. With the aggregation of the museum's research and management expertise, dissemination and administration, the museum area will be a powerful knowledge centre for UiB, for the Knowledge City-Bergen, and for society. At the same time, the laboratory-based research linked to natural history, with associated archives and conservation, will be developed together at the Science Building as part of the Nygårdshøyden south project. The University Gardens at Milde are maintained as important research infrastructure for UiB and external partners.

The museum's scientific collections must be safeguarded for future generations. Good infrastructure in the University Gardens, maintenance of our buildings, and long-term and stable archival conditions are crucial to safeguarding our mission. The establishment of sufficient and secure storerooms with good accessibility as well as the development of future-oriented research dissemination in our new cultural history museum building, with exhibition, study, and public areas, will have a high priority in the strategy period.





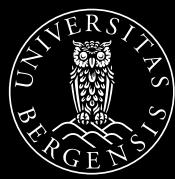
**Until 2030, the University Museum will:**

- develop the museum area with its listed buildings and gardens centrally at Nygårdshøyden
- work to be able to welcome the public to a newly renovated and sustainable cultural history museum building, with innovative dissemination arenas, by the end of the strategy period
- work to once again be able to open the Glasshouse in the Museum Garden to the public as an updated and inviting dissemination arena
- further develop the museum's infrastructure through the highest possible collocation of storerooms, laboratories, and workplaces
- establish new permanent conservation laboratories of a high international standard
- further develop safe and functional workplaces for all employees
- work actively to ensure good storage conditions for all the museum's physical archives, photo, and object collections through the realisation of sustainable archival infrastructure





**Design:** Beate Helle. **Photo:** cover p. Adnan Icagic | p. 2 Joan J. Soto-Angel | p. 5 Torsten Eriksson | p. 7 Adnan Icagic | p. 9 Leif Inge Åstveit | p. 11 Jenny Smedmark | p. 13 Adnan Icagic | p. 15 Adnan Icagic, Katrine Kongshavn, Mette Magni Bing Espedal, Torsten Eriksson | p. 17 Torsten Eriksson, Adnan Icagic | p. 18 Adnan Icagic.



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