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New Nordic Centre of Excellence focusing on Arctic mining communities

A Nordic Centre of Excellence funded by NordForsk will build an interdisciplinary research environment to provide new thinking about sustainable development, especially in the context of Arctic mining. The new centre is led by KTH Royal Institute of Technology in collaboration with Stockholm University and Stockholm Environment Institute.

The Nordic countries and NordForsk are investing a total of NOK 112 million in four new interdisciplinary Nordic Centres of Excellence. 28 million NOK over five years has been awarded to the Nordic Centre of Excellence – **Resource Extraction and Sustainable Arctic Communities, REXSAC**.

REXSAC researchers will study extractive resource industries in the Arctic as cultural, social, economic, and ecological phenomena – from analysis of why resource extraction commences, to what consequences it has for communities in the Arctic and beyond, and what opportunities exist for transitioning toward post-extractive futures. The centre is led by KTH Royal Institute of Technology in collaboration with Stockholm University and Stockholm Environment Institute.

“This is a tremendous opportunity to bring committed scholars and local communities together in work for the common good in the Arctic. This region is often conceived of as a playing field for Big Money and Big Politics. But essentially, it is a place where millions of people find their livelihood. The Arctic is their home and our research is there for them. We will look for the combinations of resource use and the building of communities that support sustainable wellbeing”, said Sverker Sörlin, professor at the Division of History of Science, Technology and Environment at KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

The centre will engage an international network of scholars from across the humanities, the natural and social sciences. Community participation in environmental and social monitoring is also a central part of REXSAC.

“REXSAC provides us with a unique opportunity to build new knowledge together with local communities. This work will show how Arctic landscapes respond to multiple pressures from land use change caused by mining, other infrastructure development and climate change”, said Gunhild Ninis Rosqvist, professor at the Department of Physical geography at Stockholm University.

Mining has shaped social development in many parts of the Arctic and also often had major impact on local environments. REXSAC uses a number of case studies, principally from Sweden, Greenland and Svalbard, to understand how lessons from the past can inform decision-making today. The research network extends beyond the Nordic countries, with explicit ambitions to compare Arctic experiences with other parts of the world, to understand Arctic mining and resource extraction in a global context.

“REXSAC offers an exciting space for integrating engagement with users in the whole research process and to make such a philosophy part of the centre’s PhD program”, said Annika E. Nilsson, Senior Research Fellow at Stockholm Environment Institute.

REXSAC is led by KTH Royal Institute of Technology in collaboration with Stockholm University and the Stockholm Environment Institute as core collaborating institutions. REXSAC is organized as a consortium with thirteen partners as well as affiliated individual scholars from in a range of institutions across the Nordic countries and other parts of the world. Stockholm Environment Institute is responsible for the engagement and communication strategy.

The other partners include the Stefansson Arctic Institute (IS); the University of Copenhagen (DK); the National Museum of Denmark (DK); the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research, NIKU (NO); the University of Oslo (NO); the Greenland Institute for Natural Resources (GL); the University of Oulu (FI); Dalarna University College (SE), the Swedish Agricultural University (SLU), (SE); and Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada.

REXSAC is one out of four new Nordic Centres of Excellence in Arctic research under the programme [Responsible Development of the Arctic: Opportunities and Challenges – Pathways to Action](#) funded for the period 2016-2020. Read more about [NordForsk’s Nordic Centres of Excellence](#).

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REXSAC is organized as a consortium with thirteen partners and affiliated individual scholars from a range of institutions across the Nordic countries and other parts of the world. The Nordic Centre of Excellences are funded by NordForsk, an organisation under the Nordic Council of Ministers that provides funding for and facilitates Nordic cooperation on research and research infrastructure.