



NHMD Collections Governance Policy

This document was approved by the Board of Directors on 21 November 2023 and shall remain in place until a revision is issued by the Deputy Museum Director for Collections.

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1. The Natural History Museum of Denmark's Vision and Purpose

Our vision is to empower connection between people and nature

We want to inspire, engage, and enable people to enjoy, understand and care for the diversity of the natural world.

Our purpose is to promote positive change for people and planet

We advance a scientific understanding of the natural world to help everyone make knowledge-based decisions for a sustainable future.

2. The Collections Policy Framework

The Collections Policy Framework is part of the broader policy and strategic environment within the Natural History Museum of Denmark (NHMD). This document is part of the NHMD's Collections Policy Framework and provides an introduction to the NHMD policies that relate to the collections at the NHMD. It contains a description of the NHMD's collections and the expertise of the staff that care for and manage those collections.

The framework consists of:

- Collections Governance Policy, 2023
- Collections Access Policy, 2021
- Collections Development Policy, 2023
- Collections Care Policy, 2023

Separate policies have been developed for certain parts of the collections:

- Human Remains Policy, 2023
- Living Collections Policy, 2015
- The National DNA and Tissue Repository Policy, 2023

More separate policies are under development for other areas at the museum.

The Collections Policy Framework applies to all NHMD employees, contractors, scientific associates, affiliated students, and volunteers. Sections of the policy framework will also apply to visitors and external users of the collections.

2.1.

The NHMD Collections Governance Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, including the Museum Director, the Board of Directors, and staff members.

3. Scope

The NHMD holds different types of collections covered by the scope of the Collections Policy Framework.

The collections are the essential core of the museum: Collected over four centuries, the approximately 14 million objects include skins and hides, skeletons, organisms in jars with alcohol, insects on pins, plants on herbarium sheets, fossils, minerals, meteorites, seeds, DNA, tissue samples and more, from all over the world. Additionally, the living collections of the Botanical Garden number some 9,000 plant species such as orchids,

cacti, carnivorous plants, and exotic trees. The Archives, Library and Science History Collection comprises historical instruments, tools, paintings and art objects, a collection of older books and journals (from before 1900) as well as the botanical, geological and zoological archives.

These collections form the foundations of the museum's research, teaching, and outreach efforts, and for a wide range of international research. As well as being a research tool and outreach resource, the collections are also a link to cultural heritage: many objects exemplify a preservation technique of a specific era, have inspired classic works of art, or tell a story of the era in which they were collected.

The University Act of 2003 initiated the transformation of the Danish universities to self-governing institutions. The act came into force on 1 January 2005. In addition, a document relevant to the NHMD collections was drawn up in 2007 (Aktstykke 136). This document states that the NHMD collections, including Danekræ (fossil troves) belong to the State of Denmark, but that the museum in collaboration with the University of Copenhagen still has the overall responsibility for the care and management of these collections.

4. Introduction to the NHMD Collections Policies

The NHMD collections management policies are here compiled for the first time. They are inspired by similar policies and procedures from the Natural History Museum London (2016) and adapted to the unique setup at the Natural History Museum of Denmark (NHMD). The policies cover all areas of collections management at the NHMD and includes national legislation and international agreements as well as national Danish regulations and norms.

How the NHMD structures the processes of decision-making, accountability, controls, transparency of its Collections Management activities – its corporate governance – are given in the collections policies.

These policies are to be used by anyone (within the NHMD or externally) who manages, works with, or uses the NHMD collections. They are supported by collections management procedures. These procedures are consistent between scientific sections and collections. If any section or collection needs to depart from the agreed museum-wide procedures, the deviation must be documented and agreed to by the Deputy Museum Director for Collections and the Collections Committee.

All collections management policies are approved by the Board of Directors and must be reviewed at least every 5 years.

5. Legal Framework

The NHMD operate framed by Danish laws and with appropriate regard to a number of standards that are applicable to collections management. A list of the legislation, protocols, conventions, and ethical codes guiding the NHMD policies, and the standards used are listed in Appendix 1.

The NHMD is one of three accredited state museums under the Danish Museum Act, and thus has certain tasks and responsibilities set out in the Act. The NHMD is the main museum for natural history in Denmark.

The NHMD operates directly under paragraphs 1-2 and 8-12 of the Danish Museum Act when it comes to obligations and national tasks. The Danish Museum Act defines all major tasks of the NHMD: to collect, register and preserve national nature heritage; research and public outreach. The NHMD also administers paragraph 31

of the Museum Act with regard to Danekræ (fossil trove finds). The various details of the legal environment and the standards the NHMD applies to its collections management activities are herein described.

The NHMD is also a department under the University of Copenhagen, and therefore manages research, teaching and public outreach within the University Act.

6. Ethical Framework

The NHMD's collections activities are conducted in compliance with the framework for research at the University of Copenhagen. The framework is described in the University's "Code of Conduct for Responsible Research". The code is based on "The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity".

The NHMD's collections are developed and cared for to provide an empirical and accurate scientific view of the world, enabling the NHMD to deliver its mission. Since its founding the NHMD has operated within national and international spheres of interest regarding the development of its collections. Historically items have entered the NHMD's collection in wide-ranging ways and the ethical standards applied have varied throughout the centuries. The NHMD continues to collect and preserve items in the present day and is committed to the values of rigour, integrity, trust, openness, and verification in all aspects of its science. Accordingly, the NHMD requires both good practice and conformity with all legal, professional, and ethical obligations by staff, students, associates, and volunteers. The NHMD staff are expected to be aware of, and be guided by, generally accepted ethics and professional standards applicable in their fields as published by reputable professional membership societies and organisations. The NHMD expect research visitors and collaborators to follow similar practice.

7. Collections Governance Roles: Accountability and Responsibility

The holding of the collections imposes legal and ethical obligations on the NHMD to provide for the proper management, preservation, and use of the collections and their associated information.

Collections Governance defines the roles of the Museum Director and other staff regarding their duty to the care of the collections; it delineates duties and responsibilities for critical issues so as to manage risks to the collections from their use. The roles detailed below have responsibilities for the management and use of the collections as well as accountability that legal and ethical obligations are met. All the Museum's staff are expected to work collaboratively to support collections stewardship, thereby ensuring a good standard of care, compliance with policy, appropriate and efficient use of resources and alignment with agreed priorities.

7.1. Overall NHMD Organization

The NHMD is a department within the University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Science. The faculty's departments are organised into sections. The terminology of the NHMD differs from the other departments under the University of Copenhagen due to the obligations, responsibilities and particular status embedded and described in the Danish Museum Act.

The NHMD is organized into four divisions: Research, Collections, Exhibitions & Visitor Experience and Administration & Operations (Appendix 2). Each division is managed by a Deputy Museum Director.

The Collections, Exhibitions & Visitor Experience, and Administration & Operations divisions are further subdivided into a number of units. Each unit is managed by a Head of Unit. The Collections division comprises five units: Zoological Collections, Geological & Botanical Collections, Botanical Garden Living Collection,

Conservation and finally Digital Collections & Archives (Appendix 3). The staff members of the units in the Collections division are furthermore divided into teams.

The Research division comprises four sections, each of which is managed by a Head of Section.

The daily management of the NHMD is carried out by a Museum Leadership Team (MLT) consisting of the Board of Directors, the Heads of Sections and Units and a few others with management or coordination tasks.

Descriptions of individual responsibilities for all positions are available online and will therefore only be briefly summarized in the following.

7.2. The Museum Director

The Museum Director has the overall responsibility for the museum and its collections. The responsibility has been delegated to the Museum Director by Rector, the Head of the University and accountable to the Board of the University. The Museum Director is also accountable to the Danish Museum Act.

As Head of Department the Museum Director sits, together with the dean and associate deans, in the faculty management. This organisation ensures that important information passes from the Rector's office and the deanery to the departmental staff and, of equal importance that information also flows in the opposite direction.

The Museum Director has one yearly status meeting with the Danish Ministry of Culture as well as the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

The Museum Director's responsibilities and accountability with issues related to the collections are individually described in the NHMD policies mentioned in section 2 in this policy.

7.3. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors consists of the Museum Director, the Deputy Museum Director for Research, the Deputy Museum Director for Collections, the Deputy Museum Director for Exhibitions & Visitor Experience, the Deputy Museum Director for Administration and Operation, the Deputy Museum Director for Teaching, and Deputy Museum Director for Communication and Fundraising. They have statutory accountability for the general management and control of the museum and its collections under the Danish Museum Act and the University Act.

The Board of Directors meets weekly and issues relating to the collections will be discussed at these meetings.

7.4. Heads of Divisions

The Heads of Divisions (Deputy Museum Directors) are responsible for their division's overall finances and budget, strategic developments, and general management of the division.

7.5. Deputy Museum Director for Collections

The responsibility for the day-to-day management of the collections is delegated to the Deputy Museum Director for Collections by the Museum Director.

The Deputy Museum Director for Collections is accountable to the Museum Director and the Board of Directors for the collections care and use, and for managing the collections within the framework of NHMD policies and

strategies agreed with the Board of Directors, including the allocation of resources to support the care and use of the collections.

The Deputy Museum Director for Collections furthermore has the responsibility for delegating the daily responsibility for management and care of the collections to the Heads of Units in the Collections section.

7.6. Heads of Units and Heads of Sections

The Heads of Units and the Heads of Sections are responsible for the managing their unit's or section's personnel resources with regard to planning and prioritizing of work, as well as finances and budgets for the unit or section in collaboration with either the Deputy Museum Director for Collections or Deputy Museum Director for Research.

Each Head of Unit and Head of Section have a number of specific management tasks related to their unit or their section.

7.7. Museum Leadership Team (MLT)

The Museum Leadership Team consists of the Board of Directors, the Heads of Units and the Heads of Sections.

Their main tasks are to coordinate and discuss management and management practices across the NHMD, strategy and development, issues relating to divisions, sections, and units, as well as to inform and coordinate projects and activities and ensure cooperation and a good working environment across the NHMD.

The Museum Leadership Team meets monthly.

7.8. Scientific Curators

The scientific curators are organized into four research sections: Zoology, Botany, Geology, and Science & Society. Each section has a Head of Section.

The curators conduct collection-based research and use a substantial amount of their non-research time on scientific curation of their respective collections. Curators are normally specialists within the subjects they manage and have academic and historical insight into their curated collections. Based on the strategy for each collection, curators are expected to assess the research and exhibition potentials of their collection and are responsible for the management and enrichment of the collection through collecting, exchanges, sending out of specimens for identification by specialists, and invitations for visits by external specialists.

Curators are responsible for the scientific training of collection managers, conservators and preparators, scientific guidance of visitors and students, and for the growth and quality of the associated collection databases.

Furthermore, the scientific curators are also responsible for loans, including approval, selection of specimens, and recalls. They also preside over deaccessions of collection material, the taxonomical classifications used in each collection, as well as sorting and identification of specimens.

Finally, curators take care of scientific communications of the collections, including inquiries from the public. They are also scientific consultants for the museum's exhibitions, Communications and Fundraising Unit, and as scientific resources for the relevant parts of the amateur natural history community within botany, geology, and zoology in Denmark.

7.9. Collection Managers

The collection managers are organized into smaller teams in each unit. Each Unit has a Head of Unit.

The collection managers assist the curators and are responsible for the practical day-to-day management of the collections. They treat and preserve specimens which enter or are already present in the collections, labelling, refilling of alcohol and glycerine, etc.

The collection managers are also responsible for the physical facilities for storage (layout, furniture, and materials), rearrangement and organisation of specimens, setting out specimens for visiting researchers, loans, teaching, etc., and packaging of outgoing loans.

7.10. Conservators

The conservators are organized into one team. They are responsible for treating and preserving specimens which enter or are already present in the collections.

The conservators ensure that standards and best practice in preservation and collections care are applied across the NHMD. They are in close collaboration with the collections managers also responsible for the integrated pest management, ensuring the environmental standards, the monitoring, and emergency care of collection items.

7.11. Horticulturalists

The horticulturalists at the Botanical Garden are organized into an outdoor and an indoor team, in their unit. The Unit is run by the Head of the Unit.

The horticulturalists maintain the living collections in the greenhouses and the open-air areas. They work to develop and expand the collections in collaboration with the scientific botanical curators and in accordance with international practices and conventions.

7.12. IT-Staff

The IT-staff in the unit Digital Collections & Archives are responsible for the NHMD collections management system (development, helpdesk, etc.). The unit is also partly responsible for NHMD's involvement in the Global Diversity Information Facility (GBIF), Arter.dk, the Danish Biodiversity Information Facility (DanBIF), and the Danish Distributed System of Scientific Collections (DaSSCo).

7.13 Administrative Staff and Other Employees Related to the Collections

The above-mentioned roles are supported by a number of administrative staff. This includes a registrar, an ABS compliance officer, and technical support staff on collections and research infrastructure.

7.14. Museum Committees

The NHMD has a number of committees that support the daily running and communication between sections and units directly or indirectly related to the collections. The museum committees assure continuity of organizational decision-making and consider collections related matters.

The Collections Committee has an important advisory function, and the overall purpose is to contribute to the quality of the NHMD's collections management and to assist the Deputy Director for Collections with decision making and advice regarding both strategic as well as practical tasks relating to the collections.

The Collections Committee members are appointed by the Museum Director after being nominated by the Deputy Director for Collections.

Other committees related to the NHMD collections are the Digitalization Committee, the Faculty Research Board, and the Education Board. The NHMD also has a Work Environment Committee (IAMU), a Collaboration Committee (LSU), an IT Committee (I-ITU), and a Security Committee.

8. Policy Review Procedure

This Policy replaces any previous policy.

The Collections Governance Policy will be reviewed at least once every five years to maintain its validity and usefulness as a guide for the museum staff and Board of Directors. The Deputy Museum Director for Collections will submit proposed revisions to the Board of Directors for final approval.

Name of governing body: Board of Directors, Natural History Museum of Denmark

Date of approval by governing body: 21 November 2023

Date at which this policy is due for review: 21 November 2028

APPENDIX 1. Legal, Ethical and Standards Framework

The Museum's Collections Management Policy framework is informed by legislation, ethical codes, and appropriate sectoral standards.

A. International Conventions and Protocols

- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992
- The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2010
- Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora (CITES), 1975
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, UNESCO, 1970. Ratified in Denmark, 2003
- EC Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora), 1992

B. Legislation

Below listed with the official text in Danish (DK) and with reference to the English translation (ENG) if a consolidated version is accessible. In the event of any consistency between the Danish and English language versions of the text, the Danish version prevails. Also, in case of violations the Danish version will be used as the basis for the assessment of the legality:

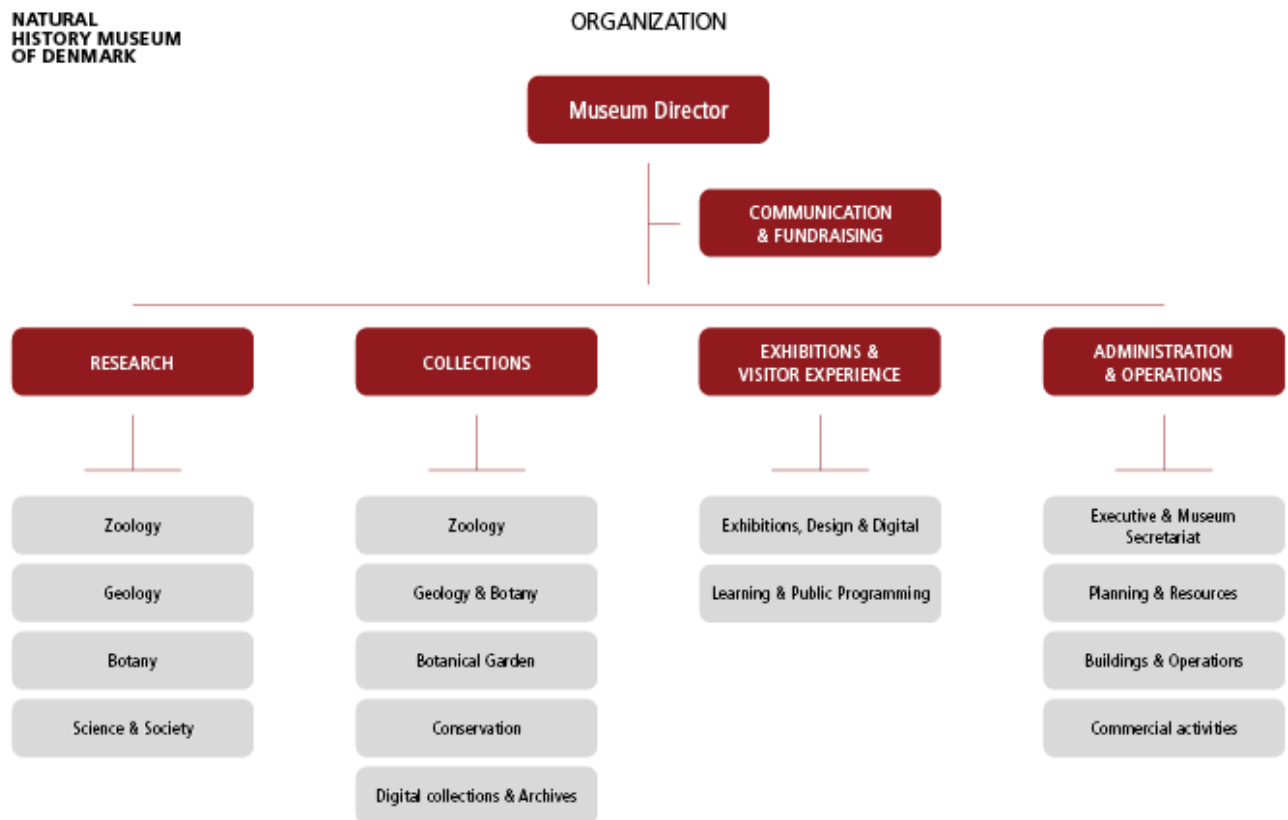
- **DK: Museumssloven** - LBK nr 358 af 08/04/2014
ENG: Consolidated Act on Museums (Danish Museum Act)
- **DK: Universitetsloven** - LBK nr 778 af 07/08/2019
ENG: Danish Consolidation Act on Universities (Danish University Act)
- **DK: Forvaltningsloven** - LBK nr 433 af 22/04/2014
ENG: The Public Administration Act
- **DK: Lov om opfindelser ved offentlige forskningsinstitutioner** - LBK nr 210 af 17/03/2009
ENG: Act on Inventions made at public Research Institutions
- **DK: Patentloven** - LBK nr 90 af 29/01/2019
ENG: The Consolidated Patents Act
- **DK: Offentlighedsloven** - LBK nr 145 af 24/02/2020
ENG: An Equivalent to the Freedom of Information Act
- **DK: Databeskyttelsesloven** – Lov om databeskyttelse nr. 502 af 23/05/2018
ENG: The EU General Data Protection Regulation
- **DK: Miljøbeskyttelsesloven** - LBK 1218 af 25/11/2019
ENG: The Environment Protection Act

C. Ethical Codes & Guidance

- ICOM Code of Ethics for Natural History Museums, 2013
- ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums, 2004
- The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, ALLEA, 2023
- Code of Conduct for Responsible Research. University of Copenhagen, 2023
- The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2014
- CETAF - Code of Conduct and Best Practice for Access and Benefit-Sharing, 2019
- CETAF - Framework for Responsible Research and Innovation, 2017

APPENDIX 2. Organizational Chart for the NHMD

NATURAL
HISTORY MUSEUM
OF DENMARK



APPENDIX 3. Organizational Chart for Collections

