

My fieldwork was supported by an Arctic Field Grant

Linn Svendheim (Nord University), H el ena Cuny (University of Occidental Brittany) and Vanessa Pitusi (UiT The Arctic University of Norway) all received Arctic Field Grant (AFG) from Svalbard Science Forum for doing fieldwork in connection with their Master projects. The AFG provides funding for fieldwork for students and researchers collecting data in Svalbard and Jan Mayen.

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Svendheim, Cuny and Pitusi's projects were all parts of campaigns in the FAABulous project (PI: Eva Leu, Akvaplan-Niva). The FAABulous project, Future Arctic Algae Blooms - and their role in the context of climate change, investigates how the basis of the marine food web, the photosynthetic microalgae, are affected by the current changes in the Arctic environment.

The students did fieldwork in the Van Mijenfjorden, Svendheim in 2016, and Cuny and Pitusi in 2017. They report that they experienced a dynamic work environment with experienced researchers of different backgrounds that provided advice and guidance during the fieldworks.

Linn Svendheim says: We were usually people from different projects on each sampling trip, making the trips both social and educating since you got to help out on different projects.

Different means of transport were needed to conduct the fieldwork. Snow mobiles were used to reach the Van Mijenfjorden station on the sea-ice, and for sampling in water the Helmer Hansen research vessel but also KV Svalbard, the coast guard ship from the Norwegian army, were used. For the sampling in the Isfjorden-Adventfjorden time series station (IsA) a small boat was more convenient.

Funding from Arctic Field Grant can be crucial for Master and PhD students in order to conduct fieldwork in the Arctic. Approximately 40 such grants were allocated for each of the two years that Svendheim, Cuny and Pitusi received their AFG. The AFG, that has existed for more than 50 years, is today managed by the Svalbard Science Forum, and has a high success rate (approximately 50%).



Zooplankton sampling from a boat at IsA Station using a 60 m net (Photo: H el ena Cuny)

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<https://www.forskingsradet.no/en/svalbard-science-forum/ssf-info/news/my-fieldwork-was-supported-by-an-arctic-field-grant/>

Vanessa Pitusi says: Everyone helped each other where they could and although days were long it was always fun. Sea ice cores were collected for many different purposes, but most of the time only the lower 10 cm were being used, as that is where biologically speaking the most interesting activity occurs. Thus, the leftover cores were used to build an ice-henge.

Pitusi sums up: Two weeks of sampling on the ice and time in the laboratory meant that my confidence in the logistical planning and execution of fieldwork grew. It was a fantastic experience to work as part of a project and learn about the effort involved behind collecting sufficient samples to build a solid scientific case. This opportunity also made it possible to network with researchers from different disciplines and countries, which otherwise might have been difficult; it was a very enriching experience.

More information about the FAABulous project can be found here:

<http://www.mare-incognitum.no/index.php/faabulous>

The Research in Svalbard (RiS) portal

Information about the three projects can of course be found on the Research in Svalbard (RiS) portal. RiS is an open access database that offers information science projects in Svalbard. The information includes any participating scientists and institutions, publications and data collected. There are currently about 3500 projects; 12700 publications and 500 datasets in RiS. You can search for names, keywords, locations, dates and many other factors. Try Svendheim, Cuny or Pitusi for more information about their projects.

Svalbard Science Forum

The Svalbard Science Forum (SSF) promotes coordination of and collaborative efforts in research activities in Svalbard. SSF objective is to contribute to increased scientific quality and cooperation within Svalbard research; increased coordination of activities; open sharing of data and reduced environmental impact.

The SSF's tasks include managing the RiS Portal and database, and administration of the funding schemes Arctic Field Grant (AFG) and Svalbard Strategic Grant (SSG) The Svalbard Science Forum is administered by the Research Council of Norway.
