

NAISS Newsletter no 4 2025

Numerous negotiations, contracts, new systems and national collaborations

The last year has been extremely intense but also highly productive. During 2025, NAISS has both finalised the procurement and signed the contract for the largest and by far most powerful academic supercomputer to date in Sweden. As we are writing this the Arrhenius system is being installed in NAISS' new facility, which marks an important milestone as our first national system. We have also been able to negotiate and commence operations of the new national AI factory service hub with partners and support staff all over Sweden, and we are presently in the final round of bids being submitted for the dedicated AI factory hardware resource that is scheduled to be installed next summer.



The installation of storage, CPU and GPU modules for Arrhenius in progress in the new NAISS national data center, just before Christmas 2025.

Evolving the organisation & steering towards the 2027-2030 period

One of the most useful activities for the new Director during the year has been the repeated discussion with representatives from the leadership at our partners to better understand needs and how to create an organisation that is steered by user requirements. Based on these discussions we will initiate a new process for the Stakeholder Advisory Reference Committee in early 2026, where we involve STARC in an annual process of updating the strategic plan. In the NAISS proposal for funding 2027-2030 we particularly stress the importance of higher ambition in the user support, and since this received very positive informal feedback we will start deploying the new organisation already during 2026. This will include dedicated directors for technical operations, user support, allocations, and not least external relations. For the latter, we are delighted to announce that Prof. Matts Karlsson, who was instrumental in helping shape NAISS, will join the organisation half time from January with responsibility of liaising better with universities, infrastructures and other

stakeholders. We are also planning to coordinate a joint investment in a general cluster for all partners interested in resources e.g. for infrastructures, education or simply extra resources for key research environments. Similarly, during 2026 NAISS will start to offer long-term object storage at a cost we believe will be significantly lower than any other available alternative, and we are gradually planning to also enable this for sensitive data.

The NAISS User Support Advisory Committee has been highly active during the year under the leadership of Prof. Marie Skepö, and we are particularly delighted to see how they have initiated a new setup with regular mini-user-forums all over the country. Their prioritisation and recommendations are used to ensure NAISS activities are driven by user requirements, and the new user support module (with dedicated effort ranging from outreach and training to domain-specific research support and strategic software engineering) planned from 2027 will get an early start already the coming year, initially led by Dr. Henric Zazzi.

The NAISS Director will start a new round of visits to both existing partners and several new universities that have expressed interest in joining NAISS both to participate in strategic discussions and help secure sufficient user support - and from NAISS' side it is imperative to understand how the infrastructure can support the long-term work both of partners and infrastructures not merely by delivering allocations, but working together to help teams better exploit modern HPC, AI and data resources and training - including the AI factory and international collaborations.

Credit where credit is due

All these projects have required major efforts both from NAISS staff and all our university partners to respond to short external deadlines, and we want to express our gratitude for how constructive and adaptive everyone has been in this process - not least our staff who has put in effort far beyond their normal working hours and partners accepting to commit staff before actual contracts were finalised.

Similarly, while we keep stressing that Sweden has fallen far behind several of our neighbours in investments in computing and AI and that we urgently need to address this, we are deeply grateful both to Vetenskapsrådet and the government for stepping up and securing the national co-funding first for the Arrhenius system, and then again for the AI factory. NAISS still has a lot of work remaining to do, but we see this as a strong confirmation that our strong commitment to a single new national organisation is starting to result in equally strong support from funding agencies, the Swedish state, and not least enterprise interested in collaborations.

From the Director's side, we are glad that Jan-Eric Sundgren has agreed to continue as NAISS Steering Committee Chair also during 2026 and thus take the organisation through its entire first funding period.

Last but not least, none of this would have happened without your strong support for the vision of a unified national Swedish infrastructure. Thank you for an eventful 2025, and we look forward to your input both in STARC and other forms already in January 2026 to accelerate the pace even further.

Season's greetings,

Erik Lindahl

Jan-Eric Sundgren

NAISS Director

NAISS Steering Committee Chair