CASCADES
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MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CASCADES Expedition begins its second leg to investigate Arctic sea-ice formation

Sion / Brest / Québec City, 29 October 2026 *– Today, a multinational scientific team leaves Iqaluit to join the Canadian research icebreaker CCGS* Amundsen *and begin the second leg of the CASCADES Expedition in Baffin Bay. Complementing the first leg that took place in August and studied the interactions during the melting season, the second leg will investigate another critical moment: the formation of sea ice. Both legs thus aim to provide a thorough overview of the interactions between glaciers, sea ice and ocean ecosystems that shape the environment and the communities in the Arctic. Coordinated by the Institut nordique du Québec (INQ), the Swiss Polar Institute (SPI) and the French Polar Institute (IPEV), the CASCADES Expedition benefits from the support of the Transforming Climate Action (TCA) programme and Amundsen Science, and is an endorsed action of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.*

The CASCADES Expedition comprises two legs, aligned with two key Arctic phases: the melt of glaciers in August and the freeze-up of sea ice in November. The first leg (Leg A) conducted sampling along oceanographic transects in Baffin Bay and across a latitudinal range of glacier-fjord systems along the west coast of Greenland. The second leg (Leg B), which is now starting, will focus on the early formation of sea ice in western Baffin Bay. Studying these dynamics will bring a better understanding of the local and global impacts of ongoing climate shifts in the Arctic. These critical observations from one of the world's fastest-changing regions will also help improve projections of future climate change while strengthening international scientific collaboration.

Alongside 7 projects that cover 5 research clusters during Leg B, the expedition outreach programme comprises CLASSCADES, a series of free learning modules in French and German that will enable schoolchildren aged 8 to 12 to explore the science and daily life aboard the icebreaker CCGS *Amundsen*, and to learn about the Arctic and its importance. Started in September, CLASSCADES is designed by Swiss Polar Class, the educational programme developed by the Swiss Polar Institute (SPI) for primary schools. So far, over 500 classes across Switzerland, France and Canada have virtually embarked and will be following the expedition from their classrooms.

"Every year, when the polar night comes, the Arctic sea ice cover gains 10 millions km2 in areal coverage. This second leg of CASCADES is one of the latest ever and represents a rare and unique opportunity to study how sea ice grows and how it affects the ocean biogeochemistry. With the Amundsen equipped with sensors that can see through the darkness, the international team of scientists, technicians and artists will sail multiple times across the ice edge in various weather conditions to scrutinize air-ice-sea interaction during the ocean freeze up."
– Dany Dumont, Associate Scientific Director, Transforming Climate Action, Chief Scientist of the CASCADES Expedition

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"CASCADES enables ambitious Swiss research projects and fosters cutting-edge international cooperation. As the Swiss Polar Institute celebrates its tenth anniversary this year, we are proud to support this collaboration between Canada, Switzerland, France and Greenland. The knowledge generated during this expedition in the Arctic will also help us better understand and address the environmental changes that are happening closer to home."
– Christoph Hegg, Chair, SPI Foundation Board

"The CASCADES Expedition is an unprecedented effort to gain a better understanding of the transformations of sea ice and Greenland's glaciers and their impacts on the ocean and coastal communities. The global repercussions of these changes explain why researchers from several countries are coming together and pooling their expertise to tackle different facets of the issue, from ice dynamics to the response of the marine ecosystem which underpins biological productivity and moderates the climate. Beyond the numerous measurements that will be taken, CASCADES is a fine example of scientific diplomacy and international collaboration." (quote translated from French)
– Jean-Éric Tremblay, Scientific Director of the Institut nordique du Québec, Co-chief Scientist of the CASCADES Expedition

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MORE INFORMATION

The CASCADES Expedition explores how melting glaciers, sea ice, and ocean ecosystems interact and shape the environment and the communities in the Arctic. This research is essential as the Arctic region is critical to climate systems worldwide. Switzerland is warming at about twice the global average, making international polar research increasingly relevant to local climate challenges that lie ahead.

Bringing together 13 international scientific projects overall, covering 7 research clusters – spanning glaciology, oceanography, biogeochemistry, marine ecology, atmospheric science and climate modelling – and involving around 20 research institutions from four different countries, the Expedition highlights the importance of international cooperation and the involvement of local communities when it comes to studying the changing climate and its impacts. The CASCADES Expedition is part of the *Amundsen* 2026 expedition – a large-scale, multidisciplinary, international scientific campaign conducted aboard the CCGS Amundsen.

CASCADES Expedition website in English:
→ https://cascades-expedition.science/
Project list:
→ https://cascades-expedition.science/research-projects/
Access to the press room:
→ https://cascades-expedition.science/press-room/
CASCADES Expedition official Instagram account:
→ https://www.instagram.com/cascades_expedition/
CLASSCADES dedicated page:
→ https://polar-class.ch/classcades/

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ABOUT THE PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Institut nordique du Québec (INQ)

Institut nordique du Québec (INQ) is a leading hub for research and training on the North and the Arctic. Bringing together 17 Québec universities, numerous partners, and the Northern First Peoples, INQ fosters cross-sector collaboration to address major northern challenges. It contributes to enriching training, value-creating research, and the development of concrete, resilient, and adapted solutions for the North and the Arctic.
→ https://inq.ulaval.ca/
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LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/institut-nordique-du-québec/
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9JldOmvtd5QlqeMvz3EiSw

Swiss Polar Institute (SPI)

As an institution of national importance, the Swiss Polar Institute (SPI) supports scientists based in Switzerland who work on polar and remote high-altitude environments. SPI acts as a focal point for Swiss research in these regions, enhancing opportunities, promoting collaborations, and providing key services.
→ www.swisspolar.ch
LinkedIn: Swiss Polar Institute
X: @SwissPolar
Bluesky: @swisspolar.bsky.social
YouTube: @swisspolarinstitute

The French Polar Institute Paul-Émile Victor (IPEV)

The French Polar Institute is a public organization responsible for bringing to fruition French research operations in the polar regions of the Globe. The French Polar Institute deploys substantial resources and specially adapted, technologically advanced systems to research sites. The Institute also employs people with the special knowledge and skills required for top quality scientific research in extremely harsh polar conditions. Its activities span the Arctic, the French sub-Antarctic islands, and Antarctica, advancing our understanding of climate and environmental issues.
→ https://institut-polaire.fr/en/
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Amundsen Science

Based at Université Laval, Amundsen Science is the organization responsible for managing the scientific mandate of the research icebreaker CCGS *Amundsen*. Mobilized for research in 2002 thanks to major grants from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and other partners, the *Amundsen* is at the heart of a revitalized Canadian effort to study the changing Arctic Ocean. Since 2003, the research icebreaker has welcomed more than 120 Canadian and foreign teams, who have deployed 52 major scientific programs, totalling nearly half a billion dollars in research investment.
→ https://amundsenscience.com/
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Transforming Climate Action (TCA)
Transforming Climate Action (TCA) is an initiative dedicated to supporting collective efforts to better understand and address climate-related challenges. By bringing together diverse expertise, organizations, and partners, TCA promotes collaboration, knowledge sharing, and coordinated action. Its work contributes to the development of informed, forward-looking approaches that support resilience and long-term responses to climate change.
→ https://www.ofi.ca/tca/about

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