Facts about the VRI programme

The Research Council of Norway

Programme
Regional R&D and Innovation – VRI

What is VRI?

The VRI programme is the Research Council's main initiative targeted toward research and innovation at the regional level in Norway. The primary objective of the VRI programme is to promote innovation, knowledge development and value creation through regional collaboration and a strengthened R&D effort within and for the regions.

The VRI programme has an initial time-frame of ten years (2007–2016).

The VRI programme was launched in 2007 and VRI initiatives have now been established in all regions/counties of Norway. Through the VRI initiatives the regions have developed strategies and identified priority areas and instruments to be used to strengthen cooperation and the flow of knowledge between R&D and trade and industry. To be eligible for financial support from the Research Council the VRI initiatives must have their basis in a regional partnership. These partnerships must contribute 50 per cent of the project funding.

What does a regional VRI initiative comprise?

A regional VRI initiative must be cohesive and well-coordinated. The initiative must consist of one project that promotes interaction between various regional parties and at least one research project.

In the **projects promoting interaction** the regions have given precedence to industry-oriented priority areas. Within those priority areas, the regions select a set of instruments they wish to use to initiate concrete research cooperation between companies and research groups. The most commonly used instruments are

- mobility schemes
- competence brokering
- action research in companies, and
- networks and pre-project funding for companies
- regional foresight

Research projects under the VRI programme are intended to enhance the focus of the regions on research, through research projects initiated at the regional level. These are research projects on innovation-related topics within the region's designated priority areas. The projects devote particular attention to the institutions' scientific and educational responsibilities and the needs of trade and industry.

Who puts together the applications for regional VRI initiatives?

Applications for regional VRI initiatives must have backing from the regional partnership. The regional partnership, which consists of representatives from trade and industry, R&D institutions, public authorities and sometimes other funding agencies, is responsible for organising the overall activities under a regional VRI initiative. It is up to the partnership to determine which institution or institutions submit applications to the Research Council and thus serve as the Research Council's contractual partners.

15 regional VRI initiatives are now up and running

For more information:
www.forskningsradet.no/vrienglish

Examples of funding instruments under the VRI programme:

Mobility initiatives – projects that enable students, researchers and representatives of trade and industry to cross institutional boundaries and gain experience of and participate in new environments.

Competence brokering – a scheme in which a qualified consultant (broker) helps companies to find suitable research expertise.

Dialogue and broad participation – a form of cooperation that promotes employee involvement in innovation efforts, with action-oriented researchers assisting in the process. This form of cooperation can be used in companies, networks and the region as a whole.

Regional foresight – a tailored, participant-based process to promote understanding of future challenges. The process can be used to generate support for a regional agenda for R&D and innovation.

Regional dialogue conference – a meeting place for regional players to learn about each other's expertise and roles and develop a common understanding of what they can do together.

Pre-project funding – funding designed to encourage companies to increase their R&D investment.

Priority areas in the regions:

Agder – ICT, oil/gas/process industries, culture industry and experience business
Buskerud – Industry, tourism and hospitality, health
Finnmark – Food and energy sector
Hedmark/Oppland – Industry, biotechnology, bioenergy, tourism and hospitality, culture industry and experience business, information security
Hordaland – Energy, marine and maritime industries, tourism and hospitality
Møre og Romsdal – Marine and maritime industries
Nordland – Aquaculture, experience-based tourism and hospitality and infrastructure in cold climates
Oslo/Akershus – Maritime, energy and the environment, IT, life sciences, culture
Rogaland – Food, energy, maritime sector
Sogn og Fjordane – Tourism and hospitality, renewable energy, marine industry
Telemark – Industry and new industries, power of attraction
Troms – Marine resources, tourism and hospitality and petroleum/energy/ the environment
Trøndelag – Experience business, renewable energy and environmental technology, food
Vestfold – Microtechnology/electronics, water treatment, oil/gas engineering, foodstuffs and culture industry
Østfold – Food and packaging industry, energy, the environment, experience business

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