

Portfolio analysis for Global development and international relations

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Statistics of relevant projects within the portfolio

The portfolio for global development and international relations covers research funded both by the EU as well as targeted and non-targeted funding mechanisms within the Research Council of Norway (RCN). Targeted programmes are in their entirety dedicated to thematic priorities within the Portfolio plan for global development and international relations and the Portfolio board for global development and international relations makes the funding decisions for these programmes. For this portfolio the targeted funding mechanisms are International relations, foreign and security policy and Norwegian interests (UTENRIKS), Norway – Global Partner (NORGLOBAL2), Global Health Research (GLOBVAC), VISJON2030 and South-Africa - Norway joint research programme on ocean research including blue economy, climate change, the environment and sustainable energy (SANOCEAN). Most of the funds to these funding mechanisms originates from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' ODA-budget[2] and encompass research on global development topics.

The portfolio accounted for 450 research projects in 2021 of which 381 projects are funded from the RCN and 69 projects are funded from the EU framework programme for research and innovation. The total budget of the portfolio amounts to 1.258 million. Although the number of EU-projects are by far surpassed by the number of RCN funded projects, the funding from EU accounts for more than half in terms of money: 673 million from EU versus 585 million from the RCN. This is mainly due to two large-scale EU Specific grant agreements on vaccination research in LMICs (amounts to 597 million).

Figure 1 Development of the Portfolio for global development and international relations 2019-2021

The portfolio is built up by various project types/categories. In relation to the RCN-funded part of the portfolio, the prevailing project type is Researcher project (255 projects), Research centre (2 centres), Collaborative and knowledge building project (25 projects), Coordination and support activity (40 projects) and Innovation project (3 projects). In addition, the portfolio covers basic grants to the Research institute sector in areas of relevance to the portfolio (13 grants).

The EU-funded part of the portfolio is dominated by Specific grant agreements (2 projects of total 597 million) in addition to Research and innovation action (39 projects of 41 million), Starting grant (7 projects of 14 million) and SME Innovation (1 project of 8 million).

Table 1 RCN-funded portfolio by R&D sector

The portfolio divided per R&D-sector shows that funds and number of projects are evenly distributed between the University-sector[3] and the Research institute sector with 175 projects to the former and 178 projects to the latter. The business-sector accounts for only 4 projects and public health administration accounts for 3 projects. Organizations abroad are owners of two projects.

Figure 2 The portfolio per discipline

The portfolio is dominated by research within the social sciences (59 percent of the effort), followed by health and medicine (23 %), science and mathematics (8 %), technology (5 %) and humanities (4 %)[4]. There is further a modest effort within the areas agriculture and fisheries. The portfolio's distribution across disciplines is the same as in 2020, aside from in health and medicine which has a significant increase from 16 percent the previous year following the extraordinary efforts related to the corona pandemic.

In terms of number of projects per funding mechanisms, NORGLOBAL2 accounts for the largest part of the portfolio with 71 projects, followed by free-standing projects within social sciences and the humanities with 62 projects, UTENRIKS with 55 projects, GLOBVAC with 33 projects, Centres of excellence with 2 projects, BEDREHELSE (public health research funding scheme) with 18 projects, IKTPLUSS (ICT-research funding scheme) with 11 projects, and ENERGIX (renewable energy funding scheme) with 7 projects.

Figure 3 Composition of the portfolio from various funding mechanisms.

With its international thematic orientation, most projects within the portfolio have cooperation with researchers and/or research institutions in other countries. Based on Meld. St. 17 (2017-2018) Partner countries in the Norwegian development politics, the NORGLOBAL2 programme encourages that the funded research focuses on one of the 16 priority countries for Norwegian development aid. Three funding schemes, INDNOR, CHINOR and SANOCEAN, are bilateral cooperation mechanisms requiring research cooperation with respectively India, China, and South-Africa. In total the portfolio's RCN-funded projects have formalized cooperation with 75 different countries, an increase from 62 in 2020. The most important partner countries for the projects in the portfolio are The United Kingdom (37 projects), USA (27), South Africa (21), Ethiopia (20), Uganda (19 projects), Tanzania (16), Kenya and Russia (12 projects each), The Netherlands and Germany (9 each), Sweden and Ghana (8 each), Denmark and Finland (7 each), Bangladesh and Nepal (6 each) and Indonesia and China (5 each). Of the countries listed above, South Africa, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, India, Ghana, Bangladesh, Nepal, and China, are ODA-eligible partner countries. Of total partner countries, 26 participated in one project. As the figure below indicates, the cooperation between Norwegian and African researchers is mainly concentrated to countries in eastern and southern Africa (the anglophone parts of Africa) with very little or no cooperation with researchers in countries situated in central and western parts of Africa. The cooperation with European researchers is first and foremost with The United Kingdom and, subsequently, with researchers working in northern and central European countries. The USA is by far the dominating research partner in the Americas.

Figure 4 International cooperation by number of RCN-funded projects (darker colours indicate more cooperation)

The partner countries are not evenly distributed across the various funding schemes. For UTENRIKS-projects the main partner countries are Russia (11 projects), The United Kingdom (9), USA (8), India and Ukraine (5 projects each). For NORGLOBAL2-projects the main partner countries are Ethiopia (17 projects), The United Kingdom (15), USA (14), Tanzania and Uganda (11 projects each), South-Africa (8), Kenya (7), Ghana (6), and India, The Netherlands, Nepal, Senegal, Sweden, and Germany (5 each). GLOBVAC-projects have partners in 18 LMICS, of which 13 in Africa. The principal partner countries for GLOBVAC-projects are The United Kingdom (10 projects), Uganda (8), and Kenya (5).

The European framework programmes are important arenas for R&D cooperation with countries of high relevance for this portfolio. Within the Europe framework programme Norway has entered into cooperation with a total of 131 countries. Although most are with European countries, Norwegian researchers have 136 joint contracts with research institutions from prioritized countries of the Norwegian Government's Panorama Strategy - Brazil, China, India, Russia, and South-Africa. There are a further 57 joint contracts with research institutions in partner countries to the Government's development strategy - Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan, Mali, and Palestine.

The distribution of the portfolio across Norwegian research institutions shows a concentration in Eastern Norway with 64 per cent of the RCN-funded projects, compared with 61 percent the previous year (mostly Oslo area), albeit institutions in Western Norway (mostly Bergen area) also have been successful in obtaining funding for their research with 23 percent of the projects, down from 24 percent in 2020. Research institutions in other parts of the country have obtained only a few projects, and this pattern remains constant over the last couple of years. Most of the growth in the portfolio in 2021 is thus allocated to research institutions in the Oslo area. This is, in particular in relation to research on global development and global health, due to the thematic priorities of the calls within the portfolio and how well they fit with the thematic profiles of the research institutions across Norway. For research on international relations and geopolitics relevant Norwegian research institutions are found in all regions.

Figure 5 Geographic distribution of projects in Norway

The number of publications for the portfolio is extensive. In 2019 half of the publications derived from projects funded by the targeted funding schemes, especially GLOBVAC, UTENRIKS and NORGLOBAL2, but in 2021 almost two thirds of publications derived from non-targeted funding schemes. The decrease in publications from GLOBVAC is due to the change between two funding periods, and publications are expected to increase as projects funded in the new programme period are finalized.

Figure 6 Number of scientific publications

The output from the portfolio covers a wide range of both scientific and non-academic results, from i.e., abstracts to articles, lectures, and websites. The number of reported outputs in the Norwegian academic register Cristin (Current research informatic system in Norway) within this portfolio has increased since 2019. There is a strong emphasis on academic articles, academic lectures, other lectures, and interviews.

Table 2 Reported outputs from the portfolio (data from Cristin)

A bibliometric analysis based on a normalized citation index of the projects under this portfolio shows that the citation index varies across topics and across years. The analysis is made on the two periods 2014-2016 and 2019-2021. The analysis is further made on the articles deriving from the targeted funding schemes (UTENRIKS, NORGLOBAL, GLOBVAC etc.) and from all funding schemes within the portfolio. The average national citation index is reference. In some areas, like clinical research and life sciences as well as the social sciences, the publications from the portfolio's citation index are below the national average for the period 2019-2021.

Figure 7 Normalized citation index for the portfolio

The figure below shows the portfolio's share of the top ten percent most cited publications. The pattern of publications most cited across disciplines is the same as for the citation index above.

Figure 8 Portfolio's share of publications among the top ten percent most cited

The government's aim is that all Norwegian scientific articles financed by public funds must be openly accessible by 2024. The figure below shows the status for open publication within the portfolio, both for targeted funding schemes and for the entire portfolio (targeted and non-targeted funding schemes included) and the national average per discipline. The fluctuation of national average per period reflects that there has been put much more emphasis on open publications the past few years.

Figure 9 Open publications from the portfolio

The quality of the research within this portfolio's targeted funding schemes is shown in the figure below. The scale is on number of projects granted funding and their grades over the period 2017-2021. The number of projects with grades 6 and 7 (out of a maximum of 7) is stable and the number of projects with grade 5 is in decline. The average grade for projects which obtain funding from this portfolio is 5,99 in 2021, an increase from 5,74 in 2020.

Figure 10 Overall grade of projects within the portfolio

- [2]ODA: Official Development Aid
- [3]Includes both universities and university colleges.
- [4]Does not include EU-funded research as this is not included in statistics on subject/discipline.

