



About the Research Council of Norway

The Research Council of Norway is a national strategic funding body for research and innovation. The Research Council distributes around NOK 10 billion every year to research projects, and it is the most important research policy adviser to the Government, ministries and other key institutions and environments linked to research and innovation. We have a special responsibility to follow up the Government's long-term plan for research and higher education. The Research Council implements national research policy decisions through various funding schemes under 15 portfolios. In cooperation with the research environments, industry and the public administration, the Research Council endeavours to boost the quality of and funding for Norwegian research and promote innovation and knowledge. The Research Council works to achieve greater international cooperation and increased participation in the EU's framework programmes for research and innovation. Other important tasks are creating meeting places for and dialogue among researchers, users of research and actors that fund research and innovation.



Action plan for internationalisation

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competitiveness.

Research and innovation enhance all aspects of Norwegian society. The effects of globalisation and the need for a restructuring of industry and other sectors is becoming increasingly important at the regional, national and international level. It is an important research and innovation policy goal for Norwegian research environments to increase cooperation and form closer ties with international partners.

This is reflected in the Government's long-term plan for research and higher education, the Research Council's strategy and, not least, in the goals and strategies of actors in the sectors concerned. The link between education, research, technology and innovation is important for Norway to succeed in international competitive arenas, and for raising the level of entrepreneurship and sustainability globally. There should also be a focus on climate-friendly forms of international cooperation, such as more frequent use of digital meetings.

The Research Council's action plan for internationalisation covers the areas that most require a change of pace in the international efforts. The plan clearly signals an increase in the level of ambition, the potential for improvement and need for new instruments. The most important arenas for international cooperation are the Research Council's own investments and multinational platforms, such as the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation. Both these arenas also focus on increased cooperation with countries outside Europe.

Horizon Europe is set to start in 2021 and will largely be a continuation of Horizon 2020. The Research Council has been assigned a clear responsibility to lead the national support apparatus that is tasked with mobilising, guiding and qualifying actors in relation to Horizon Europe. The European Innovation Council (EIC) and Missions are the main new features of the new programme. The partnership landscape has also undergone change. The partnerships will constitute roughly the same proportion of the programme as in Horizon 2020, but will require a larger proportion of co-funding from the countries involved. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), socio-economic impact and the green transition, particularly linked to the EU's Green Deal, are other aspects that have been assigned greater importance. Norway has achieved great success in the latter years of Horizon 2020 following a somewhat slow start. The Research Council must therefore endeavour to help Norwegian actors do well right from the very start of Horizon Europe.

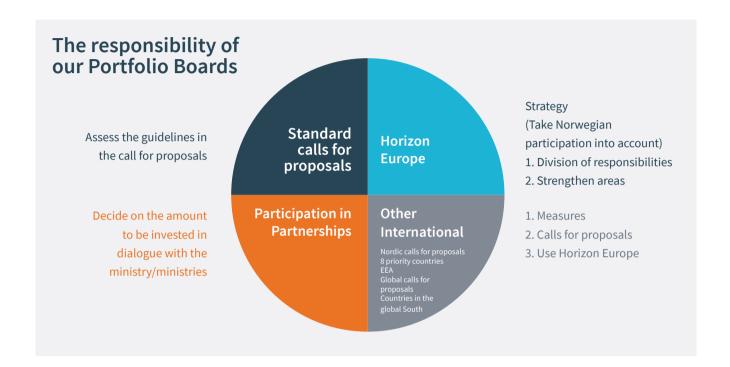
John-Arne Røttingen

John Bre By

Director General



1: Four main tracks for internationalisation



GOAL: The Research Council will work to secure closer alignment between national and international instruments and to contribute to reaching Norwegian research and innovation policy goals.

Around 60 per cent of the projects funded by the Research Council include some form of international cooperation. This is a very important part of the Research Council's work on strengthening international cooperation in both research and innovation. The remit of the portfolio boards state that they are also responsible for internationalisation. In addition to the Research Council's own portfolio, this applies in particular to the EU Framework Programme including partnerships and Missions, Nordic cooperation via NordForsk and international joint calls for proposals..

1.1 International cooperation in projects funded by the Research Council

- Ensure all portfolio boards have concrete and verifiable goals for international cooperation in their portfolio plans
- Increase the proportion of projects that include international cooperation in the Research Council's portfolio by 20 per cent from the 2020 level (see text box no 1, p. 4)
- Continue to fund foreign partners in projects funded by the Research Council (funding is not awarded to foreign businesses)
- Enter into cooperation agreements (see text box no 2, p. 4) with the most important research and innovation funding organisations in the ten countries we currently cooperate the most with
- Participate in the pilot multilateral scheme (see text box no 2, p. 4) under Science Europe



International cooperation in the Research Council's portfolio is currently specified through the labelling system with the proportion of projects that include cooperation with one or more foreign partners, both with and without Research Council funding. For projects that started in 2019, the Research Council will also be able to specify more accurately how large a proportion of the projects' budgets go to funding foreign partners.

The Research Council cooperates with several other research councils on bilateral calls for proposals and on Moneyfollowscooperationline (MFCL) schemes. This is an important internationalisation measure.

The Multilateral Lead Agency scheme under Science Europe is under development and will enable Norwegian researchers to apply for funding from all research councils participating in the scheme, and vice versa. Each country covers their researchers' participation in a very simplified manner with a low level of bureaucracy compared to today's schemes.

1.2 Participation in Partnerships

The Research Council of Norway will:

- The Research Council will participate in joint calls:
- where participation will constitute considerable added value for Norwegian research and/or industry
- where funding is cost-effective
- where there are clear national research and innovation policy guidelines
- the portfolio boards will decide participation and the amounts to be invested in dialogue with the relevant ministries

We distinguish between partnerships under the auspices of the EU and international joint calls for proposals where, for example, research councils from several countries cooperate on calls. There will be around 40 to 50 partnerships in Horizon Europe. Around half of them will require funding from the Research Council if we decide to participate. There will be close dialogue between the Research Council and the ministries on participation in the European partnerships.

1.3 Cooperation with Horizon Europe and European research and innovation policy

The Research Council of Norway will:

- Work together with the portfolio boards to ensure synergies with Horizon Europe
- Enhance advice to industry on participation in Horizon Europe and Eureka
- Have a special focus on open data/open research, the role of social sciences and humanities, and responsible research and innovation (RRI)
- Promote research and innovation's role in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals in forums such as Science Europe and thereby influence the structure of Horizon Europe and the European Research Area



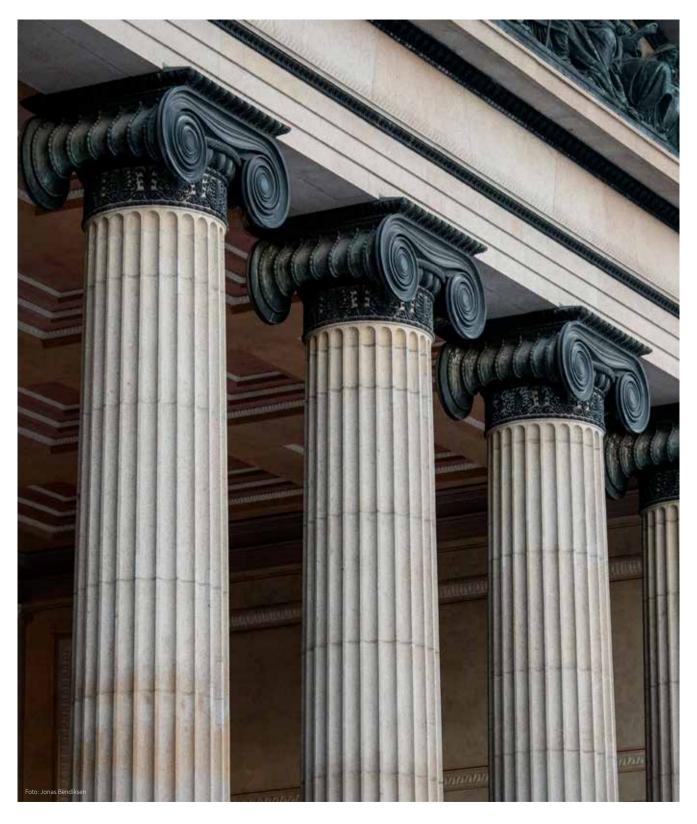
1.4 Priority countries, Nordic cooperation and EEA funding

The Research Council of Norway will:

- Ensure that the portfolio boards' investments expand the scope of research and innovation cooperation with the priority countries outside Europe through bilateral and, primarily, multilateral platforms by 20 per cent from the 2020 level
- Consider, in collaboration with other actors, establishing a
 portal about Norway as a research and innovation nation
 (research-based innovation) to make it easier to establish links
 between Norwegian and foreign research and development,
 and innovation actors
- Help enable the Norwegian authorities and funding agencies to use international research and innovation cooperation as a bridge for improving relations between countries
- Serve as a driving force in Nordic cooperation through NordForsk
- Mobilise more consortiums that have succeeded in EEArelated programmes to apply for funding in Horizon Europe

NordForsk organises and co-funds joint Nordic programmes in research, research-based innovation and research infrastructure. NordForsk is organised under the Nordic Council of Ministers, but the national research councils, universities and other researchfunding bodies are also key NordForsk stakeholders.

The EEA funds are Norway's contribution to social and economic redistribution in the European Economic Area (EEA). This funding is also intended to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between Norway and the recipient countries. The breadth of thematic programmes is great, and the most relevant for the Research Council is 'Innovation, research, education and competitiveness'.



2: Higher scientific quality

GOAL: The Research Council's work on internationalisation will contribute to raising the quality of Norwegian research and innovation.

2.1 Increase influence in the EU framework programme and strengthen internationalisation to raise quality

The Research Council of Norway will:

- Mobilise all sectors and actors to achieve the Research Council's ambition of receiving contributions of 2.5 per cent in Horizon Europe
- Increase support measures to raise the quality of Norwegian applications to Horizon Europe, especially ERC (see text box)
- Work systematically to ensure that more researchers with all levels of experience and in all sectors take advantage of the career development and mobility options in Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA in Horizon Europe)

ERC – European Research Council is the instrument that most directly targets raising the scientific quality of the EU's framework programme. Scientific quality is also raised through participation in broad international consortiums with businesses, civil society and research institutes where the goal is to solve global societal challenges

2.2 Increase outgoing mobility and attract the expertise Norway needs

The Research Council of Norway will:

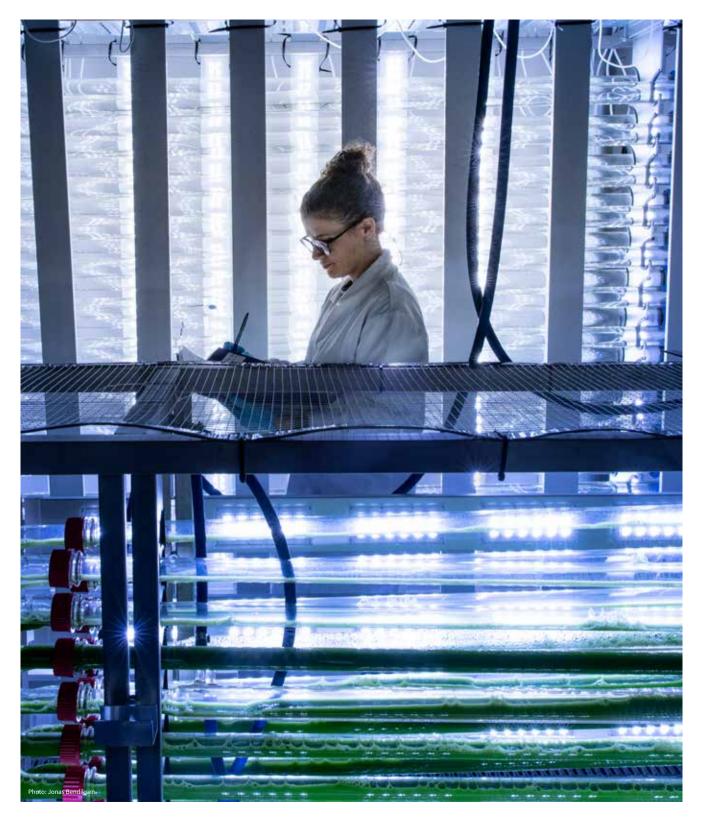
- Enable more candidates to take a PhD abroad and, together with the sector, consider incentives to this end
- Increase the number of researchers who decide to do research at reputable international educational institutions and innovation environments early in their career
- Ensure that international mobility schemes are in line with gender balance and gender perspectives in Norwegian research and innovation
- Exploit synergies between research, innovation and education and attract the best Master's and PhD level candidates from abroad to Norway, and ensure that a large proportion of these talents stay here
- Consider in dialogue with the higher education sector a scheme to secure career pathways in Norway following return from a foreign research and innovation institution

The proportion of foreign researchers who complete their PhD at Norwegian institutions has gradually increased in recent years. In 2018, the proportion was 42 per cent on average, which is the highest figure ever. The proportion is considerably higher in technology and natural science subjects, and is between 60 and 70 per cent in many individual subjects. The number of Norwegians who take a PhD abroad is still low; just under 70 individuals in 2017. In comparison, 1,564 PhDs were completed in Norway in 2018, of which 900 candidates were Norwegian. Attention should be given to the balance between outgoing and incoming mobility, and the large variation between subject fields.



2.3 Utilise and further develop infrastructure, scientific equipment and databases to attract foreign researchers and businesses

- Be a driving force for joint systems and standards for storing and making research data available, including via ESFRI and Horizon Europe
- Work actively to expand European cooperation and ensure greater synergies in connection with establishing and operating expensive infrastructure for research and innovation
- Fund, support and highlight infrastructure and equipment that attracts researchers and world-class research-based businesses to Norway



3: Challenge-driven research and innovation



GOAL: The Research Council's work on internationalisation will better enable Norwegian research and innovation to solve national and global challenges facing society.

The Research Council's work on internationalisation will better enable Norwegian research and innovation to solve national and global challenges facing society. The cooperation projects in pillar 2 of Horizon Europe on Global challenges and industrial competitiveness will be the biggest international arena for research and innovation cooperation linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Partnerships and Missions will also be linked to this pillar. The six clusters in the pillar correspond well with the Research Council's portfolios. They are:

- Health
- Culture, creativity and inclusive society
- Civil security for society
- Digital, industry and space
- · Climate, energy and mobility
- Food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment

3.1 More and closer international cooperation on sustainability

The Research Council of Norway will:

- Step up the work on qualifying, guiding and advising Norwegian businesses, the public sector and research actors to participate in this part of Horizon Europe
- Prioritise the work on reference groups, advisory services and participation in the EU's programme committee work to strengthen the position of Norwegian research and innovation in Horizon Europe
- Target our SDG efforts in cooperation with our nine priority countries outside Europe
- Ensure that participation in international research funding cooperation on achieving the SDGs is prioritised in all portfolio boards where relevant
- Ensure that the sustainability concept includes social dimensions such as raising the status of minorities, strengthening women's position internationally and combating economic inequality

Norway has nine priority partner countries for research: USA, Canada, China, Brazil, India, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and Japan. The Government's Panorama Strategy and bilateral research agreements help to give direction to this work, and the Research Council has established special schemes to stimulate research and innovation cooperation with the priority countries.

3.2 3.2 Secure synergies between national and international efforts in Missions-oriented research and innovation

The Research Council of Norway will:

- Actively participate in the work on, and guidance in connection with, participation in Missions to increase contributions from Horizon Europe and strengthen Missions-driven research and innovation work with our most important partner countries outside Europe
- Secure synergies with the EU's Missions in nationally-oriented societal missions that the Research Council initiates or becomes part of
- Work to ensure that social sciences and humanities perspectives are well addressed in relevant parts of Horizon Europe, such as Missions and partnerships

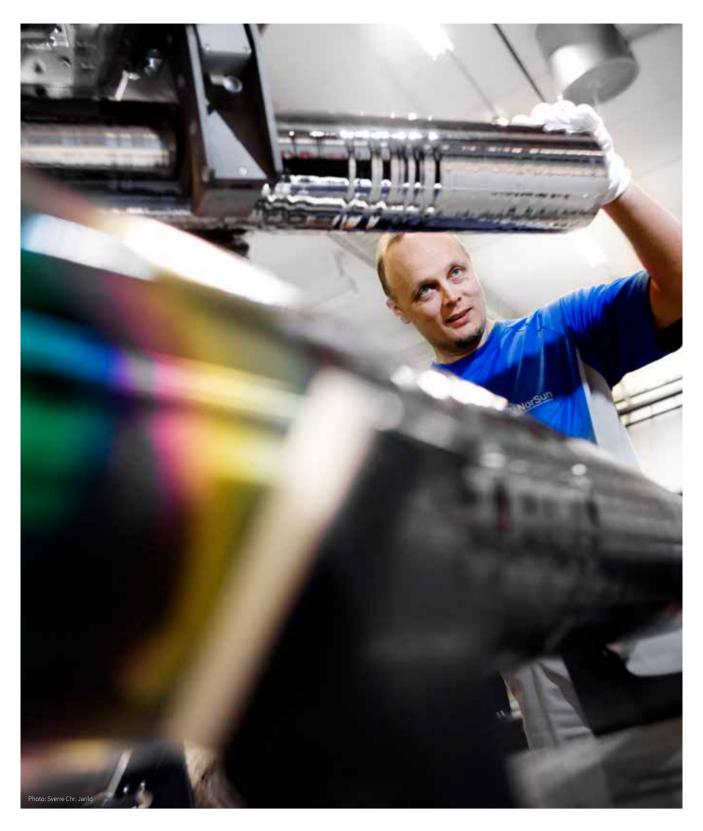
Missions thinking, i.e. achieving a concrete goal within a decided timeframe via a palette of measures across policy areas and actors, is spreading quickly in international research and innovation policies. It is therefore important to support this in Norway.

This will increase the chance of succeeding in achieving overriding goals in Missions in Horizon Europe, and it ensures that a wide range of actors in Norway can participate in consortiums with expertise from many countries in the EU and internationally.



3.3 Development research, sustainability and capacity building

- Prioritise R&D funding cooperation between countries, including partners in developing countries, to subsequently stimulate capacity building in the global South and technology transfer
- Promote research and innovation that helps countries in the global South to achieve the SDGs, and build capacity in science, innovation and technology
- Highlight how research and innovation cooperation with countries in the global South can generate good, permanent effects on development, including by using Official Development Assistance also in combination with ordinary research funding



4: Innovation and increased competitiveness

GOAL: The Research Council's international work will contribute to future value creation in industry and the public sector, environmentally friendly technology and greater sustainability.

4.1 Strengthen the international competitiveness of Norwegian industry through Horizon Europe

The Research Council of Norway will:

- Promote Norwegian industry and technology in the work on the green shift in Europe – and contribute to the EU's Green Deal and secure Norwegian contributions in related funding instruments
- Harmonise instruments that convert research into innovation with the European Innovation Council – to ensure that Norwegian technology companies with the potential for international growth can grow in an international market

The European Innovation Council (EIC) addresses the challenge of converting research results into forward-looking products, services and workplaces. The Research Council's national programmes qualify Norwegian companies and entrepreneurs for EIC. The Research Council has harmonised national instruments with the EIC to make it easier for Norwegian companies to qualify and succeed through the EIC.



4.2 Greater cooperation between industry and the institute sector for greater influence in the EU, and use of policy instruments in connection with public procurements

- Further develop incentives for the institute sector to increase participation in international cooperation projects together with industry and the public sector – and work to ensure the institutes' costs in EU projects are covered
- Strengthen the knowledge base on and dialogue with research and innovation actors to enable more Norwegian businesses to initiate – and be invited to join – consortiums in Horizon Europe and other international competitive arenas
- Encourage more expedient use of instruments for innovative procurements in Horizon Europe through a dedicated national scheme



4.3 Increased R&D and industry cooperation with countries outside Europe and better use of the Research Council's international networks

The Research Council of Norway will:

- Increase cooperation with Norwegian offices abroad and relevant chambers of commerce in countries where Norway has major exports/potential for innovation and business development; for example by establishing secondment schemes
- Further develop our instruments to promote Norwegian industry and promote cooperation with the foremost international R&D actors, including via Horizon Europe
- Actively support Nordic research and innovation cooperation through NordForsk and Nordic Innovation

Innovation Norway has regional offices and contact points in many countries all over the world. Some of them are co-located with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' embassies and delegations. Norway also has foreign service missions via the Foreign Service. The Research Council works to promote more research and innovation in the foreign service missions' activities.



