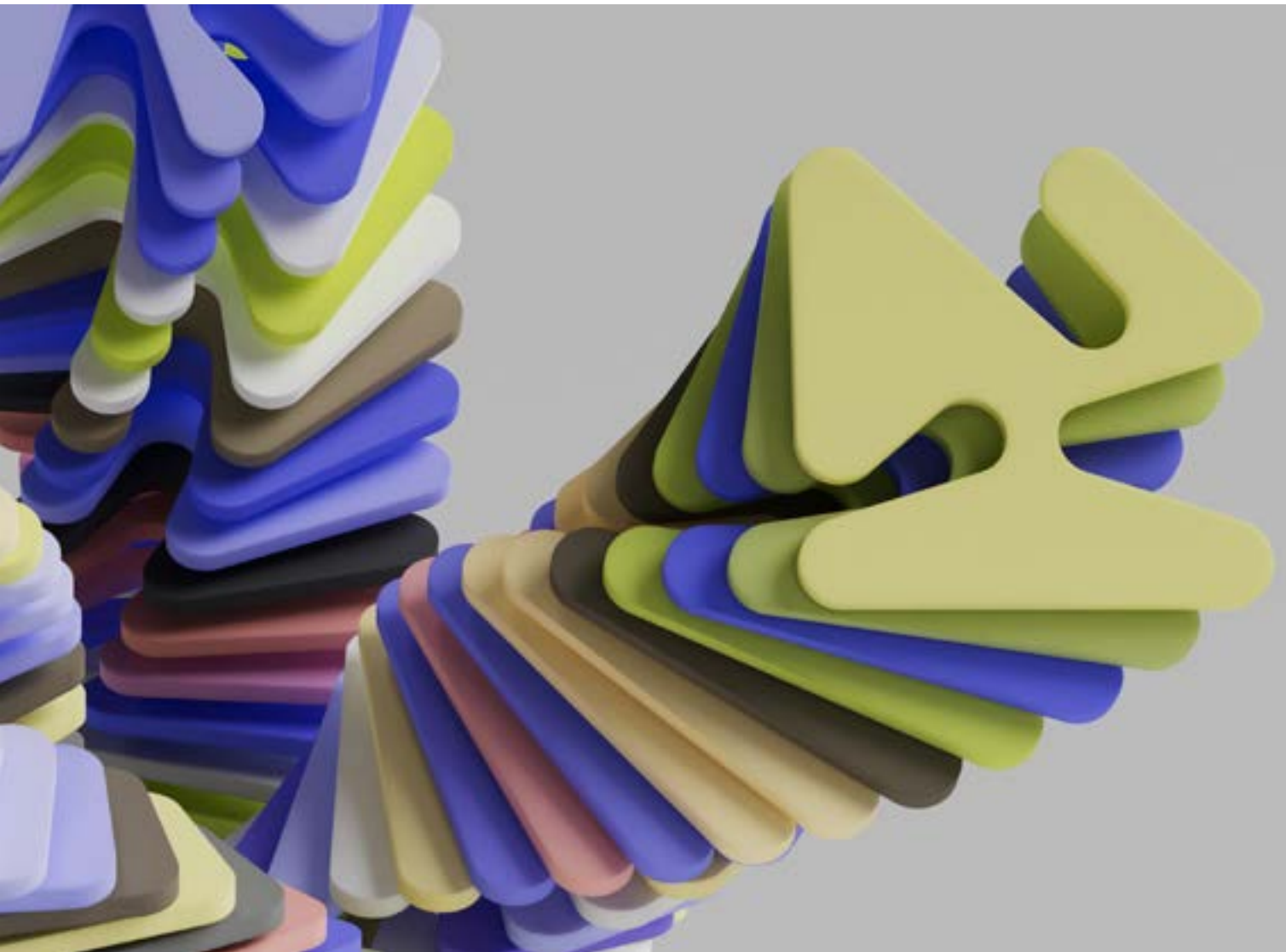



# The Research Council of Norway's strategy



# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Six main trends form the basis of the new strategy                    | 6  |
| <hr/>   |    |
| The challenges place new demands on research and the Research Council | 7  |
| <hr/>   |    |
| High quality, accessible research                                     | 9  |
| <hr/>   |    |
| Environmental, social and economic sustainability                     | 10 |
| <hr/>   |    |
| Strengthened competitiveness and innovation capacity                  | 11 |
| <hr/>   |    |
| A well-functioning research system                                    | 12 |
| <hr/>   |    |
| Good advice   | 13 |
| <hr/>   |    |
| Organisational development  | 14 |

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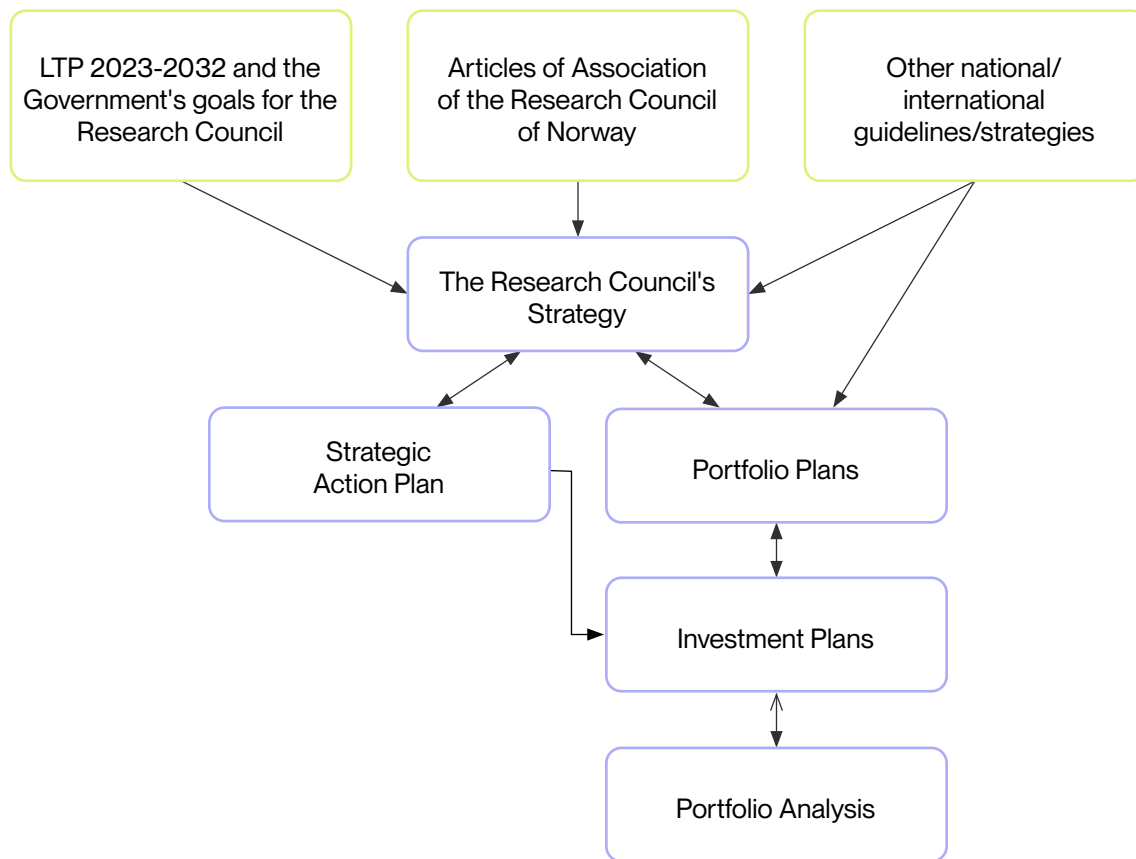
Delivering the  
power of ideas  
the world needs

Norway has a strong, competent and independent Research Council. The Research Council of Norway works to promote a society in which research is created, used, challenged, valued and shared through effective instruments for research and research-based innovation. We contribute to increasing the quality of research through our own and international competitive arenas, we provide independent advice on research and innovation policy, and we help to ensure that knowledge is used to solve major societal challenges.

The long-term plan for research and higher education, the Research Council's statutes and the Norwegian government's objectives for the Research Council provide the framework for our activities and form the basis for this strategy. Like the long-term plan, our strategy has a long-term perspective and is not limited in time.

The strategy was revised in the spring of 2026. Updated priorities show what the Research Council will do differently in light of a changed set of challenges.

# The strategy in the Research Council's management system



# Six main trends form the basis for the revised strategy



changes in the global order



changes in the security paradigm



accelerating climate change and nature degradation



accelerating technology development



increasing demographic imbalances



threats to democracy

**Source:** European Commission Strategic Foresight Report 2025, our translation.

Current societal development is characterised by rapid changes and increased uncertainty. The rules-based international order is weakening and the global landscape is becoming increasingly fragmented. There is a shift in power towards authoritarian regimes, and democracy and fundamental values are under threat in many countries. In a short time, security has become a key factor in all politics, and political priorities are characterised by the simultaneous pursuit of economic competitiveness and strategic autonomy.

Technology is key to future competitiveness, and requires managing the associated risks to security, privacy, climate and the environment, democracy, trust and cohesion. In particular, artificial intelligence has the potential to create major upheavals – both positive and negative.

There is concern that algorithm-based, personal information sources limit the common space for democratic debate, while a few tech billionaires gain increasing influence on politics and people's everyday lives. Artificial intelligence increases research and innovation actors' opportunities within data analysis, simulation and hypothesis development, and has helped to bring together previously independent technological domains in ways that promote faster and deeper convergence. Developments, in turn, drive innovation, new applications and new governance challenges.

At the same time as attention to security policy and technological developments has increased, issues related to the environment and climate have received reduced international attention. The consequences of climate change and the degradation of nature have worsened, and have now reached levels that are more difficult to manage. Demographic changes will also have very significant future ripple effects on the welfare of the population and society's resilience, but are often given less attention than the challenges indicate.

# Current challenges place new demands on research and the Research Council

Current challenges require a strong Norwegian commitment to research and innovation. On the one hand, there is a need to mobilise offensively to meet known challenges and exploit opportunities related to existing forces. On the other hand, a targeted investment in basic and groundbreaking research is needed that can lay the foundation for responding to future challenges we do not yet know, and build new competitive advantages. By funding the best research and innovation projects, linking actors in new partnerships and actively advising the authorities, the Research Council can contribute to strengthening scientific quality, increasing value and innovation in the business sector and the public sector, and addressing major societal challenges.

Norway must strengthen its capacity for research breakthroughs and long-term knowledge development in order to assert itself in the international competition for access to knowledge, talent and technology. The Research Council's schemes for quality-driven groundbreaking research are an important contribution, which create new insights that are of great importance for societal development, value creation and innovation.

The Research Council also contributes to innovation more directly, through its central position in the industry-oriented support system. The Norwegian industry structure of the future must be based on value creation in knowledge-based industries. This requires stronger links

between the business sector and research institutions, good cooperation in the support system and better coherence between research and innovation policy and other policy areas.

The new geopolitical reality we are facing calls for the creation of better links between civilian and military research and innovation efforts, and improved measures for protecting sensitive research. At the same time, a balanced approach to research security is required that does not adversely affect international cooperation unnecessarily. Research must be as open as possible and as closed as necessary.

The security policy challenges call for a critical assessment of how international research cooperation is organised. Well-functioning international cooperation constellations are essential. Nordic cooperation, the EU's next framework programme and the Competitiveness Fund will be key elements in the Research Council's work on international cooperation in the future.

Academic freedom is under pressure in many countries. International research collaboration must be based on equality and the autonomy of research. These basic principles must be upheld and actively defended. At a time when scepticism towards scientifically based knowledge is increasingly expressed internationally, it is important that the Research Council contributes to maintaining and strengthening confidence in research.

# Our vision, values, and target area



# Target area:

## High quality, accessible research



### Priorities:

- Strengthen ground-breaking research and develop new approaches to stimulate high-risk high-gain research, more world-leading research environments and international collaboration.
- Encourage better links between high-quality basic research, societal challenges and innovation in order to contribute to increased international competitiveness.
- Take the lead in efforts to make research as open as possible through measures to ensure open access to publications, sharing of research data and reform of research assessment.
- Ensure trust in research through the development of a better knowledge base on what inhibits and promotes trust, as well as the development of new, broad alliances of actors who can communicate the value of research in new ways.

The Research Council works systematically to strengthen the quality and international impact of Norwegian research through our national competitive arenas. We promote innovative research ideas, the development of world-leading academic environments and adapted career paths for a diverse range of promising researchers.

We work actively to defend and promote academic freedom – a prerequisite for scientific quality, well-functioning democracies and public confidence in research. A key part of our responsibility is to ensure that new knowledge is widely shared, and that the findings and results of research are actively used in society and business.

# Target area:

## Environmental, social and economic sustainability



### Priorities:

- Help ensure that research and innovation efforts are more closely linked to other policy areas through new ways of working.
- Contribute to targeted investments in international research cooperation on environmental sustainability in light of changed conditions for international cooperation in the field.
- Facilitate responsible technology development and use in society in general and in the research sector in particular, given the society-changing potential of technologies.
- Ensure good management of research on the Arctic and the High North, given the increased importance of these areas for energy, climate and geopolitical stability.
- Contribute to targeted investments in research aimed at social sustainability and democratic resilience in the face of increasing demographic imbalances and threats to democracy.

The Research Council promotes cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral research and innovation processes that contribute to solving important societal challenges and ensure that new knowledge is adopted more quickly.

We work purposefully to stimulate knowledge development in line with the Government's research policy priorities, so that society has access to necessary knowledge.

We strengthen international research collaboration to meet common challenges related to sustainability, and we contribute to a good research culture characterised by responsibility, academic freedom, gender equality and diversity.

# Target area:

## Strengthened competitiveness and innovation capacity



Photo: Anne Valeur

The Research Council contributes to building quality, capacity, adaptability and long-term competitiveness in the private and public sectors. We direct research and innovation towards value creation, sustainable transitions and efficient services throughout the country, through flexible and needs-based schemes

for the business sector, the public sector and research institutions. We support research and research-based innovation in artificial intelligence and digital technologies and strengthen knowledge about their application and societal impacts.

### Priorities:

- Intensify efforts and develop new measures to stimulate commercialisation, entrepreneurship and increased private investment in research and innovation.
- Build capacity and quality through collaboration between the best environments nationally and internationally in technology areas which are critical for international competitiveness and national societal development.
- Strengthen the innovation capacity of the public sector through targeted partnerships and user-oriented research, enabling the broad introduction of new technology and new ways of working.

# Target area:

## A well-functioning research system



### Priorities:

- Work for better links between civilian and military research efforts and the development of working methods that ensure that research can be as open as possible and as closed as necessary.
- Strengthen efforts to ensure that the success of Norwegian research and innovation communities in the EU's competitive arenas and further develop our ability to create good strategic coherence between European and national initiatives.
- Further develop cooperation with priority countries and regions in priority thematic areas.
- Work to improve the coherence between investments in research infrastructure and investments in ground-breaking research and innovation and ensure that the infrastructures are accessible to relevant research and innovation communities.

The Research Council works to develop a well-functioning research and innovation system of high quality that is able to meet society's restructuring needs. We facilitate Norwegian research communities' access to state-of-the-art research infrastructure and secure data storage.

We work for the internationalisation of research by contributing to good interaction between the national and international research systems, so that Norwegian communities can participate in and influence global knowledge arenas.

# Target area: Good advice



Photo: Magnus Varnem

## **Priorities:**

- Further develop our ability to provide comprehensive advice on the development of the research and innovation system that goes beyond the Research Council's policy instruments.
- Strengthen and highlight the knowledge base for our advice.
- Further develop our meeting place and advisory function so that we mobilize and include a greater breadth of actors with the goal of increased engagement and understanding of the value of research.

The Research Council provides the authorities with advice as a basis for formulating research policy and sets the direction for the research and innovation policy discussion in collaboration with relevant actors.

We contribute added value to the ministries' public policy and cross-sectoral initiatives through analyses, insight work and strategic advice that links research, policy and societal needs.

We provide advice on international research policy in a global community of research and innovation actors and through international offices.

# Target area: Organisational development



The Research Council develops the organisation through a systematic approach to policy instrument development that ensures accurate and future-oriented schemes. We simplify and digitize our services and work processes to increase quality and flexibility, with the goal of providing better user experiences, freeing up time and improving the knowledge base about our own organisation. We develop expertise throughout

the organisation to improve consulting, products and work processes through experimentation, learning and clear priorities. We facilitate well-being and engagement through good work processes, coping and development opportunities, as well as inclusive social and academic arenas, to ensure the Research Council is an attractive and learning organisation in continuous development.

## Priorities:

- Ensure stable and safe operations through strengthened security and emergency preparedness.
- Develop the competence in the organisation to improve policy instruments through a knowledge-based, experimental design, with the aim of better and more effective forms of support.
- Explore how artificial intelligence affects and can be leveraged in our core processes and use AI tools actively to make better decisions and increase efficiency internally and among our users.

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