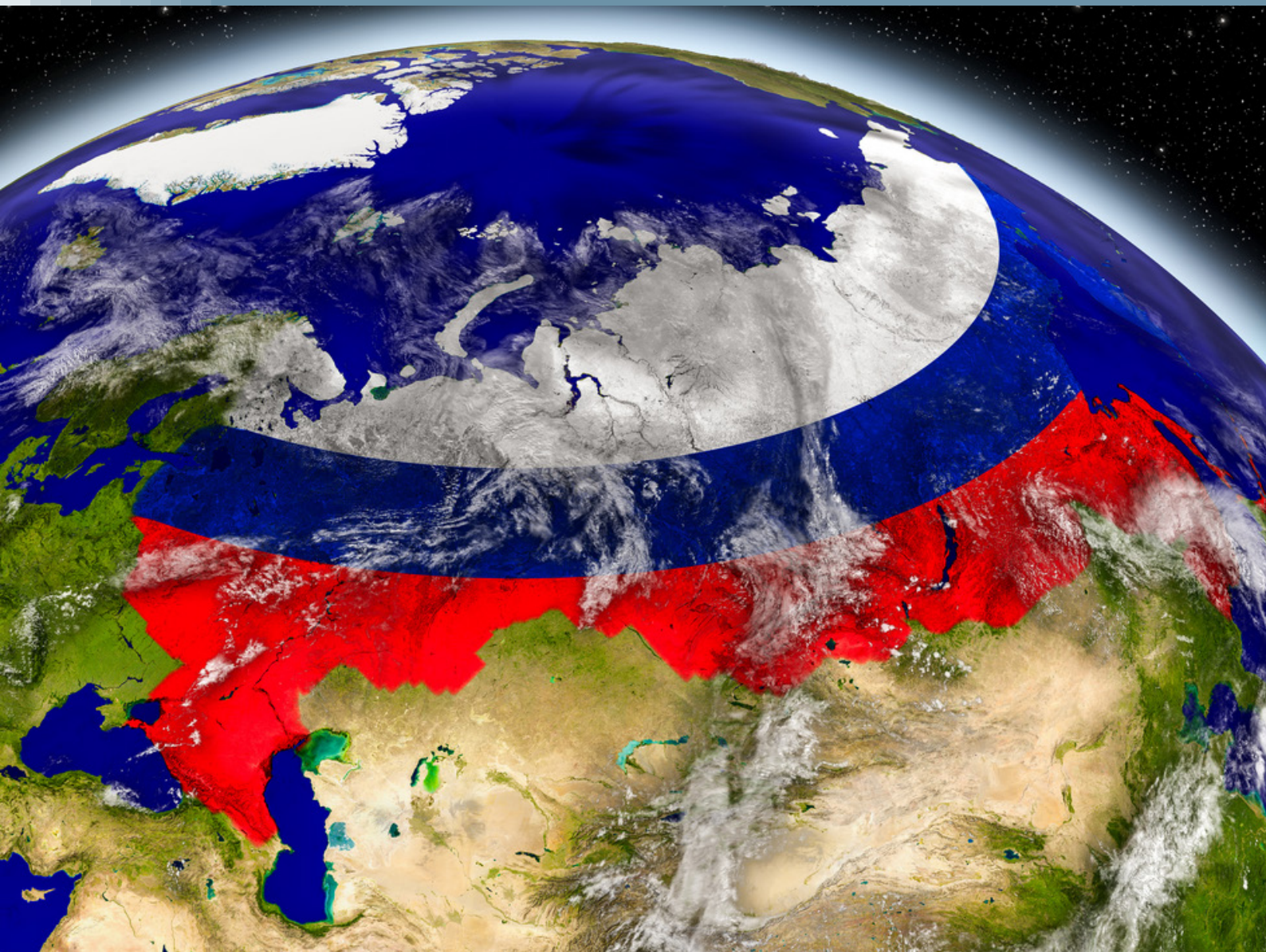


Work programme 2017–2023

Programme
The High North and Russia – NORRUSS Pluss



Work programme 2017-2023

The High North and Russia – NORRUSS Pluss

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The report can be ordered and downloaded at
www.forskningsradet.no/publikasjoner

English translation: Carol B. Eckmann

Graphic design cover: Melkeveien.no

Photo/illustration: Shutterstock

Oslo, 2017 October

ISBN 978-82-12-03641-3 (pdf)

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1 Introduction

Since its inception in 2012, the NORRUSS programme has established itself as the primary research funding mechanism for Norwegian research on The High North and Russia, and has become a vital part of the research portfolio financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed by the Research Council of Norway.

The start of a new funding cycle in 2017 calls for a new NORRUSS research programme that builds on past successes and experience and, more importantly, captures the realities of the rapidly changing political and socio-economic environment of Russia and High North/Arctic research in years to come.

In addition, the new NORRUSS programme has several other important underlying objectives, including further strengthening of Norwegian Russia research groups and institutions, and working to ensure that Norwegian Russia and High North research is more significant for policy-makers and generates more actionable input for policy makers.

The NORRUSS programme builds on good practice and lessons learnt from the first phase of the programme. This document has been adopted by the Research Board for the Division for Society and Health as the work programme for the new NORRUSS programme, based on the experiences of the NORRUSS1 programme, the programme's mid-term evaluation, the developments in the international policy and security agenda and the reviews and comments from relevant partners representing the end users of the research outputs.

Key documents for the programme are:

- The mid-term evaluation of the programme conducted by Oxford Research in 2014.
- Norway's Arctic Policy, April 2017, *Between Geopolitics and Regional Development*
- Meld. St. 36 (2016–2017) Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy, white paper from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The Norwegian Governments's Ocean Strategy, May 2017, *New Growth, Proud History*
- Strategy on International Cooperation for the Research Council of Norway with its eight priority countries outside of the EU/EEA.

2. Summary of the work programme

The international research landscape is rapidly changing. Global cooperation is needed to solve today's global challenges. While Norway continues to give priority to European cooperation as one of its main arenas for international collaboration, the Research Council is seeking to expand bilateral partnerships with strong and emerging research nations outside of Europe as well. Russia has been designated as one of the Research Council's eight priority countries outside of the EU/EEA. A roadmap for bilateral research cooperation with Russia has been drawn up to highlight the strategic priority areas for Norwegian-Russian research cooperation.

The NORRUSS programme seeks to expand, reinforce and renew the scope of the research being conducted by Norwegian research institutions on a wide range of issues related to Russia and to the High North.

Furthermore, the programme will benefit research on relevant issues in countries in the Eastern Partnership, with an emphasis on Ukraine, but also Georgia and Moldova.

In the last year, a growing number of countries have turned their attention towards the northern areas – the High North and the Arctic – to engage in research and activities associated with climate change, resource management and international cooperation. The increasing geopolitical interest in the region calls for wide-ranging, interdisciplinary research into the strategic interests of the various countries as well as their policies relating to the area.

Security policy, environmental and natural resource management, business activity and social development in the Arctic must be based on sound scientific knowledge.

The oceans, climate change and the environment are key topics in current Arctic research. It will also be important to develop more knowledge on sustainable social and business development in the Arctic.

Russia which has the longest Arctic Sea coastline of any state, and is Norway's neighbour in the north, is an important research partner in polar, climate and energy research. Communication across the Norwegian-Russian border in the north has increased due to the active Barents cooperation, opening up new research areas within the social sciences such as economics, innovation and health-related topics.

Russia has many interests not only in Europe, but also in the Middle East, the Caucasus and Asia, which make it an important neighbour, making it a constant factor in Norway's domestic and foreign policy as well.

Russia has the largest population in Europe and its highly competent research and innovation sector continues to be seen as an interesting research and industrial partner. With a consumer market waiting to expand, a thorough knowledge of the Russian economics and trade environment is of importance for the Norwegian business sector.

It is thus of great importance for Norway to continue to deepen and broaden its understanding of today's Russia in order to develop a picture of the future. The new NORRUSS programme introduces new resources for research on Russia and its national and international challenges and opportunities, as well as on mainstream issues within Russian society.

Developments in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova are all important elements in understanding the broader dynamics taking place in this region and beyond. These countries follow different trajectories and are different in size as well as domestic political developments. However, they all share a common aspiration to continue European integration.

The programme will focus on the following thematic priority areas:

- Challenges and opportunities in the High North and the Arctic
 - Geopolitics and governance
 - Resources and environmental challenges in the oceans
 - Social and economic development, business activity
- Russian foreign relations, geopolitics and security
- Developments in Russia; politics, economy and society
- Developments in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

2 Background and challenges

2.1 Background

In the white paper on Norwegian foreign and security policy and the Norway's new Arctic - *"between Geopolitics and Regional Development"* the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirms that the High North and the Arctic are important for Norway as an area where countries from three continents work together to learn more about ongoing global climate change and its impact on the management of the region's resources.

Growing international interest and activity in the region provide stepping stones to increased international cooperation. But they also bring challenges regarding the need to understand the respective stakeholders' political and strategic ambitions for the region. Norway has centuries of experience in managing activities and research in the north. Norway intends to take an active role in the future sustainable development of the region, with regard to resource management, business and societal development and international security issues. This means that the long-term cooperation with Russia on research and resource management will continue to be of importance. The bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the Barents Region and within the Arctic Council are important building blocks for further expansion of research and innovation.

2.1.1 Points of departure for the new NORRUSS programme

There are several points of departure that define the new NORRUSS programme, including the experience of the previous programmes; the programme context set by Norwegian government policies in regard to Russia as well as the High North and the Arctic; the need for a long-term planning perspective; and an in-depth analysis of current trends that have medium- and long-term ramifications.

The mid-term evaluation conducted by Oxford Research AS in 2014 concluded that the programme objectives were ambitious and had a long-term perspective, including:

- to develop long-term and strategic competence in Norway on the High North;
- to develop long-term and strategic competence in Norway on Russia within the social sciences and humanities, as well as research cooperation with Russia;
- to develop new knowledge on foreign policy issues of special relevance to the High North/Arctic, with a focus on the interests of China, Japan, South Korea and India.

With regard to the first two objectives, the evaluation saw the NORRUSS programme as "being on the right path in order 'to develop long term and strategic competence' in the field," but with "room for improvement and need for continuation of the programme, in order to develop long term expertise."

The evaluation further stated: "the programme has managed to sustain the existing competence on Russia and the High North, and allow existing research groups to maintain their thematic focus and size. The two main objectives of the programme require more focus in the future, through financing of recruitment positions and further strengthening of the strategic research conducted in the existing groups."

Another finding in the evaluation was that the programme should give greater focus to larger projects with a longer project duration (allowing projects to last for 4-5 years), as this would increase strategic influence on the research community and promote greater sustainability of the research clusters. This could also open up for recruitment positions such as Ph.D. and post-doctoral positions.

A general finding in the evaluation of the research topics was that more studies are needed on the development of the political regime in Russia, and the regime's interaction with economy, security, policy, etc.

2.1.2 Achievements and lessons learnt

An important lesson that has been learnt is that the research environment in Russia can be unpredictable, which can pose challenges to research in more politically sensitive areas such as governance and corruption, political protest and geopolitics. Even in less sensitive topics, research groups conducting NORRUSS projects have increasingly reported that there were challenges in relation to their research activities in Russia.

The programme board has been fully aware of these challenges and various other issues pertaining to the feasibility of carrying out projects involving politically sensitive topics, and has consistently operated within the programme requirement that projects must include Russia-based partners. Overall, this can be said to have led to some underrepresentation of certain research topics, an issue that was also raised in the mid-term evaluation of the programme. To rectify this, the implementation of more projects on Russian security, foreign policy and geopolitics will be required under the NORRUSS-2 programme.

2.2 Challenges

From a research perspective, the previous NORRUSS programme had two key strengths. Firstly, it allowed a considerable range in thematic areas, thus promoting the development of high-quality research in very different areas of Russia research in the humanities and social sciences. Secondly, the overall scope enabled the programme board and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to target strategic areas of research in the various calls, thereby responding to important domestic and international developments relating to Russia. The two thematic priority areas were (i) *Challenges and opportunities in the High North. Russia's relations with the outside world*; and (ii) *Developments in Russia: politics, economy and society*.

A key task for the new programme is to find the right balance between an adequate range of thematic areas and ability to maintain a clear focus when it comes to future calls for proposals. Clearly, the new programme cannot merely replicate the previous thematic areas. At the same time, it must encompass the latitude needed to respond to the changing Russian and international environment, as well as a long-term perspective that ensures that the programme and its thematic areas remain relevant for years to come.

2.2.1 The High North and the Ocean area of the Arctic

The world is feeling the effects of global warming, and nowhere are these more pronounced than in the Arctic. Over the last 100 years, temperatures in the Arctic have risen twice as fast as the global average. The effects of climate change are also far more visible there. A relatively slight rise in temperature can change entire landscapes because most parts of the Arctic are shaped by ice, not rock or earth. Currently, the ice is melting faster than ever. Less ice means more access. More access means more human activity. What kind of impact will this have on governance issues, and what kind of challenges will emerge in relation to security, politics, economic activity and the welfare of the population?

There is renewed interest in the overarching issues of geopolitics, climate change and geoeconomics in the Arctic/High North. The programme will build on and continue the work already carried out under the Geopolitikk Nord and the NORRUSS programmes. The *strategy paper, Norway's Arctic Policy - Between Geopolitics and Regional Development*, also provides part of the foundation for determining the thematic priority areas set out for the programme.

In the Norwegian Government's Ocean Strategy, *New Growth, Proud History*, it is stated that one of the great challenges of the future will be to balance the need for increased production with the requirements for stronger protection of the ocean resource base. Norway must ensure sustainable ocean development in collaboration with other countries. The ocean is about more than just creating jobs and further growth. The ocean will also be vital in meeting many of today's major global challenges. At the same time, new technology, more digitization and new production methods gives opportunities for cross border business cooperation and for cooperation between research and industry in order to facilitate blue growth.

2.2.2 Russia as a key global actor

Since the launch of the first NORRUSS programme, Russia has become an increasingly prominent international actor. This has had repercussions for Norway and Norway's relations with Russia. Russian military engagement in Ukraine and Syria and a more active Russian role in political processes in Europe have had an impact on Norwegian perceptions of Russia, on political and economic relations with Russia, and on matters of Norwegian national security. Thus, the new NORRUSS programme will need to give greater consideration to Russia's role in international relations. A way forward for the new programme would be to capture cooperation and conflict in a changing world more broadly while retaining a focus on Russia and Eurasia.

Although the previous programme acknowledged the interdependencies between Russia's foreign relations and Russian domestic issues, the actual projects did not necessarily explore these interdependencies in depth. The new programme aims to highlight this nexus more strongly, and to encourage projects to research these interdependencies in their complexity, not as an extension of each other. "The domestic/foreign nexus takes on very different forms in Russia, and can be found in the continuing influence of structural factors: geography, issues of history and historical memory; civilizational and ideological biases; and perceptions of identity. In addition, it is also reflected in political strategies, financial interests, societal pressures (nationalism, democratic sentiments, religious and social conservatism), as well as in the impact of specific domestic and international

events.”¹ The domestic/foreign nexus is also important for understanding Russia in the context of regional and global processes. The previous programme’s mandate for projects dealing with Russia’s relations with the outside world will be strengthened by the new programme’s imperative to contextualise Russia’s role in regional and global processes with reference to the domestic/foreign nexus.

3 Objectives of the programme

This NORRUSS programme aims to contribute to knowledge-based discussion about the High North, the Arctic, Russia as well as countries in the Eurasian Partnership, in the public sphere as well as the public administration and at the policy-making level of the Norwegian government. To achieve this, research activities will be conducted in light of the following objectives:

Primary objectives

1. To expand knowledge on geopolitical and foreign policy issues of relevance to the High North and the Arctic.
2. To develop long-term strategic expertise in Norway on Russia with regard to both its domestic situation and its foreign relations.
3. To generate research findings of high scientific quality and strengthen the Norwegian research community.

Secondary objectives

- To promote international research cooperation and networking with established research institutions.
- To promote a multi-disciplinary approach when appropriate and to encourage the use of innovative methodologies.
- To support projects within different disciplines such as political science, sociology, economics, law, history, media studies, social policy, and climate and environmental studies.
- To actively disseminate research findings to political authorities, public administration, trade and industry, media as well as other groups involved in High North and Arctic issues and Norwegian-Russian dialogue and cooperation.

4 Thematic and scientific priority areas

As the programme is open-ended, with no set end date, the work programme will be revised every third year. Hence the thematic priority areas are subject to change during revision. This will help to keep the programme up-to-date and flexible in relation to the changing international political and economic situation.

The topics listed below are given as examples of relevant research topics. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the possible research topics for the programme. The calls for proposals will define the relevant thematic scope and requirements of the applications in accordance with the three thematic priority areas.

¹ Lo, Bobo (2015) p. xix

The programme will give emphasis to projects that will be of relevance to authorities and stakeholders that formulate and execute Norway's policies in relation to Russia and in the High North; i.e. the projects should, whenever possible, have an applied impact.

Thematic priority areas

The programme will focus on the following thematic areas:

- Challenges and opportunities in the High North and the Arctic
 - Geopolitics and governance
 - Ocean based resources and environmental challenges
 - Social and economic development, business activity
- Russian foreign relations, geopolitics and security
- Developments in Russia; politics, economy and society
- Developments in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

4.1 Challenges and opportunities in the High North and the Arctic

A. *Geopolitics and governance in the north*

Geopolitics denotes the interplay of natural resources, geographic space and strategic dominance, whereas governance is about creating and operating institutions that structure the interaction of state and non-state actors in pursuit of individual and collective interests.

The Arctic is a region of significant and increasing geopolitical importance. It is key to our ability to understand and manage climate change, and its natural resources offer major opportunities for business development and value creation. As the ice retreats, the Arctic countries will no longer be divided by the ice, but connected by the ocean. It will open up new possibilities for trade and transport; mining and minerals; oil and gas; research and education.

The migration of fish stocks into new areas and introduction of new species may open new fishing and harvesting areas. These and other developments may generate conflict but may also strengthen incentives for cooperation.

Norway's High North policy seeks to strengthen the country's ability to exercise its authority and to promote Norwegian interests in the north. This is done through international cooperation within the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension. Better insight into the challenges and potential of these mechanisms would be of value, including the various priorities and aims of the different actors.

Relevant research topics include, among others, how Arctic change relates to processes and drivers at the global level, including developments in the law of the sea and politics and the rising prominence of Asian states in the world economy.

B. Ocean based resources and environmental challenges

Around 10% of Norway's population lives north of the Arctic Circle. People have harvested resources in the north for thousands of years. The Arctic is rich in minerals, oil and gas, and fish and seafood. Research on climate change and marine biology is paving the way for new businesses.

But climate change also has negative impacts. The effects of global warming in the Russian north include permafrost degradation; increasing ambient air temperatures, precipitation and frequency of extreme events; and an overall softening of the extreme climate. Much of the land area in the Russian Arctic Zone consists of permafrost. Vast permafrost areas are turning into swamp due to their southerly location. In addition, the vast Siberian permafrost area sits on top of large methane deposits that will further exacerbate global climate change if and when they are released due to permafrost degradation.

Furthermore, ocean warming has an impact on marine ecosystems, leading to migration of fish stocks into new areas. The northward and eastward shift of species will depend on density distribution, temperature and food conditions, but there are already clear challenges being posed to established resource management systems as the harvesting industry and trawlers follow the stocks into new areas. Relevant research topics here include challenges and synergies in resource management and cross-border industry cooperation.

Roughly half of Norway's undiscovered petroleum resources lie in the Barents Sea. The area is also home to large, important fisheries resources. In 2010 Norway and Russia came to an agreement on the maritime delimitation line in the eastern Barents Sea. Exploration for oil and gas is now undergoing on both sides of the boarder and there is great expectation for discoveries. Norwegian and Russian, as well as International oil companies, are active on either side, even though the regulation and licensing is very different in the two countries.

Petroleum exploration in this area opens up opportunities for value creation on both national and local scale, and can foster closer collaboration between Norwegian and Russian businesses, on environmental protection and control and between research institutions studying the area. But unintended events or accidents can also trigger disputes. Large discoveries of petroleum will demand a long-term plan for bringing the products to market. This can give rise to increased business opportunities on both sides, but also spur conflict if not handled properly.

A long-term approach to building knowledge and competence in Norwegian institutions on the Russian oil and gas sector and industrial development in the Northern areas will therefore be important for Norway in the years to come. This includes research to understand (a) Russia's potential as an exporter and competitor, (b) terms and opportunities for Norwegian investments in the Russian petroleum sector, and (c) the petroleum sector's importance for political and economic development in Russia.

C. Social and economic development, business activity

There are numerous opportunities for development in the High North, and the Government's new Ocean Strategy and the revised High North Strategy both promote further growth in the region from the Norwegian side. Innovation and cross-border cooperation to enhance business development in the north is vital for the wellbeing of the inhabitants/population of the High North.

Education, health services, public infrastructure and urban living should be further developed, making use of digital solutions in order to reach out to people living in communities far away from service providers. Best practices from neighbouring areas and win-win effects of municipal and regional cooperation should be applied.

Arctic states such as Russia, Iceland, Canada and Denmark and the other Nordic countries face many of the same challenges when it comes to safeguarding the health and welfare of their populations living in the High North. "The Arctic" does not denote an area of uniformity; there are many "Arctics." For example, as a result of the North Atlantic Current, temperature and ice conditions in the mostly ice-free Norwegian part of the Arctic are vastly different from those of Alaska. Climatic conditions and the amount of human activity vary greatly across the region. This calls for experience-sharing and cooperation in pursuit of best practices.

How will climate change affect settlements and urban areas in the circumpolar north? How will these changes influence the implementation of the Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation as well as the country's economy and ability to create growth in this area, with the subsequent challenges to sustainable and environment-friendly development?

Cross-disciplinary and cross-border cooperation could lead to new solutions for increasing employment, value creation and welfare in the regions, achieving a good balance between conservation and sustainable use of resources through sound management and international experience-sharing.

Relevant research topics here include the characteristics of living in the north (environment, economics, social structures and cultural transitions), special needs of the people living in the circumpolar region in relation to health and wellbeing, urban development / settlement patterns, innovation and business development. Projects that cooperate with industry sector will be linked to this thematic area.

4.2 Russian foreign relations, geopolitics and security

A. General trends, geopolitics and foreign policy

An important priority in this programme is to assess Russia's increasingly assertive role in international affairs and matters of foreign and security policy. Russia is a power with a global reach, and the NORRUSS programme and the projects it generates should accordingly aim at a wide perspective. Equally important is the need to highlight the interdependence of factors shaping Russia's foreign policy and issues of an internal and domestic nature.

Analyses of Russia's attitudes and conduct vis-à-vis Europe, and those aspects which have, or might have, a direct bearing on Norway and/or Norwegian-Russian relations, would be of particular value.

Russia relates to three "geopolitical spaces" – Eurasia, the Euro-Atlantic and the Asia-Pacific – each of which fulfils a particular function in the pursuit of Russian interests abroad. While Russia previously strived for participation membership in each of these three 'geopolitical spaces', the Ukraine crisis and its impact on Moscow's relations with the West led to a reorientation of Russia's geopolitical vision towards the East and towards Eurasia. Regardless of its multiple shortcomings, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) should not be dismissed out of hand. For Russia, it is the primary vehicle for realising its global geopolitical agenda.

Russia's narrative is shaped by, and shapes, a discourse about cultural and historical ties with Russian borderlands, as well as by the cultural and security vulnerabilities generated by the West's treatment of Russia, as evidenced by the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This discourse has underscored a more assertive foreign policy turn the last years.

The programme will open up to a broad research perspective covering relevant topics such as the change in international relations and security – with Russia as a key global actor, insights into Russian foreign and security policy, and Russia's interests and actions in the Middle East, Asia and the High North.

B. Geoeconomics, foreign economic relations

The domestic/foreign nexus is important for understanding Russia in the context of regional and global processes. What kind of potential impact will global forces such as globalisation, digitalisation and urbanisation have on the political, economic and business climate in Russia and in Russian relations to foreign markets?

One strategy has been "Sovereign Globalisation" by restoring Russia's economic strength through international integration and implemented reforms such as privatisation, monetary policy, fight against corruption and encouraging competition on the domestic market. It would be of interest to study whether these reforms lead to effects or change, as well as the extent to which they influence Russian policy-making when it comes to industrial and monetary issues.

There are long-term trends with negative implications for Russia, such as changes in the global structure of energy demand and supply, exhaustion of Russia's productive oil and gas fields, the absence of Russian representation among global companies outside the natural resources sector, the country's inadequate labour resources and the competitive global market for talent.

In its latest economic strategy, the Russian government has suggested a deeper engagement, on better terms, with the global economy as a tool for driving growth higher. Deeper cooperation is called for, in particular with regional groupings such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the BRICS countries.

The strategy reflects the latest shift in Russian thinking on how and on what terms to engage with the global economy since the break-up of the Soviet Union. On the one hand, a "securitisation" agenda seeks to protect Russia from pressure or manipulation of interdependence by hostile foreign powers. On the other hand, more liberal voices recognise that competitiveness and engagement are

essential for Russia's own long-term prosperity. These tensions also lie at the heart of differences now being publicly aired between teams of advisers tasked with drawing up alternative reform plans to be implemented after the 2018 presidential election.

Relevant topics here include the Russian shadow economy, investment climate for foreign investors, law and property rights, the Russian position on international trade and climate agreements, Russian investment policies and cooperation agendas with Asian countries.

C. Soft and hard power strategies

In its pursuit of a new and stronger position on the global stage, Russia is, or has at least been accused of, using a whole range of both "soft" and "hard" power strategies. To understand modern Russia it is also important to gain a better understanding of how these strategies work. What role, if any, do they play in Russian foreign policy? Are the strategies "designed" to influence other states, and if so, how?

Relevant topics here include exploring the role of information strategies in Russian domestic and foreign policies and the Russian use of media and information strategies as tools to achieve specific goals; understanding Russian identities/loyalties: How do ordinary Russians identify themselves with the different strategies used by the Russian government? Where does the loyalty of the "ordinary Russian" lie when faced with the range of soft and hard power strategies of the Russian government? There is also there is a need for increased knowledge about the military sector, both about military modernisation and the underlying strategies.

D. Russia's neighbouring regions

Ever since the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia has insisted that the post-Soviet space is a foreign and security policy priority area. Yet the organisational framework launched for pursuing this strategy – the CIS – has been superseded by the more exclusive Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Research into the actual performance of the Eurasian Economic Union, CSTO as well as CIS affairs are of key interest, not least in the context of China's launching of the One Belt, One Road infrastructure initiative, which may prove a game changer for Eurasia.

Concerning Russia's Western neighbours, relations with the European Union have turned more tense due to Russia's annexation of Crimea and support of separatists in Ukraine, which caused the EU, the United States and other nations to adopt restrictive measures against Russia. How the bilateral Europe-Russia relationship actually unfolds in the wake of this is another important area of research. The equally tense Russia-NATO relationship also deserves scrutiny as do more overlooked European issues such as Russia and the Council of Europe.

Lastly, the rise of China and potential emergence of a Sino-centric regional order will inevitably influence Russia's Far East and raise new challenges for the Kremlin, and thus merits research. Given that Russia is a great power in relative decline vis-à-vis its Asian neighbourhood, it is of general importance to study Asia-Russia dynamics and their possible repercussions for the Arctic as well as for domestic Russian developments.

In the neighbouring regions of Russia, like the Caucasus, the Central Asia and in the Far East global politics and conflict continues to pose challenges. Russia is an important actor with knowledge and experiences from these regions worthwhile to follow up more closely and to understand more thoroughly.

4.3 Developments in Russia: politics, economy and society

A. Political trends and challenges

Activities under this area will be targeted towards developments in Russian internal politics, economy and society, and the ambitions and interests of actors within the Russian political system.

Russian governance is typically described as an authoritarian system which has structures that are formally democratic, but daily practices and ways of thinking are influenced by the Soviet past. The last twenty-plus years have not diminished the importance of understanding both the specificities of the Russian state and its development trajectories.

Research should focus on the critical issues shaping Russia's domestic agenda: the relationship between formal and informal realms; the interdependence of property and power; dynamics of economic development and investment; centre-periphery relations; identity, demography and broader social trends; the need for modernisation and obstacles to its realisation.

Other relevant research topics here include: state governance and administration reforms; interest representation in Russian society; identity politics, the use of mass and social media, migration's impact on society; religion and religious communities in Russia; rule of law; development of the judiciary; and law enforcement agencies.

B. Economic trends and challenges

Russia's new Economic Security Strategy was approved in May 2017. This is the first such strategy since 1996. The strategy is clear on the economic challenges and threats that face Russia. Although mention is made of external challenges, the greatest emphasis is put on the domestic sources of Russia's weakness: lack of competitiveness, low investment and failure to innovate. The stated causes include, among others, high levels of criminality and corruption, excessive administrative barriers, ineffective state administration, a large shadow economy, lack of long-term investments, decline in the quality of education, poorly-developed market infrastructure and lack of participation in global supply chains.

Russia's economic insecurity lies mainly in its own domestic policies and institutions, and suggested solutions to the challenges involve introduction of reforms that will tackle the inefficiency, the corruption and other disincentives to investment and innovation. This includes educational reform, prevention of artificial bankruptcy and other forms of illicit corporate raiding, better management of state assets, prevention of money laundering, strengthened property rights, and a more attractive investment climate.

The population continues to be negatively affected by structural economic problems. Key issues include high dependency on the extractive industries, corruption and bureaucracy, a faltering pension system and labour market and insufficient investment in infrastructure. Weak development of the welfare state and institutional support for vulnerable groups undermine the human capital of the country.

Relevant research topics here include Russia's economy and macro-economic trends, economic and monetary policy-making, industrial policy-making, foreign investor relations, market conditions and Russian investments abroad.

C. Social trends and challenges

Russia has traditionally benefited from a wealth of human capital, most notably from its large and well-educated population. Today it faces a number of major societal challenges that undermine the human potential of the nation.

Since the early 1990s, Russia has experienced a period of population decline. Factors contributing to this trend include deteriorating public health and the failing health care system. While mortality rates have been improving over the last decade from their catastrophic highs in the 1990s, male mortality in particular remains significantly higher than in other industrialised countries. High rates of suicide and accidental death, alcoholism and drug addiction remain key societal challenges. Policy reforms in health care and pension systems are central to addressing these trends and their effectiveness and differential impact on the population is an important research area.

Youth and expert emigration (known as "brain drain") continues to negatively affect Russian society. Educational reform and its impacts on social mobility and equality is also an important research issue.

The rapid marketisation of Russia has left a legacy of social inequality with wealth inequality reportedly the highest in the world. The levels of social inequality and their regional and socio-demographic concentration are important research questions not least because social inequality is increasingly a source of political concern and mobilisation, creating a window for potential policy input.

Alongside these challenges and structural issues, it is important that research pays attention to individual, group and societal responses to them. Attention to resilience, agency and collective action to meet these challenges is a possible strand of research. Relevant research topics here include studies that map individual strategies for coping with complex social needs or lifestyle responses to the strains of contemporary living as well as examples of active citizenship in the form of participation in residents' associations, veterans' or youth organisations or (online and offline) activism in social movements.

4.4 Developments in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

Developments in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova are all important elements in understanding the broader dynamics taking place in this region and beyond. These countries follow different trajectories and are different in size as well as domestic political developments. However, they all share a common aspiration to continue European integration.

Furthermore, over the past few years all three countries have had significant challenges in their relationship with Russia. From a European security point of view, a stable and prosperous development in these countries and in the region as a whole is of key importance. For Norway, it is important to understand the internal developments as well as the foreign and security policies of these countries.

Research within this area should have an emphasis on, but not limited to, reform efforts, European integration and security policy.

As this group of countries are ODA-eligible, funding will be granted to research projects that would contribute in strengthening the educational and research capacity in these countries. Hence, any research proposal should identify a partner in the mentioned countries. The purpose would be to produce research based knowledge of high quality which could enhance development, strengthening their own research capacity, and support better research competence in Norway on selected development issues in these countries.

5 Priorities for structuring the research effort

The NORRUSS programme is organised across a broad platform aimed at achieving policy relevance and impacts beyond academia. The NORRUSS programme board is appointed by the Research Board for the Division for Society and Health of the Research Council of Norway.

The programme board will work to ensure that the programme's activities are carried out in accordance with the guidelines set out in the work programme. The programme will comply with the guidelines stipulated for the Research Council's programmes.

Revision of the work programme

This programme is an open-ended programme, with no set end date. A revision of the programme will be undertaken regularly in order to ensure that the programme remains relevant to society and policy-makers alike.

Research landscape analysis

A research landscape analysis will be commissioned during the first two years of this programme to ensure the programme's thematic relevance and to identify research gaps and structural challenges within the Norwegian research community related to The High North and to Russia and geopolitics. The analysis should highlight the research areas covered in the first NORRUSS programme, relevant topics/questions, the Norwegian universities involved, the disciplines encompassed, other universities and other partners, the number of researchers (career stages, E&D etc.).

Ethics

The programme expects all researchers to abide by national, European and international standards of research integrity. Researchers should ensure that their research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards. This includes seeking ethical approval for research where appropriate. Researchers are also expected to treat colleagues with integrity, honesty and collegiality, including the fair provision of references and peer review.

Gender balance

The programme encourages gender balance in research teams and decision-making bodies in order to reach the target of 40% of the under-represented sex in panels and advisory groups.

Type of research

The NORRUSS programme is a challenge-based programme that requires co-production of research to meet its goals. The research should produce knowledge relevant for policy-making authorities and institutions, as well as for the public at large, in order to promote a public that is well-informed and able to analyse information in traditional and social media regarding the topics targeted in the programme. The calls for proposals will further define the type and scope of the projects. The primary application type to be used will be researcher projects, but innovation projects may be of relevance as well.

Building networks and recruitment

The NORRUSS-2 programme will fund high-quality researcher projects and post-graduate level research. Extended financial support to promote network building and more extensive umbrella projects will be considered. In order to ensure future recruitment to the research field, applications for Ph.D. student positions as well as post-doctoral fellowships may be included in the projects.

Innovation Projects for the Industrial Sector

Innovation Projects for the Industrial Sector and Cooperation projects with industrial actors may also be used as a funding instrument under the work programme. In the event this type of project is sought, the NORRUSS programme will establish cooperation with relevant Research Council industrial and innovation programmes.

Social dialogue and meeting places

The NORRUSS-2 programme will use the established communication channels with the government ministries. The programme seeks direct as well as indirect interaction with policy-makers to ensure the highest possible degree of policy relevance. The programme will take initiative to establish regular meeting places involving policy-makers and researchers.

Calls for proposals will among other things require applicants to include a plan for dialogue with relevant stakeholders, including use of relevant social media platforms and a dedicated, regularly updated project website. The programme's Facebook account will provide an additional informal platform for discussion and information sharing.

6 Cooperation with related instruments

In order to achieve its objectives, the NORRUSS programme may seek collaboration with other Research Council programmes and other funding agencies. Such cooperation will help to give projects access to relevant research from other sectors, thereby broadening project perspectives and promoting greater sharing of research findings. It may also add to the amount of funding available under the calls for proposals.

6.1 Research Council programmes

The following Research Council programmes are relevant for coordinated calls with the NORRUSS programme:

- **The Polar Research Programme (POLARPROG)** generates knowledge to enhance our understanding of the climate system and ecosystems in the Arctic and for use in the context of policy implementation, responsible resource management and industrial activity.
- **The Large-scale Programme on Climate Research (KLIMAFORSK)** is a broad-based, long-term programme aimed at generating new, future-oriented knowledge of national and international significance. There is long-standing cooperation between Norwegian research groups and Russian researchers.
- **The Large-scale Programme for Petroleum Research (PETROMAKS 2)** generates new knowledge and technology to facilitate the optimal utilisation of Norwegian petroleum resources and enhance the competitiveness of the Norwegian continental shelf.
- **The Norwegian Programme for Research Cooperation with China (CHINOR)** facilitates Sino-Norwegian cooperation through collaboration with thematic research programmes at the Research Council.
- **The Norwegian Programme for Research Cooperation with India (INDNOR)** promotes cooperation between India and Norway in the following thematic priority areas: international political issues, climate, the environment, clean energy and social development.
- **The Programme for User-driven Research Based Innovation (BIA)** funds industry-oriented research and has no thematic restrictions. This broad-based programme supports high-quality R&D projects with good industrial and socio-economic potential.
- **The Large-scale Programme on Health, Care and Welfare Services (HELSEVEL)** encompasses health and care services, social and welfare services, and child welfare. Services research and service innovation are the key components of the programme.
- **The Programme for Research and Innovation in the Educational Sector (FINNUT)** funds research across a wide scope from early childhood education and care to higher education and adult learning.

6.2 International calls

The Research Council of Norway signed a cooperation agreement with the Russian Foundation for Basic Research and the Russian Foundation for Humanities in 2012. Six joint calls for proposals have been issued since that time. These were administered by the NORRUSS programme on the Norwegian side, but included funding from the PETROMAKS 2, POLARPROG and MAROFF

programmes. The NORRUSS programme has participated in one call with the Russian Foundation for Basic Research and the Foundation for Humanities.²

The results of the joint calls have proven to be fruitful and have created added value for the research communities by opening up possibilities for extended research cooperation with Russian organisations. The Russian organisations administer their own funding, thus avoiding the issue of unwanted foreign influence on the Russian research system.

The NORRUSS-2 programme will also seek to cooperate with international programmes such as Horizon2020 and other relevant Nordic and European initiatives in order to strengthen ties to leading international expert environments and create added value through co-funding of projects.

7 Anticipated results, impacts and societal outcomes

7.1 Achieving long-term impact of the research

The second phase of the NORRUSS programme seeks to achieve long-term impact by means of the following activities:

- Encouraging and supporting research capacity-building and competency in Norway.
- Encouraging and supporting award holders in building sustainable partnerships and networks within Norway and overseas. This relates both to transnational academic partnerships/networks and to transnational cross-sectoral partnerships and networks.
- Supporting international collaboration, particularly that involving early career researchers in order to build capacity for opportunities for future collaborative research endeavours.
- Facilitating and encouraging knowledge exchange and engagement with public, private and third-sector organisations.
- Supporting and encouraging multi-disciplinary approaches to research questions when this is appropriate.
- Documenting and articulating the successes and effects of the previous research programme, including the approaches/pathways explored to provide lessons for award holders within this programme.
- Capturing programme-level performance indicators to track progress against the programme's objectives (building on the existing indicators).

² RFH merged into RFBR in 2016.

- Exploring programme-level approaches to:
 - Support greater communication and the dissemination of research. Using two-page policy briefings/recommendations in order to facilitate more communication and dissemination. Where relevant, industry and third-sector focused briefings/recommendations may also prove to be a useful stipulation for projects.
 - Facilitate rapid response approaches/short-term projects which offer syntheses of research for a specific policy-led challenge/question.
 - Theme/issue-led closed workshops with policy-makers to inform them of current research and to encourage greater understanding of pertinent challenges and issues.

While the impact of this programme will be measured through its achievements, the impact of research may also be seen through targeted approaches or serendipitously and can manifest itself over the course of the research project, towards the end of the project or significantly after the completion of the research project or the publication of the outcomes of the research. In order to understand and measure the impact of this programme over the next years in pragmatic terms, the focus will need to be on some of the more immediate likely effects of the programme:

- capacity-building of relevant expertise in Norway;
- building collaborative approaches and key networks which are both cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary;
- engagement with policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders as part of the research projects;
- the dissemination of research within an academic sphere;
- the targeted dissemination of research/research outcomes/briefings to public, private or third-sector organisations/individuals.

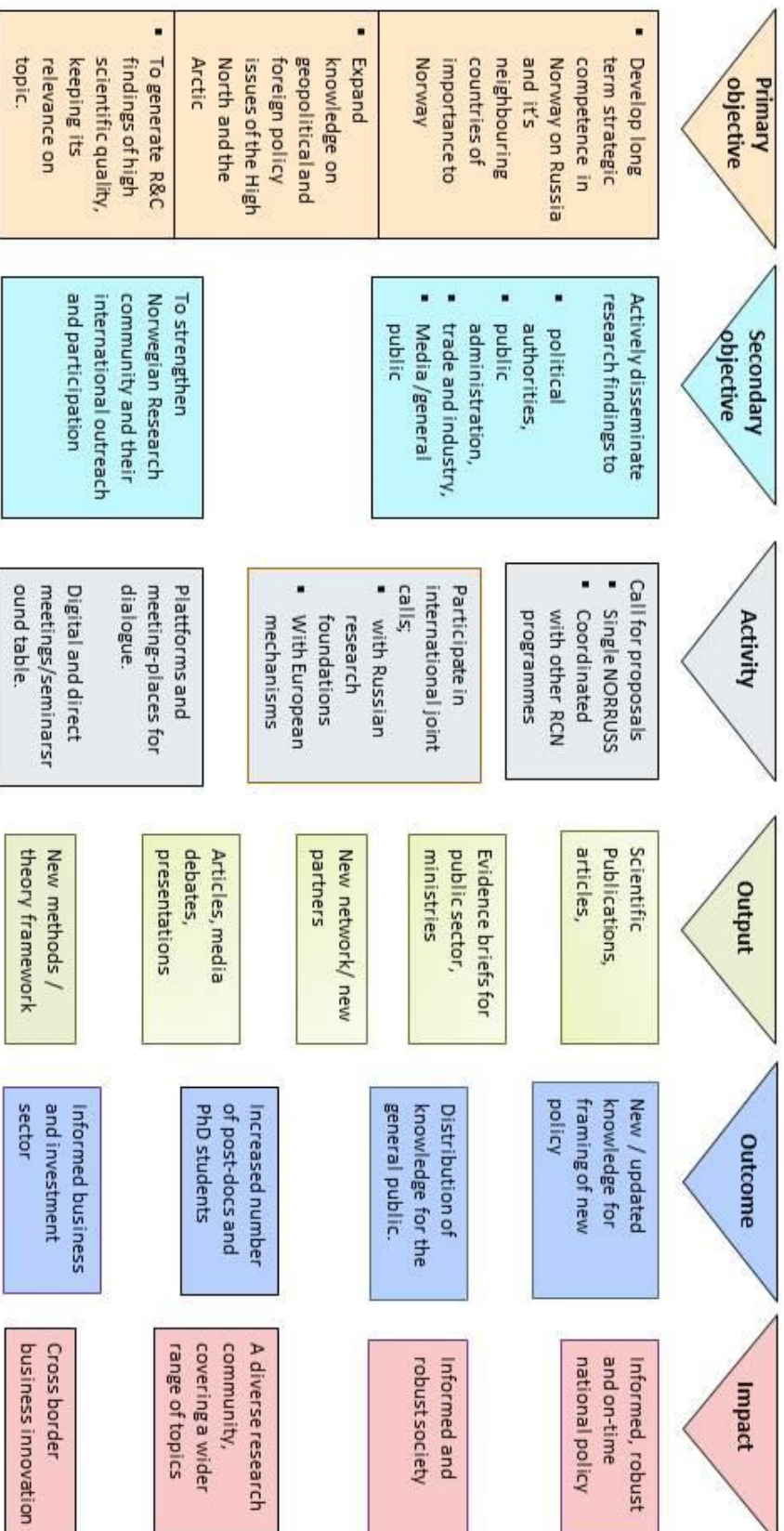
7.2 Performance indicators

Performance indicators provide a means of measuring and articulating the impact of the programme. Such indicators are provided in the reporting system of the Research Council. The results of the reporting are presented in annual programme reports and on a more general level within the Research Council.

The performance indicators are linked to:

- Gender diversity (project managers, post-doctoral fellows, Ph.D. students)
- Publications
- Collaborations, partnerships and networks
- Communication and engagement

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8 Resources and budget

Programme activities are financed via annual allocations from the funding ministries, with ambitions for a five-year budget.

A *preliminary schedule* for calls for proposals for the initial three-year period is shown below. Changes might occur.

Funding will be set aside for a research landscape analysis in addition to the calls for proposals (see page 13).

Schedule for funding announcements						
Thematic priority areas		Priorities for structuring the research effort		Funding announcements		
Thematic priority area	Amount	Type of support/measure	Amount	Title of funding announcement	Time period	Amount
Year 2018		Year 2018		Year 2018		
Thematic priority area A	30 mill.	Researcher projects	50 mill	Challenges and opportunities in the High North and Arctic	2018-2019 2018-2021	10 mill 10 mill
Thematic priority area B	18 mill	Innovation projects	10 mill	Russian Foreign Relations, Geopolitics and Security	2018-2021	18 mill
Thematic priority area C	12 mill			Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia	2018-2021	12 mill
				Crossborder business innovation in the High North	2018-2021	10 mill
Total	60 mill	Total	60 mill	Total		60 mill
Year 2019		Year 2019		Year 2019		
Thematic priority area A	20 mill	Researcher projects	30 mill	Challenges and opportunities in the High North and Arctic	2019-2022	20
Thematic priority area B	10 mill			Developments in Russia, Politics, Economy and Society	2019-2022	10
Total	30 mill	Total	30 mill	Total		30 mill
Year 2020		Year 2020		Year 2020		
Thematic priority area A	15 mill	Researcher projects	25 mill	Challenges and opportunities in the High North and Arctic	2020-2021 2020-2023	5 mill 10 mill
Thematic priority area B	10 mill			Russian Foreign Relations, Geopolitics and Security	2020-2023	10 mill
Total	25 mill	Total	25 mill.	Total		25 mill

9 Governance and organisation

Programme board

The NORRUSS programme is governed by the NORRUSS programme board, which has broad expertise in the topics for which the programme is responsible.

The programme board is appointed by the Research Board for the Division for Society and Health, which has the overall responsibility for the programme.

Funding announcements will be issued in compliance with the Research Council's overall principles and guidelines, and grant applications will be reviewed by international expert referees. The NORRUSS programme board will take the final decision regarding grant allocations based on an overall assessment of quality and relevance to the programme objectives. As part of the application review process, the programme board will also give consideration to the general programme portfolio to ensure that the programme objectives can be achieved.

Administration and key documents

The Research Council administration is responsible for following up project reporting and the general administration of the programme's activities relating to communication and meeting places.

The NORRUSS work programme is accompanied by an action plan, which is drawn up for a three-year period. The action plan also includes a communication plan and a three-year schedule for calls for proposals. The calls for proposals will be the most important tool for defining and shaping the programme profile.



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The High North and Russia

– NORRUSS Pluss,

www.rcn.no/norruss

The report can be ordered and

downloaded at

www.forskningsradet.no/publikasjoner

English translation: Carol B. Eckmann

Oslo, October 2017

ISBN 978-82-12-03641-3 (PDF)

Graphic design cover: melkeveien.no

Photo: Shutterstock