

# Research Strategy for the Foreign Service and Norad

2017–2024



Norwegian Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs



Norad

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# Foreword

Norwegian foreign, security and development policy must be knowledge-based, and ongoing capability to adjust policy in response to significant global change is vital. Norway's values are permanent, but political choices and actions must match the very real challenges that arise.

The Foreign Service and Norad should therefore promote the production of strong research-based knowledge in their areas of responsibility. This is also consistent with their sectoral responsibility for research and development pursuant to Norwegian research policy.

The Foreign Service and Norad invest in research and development to help ensure that policy development and decision-making reflect research-based knowledge, to promote long-term development of robust Norwegian research institutions in their priority sectors, and to support global knowledge production. Safeguarding Norwegian interests and achieving global goals – both in long-term processes and in response to unforeseen events – demands broad inter-disciplinary knowledge of the highest quality. Research must produce insights that provide answers to relevant challenges.

The purpose of this strategy is to clarify and focus the research activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic and consular missions and Norad. The strategy discusses principles, priority areas, instruments and stakeholders. Cooperation between Norwegian and foreign researchers is key. A further priority is effective communication of research results, to ensure that new knowledge is rapidly disseminated to institutional and other users.

The strategy must guide budget prioritisations and allocations. An additional purpose is to highlight for research institutions the research and development needs and priorities of the Foreign Service and Norad in the context of foreign, security and development policy.

# Objectives

Norway's research initiatives in the areas of foreign, security and development policy help to overcome global challenges and promote knowledge-based policy-making.

1. Intensified production and communication of relevant, high-quality research-based knowledge with potential to help resolve global challenges.
2. Norwegian research institutions have extensive expertise in the fields of foreign, security and development policy, and cooperate with leading international researchers and partners in developing countries.
3. Relevant research-based knowledge is made available to, and used by, decision-makers.
4. Stronger research capacity in developing countries.

## Definition of “research and development”

Research and development (R&D) can be defined as creative and systematic efforts to produce new knowledge (research) and find new applications for existing knowledge (development).

# Sectoral responsibility

In the research context, sectoral responsibility holds individual ministries accountable for research activities in their specialist areas as part of implementing overall government research policy. The Ministry of Education and Research has developed guidelines establishing that ministries shall:

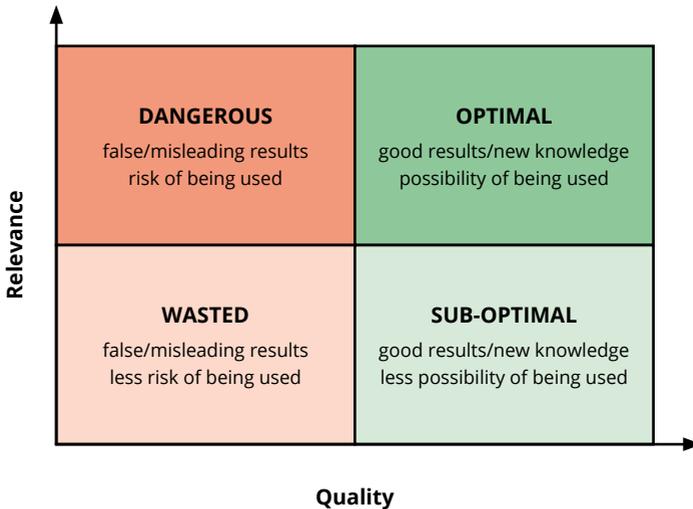
- Stay updated on knowledge needs in their specific sectors
- Make systematic use of research as an instrument for achieving sector policy goals
- Support research and expertise-building in their specific sectors
- Ensure the production of research of utility in policy development and administration
- Facilitate research of high scientific quality and relevance
- Select appropriate research funding channels
- Cooperate with other ministries
- Promote international research collaboration in their specific sectors

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has sectoral responsibility for fields relevant to foreign and development policy. This includes national responsibility for organising funding to ensure that Norway has skilled knowledge institutions in fields of importance to Norwegian foreign and development policy.

# Principles

The following general principles apply to R&D work in the Foreign Service and Norad:

- **Quality:** Competitive tendering promotes higher quality. Reliable supporting data and methodology, and a systematic approach, are absolute requirements. Research shall be undertaken free of political influence. Quality shall be measured by, among other things, success in securing publication and citation in peer-reviewed journals and books.
- **Relevance:** Research that is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad shall focus primarily on Norway's primary strategic foreign, security and development policy priorities. Research shall also be innovative, and be targeted at areas in which Norwegian research can add to global knowledge production.
- **Both high quality and high relevance are crucial:** Basing policy and action on research of uncertain quality entails risk (see the figure below).



- **Research ethics:** All research must comply with international guidelines on research ethics.
- **A long-term perspective:** Groundbreaking research into global challenges requires broad research initiatives with a long-term perspective. Such initiatives also foster strong research institutions capable of meeting demand for new knowledge that arises when changes occur quickly and necessitate rapid decisions.
- **Coordination:** Different parts of the Foreign Service and Norad have overlapping informational needs, and R&D funding is split into different budget items. Other ministries have similar overlaps in needs and responsibilities. R&D efforts are rendered more effective by good coordination, integration and collaboration.
- **Communication:** Knowledge generated by research must be made available in a manner that encourages active use of it by Foreign Service and Norad personnel, interest groups and the public. Accordingly, a wide range of communication instruments should be employed – from articles in scientific journals to professional use of social media. Verbal communication, in the form of both seminars and regular dialogue meetings between researchers and users, is important. Research results should be published internationally, preferably on an “open access” basis.

## R&D allocations

The Foreign Service and Norad make substantial allocations to R&D, particularly through the aid budget. Allocations are made under many different items and chapters in the budget. Additionally, large aid projects often include an R&D component. It is the specialist units within the Foreign Service and Norad that allocate funds to R&D within the framework of the fiscal budget. One goal of this strategy is to make investment in research more uniform, integrated and visible.

A further objective is to gather more of the funds devoted to long-term research in programmes run by the Research Council of Norway, in order to secure robust competition through broad announcement and evaluation of applications by international specialist panels and boards. A separate goal in the area of development policy is to invest in research and research capacity-building in developing countries.

Research activities and projects of significance for foreign and development policy are not only funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad. The Research Council of Norway groups allocations from multiple contributors (ministries, the business sector) into thematic areas of cross-sectoral interest, such as climate and renewable energy. Much of the research funded through the aid budget is channelled to actors that also receive support from other donors.

Strong research institutions are both a goal in themselves and an instrument for research production. Although foreign sources offer much relevant research already, it is important to foster research that reflects the Norwegian context. R&D investment is intended to fortify national knowledge stand-by capacity. To achieve this, research cannot be restricted to current issues and topics. Future challenges can never be predicted with absolute certainty. Strong Norwegian knowledge institutions provide vital stand-by capacity to meet unforeseen knowledge needs.

Innovation-focused research and market access for Norwegian businesses are also relevant factors in the Foreign Service's cooperation with bodies such as the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries and Innovation Norway. Job creation and business development are key considerations in the development policy context, along with health, education and other priorities. Here too, innovation and technological research are important for the achievement of results. Diplomatic and consular missions have an important role to play in promoting Norway as an innovative, knowledge-based, attractive destination for investors, entrepreneurs, researchers and students.

# The Government's long-term research plan for the period 2015–2024

The long-term plan for research and higher education (2015–2024) is a key element of Norwegian research policy, and sets out the following three primary aims:

1. To strengthen competitiveness and innovation capacity.
2. To solve major challenges to society.
3. To develop high-quality research groups.

## Selected actors

Research funding is administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad and diplomatic and consular missions. [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) administers R&D funds related to foreign and security policy, and certain aspects of development policy. Day-to-day administration is undertaken by numerous sections within the ministry, as well as various missions abroad. The Ministry's senior research adviser coordinates both the Ministry's research work and contact between the Foreign Service and relevant research institutions. [Norad](#) administers a considerable proportion of the aid funding devoted to research on behalf of the Ministry, and advises the Ministry and the Foreign Service on research-related matters. These activities are undertaken by various specialist sections within Norad, including a dedicated research, innovation and higher education section (FORSK).

Key partners in Norway's research efforts include:

[The Research Council of Norway](#) is the Government's most important channel for public research funding, and the most important adviser on research policy for both the Government and ministries. The Research Council of Norway creates meeting places and undertakes vital coordination of different thematic priority areas.

**Research institutes** conduct R&D and issue evaluations and studies, among other things. Institutions make R&D contributions on direct assignment for the Foreign Service and Norad, often with a shorter timeframe than for projects announced by the Research Council of Norway. Research institutions approved by the Research Council of Norway also compete for funding from the council.

**Universities and university colleges** in Norway undertake considerable self-funded R&D. They also participate in research projects announced by the Research Council of Norway, and in programmes that foster collaboration with partners in developing countries. Capacity-building among universities and university colleges in developing countries occurs both through such collaboration and through dedicated programmes.

**Foreign research institutions and organisations.** Research into international relations and security policy is important for all countries, and foreign actors possess substantial knowledge of potential relevance to Norway. Norwegian and foreign researchers cooperate extensively. The Foreign Service and Norad may also cooperate directly with foreign actors when necessary to develop know-how in important policy areas. R&D actors in developing countries receive direct support from Norad and diplomatic and consular missions.

**The Ministry of Education and Research** has overall responsibility for Norwegian research policy, and coordinates the work done by other ministries. It also has primary responsibility for basic allocations and funding for basic research in Norway, as well as Norway's contributions to the EU Horizon 2020 research framework programme.

# Priority areas

This strategy gives priority to R&D efforts in four overarching areas:

1. Security policy, the Arctic and Russia
2. Asia
3. Europe
4. Development and aid

These priorities have been chosen because they represent distinct geographical and thematic areas in which major changes are occurring that are of significance to Norwegian interests and global capacity to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and in which Norway expects to have the greatest need for new research-based insights in future. Further reasons and specification of the R&D priorities are provided below.

Like the Government's long-term research plan for the period 2015–2024, which is due to be revised in 2018, this strategy provides for adjustment of priority areas during the strategy's lifetime.

There will always be overlaps and connections between different thematic and geographical topics in the areas for which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad are responsible. Although the challenges are complicated and complex, it is still sensible to apply a practical division into priority areas to help clarify the allocation of organisational responsibility.

Foreign and development policy are becoming ever more interconnected in various areas, and sometimes also have close links with security policy and domestic policy. Challenges related to conflict/vulnerability/migration are one example. Another is health/global epidemics/vaccines.

## Security policy, the Arctic and Russia

The primary objective of Norwegian security policy is to protect Norway's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political freedom of action. In an ever more globalised world, conflicts in other regions have an impact on Norway's security. Changes in the global power structure also affect Norway's security policy framework. It is important to understand these fundamental changes and adapt policy and instruments. The white paper on Norway's future foreign and

security policy<sup>1</sup> describes the Government's policy response to a more challenging and serious security policy situation than Norway has faced for many years. Unpredictability has become a characteristic of the times. Known variables are changing, and cooperation is being tested.

Knowledge in strategically important fields is a prerequisite for the construction of a solid decision-making basis. It is therefore important to encourage research into the most important foreign and security policy priorities. Norway has maintained strong research institutions focusing on the Arctic and Russia under shifting security policy conditions. Implementation of the parliamentary white paper on Norway's future foreign and security policy includes continuation of key research programmes in these areas. The Research Council of Norway plays an important role in coordinating research to meet long-term knowledge needs.

### Priorities

- Global security challenges:<sup>2</sup> terrorism, organised crime, piracy and security challenges in cyberspace
- Transatlantic cooperation, NATO and European security
- Russian security and foreign policy
- Russian domestic policy and the Russian economy
- Political developments, conflicts and security policy challenges in Eurasia
- Opportunities and challenges in the Arctic, including ocean issues in the polar regions
- Arctic security policy, including Asia's interest in the Arctic

### Asia

Asia has growing global presence and influence. Norway interacts with Asia with increasing frequency – in Asian countries, regional organisations, multilateral contexts and Norway's own neighbouring areas. This trend will influence the shape of future Norwegian foreign and security policy, as well as the framework conditions for Norway's business policy in Asia. It is therefore crucial that Norway has a thorough understanding of political and economic developments in Asia.

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<sup>1</sup> Meld. St. 36 (2016–2017) Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy.

<sup>2</sup> Meld. St. 37 (2014–2015) Global security challenges in Norway's foreign policy.

The development of effective policy necessitates continuation of research cooperation with Asia and reinforcement of Norway's knowledge of the continent.

In combination with increased trade and investment, research cooperation strengthens the links between Norwegian technology, expertise and capital and Asian markets and knowledge institutions. Countries such as China, India, South Korea, Japan and Singapore are now of great significance in Norwegian value creation. Other Asian countries are also growing in importance, with exports to ASEAN increasing by almost 180% over the past 10 years.

Closer cooperation between Norwegian and Asian research institutions will help provide solutions to the challenges of tomorrow. Climate and clean energy, resistance to antibiotics, food security and bioeconomics are just some of the sectors in which cooperation has already been established. Facilitating cooperation on an equal footing between Norwegian and Asian experts has high priority. Examples in this regard include the INDNOR (India) and CHINOR (China) programmes funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by the Research Council of Norway. Knowledge and technology transfer help to open doors for collaboration.

Continued investment in technical cooperation, knowledge transfer and technology exchange with Asia will generate new insights and have positive ripple effects on bilateral cooperation.

However, outside the established research programmes, Norwegian research into Asia is fragmented and largely carried out by individuals and on a project basis. Norway needs stronger institutionalised expertise on Asia.

Improved expertise on Asia will provide a more robust basis for safeguarding Norway's interests in the fields of security and foreign policy, international economic development and development policy. Among other things, research should provide deeper insight into changes in political and economic power structures, in which Asia – and China in particular – are playing an ever more important role.

#### *Priorities*

- China
- India
- Global trade
- Asia and the Arctic
- Security policy in Asia

## Europe

Norwegian foreign policy starts with Europe. The EU is Norway's most important economic partner, and European cooperation promotes Norwegian security, value creation and competitiveness. Europe is increasingly taking the lead in the foreign and security policy context and on key global issues such as trade and climate change. Given the importance of European cooperation for Norwegian interests, it is clear that Norway requires robust European policy research capacity.

Such research efforts should build knowledge and understanding of policy and regulatory developments in areas with a significant impact on Norway as an EEA member state and close economic partner of the EU. European policy research should also provide insight into, and understanding of, overarching developments in European integration, European foreign and security policy and cooperation between key EU member states that are relevant to Norwegian interests.

Since 2007, the Research Council of Norway has led the "Europe in Transition" research programme, which aims to generate insight into European change processes and their effects in order to build a knowledge base for the development of Norway's European policy. A further aim is to fortify relevant Norwegian research institutions to enable them to deliver research of a high international standard and help to resolve social challenges facing both Europe and Norway. The programme has helped strengthen Europe-focused research in existing institutions (including the University of Oslo, NUPI, PRIO, FNI), and is having ripple effects through the migration of researchers to other institutions, where they are starting up new research groups (including the University of Bergen, the University of Agder, Hedmark University of Applied Sciences, NTNU). The "Europe in Transition" programme has given Norway research institutions that are conducting high-level international research into European change processes.

The EEA and Norway Grants represent Norway's contribution to the reduction of social and economic disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA). The grants are also intended to strengthen relations and cooperation between Norway and the recipient countries. In the programme period 2009–2014, research programmes were implemented in six recipient countries: Poland (109 projects), Czech Republic (24), Romania (23), Greece (18), Estonia (13) and Latvia (11). In total, 198 projects received support, of which 74% (147 projects) had Norwegian partners. The programmes fund both basic research collaboration and applied

research in the fields of social studies and the humanities, health, gender equality, the environment and renewable energy.

The Research Council of Norway is currently the programme partner for five research programmes (all of those mentioned above, except Greece). Norway's involvement in the research programmes funded by the EEA and Norway Grants is helping to build networks and contacts, which in turn are opening up new partnership opportunities for Norwegian organisations in the context of the EU Horizon 2020 research framework programme.

Negotiations are currently taking place with recipient countries regarding priorities for use of the EEA and Norway Grants in the next programme period. Research will be given increased prominence. Thus far, MOUs have been signed with six of the 15 recipient countries: Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Portugal, Estonia and Malta. The Research Council of Norway will be the programme partner for research programmes in Romania, Portugal and Estonia. The thematic focus of the research programmes will be decided during the programme development phase.

#### *Priorities*

- Brexit
- Trends in European integration (EU27)
- Development of the common market
- Developments in European growth and employment
- Development of European foreign and security policy
- Migration
- Development of European climate and energy policy

#### **Development and aid**

Research for development accounts for the majority of the research supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad. The objective is to foster high-quality research that can help to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development.

As one of the major international aid donors, Norway has a responsibility to support global efforts to develop knowledge on global challenges and development drivers and barriers. New knowledge and technology are crucial for social-sector

development, the economy, businesses, a democratic and rights-based society, and natural-resource management. Many countries are in various ways affected by conflict, humanitarian and natural disasters, migration, climate change, international trade, etc. Thus, developing countries have a particular need for new knowledge that is of local relevance.

Norwegian development policy is founded on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>3</sup> The SDGs demand an integrated approach to global, regional and national development. Investment in research and knowledge is a vital prerequisite for achievement of the SDGs, and is mandated in many SDG sub-goals.

A considerable proportion of research funding is administered by Norad. “Knowledge for Development” – Norad’s strategy towards 2020 – emphasises the importance of building a knowledge base for Norwegian development policy, that Norwegian aid funding should be used where it makes the greatest difference and secures the best results, and that development work must be of high quality.

The most integrated research portfolio exists in the field of health, and ranges from capacity-building through Norwegian and international knowledge-production projects to innovation. Major individual projects are being implemented in the areas of international agricultural research, climate change and forestry, and marine research infrastructure. Broader thematic programmes have been established to reinforce Norwegian research for development and to build up higher education and research capacity in developing countries.

It is still the case that only a small proportion of global knowledge production occurs in developing countries. A need therefore exists to strengthen developing countries’ capacity to plan, implement, communicate and use high-quality research so that they can identify and overcome their own challenges. Strengthening universities and higher education institutions helps to build a strong academic sector, develop leaders and raise the educational level of the workforce. Further, independent research institutions and organisations play an important role in financing, generating, compiling and/or communicating knowledge.

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<sup>3</sup> Meld. St. 24 (2016–2017) Common Responsibility for Common Future.

The Research Council of Norway is an important partner with respect to priority areas in which Norway has established or may potentially establish internationally competitive research institutions. To ensure research quality and relevance, Norwegian researchers must collaborate with leading international researchers, including researchers in developing countries.

Many of the research initiatives supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad involve strategic partnerships that help to safeguard research quality and relevance and ensure that invested funds have the greatest possible impact. Examples include not only cooperation between researchers and research and higher education institutions, but also different types of donor collaboration, such as multilateral organisations, public-private partnerships, etc. Partnerships with users of research, for example policymakers and civil society, should also be strengthened.

### *Priorities*

1. To reinforce the knowledge base for Norwegian development policy by ensuring investment in research in all areas of high aid investment.
2. To boost knowledge production and research capacity in developing countries by maintaining and refining support for universities and higher education institutions, and by expanding support for independent research institutions.
3. To strengthen Norwegian research institutions through programmes administered by the Research Council of Norway that include partnerships with leading international researchers, including researchers in developing countries.
4. To make increased use of research-based knowledge in the formulation of Norwegian development policy and aid administration, as well as in policy development and application in developing countries. The purpose of aid is to help countries to transition from low to middle-income status. Greater efforts must be made to identify prerequisites for this through research, and to implement findings in practical aid administration.
5. To fortify strategic partnerships that promote quality, relevance and effective use of research funds and ensure that funding has an impact.

# Relevant instruments

## *Multi-year research programmes*

Long-term financing of research in the areas of foreign, security and development policy is a prerequisite for the production of relevant, high-quality new knowledge, reinforcement of specialist institutions and improved capacity to deal with unforeseen developments. Such funding also fosters predictability and skills-building in Norwegian and international research institutions. The development of strong specialist institutions takes time, and predictable financing is a prerequisite for their maintenance. Similarly, long-term programmes are needed to achieve the aim of improving capacity among research institutions in developing countries.

## *Short-term research assignments*

When a situation demands quicker delivery of research-based knowledge about given issues, other instruments have to be used. These include comparisons or summaries of existing knowledge, analyses and short policy papers. Assignments may be issued under existing framework agreements between research institutions and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Norad, or be announced in accordance with applicable procurement and grant rules.

## *Inter-disciplinary research and research cooperation*

The fields of foreign, security and development policy frequently present complex and complicated challenges and problems. Inter-disciplinary research and research cooperation are often required to generate knowledge and new insight on such topics. This must be reflected in R&D project announcements, and be taken into account in the evaluation of applications.

## *Core support*

Core support can be used when there is a need to strengthen, for example, funding, production, use or communication of research. Core support is used for certain international research institutions and organisations, including in developing countries. Core support is also given to multilateral organisations and international partnerships that are also involved in research activities to some degree.

## *The Panorama strategy*

This is the Government's strategy for higher education and research cooperation with Brazil, India, Japan, China, Russia and South Africa. Although the Ministry

of Education and Research is responsible for implementation of the Panorama strategy, units within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad that work with these countries may also benefit from the available instruments.

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*Knowledge without action is wasteful,  
action without knowledge is foolishness.*

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World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, quoting the philosopher Al-Ghazali  
(speech in Dubai, 13 February 2017)



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