Portfolio plan Global Development and International Relations

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Priorities

This portfolio will prioritise research and innovation that contributes to realising relevant goals and ambitions of the Research Council and, consequently, the Government's research agenda. The priorities of the portfolio are based on several key documents (see Appendix 3).

Disciplinary and technological priorities

The scope of this portfolio requires contributions from a wide range of technologies and disciplines, including social sciences, medicine, STEM etc. Further, there is an emphasis on the contribution from the humanities within the portfolio, in accordance with the ambitions set out in the Government's white paper Meld. St. 25 (2016–2017) The Humanities in Norway. Research within this portfolio presupposes a good understanding of the local and regional context as regards societal structures, politics, values, traditions, language etc. Cultural and religious competence and sensitivity are crucial to issues such as inequality, migration, health, conflict etc., but also when it comes to policy making and systems of governance and democracy. The role of strong legal and justice frameworks is equally important on the international, national and local levels, which requires contributions from jurisprudence.

There is a need for a stronger emphasis on innovative interdisciplinary research if we are to be able to address complex challenges. This portfolio will encourage and support researchers aiming to work in interdisciplinary and transformative ways.

The complexity of the challenges this portfolio aims to contribute to solving demands new and innovative approaches to research. The portfolio supports epistemological diversity and is open to a range of methodological approaches.

Thematic priorities

The Portfolio for Global Development and International Relations has been developed on the understanding that Security and Governance, Poverty, Development and Equality, and Global Health are interrelated.

Several prominent issues are of relevance and have an impact across the thematic priority areas, especially socioeconomic inequality, inequity, migration, peace, violence and conflict. In addition, two thematic dimensions have a particularly strong impact on this portfolio's thematic priorities, the SDGs (cf. Appendix 2) and climate change, climate adaptation and just transition.

Climate change and just transition

Issues related to climate and the green transition are covered by designated portfolios, but they impact strongly on this portfolio's thematic dimensions. The consequences of flooding, drought and disease – resulting in migration on an unprecedented scale in areas where tension is already high, e.g. due to drought and crop-failure – lead to intensified competition for food, water and energy in regions where resources are already stretched to the limit. This has implications for conflict and development.

In many areas, ecosystem services are threatened by the degradation of habitats, loss of biodiversity, pollution, and climate change. Sustainable natural resource management practices have the potential to secure vital ecosystem services and prevent natural hazards from becoming crises. As detailed in the Government's Strategy on climate adaptation, prevention of climate-related disasters and the fight against hunger, key priority areas include climate-adapted agriculture, warning systems and climate services, risk financing, and disaster risk management.

The threats facing the oceans are multifaceted, including rising temperatures and sea levels, acidification, the bleaching of coral, degradation of mangroves, and marine pollution and littering. Marine plastic waste is mainly caused by lack of waste collection and waste management on land, and most of the plastic enters the oceans via rivers. Many LMICs foresee increased economic growth within the blue sectors. Diversification and new economic activities are needed but may compete with existing activities, such as those of small-scale fishing communities. It is thus important that the consequences for those who live by and off the sea are considered both in connection with facilitating new economic activity and when implementing conservation measures.

Access to energy is fundamental to improving the quality of life and is a key imperative for economic and social development. However, in LMICs, energy poverty is still rife. Understanding the energy needs of societies, energy use, energy sources, technological solutions for energy supply and distribution, their implementation, financing, effects on societies and long-term sustainability is a priority. Knowledge is needed about the effects of renewable energy sources on poverty alleviation, climate, and job creation, as well as on the role of the private sector. Africa is emerging as a driver for growth in demand for oil, gas and renewables. However, the production of energy can create and increase inequality, and it is crucial to understand both how the energy sector affects local inequalities and how green transitions in affluent countries in many ways rely on precarious and dangerous work in low-income countries. It is crucial to ensure a just transition for all stakeholders and the inclusion of local communities.

Security and governance

Following a period of steadily increasing cooperation and relative stability, most indicators now point towards a more turbulent and unpredictable world. Several regions of the world are characterised by instability, violence and ongoing conflicts, most recently in Europe with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Confidence in research, media, institutions and leaders has been weakened due to conspiracy theories and fake news. The international security situation is affected by the development of new technologies, including military technologies and in the space and cyber domains. Tendencies towards de-globalisation and fragmentation and various interdependencies mean that questions about trade, technologies and finance are strongly linked to security competition and risk management. The EU is facing several external and internal challenges, including Brexit, the geopolitical strains on the union's relations with Russia, China and the USA, and challenges to freedom of the media and the rule of law in some member states.

Rule-based order

The international order is changing. Growing inequality puts new pressure on the multilateral system. There is more competition between great powers and generally heightened levels of tension and conflict. Norway has a major stake in a rules-based and stable world order with open and free markets. A functioning multilateral system is also of crucial importance if the SDGs are to achieved. Hence, research is needed on the conditions under which multilateral cooperation and the institutions can be strengthened, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness and legitimacy of key organisations, such as the UN.

New knowledge is required to understand how heightened competition between the great powers is further challenging the established world order and its institutions, and how this development creates a new, more challenging, and less predictable context for international cooperation on matters related to security, climate change, trade, commerce, and the world economy, as well as health and development issues. In this heightened competition, it is also imperative to understand and develop new knowledge of the changing legal framework surrounding international conflict. This new and challenging context affects all regions, states and communities.

An increasing number of regional institutions have been established. It is important to carry out research on the intentions behind and impacts of these new institutions. Do they help to fill a vacuum and offer public goods that are not otherwise available, or do they compete with existing institutions and regimes? And how can we understand the role of the great powers in regional institutions?

Foreign and security policy

Foreign and security policy concerns the behaviour of individual countries and is of course affected by systemic impulses that impinge upon individual countries, e.g. the number of and relations between the great powers, and by alliance obligations. But foreign and security policy behaviour is also a product of domestic factors: the mindset and ambitions of key decision-makers, domestic political constellations, including the character of the bureaucracy, and economic and military capabilities. Security policy is about the survival of the nation state and the safety of its citizens.

Transnational crime, international terrorism and cyber threats are putting societies, including Norway, under pressure. The hacking of critical infrastructure, fake news, disinformation campaigns and other external meddling are all part of a complicated new threatening situation, thus adding further complexity to the challenges posed by the traditional threats to the nation's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

Obviously, some countries, regions and institutions stand out as particularly significant and deserving of attention from a Norwegian point of view. These countries may be important to Norway's foreign and security policy relations or may be global drivers because of their economic and military strength and/or their technological impact. At the same time, however, it is essential to carry out research on themes, countries and areas other than those that appear to be most immediately important, both because this helps us to understand new developments and changes to the international system, and because it gives us access to knowledge that may be useful in contingency situations. Of particular importance from a Norwegian foreign and security policy standpoint are Russia and the former Soviet states, the High North and the Arctic, the USA, Europe and the European Union, as well as the leading Asian countries.

Governance and human rights

Democracy as a system of government expanded geographically from the mid-20th century. This trend is now moving in reverse however. Authoritarian-style government is on the rise in many parts of the world. People are losing faith in democratic governments for multiple reasons: inequality, a decline in relative or absolute living standards, and inequities as a result of globalisation. One commonality is widespread anger at existing political elites that is further agitated by forceful populist politics. Many of today's anti-democratic movements also challenge ideas of gender equality and minority rights. The core enlightenment values of democratic principles, freedom of speech and individual human rights are under attack.

The global power shift towards emerging players, like China in particular, with their very different political traditions, is also affecting development towards democracy in new ways. How does the emergence of these new players affect the possibility of supporting human rights and democracy movements when they remain intellectually, culturally and politically powerfully opposed to them? The very notion of a public sphere and civil society is being reframed and undermined by the politics espoused by players like China, Russia, and to some degree, India. Together, these countries account for almost half of the global population and over a quarter of global GDP, figures that are likely to increase in the coming years. Ignoring the challenge these countries pose to the values of the West would be negligent. However, taking a zero-sum approach, whereby they simply figure as problems that will eventually be prevailed against, is naïve and unrealistic. The stability of the world is being fundamentally challenged by strong identity conflicts, ethnic as well as religious, and by a shift from a unipolar to a multipolar, and therefore more diverse but fragmented and potentially unstable, global order. Knowledge of these fundamental geopolitical changes, and tensions of this type, and, not least, how different actors and countries utilise them, is important in order to understand not only local conflicts within and between countries, but also more general challenges to the world order, and the need to create a new, more dynamic structure within which that order is framed and defended.

New and inexpensive digital platforms and social media have enabled the extensive and rapid exchange of information. New digital technology is being used to access information about people's personal lives. This threatens universal rights relating to elections and freedom of expression, as well as minority rights intended to protect against discrimination.

Major incidents that are a serious threat to society, such as natural disasters, conflict, terrorism or pandemics, normally trigger extraordinary measures and regulation by the authorities. There is a need to understand the wider consequences of such measures, such as emergency laws and the imposition of severe restrictions, for human rights. We also need to better understand the impact of urban and domestic violence and broader security threats and tensions. Furthermore, there is a need to understand how changing geopolitical priorities and more intense great power rivalry change the conditions for human rights advocacy.

Population displacement and migration

The number of internally and externally displaced people has doubled in the decade 2011–2021[3] and it is expected to rise further. Individual lives and livelihoods, regional and national stability, and decades of development are at risk. New and ongoing conflicts, the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic continue to increase the need for humanitarian assistance. Children, especially girls, are missing out on education. Women's rights are threatened. Gender-based violence (GBV) is increasing in humanitarian settings, mainly affecting women but also children and men. More research is needed to understand how and what measures need to be implemented to ensure effective prevention of all types of GBV, including through legal tools and mechanisms. The implementation of effective programmes that facilitate the provision of compassionate care, safe spaces, and referral pathways for those who have survived GBV is a priority since they are not available to the majority of people affected by conflict and war.

The humanitarian caseload is a growing concern in relation to development and has a direct impact on the SDGs, as there is a lack of resources and a need for reforms that enable a more adequate response to humanitarian challenges. It is necessary to find appropriate ways of linking humanitarian assistance with long-term development and responding to the root causes of vulnerability. This includes the roles of local, national, and international actors in the humanitarian response and how social and political factors affect the root causes of vulnerability and marginalisation processes, as well as being accountable to affected populations and reaching the most vulnerable. New knowledge is needed about key concerns relating to the delivery of efficient and timely humanitarian aid to 'hard to reach' areas. How can humanitarian principles be upheld in complex conflict settings, where the ruling party sets the conditions for the delivery of humanitarian aid? The presence of peace operations, with their resources and infrastructures, affects and interacts with the social, material and institutional infrastructure of local states. Research is needed to understand the unintended effects of such international presences. The political roles and effects of humanitarian action are important to understand, as is answering the question of whether humanitarian efforts succeed or fail.

Large migration flows have significant and complex impacts on the development of countries of origin, on transit countries, and recipient countries, and not least on the individual migrants. New knowledge is needed about the entire migration chain, from the causes of migration to the effects of migration on countries of origin, transit countries and recipient countries, in order to improve the chances of benefiting from opportunities and meeting the challenges.

Migration also comes in other forms. Regional labour migration is growing despite difficult working conditions and limited access to welfare benefits. There is large-scale internal migration in countries with rural-rural migration and migration to big cities that leads to major changes in the composition of population, the labour market, the economy and the environment. Going forward, it

will be important to monitor how migration in all its forms affects international and regional cooperation, governance policies, economies, social structures and societal values.

[3]UNHCR - Figures at a Glance

Poverty, inequality, and development

There is a need to understand how progress towards development and equality can be achieved worldwide. The situation in ma LMICs calls for urgent action, as they have been hit hard by multiple crises simultaneously: the global pandemic, climate crisis, ecosystem crisis, global political crisis and economic crisis. Thus, in line with the criteria for ODA funding, LMICs are a priority ir this section.

Reducing poverty, inequality, and exclusion

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, and mostly in LMICs, approximately 120 million more people have been pushed into extreme poverty. The slow-down of economic activity has caused a significant increase in unemployment and brought years of progress to a halt.[4] The Russian invasion of Ukraine is further affecting the global economy and value chains, with detrimental consequences (e.g. for fuel and food prices). How poverty is interlinked with trends on the local, national, and global level must b better understood. Developing and upscaling innovative solutions to promote poverty reduction by using new digital opportunitie and new types of partnership should be explored. There is a need to understand how public-private partnerships can contribute poverty reduction, without impacting negatively on the authority and accountability of international and national public actors engaged in development work. A key challenge is to effectively engage and include local communities in decision-making processes, and to ensure robust long-term results from the perspective of poverty reduction.

Inequality, both socioeconomic and gender-based, is of concern, since inequalities are increasing both between and within populations. Corruption, state capture, tax evasion and other forms of economic crime often exacerbate inequality and poverty and threaten democracy. Illicit financial flows from poor countries, and the use of tax havens, result in vast amounts of money being siphoned off instead of advancing economic development for the common good. There is a need to understand how thes complex developments and trends, in addition to digitalisation and the expansion of new technology, create both risks and opportunities.

Education, skills and labour

Education with good learning outcomes is essential to reduce poverty, create new jobs, stimulate business, promote peace and democracy, and to achieve a just and green transition. The educational system plays a crucial role in nation-state building by shaping collective identities and framing history in ways that can mitigate or even prolong conflicts. The education of children ar young people, especially that of girls and women, is at risk in conflict and crisis situations. Despite considerable progress in increasing educational access in recent years, millions of children still have no access to formal education and, where they do, learning levels often remain low. Knowledge is needed about how to improve learning outcomes and the quality of education, improve teacher education and ensure inclusive and equitable access to educational opportunities. We need knowledge about what works if we are to ensure quality learning for particularly vulnerable groups, such as migrant and refugee children, the disabled, minority populations etc.

Skills and the education of the workforce play an increasingly important part in countries' ability to compete for work in global value chains. New knowledge is needed to better understand the skills and competences needed for the labour markets in LMIC to improve the quality and responsiveness of postsecondary vocational/professional higher education, especially for vulnerable groups, and to utilise the potential of the use of digital technologies in education. Furthermore, the education sector must enable lifelong learning, which is important if the adult population is to acquire new skills. The green transition and technological advances are expected to render many (but not all) labour-intensive jobs obsolete.

In many parts of the world, the unemployment rate is surging, particularly among youth. Research is needed on how to meet the urgent need for job creation, particularly for young people in the context of high population growth and increasing urbanisation i parallel to persistent, extreme, rural deprivation. Widespread discrimination against women, marginalised groups like LGBT+ people, the disabled, and numerous ethnic groups is prevalent in many labour markets. The Covid-19 pandemic has raised awareness of the significance of welfare provision for the poorest and most vulnerable, especially for workers in the informal economy that is not regulated or protected by the state, as well as a new understanding of macroeconomic support instruments in such conditions. More knowledge is needed about how new jobs with decent working conditions can be created, and how trends in the globalisation of trade, services, capital and information facilitate and constrain employment and income opportunities.

Peace, violence and state fragility

Violence and conflicts have an impact on security, on political and economic conditions, health and general law and order. Hum rights violations are more widespread in times of armed conflict, and often persist long afterwards. The number of armed conflic

characterised by extreme brutality and complexity has increased in recent years. In addition, the majority of non-war, violence-related deaths occur in LMICs. Combined with natural and other disasters, and partly exacerbated by the consequences of climate change, these are immense challenges and create unprecedented needs for humanitarian assistance.

Armed conflicts, both inter-state and non-state conflicts, change people's lives, and women, men and children are affected in different ways and often long after the formal end of armed conflict. The underlying causes and dynamics of armed conflict and violence must be better understood and addressed, and knowledge about efficient conflict transformation should be increased. To reduce the impact of armed conflict, we need to know where it is most likely to erupt, and which conflicts have the potential to escalate into full-blown wars. There is a need to continue to deepen our understanding of the multiple ways in which conflicts affect development, and vice versa, and to identify the most effective tools to bring countries out of the conflict trap, e.g. the effect of extractive industries on conflict should be further examined.
There is also a need for further research on the most effective forms of armed conflict/violence prevention and on the conditions under which peace negotiations, agreements, and support operations are more likely to secure lasting and positive peace.

LMICs often suffer from one or more fragilities in core functions of the state, i.e. the state's ability to control violence, its ability to provide basic public services, and the state's legitimacy. Violence and conflicts, both within a country and in neighbouring countries, have the power to destabilise or even subvert governments and significantly weaken core state functions.

Food access and food security

Access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food is vital for everyone. However, food security is a major concern in an increasing number of countries and regions, especially in countries suffering from war and violent conflict. Identifying drivers of failures in food systems is essential to reduce undernourishment and malnutrition and improve system sustainability. Such drivers may be political, structural or economic. Technology, innovation, entrepreneurship and the establishment of functional markets are key parts of this complex. The international food security agenda has mostly focused on rural hunger and measures to increase production and support smallholder agriculture. However, food insecurity is a consequence of poverty and inequalities, and these factors also affect urban households and consumers. The food insecurity of urban populations has been of marginal concern to governments and the international community.

A well-functioning food system relies on sustainable natural resource management practices, and fair sharing of the benefits of natural resources. New knowledge is needed to ensure climate-adaptive agriculture, warning systems and climate services, risk financing, and disaster risk management.

[4]Sustainable Development Report 2021 (sdgindex.org)

Global health

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is recognised as one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition. Unequal development in different countries in the promotion of health and control of disease, especially communicable diseases, is a common danger. Health is also seen as fundamental to the attainment of peace and security. A comprehensive approach to global health recognises the physical, psychological (or mental), and social components of health and recognises that they are inter-related. A focus on equity in global health research also involves pursuing research on these broad determinants of health. Promoting equity will also favour research that focuses on values that are linked to health equity, e.g. voice, agency, and the accountability to citizens of health systems.

Determinants of health

Health research includes research on the intersecting social, economic, political and cultural determinants of health, and access to and the provision of health services. The latter is closely connected to a range of challenges that are reflected in the other 16 SDGs, such as education, poverty, inequalities, gender equality, nutrition and food security, air pollution, conflicts, and climate change, which are generally described as the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health.

Of relevance to global health research supported by the portfolio is the influence of global-level institutions and policy processes, and global governance and financing mechanisms, which often shape the parameters for health improvement in LMICs. This includes research on public health interventions that span different sectors, including addressing health challenges through intersectoral collaboration at the nexus of human, animal and environmental health (e.g. One Health) or responding to the impact on health and health systems of climate change.[5]

Burden of disease

Disadvantaged populations in LMICs contribute disproportionately to the global burden of disease and suffer from excessive mortality, morbidity and disability due to a range of communicable and non-communicable diseases. The specific targets set include an emphasis on vulnerable populations, including mothers and new-born babies, children under five years of age, as well as a focus on communicable diseases such as AIDS, TB and malaria, neglected tropical diseases, hepatitis, water-borne and

other communicable diseases. Premature death from non-communicable diseases, mental health and wellbeing, the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, death and injury from road traffic accidents, hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution are recognised and important aspects of the global burden of disease.

The portfolio will support and encompass research that can contribute to continued progress in reducing the burden from communicable diseases, maternal, new-born, and child health, non-communicable diseases (NCDs),[6] population-based public health interventions that can prevent major health risks, and all other health issues reflected in the SDG 3 targets. The spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) will stall progress in fighting infectious diseases, and research on all aspects of AMR in an LMIC-setting is therefore supported by the portfolio, as is vaccine development. Specific mention is also made of the need to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health in national strategies and programmes.

Focusing on issues that contribute to the greatest disease burden is important in order to identify areas where research can have the greatest impact. However, it is important to recognise that, in contexts and for populations where surveillance and diagnostic services are non-existent or weak, estimates of mortality and morbidity are complicated, inaccurate or even completely lacking. Research is needed that seeks to provide 'know how' on the development of birth and death registration and causes of death, as well as assessing documentation of morbidity, especially for 'hard to reach' and disadvantaged population groups.

The portfolio takes a broad approach to thematic areas covered by global health research in order to capture important parameters that effect health equity (distribution of disease burden, generating knowledge on the effectiveness, feasibility, and sustainability of interventions etc.) Thus, the portfolio covers research on the adverse interaction of diseases of all types in an LMIC-setting, referred to as the syndemic approach.[7]

Health systems

A health system is best described through its six 'building blocks', including health services delivery, the health workforce, medical products, vaccines and technologies, information services, leadership and governance, and financing. All six need to be in place for a health system to be able to provide the required services. Research is needed to provide information to inform health systems and strengthen the provision of high-quality health services, thereby ensuring health preparedness, promoting equity, and meeting the health needs of LMIC populations, especially those who are most vulnerable, disadvantaged and hard-to reach. One of the key targets of SDG3 is to ensure Universal Health Coverage (UHC), including financial risk protection, access to high-quality essential healthcare services and access to safe, effective, high-quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

Emerging and re-emerging communicable diseases with epidemic or pandemic potential are a persistent threat to global health security, to public health and socioeconomic development in many LMICs. This has been underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has clearly demonstrated that for one country to be safe, all countries must be safe. The goal of attaining strong health preparedness to promote global health security, as reflected in several targets in the SDGs, has the potential to accrue benefits to all countries. However, the portfolio's thematic priority of global health will only support research on this topic insofar as the focus is on health needs and health systems in LMICs.

Policy and practice

The primary objective of global health research is to conduct high quality research that will provide new knowledge and understanding of what is needed and how this can best be implemented to promote health equity and health improvements for disadvantaged populations[8] in LMICs.

The societal impact of submitted research proposals can be assessed in terms of their potential to: (1) contribute, directly or indirectly, to substantial reductions in the disease burden in LMICs; (2) promote health equity in LMICs, and (3) produce higher-level insights of relevance to policy and practice beyond the specific setting and context where studies are carried out, i.e. by closing current evidence gaps and thus informing future guidelines and policies. These three criteria will be used together to evaluate the potential for impact.

The portfolio will prioritise implementation research defined in a broad and inclusive way.[9] This reflects the significant potential of implementation research to advance sustainable and equitable health improvements in LMICs by catalysing the integration of evidence-based approaches in practice. Research on effective implementation should be understood broadly to include research on interventions with proven efficacy as well as programmes and policies with the potential to substantially reduce the disease burden and promote health equity.

The prioritisation of implementation research does not exclude funding of high-quality research, such as basic science, social sciences, epidemiological, diagnostic and clinical research, if it addresses questions that are demonstrably of high relevance to global health.

[5]Watts N, Amann M, Arnell N, Ayeb-Karlsson S, Belesova K, Boykoff M, et al. The 2019 report of The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: ensuring that the health of a child born today is not defined by a changing climate. Lancet. 2019

16;394(10211):1836–78.

[6]The 2018 UN Political Declaration on NCDs promotes a 5 x 5 NCD agenda, focusing on five core diseases (cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, cancer, diabetes, and mental and neurological conditions) and five core risk factors (unhealthy diet, tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, physical inactivity, and air pollution). The inclusion of air pollution demonstrates the growing attention to environmental risk factors that contribute significantly to the burden of disease in LMICs.

[7]Syndemics involve the adverse interaction of diseases of all types (e.g. infections, chronic non communicable diseases, mental health problems, behavioral conditions, toxic exposure, and malnutrition) that, as a result of such interaction, produce an increased burden of disease in a population. Syndemics advance under health disparity, impacted by poverty, stress, structural violence or conflicts. The syndemic approach departs from the biomedical approach to diseases, which diagnostically isolates, studies and treats diseases as distinct entities separate from other diseases and independent of social contexts.

[8]Disadvantaged populations include children, and socially and economically disadvantaged groups, such as people living in poverty, rural populations and disadvantaged minorities.

[9]For a definition of implementation research, please consult the publication Implementation research: new imperatives and opportunities in global health

Prioritised areas of application

The portfolio targets Norwegian research organisations, but the public sector, business and society at large must benefit from the research results. Research relevant to policymaking and the public administration, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), is an important priority. Other ministries, public agencies, business and NGOs will also benefit from the research. The portfolio also prioritises research relevant to policymakers, the public sector, business and local communities in LMICs.

Calls that require the participation of users include criteria relating to dialogue with and the dissemination of findings to key stakeholders. Interaction with society at large is also promoted by the portfolio. User involvement refers to the involvement of end users of research findings, during different stages of the research process, from defining the research priorities and questions to interpreting the implications of the research for policy and practice.[10] Many research proposals will have the potential to inform Norwegian investments and participation in global health initiatives with a sound evidence base.

Many research proposals are intended to have the potential to inform Norwegian investments and participation in global initiatives and arenas. The portfolio will seek direct and indirect dialogue with Norwegian policymakers and other Norwegian stakeholders to ensure policy relevance. The portfolio uses the communication channels established with government ministries and takes initiatives to establish regular meeting places between policymakers and researchers.

[10]Relevant users may include community members, patients, public sector officials, and bureaucrats in ministries, politicians, other collaborative partners and officials in international organisations and local and international NGOs and social movements.

Structural priorities

This portfolio will underpin the ambitions relating to open research, which refers to the way research is carried out and shared, and how changes are evaluated. The need for high-quality research in society is increasing. Open research will be included in the development of the portfolio's instruments, e.g. through measures that provide better access to research data, the development methods, utilisation of research results in research and innovation, and by means of user participation and involvement.

Data generated through publicly funded research should in principle be considered a public good and shared with other researchers, business and industry, and society at large. This will help to strengthen the quality of and trust in research by allowing for better validation and verification of research results. It will also help to speed up knowledge development and, in turn value creation and innovation in the private and public sectors. Research and innovation are increasingly driven by access to new and massive quantities of data. Efficient structures for transparency and the sharing of research data are necessary to ensure data quality, efficient utilisation of resources by the research communities and increased use of research findings in society.[11]

International collaboration

The achievement of the portfolio's goals is dependent on cooperation with other funding schemes, including, but not limited to, the EU framework programmes, Nordic Research Cooperation (NordForsk), Belmont Forum, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP), Global Research Council and other international R&D-funding organisations and multi- and bilateral initiatives. Further, international cooperation in the research projects will be of great importance to achieving this portfolio's goals. The portfolio will work actively to support international collaboration that aims to reduce fragmentation, facilitate coordination and increase the impact of research investments.

The strategy to strengthen collaboration within research and higher education with prioritised countries outside the EU, the Panorama strategy, is highly relevant to this portfolio. The countries included in the strategy are the USA, Canada, Brazil, India, China, Japan, Russia,[12] South-Korea and South-Africa. The strategy aims to facilitate a more comprehensive and long-term cooperation with these countries in higher education and research, with a view to more cooperation in areas where Norway has competence and a potential to contribute, despite international research cooperation with several countries becoming increasingly difficult.

In development and global health research, collaboration with all countries listed in the OECD-DAC register of ODA-eligible countries[13] is of relevance to this portfolio. In addition, in line with the Government's development policy, emphasis is placed on collaboration with specific partner countries, both those targeted for long-term development: Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Tanzania and Uganda, and countries that are mainly in need of stabilisation and conflict prevention: Afghanistan, Mali, Niger, Palestine, Somalia and South-Sudan.

Fair and equitable partnerships
This portfolio will promote equitable research partnerships between Norwegian research institutions and academic institutions of other research institutions in LMICs in all relevant areas. Such partnerships may also involve governments or NGOs, regional networks and institutions. Strong partnerships with academic institutions in LMICs are pivotal to research of high quality and to ensuring the relevance of the research to the context studied.

As part of a broader movement to decolonise the global research agenda, there is an increasing emphasis on the limitations of focusing solely on capacity building, and on the benefits of moving towards fair and equitable research partnerships that promote the agency of partner institutions in LMICs, with equitable sharing of funding, institutional costs and credits. An important part of equitable partnerships is ensuring that LMIC institutions and researchers are genuinely involved in defining the scope, relevance and priority questions of collaborative research proposals. The allocation of funding to respective LMIC partners should be commensurate with their expected responsibilities and the capacity-strengthening goals, from scientific leadership to grant management. Collaboration agreements governing the partnerships should, among other things, stipulate the responsibilities of Norwegian and LMIC researchers, as well as other partners in managing the grant and developing research studies, and how, in collaboration, they will manage data handling, scientific analysis, intellectual property rights and authorship.

Research projects carried out in LMICs should demonstrate co-leadership of the proposed scientific agenda with investigators from LMIC institutions and strive to include opportunities for mentorship and/or research training for junior researchers from Norway and LMIC partners. The Research Council requires that a Norwegian institution be 'project owner' with overall administrative and scientific responsibility. Projects implemented in one or more LMIC should include institutional partner(s) in the relevant country or countries, and, where possible, they should be assigned senior responsibility within the project as co-project manager, work package leaders or as project managers if employed in part by the Norwegian project owner.

Ethics
Researchers are expected to abide by national, European and international standards for research integrity. They must ensure and document that their research is conducted in accordance with ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations, and standards. This includes seeking ethical approval for research where appropriate. Researchers are expected to treat colleagues with integrity, honesty and collegiality, including the fair provision of references and peer reviews.

Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) has emerged as an important approach in international research and innovation policy. RRI includes approaches to research and innovation that aim to anticipate and assess potential impacts and societal expectations, with the goal of creating inclusive and socially responsible research and innovation. RRI's approaches to democratisation of research and innovation through participation are important dimensions.

Gender balance and gender perspectives
The portfolio follows the Research Council's policy for Gender balance and gender perspectives in research and innovation, which states that the Research Council will work more systematically to promote gender balance within research projects, when deemed relevant, by striving to achieve the goal of increasing the proportion of female project managers and women in senior academic positions.

A gender perspective on research implies that biological and social gender is reflected in research content. A growing number of studies show that diversity, including gender balance and gender perspectives, helps to enhance the scientific quality and social relevance of research.

These initiatives emphasise paying attention to asymmetries in power, privilege and resources that might affect gender inequities. They also encourage reflection on the role of research in addressing such issues. Gender also intersects with different forms of discrimination and marginalisation.

Innovation
A broad understanding of innovation includes significantly improved goods, services, processes and concepts, as well as ways

organising and governing that generate value and societal benefits, including new models for governance, financing and delivery of services and public interventions. Innovation should also be about how research is conducted and the portfolio values innovation in research methodology. This aligns well with the goals of the main strategy of the Research Council of Norway - Empowering ideas for a better world and the [Strategy for innovation in the public sector](). Innovation in research is not limited to the development of technologies and products. The portfolio will encourage researchers to think creatively about how their research findings can contribute to innovations with the potential to contribute to all the SDGs.

[11]Cf. the Research Council's [Report and recommendations relating to licensing and making research data available]()

[12]The research collaboration with Russia has been suspended following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

[13][OECD-DAC list of ODA-eligible countries]()

Priorities concerning the EU framework programme, Horizon Europe

The synergies and interactions between national and European arenas are important in the work on achieving the portfolio plan's investment goals. The relevance of the structure of Horizon Europe to the Portfolio for Global Development and International Relations is primarily linked to Pillar 2 – Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness. Of particular interest for this portfolio is the inclusion of targeted actions with key non-EU partners, including the comprehensive 'Africa Initiative'. As a strategic partner, the EU seeks to enhance cooperation with Africa in order to promote actions targeted at finding locally adapted solutions to challenges that are universal in nature, but which often hit Africa hardest.

In the area of global health, the EU-Africa Global Health Partnership (often to referred as EDCTP3) is part of Horizon Europe. EDCTP3 will support international collaborations that accelerate the clinical evaluation and implementation of interventions against poverty-related infectious diseases, including the neglected ones affecting sub-Saharan Africa. By building research capacity, it will also enhance the ability of sub-Saharan African countries to identify and respond to key infectious disease health challenges. The portfolio is responsible for representing Norway in the Partnership. Relevant parts of the global health research supported by the portfolio should be aligned with the strategic research and innovation agenda of EDCTP3.

Horizon Europe will incorporate research and innovation missions linked to key societal challenges and that are relevant to a broad range of stakeholders, as well as citizens, in order to increase the effectiveness of funding by pursuing clearly defined targets. Missions are a new concept in the EU framework programme and are thereby 'experimental.' They provide a learning lab for policy experimentation with a view to planning and co-creating R&I with all the EU policies concerned, but also with concerned stakeholders and citizens. Ultimately, they should deliver European public goods on some of the issues that matter most to people.

Norway's investments in the EU framework programmes are significant, and the Government's ambition is for Norwegian actors receive 2.8 per cent of the competition-based funding in Horizon Europe. The Research Council will closely follow up the framework programme's more specific priorities in relevant clusters, and strongly encourage Norwegian researchers and research groups to participate in EU calls for proposals.