



**Programme on Alcohol and Drug  
Research 2013-2015 (RUSMIDDEL)**

**Work Programme**

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# Programme on Alcohol and Drug Research 2013–2015

## Summary

Research-based knowledge on substance use, alcohol and drugs, and the impacts of social conditions and policy design forms an important basis for proper prevention and treatment in the alcohol and drug field. There is still a great need for new knowledge; major changes have been taking place in alcohol and drug research, alcohol and drug policy has been reshaped in recent years, and significant advances have been made in understanding the mechanisms behind substance use, including psychological and biological processes. In the white paper on substance use (Meld. St. 30 (2011–2012)), the Ministry of Health and Care Services sets out an integrated policy on alcohol, drugs and doping. This is a field facing a wide array of challenges, and the research programme will help to strengthen alcohol and drug research in Norway. The white paper states that the Government will continue the activities of and establish a joint programme board for the Programme on Alcohol and Drug Research (RUSMIDDEL) and the Research Programme on Mental Health (PSYKISKHELSE), with the aim of viewing substance use and mental health in a unified context.

The RUSMIDDEL programme is a continuation of the Programme on Alcohol and Drug Research 2007–2011 (which was extended until 2013). The previous programme was comprised of two components: establishing and building up a research centre for clinically relevant alcohol and drug research and providing support for researcher-initiated projects within the programme's thematic priority areas. The Norwegian Centre for Addiction Research (SERAF) is now well established and will continue its activities under the RUSMIDDEL programme until 30 April 2018. SERAF has been asked to give priority to alcohol research in the coming five-year period. A review of the projects funded under the programme was conducted in 2011. The report concluded that the programme had contributed to the field with high-quality research and relevant new knowledge, but that further investment is needed.

The RUSMIDDEL programme has now been extended through 2015, to bring it into alignment with most of the other health science research programmes at the Research Council of Norway. A joint programme board has been appointed for the RUSMIDDEL and PSYKISKHELSE programmes. Although this work programme only applies through 2015, it has been written in part with a longer-term perspective in mind. The programme will target attention in particular towards user participation and gender perspectives in the research, and active steps will be taken to increase internationalisation.

## Objectives of the programme

### Primary objective:

To generate more knowledge relating to patterns of alcohol and drug use and overall use of these substances, the causes of alcohol and drug problems, and how to prevent and treat these problems. Focus will be placed on social as well as psychological and biological perspectives.

### Secondary objectives:

- To acquire more knowledge about alcohol use, consumption patterns and alcohol-related problems;

- To further advance clinically relevant alcohol and drug research, by providing continued funding to the Norwegian Centre for Addiction Research (SERAF), among other measures;
- To obtain more knowledge about doping and new illegal substances and problems linked to these;
- To procure more knowledge about addiction as a phenomenon and about gambling addiction;
- To enhance knowledge about preventive measures that work and expand the knowledge base for developing preventive measures and treatment as well as an effective drug and alcohol policy;
- To increase the proportion of projects involving international partners;
- To provide co-funding to a collaborative project with the US National Institutes of Health (NIH).

## **Priority research tasks**

### **Thematic priority areas**

1. Alcohol and alcohol-related problems;
2. Continued support for clinically relevant alcohol and drug research;
3. Gambling-related problems and doping;
4. Drug policy.

### **Strategic priority areas**

The programme will:

- Continue to give priority to projects incorporating doctoral research fellowships.
- Give special priority to projects incorporating post-doctoral positions and encourage post-doctoral fellows to conduct research stays abroad.
- View projects that involve different disciplines and take an interdisciplinary approach as particularly interesting.
- Encourage the active involvement of users, health care personnel and volunteer care providers in research activities.
- Ensure that research projects give adequate consideration to gender perspectives.
- Point out the role of methodological approaches that appear to be particularly fruitful. Original research is currently being conducted in Norway using new techniques (brain imaging, genetic studies) to shed light on fundamental mechanisms in the central nervous system. Norway also has unique advantages

with regard to longitudinal studies, data on twins and linkage of various registries, which should continue to be exploited and supported.

- Enhance national cooperation between institutions, particularly universities.
- Further strengthen international research cooperation.

## **International cooperation**

Many of the key topics and challenges in Norwegian research are the focus of research activity in other countries as well. International research collaboration and the flow of knowledge across national borders are essential, especially if we are to find viable solutions to global challenges. International cooperation is vital for improving quality and enhancing capacity in Norwegian research, and Norwegian researchers should both benefit from and contribute to international knowledge sharing. The Norwegian research community must also seek to attract the very best researchers and position itself at the international forefront in selected research areas.

The programme board's efforts to promote international research cooperation within the programme's sphere of responsibility are firmly rooted in two fundamental documents: Meld. St. 18 (2012–2013) Long-term perspectives – knowledge provides opportunity, white paper from the Ministry of Education and Research, and the Research Council of Norway's Strategy on International Cooperation 2010–2020.

The programme board will follow up and give priority to the launch of at least one collaborative project with the NIH in connection with the call for proposals issued in autumn 2012, and may issue a new call for such projects in the course of the programme period. The programme will also work to increase participation in EU research activities.

## **Communication and dissemination activities**

The programme's webpages <http://forskningsradet.no/rusmiddel> are a key tool in the programme's communication and dissemination activities, and will be updated on a regular basis with news, information about the programme's objectives and sphere of responsibility, contracts, projects and funding announcements.

## **Budget**

The programme period will extend through 2015. The Ministry of Health and Care Services is the main source of funding for the programme. The programme's budget for 2013 is NOK 30.4 million. The Ministry of Culture will provide additional funding for research on gambling. The programme's annual budget is determined by the annual allocations over the national budget.



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