

# The Research Council's strategy



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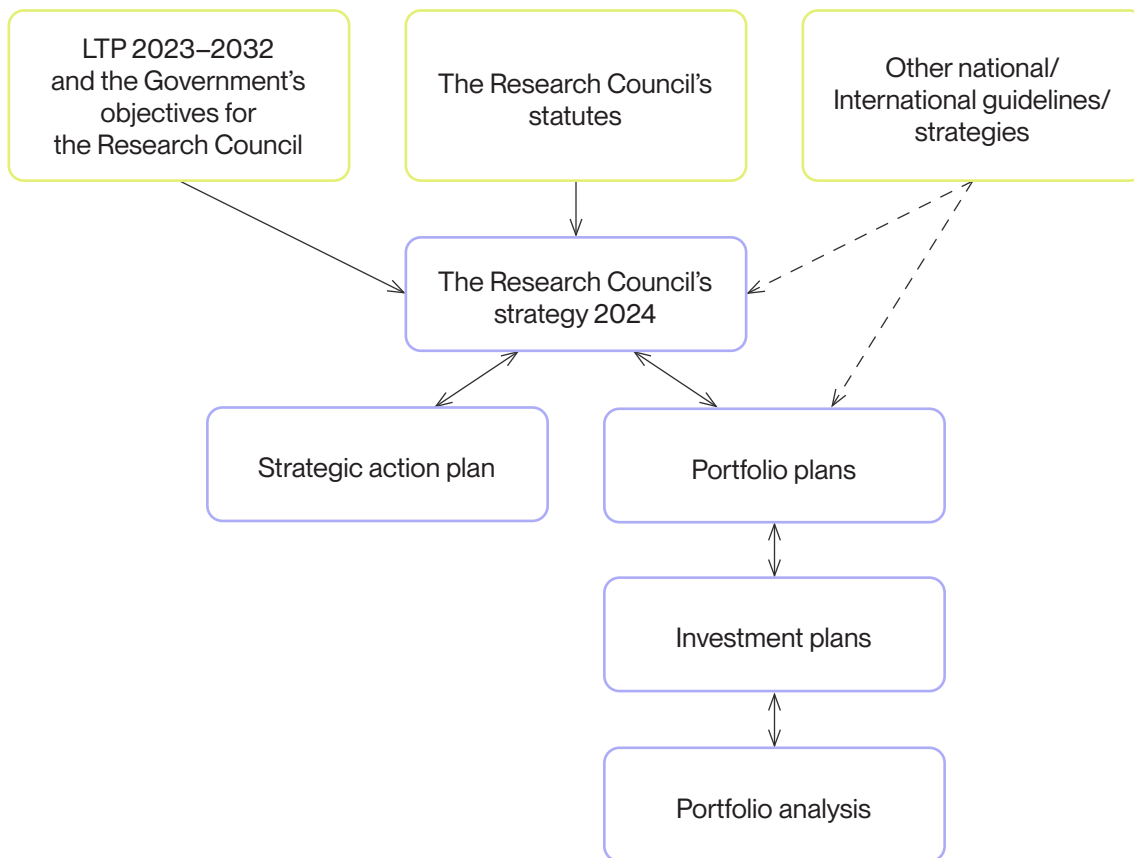
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Empowering  
ideas for a better  
world



Norway has one strong, competent and independent Research Council, which works to promote a society in which research is created, used, challenged, valued and shared through effective and comprehensive policy instruments for research and research-driven innovation. We help to improve the quality of research through our own and international competitive arenas, provide independent advice on research and innovation policy, and help to ensure knowledge is used to solve the challenges facing society.

The long-term plan for research and higher education, the Research Council's statutes and the Government's objectives for the Research Council provide the framework for the Council's activities and the basis for this strategy. Like the long-term plan, our strategy has an overall long-term perspective. The more concrete priorities will be rolled out in line with the need for change.



The strategy in the Research Council's management system

## In collaboration with the sector, we will ensure the foundation of basic research

The Research Council plays an important role in enabling the research system's most important resource – researchers themselves – to develop their ideas and ambitions and generate new knowledge in their research communities. High-quality research strengthens Norway's knowledge and skills readiness and pushes the boundaries of what we know, understand and can achieve. Research provides insight and understanding, is fundamental to society's cultural development and contributes knowledge to an enlightened social debate. Diversity in research, and among researchers, contributes to a breadth of perspectives and increased innovation.

A stable research system with a long-term perspective is important to develop the knowledge that society needs. Centre schemes and investment in research infrastructure contribute to this, and structure the Norwegian research system. We contribute to knowledge in all areas of society by ensuring that Norway has good research and development communities that can work with a long-term perspective and respond quickly to new challenges.

## **We will contribute to the research-based knowledge we need to meet major challenges**

Research has led to great progress and solved many of the problems society has faced over the years. Through research, new solutions can create better lives for everyone. However, our time is also dominated by climate and natural crises, international conflicts, migration and major demographic and economic changes that threaten the sustainability of our welfare society and support for democratic institutions.

National security and preparedness research is necessary to reduce society's vulnerability. The entire breadth of research must be strengthened, from national preparedness to the sectoral authorities' areas of responsibility. Research is also important in reducing conflict and uncertainty. Several technologies and disciplines have broad areas of application. New solutions are needed that promote cooperation between military and civilian research and innovation communities, and that address transparency and the need to protect information.

The welfare society's ability to provide services and security for everyone is under pressure, and research and innovation that can help improve public health and living conditions in the face of demographic change is crucial. Our welfare is secured through restructuring and value creation. The green and digital transition will require new solutions in both the public sector and in trade and industry. The need for competent and sufficient labour is a key factor. The Research Council will contribute to a skills boost to meet the challenges society is facing. This will help ensure an inclusive and competent labour market, a public sector that delivers good and efficient services and an internationally competitive business sector.

We will help ensure that trade and industry and the public sector across Norway have schemes that promote restructuring. Enabling technologies are merging to create new opportunities, with digitalisation as a key driver. Mastery, responsible use and development of technologies are essential for participation, value creation, competitiveness and welfare. A successful green transition depends on a fair and inclusive digital transition. The Research Council will contribute to increased insight into how this transition affects how we live, work and interact.

## **We will strengthen national and international cooperation**

The growing need to see knowledge and technology from different fields in context requires good interaction, coordinated efforts and extensive cooperation across disciplinary, sectoral, stakeholder and national boundaries. In collaboration with other stakeholders in the research and innovation system, the Research Council will contribute to the development of society in line with the changing challenges we face. Global and national societal challenges trigger the need for profound transformation, require new approaches and partnerships, and create new opportunities for innovation where research is key.

International research cooperation connects the world at a time when international cooperation is diminishing. It is therefore more important than ever to ensure responsible international cooperation and openness in research, while also safeguarding the need to protect research and research results in certain disciplines and areas of technology.

## We will contribute to knowledge-based research policy

In addition to realising the Government’s overall research policy, the Research Council is also the Government’s most important adviser on research and research policy. This means further developing the independent knowledge-based advice we provide to research policy authorities across the breadth of the research and innovation system, as well as advising the ministries on allocations and the Research Council’s investments. Our research policy advice shall be based on a sound knowledge base and extensive dialogue with stakeholders in the research and innovation system.

The Research Council will facilitate good cooperation between the research performing institutions, trade and industry, public enterprises and stakeholders in civil society when the

research is conducted and when the results are applied. Dialogue can be increased, for example, by creating and further developing meeting places for researchers and those who are going to use the research.

Below we elaborate on the most important changes and priorities that the Research Council will work on going forward, broken down into six target areas. The target areas describe the areas in which it is particularly important for the Research Council to bring about a change. The priorities highlight the most important steps we must take to bring about change and help solve the challenges, and do not cover the scope of the Research Council’s work and areas of responsibility.



Our vision, values and target areas

**Target area:**  
High-quality and  
accessible research





# The Research Council contributes to more world-leading research groups



The Research Council will contribute to identifying and building Norwegian world-leading research groups in basic research, applied research and research-based innovation.

High-quality research moves the frontier of knowledge and contributes to the development of research areas that other research can build on and enables us to prepare for unknown, new challenges. The Research Council will contribute to high-quality national research through policy instruments that strengthen outstanding research groups and promote international research cooperation. We will work to increase the participation rate for Norwegian researchers in the European competitive arenas that promote high scientific quality within Horizon Europe.

We will develop policy instruments for high-quality research within and across disciplines. Our competitive arenas must ensure high-quality research and have a high level of legitimacy. The Research Council also requires a high ethical standard in the projects that are awarded funding. We give promising young researchers the opportunity to develop their own research

ideas and careers. In some critical areas of society, the research is of inadequate quality or the research system has inadequate capacity. It is important to identify these weaknesses and take measures to strengthen quality and capacity. Collaboration must also be encouraged to ensure that research is used.

## Priorities:

- We raise the quality of Norwegian research through our national competitive arenas and encourage greater success in international competitive arenas.
- We promote innovative research ideas, new world-leading research groups and promote promising researchers.
- We contribute to the sharing of new knowledge and the use of research findings and results.

**Target area:**  
Environmental, social and  
economic sustainability



# The Research Council triggers research and research-based innovation that provides new answers to how we can solve the challenges facing society and how existing knowledge can be applied more quickly

Sustainable social development is largely about meeting our time's need for fair and responsible development within nature's limits, ensuring equal opportunities for good health and quality of life, and maintaining an inclusive welfare society. New solutions are needed to quickly reduce emissions, and ensure sustainable nature and land management on land and at sea. New forms of cooperation must be developed across sectors to reduce inequality, combat exclusion and maintain trust in democratic institutions. Sustainability challenges are closely interlinked. The challenges related to environmental, economic and social sustainability are global, but there are major differences in countries' opportunities to solve the challenges, and how far they have come.

The Research Council will contribute to developing knowledge that highlights opportunities, challenges and dilemmas, including knowledge about how to achieve a real transformation of society which is fair, local and global, and that points in a direction that improves the environment and people's health and quality of life. At the same time, it is important that biodiversity and traditional knowledge are safeguarded so that existing industries can be developed.

Our role also involves looking at how research interacts with other policy instruments. In order to develop the best solutions, research-based knowledge must be combined with the breadth of experience-based knowledge from trade

and industry, the public and civil sectors, and society at large. We will work to ensure that new knowledge is applied, to a greater extent and more quickly, in political decision-making processes, in public administration, service provision and in society and business.

In order to meet the challenges, we must further develop and experiment with our tools and policy instruments so that they facilitate cooperation between countries, disciplines, sectors and sources of funding. We must also strike a balance between the need for a long-term perspective and the need for a high rate of change.

## **Priorities:**

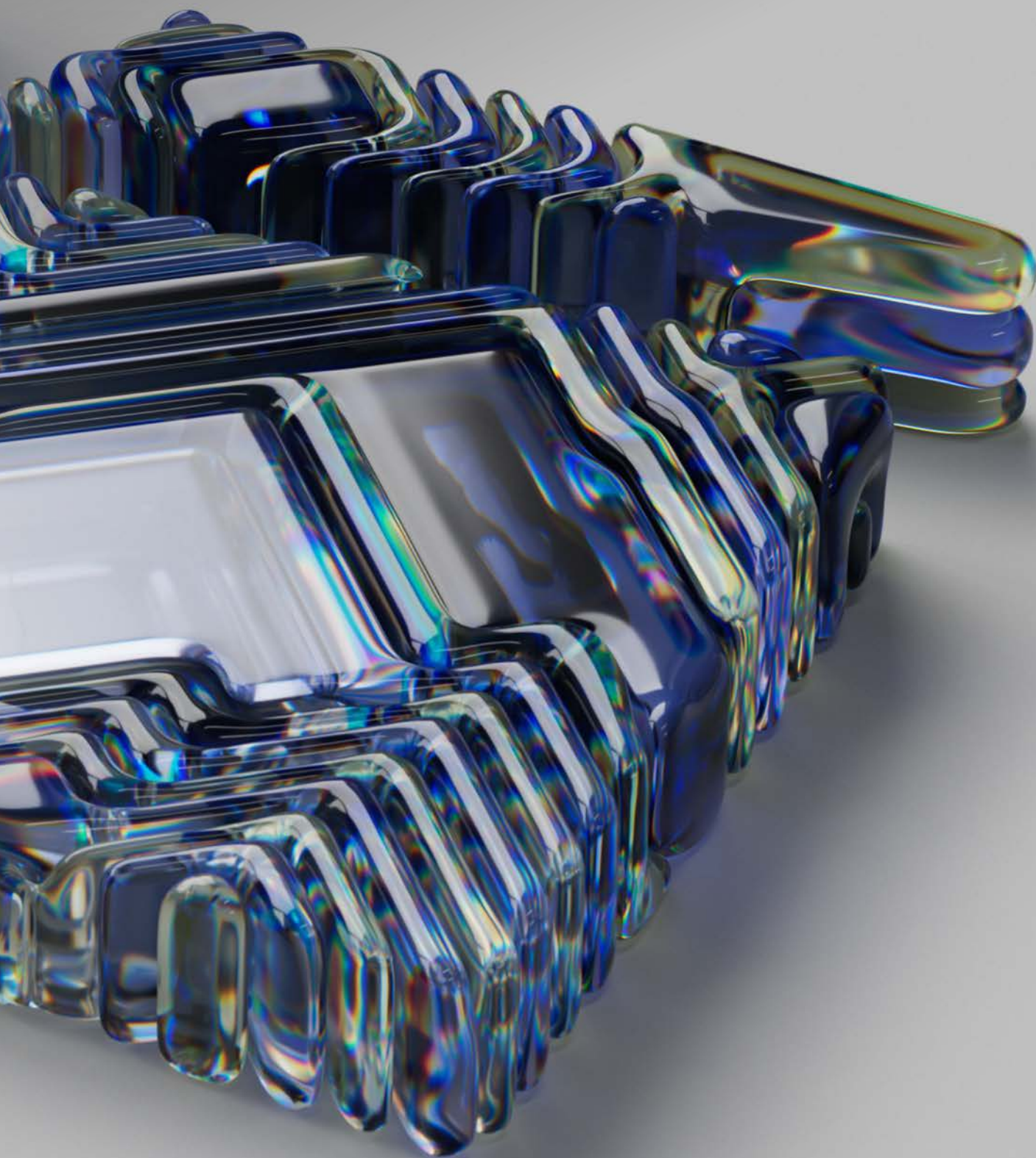
- We promote cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral research and innovation processes that solve societal challenges and apply knowledge more quickly.
- We work purposefully to stimulate and facilitate knowledge that society needs within the thematic priorities set out in the long-term plan.
- We strengthen international research cooperation to solve common challenges related to sustainability and human rights, and promote high ethical standards.



Photo: Anne Valeur

Photo: Jonas Bendiksen

**Target area:**  
Enhanced competitiveness  
and innovation capacity



## The Research Council helps to increase value creation by increasing research and development capacity in the private and public sectors

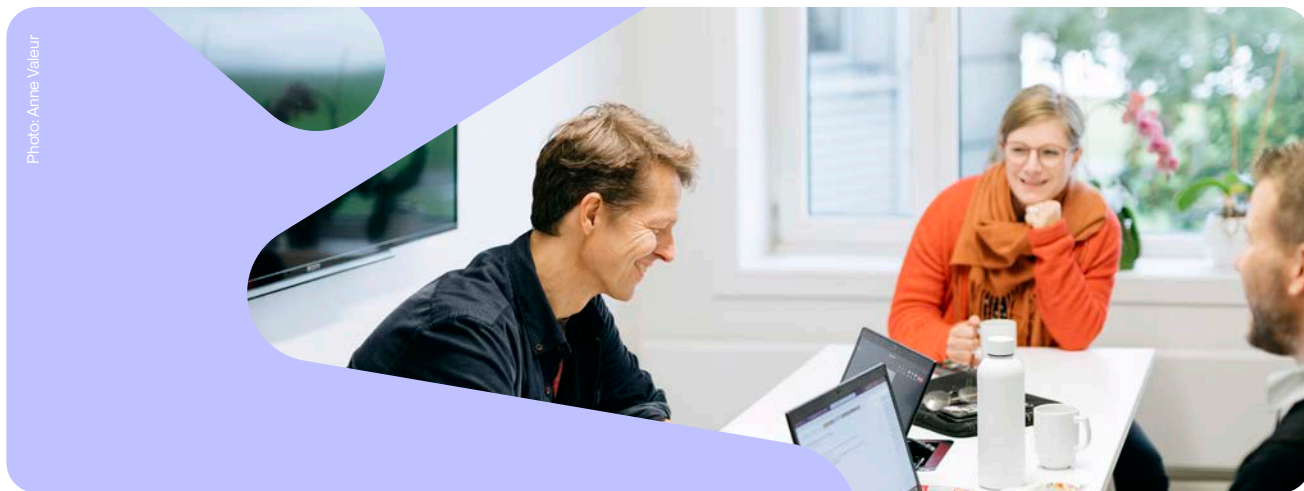


Photo: Anne Valeur

Enhanced competitiveness and innovation capacity through research is important to address the major challenges facing society and to develop more value-creating and sustainable industries. The innovation system in the public sector must be developed, and interaction strengthened between research and industry on new solutions. Knowledge must be shared and applied in the business and public sectors throughout Norway in order to succeed in value creation and the green and digital transition. The Norwegian research system must be a strong driver for restructuring and new business

development, adapted to regional and national needs, and enable Norwegian businesses to assert themselves on international markets. Established and new businesses and the public sector have great opportunities to create value by employing artificial intelligence and digital technologies, and to develop internationally competitive products and services. This is contingent on increasing quality and capacity through long-term research efforts, especially in areas undergoing rapid technological development.



Photo: Anne Valeur

The high pace of technology development and dynamics in applications and markets mean the Research Council's policy instruments must be flexible, and must allow a higher allocation frequency as well as facilitate better interaction for knowledge and competence sharing and international cooperation. The Government's ambition to increase research and development efforts in trade and industry requires good framework conditions for business development, innovative partnerships, new knowledge-based industries and growth companies, as well as the further development of established businesses. The Research Council will facilitate mobility and ensure that research institutions contribute more to innovation across the breadth of subjects and disciplines.

The policy instruments must be accessible and user-friendly, and the system must help to mobilise new players and link up value chains and sectors. More research and research-based innovation is needed across the public sector to enable it to deliver good, effective services throughout Norway. Public purchasing power must, to a greater extent, be geared to strengthening interaction and innovation capacity in the private and public sectors.

**Priorities:**

- We contribute to an innovative public sector with a higher rate of change.
- We gear research and development towards value creation, sustainable restructuring and efficient services throughout Norway, through ongoing and flexible schemes for trade and industry, the public sector and research institutions.
- We increase research and research-based innovation efforts in artificial intelligence and digital technologies and our knowledge of their application and social consequences.

**Target area:**  
A well-functioning research system





## The Research Council contributes to good interaction in the research system



Photo: Anne Valeur

A well-functioning research system is a fundamental prerequisite for good research and for achieving the goals set out in research policy. The Research Council shall facilitate the best possible use of research resources and results and promote researcher recruitment to all sectors of society and to good, attractive research careers. The Research Council will create added value for research throughout Norway, support the development of Sami research and research on Sami society and culture, including traditional and experience-based knowledge.

We will further develop our cooperation with other stakeholders and contribute to new forms of cooperation that lead to better interaction, including between research, education and innovation, national and international research systems, and public and private funding. We will also contribute to the development of the research performing sectors so that their advantages are better utilised in a research system that supports interaction.

The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation is the largest of its kind in the world, and Norway actively participates in this programme. Establishing good interaction between the framework programme and national policy instruments is therefore a top priority. It is also important to strengthen cooperation outside Europe, and the Government has highlighted the Panorama Countries in particular as important partners. Cooperation should also be strengthened with the Nordic countries and growing regions, such as the African continent. This will open up opportunities for high-level research cooperation and commercial opportunities for Norwegian trade and industry. Our ambition is to continue to increase cooperation with the best research nations, and we will do this within the framework of ensuring that research cooperation is as open as possible and as secure as necessary.



Advanced research infrastructure is a driving force in a well-functioning research system, a prerequisite for research of the highest quality, and provides opportunities for strengthened cooperation between research communities, industry and society. The Research Council will therefore work to give priority to research infrastructure, and sharing and making data accessible by investing in national research infrastructure and Norwegian participation in international infrastructure cooperation that supports Norwegian priorities.

Open research involves sharing research results and data, and enables users to be more involved in the research. It also makes research available to stakeholders outside the established research institutions.

#### **Priorities:**

- We contribute to developing a well-functioning research system with high-quality research that meets society's transition needs.
- We work to ensure that the Norwegian research system has access to state-of-the-art research infrastructure.
- We strengthen our efforts on internationalising research by contributing to good interaction between the national and international research system.
- We follow up the Storting's and the Sami Parliament's consideration of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report.

**Target area:**  
Good advice



# The Research Council sets the agenda as an independent and knowledge-based adviser



The Research Council's ambition is to set the agenda as an independent research policy adviser to the Government, the Storting, the Sami Parliament, research and innovation stakeholders and international partners. We will further develop our role as a dialogue partner role and listen to the outside world. Our advisory services will create an understanding that using research is necessary and help maintain high confidence in research. We must therefore make the results of research more visible, including by promoting dissemination of research results in Norwegian and working to increase attention to the role of research in society.

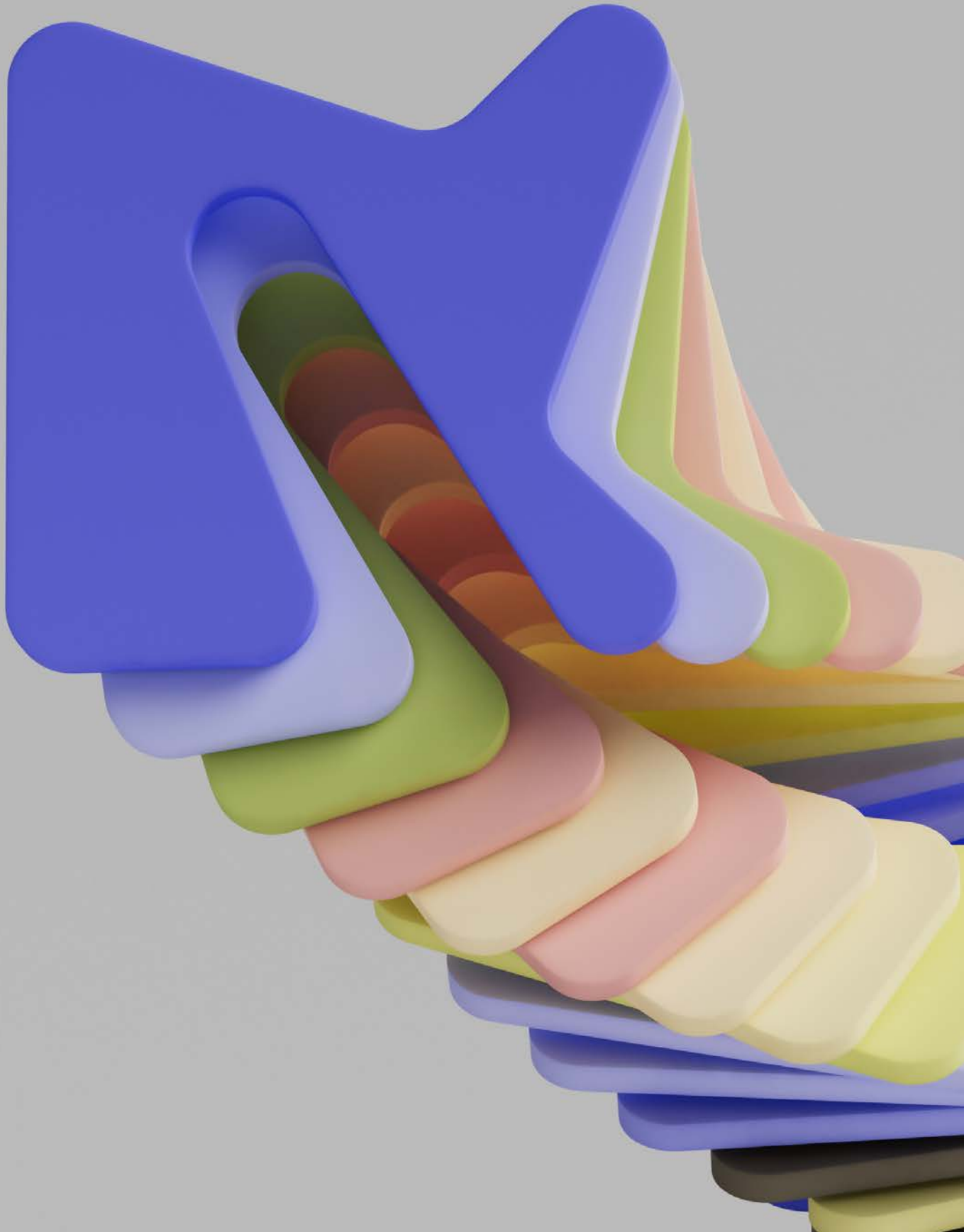
We must have a sound knowledge base for our research policy advice. We will further develop the knowledge base for our advisory services, including by involving the research communities and utilising the professional expertise of the portfolio boards when we formulate our research policy advice.

We will work to ensure that the advice we provide helps improve coordination and interaction throughout the research system and in cross-sectoral work. Through our advice, we contribute to ensuring that the Ministry of Education and Research has a good basis for exercising its coordinating role in research policy, and we will initiate and support initiatives involving several ministries.

## **Priorities:**

- We help to set the agenda for research and innovation policy discussion in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
- We strengthen and highlight the knowledge base for our advice.
- We generate added value for the ministries' sectoral policy and cross-sectoral initiatives.

**Target area:**  
Organisational development



## A competent and efficient Research Council

The Research Council will continue to be an attractive workplace in the future. We are facing extensive changes that affect how we work, who works on what and what skills are needed. Rapid change will affect us, and we must continuously develop to stay relevant, while maintaining a good working environment and including the employees' perspective in the change processes.

We will respond to the needs of our clients and users through our user-friendly services, by, among other things, including stakeholders in the research and innovation system in developments. We will increase user orientation to meet users' expectations of customised and cohesive services that fit their challenges and needs. We will safeguard the need for user-friendliness and

a long-term perspective, while experimenting and effectively implementing new schemes. This includes considering alternative forms of funding for research and development and co-funding with other stakeholders.

Work processes must be digitalised and simplified to ensure more efficient use of public funds. We will use new technology where it is expected by both users and our own employees. In order to be an insight-driven organisation, we must manage our information and access new information better than we do today. Our expertise will be adapted to the future, and we must secure relevant expertise and sufficient capacity also in a tight labour market.

### Priorities:

- We have a systematic approach to policy instrument development and experimentation to provide effective schemes.
- We simplify and digitalise our services and work processes to a greater extent, by integrating data, analyses and artificial intelligence in problem-solving.
- We work systematically to ensure the organisation has the relevant skills and sufficient capacity to meet future challenges and opportunities.
- We facilitate well-being and engagement at work through good work processes, mastery and development opportunities as well as inclusive social and professional arenas.



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This publication can be downloaded at  
[www.forskningsradet.no/publikasjoner](http://www.forskningsradet.no/publikasjoner)

Design: BOLDT

Illustration cover: CATK

ISBN 978-82-12-04121-9 (PDF) – The Research Council's strategy

