

## Portfolio analysis for Global development and international relations

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#### Portfolio analysis for Global development and international relations

The portfolio analysis shall form a basis for portfolio plans, investment plans and reporting, as well as for advice across portfolio boards, the Board of Directors and the Research Council in general. The analysis is done on the total portfolio, which includes a projects funded by the Research Council and the projects we have a national responsibility to mobilize to, such as e.g. projects from the EU framework programmes and partnerships.

#### The scope of the portfolio analysis

This portfolio analysis is made on the Research Council's total portfolio of projects, i.e., the Research Council's own efforts and EU efforts which are registered up until the end of 2021. The analysis applies to the portfolio Global development and international relations' area of responsibility and is aligned with the revised portfolio plan of 2022. All amounts are in Norwegian kroner (NOK) unless other currency is specified.

#### Disciplines/technology

The Norwegian R&D statistics divide research into six major subject areas, which in turn are divided into disciplines. The six subject areas are social sciences, humanities, medicine and health, mathematics and science, technology, and agriculture and fisheries. The research within this Portfolio relies on the contribution from all disciplines and technologies.

#### Research themes

The following broad areas are of particular interest for the Portfolio:

- Security and governance
- Poverty, development, and equality
- Global health

Each of these areas has thematic sub-priorities, which are interlinked. In addition, there are several cross-cutting dimensions. Areas of interest for this portfolio, but not exclusive, are related to the SDGs and Climate Change, climate adaptation and just transition. The former is relevant for all the Research Council's portfolios and the latter is also a main concern for the Portfolio for climate and polar research, Portfolio for oceans, Portfolio for energy, transport and low emissions, and, to a large extent, also for the Portfolio for land-based food, the environment and bioresources.

#### Areas of application of the research

The broad thematic scope of this portfolio affects and relies on interaction with a wide range of stakeholders including the government, communities, individuals, and public, private, and civil sectors internationally and in Norway. The portfolio targets primarily Norwegian research organisations. However, the portfolio for Global development and international relations receives part of its funding from the Official Development Aid (ODA) budget, which must be used for economic development and welfare low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in accordance with the OECDs Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria<sup>[1]</sup>. For ODA-funds, research relevant for policy makers, the public and civil sectors, and business in LMICs, is prioritized. Further, measures are put in place to ensure that the public sector, business, NGOs, and society at large, nationally, and internationally, may benefit from the research results.

#### R&D value chains

The portfolio covers the entire value chain from basic research to innovation and piloting, albeit the emphasis is on applied research. The Portfolio covers different kinds of empirical work including field research, development of datasets, and new methodologies or survey instruments.

[1] [Development Assistance Committee \(DAC\) - OECD](#)

## Statistics of relevant projects within the portfolio

The portfolio for global development and international relations covers research funded both by the EU as well as targeted and non-targeted funding mechanisms within the Research Council of Norway (RCN). Targeted programmes are in their entirety dedicated to thematic priorities within the Portfolio plan for global development and international relations and the Portfolio board for global development and international relations makes the funding decisions for these programmes. For this portfolio the targeted funding mechanisms are International relations, foreign and security policy and Norwegian interests (UTENRIKS), Norway – Global Partner (NORGLOBAL2), Global Health Research (GLOBVAC), VISJON2030 and South-Africa - Norway joint research programme on ocean research including blue economy, climate change, the environment and sustainable energy (SANOCEAN). Most of the funds to these funding mechanisms originates from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' ODA-budget<sup>[2]</sup> and encompass research on global development topics.

The portfolio accounted for 450 research projects in 2021 of which 381 projects are funded from the RCN and 69 projects are funded from the EU framework programme for research and innovation. The total budget of the portfolio amounts to 1.258 million. Albeit the number of EU-projects are by far surpassed by the number of RCN funded projects, the funding from EU accounts for more than half in terms of money: 673 million from EU versus 585 million from the RCN. This is mainly due to two large-scale EU Specific grant agreements on vaccination research in LMICs (amounts to 597 million).

Figure 1 Development of the Portfolio for global development and international relations 2019-2021

The portfolio is built up by various project types/categories. In relation to the RCN-funded part of the portfolio, the prevailing project type is Researcher project (255 projects), Research centre (2 centres), Collaborative and knowledge building project (25 projects), Coordination and support activity (40 projects) and Innovation project (3 projects). In addition, the portfolio covers basic grants to the Research institute sector in areas of relevance to the portfolio (13 grants).

The EU-funded part of the portfolio is dominated by Specific grant agreements (2 projects of total 597 million) in addition to Research and innovation action (39 projects of 41 million), Starting grant (7 projects of 14 million) and SME Innovation (1 project of 8 million).

Table 1 RCN-funded portfolio by R&D sector

The portfolio divided per R&D-sector shows that funds and number of projects are evenly distributed between the University-sector<sup>[3]</sup> and the Research institute sector with 175 projects to the former and 178 projects to the latter. The business-sector accounts for only 4 projects and public health administration accounts for 3 projects. Organizations abroad are owners of two projects.

Figure 2 The portfolio per discipline

The portfolio is dominated by research within the social sciences (59 percent of the effort), followed by health and medicine (23 %), science and mathematics (8 %), technology (5 %) and humanities (4 %)<sup>[4]</sup>. There is further a modest effort within the areas agriculture and fisheries. The portfolio's distribution across disciplines is the same as in 2020, aside from in health and medicine which has a significant increase from 16 percent the previous year following the extraordinary efforts related to the corona pandemic.

In terms of number of projects per funding mechanisms, NORGLOBAL2 accounts for the largest part of the portfolio with 71 projects, followed by free-standing projects within social sciences and the humanities with 62 projects, UTENRIKS with 55 projects, GLOBVAC with 33 projects, Centres of excellence with 2 projects, BEDREHELSE (public health research funding scheme) with 18 projects, IKTPLUSS (ICT-research funding scheme) with 11 projects, and ENERGIX (renewable energy funding scheme) with 7 projects.

Figure 3 Composition of the portfolio from various funding mechanisms.

With its international thematic orientation, most projects within the portfolio have cooperation with researchers and/or research institutions in other countries. Based on Meld. St. 17 (2017-2018) Partner countries in the Norwegian development politics, the

NORGLOBAL2 programme encourages that the funded research focuses on one of the 16 priority countries for Norwegian development aid. Three funding schemes, INDNOR, CHINOR and SANOCEAN, are bilateral cooperation mechanisms requiring research cooperation with respectively India, China, and South-Africa. In total the portfolio's RCN-funded projects have formalized cooperation with 75 different countries, an increase from 62 in 2020. The most important partner countries for the projects in the portfolio are The United Kingdom (37 projects), USA (27), South Africa (21), Ethiopia (20), Uganda (19 projects), Tanzania (16), Kenya and Russia (12 projects each), The Netherlands and Germany (9 each), Sweden and Ghana (8 each), Denmark and Finland (7 each), Bangladesh and Nepal (6 each) and Indonesia and China (5 each). Of the countries listed above, South Africa, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, India, Ghana, Bangladesh, Nepal, and China, are ODA-eligible partner countries. Of total partner countries, 26 participated in one project. As the figure below indicates, the cooperation between Norwegian and African researchers is mainly concentrated to countries in eastern and southern Africa (the anglophone parts of Africa) with very little or no cooperation with researchers in countries situated in central and western parts of Africa. The cooperation with European researchers is first and foremost with The United Kingdom and, subsequently, with researchers working in northern and central European countries. The USA is by far the dominating research partner in the Americas.

Figure 4 International cooperation by number of RCN-funded projects (darker colours indicate more cooperation)

The partner countries are not evenly distributed across the various funding schemes. For UTENRIKS-projects the main partner countries are Russia (11 projects), The United Kingdom (9), USA (8), India and Ukraine (5 projects each). For NORGLOBAL2-projects the main partner countries are Ethiopia (17 projects), The United Kingdom (15), USA (14), Tanzania and Uganda (11 projects each), South-Africa (8), Kenya (7), Ghana (6), and India, The Netherlands, Nepal, Senegal, Sweden, and Germany (5 each). GLOBVAC-projects have partners in 18 LMICS, of which 13 in Africa. The principal partner countries for GLOBVAC-projects are The United Kingdom (10 projects), Uganda (8), and Kenya (5).

The European framework programmes are important arenas for R&D cooperation with countries of high relevance for this portfolio. Within the Europe framework programme Norway has entered into cooperation with a total of 131 countries. Although most are with European countries, Norwegian researchers have 136 joint contracts with research institutions from prioritized countries of the Norwegian Government's Panorama Strategy - Brazil, China, India, Russia, and South-Africa. There are a further 57 joint contracts with research institutions in partner countries to the Government's development strategy - Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan, Mali, and Palestine.

The distribution of the portfolio across Norwegian research institutions shows a concentration in Eastern Norway with 64 per cent of the RCN-funded projects, compared with 61 percent the previous year (mostly Oslo area), albeit institutions in Western Norway (mostly Bergen area) also have been successful in obtaining funding for their research with 23 percent of the projects, down from 24 percent in 2020. Research institutions in other parts of the country have obtained only a few projects, and this pattern remains constant over the last couple of years. Most of the growth in the portfolio in 2021 is thus allocated to research institutions in the Oslo area. This is, in particular in relation to research on global development and global health, due to the thematic priorities of the calls within the portfolio and how well they fit with the thematic profiles of the research institutions across Norway. For research on international relations and geopolitics relevant Norwegian research institutions are found in all regions.

Figure 5 Geographic distribution of projects in Norway

The number of publications for the portfolio is extensive. In 2019 half of the publications derived from projects funded by the targeted funding schemes, especially GLOBVAC, UTENRIKS and NORGLOBAL2, but in 2021 almost two thirds of publications derived from non-targeted funding schemes. The decrease in publications from GLOBVAC is due to the change between two funding periods, and publications are expected to increase as projects funded in the new programme period are finalized.

Figure 6 Number of scientific publications

The output from the portfolio covers a wide range of both scientific and non-academic results, from i.e., abstracts to articles, lectures, and websites. The number of reported outputs in the Norwegian academic register Cristin (Current research information system in Norway) within this portfolio has increased since 2019. There is a strong emphasis on academic articles, academic lectures, other lectures, and interviews.

Table 2 Reported outputs from the portfolio (data from Cristin)

A bibliometric analysis based on a normalized citation index of the projects under this portfolio shows that the citation index varies across topics and across years. The analysis is made on the two periods 2014-2016 and 2019-2021. The analysis is further made on the articles deriving from the targeted funding schemes (UTENRIKS, NORGLOBAL, GLOBVAC etc.) and from all funding schemes within the portfolio. The average national citation index is reference. In some areas, like clinical research and life sciences as well as the social sciences, the publications from the portfolio's citation index are below the national average for the period 2019-2021.

Figure 7 Normalized citation index for the portfolio

The figure below shows the portfolio's share of the top ten percent most cited publications. The pattern of publications most cited across disciplines is the same as for the citation index above.

Figure 8 Portfolio's share of publications among the top ten percent most cited

The government's aim is that all Norwegian scientific articles financed by public funds must be openly accessible by 2024. The figure below shows the status for open publication within the portfolio, both for targeted funding schemes and for the entire portfolio (targeted and non-targeted funding schemes included) and the national average per discipline. The fluctuation of national average per period reflects that there has been put much more emphasis on open publications the past few years.

Figure 9 Open publications from the portfolio

The quality of the research within this portfolio's targeted funding schemes is shown in the figure below. The scale is on number of projects granted funding and their grades over the period 2017-2021. The number of projects with grades 6 and 7 (out of a maximum of 7) is stable and the number of projects with grade 5 is in decline. The average grade for projects which obtain funding from this portfolio is 5,99 in 2021, an increase from 5,74 in 2020.

Figure 10 Overall grade of projects within the portfolio

[2]ODA: Official Development Aid

[3]Includes both universities and university colleges.

[4]Does not include EU-funded research as this is not included in statistics on subject/discipline.

### **Assessment of the portfolio in light of the realisation of goals**

The portfolio for Global development and international relations contributes to realising the main goals of the Research Council Norway's executive strategy, [Empowering ideas for a better world](#) (2020 – 2024), in particular the goal of Sustainable Development and the strategic area Cohesion and Globalisation. The interventions and activities within the portfolio's area of responsibility aims at contributing to the following societal goals set out for this portfolio:

#### **Societal goals**

1. Societies across the world are resilient and informed.
2. Researchers collaborate internationally in genuine, fair, and equitable partnerships.
3. Norway contributes effectively to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
4. Norway is prepared to deal with the challenges and opportunities it faces in pursuit of its interests and values.

The funding ministries, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have a strong influence on the thematic profile of the targeted funding schemes within this portfolio. This influence, and the ministries prioritization of research funding within the portfolio's thematic priorities, is reflected in the distribution of funds across priorities and the overall volume of the portfolio, and thus impact on the achievement of this portfolio's goals.

In order to achieve the user goals set out for this portfolio, the Portfolio board for global development and international relations

have decided on a set of actions for each goal in the Portfolio plan for global development and international relations:

**User goal 1:** Civil society and citizens have confidence in and make use of research, participate in the development of knowledge and help to create innovative and sustainable solutions.

The actions set forth to achieve this goal is to invest in projects and measures that promote participation and interest in knowledge development and ensure wide dissemination of research findings.

In terms of funding of new projects, 2021 was an active year as a total of 58 new projects had their start-up on research topics across the portfolio's priorities. By comparison, 49 new projects started up in 2020. In regard to dissemination, 2021 was a year still impacted by covid-19 restrictions in terms of travelling, conferences, and meetings.

To increase the participation of end-users in projects GLOBVAC launched a call for Collaborative Projects in Global health in 2022. Eligible projects had to include partners that are not research organisations from LMICs, like NGOs, civil society organizations and public sector bodies.

For 2021, projects within this portfolio reported 416 user-oriented dissemination activities (policy briefs, workshops, conferences, etc.) and 227 dissemination activities open to the wider public.

**User goal 2:** Researchers within the portfolio's areas maintain high quality, theoretical and methodological diversity, and creativity in research, and participate actively in international research, development and innovation.

The actions set forth to achieve this goal is to invest in and advise on measures to strengthen competence and capacity within the portfolio's subject areas and promote high-quality research. Promote and underpin international research collaboration, including genuinely equitable partnerships with researchers in LMICs.

The funded projects are of high quality with an average grade from the experts of 5,99 of maximum 7. The projects contribute to international cooperation and capacity building by extensive research partnerships with researchers and research institutions in 75 different countries, of which most are LMICs. All 16 partner countries in Norwegian development policies are among the international research partners. All calls for proposals have had specific criteria on international research collaboration, and some with explicit requirements on equitable partnerships. The research infrastructure within the portfolio areas is further developed and maintained as several of the projects include establishment or updating of research database. The portfolio supports research networks on a number of thematic and geographical areas: Asia, Effectiveness of peace operations, Humanitarian efforts, Competence and job creation, Taxation, capital and development, Risk management for safer and sustainable oceans, and Russia. The Portfolio also include a Researcher School on Global Health.

Norwegian researchers have further been encouraged to exploit the funding opportunities within the Horizon Europe framework programme for research and innovation, and in particular the framework programme's Africa initiative. Funding results from the first round of calls will be made public throughout 2022 and early in 2023. So far, Norwegian research institutions have been quite successful in obtaining funding from the Africa initiative calls. For the call on Public health: Innovative approaches to enhance poverty-related diseases research in sub-Saharan Africa, a consortium led by the Oslo University Hospital obtained funding for the project Dual screening by Spectral Artificial Visual Examination (SAVE) for Female Genital Schistosomiasis (FGS) and cervical cancer. Digital, new, low-cost, and simple screening and training. For the call on Green Transition – the partnership on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE) and transport topics: Radical improvement of road safety in low and medium income countries in Africa the Institute for transport economics is a partner in the consortium for the project Safe System for radical improvement of road safety in low- and middle-income African countries. For the call on Green Transition – the partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) and environment topics: Socio-economic empowerment of the users of the sea, the Nordland Research Institute coordinates the project Socio-economic Empowerment of coastal communities as users of the sea to ensure sustainable coastal development. Under the same topic's call on Quantify impacts of the trade in raw and processed biomass on ecosystems, for offering new leverage points for biodiversity conservation, along supply chains, to reduce leakage effects, NTNU coordinates the project Biodiversity and trade: mitigating the impacts of non-food biomass global supply chains. For the call on Capacities for Science: Democratic politics in the EU's neighbourhood, the NTNU coordinates the project REconfiguring EU DEMOcracy Support? Towards a sustained demos in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood.

**User goal 3:** Governments, policymakers, practitioners and the corporate sector use research to shape global health and development policy and practice, in particular in LMICs.

The actions set forth to achieve the goal is to invest in research that provides updated knowledge and a thorough understanding of developments and trends relating to Norway's development policy in general, and to Norwegian ambitions for Agenda 2030 in particular. Ensure an ongoing dialogue and sharing of findings between the research community and key stakeholders, and ensure that research findings are implemented and validated, and that new practices based on research are assessed on a regular basis.

The portfolio board has invested in efforts that contributes to participation in, and the establishment of, international network such as the EDCTP, Belmont Forum, GACD and the Covid-19 Therapeutics Accelerator. Implementation research emphasizes partnerships between community members, implementers, researchers, and policy makers. This type of research was prioritized in the call for global health projects in 2021 with the aim to identifying barriers and facilitators to effective and equitable implementation of interventions, programmes and policies. Further, the call for Collaborative Projects in Global Health in 2022 requires practitioners and other users of the research in LMICs as collaborating partners with an active role in defining the research questions, implementing the research activities, and using the results in projects. Despite constraints due to the covid-19 pandemics, there has been extensive activities in the dissemination of results from research and dialogue with key stakeholders by means of online seminars, policy briefs, articles etc. For instance, the GLOBVAC-conference was held digitally in 2021.

**User goal 4:** The government uses research to frame Norwegian foreign and security policy.

The actions set forth to achieve the goal is to invest in research that provides updated knowledge and a thorough understanding of developments and trends relating to Norway's foreign and security policy and ensure an ongoing dialogue and sharing of findings between the research community and key stakeholders.

By September 2022 the research on Norwegian foreign and security policy accounted for 113 projects, of which the targeted funding scheme UTENRIKS funded a total of 61 projects in the period 2018-2022 of a total budget of 452 million.

The Research Council facilitated a number of webinars where the projects were reporting to the funding sections at the MFA on their research results, and they participated in discussions on what are the relevant topics and research questions for future calls and what are the challenges of research activities in countries like Russia, China, and India. An important issue for the MFA departments was how to ensure the policy relevance of the research.

The projects and their team-members have used the covid period to make use of the commonly acquired knowhow on online conferences and webinars to reach out to an even broader audience, for discussions and dissemination of research results. The UTENRIKS Facebook shows an outreach activity of the projects that was kept up and widened the last year as well.

### Disciplines/technology

The portfolio covers a wide range of disciplines and technology areas, and the scopes of the portfolio's calls for proposals are inherently cross-disciplinary, as they are primarily aimed at contributing to solving complex problems. The portfolio thus contributes considerably to relevant use of trans- and multidisciplinary, especially within the social sciences. This is due to the thematic priorities in the calls which are a function of the priorities within the portfolio plan and the priorities in the annual allotment letters from the funding ministries. There is a potential to increase more radical trans-disciplinary research, however the funding of Large-scale trans-disciplinary projects in 2021 only resulted in two projects on topics related to the core priorities of the Portfolio for global development and international relations. A few more projects from this call within climate change and clinical medicine are nevertheless relevant for the portfolio. For future calls on transdisciplinary projects the Research Council must mobilize the researchers working on thematic priorities within this portfolio to compete for funds.

Publication data from the portfolio shows that publications from projects peak three to four years after start-up. The citation rate shows a slightly increasing trend over the last years. Overall, the articles in this portfolio that can be traced to RCN-funding have been cited slightly below or in line with the average for Norwegian research in the same period, which again is well above world average. Citation analyses reveal that publications deriving from targeted funding schemes are less cited than publications deriving from other funding schemes, such as FRIPRO (the free-standing projects). This could be due to a somewhat lesser emphasis on novelty when funding projects from targeted funding schemes. However, there is a remarkable variety across disciplines, as the share of publications on agriculture, environment, and ecology as well as on earth sciences within this portfolio are cited well above national average. Future developments on the citation index must be closely monitored, and a mitigating action could be to put stronger emphasis on novelty in funding of proposals within the portfolio – especially in social sciences.

### Sectors, actors, etc. where the results of the research are applicable

Interviews with various users in policy and public administration<sup>[5]</sup> show that researchers are frequently used as experts and advisers by politicians and public officials. On the other hand, their scientific articles and reports are less mentioned as a direct source for decisions and policy processes. Another general conclusion is that research in this area is mainly linked to evaluation overviews and insight in topics that emerge on the policy agenda. There are fewer references to more strategic use of research for shaping future strategies and priorities in the area. In other words, there is an emphasis on research for “policy readiness” instead of research as a “strategic and corrective factor”.

Policy readiness is to a large extent a requirement in the calls funded by the MFA. Including key partners in research projects is important to ensure a wider use of the research in further developing policy areas, products, practices, treatments, etc. However as the data shows, the project partners under this portfolio are mainly from the academic sector, both nationally and internationally. There is very little participation from the business sector and the public sector.

## Research themes

The portfolio spans across the following three thematic dimensions: Security and governance, Poverty, development and equality and Global health. In total, including both RCN-funded and EU-funded projects, the number of projects under Security and governance are 137 in 2021. The corresponding number for Poverty, development and equality is 135 and for Global health 97. The effort for each of these priorities are dependent not only of the priorities in investment plans and calls for proposals, but first and foremost on available funding and the ministries various earmarking of funds.

The contribution from the EU framework programmes is for the largest part health related research, and more specifically research on vaccination. As the RCN-part of the portfolio is funded almost equally by targeted and non-targeted funding schemes the direction of the portfolio development across the thematic priorities is not only dictated by the Portfolio board's funding decisions. However, the funding decisions for the targeted funding schemes lies within the competence of the Portfolio board, and by negotiating instructions from the ministries, priorities of the portfolio plan and the thematic distribution of projects from non-targeted efforts, it is possible to ensure that the thematic priorities, to some extent, are balanced and well-represented within the portfolio.

Although the UTENRIKS programme has a wide thematic scope, the earmarking of funding makes it difficult to fund research on issues other than those related to the more geographic specifications for the programme, i.e., Europe, Asia, Russia, and the High North/Arctic.

NORGLOBAL2 aims to contribute to progress towards the SDGs and the funded research falls within two priority areas for Norwegian development policy: Fight inequality and reduce climate change.

GLOBVAC falls within the third priority area for Norwegian development policy: Global health. The programme has a wide thematic scope funding research relevant to SDG3 and that contribute to sustainable health improvements for disadvantaged populations in LMICs. Funded projects span a wide variety of topics including communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases including mental health, mother and child health, as well as digital health, AMR and environment and health. Almost half of the projects funded by GLOBVAC since 2020 can be defined as health systems- and health services research. At least ten projects in the sub-portfolio involves implementation research.

### **International relations, foreign and security policy (UTENRIKS)**

The UTENRIKS portfolio consisted at the end of 2021 of 57 researcher projects, three collaborative and knowledge-building projects and one network project. The total amount of funding within UTENRIKS was by end 2021 a total of 452 million kroner.

The projects in the UTENRIKS portfolio cover the following thematic and geographic areas. The thematic areas are listed according to the priority areas in the Portfolio Plan.

Figure 11 Distribution of projects across the thematic priorities of UTENRIKS

Figure 12 Geographic areas of study in UTENRIKS-projects

An overview of the 61 projects shows that the sub-portfolio covers a range of topics all relevant to stakeholders interested in foreign policy and security issues. A large part of the projects covers areas of research related to a broad spectrum of topics within the area Governance and human rights. This is due to the funding structure of the sub-portfolio which has a large part if it funding from the Development Assistance budget (03). The sub-portfolio was established with the aim to promote research on foreign relations, security issues and geopolitics, but as a large part of the funding comes with requirements linked to the OECD DAC, it leads to a predominance of topics that can be categorized according to the DAC criteria. This is the case for 90 % of the funding to research on Asia and all the funding available for research on Eastern Europe.

### **International development research (NORGLOBAL2)**

In 2021 the NORGLOBAL2 programme funds a total of 68 projects of which 57 are researcher projects, one is a collaborative and knowledge building project, four are support to conferences, and six are support to research networks. NORGLOBAL2 has funded several multidisciplinary projects that targets more than one of the thematic areas in the portfolio plan.

Figure 13 Distribution of projects across the thematic priorities of NORGLOBAL2

In total, women account for 44 percent of the PI's and 54 percent of the Ph.D.'s within the NORGLOBAL2-portfolio. The gender

balance of PI's has been constant over the past three years, but the share of female Ph.D.'s has increased from 47 percent in 2020. For post.doc. positions women make up 61 percent in 2021, however, the numbers are small with only 4,1 man-years for the group, so the gender balance changes over the years. No action is deemed necessary concerning the gender balance in NORGLOBAL2.

Partner institutions from 55 different countries participate in NORGLOBAL2 projects together with Norwegian research institutions. The Norwegian institutions are the project owners of these projects. The overview below shows the country of project partners in the different projects.

<i>Partner countries</i>	<i>Partner in projects</i>	<i>Partner countries</i>	<i>Partner in projects</i>	<i>Partner countries</i>	<i>Partner in projects</i>	<i>Partner countries</i>	<i>Partner in projects</i>
Afghanistan	2	Germany	5	Mozambique	2	Sri Lanka	1
Armenia	1	Ghana	6	Myanmar	2	Sweden	5
Australia	1	Greece	1	Nepal	5	Switzerland	3
Bangladesh	2	Hungary	1	Netherlands	5	Tanzania	11
Benin	1	India	5	Niger	2	Thailand	1
Brazil	1	Indonesia	4	Nigeria	2	The Check rep	1
Cambodia	1	Iraq	1	Pakistan	1	Turkey	2
China	1	Ireland	2	Philippines	1	UAE	1
Colombia	3	Jordan	2	Qatar	1	Uganda	11
Cyprus	1	Kenya	7	Senegal	5	UK	15
Denmark	3	Lebanon	4	Singapore	1	USA	14
Ethiopia	17	Liberia	1	Somalia	1	Vietnam	1
Egypt	1	Malaysia	1	South Africa	8	Zimbabwe	1
Finland	4	Mexico	3	Spain	2		

### **Global health (GLOBVAC)**

In 2021 the GLOBVAC sub-portfolio funded a total of 32 projects of which 10 have been funded after 2020 when the new priorities for global health was launched. 8 more projects have so far been funded in 2022. Funded projects must contribute to sustainable health improvements for disadvantaged populations in low- and lower-middle income countries (LLMICs), and the research must be relevant to Sustainable Development goal 3 "Good health for all" and its targets. 14 projects are Researcher Projects and 4 are Collaborating projects.

All projects funded after 2020 must meet strict requirements relating to equitable partnerships with organizations on LMICs. The 18 projects have partners in 11 different LMICs spanning three continents.

Table 3 Thematic areas and international partners in the 18 GLOBVAC projects funded since 2020.

*\* Partner countries in the 8 newly funded projects include Tanzania, Nepal, Kenya, Philippines, Guatemala, India, Brazil, The Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland*

An overview of the 18 projects shows that the sub-portfolio covers a range of topics. Health systems and health services research is covered by 7 projects, while 4 projects cover Maternal and child health, 3 Communicable diseases and 3 e/mHealth. Mental health, AMR, Environment and health and Epidemics are covered by 2 projects each. Some projects have overlapping topics, this is specifically relevant for health system- and/or services research projects. Implementation research is a priority and 10 projects in the current sub-portfolio includes this type of research. 10 million annually is earmarked non-communicable diseases. So far, the 2 mental health projects in the portfolio covers this earmarking. The programme is also responsible for meeting Norway's commitments towards EDCTP3, and up to 70 million must therefore be allocated to research that accelerate the clinical development of new or improved health technologies for the identification, treatment, and prevention of poverty-related and neglected infectious diseases, including (re-)emerging diseases in Sub-Saharan Africa. So far, we have 1 project in our portfolio that is approved by EDCTP as an in-kind contribution (12 million), 1 of the projects funded in 2022 may also be eligible as a EDC in-kind project.



## Areas of application of the research

The research within the portfolio is for the most part applied research. This entails that the results and findings from the research have impact on policy making, guidelines, practice, etc. As many projects provide new knowledge and analyses of political and/or societal development in different countries and regions, the portfolio is an important contributor to policy making on foreign- and security policy and development policy for the government.

However, a number of projects, within NORGLOBAL2 and GLOBVAC provide new knowledge for better practices and innovative efforts to fight poverty and health problems. Many children die of malaria after discharge from hospital. Research funded by this portfolio has demonstrated that many of these deaths can be prevented by giving children antimalarial drugs during the first three months after discharge from hospital. These results directly informed the new WHO guidelines on malaria that was launched on June 3rd.

Several projects in our portfolio publish in high-impact journals. One example of a discovery that has potential for high impact is the work of a doctoral fellow that was published in the *Lancet Infectious Diseases* in 2021. The doctoral fellow found that cryptosporidiosis, a diarrheal disease leading more than 48 000 deaths annually, can be diagnosed by using a microscope already used to diagnose tuberculosis in many low-resource settings. The diagnostic test has high sensitivity and specificity for cryptosporidiosis and can be easily integrated with existing laboratory infrastructures in low-resource settings.

## R&D value chains

The portfolio covers the entire value chain from basic research to innovation/piloting. There is, however, a strong emphasis on applied research following that the main purpose of most funding mechanisms relevant for the portfolio is to inform policy making. The GLOBVAC-programme has a somewhat more operational purpose for health services and vaccine-development in developing countries. Across the portfolio 69 percent of the projects funded by the Research Council are researcher projects, 6 percent are other support projects (most of which are innovation projects), 6,8 percent of the projects are Collaboration and Knowledge-building projects. 11 percent of the projects are coordination and support projects (networks, conferences, etc.).

The portfolio targets primarily Norwegian research organisations. However, measures are put in place to ensure that the public sector, business, NGOs, and society at large may benefit from the research results. Research relevant for policy making and 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 and public agencies also benefit from the research funded by the portfolio. Further, the portfolio prioritises research relevant for policy makers, the public sector and business in developing countries, and aim at underpinning national STI-priorities in partner countries. One way of ensuring this is to require involvement of end-users 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. This has been done in the Collaborative Projects in Global health call in 2022. All projects funded by GLOBVAC must also collaborate with local partners in LMICs. The collaboration must be built on principles ensuring equitable partnership.

## Division of labour nationally and internationally

The research effort has strengthened the Norwegian research capacity across the portfolio's thematic priorities and has made it possible to ensure research capacity in areas that arise on the global agenda, such as research on geopolitics, Russia, and Ukraine (actualized by the Russian attack on Ukraine), tax havens and illicit capital flows (actualized by Pandora Papers) and global health (actualized by the Covid-19 pandemics).

The national efforts account for only 46 percent of the overall portfolio on Global development and international relations, which is down from 70 percent in 2020. The EU contribution of 673 million comes from two very large projects on vaccination research in relation to the covid-19 pandemic.

To ensure equitable partnerships, all projects funded by GLOBVAC must ensure equitable sharing of funds and institutional costs with partner institutions in LMICs, have plans for equitable sharing of credits, have plans for how the project will contribute to strengthening both individual and institutional capacity in the collaborating institutions in LMICs, and demonstrate co-leadership of the proposed scientific agenda with investigators from LMIC institutions. This will lead to capacity strengthening also for the LMIC researchers.

## Funding

Research and knowledge development are integral parts of policy development, and necessary tools for realising the goals of the individual sector or ministry. This means that for the ministries, except for the Ministry of Education and Research, research is not an end in itself. Research as an instrument for goal attainment is continually being assessed against other instruments and measures that may be of a more short-term nature. In such a balance sheet, it is vitally important that the sector ministries have both a clear understanding of what research can contribute to and a certain time horizon for research initiatives. Research-based knowledge is an important basis for academic and political decisions and in the evaluation of measures taken. Furthermore,

research-based teaching is a prerequisite for high quality education.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is by far the most important funder of the Portfolio for global development and international relations. Most of its funding comes from the ODA-budget, which is subject to the OECD DAC-committee's criteria for evaluation. The funding is strictly related to the Government's development policies. This puts some limitations on the research, especially the possibility to fund research that studies questions that cut across the 'global north' and the 'global south'. The other part of the ministry's funding is tied up in earmarkings related to research on specific geographic regions or countries. This makes it difficult to prioritize research on geographic regions which are not prioritized as well as research on international and intergovernmental institutions. There are furthermore important contributions from the Ministry of Health and Care Services for global health research. In addition, there is modest funding from the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Ministry of Education and Research. These ministries with minor funding, albeit they are already funding the portfolio, as well as other ministries, should step up their efforts to secure research on international and global issues relevant to the ministries' various sector responsibilities. This is especially important considering the Global Sustainability Goals, where every ministry has responsibility to contribute both on a national and on a global level.

Table Funding in 2021 of targeted schemes in the portfolio by ministry

The funding ministries use research to underpin policymaking, and for some areas it is crucial to sustain and further develop a national research capacity, especially in connection with national interests related to foreign and security policy. Although Climate change and just transition is an important cross cutting priority of the portfolio and included targeted funding schemes such as NORGLBOAL2, UTENRIKS, INDNOR, SANOCEAN and CHINOR, most projects in this area is funded by non-targeted funding schemes like ENERGIX and KLIMAFORSK. These funding schemes have very large budgets, and it is encouraged that the scope of the research is directed towards more global perspectives.

[5]The Research Council conducted interviews with R&D-coordinators and key stakeholders in all ministries in 2021 regarding their views on the effectiveness and relevance of the services from the RCN. In the report "Pathways to Global Impact" by NIFU 2017, key personnel with the Ministry of Foreign affairs were interviewed on their knowledge, and use of, research within their areas of responsibility.

### **Issues that impact investment choices**

Investment choices are impacted by the priorities in the portfolio plan, both thematic and structural, striving to achieve a sound balance across the priorities. Further, as this portfolio has a very applied objective and targets policymakers and practitioners, both nationally and in LMICs, within the priority areas. This is of consequence for investment choices as the research not only must emphasise novelty and excellence, but also strong relevance to the topics highlighted in key Governmental papers from funding ministries of this portfolio.

Key documents which constitute the basis for priorities within the portfolio are the white papers

- [Meld. St. 4 \(2018-2019\) Long-term plan for research and higher education 2019-2028](#) (of particular relevance is the cross-cutting perspective related to the Sustainable Development Goals and the priority area Societal Security and Social Cohesion in a Globalised World)
- [Meld. St. 27 \(2018–2019\) Norway's Role and Interests in Multilateral Cooperation](#)
- [Meld. St. 36 \(2016–2017\) Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy](#)
- [Meld. St. 17 \(2017-2018\) Partner Countries in Norway's Development Policy](#) (executive summary in English)
- [Meld. St. 24 \(2016–2017\) - Common Responsibility for Common Future](#)
- [The research strategy for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation 2017 - 2021](#)
- [Strategy for research and development for the defence sector](#) (only available in Norwegian)
- [Meld. St. 10 \(2021–2022\) Priority changes, status and actions in the defence sector](#) (only available in Norwegian: Prioriterte endringer, status og tiltak i forsvarssektoren)
- [Meld. St. 40 \(2020–2021\) Objectives with meaning – Norway's action plan to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030](#) (only available in Norwegian: Mål med mening— Norges handlingsplan for å nå bærekraftsmålene innen 2030)
- [Health and Care 21-strategy](#) (only available in Norwegian) along with the executive strategy for The Research Council of Norway, [Empowering Ideas for a Better World](#), in addition to priorities set out in the annual allotment letters from the ministries

The ministries' allocations to the Research Council should, within this portfolio, contribute to the achievement of the Long-term plan's goals Improving scientific quality and Meeting major societal challenges. The first goal entails a national responsibility for making funds for research available and secure competent Norwegian knowledge environments in areas of importance for each

of the ministries. This includes promoting long-term production of knowledge, as well as knowledge that can contribute to achieving the sustainability goals relevant for each ministry.

The papers and strategies listed above, all express great ambitions regarding the need for solid, timely and relevant research to underpin policy and practice within each of the portfolio's priority areas. However, the R&D-funding is both somewhat inadequate and rather imbalanced. Most of the portfolio's funding derives from ODA funds. Only 11 percent is allocated to research on international relations, foreign and security policy. There is a need to increase overall funding for this portfolio, and an acute need to increase non-ODA funding, to achieve the goals set by the Government and the various ministries. This would ensure an adequate and balanced R&D-effort and provide opportunities to fund more research that cut across 'global development' research and 'international, foreign and security'-related research.

The latter point is particularly important to meet the challenges ahead. As stated in the Government's white paper Meld. St. 14 (2020–2021) Long-term Perspectives on the Norwegian Economy 2021, global challenges require cooperation and joint efforts "A change in international relations towards more rivalry and less cooperation between countries is cause for concern in a time when it is more important than ever for the world to stand united in solving joint challenges.<sup>[6]</sup>" Although the paper has a national motivation, the interconnectedness through global economy, global value chains, international relations, etc. necessitates a continuous knowledge-production related to international and global matters and development trends.

The portfolio sets out a number of structural criteria which impact funding decisions. A priority in the portfolio is to encourage international collaboration and calls within the portfolio will often demand international partners. The projects all have extensive collaboration; however, they converge around a handful of countries.

The portfolio promotes fair and equitable research partnerships between Norwegian research institutions and research and other institutions in LMICs. GLOBVAC has come the furthest in implementing principles for ensuring equitable partnerships, but other funding schemes are following suit.

An important prerequisite for obtaining funding is that researchers must abide by national, European, and international standards for research integrity. Research must be conducted in accordance with ethical, legal, and professional frameworks, obligations, and standards. This includes seeking ethical approval for research where appropriate.

The Research Council aims at promoting gender balance within research projects both in project managers, in senior academic positions and in recruitment positions. This portfolio has an excellent gender balance on all levels, and further actions to ensure better balance is deemed unnecessary.

[6]Meld. St. 14 (2020–2021) Long-term Perspectives on the Norwegian Economy 2021. Page 3.

### **Alternative investment options**

The Russian war against Ukraine, paired with the Chinese zero-covid policy which is causing a lowering of domestic growth and disrupting global supply chains, is slowing the recovery from the pandemic. The inflation pressures have increased sharply and the rise in cost of living are putting many people in precarious circumstances with economic hardship and risk of famine. LMICs are particularly vulnerable for disruptions in food supply from Russia and Ukraine, and according to OECD's annual GDP growth projections for 2022, the average growth projection is adjusted downwards from 4.46 % in December 2021 to 3.02 in June 2022<sup>[7]</sup>. After two years of disruption in the access to essential health services, building resilient health systems is urgent, particularly in low-resource settings. In addition, the world suffers the consequences of the climate crisis, the ecosystem crises, and an energy crisis. The impacts of these crises, both individually and combined, calls for a better understanding of how they affect people, countries, and regions, and how they in turn will influence development, international relations, globalisation, and geopolitics on the longer term.

With the ongoing crises, the research within this portfolio should both contribute to understand, mitigate, and dampen their adverse effects by initiating calls targeting the crises, and at the same time provide funding opportunities for research that advances the development of original research methods and theories. Ensuring a sound balance between the two should be considered in future calls for proposals. Further, the funding schemes under this portfolio should seek closer cooperation with funding schemes in other portfolios to ensure broader perspectives and increased funding for calls.

In order to secure research with global development perspectives related to the SDG's, the funds for the bilateral funding schemes INDNOR and CHINOR, which both have priorities based on the SDG's, have been merged with additional funding from the Ministry of Education and Research to a collaborative funding mechanism – Research for Global Sustainability. The funding mechanism co-funds research in thematic areas together with relevant funding schemes, i.e., on renewable energy, climate, environment (terrestrial and ocean), food-production, migration, education, etc. The funding scheme aims at increasing the research efforts towards the SDG's and to ensure global perspectives into funding schemes which have primarily a national focus. Upcoming calls should ensure research on effective and innovative ways of reaching the SDG's. Emphasis should be put on fair and equitable partnerships with both academic and non-academic institutions in LMICs.

There is a need to ensure a stronger Norwegian participation in Horizon Europe on the portfolio's priority dimensions, especially

related to the EUs Africa initiative and EDCTP3 which provides international collaboration and funding opportunities on many areas of high relevance to this portfolio.

Within the thematic area global health, calls for proposals that are thematically broad have resulted in 18 projects covering a range of topics directly related to SDG3 and most of its targets. All of which are implemented in accordance with set criteria of equitable partnerships. Such relatively unrestricted calls allow the researchers to develop the research questions themselves, and the research with the best quality and relevance is funded.

Implementation research has been a priority since 2021, and 10 million annually is earmarked non-communicable diseases (NCDs). These areas are both well covered in the portfolio. So far, only one projects falls within the strategic and thematic priorities of the EDCTP3. As 70 million is earmarked Norway's commitments towards the partnership, this is an area that needs to be strengthened. The global health sub-portfolio funds a lot more implementation research and social science than during GLOBVAC2. This is a natural consequence of the new priorities. However, GLOBVAC2 also funded basic research and pre-clinical research, specifically related to infectious diseases. The last calls have attracted very few such applications, and no projects have been funded so far. To attract such applications, funding opportunities must be communicated to relevant research groups.

The projects within the portfolio have extensive international collaboration and many countries are represented. However, project partners converge around a handful countries, United Kingdom, USA, South Africa, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, and Russia. For the majority of the countries, they are partners in only one project. To some extent this is due to geographical priorities within funding schemes. Still, it should be considered whether this is a desirable concentration or whether the researchers should be encouraged to seek new partnerships. A key point being not to sever existing successful partnerships, but to bring better balance into the portfolio.

[7]OECD Economic Outlook 2022/1

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Messages at time of print 3 May 2025, 06:13 CEST

No global messages displayed at time of print.