

## Norwegens Staatshaushalt 2011: Erhöhung der Förderung der Grundlagenforschung

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Englischsprachiger Artikel des norwegischen Forschungsrats über das Staatsbudget für das kommende Jahr und die finanziellen Mittel, die der Grundlagenforschung zugutekommen sollen.

After years of little or no growth, Norwegian basic research has received a long-awaited boost in allocations in the national budget for next year. The Research Council is pleased with the proposed increase of NOK 60 million for the open competitive arena for high-quality research, which provides funding for Independent Projects (FRIPRO).

"It is very positive indeed that the Government has recognised the need to strengthen this funding instrument, which provides fruitful working conditions and adds volume to the activities of Norway's top researchers, regardless of what their research focuses on," says Executive Director Anders Hanneborg at the Research Council.

Over the past several years the Research Council has assigned priority to enhancing the open competitive arena for high-quality research in its input to the national budget. In its budget proposal for 2011, the Council recommended an increase of NOK 150 million for funding of independent projects.

With the proposed rise in funding, the 2011 budget for the FRIPRO scheme will total NOK 535 million.

#### Solving tomorrow's challenges

Anders Hanneborg notes with satisfaction that the Ministry of Education and Research stresses the need to bolster independent basic research in order to better equip Norway to meet coming challenges to society as well as to strengthen the various subject areas.

"High-quality basic research in a wide array of subject fields and disciplines lays the foundation on which all new knowledge and innovation builds. Many independent basic research projects have served as a springboard for listed companies or established medical treatments, while others have generated new insights that expand our understanding of the world around us," he states.

#### Funding the crème de la crème

The rigorous quality assessment of the grant proposals submitted for Researcher Projects is the FRIPRO scheme's major strength. Proposals are assessed on their own merits, independent of the politically-defined thematic priority areas or technologies. Only projects exhibiting the highest scientific calibre are granted funding.

"Fostering favourable conditions for innovative, high-quality research is crucial if Norway is to successfully tackle the changes it is facing," asserts Minister of Research and Higher Education Tora Aasland in a press release from the Ministry of Education and Research in connection with the presentation of the national budget.

The press release states that the increase in funding for independent basic research projects will provide more top research groups with the resources they need to carry out pioneering projects of high scientific merit. According to the Ministry, the open competitive arena for high-quality research ensures that original ideas are recognised and unexpected scientific findings are further explored.

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