

# The Research Council of Norway's policy for basic research – abstract in English

Basic research of high quality is targeted towards the research front and seeks to expand the frontiers of knowledge. A key aspect of basic research is that it has scientific relevance in that it contributes to scientific development and generates new scientific insights. Basic research is driven by curiosity and motivated by a desire to advance fundamental knowledge about nature and culture. The essential value of basic research lies in its role as a source of new insights that change ways of thinking about the world and that other research can use to build on. Basic research has an intrinsic value for knowledge development in all subject areas.

While it is driven by curiosity and the desire to move the research front, basic research is also often motivated by a desire to find solutions to specific problems within a broader societal framework. Thus, in addition to its scientific relevance, basic research will also often be of relevance to society. Basic research brings forth knowledge that may be used in various frameworks outside the research itself. The distinguishing feature of basic research does not lie in its lack of a specifically envisaged or practical application, but in the way in which the research questions are formulated and how they are addressed.

The Research Council promotes basic research that expands research frontiers and contributes to scientific renewal, but considers it crucial to include basic research in contexts involving issues of benefit to society as well. For this reason, it is important that the Research Council promotes basic research both via thematically oriented initiatives and via initiatives with an independent, non-thematic basis.

## Primary strategic objectives for basic research

### **OBJECTIVE 1: The Research Council will work to ensure that thematically oriented initiatives employ an adequately broad scope in their basic research.**

The Research Council will devote even greater effort to ensuring that high-quality basic research remains one of the mainstays of the thematically oriented initiatives. The scope of basic research activities must be broad enough to lead to satisfactory, long-term knowledge development within the thematic priority areas. The capacity of the research communities involved in basic research needs to be better exploited to support research in areas involving central challenges to society. The Research Council will therefore work to achieve an effective balance between allocations to open and thematically oriented funding instruments, respectively, as well as between short-term and long-term funding. The Research Council will establish meeting places to open new perspectives for basic research and to improve the interaction between basic research, education and innovation in the knowledge triangle.

### **OBJECTIVE 2: The Research Council will work to promote more pioneering basic research of high international quality.**

The Research Council is responsible for developing funding instruments that promote pioneering basic research of high quality. The Council will work to achieve constructive task

distribution within the research system, to bolster the best research groups and to build up scientific groups that are international leaders in their fields. In order to succeed, it is essential to increase the internationalisation of Norwegian research. The Research Council will work to establish adequate financial frameworks for basic research and will expand its advisory capacity in this area.

**OBJECTIVE 3: The Research Council will work to enhance recruitment and career opportunities for younger researchers in research institutions.**

The Research Council will work to improve development opportunities and career paths for top young researchers. This is essential to ensuring the further advancement and renewal of basic research. A good foundation for the future knowledge society will be dependent on the ability to provide talented young researchers of today with a chance to develop their skills. The Research Council must continue to refine its instruments for ensuring renewal and expansion of research groups through recruitment and good career opportunities. The Research Council will work to promote gender balance throughout the research community as a means of maintaining the broadest possible recruitment base for basic research.