## The Research Council of Norway

# Work programme
# 2011-2014

## Democracy and Governance in Regional Context (DEMOSREG)

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# 1 Introduction and background

Contemporary society is undergoing extensive changes in working life, trade and industry, and the social framework. Roles and responsibilities are shifting between public levels of decision-making and sectors, and internationalisation is increasing in most areas. Phase II of the Research Programme on Democracy and Governance in Regional Context (DEMOSREG) seeks to generate knowledge about how processes of change in working life, trade and industry and society at large are manifested at the local and regional level, and about the challenges and conditions these processes entail for democracy, governance and planning for sustainable development. The programme also seeks to generate new empirical insight and promote new theoretical and methodological approaches. Importance is attached to research that is relevant for the formulation of policies related to local and regional development.

The DEMOSREG II programme will run from 2011 to 2014, and is a follow-up to the DEMOSREG programme which lasted from 2005 to 2010. Phase II builds on the knowledge accumulated under phase I as well as other preceding programmes. At the same time, it is designed to further develop and update research activities in the thematic priority areas identified by the DEMOSREG I programme. This document is a revised version of the original work programme for the DEMOSREG I programme. The revision is based on the memorandum drawn up in connection with the decision to extend the programme as well as on input from the programme's mid-term conference and discussions within the programme board.

This document starts off with a discussion of the programme's perspectives and challenges. This is followed by an outline of the programme's objectives, scientific priorities and content. Finally, a description of the programme's organisation, strategic instruments and means of implementation is provided.

# 2 Perspectives and challenges

International circles often refer to the Norwegian or Nordic model as an example of an especially successful means of organising a society. It is noted that Norway, with its small, open economy, has managed to combine economic efficiency, broad work force participation, a high level of prosperity and a high degree of social security. Norway has also managed to maintain dispersed settlement patterns and keep income differences to a relative minimum, both socially and geographically. Confidence in key social institutions is high, and there is extensive popular participation in many areas of society.

Today, however, this model is coming under pressure from forces of change. Although oil revenues give the Norwegian authorities more room to manoeuvre than most other countries, the use of these revenues results in a cost level that is compelling industry to restructure. Companies are being closed down or moved out, and in many local communities previously independent enterprises are being acquired by international corporations. A key question being raised is: What will the Norwegian people live off of when the petroleum activities come to an end? Moreover, the proportion of the working-age population in relation to retirees is declining rapidly. The number of elderly in need of health and care services and people receiving benefits continues to rise, resulting in higher public-sector expenditures. At the same time, the population is growing increasingly diverse. More

immigration and greater individualisation lead to a wider array of lifestyles, identities and cultural values. The most mobile groups and their choices of place of residence are having a growing impact on settlement patterns. The result is expanding urbanisation in which people are moving to cities and more densely populated areas and away from the outlying districts. New topics and priorities have also gained a more prominent position on the political agenda. Considerations relating to climate change, the environment and sustainable development must be incorporated into all areas of society. Vulnerability and risk are also receiving a great deal of attention. In addition, international agreements are increasingly forming the framework within which national policy is formulated. Regulations and practices that affect companies and government authorities must be amended and adapted.

This situation poses new challenges in relation to public planning, governance and political participation. New framework conditions are being established for industrial development activities. It is becoming more difficult to maintain thriving local communities and ensure that the same level of services is available in all parts of the country. In central regions there is a need for more comprehensive solutions with regard to land-use planning, transport, energy use and the development of good housing environments. The municipal structure and established communal solutions have come under pressure. Alternatives such as increased inter-municipal cooperation, public-private cooperation and the consolidation of municipalities have been proposed, but it is proving difficult to find successful ways to integrate objectives related to efficiency, quality, proximity and democracy in many cases. Public planning activities, which are a vital means of coordinating decisions, balancing various considerations and ensuring democratic participation, must increasingly address situations entailing ambiguous lines of authority and opposing interests. The public sector is growing more and more complex, and new forms of governance and cooperation are emerging between players in the public and private sectors and society as a whole.

Consequently, there is a need for research-based knowledge about the processes of change taking place and the new conditions these create for governance, planning and regional development. The DEMOSREG programme seeks to focus on the interaction between policy, the market and civil society, giving special emphasis to a spatial or territorial perspective. Particular attention will be paid to local and regional processes and how these are linked to components at the national and international levels. The programme seeks greater understanding of the conflicts between various sectors, institutions and interests in a territorial context in which both the scale and the distribution of power have great significance. What characterises the developments within key areas of society and sectors, and what are the intended and unintended impacts of these changes on one another? It is also important to describe the political latitude for action at various levels. On what conditions and assumptions are current policies based? Is full advantage being taken of the existing opportunities? How capable are the old and new planning and governance models of addressing these challenges? What dilemmas can be discerned?

# 3 Objectives of the programme

The objectives of the programme are to increase knowledge about key structural changes, changes to governance and the impact of these in the interface between sectors, territorial units and different geographical levels. The programme will shed light on new conditions for innovation, governance and democracy of relevance for shaping policy.

Research conducted under the programme must:
- be of high scientific merit;
- promote the development of the knowledge base by challenging prevailing ways of thinking;
- be of relevance for  shaping policy;
- promote researcher recruitment;
- promote cooperation between fields, disciplines and research traditions;
- be oriented towards international research activities and international partners;
- ensure learning and the dissemination of knowledge.
- The programme's primary target groups are:
- Politicians and government authorities at all levels – local, regional and national.
- Special interest organisations and other stakeholders in working life, trade and industry, and civil society.
- Individual researchers and educational and research institutions.

# 4 Priority research tasks

The programme's main area of focus is specified in the following three thematic priority areas.
- Economic development and public sector restructuring
- Public governance and planning
- Democracy and political participation

The research questions to be examined under the different thematic priority areas are closely interrelated. It is therefore important that research projects conducted under the programme are designed to incorporate ideas across the various thematic priority areas and address topics and research questions of a more overarching nature. One of the overall purposes of the programme is to study the relationship between the functional and the territorial perspectives.

## 4.1 Economic development and public sector restructuring

A main challenge today is to secure the basis for value creation and competitiveness in an increasingly globalised and knowledge-intensive economy. This must be done in a way that can be sustained in a long-term perspective. Compared with many other countries, Norway has a low population density dispersed across vast geographic distances, a high degree of dependence on natural resources and a comprehensive public sector. It has been a longstanding Norwegian policy to promote regional industrial development and to ensure settlement and equivalent living conditions in all parts of the country. At the same time, there has been an ongoing process of concentration and centralisation of the population and economic activity within the various regions. This process has

been driven by strong growth in productivity of the typical regional industries, greater participation by both genders in the work force, an increasingly higher level of education and a shift in demand towards services.

The programme seeks to shed light in particular on two types of change that will likely come to have great significance for the future distribution of settlement, economic activity and employment at the regional level: one involves the structural changes taking place in the private sector as competition becomes keener and companies and industries become interconnected at a global level, and the other involves the structural changes taking place in the public sector which entail national reforms, reorganisations and pressure on the municipal structure.

### 4.1.1. Innovation and internationalisation

Innovation is regarded today as an essential condition for value creation and employment. Successful companies, industries and regions are distinguished by their ability to innovate and restructure. Innovation is presumed to be closely linked to learning and knowledge development, which take place in the interaction between various types of players. A great deal is known about innovation patterns in Norwegian trade and industry. Studies on innovation have logged the amount and types of innovation, knowledge sources, partners and bottlenecks.

The question has been raised, however, as to whether these studies adequately explain how innovation is occurring within the Norwegian economy, and little is known about how knowledge is being disseminated and learning is taking place. The various forms of knowledge, conveyers of knowledge and channels for knowledge transfer remain relatively under-researched. A vital aspect of this is the increasingly widely distributed nature of the knowledge systems. The need to compile and combine knowledge from many different sources around the world presents new challenges for companies and knowledge institutions alike. Network relations are crucial in this context, but little is known about how these networks function, what knowledge is being exchanged and what is needed to ensure that the information available is applied in new ways of thinking and acting when this is appropriate.

Another keyword is access to expertise. Studies have shown that there is an interplay between educational opportunities, educational choices, and local and regional trade and industry. The transition from education to work occurs via labour markets, which are divided according to qualifications, gender and other social boundaries. As a result, recruitment and the supply of expertise to various parts of trade and industry are influenced by many factors – the educational system, existing job vacancies, the structure of the labour markets, individual career plans and preferences regarding place of residence. Current knowledge is limited about how important groups such as young people and immigrants choose to arrange their lives and make their choices, and how this in turn affects industrial development. There is therefore a need for more research on the connections between education, mobility and the ability of companies and industries to innovate.

It would also be beneficial to investigate what happens to established industry and knowledge networks when production is registered abroad or when previously independent companies become consolidated into multinational corporations and places become dominated by just a few, global enterprises. To what extent can the political sphere influence innovation processes and the decisions taken by enterprises? How can innovation be fostered? What constitute sustainable strategies in the age of globalisation? This includes the development of new policy instruments, identification of the instruments it is possible to draw on, and determining the effects of the regional and innovation policy instruments already in use.

## 4.1.2 Restructuring in the public sector

The public sector plays a prominent role in employment, welfare, settlement and sustainable development in Norway. The municipal, county and national administrations are often the primary employer and service producer in districts that have a weak, undiversified business sector. The public sector is also important in centralised regions where the higher education and research institutions and the key cultural institutions are located. The public sector is responsible for much of the infrastructure throughout the country, and comprises a major market for private companies. Consequently, local and regional development is influenced not only by what is occurring in the private sector but to an equal degree by what is taking place in the public sector. Furthermore, the regional distribution of workplaces between the two sectors is significant in itself, in part due to the gender division in the labour market.

A key question is how reforms and major restructuring measures in the public sector affect the local communities, opportunities for employment, and the basis for innovation and value creation in various parts of the country. One example is the process of privatisation and competitive tendering within the national government in which administrative entities have been changed to a state-owned enterprise, special law company or limited company. Other examples of this are changes in the municipal revenue system, the new role and tasks conferred at the county level, the reform of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, the ongoing health reforms, the establishment of regional research funds and investment programmes in resource-intensive areas such as transport. State sector-based policies are constantly generating new regional divisions that pose new challenges related to cooperation, management, governance and control. Also under-researched are the ramifications at the regional level of the EEA agreement and Norway's adaptation to EU competition law and the rules for funding for industry and public procurement.

Similar processes are taking place at the local and regional level through the establishment of municipal and county enterprises, inter-municipal companies and other collaborative schemes. Here there is a lack of systematic comparisons of various models and their effects and ability to produce effective, legitimate results in various types of municipalities. Many of the current collaborative initiatives are undertaken because the municipalities are too small to carry out certain tasks on their own. Thus, population trends, reasons underlying relocation and choices of place of residence are also important to consider in this context. How does the movement of the population affect municipal activities and how do the changes in the public sector themselves affect the choices of place of residence?

Another relevant area for research is the ability of the municipal and county authorities to promote the development of trade and industry and society as a whole. This applies to the similarities and differences in the way they carry out tasks, how they adapt to the framework conditions set by the national authorities, and the opportunities they have to influence the framework conditions established at the national level. State governance requires effective administration at the local and regional levels. It would be beneficial to investigate how nationally established objectives regarding e.g. sustainability and adaptation to climate change are being integrated at the local level. What tensions arise when local development strategies conflict with the objectives defined at the national level? It would also be interesting to study how public policy reinforces urban centres at various levels. Since studies have focused mainly on the role of the large cities, it would be particularly useful to examine the status and significance of small and medium-sized cities and the trend towards multiple home ownership.

## 4.2 Public governance and planning

Modern society is becoming increasingly complex. A growing number of comprehensive systems involving a greater distribution of tasks and internal specialisation are being developed, resulting in a more universal, effective approach to problem-solving. In principle, the individual tasks may be handled by competent persons and organisations that concentrate on their respective spheres and operate according to their own standards and procedures. The instruments of government have also become more powerful through the use of new information and communication technologies. However, increasing specialisation leads to greater mutual dependence and more challenges related to governance. Actions and events in one area can have intended as well as unintended consequences for other areas and across vast distances. One sector can create both obstacles and opportunities for another's ability to achieve its objectives. As a result, there is a greater need for mechanisms that can help to coordinate and adapt the various activities across sectors and decision-making levels. Planning is also a vital tool for identifying and clarifying such challenges.

The programme especially encourages research projects that address two sides of this issue: one side is the development of new forms of governance and the other is planning for sustainable development.

### 4.2.1 Development of new forms of governance

The traditional, hierarchical principles of governance used in the public sector are being challenged by competing principles of governance. A transition from governance through regulation to management by performance is underway. New forms of organisation and affiliation are being utilised, and a greater component of competition with the associated economic incentives has been introduced. New, more network-based forms of governance including contractual partnership and negotiated multi-level governance have been developed as well. These schemes encompass both relations between various public bodies and between the government authorities, working life, trade and industry and civil society organisations.

There is a need for research that examines the experiences with the various forms of governance and coordination. It is important to describe their operation, interaction, effects and contribution to the achievement of objectives, especially with regard to national objectives for regional policy and land-use and environmental policy. Changes in the forms of governance affect the public institutions themselves and their relationship to the general public. To what extent is transparency ensured? How does the method of governance influence the people's confidence in the municipality and the municipality's reputation? What steps do the municipalities themselves take to create an administration that engenders trust and maintains a high ethical standard? Inter-municipal cooperation and municipal companies have come to constitute an important part of municipal activities. A vital question in connection with this type of organisation involves the conditions for elected governance and democratic control. What are the municipalities' motivations for establishing such enterprises? What are the municipalities' opportunities for governance and how are they utilised? What are the consequences for the municipal council's ability to carry out financial management and set priorities in a cohesive manner?

Another important area of research is how the municipalities adapt their planning, governance and administration to the framework conditions established by the national authorities. For instance, how does the political echelon distribute limited resources between competing needs and interests and what is the role given to the municipal administration? In this context it is of interest to study the variation between central and outlying areas, between large and small municipalities and between various policy areas. Another relevant issue is how various sectors coordinate activities and what this

means for the implementation of national policy. Who coordinates what and how? What types of planning systems have been established to coordinate activities? To what degree do these produce consensual solutions that are implemented? It is also relevant to examine the many bodies and cooperative forums established to coordinate activities across sectors and levels. Why are some more able to take a more holistic approach and reach accepted solutions than others?

Today the municipal and county authorities have considerable responsibility for horizontal and vertical coordination. It is therefore of interest to shed light on how they exercise this role and what challenges they face. Cooperation between the authorities at the municipal, county and national levels is important in this context. How do they cooperate in areas where they share responsibility, such as essential infrastructure and transport systems? The same applies to cooperation between the public authorities, players in the private sector and community organisations. More insight is needed into the many partnerships that have been established. What are the issues that have led to their formation? What do they discuss? How open or closed are they? Who is included and excluded? How are they involved in mobilising resources and what is their practical significance? Are their results better than those obtained through the traditional solutions to the tasks? The political and administrative leadership play a crucial role in all of these processes. An interesting area of research is therefore the requirements for leadership and the difference that good leadership can make.

## 4.2.2 Planning for sustainable development

Public planning activity is an important, legally established tool of governance that is integral to the municipal and county authorities' role in management of land-use and natural surroundings, production of welfare services and development of society. Regional planning activity has traditionally given high priority to creating favourable conditions for industrial development and employment and enhancing a region's attractiveness as a place to live and locate businesses. In recent years greater consideration has been given to the resource management, cultural monuments, the environment and climate change. The new Planning and Building Act emphasises that all these considerations are interrelated. The Act defines new types of plans, processes and systems for decision-making that provide tools for pursuing the sustainable development of society.

There is a need for knowledge about how the new planning tools and provisions are being applied in areas with increasing as well as decreasing populations. Studies are also needed on the degree to which the new legislation improves the quality of planning processes and the results and implementation of planning activities. Determining the respective priority of various objectives and resolving the conflicts that emerge between objectives are crucial in this context. Since sustainable development is such a key concept, research on how this is interpreted and sought to be realised is especially encouraged. Much planning activity focuses on existing and new land use, housing developments, location of functions and design of infrastructure. An important question in this context is what is being done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, ensure adaptations to climate change and maintain biological diversity through, among other things, coordinated land-use and transport planning. What conflicts arise between growth and protection, use and conservation? Assessments of risk, vulnerability and tolerance limits are relevant aspects of this as well.

At the same time, the concept of social sustainability gives rise to completely new perspectives, in which adaptation of local areas for children and adolescents and considerations relating to the gender dimension are of particular importance. This is especially crucial for cities, which are characterised by shifting dynamics, intense pressure to change and a diverse population. It would be beneficial to investigate how considerations related to accessibility and a varied cultural and green environment with a range of opportunities for outdoor activities and entertainment are safeguarded. Adaptation to climate change and sustainability are not only new planning objectives, but they also place new

demands on ways of thinking and involving the general public. A key issue is therefore whether planning activity is fragmented or cohesive and coordinated.

Planning activity is a realm in which private development interests, the public sector and civil society organisations all meet. The choice of collaborative models, power constellations and influence are critical factors here. A central aspect in this context is how interests and conflicts are dealt with in the planning and negotiation processes in cases when influential stakeholders are involved and the processes are intensive and rapid-paced. What systems and instruments are used to transform an initiative into tangible plans that are implemented? What happens to the planning expertise and quality in the municipalities and to planning activity as a tool of governance when there is no public planning monopoly and most of the proposed plans are forwarded by private sector stakeholders? What is the significance of this for the preparation of matters for processing by elected officials and thus, in a wider context, for democratically elected governance? Do the planning systems result in more effective decision-making processes and greater predictability with regard to land-use management and community development? What is the role of the market, the media and powerful interest groups in determining the outcome of planning efforts? In order to further develop the planning systems, more knowledge is needed about the way planning activities function and their significance in terms of local participation, involvement, ownership and the municipality as a developer of industry and society. More insight is also needed about whether the new planning provisions of the Planning and Building Act are suitable as a tool for governance in all the areas they are intended to cover. The relationship between planning activities pursuant to the Planning and Building Act and the other sector-based planning systems should also be examined more closely. In all these areas it will be important to present good examples of methods and procedures that may have transfer value.

## 4.3 Democracy and political participation

It is essential that public governance and planning are viewed as legitimate and have the support of the population. However, democracy entails more than just winning support for decisions. A basic premise of a democratic society is that the public sector's exercise of authority is based on representative governance. It is the citizens themselves, via the democratically elected bodies, that can impose collectively binding decisions. This means that the decision-making processes must be carried out according to specified procedures that establish a sequence of governance in which elected officials are responsible to the public at large. Additionally, a dynamic, enlightened public debate is necessary to ensure that the decisions taken are reasonable and that the public authorities' exercise of authority is monitored with a critical eye. The media are expected to play a vital role in this regard, but control by elected officials, good administration and internal controls also help to ensure the quality of the processes and results. There may nonetheless be a large gap between the ideal and the reality. Today more and more areas are being shifted into the political sphere. The public authorities are assuming responsibility for a constantly increasing number of areas, even though the distribution of tasks between the public and private sectors is in flux. At the same time, participation in elections is declining, the political parties are losing members and in many places it is difficult to recruit individuals to local politics.

In this connection, the programme will focus especially on two areas: the first is political participation at the local and regional levels with an emphasis on the relationship between various roles and channels for exercising influence, and the second is the relationship between specialist expertise, policymaking and political agenda setting.

### 4.3.1 New forms of participation

Representative democracy is based on elections, political parties and democratically elected bodies that have an overarching responsibility within their geographic areas. Grass-roots organisations and corporative negotiating systems have also been an integral part of the political establishment in Norway. Opportunities to participate politically have expanded over the years. New initiatives and movements outside of the parliamentary system have emerged. Employees' participation in decision-making has been strengthened. The users of public services have been organised and included more in decision-making processes. The right to benefits in a number of areas has been formalised in the statutory framework, and as more services have gradually become market based, more users have come to approach them as ordinary customers. In other words, the classic role of citizen has been supplemented by several alternative roles.

It is important to learn more about the factors that influence the people's participation and involvement at the local and regional levels. Shifts in roles, power constellations and the associated channels of political influence are key aspects in this context. It is unclear how these changes are reflected in the public's self-understanding, expectations and use of time. It is also unclear how they affect the distribution of the participants with regard to gender, age and social background, and thus the representation of the population. Similarly, it would be beneficial to examine how national and municipal authorities facilitate participation and what genuine opportunities the public has to influence political decisions.

As a result of deregulation and liberalisation in recent years, planning activities and other functions have in part been outsourced and transferred to the private sector, which has an institutional framework, a knowledge base and values that differ from the public sector. To what extent does this affect the ability to participate? What is organised inside and outside of the local political system? How close or far away from the populace does the municipal administration function? What is being done to strengthen recruitment to local politics, to get more people involved in elections and to create new arenas for participation outside of the traditional election channel? The role of the mass media and the new social media as arenas for and players in local political processes are important in this regard. This issue can be viewed in a variety of ways, for instance in light of how technological and structural changes affect media use and the media's ability to fulfil its responsibility to society. Greater understanding is needed of the relationship between various forms of participation, the societal basis for participation and the various contexts that promote or hinder different ways of participating, as well as of the political influence achieved through participation. What interests are given consideration? Can participation be used as an instrument by some special interest groups?

Previous studies have shown that the dividing lines in Norwegian politics have fallen along a functional axis and a territorial axis. It would be interesting to learn whether this analysis still has relevance. Industrial restructuring, major changes in settlement patterns and a weakening of the traditional counter-cultures have in all likelihood modified the lines of conflict. But even though longstanding differences have diminished, new ones are emerging all the time. There are tensions between state governance and local self-governance, between national standardisation and local freedom of choice, and between growth-oriented policy and distribution-oriented policy. Many parts of the country are also focusing on place-making, city branding and local reputation-building. It is uncertain what effect these efforts have had. It is clear, however, that regions have striven to enhance qualities to increase their attractiveness and inspire a sense of belonging. The centre-periphery dimension in Norwegian policy and regional variations in political mobilisation is therefore an area that deserves more investigation.

## 4.3.2 Specialist expertise, policymaking and agenda setting

Experts are playing an increasingly important role in the formulation of policy. The requirement regarding impact assessments in public planning activity has increased the need for scientific reports. The central authorities draw on the resources of research and investigative groups and experts in subordinate agencies. Terms such as clusters, innovation systems, ecosystems and risk have all been coined and defined by researchers. Many problems, such as regional imbalance, the ozone hole and global warming, are identified first with statistics, models and advanced methods of measurement. Therefore, a relevant area of investigation is what shapes the political agenda and what significance research has compared with other factors. Under this programme, the fields of regional policy and environmental policy comprise relevant areas for study.

The relationship between scientific expertise and policy can be analysed as two-way communication on two levels. One level deals with the dialogue between democratically elected bodies and the public administration. The public administration can take part in setting the agenda of local politics through its planning activities, budget proposals and other administrative processes. While the elected officials in many places have attempted in various ways to assume a more strategic role, they still rely on the administration's framing and presentation of issues. Updated, targeted information of relevance to governance from the municipal activities is necessary for both democratically elected and administrative governance. It will be of interest to examine the extent of reporting and control systems and how these are used as a basis for governance. The other level deals with the interaction between research and policymakers. The question is, on the one hand, what the research delivers and how it is incorporated into or helps to legitimise policy, and on the other hand, how policymakers commission and set guidelines for the research to be conducted. Important keywords are the determination of research needs, use of specialist circles, resources, selection and translation into policy.

When research and policy are tightly interwoven, it might be that both research and policy function differently and change character. However, research and policy are also part of a broader discourse which defines rationalities, roles and technologies. From this perspective, it is not the two-way communication that is interesting, but rather the dialogue itself and the basic metaphors and narratives that are used. It could also be asked whether research has any influence at all on the formulation of policy. What shapes the political agenda? Is not ongoing policymaking just as much a product of the mass media's focus, lobbying activity by special interest organisations with their staffs of experts, contributions from communication consultants or ideology production within the public administration? Another aspect of this is how the access to and use of different types of expertise might affect the power constellation between various public sectors and levels of decision-making.

More specifically, it may be beneficial to investigate evaluations. A large number of evaluations of various measures and schemes are conducted at present. Examples of these include performance audits, company audits and investigations ordered by municipal control commissions. Little is known about whether the various forms of evaluation function as intended – that is, whether they provide a basis for learning, whether they actually lead to changes in daily operations, and what must be done, if necessary, to ensure that they fulfil their purpose.

# 5 Programme organisation and funding instruments

The programme's organisation and choice of funding instruments are key factors in the programme's ability to achieve its objectives.

## 5.1 The programme board

The programme is administered by a programme board, the composition of which reflects the programme's areas of expertise and the most important user interests. The programme board is to play an active, strategic role in the programme's development and prioritisation of relevant thematic areas. The research tasks described in this document require insight from a variety of disciplines and research communities. Emphasis is therefore placed on developing research through greater interdisciplinarity, new perspectives and cooperation between independent research institutes, universities and university colleges.

## 5.2 Allocation of project funding

The programme's main funding instrument is Researcher Projects, which the researchers themselves propose and prepare. Grant proposals must specify how the proposed project will fulfil the objectives of the research programme and which of the thematic priority areas the project will address. The applications must also specify and indicate how the anticipated project results will contribute to knowledge of significance for policymaking in the field.

The projects awarded funding under the programme must be innovative and designed to generate new insight. Specifically, they must challenge established theories and ways of thinking or shed light on new connections and solutions of relevance to shaping policy. The programme is open to all types of approaches such as historical analyses, qualitative case studies and quantitative studies based on registry data or data compiled by the projects themselves.

The programme seeks to facilitate individual projects involving researchers as well as doctoral/post-doctoral candidates. There is a need to increase researcher recruitment within most of the programme's thematic priority areas, and it is therefore crucial that the projects contribute to recruitment by including doctoral research projects. In general, the projects are to be affiliated with established researcher communities. Collaborative projects in which several research institutions conduct joint research activities on the same or similar thematic areas are encouraged.

Important activities under the programme will include participation in international conferences, cooperative networks, research stays abroad and dissemination targeted at Norwegian users as well as recognised scientific forums. Projects are required to set aside funding for such activities in the budget submitted with the grant application. By the same token, the programme board realises that new needs may arise in the course of the project period, and may therefore decide to issue separate calls for proposals for network-building, internationalisation measures and dissemination and publication activities. This and other strategic guidelines will be specified in the programme's calls for proposals and annual action plans.

## 5.3 Increased internationalisation

A great deal of international research is being conducted on many of the thematic areas and research questions addressed under the programme. The programme board attaches great importance to international cooperation to increase internationalisation, acquire knowledge from abroad and assure the quality of the research activity and results. The programme board encourages comparative research projects and projects that incorporate developments in other countries. It is vital that the projects have active contact and close cooperation with recognised international research groups. It is especially important that younger researchers and doctoral candidates establish contacts abroad. Research projects are encouraged to include a component of international cooperation. The programme board also supports the use of project funds granted under the programme to co-finance participation in EU programmes. Prominent international researchers will be invited to attend conferences and seminars organised under the auspices of the programme.

## 5.4 Communication and dissemination activities

The programme seeks to ensure that research on democracy and governance in a regional context is developed into a sound knowledge base for use in policy formulation and public administration. This requires systematic communication activities and dissemination of results vis-à-vis national and municipal authorities, organisations and other users, including the general public. It is also essential to ensure adequate dissemination to the research community and among researchers both nationally and internationally. Researchers are encouraged to participate in public debate, and projects are expected to disseminate research results and knowledge as a planned part of their activities. Projects are also encouraged to develop new, untraditional dissemination activities. The Research Council will contribute to communication activities for the programme at an overall level and will monitor the projects granted funding to ensure that the planned dissemination activities are carried out. Importance will therefore be attached to the submission of reports by the projects to the programme board.

The programme's thematic orientation, funding and use of the results will be discussed directly with relevant authorities and user groups. Other dissemination activity will be carried out at seminars and conferences both during the research process and at the conclusion of the projects. As a general rule, the individual research groups will be responsible for contacting the media when their projects are concluded, but the programme board will assist in this regard when so desired. Results from the research activity will be published on a regular basis on the programme's webpages. The programme board will ensure that state-of-the-art reviews and syntheses of completed research are compiled, and will take the initiative to have these published as books and articles.

## 5.5 Coordination with other related programmes and instruments at the Research Council

The programme encompasses a wide array of thematic areas and research topics, and shares a significant interface with other programmes and activities under the Research Council. Several current programmes have features in common with the DEMOSREG programme: the Programme on Regional R&D and Innovation (VRI), Programme on Entrepreneur Research (MER), Research Programme on Welfare, Working Life and Migration (VAM), Research Programme on Nature-based Industry (NATUROGNÆRING), Programme on Norwegian Environmental Research Towards 2015 (MILJO2015), Research Programme on the Oceans and Coastal Areas (HAVKYST). Two other relevant programmes that were recently concluded are Research for Innovation and Renewal of Public

Sector (VIOS) and Research for Innovation and Modernisation of Public Sector (FIFOS). The Research Council will help to create common arenas and facilitate exchange between the programmes.

## 5.6 Timeframe and funding

Initially the DEMOSREG programme was funded for the period 2005-2010, although the intention has been to carry out a long-term, flexible research initiative over a ten-year period. The programme is now being followed up for the period 2011-2014. The main tasks in 2010 will be to conclude the current activities, issue a funding announcement and assess the grant applications. A dissemination strategy will also be drawn up. An additional funding announcement is planned in 2011-2012 to focus on any thematic areas and research topics that are inadequately covered in relation to the call for proposals in 2010. The programme is financed primarily with an annual allocation from the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and the Ministry of the Environment. Funding will also be sought from other ministries. The programme's annual budget is expected to be approximately NOK 16 million. The budgetary frameworks and funding sources will be a determining factor in the programme's scientific perspectives and priorities.