

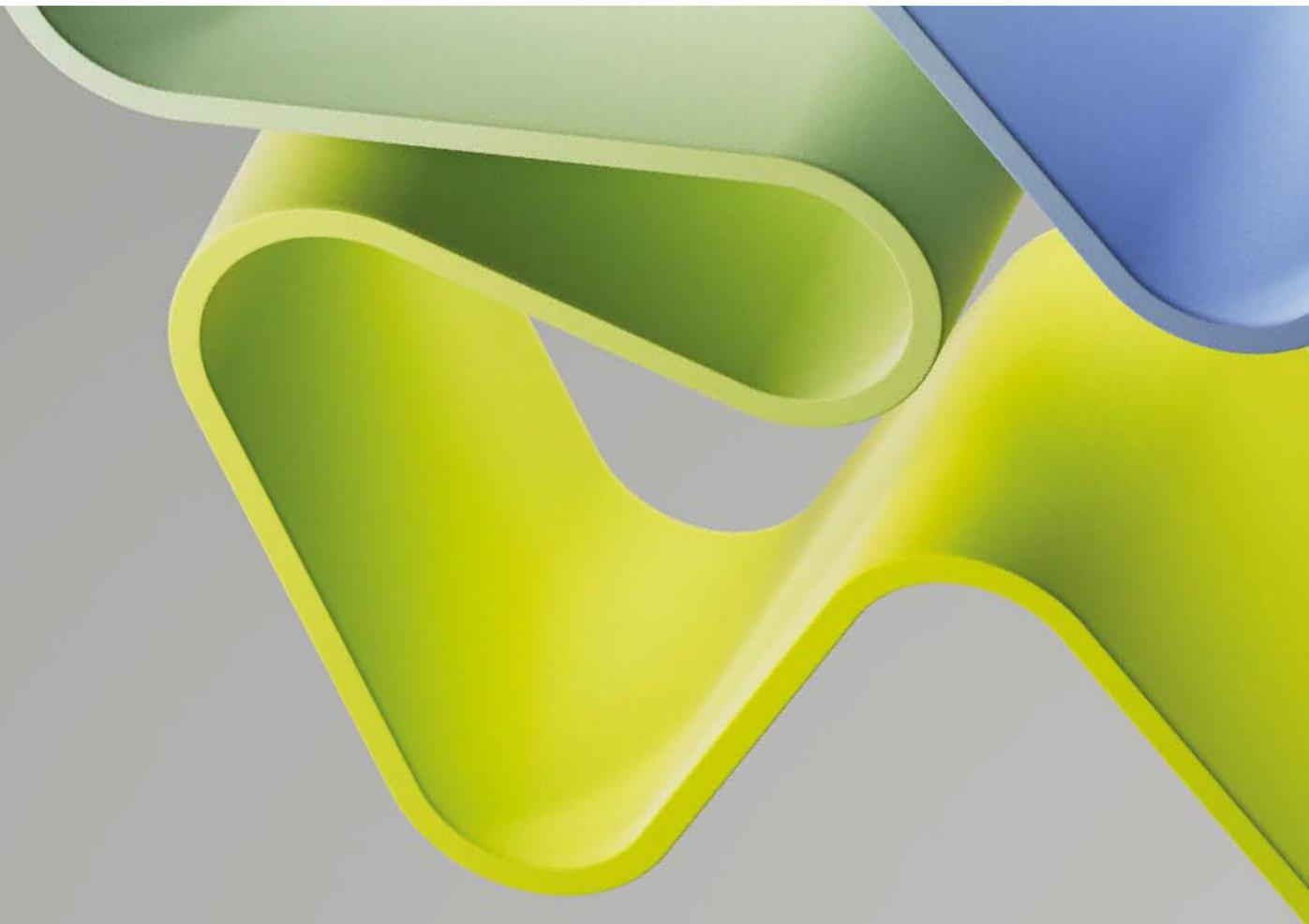
# **Evaluation of Life Sciences 2022-2024**

## **Evaluation of Biosciences 2022-2023**

### **Evaluation report – Administrative unit**

#### **Department of Natural History (INH) Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)**

December 2023



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# Statement from Evaluation Committee 1 (Higher Education Sector)

This report is from Evaluation Committee 1 which evaluated the following administrative units representing the higher education sector in the Evaluation of Biosciences 2022-2023:

- Faculty of Environmental Sciences and Natural Resource Management (MINA), NMBU
- Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (VET), NMBU
- Department of Biology (IBI), NTNU
- Faculty of Science and Engineering, UiA
- The Department of Natural History, NTNU
- University Museum of Bergen (UM), UiB
- Natural History Museum (NHM), UiO
- The Arctic University Museum of Norway, UiT

The conclusions and recommendations in this report are based on information from the administrative units (self-assessment), digital meetings with representatives from the administrative units, bibliometric analysis and personnel statistics from the Nordic Institute for Studies of Innovation, Research, and Education (NIFU) and Statistics Norway (SSB), and selected data from Studiebarometeret and the National Teacher Survey (Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education [NOKUT]). The digital interviews took place in Autumn 2023.

This report is the consensus view from committee 1. All members of the committee have agreed with the assessments, conclusions and recommendations presented here.

Evaluation committee 1 consisted of the following members:

Professor/dean  
**Marianne Holmer (chair),**  
University of Southern Denmark

Professor/chair  
**Alan Dobson,**  
University College Cork

Research group leader  
**Felicity Jones,**  
The Friedrich Miescher Laboratory

Professor/section manager  
**Jan Tind Sørensen,**  
Aarhus University

Professor/ head  
**Kjell Arne Johanson,**  
The Swedish Museum of Natural  
History

Professor  
**Martin Polz,**  
University of Vienna

Ass. Professor/head  
**Natasha Louise de Vere,**  
University of Copenhagen

Ivette Oomens, Principal Consultant, Technopolis Group, was the committee secretary.

*Oslo, December 2023*

# Profile of the administrative unit

In 2021, the NTNU University Museum had 55 employees comprising seven professors, seven associate professors, nine researchers, 14 PhD/postdocs, 15 technical personnel and three administrative staff. There is a low share of women among professors, associate professors, and researchers. The share of women among PhD/postdocs was 71,4% in 2021.

The NTNU University Museum has one department, the Department of Natural History. The Department of Natural History consists of seven research groups, but due to size requirements in the evaluation, the entire department was entered as one research group for the evaluation.

The NTNU University Museum has one common research strategy, vision and goals to which the Department of Natural History (INH) identifies. INH aims to be a national leader in digital sharing and share large volumes of data in international networks such as GBIF and iBOLD. Moreover, INH aims to be an attractive research partner and active producer of knowledge at a high international level for a sustainable natural environment. The unit aims to be a key national actor as a producer of knowledge and data for Norwegian environmental stewardship. Many of the researchers at INH take part in different national (e.g. Red list of species and nature types) and international panels (e.g. IPBES). To follow up on strategic goals, a three-year Strategic Personnel Plan is followed, together with an Action Plan. The Action Plan for the period 2019-2021 (prolonged to 2022 due to covid) contained 25 different actions ranging from small-scale actions such as compilations of career plans for the employees at the museum, to large-scale actions such as improvement (rebuilding) of their scientific collection storage facilities, and the gathering of the museum's activities at one campus.

As a higher education institution, the NTNU University Museum strives to reach the four overall goals of Norwegian Higher Education Institutions. In relation to these goals, the unit mentions in its self-assessment that they have a 40-year long record of providing scientific based knowledge and advice to the hydropower industry and managers of freshwater habitats. During the last decade, this portfolio has been increased to also include advice to industry and managers related to impacts from anthropogenic activities on salmonids in coastal areas. Examples of industrial partners include Equinor, MOWI, Statkraft, NTE, Salten Aqua and TrønderEnergi. INH is represented in the ICES working group for sea trout, the national working group for implementing sea trout management the national committees for red listed and alien species. The NTNU University Museum also participated in the development and use of "Natur I Norge" (NiN), the classification system used in mapping and management of nature in Norway.

Based on its self-assessment, the NTNU University Museum in the future might take advantage of participation in international education and training networks such as ForBio, Erasmus, Norpart, NABIS to secure recruitment to the field and extend international collaboration and future external funding of biodiversity research. This may lead to further strengthening of their research labs for state-of-the art analyses and even more external funding of staff.

## Overall assessment

The Department of Natural History conducts collection-based research that focuses on taxonomy, evolutionary genomics and ecology. The overall assessment considering the Terms of Reference provided by the administrative unit is that the research performed by the Department has a high societal relevance for understanding and conserving biodiversity. This is well illustrated with two excellent case studies that describe the societal importance of the Department, focusing on understanding land and water use impact on biodiversity and ecosystems in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and implications for policy and the Norwegian Barcode of Life (NorBOL).

The department is organised into several research groups with staff and students belonging to at least one group. Many of the research groups are very small and could benefit from a clearer structure and organisation to provide a strong framework for stakeholders to understand. The Department has basic funds from the University and the RCN, and external funding from collaborative projects (mainly funded by EU programmes) and commissioned projects (mainly funded by national agencies, counties or municipalities). Some diversification of funding would be valuable, targeting more national and international funding opportunities. The department has access to museum collections and databases, molecular biology and microscopy laboratories, and computing facilities. The collections require specialist facilities, and it is important that these are adequate for the safe keeping of these vital resources, focusing on both maintaining and expanding the collections. INH is fairly small (23 permanent faculty) and has limited opportunities to increase the number of permanent faculty members. Increasing capacity through external funding is therefore crucial. INH emphasises that international collaboration is important to increase research capacity and for a small organisation, they are very good at this. There is a significant lack of females at senior academic levels, INH is taking steps to rectify this, but the envisaged timescale before there are female full professors is several years.

## Recommendations

The evaluation committee recommends the following:

- Continue discussions about research strategy and organisation to create a clearer structure that provides a strong framework for external funders and other stakeholders to understand.
- Alongside the strategy for research, consider the strategies for collections and digitisation and ensure their alignment.
- Continue to develop and communicate the work in collections-based research and nature management, which are important societal contributions. In particular, show clearer links to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Continue to develop plans for increasing the quality of submitted research applications to maximise chances of success.
- Address gender bias at senior levels (especially full professor) more quickly than the current timeframe which will take several years before a female full professor is in post.
- Ringve Botanical Garden is a valuable research resource, consider how it can be used further in this area.

# 1. Strategy, resources and organisation of research

The Department of Natural History at NTNU excels in collections-based research with a focus on biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, particularly in Norwegian contexts. Organisational discussions are currently underway to refine research group structures to enhance clarity and strategy, crucial for external funding and research quality. Funding challenges persist, prompting a strategic pivot toward higher quality and fewer funding applications. International collaboration is vital and used effectively for enriching research quality in this small organisation, there is scope for even further action in this area.

## 1.1 Research Strategy

The research strategy for the administrative unit is currently under development. The direction of progress is very good and the focus on collections-based research is very important for museums. The Department of Natural History (INH) is one of the departments that contributes to the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) Museum. INH conducts collections-based research that focuses on taxonomy, evolutionary genomics and ecology. Specific research aims include:

- Integrative biosystematics research.
- Understanding the processes leading to speciation in bryophytes.
- Applying novel genomic tools to natural history collections to investigate the evolutionary processes responsible for biodiversity.
- Combining collections, AI and ecological data to assess biodiversity and ecological processes in space and time.
- Effects of human influence and climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem processes in land, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

INH has a focus on museum collections and being a national leader in digital sharing of large volumes of data in international networks such as GBIF and BOLD. INH aims to be a key national player as a producer of knowledge for Norwegian environmental stewardship. The administrative unit studies biodiversity from a broad perspective, with a strong focus on relevant species of Norwegian flora and fauna. INH provides biodiversity knowledge of interest in nature conservation, land-use and water-use sectors.

## 1.2 Organisation of research

The department clearly sees the importance of having an overall research strategy that is reflected in the organisation of the research activities. At the moment there are many, small research groups and this could be simplified. We recommend that these discussions continue to create a clearer structure for the organisation of research that provides a strong framework for external funders and other stakeholders to understand.

The Department has a pyramidal organisation, with a leadership team consisting of three people, the Head of Department, the Deputy Head of Department and the Head of Office, plus an advisory board with external and elected members from the institution, and a forum with representatives from each internal research section. There is considerable collaboration across sections and with other departments at the museum.

INH is organised into a number of research groups with staff and students belonging to at least one group. The groups include: TAXA - Integrative Taxonomy and DNA Barcoding; Holomuseomics; TEMAR - Terrestrial, Marine and Aerial Remote sensing for archaeology; Freshwater ecology; Bio3D; BLUES - Biodiversity, Land Use and Ecosystem Services; Bryology and Mire.

Many of the research groups are very small and the organisation of the research groups is an area of active discussion. The overall department is small and discussions are centred on the relative merits of having less research groups or whether this is necessary at all since most of the day-to-day activities are centred around specific projects. The number of research groups currently seems rather large for a relatively small faculty.

### 1.3 Research funding

We recommend that INH continues to develop plans for increasing the quality of submitted research applications to maximise chances of success. This can include peer support for the grant writing process from initial idea to final application. The Department has basic funds from the University and the RCN, and external ones from collaborative projects (mainly funded by EU programmes) and commissioned projects (mainly funded by national agencies, counties or municipalities). Many projects commissioned by stakeholders go to the Freshwater ecology group.

INH recognises the difficulties of attracting external funding for collections-based research and in biosystematics more broadly. Funding from RCN has decreased substantially in success rate from 20% – 5% from 2019 to 2021. Success rates of grants from underlying ministries and other national competitive funding have higher success. There is an acceptable return rate from international grants with two out of eight successful in 2021. INH would like to secure more external funding since internal funding is decreasing. The administrative unit has been proactive in trying to attract external funds, from private companies and the EU, and increasing engagement in international networks. INH would like to focus more on the applications that are being submitted, potentially submitting less applications but ensuring that these are higher quality. To achieve this, INH aims to start earlier with applications, have more pitching of ideas, critical testing and review of applications within the department.

### 1.4 Use of infrastructures

INH has access to NTNU infrastructure needed to fulfil its research objectives, mostly museum collections and databases, but also molecular biology and microscopy laboratories, as well as computing facilities. Increases in the use of the molecular labs has necessitated the need for larger lab facilities, including a clean lab.

The collections require specialist facilities, and it is important that these are adequate for the safe keeping of these vital resources. We recommend a strategic focus to maintain and modernise the collections. The herbarium facilities have recently been upgraded but facilities for some of the other collections need attention. Governmental support is required here to ensure that important, national collections are properly housed and available for research. More than 95% of the 1.6M collection items within the Natural History Collections have been digitised – this is an excellent proportion.

Ringve Botanical Garden is also part of this department and provides an important research location with additional infrastructure, including experimental greenhouses.

INH hosts NorBoL and is a consortium member of GBIF, it participates in DiSSCo and eLTER. The Norwegian node of the international research infrastructure BOLD, NorBOL, has for many years had a great impact on Norwegian research projects and further afield. The goal of DNA barcoding 20,000 species was reached in 2019 and new species are continuously added to the database.

## 1.5 National and international collaboration

National and international collaboration is very good at INH. At a national level the collaboration among the university museums in Norway is important for INH both in terms of research collaboration but also regarding collection work. For collections, this allows a common Collection Management System to be used where costs and expertise can be shared.

INH emphasises that international collaboration is vital to increase research capacity and partner in larger initiatives. This is especially important given the small size of the department. International collaboration in publications, research projects and formal international networks (iBOL, BIOSCAN, European Reference Genome Atlas, various COST-actions, etc.) is central to many of the scientific staff and has fostered participation in new, externally funded projects.

## 1.6 Research staff

As a department INH has a modest size with 23 permanent faculty. The research groups have different sizes and output. Some of the Department members are simultaneously part of several thematic groups.

The proportion of female to male staff in senior research roles is very poor, there are seven professors – all male, seven associate professors - 28% female, and nine researchers - 22% female. Meanwhile the proportion of PhD/postdocs that are female are 71% and all the admin staff are female. So far one extra associate professor and a tenure track assistant professor have been appointed. The recruitment process for these staff ensured that females were recruited to these roles. A further new position will shortly be available for a researcher with a genomic focus. Whilst the increase in female staff is positive it will still be several years before there is any female representation at full professor level.

## 2. Research production, quality and integrity

INHs research production, quality and integrity is very good. Its commitment to open access is excellent, particularly the very high level of digitisation of the collections. INH's focus on nature management and collections-based research has a high societal impact although sometimes a more moderate impact in terms of number of peer-reviewed publications and citations. However, some of the newer research groups, for example, Holomuseomics, illustrate how collections-based research can lead to outputs with high impact for science and society. INH is making good progress in the area of open access. The proportion of open access publications has increased, and a very high proportion of the museum's collections are available on GBIF.

### 2.1 Research quality and integrity

The research on natural systems (freshwater, peat and mire, land use) has moderate scientific impact but very high societal relevance. The dependence on funding from industry (especially hydropower) places some limits on publications in peer reviewed journals. There is a big gender bias, especially in more senior academic positions.

The research group publishes in respected journals in the field, many times in collaboration with other groups. INH also produces many local reports on subjects that are of special interest in their geographical area; however, these reports most of the times do not produce scientific publications and, in consequence, not all groups are represented in the selected list of publications. Many defended doctoral theses in recent years, although only two in 2019, which is a bit surprising. Collection-based research (including via genomics) is central. INH relies on international collaborations to gain greater recognition.

## 2.2. Open Science

INH is making good progress in open access. The proportion of open access publications has increased, and a very high proportion of the museum's collections are available on GBIF. There is room for more specific actions within some open access areas, for example, open access tutorials and peer review, specific training and workshops within INH is recommended.

## 3. Diversity and equality

Diversity and equality are considered within INH, but more could be done to imbed this into working practices. The general procedures and practices of NTNU are available to INH to protect against discrimination. These include a code of ethics for employees and a policy for gender equality and diversity. There are equality and diversity leadership sessions for senior staff and these areas are discussed within appraisal interviews with all staff.

## 4. Relevance to institutional and sectorial purposes

INH has excellent relevance to institutional and sectorial purposes. INH provides sector specific support in biodiversity conservation, land, and water management of high societal relevance. This includes advice to the hydropower industry, nature mapping and management and red list assessments. There is no focus on commercialisation, and this is not part of the Museum and admin units' strategy.

INH has a 40-year long record of providing scientific based knowledge and advice to the hydropower industry and managers of freshwater habitats. During the last decade, this portfolio has been increased to also include advice to industry and managers related to impacts from anthropogenic activities on salmonids in coastal areas. INH has participated in the development and use of "Natur i Norge" (NiN), the classification system used in mapping and management of nature in Norway. This includes contributions to the development of the system specific to peatland habitats and semi-natural habitats, contributions through the board of NiN, and contributions to the development of manuals for NiN-mapping and surveys. The Norwegian Red list of habitats is also based on NiN categories, and the Red list evaluation of wetland habitats was led by the mire group at INH.

There have been contributions from several of the research groups to a more sustainable knowledge-based use and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services for a broad range of species/taxa as well as ecosystems at local, regional and national scales. There has

been close contact and cooperation with key stakeholders within nature conservation, land-use and water use sectors.

## 5. Relevance to society

The research performed by most of the Department's groups is highly relevant for nature management and animal welfare at local, regional and national scales. This is very well illustrated by the two impact case studies. The administrative unit provides biodiversity knowledge of interest to nature conservation, land-use, and water-use sector. INH looks for solutions towards a sustainable use of natural resources, helps to understand the ecology of the Norwegian wildlife and contributes to its management. INH also participates in expert committees and provides advice to industry and government administrators.

The activities of INH make a significant contribution to many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The museum and INH are working well in this area and could place a greater emphasis on reporting this.

### **Comments to impact case 1 - Understanding land and water use impact on biodiversity and ecosystems in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and implications for policy**

Within this impact case a series of projects are described that illustrate long term empirical research on the ecology of a diverse group of species (vascular plants, bryophytes, invertebrates, fish, birds etc) focusing on the natural history of several terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. The projects have provided basic knowledge on the spatial and temporal dynamics of biodiversity of high relevance for nature management and policy development.

The project DYLAN (2009-2015) integrated natural and cultural history research involving cultural history and archaeology at the University Museum. Semi-natural ecosystems rich in both natural and cultural heritage are threatened by land use changes. This interdisciplinary project monitored and modelled natural (biodiversity and ecosystem services) and cultural heritage to understand human-nature interactions. The long-term interdisciplinary project MANECO (2000-until present) involves researchers from animal and plant ecology, animal husbandry, soil science and human geography. It examines the socio-ecological impact of sheep grazing in an alpine ecosystem to underpin the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services in low alpine cultural landscapes through livestock grazing. SUSTHERB (2008-until present) examines the long-term experimental ecosystem effects of excluding moose from boreal forest clear-cut sites. DISENTANGLE (2017-2021) had as a main objective to disentangle how herbivores and climate interactively effect ecological dynamics in northern ecosystems, including Arctic and alpine tundra and boreal forests. THE SECRET LIFE OF SEATROUT (2011-until present) and CHASES (2016-2020) focus on the pressure on coastal zones for industrial development including open net pen aquaculture and land reclamation.

Published scientific papers, technical reports, policy briefs and oral presentations for stakeholders have ensured that the management and policy implications of these projects are disseminated and implemented. This is an impressive set of projects that clearly demonstrate INH's significant societal impact on biodiversity conservation in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

### **Comments to impact case 2 - Norwegian Barcode of Life (NorBOL)**

As the Norwegian National Research Infrastructure for DNA barcoding, NorBOL has established a DNA barcode reference library for Norwegian species. This provides an incredibly important research platform allowing rapid species identification. The use of

molecular species identification has revolutionised assessment of species rich organism groups and provides a tool for more effective, precise, and repeatable documentation of biological diversity. Nature management authorities are now making use of this tool in environmental monitoring (e.g., in the Norwegian Insect Monitoring Programme) to document changes that previously were anecdotal. The Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA), Norwegian Veterinary Institute and Institute for Marine Research all actively use eDNA in monitoring projects. This is only possible because of the high-quality reference library created through NorBOL. DNA barcodes and DNA barcoding have also contributed significantly to understanding species boundaries and speciation processes as well as the interactions between them (e.g., food webs) and community change.

DNA barcoding can also be used for qualitative analyses of species in food or animal feed. INH staff have partnered with the private company Orivo in two R&D projects to test protocols to identify species in fish meal (2016-2019) and pet food (2018-2021). The results have contributed to a commercial service provided by Orivo where aquaculture feed producers can test the content and origin of fish meal used in their products.

As a national research infrastructure, NorBOL has provided data or can be linked to more than 428 registered activities in the national database Cristin (as of Dec 2021). Among these are 137 scientific papers, 92 scientific presentations, 53 posters, seven reports and numerous outreach activities. The activity and experience in the field of DNA barcoding has also made INH relevant partners in large international consortia that further advance the science beyond the current state. For example, the COST-Action DNAqua-Net (2016-2021) and the Horizon Europe funded project Biodiversity Genomics Europe. NorBOL is an excellent example of museum-based research and infrastructure development that has significant and wide-ranging societal impact.

# Appendices

## List of research groups

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Administrative unit</b>	<b>Research group</b>
NTNU	Dep Natural history (INH)	<i>Dep. Of Natural History (INH)</i>

# Methods and limitations

## Methods

The evaluation is based on documentary evidence and online interviews with the representatives of Administrative Unit.

The documentary inputs to the evaluation were:

- Evaluation Protocol Evaluation of life sciences in Norway 2022-2023
- Administrative Unit's Terms of Reference
- Administrative Unit's self-assessment report
- Administrative Unit's impact cases
- Administrative Unit's research groups evaluation reports
- Panel reports from the Expert panels
- Bibliometric data (*NIFU Nordic Institute for Studies of innovation, research and education*)
- Personnel data (*Statistics Norway (SSB)*)
- Funding data – The Research Council's contribution to biosciences research (*RCN*)
- Extract from the Survey for academic staff and the Student Survey (*Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)*)

After the documentary review, the Committee held a meeting and discussed an initial assessment against the assessment criteria and defined questions for the interview with the Administrative Unit. The Committee shared the interview questions with the Administrative Unit two weeks before the interview.

Following the documentary review, the Committee interviewed the Administrative Unit in an hour-long virtual meeting to fact-check the Committee's understanding and refine perceptions. The Administrative Unit presented answers to the Committee's questions and addressed other follow-up questions.

After the online interview, the Committee attended the final meeting to review the initial assessment in light of the interview and make any final adjustments.

A one-page summary of the Administrative Unit was developed based on the information from the self-assessment, the research group assessment, and the interview. The Administrative Unit had the opportunity to fact-check this summary. The Administrative Unit approved the summary without adjustments. The Committee judged the information received through documentary inputs and the interview with the Administrative Unit sufficient to complete the evaluation.

The Committee judged the information received through documentary inputs and the interview with the Administrative Unit sufficient to complete the evaluation.

# Evaluation of Biosciences 2022-2023

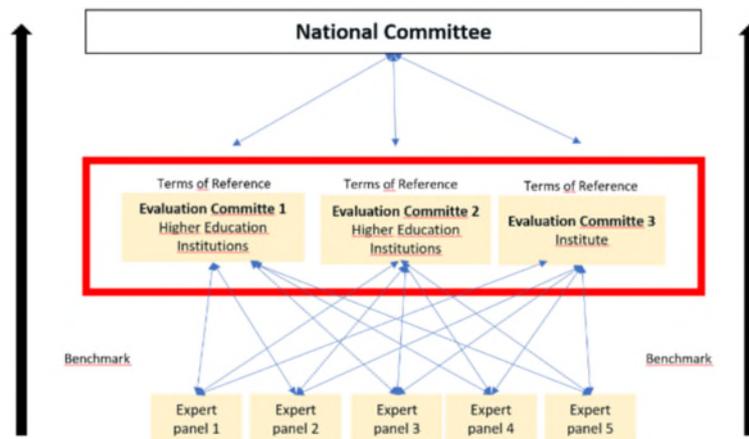
By evaluating Norwegian research and higher education we aim to enhance the quality, relevance, and efficiency. In accordance with the statutes of the Research Council of Norway (RCN), the RCN evaluates Norwegian professional environments to create a solid and up-to-date knowledge base about Norwegian research and higher education in an international perspective.

The evaluation of life sciences is conducted in 2022 - 2024. The evaluation of biosciences takes place in 2022 - 2023, and the evaluation of medicine and health is carried out in 2023-2024. The primary aim of the evaluation of life sciences is to reveal and confirm the quality and the relevance of research performed at Norwegian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the institute sector and the health trusts. The evaluation shall result in recommendations to the institutions, the RCN and the ministries.

## *Evaluation of biosciences (EVALBIOVIT) 2022-2023*

The evaluation of biosciences includes twenty-two administrative units (e.g., faculty, department, institution) which are assessed by evaluation committees according to sectorial affiliation and/or other relevant similarities between the units. The administrative units enrolled their research groups (97) to five expert panels organised by research subjects or themes and assessed across institutions and sectors.

*Organisation of evaluation of biosciences research 2022 - 2023*



The institutions have been allowed to adapt the evaluation mandate (Terms of Reference) to their own strategic goals. This is to ensure that the results of the evaluation will be useful for the institution's own strategic development. The administrative unit together with the research group(s) selects an appropriate benchmark for each of the research group(s).

The Research Council of Norway has commissioned an external evaluation secretariat at Technopolis Group for the implementation of the evaluation process.

Each institution/administrative unit is responsible for following up the recommendations that apply to their own institution/administrative unit. The Research Council will use the results from the evaluation in the development of funding instruments and as a basis for advice to the Government.

The web page for the evaluation of biosciences 2022-2023:

<https://www.forskningsradet.no/en/analysis-numbers/evaluations/subject-theme/biosciences/>

Til innmeldte administrative enheter til  
fagevaluering av biovitenskap (EVALBIOVIT)

Vår saksbehandler/tlf.  
Hilde D.G. Nielsen/4092 2260

Vår ref.  
21/10653  
Deres ref.

Oslo,  
21.04.2022

## Fagevaluering av biovitenskap (EVALBIOVIT) 2022 – 2023

Vi viser til invitasjonsbrev om å delta i fagevaluering av biovitenskap (EVALBIOVIT) datert 11.11.2021 og til informasjonsmøte med innmeldte administrative enheter 15.12.2021.

Porteføljestyret for livsvitenskap vedtok evalueringsprotokollen for fagevaluering av biovitenskap 05.04.2022 (vedlegg 1). Protokollen beskriver roller, prosesser og ansvarsfordeling i evalueringsarbeidet og er i tråd med forslaget til nytt nasjonalt rammeverk for evaluering av forskning og høyere utdanning utarbeidet i regi av Kunnskapsdepartementet.

Forskningsrådet har mottatt innmelding av 37 administrative enheter til EVALBIOVIT. Disse vil bli fordelt på sektorspesifikke evalueringskomitéer: 1-2 evalueringskomité/er for administrative enheter som tilhører instituttsektoren og 1-2 evalueringskomité/er for administrative enheter som tilhører UH-sektor. Universitetsmuseene vil bli evaluert samlet i én evalueringskomité for UH-sektor. Det skal i tillegg opprettes internasjonale fagekspertpaneler etter faglig eller tematisk likhet på tvers av sektorer. Ekspertpanelene skal evaluere forskergruppene som de administrative enhetene melder inn. Evalueringskomitéene og ekspertpanelene skal vurdere de innsamlede dataene og gi anbefalinger til den enkelte institusjon, til Forskningsrådet og til departementene.

### Tilpasning av mandat (vedlegg 1)

Forskningsrådet ber med dette administrative enheter om å tilpasse mandatet (vedlegg 1) til de lokale forhold ved egen institusjon. Tilpasningen gjøres ved å fylle inn de åpne punktene i malen (Appendix A). Utfylt skjema sendes på epost til [evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no](mailto:evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no) innen 30. september 2022.

### Innmelding av forskergrupper (vedlegg 2a og 2b)

Forskningsrådet ber administrative enheter om å melde inn forskergrupper i tråd med forskergruppedefinisjonen beskrevet i kapittel 1.2 i evalueringsprotokollen. Det bes også om at forskergruppene innplasseres i den tentative fagpanelinndelingen for EVALBIOVIT (vedlegg 2a). Utfylt regneark (vedlegg 2b) sendes til [evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no](mailto:evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no) innen 31. mai 2022.

Forskningsrådet vil ferdigstille panelstruktur og avgjøre den endelige fordelingen av forskergruppene på fagpaneler etter at alle forskergrupper er meldt inn.

### **Invitasjon til å foreslå eksperter (vedlegg 3a og 3b)**

Forskningsrådet inviterer administrative enheter til å spille inn forslag til eksperter som kan inngå i evalueringskomitéene og i ekspertpanelene (vedlegg 3a). Hver evalueringskomité skal bestå av 7-9 komitémedlemmer. Hvert ekspertpanel skal bestå av 5-7 eksperter. Utfylt regneark (vedlegg 3b, fane 1 og fane 2) sendes til [evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no](mailto:evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no) innen 31. mai 2022.

Forskningsrådet v/porteføljestyret for livsvitenskap vil oppnevne leder og medlemmer til evalueringskomitéene og til ekspertpanelene.

### **Data og datainnsamling**

Forskningsrådet har nå ute et oppdrag for analyse av data om personal og forskningsproduksjon. Analysen skal i hovedsak baseres på data i DBH, NIFUs forskerpersonaleregister og Cristin. Analysene vil inkludere indikatorer som skal brukes for evaluering av alle institusjoner.

Videre vil institusjonene få et ansvar for innsamling av data til en egevaluering som skal inngå i vurderingsgrunnlaget for evalueringskomitéene. For å sikre at evalueringen blir nyttig for forskningsinstitusjonenes utvikling, vil Forskningsrådet også invitere institusjonene til å delta i utvelgelse av relevante evalueringsdata og indikatorer som kan danne grunnlag for vurdering opp mot institusjonens egne strategiske mål og sektormål. På bakgrunn av dette har Forskningsrådet en forventning om at institusjonene som deltar i evalueringen stiller med nødvendige ressurser gjennom hele evalueringsprosessen.

Forskningsrådet har, etter en anbudskonkurranse om sekretariatstjenester, inngått en avtale med Technopolis Group som skal bistå Forskningsrådets administrasjon i arbeidet med EVALBIOVIT. Sekretariatet skal blant annet koordinere datainnsamlingen fra institusjonene og systematisere det innsamlede materialet for vurdering i ekspertpaneler og evalueringskomitéer.

### **Endring av administrativ enhet**

For noen få tilfeller kan det være behov for å gjøre noen endringer i forhold til den administrative enheten<sup>1</sup> som allerede er innmeldt til EVALBIOVIT. For eksempel kan et fakultet som ble meldt inn samlet til EVALBIOVIT i desember 2021 finne det mer hensiktsmessig å heller melde inn fakultetets institutter som egne administrative enheter. Hvis man ønsker å endre på den administrative enheten må dette meldes Forskningsrådets administrasjon så fort som mulig, men ikke senere enn 31.05.2022. Melding om endring sendes på epost til: [evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no](mailto:evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no).

### **Informasjonsmøte 9. mai 2022 og nettside for EVALBIOVIT**

Forskningsrådet arrangerer 09.05.2022 kl. 12.00-12.45 et informasjonsmøte for alle som deltar i EVALBIOVIT. Møtet vil foregå digitalt (Zoom). Vi vil i møtet bl.a. gå gjennom evalueringsprotokollen samt at det vil være mulig å stille spørsmål. Påmelding til [evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no](mailto:evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no) innen 07.05.2022.

Forskningsrådet har opprette en egen nettside hvor informasjon om EVALBIOVIT vil bli publisert fortløpende. Lenke til nettsiden finner dere her: <https://www.forskningsradet.no/statistikk-evalueringer/biovitenskap-2022-2023/>.

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<sup>1</sup> Med administrativ enhet menes en organisatorisk enhet på nivå 2 eller 3 i organisasjonsstrukturen til DBH for UH sektor eller NIFUs organisasjonsregister for institutt- og helsesektoren.

Spørsmål som gjelder fagevalueringen kan sendes på epost til [evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no](mailto:evalbiovit@forskningsradet.no) eller ved å kontakte Hilde Dorthea Grindvik Nielsen på epost [hgn@forskningsradet.no](mailto:hgn@forskningsradet.no) /mobil 40 92 22 60.

Med vennlig hilsen  
**Norges forskningsråd**

Ole Johan Borge  
avdelingsdirektør  
Avdeling for helseforskning og helseinnovasjon

Hilde G. Nielsen  
spesialrådgiver  
Avdeling for helseforskning og helseinnovasjon

### **Vedlegg**

1. Evalueringsprotokoll for fagevaluering av biovitenskap 2022-2023
- 2a. Tentativ fagpanelinndeling for evaluering av forskergrupper
- 2b. Skjema for innmelding av forskergrupper
- 3a. Invitasjon til å foreslå eksperter og informasjon om evalueringskomitéer og ekspertpaneler
- 3b. Skjema for å foreslå eksperter til evalueringskomitéer og ekspertpaneler

# **Evaluation of life sciences in Norway 2022-2023**

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**LIVSEVAL protocol version 1.0**

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*By decision of the Portfolio board for life sciences April 5., 2022*

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# 1 Introduction

Research assessments based on this protocol serve different aims and have different target groups. The primary aim of the evaluation of life sciences is to reveal and confirm the quality and the relevance of research performed at Norwegian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and by the institute sector and regional health authorities and health trusts. These institutions will hereafter be collectively referred to as Research Performing Organisations (RPOs). The assessments should serve a formative purpose by contributing to the development of research quality and relevance at these institutions and at the national level.

## 1.1 Evaluation units

The assessment will comprise a number of *administrative units* submitted for evaluation by the host institution. By assessing these administrative units in light of the goals and strategies set for them by their host institution, it will be possible to learn more about how public funding is used at the institution(s) to facilitate high-quality research and how this research contributes to society. The administrative units will be assessed by evaluation committees according to sectoral affiliation and/or other relevant similarities between the units.

The administrative units will be invited to submit data on their *research groups* to be assessed by expert panels organised by research subject or theme. See Chapter 3 for details on organisation.

<i>Administrative unit</i>	An administrative unit is any part of an RPO that is recognised as a formal (administrative) unit of that RPO, with a designated budget, strategic goals and dedicated management. It may, for instance, be a university faculty or department, a department of an independent research institute or a hospital.
<i>Research group</i>	Designates groups of researchers within the administrative units that fulfil the minimum requirements set out in section 1.2. Research groups are identified and submitted for evaluation by the administrative unit, which may decide to consider itself a single research group.

## 1.2 Minimum requirements for research groups

- 1) The research group must be sufficiently large in size, i.e. at least five persons in full-time positions with research obligations. This merely indicates the minimum number, and larger units are preferable. In exceptional cases, the minimum number may include PhD students, postdoctoral fellows and/or non-tenured researchers. *In all cases, a research group must include at least three full-time tenured staff.* Adjunct professors, technical staff and other relevant personnel may be listed as group members but may not be included in the minimum number.

- 2) The research group subject to assessment must have been established for at least three years. Groups of more recent date may be accepted if they have come into existence as a consequence of major organisational changes within their host institution.
- 3) The research group should be known as such both within and outside the institution (e.g. have a separate website). It should be able to document common activities and results in the form of co-publications, research databases and infrastructure, software, or shared responsibilities for delivering education, health services or research-based solutions to designated markets.
- 4) In its self-assessment, the administrative unit should propose a suitable benchmark for the research group. The benchmark will be considered by the expert panels as a reference in their assessment of the performance of the group. The benchmark can be grounded in both academic and extra-academic standards and targets, depending on the purpose of the group and its host institution.

### **1.3 The evaluation in a nutshell**

The assessment concerns:

- research that the administrative unit and its research groups have conducted in the previous 10 years
- the research strategy that the administrative units under evaluation intend to pursue going forward
- the capacity and quality of research in life sciences at the national level

The Research Council of Norway (RCN) will:

- provide a template for the Terms of Reference<sup>1</sup> for the assessment of RPOs and a national-level assessment in life sciences
- appoint members to evaluation committees and expert panels
- provide secretarial services
- commission reports on research personnel and publications based on data in national registries
- take responsibility for following up assessments and recommendations at the national level.

RPOs conducting research in life sciences are expected to take part in the evaluation. The board of each RPO under evaluation is responsible for tailoring the assessment to its own strategies and specific needs and for following them up within their own institution. Each participating RPO will carry out the following steps:

- 1) Identify the administrative unit(s) to be included as the main unit(s) of assessment
- 2) Specify the Terms of Reference by including information on specific tasks and/or strategic goals of relevance to the administrative unit(s)

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<sup>1</sup> The terms of reference (ToR) document defines all aspects of how the evaluation committees and expert panels will conduct the [research area] evaluation. It defines the objectives and the scope of the evaluation, outlines the responsibilities of the involved parties, and provides a description of the resources available to carry out the evaluation.

- 3) The administrative unit will, in turn, be invited to register a set of research groups that fulfil the minimum criteria specified above (see section 1.2). The administrative unit may decide to consider itself a single research group.
- 4) For each research group, the administrative unit should select an appropriate benchmark in consultation with the group in question. This benchmark can be a reference to an academic level of performance or to the group's contributions to other institutional or sectoral purposes (see section 2.4). The benchmark will be used as a reference in the assessment of the unit by the expert panel.
- 5) The administrative units subject to assessment must provide information about each of their research groups, and about the administrative unit as a whole, by preparing self-assessments and by providing additional documentation in support of the self-assessment.

#### **1.4 Target groups**

- Administrative units represented by institutional management and boards
- Research groups represented by researchers and research group leaders
- Research funders
- Government

The evaluation will result in recommendations to the institutions, the RCN and the ministries. The results of the evaluation will also be disseminated for the benefit of potential students, users of research and society at large.

This protocol is intended for all participants in the evaluation. It provides the information required to organise and carry out the research assessments. Questions about the interpretation or implementation of the protocol should be addressed to the RCN.

## 2 Assessment criteria

The administrative units are to be assessed on the basis of five assessment criteria. The five criteria are applied in accordance with international standards. Finally, the evaluation committee passes judgement on the administrative units as a whole in qualitative terms. In this overall assessment, the committee should relate the assessment of the specific tasks to the strategic goals that the administrative unit has set for itself in the Terms of Reference.

When assessing administrative units, the committees will build on a separate assessment by expert panels of the research groups within the administrative units. See Chapter 3 'Evaluation process and organisation' for a description of the division of tasks.

### 2.1 Strategy, resources and organisation

The evaluation committee assesses the framework conditions for research in terms of funding, personnel, recruitment and research infrastructure in relation to the strategic aims set for the administrative unit. The administrative unit should address at least the following five specific aspects in its self-assessment: 1) funding sources, 2) national and international cooperation, 3) cross-sector and interdisciplinary cooperation, 4) research careers and mobility, and 5) Open Science. These five aspects relate to how the unit organises and actually performs its research, its composition in terms of leadership and personnel, and how the unit is run on a day-to-day basis.

To contribute to understanding what the administrative unit can or should change to improve its ability to perform, the evaluation committee is invited to focus on factors that may affect performance.

Further, the evaluation committee assesses the extent to which the administrative unit's goals for the future remain scientifically and societally relevant. It is also assessed whether its aims and strategy, as well as the foresight of its leadership and its overall management, are optimal in relation to attaining these goals. Finally, it is assessed whether the plans and resources are adequate to implement this strategy.

### 2.2 Research production, quality and integrity

The evaluation committee assesses the profile and quality of the administrative unit's research and the contribution the research makes to the body of scholarly knowledge and the knowledge base for other relevant sectors of society. The committee also assesses the scale of the unit's research results (scholarly publications, research infrastructure developed by the unit, and other contributions to the field) and its contribution to Open Science (early knowledge and sharing of data and other relevant digital objects, as well as science communication and collaboration with societal partners, where appropriate).

The evaluation committee considers the administrative unit's policy for research integrity and how violations of such integrity are prevented. It is interested in how the unit deals with research data, data management, confidentiality (GDPR) and integrity, and the extent to which independent and critical pursuit of research is made possible within the unit. Research integrity relates to both the scientific integrity of conducted research and the professional integrity of researchers.

### **2.3 Diversity and equality**

The evaluation committee considers the diversity of the administrative unit, including gender equality. The presence of differences can be a powerful incentive for creativity and talent development in a diverse administrative unit. Diversity is not an end in itself in that regard, but a tool for bringing together different perspectives and opinions.

The evaluation committee considers the strategy and practices of the administrative unit to prevent discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.

### **2.4 Relevance to institutional and sectoral purposes**

The evaluation committee compares the relevance of the administrative unit's activities and results to the specific aspects detailed in the Terms of Reference for each institution and to the relevant sectoral goals (see below).

#### Higher Education Institutions

There are 36 Higher Education Institutions in Norway that receive public funding from the Ministry for Education and Research. Twenty-one of the 36 institutions are owned by the ministry, whereas the last 15 are privately owned. The HEIs are regulated under the Act relating to universities and university colleges of 1 August 2005.

The purposes of Norwegian HEIs are defined as follows in the Act relating to universities and university colleges<sup>2</sup>

- provide higher education at a high international level;
- conduct research and academic and artistic development work at a high international level;
- disseminate knowledge of the institution's activities and promote an understanding of the principle of academic freedom and application of scientific and artistic methods and results in the teaching of students, in the institution's own general activity as well as in public administration, in cultural life and in business and industry.

In line with these purposes, the Ministry for Research and Education has defined four overall goals for HEIs that receive public funding. These goals have been applied since 2015:

- 1) High quality in research and education
- 2) Research and education for welfare, value creation and innovation
- 3) Access to education (esp. capacity in health and teacher education)
- 4) Efficiency, diversity and solidity of the higher education sector and research system

The committee is invited to assess to what extent the research activities and results of each administrative unit have contributed to sectoral purposes as defined above. In particular, the committee is invited to take the share of resources spent on education at the administrative units into account and to assess the relevance and contributions of research to education, focusing on the master's and PhD levels. This assessment should be distinguished from an

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<sup>2</sup> <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/2005-04-01-15?q=universities>

assessment of the quality of education in itself, and it is limited to the role of research in fostering high-quality education.

### Research institutes (the institute sector)

Norway's large institute sector reflects a practical orientation of state R&D funding that has long historical roots. The Government's strategy for the institute sector<sup>3</sup> applies to the 33 independent research institutes that receive public basic funding through the RCN, in addition to 12 institutes outside the public basic funding system.

The institute sector plays an important and specific role in attaining the overall goal of the national research system, i.e. to increase competitiveness and innovation power to address major societal challenges. The research institutes' contributions to achieving these objectives should therefore form the basis for the evaluation. The main purpose of the sector is to conduct independent applied research for present and future use in the private and public sector. However, some institutes primarily focus on developing a research platform for public policy decisions, others on fulfilling their public responsibilities.

The institutes should:

- maintain a sound academic level, documented through scientific publications in recognised journals
- obtain competitive national and/or international research funding grants
- conduct contract research for private and/or public clients
- demonstrate robustness by having a reasonable number of researchers allocated to each research field

The committee is invited to assess the extent to which the research activities and results of each administrative unit contribute to sectoral purposes and overall goals as defined above. In particular, the committee is invited to assess the level of collaboration between the administrative unit(s) and partners in their own or other sectors.

### The hospital sector

There are four regional health authorities (RHF) in Norway. They are responsible for the specialist health service in their respective regions. The RHF are regulated through the Health Enterprises Act of 15 June 2001 and are bound by requirements that apply to specialist and other health services, the Health Personnel Act and the Patient Rights Act. Under each of the regional health authorities, there are several health trusts (HF), which can consist of one or more hospitals. A health trust (HF) is wholly owned by an RHF.

Research is one of the four main tasks of hospital trusts.<sup>4</sup> The three other main tasks are to ensure good treatment, education and training of patients and relatives. Research is important if the health service is to keep abreast of stay up-to-date with medical developments and carry out critical assessments of established and new diagnostic methods,

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<sup>3</sup> [Strategy for a holistic institute policy \(Kunnskapsdepartementet 2020\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the Specialist Health Services Act § 3-8 and the Health Enterprises Act §§ 1 and 2

treatment options and technology, and work on quality development and patient safety while caring for and guiding patients.

The committee is invited to assess the extent to which the research activities and results of each administrative unit have contributed to sectoral purposes as described above. The assessment does not include an evaluation of the health services performed by the services.

## **2.5 Relevance to society**

The committee assesses the quality, scale and relevance of contributions targeting specific economic, social or cultural target groups, of advisory reports on policy, of contributions to public debates, and so on. The documentation provided as the basis for the assessment of societal relevance should make it possible to assess relevance to various sectors of society (i.e. business, the public sector, non-governmental organisations and civil society).

When relevant, the administrative units will be asked to link their contributions to national and international goals set for research, including the Norwegian Long-term Plan for Research and Higher Education and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Sector-specific objectives, e.g. those described in the Development Agreements for the HEIs and other national guidelines for the different sectors, will be assessed as part of criterion 2.4.

The committee is also invited to assess the societal impact of research based on case studies submitted by the administrative units and/or other relevant data presented to the committee. Academic impact will be assessed as part of criterion 2.2.

## 3 Evaluation process and organisation

The RCN will organise the assessment process as follows:

- Commission a professional secretariat to support the assessment process in the committees and panels, as well as the production of self-assessments within each RPO
- Commission reports on research personnel and publications within life sciences based on data in national registries
- Appoint one or more evaluation committees for the assessment of administrative units.
- Divide the administrative units between the appointed evaluation committees according to sectoral affiliation and/or other relevant similarities between the units.
- Appoint a number of expert panels for the assessment of research groups submitted by the administrative units.
- Divide research groups between expert panels according to similarity of research subjects or themes.
- Task the chairs of the evaluation committees with producing a national-level report building on the assessments of administrative units and a national-level assessments produced by the expert panels.

Committee members and members of the expert panels will be international, have sufficient competence and be able, as a body, to pass judgement based on all relevant assessment criteria. The RCN will facilitate the connection between the assessment levels of panels and committees by appointing committee members as panel chairs.

### 3.1 Division of tasks between the committee and panel levels

**The expert panels** will assess research groups across institutions and sectors, focusing on the first two criteria specified in Chapter 2: 'Strategy, resources and organisation' and 'Research production and quality' The assessments from the expert panels will also be used as part of the evidence base for a report on Norwegian research within life sciences (see section 3.3).

**The evaluation committees** will assess the administrative units based on all the criteria specified in Chapter 2. The assessment of research groups delivered by the expert panels will be a part of the evidence base for the committees' assessments of administrative units. See figure 1 below.

The evaluation committee has sole responsibility for the assessments and any recommendations in the report. The evaluation committee reaches a judgement on the research based on the administrative units and research groups' self-assessments provided by the RPOs, any additional documents provided by the RCN, and interviews with representatives of the administrative units. The additional documents will include a standardised analysis of research personnel and publications provided by the RCN.

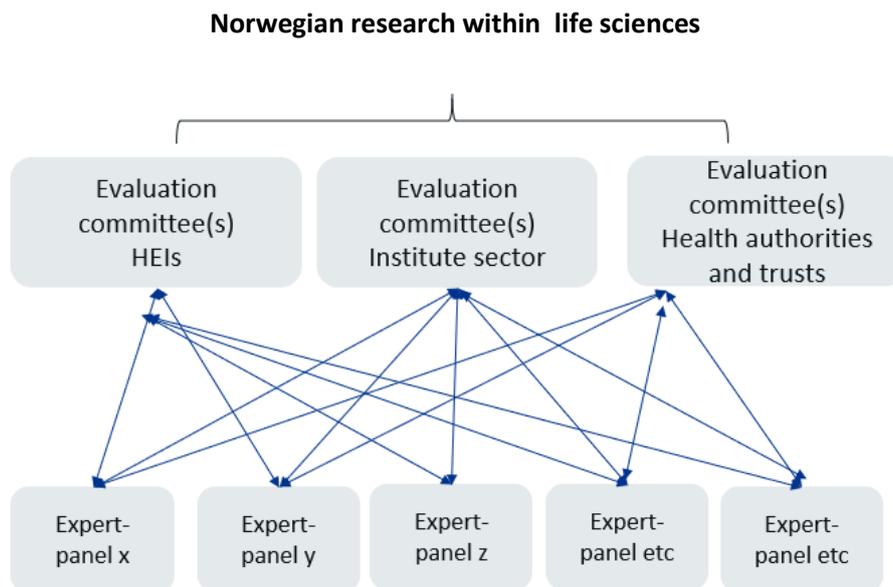


Figure 1. Evaluation committees and expert panels

The evaluation committee takes international trends and developments in science and society into account when forming its judgement. When judging the quality and relevance of the research, the committees shall bear in mind the specific tasks and/or strategic goals that the administrative unit has set for itself including sectoral purposes (see section 2.4 above).

### 3.2 Accuracy of factual information

The administrative unit under evaluation should be consulted to check the factual information before the final report is delivered to the RCN and the board of the institution hosting the administrative unit.

### 3.3 National level report

Finally, the RCN will ask the chairs of the evaluation committees to produce a national-level report that builds on the assessments of administrative units and the national-level assessments produced by the expert panels. The committee chairs will present their assessment of Norwegian research in life sciences at the national level in a separate report that pays specific attention to:

- Strengths and weaknesses of the research area in the international context
- The general resource situation regarding funding, personnel and infrastructure
- PhD training, recruitment, mobility and diversity
- Research cooperation nationally and internationally
- Societal impact and the role of research in society, including Open Science

This national-level assessment should be presented to the RCN.

# Appendix A: Terms of References (ToR)

[Text in red to be filled in by the Research-performing organisations (RPOs)]

The board of [RPO] mandates the evaluation committee appointed by the Research Council of Norway (RCN) to assess [administrative unit] based on the following Terms of Reference.

## Assessment

You are asked to assess the organisation, quality and diversity of research conducted by [administrative unit] as well as its relevance to institutional and sectoral purposes, and to society at large. You should do so by judging the unit's performance based on the following five assessment criteria (a. to e.). Be sure to take current international trends and developments in science and society into account in your analysis.

- a) Strategy, resources and organisation
- b) Research production, quality and integrity
- c) Diversity and equality
- d) Relevance to institutional and sectoral purposes
- e) Relevance to society

For a description of these criteria, see Chapter 2 of the life sciences evaluation protocol. Please provide a written assessment for each of the five criteria. Please also provide recommendations for improvement. We ask you to pay special attention to the following [n] aspects in your assessment:

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
- ...

[To be completed by the board: specific aspects that the evaluation committee should focus on – they may be related to a) strategic issues, or b) an administrative unit's specific tasks.]

In addition, we would like your report to provide a qualitative assessment of [administrative unit] as a whole in relation to its strategic targets. The committee assesses the strategy that the administrative unit intends to pursue in the years ahead and the extent to which it will be capable of meeting its targets for research and society during this period based on available resources and competence. The committee is also invited to make recommendations concerning these two subjects.

## Documentation

The necessary documentation will be made available by the **life sciences** secretariat at Technopolis Group.

The documents will include the following:

- a report on research personnel and publications within life sciences commissioned by RCN
- a self-assessment based on a template provided by the life sciences secretariat
- **[to be completed by the board]**

## Interviews with representatives from the evaluated units

Interviews with the **[administrative unit]** will be organised by the evaluation secretariat. Such interviews can be organised as a site visit, in another specified location in Norway or as a video conference.

## Statement on impartiality and confidence

The assessment should be carried out in accordance with the *Regulations on Impartiality and Confidence in the Research Council of Norway*. A statement on the impartiality of the committee members has been recorded by the RCN as a part of the appointment process. The impartiality and confidence of committee and panel members should be confirmed when evaluation data from **[the administrative unit]** are made available to the committee and the panels, and before any assessments are made based on these data. The RCN should be notified if questions concerning impartiality and confidence are raised by committee members during the evaluation process.

## Assessment report

We ask you to report your findings in an assessment report drawn up in accordance with a format specified by the life sciences secretariat. The committee may suggest adjustments to this format at its first meeting. A draft report should be sent to the **[administrative unit]** and RCN by [date]. The **[administrative unit]** should be allowed to check the report for factual inaccuracies; if such inaccuracies are found, they should be reported to the life sciences secretariat no later than two weeks after receipt of the draft report. After the committee has made the amendments judged necessary, a corrected version of the assessment report should be sent to the board of **[the RPO]** and the RCN no later than two weeks after all feedback on inaccuracies has been received from **[administrative unit]**.

## Appendix B: Data sources

The lists below shows the most relevant data providers and types of data to be included in the evaluation. Data are categorised in two broad categories according to the data source: National registers and self-assessments prepared by the RFOs. The RCN will commission an analysis of data in national registers (R&D-expenditure, personnel, publications etc.) to be used as support for the committees' assessment of administrative units. The analysis will include a set of indicators related to research personnel and publications.

- **National directorates and data providers**
- Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir)
- Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)
- Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (SIKT)
- Research Council of Norway (RCN)
- Statistics Norway (SSB)

### National registers

- 1) R&D-expenditure
  - a. SSB: R&D statistics
  - b. SSB: Key figures for research institutes
  - c. HK-dir: Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH)
  - d. RCN: Project funding database (DVH)
  - e. EU-funding: eCorda
- 2) Research personnel
  - a. SSB: The Register of Research personnel
  - b. SSB: The Doctoral Degree Register
  - c. RCN: Key figures for research institutes
  - d. HK-dir: Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH)
- 3) Research publications
  - a. SIKT: Cristin - Current research information system in Norway
  - b. SIKT: Norwegian Infrastructure for Bibliometrics  
(full bibliometric data incl. citations and co-authors)
- 4) Education
  - a. HK-dir/DBH: Students and study points
  - b. NOKUT: Study barometer
  - c. NOKUT: National Teacher Survey
- 5) Sector-oriented research
  - a. RCN: Key figures for research institutes
- 6) Patient treatments and health care services
  - a. Research & Innovation expenditure in the health trusts
  - b. Measurement of research and innovation activity in the health trusts
  - c. Collaboration between health trusts and HEIs
  - d. Funding of research and innovation in the health trusts
  - e. Classification of medical and health research using HRCS (HO21 monitor)

## Self-assessments

- 1) Administrative units
  - a. *Self-assessment covering all assessment criteria*
  - b. Administrative data on funding sources
  - c. Administrative data on personnel
  - d. Administrative data on the division of staff resources between research and other activities (teaching, dissemination etc.)
  - e. Administrative data on research infrastructure and other support structures
  - f. SWOT analysis
  - g. Any supplementary data needed to assess performance related to the strategic goals and specific tasks of the unit
  
- 2) Research groups
  - a. *Self-assessment covering the first two assessment criteria (see Table 1)*
  - b. Administrative data on funding sources
  - c. Administrative data on personnel
  - d. Administrative data on contribution to sectoral purposes: teaching, commissioned work, clinical work [will be assessed at committee level]
  - e. Publication profiles
  - f. Example publications and other research results (databases, software etc.)  
The examples should be accompanied by an explanation of the groups' specific contributions to the result
  - g. Any supplementary data needed to assess performance related to the benchmark defined by the administrative unit

The table below shows how different types of evaluation data may be relevant to different evaluation criteria. Please note that the self-assessment produced by the administrative units in the form of a written account of management, activities, results etc. should cover all criteria. A template for the self-assessment of research groups and administrative units will be commissioned by the RCN from the life sciences secretariat for the evaluation.

Table 1. Types of evaluation data per criterion

<b>Evaluation units</b> <b>Criteria</b>	<b>Research groups</b>	<b>Administrative units</b>
<b>Strategy, resources and organisation</b>	Self-assessment Administrative data	Self-assessment National registers Administrative data SWOT analysis
<b>Research production and quality</b>	Self-assessment Example publications (and other research results)	Self-assessment National registers
<b>Diversity, equality and integrity</b>		Self-assessment National registers Administrative data
<b>Relevance to institutional and sectoral purposes</b>		Self-assessment Administrative data
<b>Relevance to society</b>		Self-assessment National registers Impact cases
<b>Overall assessment</b>	<i>Data related to: Benchmark defined by administrative unit</i>	<i>Data related to: Strategic goals and specific tasks of the admin. unit</i>



**The Research Council  
of Norway**

# EVALBIOVIT

Self-assessment for administrative  
units

Version 1.2

## Overview

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**Institution (name and short name):**

---

**Administrative unit (name and short name):**

---

**Date:**

---

**Contact person:**

---

**Contact details (email):**

---

# 1 Introduction

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The primary aim of the evaluation is to reveal and confirm the quality and the relevance of research performed at Norwegian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and by the institute sector. For the life sciences area, research undertaken by regional health authorities and health trusts is also included. These institutions will henceforth be collectively referred to as research performing organisations (RPOs). The evaluation report(s) will provide a set of recommendations to the RPOs, the Research Council of Norway (RCN) and the concerned ministries. The results of the evaluation will also be disseminated for the benefit of potential students, users of research, and society at large.

You have been invited to complete this self-assessment as an administrative unit. The self-assessment contains questions regarding the unit's research- and innovation related activities and developments over the past 10 years. All the submitted data will be evaluated by evaluation committees (for administrative units) and expert panels (for research groups). Please read through the whole document including all instructions before answering the questions to avoid overlaps.

As an administrative unit, you are also responsible for collecting the completed self-assessment for each of the research groups that belong to the unit. The research groups need to submit their completed self- assessment to the unit no later than the 1st of December 2022. The unit will submit the research groups' completed self-assessments and the unit's own completed self-assessment no later than the 5th of December 2022.

The whole self-assessment shall be written in English.

Please use the following format when naming your document: name of the institution, and name of the administrative unit, e.g. UiO\_FacBiosci. Send it to [evalbiovit@technopolis-group.com](mailto:evalbiovit@technopolis-group.com) no later than 5th of December 2022.

For questions concerning the self-assessment or EVALBIOVIT in general, please contact RCN's evaluation secretariat at Technopolis Group: [evalbiovit.questions@technopolis-group.com](mailto:evalbiovit.questions@technopolis-group.com).

Many thanks in advance!

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<sup>1</sup> Personal information will be deleted when evaluation reports are published and no later than 30 April 2024

For more information on how Technopolis Group handles data processing, see: <http://www.technopolis-group.com/privacy-policy/>

For more information on how the Research Council of Norway handles data processing, see: <https://www.forskningradet.no/en/privacy-policy/>

## 2 Self-assessment for administrative units

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Self-assessment guidelines:

- Data on personnel should refer to reporting to DBH on 1 October 2021 for HEIs and to the yearly reporting for 2021 for the institute sector
- Other data should refer to 31 December 2021 if not specified otherwise
- Please read the entire self-assessment document before answering
- Provide information – provide documents and other relevant data or figures about the administrative unit, for example strategy and other planning documents, as well as data on R&D expenditure, sources of income and results and outcomes of research
- Describe – explain and present using contextual information about the administrative unit (most often this includes filling out specific forms) and inform the reader about the administrative unit
- Reflect – comment in a reflective and evaluative manner how the administrative unit operates
- 4000 characters including spaces equals one page

### 2.1 Strategy, resources and organisation of research

#### 2.1.1 Research strategy

- 2.1.1.1 Describe the main strategic goals for research and innovation of the administrative unit (1000–4000 characters). How are these goals related to institutional strategies?
- Describe the main fields and focus of research and innovation in the unit
  - Describe how you work to maximise synergies between the different purposes of the unit
  - Describe the planned research-field impact; planned policy impact and planned societal impact
  - Describe how the strategy is followed-up in the allocation of resources and other measures
  - Describe the most important occasions where priorities are made (i.e., announcement of new positions, applying for external funding, following up on evaluations)
  - If there is no long-term research strategy – explain why

#### Form 1 Administrative unit's strategic planning documents

**Instructions:** For each category (Research strategy, Research funding, Cooperation policy, Open science policy) present up to 5 documents that according to you are the most relevant. If the administrative unit uses the strategies, policies, etc. of a larger institution, then present these documents. Please use the following formatting: Name of document, Years active, Link to the document.

**Example:** Norwegian University of Science and Technology Strategy, 2021–2025, [hyperlink to the document](#)

#### 2.1.2 Organisation of research

- 2.1.2.1 Describe the organisation of research and innovation activities at the unit, including how responsibilities for research and other purposes (education, knowledge exchange, patient treatment, training etc) are distributed and delegated (500–1500 characters).

#### Form 2 SWOT analysis for administrative units

**Instructions:** Please complete a SWOT analysis for your administrative unit. Reflect on what are the major internal Strengths and Weaknesses as well as external Threats and Opportunities for your research and innovation activities and research environment. Assess what the present Strengths enable in the future and what kinds of Threats are related to the Weaknesses. Consider your scientific expertise and achievements, funding, facilities, organisation and management (500–2000 characters per cell).

### **2.1.3 Research funding**

- 2.1.3.1 Describe the funding sources of the unit and indicate the share of the unit's budget (NOK) dedicated to research compared to other purposes. Shares may be calculated based on full time equivalents (FTE) allocated to research compared to total FTE in unit (500–1500 characters).
- 2.1.3.2 Describe how successful the administrative unit has been in obtaining competitive regional, national and/or international research funding grants (200–1000 characters).

### **Form 3 Funding levels for the administrative unit for 2021**

**Instructions:** For administrative units in the institute sector receiving basic funding via RCN, funding levels should be provided for 2021 in the funding categories used in the yearly reporting:

- a) National grants (NOK) (post 1.1 og 1.2):
  - i) from the Research Council of Norway (NOK) – excluding basic funding
  - ii) from the ministries and underlying directorates (NOK)
  - iii) from industry (NOK)
  - iv) other national grants including third sector, private associations and foundations (NOK)
- b) National contract research (post 1.3)
- c) International grants (post 1.4)
- d) Funding related to public management (forvaltningsoppgaver post 1.5)

For Higher Education Institutions costs covered by external funding sources should be reported according to the same categories as far as possible. Costs may be classified as Other if they cannot be placed in one of the specified categories. Reporting should be based on incurred costs (regnskapstall) for 2021.

### **2.1.4 Participation in national infrastructures**

- 2.1.4.1 Describe the most important participation in the national infrastructures listed in the Norwegian roadmap for research infrastructures (Nasjonalt veikart for forskningsinfrastruktur) including as host institution(s) (200–1000 characters).

### **Form 4 Infrastructures listed in the Norwegian roadmap for research infrastructures (Nasjonalt veikart for forskningsinfrastruktur)**

**Instructions:** Please present up to 5 participations in the national infrastructures listed in the Norwegian roadmap for research infrastructures (Nasjonalt veikart for forskningsinfrastruktur) for each area that were the most important to your administrative unit. For each category area, please use the following formatting:

Name of research infrastructure, Years when used, Description (100–500 characters) of the engagement with the research infrastructure (reasoning, objectives, expected/actual outcomes).

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<sup>2</sup> Excluding basic funding.

<sup>3</sup> For research institutes only research activities should be included from section 1.3 in the yearly reporting

- 2.1.4.2 Describe the most important participation in the international infrastructures funded by the ministries (Norsk deltakelse i internasjonale forskningsorganisasjoner finansiert av departementene) (200–1000 characters).

## **Form 5 Participation in international research organisations**

**Instructions:** Please describe up to 5 participations in international and European infrastructures (ESFRI) for each area that have been most important to your research unit. When presenting your participation, please use the following formatting:

Name of research infrastructure, Years when used, Description (100–500 characters) of the participation in the research infrastructure (reasoning, objectives, expected/actual outcomes).

2.1.4.3 Describe the most important participation in European (ESFRI) infrastructures (Norske medlemskap i infrastrukturer i ESFRI roadmap) including as host institution(s) (200–1000 characters).

## **Form 6 Participation in infrastructures on the ESFRI Roadmap**

**Instructions:** For each area, please give a description of up to 5 engagements that have been most important to your research unit. When presenting your participation, please use the following formatting: Name of research infrastructure, Years when used, Description (100–500 characters) of the engagement with the research infrastructure (reasoning, objectives, expected/actual outcomes)."

### **2.1.5 Accessibility to research infrastructures**

2.1.5.1 Describe the accessibility to research infrastructures for your researchers. Considering both physical and electronic infrastructure (200–1000 characters).

2.1.5.2 Describe what is done at the unit to fulfil the FAIR-principles<sup>4</sup> (200–1000 characters).

### **2.1.6 Research staff**

2.1.6.1 Describe the profile of research personnel at the unit in terms of position and gender (200–1000 characters).

## **Form 7 Administrative data on the division of staff resources for 2021**

2.1.6.2 Describe the structures and practices to foster researcher careers and help early-career researchers to make their way into the profession (200–1000 characters).

2.1.6.3 Describe how research time is distributed among staff including criteria for research leave (forskningsfri) (200–1000 characters).

2.1.6.4 Describe research mobility options (200–1000 characters).

## **2.2 Research production, quality, and integrity**

### **2.2.1 Research quality and integrity**

2.2.1.1 Describe the scientific focus areas of the research conducted at the administrative unit, including the unit's contribution to these areas (500–2000 characters).

2.2.1.2 Describe the unit's policy for research integrity, including preventative measures when integrity is at risk, or violated (200–1000 characters).<sup>5</sup>

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### **2.2.2 Open Science policies at the administrative unit**

2.2.2.1 Describe the institutional policies, approaches, and activities to the following Open Science areas (consider each area separately, 500–1000 characters in total):

- Open access to publications
- Open access to research data and implementation of FAIR data principles
- Open-source software/tools
- Open access to educational resources
- Open peer review
- Skills and training for Open Science
- Citizen science and/or involvement of stakeholders / user groups

2.2.2.2 Describe the most important contributions and impact of the unit's researchers towards the different Open Science areas (consider each area separately, 500–1000 characters in total):

- Open access to publications
- Open access to research data and implementation of FAIR data principles
- Open-source software/tools
- Open access to educational resources
- Open peer review
- Skills and training for Open Science
- Citizen science and/or involvement of stakeholders/user groups

2.2.2.3 Describe the institutional policy regarding ownership of research data, data management, and confidentiality (200–1000 characters). Is the use of data management plans implemented at the unit?

## 2.3 Diversity and equality

### 2.3.1 Diversity and equality practices

2.3.1.1 Describe the policy and practices to protect against any form of discrimination in the administrative unit (200–1000 characters).

## Form 8 Administrative unit's policies against discrimination

**Instructions:** Give a description of up to 5 documents that are the most relevant. If the administrative unit uses the strategies, policies, etc. of a larger institution, then these documents should be referred to. For each document use the following formatting: Name of document, Years active, Link to the document

**Example:** Norwegian University of Science and Technology Strategy, 2021–2025, [hyperlink to the document](#)

## 2.4 Relevance to institutional and sectorial purposes

### 2.4.1 Sector specific impact

2.4.1.1 Describe whether the administrative unit has activities aimed at achieving sector-specific objectives<sup>6</sup> or focused on contributing to the knowledge base in general. Describe activities connected to sector-specific objectives, the rationale for participation and achieved and/or expected impacts (500–3000 characters).

- Alternatively, describe whether the activities of the unit are aimed at contribution to the knowledge base in general. Describe the rationale for this approach and the impacts of the unit's work to the knowledge base.

### 2.4.2 Research innovation and commercialisation

2.4.2.1 Describe the administrative unit's practices for innovation and commercialisation (500–1500 characters).

- Describe the interest among the research staff in doing innovation and commercialisation activities
- Describe how innovation and commercialisation is supported at the unit

## **Form 9 Administrative unit's policies for research innovation**

**Instructions:** Describe up to 5 documents of the administrative unit's policies for research innovation, including IP policies, new patents, licenses, start-up/spin-off guidelines, etc., that are the most relevant. If the administrative unit uses the strategies, policies, etc. of a larger institution, then present these documents. For each document use the following formatting: Name of document, Years active, Link to the document

**Example:** Norwegian University of Science and Technology Strategy, 2021–2025, [hyperlink to the document](#)

2.4.2.2 Provide examples of successful innovation and commercialisation results, such as new patents, licenses, etc (500–1500 characters).

## **Form 10 Administrative description of successful innovation and commercialisation results**

**Instructions:** Please describe up to 10 successful innovation and commercialisation results at your administrative unit. For each result, please use the following formatting: Name of innovation and commercial results, Year, Links to relevant documents, articles, etc. that present the result, Description (100–500 characters) of successful innovation and commercialisation result.

### **2.4.3 Collaboration**

2.4.3.1 Describe the unit's policy towards regional, national and international collaboration, as well as how cross-sectorial collaboration and interdisciplinary collaboration is approached at the administrative unit (500–1500 characters). Please fill out the forms that match your institution: the institute sector fills out Form 11a and Form 11b; HEIs fill out Form 12.

- Reflect on how successful the unit have been in meeting its aspirations for collaborations

### **Form 11a (institute sector) Administrative unit's partnerships ('faktisk samarbeid')**

**Instructions:** For each of the administrative unit's tender and project-based cooperation (which are not tax deducted) please present up to 5 examples under each category (Collaboration with national public institutions; Collaboration with national private institutions; Collaboration with international public institutions; Collaboration with international private institutions). Please use 100– 500 characters to describe the impacts and relevance of collaboration.

### **Form 11b (institute sector) Administrative unit's collaboration**

**Instructions:** For each of the administrative unit's tender and project-based cooperation please present up to 5 examples under each category (Collaboration with academic partners nationally; Collaboration with non-academic partners nationally; Collaboration with academic partners internationally; Collaboration with non-academic partners internationally). Please use 100–500 characters to describe the impacts and relevance of collaboration.

2.4.3.2 Reflect on the importance of different types of collaboration for the administrative unit (200–1000 characters).

- Regional, national and international collaborations  
Collaborations with different sectors, including public, private and third sector

### **Form 12 (HEIs) Administrative unit's partnerships" ('faktisk samarbeid')**

**Instructions:** For each of the administrative unit's tender and project-based cooperation (which are not tax deducted) please present up to 5 examples under each category (Collaboration with national public institutions; Collaboration with national private institutions; Collaboration with international public institutions; Collaboration with international private institutions). Please use 100– 500 characters to describe the impacts and relevance of collaboration.

2.4.3.3 Reflect on the importance of different types of collaboration for the administrative unit, the added value of these collaborations to the administrative unit and Norwegian research system (500–1500 characters).

#### **2.4.4 ONLY for higher education institutions**

- 2.4.4.1 Reflect on how research at the unit contributes towards master and PhD-level education provision, at your institutions and beyond (200–1000 characters).<sup>7</sup>
- 2.4.4.2 Describe the opportunities for master and bachelor students to become involved in research activities at the unit (200–1000 characters).

#### **2.4.5 ONLY for research institutes**

- 2.4.5.1 Describe how the research activities at the administrative unit contribute to the knowledge base for policy development, sustainable development, and societal and industrial transformations more generally (500–1500 characters).<sup>8</sup>
- 2.4.5.2 Describe the most important research activities including those with partners outside of research organisations (500–1500 characters).

### **2.5 Relevance to society**

#### **2.5.1 Administrative unit's societal impact**

- 2.5.1.1 Reflect on the unit's contribution towards the Norwegian Long-term plan for research and higher education, societal challenges more widely, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (500–1500 characters).
- 2.5.1.2 Describe how the administrative unit's research and innovation has contributed to economic, societal and cultural development by submitting one to five impact cases depending on the size of the unit. For up to 10 researchers: one case; for 10 to 30 researchers: two cases; for 30-50 researchers: three cases; for 50-100 researchers: four cases, and up to five cases for units exceeding 100 researchers. Please use the attached template for impact cases. Each impact case will be submitted as an attachment to the self-evaluation. Institutions that submit impact cases do not have to fill in the box below.

Case no. 1

Thank you for completing the self-assessment.

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<sup>7</sup> Please note: RCN will provide data from the national student survey (Studiebarometeret) on students' experience with research methods and exposure to research activities. The data will most probably be on an aggregate level but including the unit under assessment.

<sup>8</sup> Strategi for helhetlig instituttpolitikk, Kunnskapsdepartementet, p.4): «Instituttsektoren skal utvikle kunnskapsgrunnlag for politikktutforming og bidra til bærekraftig utvikling og omstilling, gjennom forskning av høy kvalitet og relevans.» ([The government's strategy for an independent institute sector](#)).



## Scales for research group assessment

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### Organisational dimension

Score	Organisational environment
5	An organisational environment that is outstanding for supporting the production of excellent research.
4	An organisational environment that is very strong for supporting the production of excellent research.
3	An organisational environment that is adequate for supporting the production of excellent research.
2	An organisational environment that is modest for supporting the production of excellent research.
1	An organisational environment that is not supportive for the production of excellent research.

### Quality dimension

Score	Research and publication quality	Score	Research group's contribution Groups were invited to refer to the Contributor Roles Taxonomy in their description <a href="https://credit.niso.org/">https://credit.niso.org/</a>
5	Quality that is outstanding in terms of originality, significance and rigour.	5	The group has played an outstanding role in the research process from the formulation of overarching research goals and aims via research activities to the preparation of the publication.
4	Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence.	4	The group has played a very considerable role in the research process from the formulation of overarching research goals and aims via research activities to the preparation of the publication.
3	Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.	3	The group has a considerable role in the research process from the formulation of overarching research goals and aims via research activities to the preparation of the publication.
2	Quality that meets the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment.	2	The group has modest contributions to the research process from the formulation of overarching research goals and aims via research activities to the preparation of the publication.
1	Quality that falls below the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment.	1	The group or a group member is credited in the publication, but there is little or no evidence of contributions to the research process from the formulation of overarching research goals and aims via research activities to the preparation of the publication.

## Societal impact dimension

Score	Research group's societal contribution, taking into consideration the resources available to the group	Score	User involvement
5	The group has contributed extensively to economic, societal and/or cultural development in Norway and/or internationally.	5	Societal partner involvement is outstanding – partners have had an important role in all parts of the research process, from problem formulation to the publication and/or process or product innovation.
4	The group's contribution to economic, societal and/or cultural development in Norway and/or internationally is very considerable given what is expected from groups in the same research field.	4	Societal partners have very considerable involvement in all parts of the research process, from problem formulation to the publication and/or process or product innovation.
3	The group's contribution to economic, societal and/or cultural development in Norway and/or internationally is on par with what is expected from groups in the same research field.	3	Societal partners have considerable involvement in the research process, from problem formulation to the publication and/or process or product innovation.
2	The group's contribution to economic, societal and/or cultural development in Norway and/or internationally is modest given what is expected from groups in the same research field.	2	Societal partners have a modest part in the research process, from problem formulation to the publication and/or process or product innovation.
1	There is little documentation of contributions from the group to economic, societal and/or cultural development in Norway and/or internationally.	1	There is little documentation of societal partners' participation in the research process, from problem formulation to the publication and/or process or product innovation.

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