

Final Report on the Achievements under the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission and NordForsk



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Final Report on the Achievements under
the Memorandum of Understanding between
the European Commission and NordForsk

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Executive Summary

In the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the European Commission and NordForsk of July 2012, NordForsk agreed to carry out actions related to ERA priorities within its remit by the end of 2013, to the extent possible within the framework of national legislation and owner, the Nordic Council of Ministers. This executive summary includes a brief description of NordForsk's main achievements under the following areas of the MoU: cross-border cooperation, research infrastructures, quality of research, and plans for the future.

NordForsk promotes **cross-border cooperation** through its joint Nordic research programmes. NordForsk's programmes are characterised by Nordic added value, multidisciplinary, response to the Grand Challenges, identification of shared priorities through consultative processes, establishment of Nordic Centres of Excellence as a main instrument, joint funding with a true common pot, open competition and international peer review, emphasis on coordination of the programmes, and ex-post evaluation.

In 2013, NordForsk has launched calls for proposals under the Education for Tomorrow programme, the Nordic e-Science Globalisation Initiative (NeGI), the Nordic Top-Level Research Initiative within Climate, Energy and the Environment (TRI), and the Nordic Societal Security programme. The programmes on Responsible Development of the Arctic as well as Health and Welfare are currently being established and a Green Growth programme is under preparation. These programmes are funded by NordForsk and national research councils. Over the years, NordForsk has succeeded in increasing the budget share allocated by the national research funding agencies, primarily in the Nordic countries. These contributions now amount to 60 % of the total budget for these programmes. In addition, there are substantial in-kind contributions from the higher education institutions hosting the programmes.

Participation in the European Joint Programming Initiative JPI Climate represents a new type of cross-border cooperation for NordForsk, and enables NordForsk to further develop its ties to European countries. In 2013–2014, NordForsk will be administering JPI Climate's first joint call for transnational collaborative research projects, in cooperation with the French National Research Agency (ANR)

The Nordic e-Infrastructure Collaboration (NeIC) is currently NordForsk's best-known flagship initiative in the field of **research infrastructure**. In 2013, the Nordic countries signed a 10-year agreement on joint development of advanced IT services for research. This demonstrates a significant commitment to developing services within a wider range of scientific fields in a sustainable manner. Research infrastructure provided by the NeIC is of crucial importance to the Nordic eScience Globalisation Initiative (NeGI), which is a large-scale Nordic research and educational programme that also supports training in e-Science tools and methods. The thematic areas of the NeGI encompass climate research and health/social preconditions for health.

NordForsk has been very active in promoting Open Access. In 2013, the NordForsk Board adopted Open Access guidelines for publications. NordForsk places priority on implementation of Open Access to publications, data, software and educational resources. Activities under the NORIA-net on Registries and the Biobank Initiative have revealed opportunities, but also challenges, related to Open Access to data.

NordForsk is currently working on a broad front to enhance the **quality of research**. In 2013, for example, NordForsk updated the grant agreement template for the Nordic Centres of Excellence in order to better incorporate open recruitment procedures (a requirement), advertising of vacancies (a recommendation), human resource strategies (a requirement) and gender equality (a requirement).

The NordForsk Board approved a Gender Policy in 2013. The aim of the policy is to make visible how gender awareness improves the quality of Nordic research and research collaboration. The policy addresses both gender balance among researchers and gender perspectives on research topics. NordForsk will monitor the implementation of the policy and present an annual report.



NordForsk Director Gunnel Gustafsson, EU Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Máire Geoghegan-Quinn and Chair of the NordForsk Board Guðrún Nordal, in Brussels, July 2012. Photo: Terje Heiestad

In order to gain better knowledge on how to support researcher mobility within the Nordic region and across sectors, NordForsk has commissioned a study on mobility, which will be published at the end of 2013. The report “Mobility of Researchers and Knowledge Transfer in the Nordic Region – Patterns, Framework Conditions, Incentives and Trends” will present data on e.g. mobility patterns in different Nordic countries and different disciplines and motivation for and obstacles to mobility in academic careers.

NordForsk recently conducted a survey to monitor the follow-up of ERA priorities (human resource strategies, recruitment, academia-industry mobility, cross-border mobility, Open Access to publications and data, and e-Infrastructures) within Nordic projects funded by NordForsk. The survey compiled the opinions of 73 partners at six Nordic Centres of Excellence under the Nordic Top-Level Research Initiative within Climate, Energy and Environment (TRI), covering Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The response rate was 74 %. The results show that awareness of the ERA policy priorities and goals varies at the science community level. Host institutions naturally have a key role in promoting ERA priorities, but funding agencies can also offer incentives and promote policy goals through call texts, evaluation criteria and grant agreements.

In the future, NordForsk will continue to facilitate Nordic cooperation in a sustainable manner. The organisation will work to identify and employ the topics and mechanisms that yield the highest added value. This will require the identification of joint Nordic research priorities and the implementation of common pots. NordForsk will continue to implement the above-mentioned ERA priorities, including Nordic-Baltic cooperation and doctoral training. ERA priorities played an important role already when the Nordic Research and Innovation Area (NORIA), was established. In order to support the implementation of NORIA, NordForsk will seek to further develop its own practices and processes as well as to evaluate and monitor the tools employed.

NordForsk's Achievements under the MoU between the European Commission and NordForsk





NordForsk's Achievements under the MoU between the European Commission and NordForsk

BACKGROUND

Inspired by the European Research Area (ERA), a Nordic counterpart was introduced in 2003: the Nordic Research and Innovation Area (NORIA). The vision of NORIA is to promote globally leading Nordic research and innovation by strengthening regional Nordic cooperation. To achieve goals which support the implementation of this vision, NordForsk is promoting cross-border cooperation, mobility, joint use of research infrastructures and Open Access. In July 2012, NordForsk signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the European Commission to carry out actions related to ERA priorities, as defined in the ERA Communication 2012, as part of the effort to realise the ERA by 2014.

OPEN LABOUR MARKET FOR RESEARCHERS – OPEN RECRUITMENT

MoU: Fill vacancies for first stage, recognised, established and leading researchers (as defined by the EU Framework for Research Careers) according to open, transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures, in line with the basic principles of the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

NordForsk:

- The new grant agreement for Nordic Centres of Excellence (NCoEs) includes a mandatory requirement stating that any new positions funded by the NCoE grant must be advertised internationally in an open competition and with transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures in line with the basic principles of the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Appendix 1).

MoU: Advertise vacancies for first stage, recognised, established and leading researchers (as defined by the EU Framework for Research Careers) on the EURAXESS Jobs portal.

NordForsk:

- The new grant agreement for NCoEs includes a recommendation that vacancies for first stage, recognised, established and leading researchers be advertised on the EURAXESS Jobs portal as far as possible (Appendix 1).

OPEN LABOUR MARKET FOR RESEARCHERS – RESEARCH CAREERS

MoU: Implement and support the implementation of human resource strategies for researchers in line with the basic principles of the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Seek to promote the EU Human Resources Excellence in Research Logo.

NordForsk:

- All NordForsk funding instruments emphasise career-building. The new grant agreement for NCoEs includes a requirement stating that institutions receiving NordForsk funding must **implement and support the implementation of human resource strategies for researchers in line with the basic principles of the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code for the Recruitment of Researchers** (Appendix 1).

OPEN LABOUR MARKET FOR RESEARCHERS – DOCTORAL TRAINING

MoU: Fund structured programmes for doctoral training in line with the basic EU Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training.

NordForsk:

- Doctoral training is an essential component of projects funded by NordForsk, particularly the NCoEs (Appendix 2). NordForsk is currently exploring how to incorporate structured programmes into the NCoE scheme in line with the basic EU Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training.
- The Nordic Top-level Research Initiative within Climate, Energy and the Environment (TRI) provides educational tracks¹ to European students. Several courses have been organised as a collaboration between the NCoEs. Some courses involve collaboration with existing Nordic and international networks.

OPEN LABOUR MARKET FOR RESEARCHERS – ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY MOBILITY

MoU: Support academia-industry mobility for the training of excellent researchers.

NordForsk:

- All NordForsk funding schemes can be used to support academia-industry cooperation and mobility. The 2013 TRI call on “Green Growth in an Era of Climate Change” aimed to promote research of high scientific quality and high societal relevance as well as the incorporation of academia-industry cooperation into the projects. Three projects will be started up in 2014.
- Mobility is a requirement under most NordForsk funding schemes. Under the NCoE scheme, participants are required to engage in cross-border mobility activities within and outside the Nordic region, and plans for this must be described in the grant proposal.
- NordForsk commissioned a study on mobility among researchers in the Nordic region, focusing on cross-border mobility and mobility between academia and industry. The report “Mobility of Researchers and Knowledge Transfer in the Nordic Region – Patterns, Framework Conditions, Incentives and Trends” will present data on e.g. mobility patterns in different Nordic countries and different disciplines, and motivation for and obstacles to mobility in academic careers. The report will be published at the end of 2013.

¹ Five of the six NCoEs under the TRI provide open educational tracks.

OPEN LABOUR MARKET FOR RESEARCHERS – MOBILITY TEAMING

MoU: Explore the possibility of developing and funding, in a cost-efficient way, research cooperation with other regions (“teaming”) building on existing experience and taking advantage of research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation.

NordForsk:

- NordForsk’s cooperation with the Baltic States is in line with the Nordic Council of Ministers’ collaboration programme with the Baltic States. Nordic-Baltic collaboration has previously been oriented towards the establishment of joint programmes. Recent discussions have identified e.g. research infrastructure as an additional potential area for joint actions. As of 2014, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region will be one of the guiding policy documents for this cooperation.
- Two joint research and innovation programmes have been launched to facilitate collaboration with the Baltic countries. Both programmes are funded jointly by Baltic and Nordic countries through a true common pot.² Funding criteria do not include smart specialisation. Entrepreneurship, on the other hand, has been one of the goals when defining the Nordic-Baltic added value.
- The 2013 NeGI call on “eScience in Health and Social Preconditions for Health” funded one NCoE with partners from Estonia and Poland.
- In 2012, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation launched the Nordic-Russian Cooperation Programme in Education and Research. NordForsk coordinates the research activities under the programme. A joint Nordic-Russian committee administers the programme and selects areas for cooperation based on shared priorities. In 2013, funding was granted to Nordic-Russian cooperation under the TRI.
- Participation in the Joint Programming Initiative JPI Climate further develops NordForsk’s ties to other European countries.³ In 2013–2014, NordForsk will be administering JPI Climate’s first joint call for transnational collaborative research projects, in cooperation with the French National Research Agency (ANR). Twelve European countries are supporting the call, which has a budget of approximately EUR 12 million.

GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN RESEARCH

MoU: Implement gender action plans, addressing for example the successful implementation of gender measures through transparency, accountability and monitoring of gender equality, and the promotion and support of gender-sensitive science.

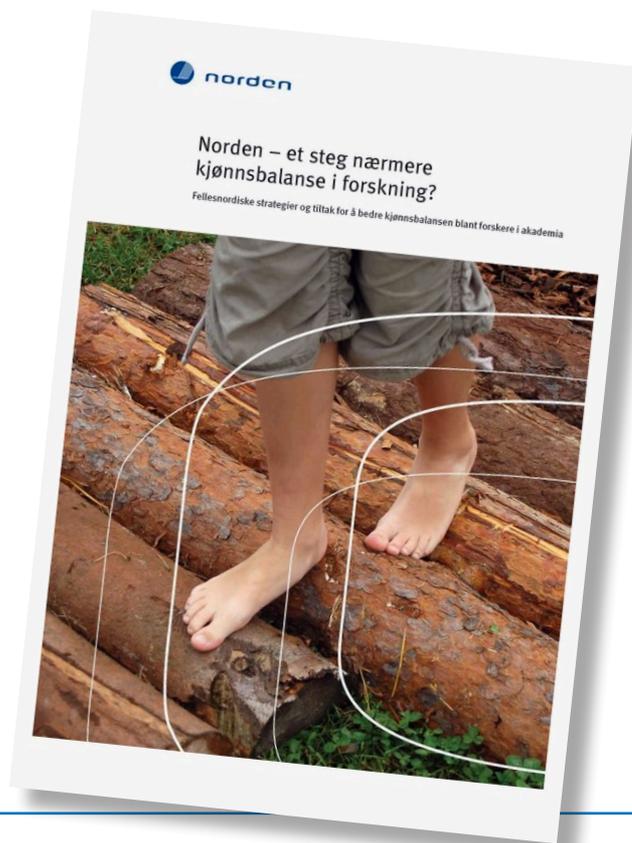
NordForsk:

- The NordForsk Board approved a Gender Policy in June 2013. The aim of the policy is to make visible how gender awareness improves the quality of Nordic research and research collaboration. The policy addresses both gender balance among researchers and gender perspectives on research topics. The implementation of the Gender Policy will be monitored and analysed. The outcome of the analysis will be presented to the NordForsk board in an annual report (Appendix 2).
- NordForsk has upgraded its templates for calls for proposals for funding. In line with the NordForsk Gender Policy, all grant proposals must provide a description of the gender balance in the project consortium, as well as gender perspectives in the proposed research.
- The new grant agreement for NCoEs includes a requirement stating that gender equality must be given particular attention when recruiting to positions within the project (Appendix 1).
- NordForsk participated in the Nordic reference group that assisted in the preparation of the report “The Nordic region – a step closer to gender balance in research? Joint Nordic strategies and measures to promote gender balance among researchers in academia”.⁴ The report was authored by representatives of stakeholders, universities and research

² The Nordic-Baltic research and innovation programme on Living Labs (LILAN) 2009–2013 consists of three projects. The Citizens’ Services Programme 2009–2013 has issued two calls and funded several projects.

³ NordForsk is an observer on the Governing Board of JPI Climate and has participated in the planning and implementation of Fast Track Activities under the JPI.

⁴ <http://www.norden.org/no/publikationer/publikasjoner/2013-544>



The Committee for Gender Balance in Research (the KIF Committee) recently published a report entitled «The Nordic region - a step closer to gender balance in research?» The report was partially funded by NordForsk.

funders in the five Nordic countries.⁵ In 2013, the NordForsk Board decided to investigate further actions to follow up the recommendations of the report.

- NordForsk funding decisions are based on open competition (calls) and international peer review. Evaluation panels consist of internationally renowned, preferably non-Nordic, experts within the field of the programmes. In 2013, NordForsk organised five evaluation panels⁶ in which the proportion of women was only 27 %.⁷
- The proportion of women in the programme committees of currently ongoing NordForsk programmes is 40 %.⁸
- The proportion of women and men team leaders varies among the NCoEs established in 2013. Under the NeGI, the proportion of male team leaders is 89 %, while there are roughly the same amount of women and men team leaders under the Education for Tomorrow programme.

⁵ The report was published in June 2013.

⁶ In 2013, proposals received in response to five calls under the Education for Tomorrow programme, the NeGI, the TRI, and the Societal Security programme were evaluated.

⁷ The total number of experts in the evaluation panels was 26, of which 7 women and 19 men.

⁸ The total number of members in the six programme committees was 33, of which 13 women and 20 men.



The Nordic e-Infrastructure Collaboration (NeIC) is administered by NordForsk

OPTIMAL LEVELS OF TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION AND COMPETITION – RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

MoU: To facilitate and support access to national and Nordic research infrastructures of pan-European relevance.

NordForsk:

- Collaboration on research infrastructure is one of the main components of the upgraded NCoE funding scheme, together with joint research activities, researcher training, management and communication. Access to relevant infrastructure is a criterion for selecting new NCoEs, and NordForsk awards funding for cooperation on research infrastructure where relevant (Appendix 3). As an example, three NCoEs under the TRI have signed an MoU on infrastructure sharing. This involves experimental equipment in the field, ship time, and other costly equipment where relevant.
- In 2013, the Nordic countries signed a 10-year agreement⁹ on joint development of advanced IT services for research under the NeIC,¹⁰ facilitating the development of sustainable services within a wider range of scientific fields under the current collaboration.
- NordForsk is funding the Nordic ELIXIR¹¹ network, with the aim is to increase Nordic collaboration between national ELIXIR nodes as well as collaboration on data sharing. The network has participants from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

⁹ The MoU will ensure funding for the NeIC for the 2013–2023 period.

¹⁰ The NeIC is organised as a unit under NordForsk.

¹¹ ELIXIR is an ESFRI initiative for biological data/bioinformatics.

- NordForsk is hosting the Nordic Trial Alliance (NTA). The overall aim of the NTA is to enhance Nordic clinical research e.g. by coordinating national clinical research networks and infrastructures and providing access to larger patient populations. The network has members from all of the Nordic countries. The NTA engages in close dialogue with stakeholders, including the pharmaceutical industry, patient organisations, research funders, researchers and relevant authorities. A stakeholder forum is organised on an annual basis.
- NordForsk is funding the Nordic Biobank Initiative (BBMRI Nordic), including a Nordic Colon Cancer Pilot. The goal is to demonstrate that large-scale biobank research can be carried out across national borders. The Nordic Colon Cancer Pilot aims to set international standards. The BBMRI Nordic Network has participants from all the Nordic countries, including the Faroe Islands, and from Estonia.
- In 2013, NordForsk appointed a high-level research infrastructure advisory group to provide strategic advice on issues concerning research infrastructure cooperation, especially on priorities for long-term investments related to the use of existing research infrastructures and establishment of new ones. The group has members from Nordic research councils as well as European and international research infrastructure communities.

OPTIMAL LEVELS OF TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION AND COMPETITION – CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

MoU: Aim at significantly increasing own contribution to transnationally coordinated societal-challenge research agendas, implemented through cross-border thematic programmes as for instance JPIs.

NordForsk:

- NordForsk initiates and coordinates multidisciplinary research programmes in response to Grand Challenges. All programmes are based on priorities shared by the Nordic countries and joint funding between the national funding agencies. Programmes are supervised by programme committees that are appointed by NordForsk and composed of representatives of the participating funding agencies. In recent years, NordForsk has established programmes in the fields of Welfare, Health, Climate and Environment, eScience, Educational Research, Societal Security and Arctic Research. A green growth is currently under development.
- Participation in the Joint Programming Initiative JPI Climate further develops NordForsk's ties to other European countries.¹² In 2013–2014, NordForsk will be administering JPI Climate's first joint call for transnational collaborative research projects, in cooperation with the French National Research Agency (ANR). Twelve European countries are supporting the call, which has a budget of approximately EUR 12 million.
- In 2011, the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) for Education and Research appointed a high-level expert group to analyse future Nordic research cooperation, with the aim of strengthening the role of research and innovation in facing global challenges. The report "Vilja till forskning? Rapport från högnivågruppen för översyn av det nordiska forskningsamarbetet"¹³ (2011), examined the relationship between research and innovation and between NORIA and the ERA, as well as researcher mobility and collaboration on research infrastructure. Two groups discussed these recommendations in 2013: a Nordic working group consisting of representatives of the Nordic research funding agencies¹⁴ and the NCM's ad hoc group on research. Both groups have given recommendations for the continuation of these efforts, which will be carried out in 2014.
- Ex-post evaluations are conducted on all concluded programmes. Evaluations of the Nordic Welfare Research, and Food, Nutrition and Health programmes were carried out in 2013 (with reports to be published in early 2014).

¹² NordForsk is an observer on the Governing Board of JPI Climate and has participated in the planning and implementation of Fast Track Activities under the JPI.

¹³ <http://www.norden.org/no/publikationer/publikasjoner/2011-572>

¹⁴ The group included participants from the Academy of Finland, Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation, Rannis, Research Council of Norway, FAS, Formas, NUS, Tekes and Vinnova. NordForsk was responsible for leading the activities. The group presented a report at the meeting of the NCM for Education and Research in April 2013. The group made recommendations for actions and models for implementing Nordic research collaboration more efficiently in the areas given priority both in the Nordic and the European research and innovation areas.

MoU: Allow cross-border access to and portability of grants on the basis of agreed common principles and procedures within the context of an approved research plan.

NordForsk:

- NordForsk establishes cross-border research programmes that are jointly funded via a common pot (with no fair return). Projects awarded funding typically include consortia of research groups from at least three countries. Researcher mobility is strongly encouraged. Cross-border access to and portability of grants is therefore an integral component of all NordForsk programmes.

MoU: Apply the Common Pot in joint funding, when appropriate.

NordForsk:

- NordForsk employs a true common pot as a funding model. In recent years, NordForsk has succeeded in increasing the budget share allocated by the national research funding agencies, primarily in the Nordic countries. This now amounts to 60 % of the total budgets for ongoing common pot programmes. The common pot budgets for NordForsk programmes totalled roughly EUR 130 million in the 2005–2013 period.

MoU: Implement annual work programmes based on a jointly agreed multi-annual strategy that incorporates jointly agreed instruments, themes and funding allocations as well as joint international peer review.

NordForsk:

- NordForsk operates with a four-year strategy, accompanied by annual action plans, decided by the NordForsk Board. All programmes are based on national priorities identified through a preparatory and consultative phase that takes place at the political and national funding agency level in the Nordic countries. The implementation of the programmes is supervised by programme committees. The NordForsk Board appoints the committee members from among the participating funding agencies. The thematic area, scope and funding instruments for each programme are defined by the programme committee.
- NordForsk funding is allocated through processes based on legitimacy, quality, efficiency and transparency. Funding decisions are based on open competition (calls) and international peer review. Evaluation panels consist of internationally renowned, preferably non-Nordic, experts within the fields of the programmes. In 2013, NordForsk organised five evaluation panels,¹⁵ comprising a total of 26 experts from 11 countries, nine of which are outside the Nordic region (Europe, the US and China).
- A total of 56 proposals received in response to five calls under the Education for Tomorrow programme, the NeGI, the TRI, and the Societal Security programme were evaluated in 2013. A total of 12 grants were awarded for Nordic Centres of Excellence and large-scale collaborative projects, all involving broad-based consortia of research teams from several countries.

MoU: Agree on comprehensive funding principles that are in line with national research funding and accessible for researchers.

NordForsk:

- NordForsk initiates and coordinates multidisciplinary research programmes in response to Grand Challenges. All programmes are based on priorities shared by the Nordic countries and joint funding between the national funding agencies. Programmes are supervised by programme committees that are appointed by NordForsk and composed of representatives of the participating funding agencies. In recent years, NordForsk has established programmes in the fields of Welfare, Health, Climate and Environment, eScience, Educational Research, Societal Security and Arctic Research. On a green growth programme is currently being developed.

¹⁵ Proposals received in response to five calls under the Education for Tomorrow programme, the NeGI, the TRI, and the Societal Security programme were evaluated in 2013. As a result, a total of 12 Nordic Centres of Excellence and large-scale collaborative projects were established.



From NordForsk's conference in Brussels on Open Access, February 2013. Halldór Asgrímsson, Guðrún Nordal, Atle Leikvoll and Octavi Quintana-Trias Photo: Terje Heiestad

OPTIMAL CIRCULATION AND TRANSFER OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE – OPEN ACCESS AND E-SCIENCE

MoU: Support and explore possibilities to implement efficient policies, accepted by the research community, for Open Access to the publications resulting from publicly-funded research.

NordForsk:

- The NordForsk Board has adopted a set of Open Access guidelines based on the Science Europe principles.
- NordForsk is also currently developing a concrete Open Access policy that will follow the Swedish Research Council's model, which aims at achieving a balance between green and gold Open Access. Thirty Nordic universities are collaborating to set up a system of interoperable repositories similar to the Liege model.
- Together with the NCM, NordForsk is formulating Open Access principles focused on publication in connection with all activities under the auspices of the NCM.

MoU: Explore the possibilities to implement comprehensive principles, standards and procedures for open access to research data emanating from publicly-funded research.

NordForsk:

- All NCoEs under the TRI have adopted principles for Open Access to the data they generate.
- NordForsk organised an Open Access workshop, “Open Access to Data: A Critical Component in the Implementation of ERA”, in February 2013.¹⁶
- NordForsk has established the working group NORIA-net on Registries and Biobanks. The aim is to promote Nordic registry-based research and responsible data sharing across borders.¹⁷ The group will propose short and long-term actions for catalysing Nordic cooperation in this field. The group will submit its recommendations to the NordForsk Board at the end of 2013.
- NordForsk is funding the Nordic Biobank initiative (BBMRI Nordic), including a Nordic Colon Cancer Pilot. The Nordic Colon Cancer Pilot aims to set international standards for the field. BBMRI Nordic has launched several joint actions in order to harmonise biobank working procedures among its partners.

MoU: Adopt and implement Open Access mechanisms for scientific data and results using e-Science services, with the Nordic e-Science Globalisation initiative as a pilot.

NordForsk:

- Under the NeGI’s two calls for NCoEs, grant proposals were required to include plans for implementing Open Access to publications, data, software and educational resources. In addition, the proposed centre’s contribution to Open Science was one of the evaluation criteria for funding. The grant agreements also included a requirement for implementing Open Access.

MoU: Support further training and awareness of researchers of digital services for connectivity, computing, software and data to allow them to effectively and efficiently carry out their research and benefit from these services.

NordForsk:

- NordForsk is raising awareness of the large number of state-of-the-art digital science activities and services that are currently underway or are under development.¹⁸ For example, one of the NCoEs under the TRI provides climate change data to insurance companies.
- NordForsk provides support for training activities such as the Nordic doctoral education programme in eScience tools and techniques. This initiative under the NeGI aims at improving the eScience skills and awareness of future researchers.

OPTIMAL CIRCULATION AND TRANSFER OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE – KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

MoU: Explore possibilities to increase linkages and strategic partnering between academia and industry and define joint collaborative research agendas.

NordForsk:

- The NCoE NORD-STAR under the TRI seeks to develop practical and accessible tools for visualising the effects of global climate change. The project is now setting up a website to publish climate change-related information for various types of landscapes. These tools may be used by public and private companies in the Nordic countries. NORD-STAR collaborates with four Nordic insurance companies in three Nordic countries that provide financial support to the NCoE.

¹⁶ The EUA, LERU, Science Europe, NordForsk and EC DG RTD gave presentations at the workshop, while the EUA, Science Europe, NordForsk, the NCM, EC DG CNECT and DG RTD participated in panel discussions.

¹⁷ A Nordic Expert meeting, “Responsible Data Sharing Across Borders”, was held in March 2013 in Stockholm. The goal was to discuss how to overcome hindrances impeding Nordic collaboration on registries and biobanks. A proposal for a Nordic data-sharing framework was presented at the meeting. As a concrete outcome of the meeting, the Nordic Bureau of Statistics have set up a task force to look at the demands and obstacles that cross-border research is facing.

¹⁸ For example, the NeGI and the NeIC.

- NordForsk co-organised a seminar on Nordic societal security and emergency preparedness with the secretariat for the Nordic Council Delegation of the Norwegian Storting in April 2012. The Nordic Societal Security Programme has recently issued a common pot call for an NCoE in societal security.
- NordForsk has increased the number of personnel in its communications department to improve dialogue with universities and the general public.

OPTIMAL CIRCULATION AND TRANSFER OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE – REPORTING

MoU: Produce a concise progress report on the implementation of the actions listed above by December 2013

NordForsk:

- This document is the progress report.

NORDFORSK SURVEY ON ERA PRIORITIES 2013

In order to monitor progress in connection with ERA priorities, NordForsk conducted a survey of the Nordic Centres of Excellence (NCoEs) funded by the Top-Level Research Initiative within Climate, Energy, and Environment (TRI). The survey was conducted in autumn 2013 and sought information about the general awareness of the host institutions' strategies, practices and processes and supporting systems. The focus was on human resources, recruitment, academia-industry mobility, cross-border mobility, Open Access to publications and data, and e-Infrastructures. The survey compiled the opinions of 73 partners at six NCoEs covering Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.¹⁹ The response rate of the partners was 74%.

The survey shows that NordForsk funding is used to recruit researchers and that open, transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures are the general principle. Cross-border mobility is common in NordForsk-funded projects. Researchers appreciate NordForsk funding and it is an important source of support for mobility activities. Researchers support the joint use of research infrastructure when applicable to the project. Open Access both to publications and to data is common. At the NCoEs that had not adopted principles on Open Access publishing, respondents mentioned e.g. the lack of a common policy at the host institution, the institution's focus on prestigious journals, or costs as reasons for this. Furthermore, respondents at the centres that had not adopted principles on Open Access to data mentioned reasons such as the lack of a common policy at the host institution or uncertainties about legal issues. A summary of the survey results is presented in Appendix 4.

According to the survey, awareness of ERA policy priorities and goals varies at the research community level. While the scale of NordForsk's survey is small and the results are based on a limited number of respondents, the respondents are top scientists in the Nordic countries, which make the results interesting. For example, the fact that half of the respondents are not aware of whether their host institution has a human resource strategy (in line with the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers) may not necessarily mean that the host institution does *not* have a human resource strategy. It is likely that the researchers are simply not familiar with the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. In all likelihood, the same applies to the EU Human Resource Excellence in Research Logo.

Host institutions naturally play a key role in promoting ERA policies and strategies within their institutions, but funding agencies can also offer incentives and promote ERA policy goals through the way in which they allocate funding. For example, ERA priorities can be incorporated when preparing calls for proposals, drawing up evaluation criteria and finalising grant agreements.

¹⁹ The six NCoEs have a total of 73 partners in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Not all of the Nordic countries are represented in each NCoE. The survey was sent to the main investigators at the NCoE, such as project and team leaders. In total, 90 investigators from the 73 partners received the survey. Fifty-eight of the 90 investigators (which corresponds to a 64 % response rate for the investigators) and 54 of the 73 partners (which corresponds to a 74% response rate for the partners) responded to the survey.

Appendixes





Appendix 1

AGREEMENT

on funding of a
Nordic Centre of Excellence
between

NordForsk
Stensberggata 25, NO-0170 Oslo, Norway

and

[Organisation
Department
Address, Country]

under the research programme
“name”

This agreement is entered into between *NordForsk* (hereinafter referred to as **NordForsk**) and *Organisation* (hereinafter referred to as the **Project Manager**). NordForsk and the Project Manager are together referred to as the **Parties**, and individually as **Party**.

1.0 Background

1.1 NordForsk

NordForsk was established by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2005 to provide funding for Nordic research cooperation as well as advice and input on Nordic research policy development.

1.2 The Research Programme

Background and aims of the current research programme

1.3 Nordic Centre of Excellence

Nordic Centres of Excellence (hereinafter referred to as **NCoE**) are established to strengthen cooperation between outstanding researchers, research groups and research institutions within areas of priority in the Nordic countries.

Background on the specific call for NCoEs under the current programme

1.4 The Agreement

This agreement provides, together with NordForsk's Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract (hereinafter referred to as the **Standard Terms and Conditions**) and additional contractual documents as listed in clause 3.0 below, the regulations and specifications for the Project, as well as the principles governing the funding provided by NordForsk, including the Parties' rights and obligations towards each other.

As is further elaborated in the Standard Terms and Conditions clause 1.2, the Project Manager shall enter into and sign agreements with the Cooperating Partners governing the relationship as well as the respective rights and obligations of the Project Manager and the Cooperating Partners (hereinafter referred to as **Cooperation Agreements**).

2.0 The Project to be funded

2.1 Project Details

Project title: *Title*

Project no.: *XXXXX*

Project period: *xx.xx.xxxx – xx.xx.xxxx*

The Project Period of five (5) years is contingent upon the Project receiving a satisfactory midterm evaluation as further described in clause 10.0.

The project number shall be specified in all written correspondence concerning the Project.

2.2 Objective

The Project is part of the research programme "*Title*", the overall objectives of which are:

- ...
- ...
- ...

The specific objective of the **Project** is to:

...

The specific objectives are:

1. ...

2. ...

3. ...

2.3 Project Performance

The Project Manager undertakes to implement and carry out the Project in accordance with the contractual documents, cf. clause 3, including but not limited to the Project Description, Progress Plan and Budget as agreed between the Parties in writing.

The Project Manager furthermore undertakes to immediately and without undue delay notify NordForsk in writing of any substantial deviations from the Progress Description, Project Plan and/or Budget or other contractual documents.

NordForsk will at its discretion, and as further prescribed in clause 1.1 of the Standard Terms and Conditions, assess the impact and potential consequences of the notified deviations, cf. clause 7.1 of this agreement as well as clauses 2.5 and 10.2 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

If approved by NordForsk in writing, the deviation(s) will be treated as a contractual amendment pursuant to clause 11 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

2.4 Project Description (Summary)

Public summary. NordForsk reserves the right to use parts of the text or the text in full for information purposes.

...

The foregoing summary shall be deemed a public summary, and may as such be used by NordForsk in part or in full for information purposes.

3.0 Contractual Documents and Interpretation

The following documents, with any and all attachments and appendices, shall, for the purpose of the Project, constitute contractual documents, which may thus contain rights and obligations by which the Parties are bound.

- This agreement on funding of a NCoE
- NordForsk's Standard Terms and Conditions
- The Project Budget including Detailed Budget, Budget Distribution and Total Budget
- The Progress Plan
- The Publication Plan, Dissemination Plan and Data Management Plan
- The List of Cooperating Partners
- The successful grant application document with appendices

By signing this agreement, the Project Manager confirms that he/she has read the Standard Terms and Conditions, and acknowledges their application.

In the event that the provisions of the various contractual documents should conflict with one another, they shall apply in the order of precedence listed above.

Any amendments agreed between the Parties subsequent to the signing of this agreement shall be in writing, and shall be executed in compliance with clause 11 of the Standard Terms and Conditions. Such amendments shall constitute a contractual document between the Parties, and in case of conflict, shall take precedence over all other contractual documents.

Any amendments, as referred to in clause 11 of the Standard Terms and Conditions, shall take effect from the time at which they signed, unless otherwise agreed between the Parties.

4.0 Project Management and Organisation

4.1 Project Management

The Project Manager is responsible for the management and implementation of the Project, and has appointed the following Administrative Manager and Project Leader:

Administrative Manager: *Name, Title, Department, Organisation*

Project Leader: *Name, Title, Department, Organisation*

If the Project Manger considers a replacement of either the Administrative Manager or the Project Leader, NordForsk shall be immediately and duly notified in writing. NordForsk shall furthermore be consulted before the position of Project Leader is filled with a new individual. The Project Leader shall be an established senior researcher based at a research institution in a Nordic country.

4.2 Cooperating Partners

The Cooperating Partners to the Project are listed in Appendix 7. Any changes to the composition of the Cooperating Partners require the prior written consent of NordForsk, cf. clause 1.2 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

The list of the Cooperating Partners and their representatives shall include contact information such as e-mail addresses and telephone numbers. The list of the Cooperating Partners shall be distributed among the representatives concerned.

4.3 Management Group

For the purpose of promoting and facilitating cooperation between the Cooperating Partners involved in the Project, a Management Group shall be established. The Management Group shall include one representative from each of the Cooperating Partners and from each team.

Further details on the Management Group shall be set out in the Cooperation Agreements, cf. clause 1.2 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

4.4 Organisation

The Project Manager shall organise and manage the Project in a manner that provides for the effective fulfilment of the Project objectives, and a basis for positive and genuine cooperation between the Cooperating Partners and any other involved parties, i.a. by assessing physical or virtual co-location of the participants in the Project.

4.5 Programme Committee and Scientific Advisory Board

A **Programme Committee**, which consists of representatives from the Joint Financing Bodies and NordForsk, will supervise the implementation of the Project during the Project Period, and in doing so may request from the Project Manager any such reasonable information as deemed necessary for performing this task. The Project Manager and the Cooperating Partners are obliged to answer any question and forward any such information as the Programme Committee may request, and further to give due consideration to any advice or input given by the Programme Committee. Moreover, the Programme Committee will be responsible for the midterm evaluation as outlined in clause 10.0.

A **Scientific Advisory Board** is appointed in order to facilitate the best scientific progress and coherence of the Programme of which the Project is a part, by providing regular and structured advice. Both the Project Manager and the Cooperating Partners are under an obligation to give due consideration to any advice provided by the Scientific Advisory Board.

5.0 Recruitment

The Project Manager shall implement and support the implementation of human resource strategies for researchers in line with the basic principles of the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Any new positions within the Project shall be announced internationally in open competition and according to transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures, in line with the basic principles of the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, in order to support cross-border mobility. Vacancies for first stage, recognised, established and leading researchers shall as far as possible be advertised on the EURAXESS Jobs portal.

Gender equality shall be given particular attention when recruiting to fill positions within the Project.

6.0 Progress Plan

The Project Period of five (5) years shall commence from **xx.xx.xxxx**. Within the said period, the Project shall progress according to the schedule for implementation and completion of the Project's main activities/milestones cf. definition in the Standard Terms and Conditions and pursuant to Appendix 3 hereto.

7.0 Project Budget

7.1 General Provisions

The Project Budget is set out in Appendix 2 hereto, as listed in clause 17 "Appendices".

Any scientific deviation(s) from and major change(s) to the Project Description and Progress Plan, cf. clause 6.o, that affect the Project Budget, including changes to the distribution between cost categories, shall be subject to NordForsk's prior written consent. Should a material deviation occur which has not been previously consented to by NordForsk, the Project Manager shall immediately and without undue delay, and in accordance with clause 2.3 of this agreement as well as clause 1.1 of the Standard Terms and Conditions, notify NordForsk in writing.

The impact and potential consequences of the notified deviations will be assessed by NordForsk at its discretion in accordance with clause 1.1 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

7.2 Special Provisions

Accommodation and travel costs in connection with Project activities shall be kept as moderate as possible.

Any costs associated with publishing in Open Access journals shall be reflected in the Budget.

8.0 Project Funding

NordForsk's Grant for 201x (year one) and the Pledges for subsequent years amount to a total sum of **NOK xx.xx.xxx, xx** for the full Project Period.

1) The Grant for 2013 (year one) amounts to:

201x (year 1) : NOK **x.xxx.xxx, xx**

2) The annual Pledge distribution is outlined as follows:

201x (year 2) : NOK **x.xxx.xxx, xx**

201x (year 3) : NOK **x.xxx.xxx, xx**

201x (year 4) : NOK **x.xxx.xxx, xx**

201x (year 5) : NOK **x.xxx.xxx, xx**

The Grants awarded by NordForsk shall be used in accordance with the Budget, including the division of cost categories, cf. clause 6.0 and Appendix 2.

Transfer of Grants for years 2 and 3 will be effectuated on the precondition that the Project Manager fulfils the contractual obligations undertaken, and shall only commence after the annual Progress Reports have been approved, cf. clause 9.1 below and clause 4.1, cf. clause 2.5, of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

Grants for years 4 and 5 are furthermore dependent on the result of the midterm evaluation as set out in clause 10.0.

Payments shall be made to:

University
Department
Address, Land

IBAN Number:

SWIFT Code:

National account:

9.0 Reporting

9.1 Annual Reporting

The Project Manager shall annually, starting from **201x**, and prior to the reporting deadline **xx.xx**, prepare and submit an annual report (Progress Report) to NordForsk pursuant to clause 4.1 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

The Project Manager shall submit the Progress Report via the NordForsk web portal.

The reporting for year 3 shall be more comprehensive, and will form the basis for the midterm evaluation carried out by the Programme Committee pursuant to clause 10.0 below. The specific requirements for the said reporting shall be determined by NordForsk, and shall be communicated in writing to the Project Manager in due time before the reporting deadline.

9.2 Final Reporting

The Project Manager shall prepare and submit a Final Report with Project Accounts attached thereto to NordForsk, no later than **three (3) months** after the completion of the Project Period, pursuant to clause 4.2 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

9.3 Other Reporting

The Project Manager shall upon request provide NordForsk with additional reporting covering specific periods of time and/or specific parts of the Project, cf. clause 4.3 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

9.4 Miscellaneous

All reports shall be submitted in the manner and form specified by NordForsk, and in accordance with NordForsk's guidelines and report forms for reporting.

The Project will not be considered completed until NordForsk has approved the Final Report pursuant to clause 10.1 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

All unused funds shall be reimbursed to NordForsk pursuant to clause 2.3 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

The results and impact of the NCoE will be subject to a final evaluation, to be conducted after the end of the Project Period. The Project Manager shall participate in the evaluation if so requested by NordForsk.

10.0 Midterm Evaluation

At the end of the third year of operation, a midterm evaluation of the Project will be undertaken. The midterm evaluation shall be based on the more comprehensive reporting for the whole project period including year three, cf. clause 9.1. The annual report for year three (3) will be included in the midterm evaluation.

The Programme Committee will be responsible for the midterm evaluation, cf. clause 4.5

Should the Project fail the midterm evaluation, NordForsk may terminate the Project in writing with immediate effect, and prior to the completion of the Project Period, unless the Project Manager rectifies the objections raised in accordance with the instructions provided and by the deadline set by NordForsk.

11.0 Intellectual Property Rights and Utilisation

In relation to NordForsk, the Project Manager acquires any and all intellectual property rights and any other potential rights to the Project Results, albeit NordForsk shall at its discretion be granted a royalty-free, non-exclusive licence and user rights to the same, cf. clause 5.1 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

The issue of ownership, user rights, potential protection, commercialisation of the Project Results and other issues relating to Project Results, intellectual property rights and ownership to equipment between the Project Manager and the Cooperating Partners shall be regulated in the Cooperation Agreements to be concluded pursuant to clause 1.2 of the Standard Terms and Conditions, cf. clause 5.3 in the Standard Terms and Conditions.

These agreements shall also include provisions on any pre-existing know-how, data or other information possessed by the Project Manager and Cooperating Partners needed to perform Project tasks or utilise the Project Results, which among the said Project participants shall be granted on a royalty-free basis.

The Cooperation Agreements shall also specifically address the possibility of transferring ownership to Project Results or user rights to third parties, bearing in mind that no indirect state aid may be granted in this respect.

The Project Results must be utilised within a reasonable period of time, given the characteristics of the particular industry, the market and the specific field of research.

12.0 Open Access

NordForsk employs an Open Access policy, which aims at achieving widespread dissemination and open access to publications resulting from publicly funded research

12.1 Publication of the Project Results

As a general rule, the Project Manager shall ensure that Project Results are made public as soon as possible, and in accordance with the publication plan (Appendix 4) and dissemination plan (Appendix 5).

Publication may nonetheless be temporarily postponed if it will interfere with the protection or commercialisation of any results or confidentiality obligations, or be detrimental to the activities of the Project Manager or the Cooperating Partners.

Additional details on publication are provided in clause 6 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.

12.2 Management of Data

Research-generated data shall be considered available to the general public after the completion of the Project in accordance with the Data Management Plan (Appendix 6), unless special circumstances indicate otherwise.

12.3 Other

The Project Manager shall maintain a project website displaying the activities and results of the Project, which is updated continuously.

13.0 Communication activities and profiling

The Project Manager shall, in dialogue with NordForsk and until the Project is concluded, provide NordForsk with any project information required at any time for NordForsk communication purposes, cf. clause 6 in the Standard Terms and Conditions, including but not limited to research results with communication and/or media potential.

The Project Manager shall in close dialogue with NordForsk prepare and continuously update a communication plan during the course of the Project Period.

Communication initiatives, including but not limited to a final conference, shall be planned in close dialogue with NordForsk.

NordForsk and the Joint Financing Bodies shall be mentioned with names and logos in all profiling activities related to the Project.

The NordForsk logo can be downloaded from the NordForsk website www.nordforsk.org.

14.0 Miscellaneous

NordForsk is entitled to request that the Project Manager, without any compensation, participates in relevant meetings/seminars, or contributes otherwise with the objective to promote and facilitate the Nordic research cooperation in general and the Programme and the Project in particular.

15.0 Applicable Law and Dispute Resolution

This agreement is governed by and shall be interpreted in accordance with Norwegian law. Any disputes arising in connection with this Contract shall be settled by Oslo District Court, unless otherwise agreed between the Parties.

16.0 Contact Persons

Contact Person **NordForsk**: xxx xxxx, *Senior Adviser*
tel: + 47 xxx xx xxx / e-mail: ...@nordforsk.org

Contact Person **Project Manager**: *name, title*
tel: + / e-mail:

17.0 Appendices

- Appendix 1 – NordForsk Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract
- Appendix 2 – The Project Budget including Detailed Budget, Budget Distribution and Total Budget
- Appendix 3 – Progress Plan
- Appendix 4 – Publication Plan
- Appendix 5 – Dissemination Plan
- Appendix 6 – Data Management Plan
- Appendix 7 – List of Cooperating Partners
- Appendix 8 – The successful grant application document including CVs and letters of intent
- Appendix 9 – Signed Copy(ies) of the Cooperating Agreement(s)

This Agreement is signed in two (2) original copies, of which each Party keeps one (1).
Date/Place: ...

Gunnel Gustafsson, Director
NordForsk

Date/Place: ...

Name, title
University, Department

Appendix 2

NordForsk's Gender Policy

Background

NordForsk's Gender Policy is based on the recommendations presented in the report "Towards Increased Impact through Nordic Research Funding. Assessment of NordForsk's Portfolio of Instruments" (2010) and the report The Nordic region – a step closer to gender balance in research? (2013). In addition, NordForsk's Gender Policy complies with NordForsk's commitment to develop the European Research Area as presented in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the European Commission. The MoU implies that gender balance among researchers as well as gender perspectives on research are important aspects for the quality of research. NordForsk's Gender Policy abides to good research funding conduct and transparency. It does not waver from the principle that all scientific evaluation of applications should be impartial and emphasize the quality of the research.

Aim

The aim is to make visible how gender awareness improves the quality of Nordic research and research collaboration. Both gender balance among researchers and gender perspectives on research topics increase the quality of research and of policy decisions with implications for society as a whole.

Gender balance aims at a balance between men and women. Gender perspectives on the research topics aim at exposing gender-based differences because they often impact the research results significantly.

Competitive funding processes should reflect this policy and all advisory groups, review panels, expert groups, programme committees as well as NordForsk Board and Secretariat should be gender balanced.

Suggested monitoring

- All committees, groups or panels appointed by NordForsk should include at least 40% of each gender. They should also include gender expertise on the research topic.
- NordForsk will analyse how men and women perform in NordForsk's competitive funding (gendered success rate), what the gender balance is in the funding processes (both competitive and other-wise), and how the implementation of a gender perspective in the funded activities is achieved.
- NordForsk shall have a visual expression that is gender balanced and reflects the diversity of society.

Reporting

NordForsk secretariat will report to the Board once a year. These annual reports will follow-up on NordForsk's activities and assess how the gender balance and the implementation of a gender perspective on the research themes is implemented.

Approved by the NordForsk Board on 14 June 2013

Appendix 3

Nordic Centre of Excellence – Upgraded Concept

2012-03-15

I. Aims of Nordic Centres of Excellence

Nordic Centres of Excellence are established to strengthen cooperation between outstanding researchers, research groups and research institutions within areas of priority for the Nordic countries. Nordic Centres of Excellence add value to research conducted in the Nordic countries and increase the impact of Nordic research in Europe and worldwide.

II. Main features of a Nordic Centre of Excellence

A Nordic Centre of Excellence is an *outstanding, creative and efficient multi-site or single-site environment* with a joint research agenda, joint management, coordinated researcher training, common communication activities, and collaboration on research infrastructure.

Nordic Centres of Excellence are to comprise Nordic researchers at the forefront of their fields, and may include participants from non-Nordic research environments who are needed to fulfil the goals of the centre.

Nordic Centres of Excellence facilitate more efficient use of resources by bringing together people, funding and infrastructure in collaborative entities, thereby enhancing the coordination of research efforts. They promote international researcher mobility, true interdisciplinary research, and the joint use and establishment of research infrastructure. The centres incorporate a targeted international strategy and provide joint access to the best research environments in the Nordic region, thus increasing the region's attractiveness and strengthening Nordic ties to and impact on relevant European research initiatives. Through coordination of researcher education, the centres build competence, establish long-term networks and expand the career opportunities of younger researchers.

The Nordic Centres of Excellence promote both the development and use of research-based knowledge. The joint communication and dissemination activities and coordinated data management conducted at the centres increase the likelihood that the research results will be used both in the scientific communities and by society as a whole. Collaboration with public service providers and industry is encouraged within the framework of a Nordic Centre of Excellence.

Status as a Nordic Centre of Excellence and the appurtenant funding are granted for a five-year period. Funding is granted for Nordic research cooperation as specified in the proposal. The amount of funding allocated by Nord-Forsk will depend on the centre's thematic area, size and budgeted activities; however, in order for a Nordic Centre of Excellence to function properly, the funding amount should normally not be less than NOK 20 million. Nord-Forsk may award additional grants in connection with needs arising from new ideas and partnerships during the funding period. All in all, the five-year funding period should be used to create conditions conducive to continued cooperation beyond the funding period.

III. What to include in a proposal for a Nordic Centre of Excellence

A proposal for a Nordic Centre of Excellence must describe how the planned centre will fulfil the objectives of a Nordic Centre of Excellence.

A Nordic Centre of Excellence must have joint strategies for research, management, international cooperation, communication and dissemination, coordinated researcher training, infrastructure cooperation and data management.

Special importance will be attached to researcher mobility as a means of achieving the objectives of the Nordic Centre of Excellence. Participants are therefore expected to engage in cross-border mobility within and outside the Nordic region, and plans for this must be described in the proposal.

The proposal must include a budget specifying the total anticipated expenses for the Nordic Centre of Excellence and a specification of the funding requested from NordForsk. In addition, information should be provided about any grants for research activity and research infrastructure that the proposed centre receives from national funding agencies and international sources, as well as the expenses to be covered by the host institution. National funding and in-kind

contributions are essential in order to demonstrate national commitment and ensure that activities have support within the countries and are aligned with national priorities.

IV. Criteria for selecting Nordic Centres of Excellence

All proposals must be **relevant to the call**, must be of **excellent scientific quality**^{*}, and must describe **how added value will be created** through the cooperation.

The quality of the proposed Nordic Centre of Excellence will be assessed in relation to the following three components:

- **Excellence of Research Plan** (scientific quality; originality and novelty of research; relevance; feasibility and expected results; appropriateness of budget; potential for knowledge transfer and use of knowledge; potential for long-term cooperation beyond the funding period)
- **Excellence of People** (scientific merits; leadership; experience and skills related to management and operation)
- **Excellence of Environment** (inclusion of relevant environments; cohesion; potential for specialisation; economy of scale; access to relevant infrastructure; international strategy and profile; demonstrated skills and plans for researcher training; organisation of the NCoE)

The research plan will in the final phase also be assessed in relation to the feasibility of the proposed budget for the Nordic Centre of Excellence, including the specification of the funding requested from NordForsk.

* The term "scientific" is used to refer to all fields of research, including the humanities.

To be eligible to submit a proposal under this call, applicants must fulfil the following criteria:

- The Leader of the Nordic Centre of Excellence must be an established senior researcher based at a research institution in a Nordic co-funding country. NordForsk will enter into a contract with this institution, which is responsible for the administration of the Nordic Centre of Excellence. The grant will be disbursed to this institution.
- A Nordic Centre of Excellence must have institutional commitment from at least three Nordic countries.
- Partners from countries that do not participate in the common-pot funding of the respective programme must document their own contribution (cash and in-kind) to the Nordic Centre of Excellence.
- Proposals must include a statement on research ethics.
- Proposals must include a description of gender aspects of the research and organisation of the NCoE.

V. Monitoring of Nordic Centres of Excellence

Nordic Centres of Excellence are funded under thematic programmes, prioritised by the Nordic countries. Funding decisions are based on calls with an open competition and in-depth peer review performed by external and international experts. NordForsk's Rules for Impartiality are applied to avoid conflicts of interest in the selection and monitoring of Nordic Centres of Excellence. Funding decisions are taken by the NordForsk Board or by the Steering Committee of the respective programme, when authorised by the Board.

NordForsk signs a contract with each Nordic Centre of Excellence, specifying the exact funding amounts and other details. NordForsk administers the funding and plays an active role as the secretariat (programme coordination). The Steering Committee monitors and further develops the research programme, including the Nordic Centres of Excellence, in cooperation with NordForsk.

Performance of the Nordic Centres of Excellence is monitored through annual progress reports comprising a scientific progress report and a financial report. After three years of operation, a more comprehensive interim progress report is prepared, before the centres are granted the final two years of funding. A final evaluation of the results and impact of the Nordic Centres of Excellence is conducted at the end of the funding period.

To facilitate the best scientific progress, Nordic Centres of Excellence should receive regular, structured input from internationally renowned, non-Nordic scientists in their respective research fields. To this end, a Scientific Advisory Board or Reference Group will be appointed either by the Steering Committee of the programme or by the Nordic Centre of Excellence itself. Each programme decides how this group is to be organised.

To support cross-border mobility, new positions within the Nordic Centre of Excellence should be announced internationally in an open competition.

It is recommended that NordForsk keeps open the possibility of awarding additional funding for new activities that emerge during the funding period (as a result of creating ties to other activities/programmes, establishing new collaborations, developing joint tools etc.).

Appendix 4

NordForsk survey on ERA priorities 2013

In order to monitor progress in connection with ERA priorities, NordForsk conducted a survey of the Nordic Centres of Excellence (NCoE) funded by the Top-Level Research Initiative Programme within Climate, Energy, and Environment (TRI). The survey was conducted in autumn 2013 and sought information about the participants' general awareness of their host institutions' strategies, practices and processes and supporting systems. The focus was on human resources, recruitment, academia-industry mobility, cross-border mobility, Open Access to publications and data, and e-Infrastructure. The survey compiled the opinions of 73 partners at six NCoEs covering Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.²⁰ The response rate of the partners was 74 %.

Research careers

More than half of respondents were not aware of whether their host institution had a human resource strategy in line with the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.²¹ Two of three respondents were not aware of whether their host institution uses the EU Human Resource Excellence in Research Logo.²²

Open recruitment

NordForsk funding is used to recruit researchers.²³ Open, transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures is the general principle.²⁴ The EURAXESS Jobs portal, on the other hand, is not commonly used as an advertisement channel for vacancies.²⁵

Academia-industry mobility

Although there is little academia-industry mobility under NordForsk-funded projects, nine of 55 respondents reported that they have either supported or are planning to support academia-industry mobility in the coming year.²⁶

Cross-border mobility

Cross-border mobility is common under NordForsk-funded projects.²⁷ It appears, however, that the volume (total length of visits or number of researchers) is not high.²⁸ Researchers appreciate NordForsk funding and it is an important source of support for this type of mobility activity.^{29,30}

20 The six NCoEs have a total of 73 partners in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Not all of the Nordic countries are represented in each NCoE. The survey was sent to the main investigators at the NCoE, such as project and team leaders. A total of 90 investigators from the 73 partners received the survey. Fifty-eight of the 90 investigators (which corresponds to a 64 % response rate for the investigators) and 54 of the 73 partners (which corresponds to a 74 % response rate for the partners) responded to the survey.

21 Does your host institution have a human resource strategy in line with the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers? Not aware: 53.4 %

22 Has your host institution used the EU Human Resource Excellence in Research Logo? No: 28.6 %. Not aware: 71.4 %.

23 Have you recruited researchers during the last 12 months or are you planning to recruit researchers in the next 12 months by using (partially or completely) the NordForsk grant? We have recruited: 65.5 %; We are planning to recruit: 12.1 %

24 In these recruitments, have you used or are you planning to use open, transparent and merit-based procedures? Yes: 92.9 %

25 Have you advertised or are you planning to advertise vacancies on the EURAXESS Jobs portal? No: 85.4 %.

26 Have you supported academia-industry mobility (partially or completely by NordForsk grant) during the last 12 months or are you planning to support this in the next 12 months? We have supported: 15.5 %. We have NOT supported: 65.5 %.

27 Have you supported any cross-border mobility (each visit at least 2 weeks) during the last 12 months? This could be Nordic/international and researchers/students and both incoming/outgoing mobility. Yes: 78.9 %.

28 When adding up the lengths of the visits of the cross-border mobility, please estimate the total length of the visits. Less than 6 months: 73.3 %. (Footnote: Please estimate the number of persons in this cross-border mobility. 1-4 persons: 91.1 %. 5-9 persons: 4.4 %. 10 or more persons: 4.4 %.)

29 Please estimate the level of NordForsk funding in this mobility. Partly used NordForsk funding: 77.3 %. Only used NordForsk funding: 20.5 %.

30 Please estimate the general importance of NordForsk funding for this mobility. Somewhat important: 26.7 %. Important: 71.1 %.

Gender

The research community appears to have good knowledge of gender action plans.³¹ However, nearly every fifth respondent was unaware of whether such a strategy existed at the host institution level.³² In general, recruitment processes take account of gender issues.³³ Surprisingly, in recruitments that do not consider gender issues, reasons other than e.g. lack of the under-represented gender among applicants play an important role.³⁴ One possible explanation may be that recruiters prefer to hire persons whom they already know.

Research infrastructure

Researchers appear to support access to and joint use of research infrastructure if it is applicable to the project.³⁵ ³⁶ More than half the respondents replied that they are planning to facilitate access to or use infrastructure during the coming year as well.³⁷

Open Access and eScience

Nearly half of the respondents reported that their host institution has a policy on Open Access to publications.³⁸ At the same time, more than one-third were not aware of any such policy.³⁹ Nevertheless, Open Access to publications appears to be implemented in practice.⁴⁰ Respondents at the NCoEs that have not adopted principles on Open Access publishing cited e.g. lack of a common policy at the host institution level, focus on publication in prestigious journals, or costs as reasons for this.⁴¹ Thus, there is more than one explanation for why these principles have not been implemented.

Almost half of the respondents reported that their host institution has a policy on Open Access to research data.⁴² However, again, there were quite a few who are not aware if this kind of policy existed.⁴³ An interesting finding is that a large proportion of respondents have already adopted principles on Open Access to research data and more reported that they are planning to do so.⁴⁴ Those who had not adopted these principles mentioned reasons such as a lack of a common policy at the host institution or uncertainties about legal issues.⁴⁵

More than half of the respondents use or are planning to use e-Infrastructure services for storing and handling research data.⁴⁶ Every fifth respondent reported that they have received training in e-Infrastructure services for storing and handling research data and that training is planned for the coming year.⁴⁷ On the other hand, more than one-third had not received any training at all.⁴⁸

31 Based on the information available, does your host institution have a gender action plan? Yes: 69.0 %.

32 Based on the information available, does your host institution have a gender action plan? Not aware: 19.0 %.

33 Have you considered gender balance in the teams or in recruitments? Yes: 80.7 %.

34 Based on the information available, please specify the reasons for this (you can choose several). Lack of applicants from under-represented gender: 18.2 %. Lack of qualified applicants from under-represented gender with required specific expertise or experience: 9.1 %. Any other reasons: 81.8 %

35 Please estimate to what extent you have been able to facilitate access to or joint use of research infrastructures (RI) (national, Nordic, other international). Average amount: 43.1 %. Very much: 31.0 %.

36 Based on the information available, please specify the reasons for why you have only to a very little extent been able to facilitate access to or joint use of research infrastructures (RI) (national, Nordic, international)? Joint use of RI is not applicable to the project: 86.7 %.

37 Based on the information available, are you planning to facilitate access to or joint use of existing research infrastructures during the next 12 months? Yes: 60.3 %.

38 Does your host institution have a policy on Open Access to publications? Yes: 46.6 %.

39 Does your host institution have a policy on Open Access to publications? Not aware: 37.9 %.

40 Have you adopted or are you planning to adopt principles on Open Access publishing during the next 12 months? We have adopted: 38.6 %. We are planning to adopt: 22.8 %.

41 Based on the information available, please specify the reasons for this (you can choose several). Lack of a common policy on Open Access in the host institution: 38.1 %; Focusing on prestigious journals in the field is more important than Open Access: 47.6 %. Costs: 33.3 %.

42 Based on the information available, does your host institution have a policy on Open Access to research data? Yes: 44.8 %.

43 Based on the information available, does your host institution have a policy on Open Access to research data? Not aware: 36.2 %.

44 Have you adopted or are planning to adopt principles on open access to research data in the next 12 months? We have adopted: 46.6 %. We are planning to adopt: 15.5 %.

45 Based on the information available, please specify the reasons for this. Lack of a common policy at the host institution level: 37.5 %. Uncertainties about legal issues: 37.5 %.

46 Are you using or planning to use e-Infrastructure services for storing and handling research data? Yes: 51.7 %.

47 Has there been any training or are there plans for future training on e-Infrastructure services for storing and handling research data in the next 12 months? There has been training: 21.1 %.

48 Has there been any training or are there plans for future training on e-Infrastructure services for storing and handling research data in the next 12 months? There has NOT been any training: 35.1 %.



NordForsk is a platform for joint Nordic research and research policy development. The aim of the organization is to facilitate cooperation in all fields of research and research-driven innovation when this adds value to work being conducted in the five Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and in the autonomous areas the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands. To accomplish this, priority is given to policy advice based on thorough analysis, and to funding of research that is judged to have considerable potential to result in long-term knowledge-based progress.

NordForsk was established by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2005. Its main stakeholders are the national research-financing bodies of the five Nordic countries.

Vision

NordForsk contributes to excellence in research and thereby to economic progress and increased quality of life in the Nordic region, in Europe and worldwide.

