



Round Table on Nordic Africa Research Co-operation: Options and obstacles, 5  
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## Nordic Research Co-operation: A NordForsk Perspective

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The organization that I am representing is not specifically focused on Africa, but this is not to say that we could not support research with this focus.

In this context I have here chosen to present:

NordForsk – what it is and how the organization works (i); the priorities for the strategy period 2015 – 2018 (ii), and some examples of present and forthcoming projects and programmes (iii).

### What NordForsk is and how the organization works

NordForsk is a **platform** for joint Nordic research and research infrastructure cooperation. The organisation was established in 2005 by the Nordic Council of Ministers in order to strengthen the Nordic research and Innovation Area. NordForsk's mandate is to facilitate, i.e. to identify and respond to, strategic priorities for Nordic research cooperation, and thereby create **Nordic added value**.

The **NordForsk Board** has full responsibility for NordForsk's actions and takes yearly strategic decisions on how to spend the funds provided by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Board also draws up plans for how to develop NordForsk further in the future. The Board is composed of high-level members from the research councils and universities in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and observers from the Nordic Council of Ministers and from the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands. There are five members from the research councils and one from the Nordic University Association.

NordForsk's role as a **facilitator** involves consultations with Nordic funding agencies and the Nordic University Association regarding priorities for joint Nordic actions and possibilities for co-funding of research and research infrastructure.

The **vision** is of a Nordic region that is globally leading in research and innovation, with NordForsk continuously contributing to this.

The **goal** of NordForsk is to enhance the quality, impact and cost-efficiency of Nordic research and research infrastructure collaboration.

To obtain its goal, NordForsk applies the following **principles** in all its activities:

- conducting analysis of key issues on the Nordic science policy agendas (Noria-nets);
- requiring co-funding from at least three Nordic countries to start a large research and/or infrastructure programme (common-pot);
- appointing programme committees;
- establishing open calls for proposals with international peer review of applications;
- conducting ex-post assessment of research and research infrastructure collaboration;
- ensuring open access;
- ensuring transparency;
- improving gender equality;
- providing support for mobility, higher education, international cooperation, research integrity and research-driven innovation in large programmes;
- promoting Nordic research cooperation in a European and international context.

### Strategic Priorities 2015 – 2018

NordForsk's strategic priorities aim to strengthen Nordic universities and other research organisations by joint Nordic actions funded by NordForsk in cooperation with national research councils and other funding agencies. When investments in joint Nordic research programmes are made, the availability of relevant research infrastructures should be considered and so should the impact of the programme. Similarly, investments in Nordic research infrastructure cooperation should take future gains in terms of research quality and impact into account.

Investments in research and research infrastructure are key priorities for NordForsk and should be perceived as mutually interdependent and closely linked to the impact on society, and on policy and science communities. The strategic priorities below are all important and interlinked. Thus, they are not stated in any order of priority.

The strategic priorities are brief and are made more specific in the implementation plan for the four-year period, with further specification in the annual action plans. These plans could also include elaborations of NordForsk's role as facilitator and the principles listed at the previous page.

The NordForsk Strategy 2015-2018 with the enclosed implementation plan will be revisited at least annually and updated in response to changes in the framework conditions or in light of other relevant circumstances.

Nordic cross-border research cooperation:

- Strengthening integrated cross-sectorial research with the aim of tackling societal challenges and ensuring sustainable development.
- Creating critical mass in potentially excellent research areas.

Nordic research infrastructure cooperation:

- Increasing cross-border access to and joint use of existing research infrastructures in the Nordic region and globally.
- Supporting the establishment of new Nordic research infrastructures.

Impact of Nordic research and research infrastructure cooperation:

- Providing Nordic policy-makers and users with new evidence-informed/tested knowledge.
- Improving knowledge about new results of Nordic research and research infrastructure cooperation on the science and society arenas by increased visibility.

Examples of ongoing projects and programmes:

*Nordic cross-border research cooperation:*

Large projects and programmes: Health and Welfare; Societal Security; Responsible Development of the Arctic.

Creating Critical Mass: Education for tomorrow; Gender in the Nordic Research and Innovation Area.

*Nordic research infrastructure cooperation:*

Increasing cross-border access and joint use: Nordic eInfrastructure Collaboration (NeIC)

Supporting establishment of new Nordic research infrastructures: Register cooperation within health and welfare and She Figures.

**Forthcoming?**

Nordic university co-operation; Nordic Languages, language culture and communication and Noria-net on African research.