

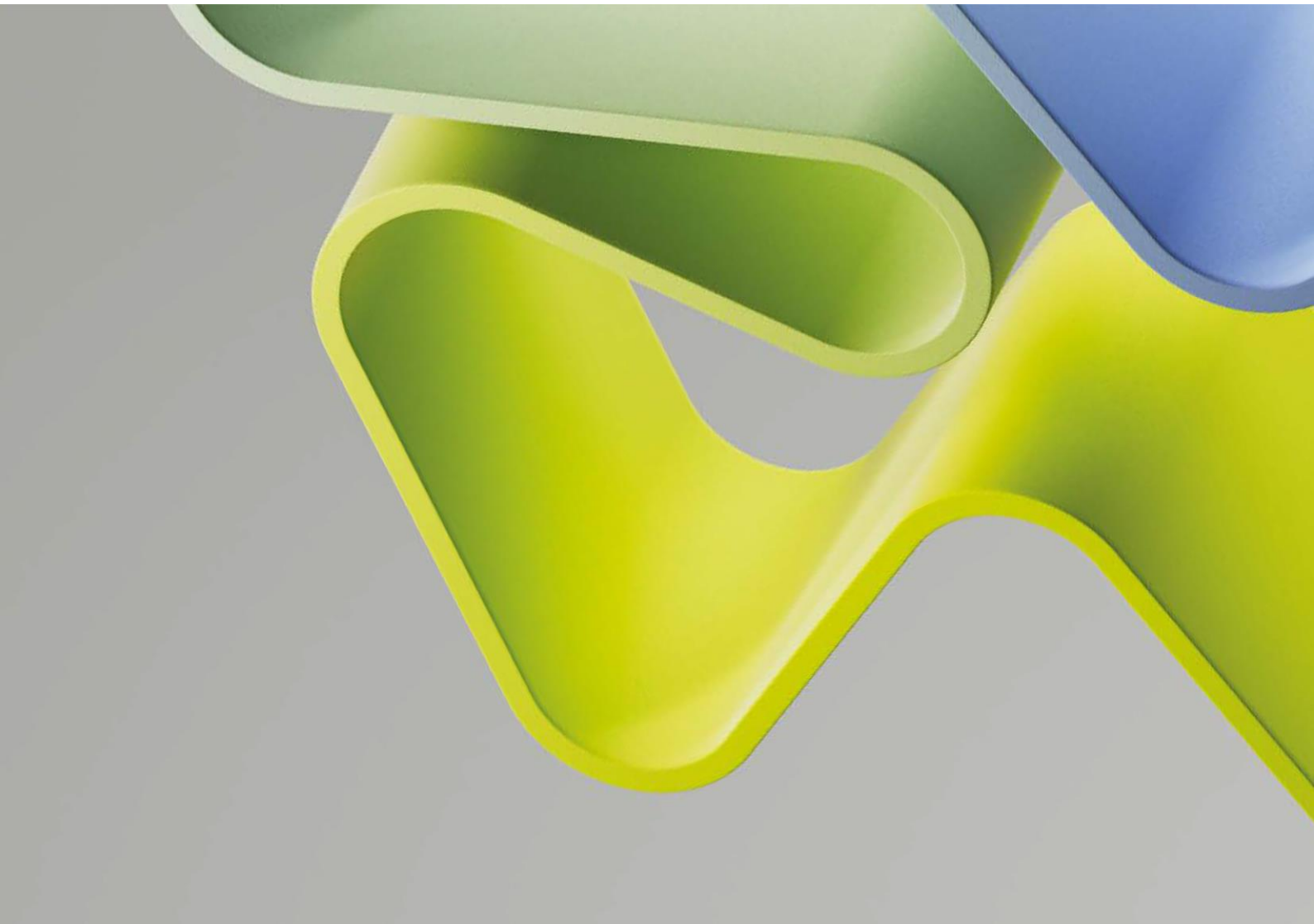
Evaluation of Medicine and Health 2023-2024

Evaluation report – Panel 5b

Research Group: Centre for Alcohol and Drug Research (KORFOR)

Administrative Unit: Stavanger University Hospital

Institution: Stavanger University Hospital



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Preface

The Research Council of Norway (RCN) is given the task by the Ministry of Education and Research to perform subject-specific evaluations. The primary aim of the evaluation of medicine and health (EVALMEDHELSE) 2023-2024 is to reveal and confirm the quality and relevance of research performed at Norwegian Higher Education institutions, research institutions (the institute sector) and the health trusts, in an international perspective. Such knowledge is useful for the institutions that participate in the evaluation, for the Research Council who advise the authorities on how research should be developed further, and for the authorities, who set targets and frameworks for research and higher education. Research groups submitted by their administrative unit will be assessed by 18 expert panels organised by research subjects or themes. The expert panels will assess research groups across institutions and sectors based on research group's self-assessments and examples of scholarly output. These research reports will be part of the evaluation of their belonging administrative units.

Abstract

KORFOR is a network and research group based at Stavanger University Hospital and was founded in 2007. KORFOR focuses on alcohol and substance-use disorders by conducting research to understand recovery trajectories and initiate early intervention. Development of infrastructure, in the form of databases, is also taking place. The group holds 3 senior faculty and 14 junior faculty members plus 10 registry and research support workers. Funding predominantly derives from internal support but also some external funding has been obtained. Benchmark goals are related to publications, PhD-students, external funding, education and involvement of users. The level of the research group is evaluated as good. The group's strengths include a strong commitment to clinical practice and dissemination. As mentioned in the benchmarks, further internationalization, improvement of research quality, and external funding is recommended.

Overall assessment

Overall, the level of the research group KORFOR is evaluated to be good. The tight engagement with clinical practice is a strong asset, which is likely to lower thresholds for implementation of research into practice. Other strengths include the impact on national and local policymakers. The research output and quality might be stronger. Also, the extent of external fundings might be improved.

Grading:

Dimensions	Score
Organisational dimension (How adequate the organisational environment is in supporting the production of excellent research).	3
Quality dimension (Research and publication quality/Research group's contribution)	3/4
Societal impact dimension (Research group's societal contribution/User involvement)	4/3

Recommendations

As emphasised by the group, it might be considered how research quality and outputs may be further improved, e.g. through internationalization or focus on novel topics, such as user involvement. The external funding profile might also benefit from a higher level of internationalization. In terms of dissemination, national conferences or workshops could be considered if not already existing. Further, less conventional dissemination sources might be explored.

1. Strategy, resources and organisation

1.1 Research group's organisation and strategy

KORFOR is a research group based at Stavanger University Hospital and was founded in 2007. The group carries out extensive network activities. Their focus is on alcohol and substance use disorders (SUD) and they primarily conduct research to understand recovery trajectories and initiate early detection and intervention in clinical practice. The strategic goals of the group focus on high quality research, advancement of treatment for SUD, strong ties to clinical practice, and engagement of users. Benchmarks for the past period consisted of goals related to number and internationalisation of publications, PhD-students, external funding, education and involvement of users with lived experiences. The research group teaches at several universities and for different target groups. They develop infrastructure, in the form of databases for research. Also, they participate in numerous dissemination events. The budget of the group is covered through internal funds and external grants.

The group has a good number of research staff. There are many support workers in the teams, which is likely to be related to the maintenance of the databases. Some members of the group balance clinical work and research, which is stated to be challenging. Their strategy addresses relevant aspects of research goals, including external funding - and involvement of users. Strengths of the group are the dedication to improving clinical practice and close collaboration with the clinic, and the development of policies for integration of users into research. Benchmarks are standard but link well to the strategic goals. Also, they are quantifiable and address external funding and development of user policies.

It is good to have internationalization as a goal and the number of publications seems reasonable for a group of this size. The goal of 30% international co-authors seems relatively low. Seemingly, teaching is being offered at several universities and in the clinic, which is viewed as a strength. There does not seem to have been any international mobility or exchange programs, for instance for PhD-students. Still, they engage in a wide range of national and some international collaborations. Especially the national collaborations may be likely to enhance the clinical relevance of the group. Infrastructural support from the host institution includes writing support for grant applications and biostatistical supervision for research, which are advantages that may be explored further.

Recommendations:

As mentioned in the benchmark goals, the group might like to consider how to further improve their quality of research. Internationalisation, in the form of invited international researchers or exchange of staff, may also be considered.

1.2 Research group's resources

The staff at KORFOR consists of: 1 professor, 2 associate professors, 8 researchers/Postdoctoral fellows, 6 PhD-students, 5 registries, and 5 research support workers. The majority of the budget was covered via their base funding. i.e. internal support from Stavanger University Hospital. About 1/3 of the groups budget stems from external grants from different entities, including Norwegian Research Council.

The proportion of external funding has to date been relatively low. It is mentioned that the group face challenges in terms of securing competitive grants. Seemingly none of the external funding derived from international funding institutions. Based on these facts, it seems that there is room for improvement in the funding situation.

Recommendations:

It might be considered to become involved in international collaborations or consortia, which also might involve grant applications. Collaborators might be identified through international conference or existing collaborators. International collaborations might also improve the quality of research. Depending on the existing evidence in this field, the aspects and experiences with user involvement might also be a relevant research topic to explore further.

1.3 Relevance to the institution

KORFOR has linked up with the regional health providers by situating themselves as the regional competence centre. The goals of groups fall within the scope of those hospitals and the host institution. The contribution to clinical services, scientific publications, dissemination, and user involvement are judged to be of relevance for the host institution.

Setting up and maintaining research databases, i.e. infrastructure for future research, is evaluated to be a strength with respect to institutional relevance. Also, user involvement is also likely to contribute to improvements of standards for research within the host institution. Given that the actual strategic goals of the host institution are not mentioned, it remains challenging to evaluate the direct relevance. Nevertheless, the object of study, i.e. treatment for SUD, is also considered as relevant for the host institution.

Recommendations:

The research group might consider what further benefits they might bring to the host institution, especially if these include a mutual benefit.

2. Research quality

2.1 Research group's scientific quality

KORFOR employs a variety of methodologies, for instance, by using longitudinal birth cohort data. They have a relatively interdisciplinary staff, which includes clinicians and social scientists. They also present experiences with engaging user representatives into research. The research group has a strong dedication to producing evidence on how to recover from SUD and to implement this knowledge into clinical practice. Collaboration also plays a central role.

The research group has produced a good number of publications with a good level of quality. The impact factor of the journals is good but might potentially be improved. It is not entirely clear whether scientific collaborations have resulted in an improved research quality. As mentioned above, publications have been published in good but relatively low ranging journals. The number of listed projects seems relatively small. Some, albeit few, monographs have been published.

Recommendations:

It might be considered to formulate concrete strategies on how the group may produce research with a higher level of evidence. It might also be considered if the group has the ambition to become national leading within a specific field of study.

2.2 Research group's societal contribution

KORFOR has reached out to policymakers and been involved in drafting policies for local entities as well as the Norwegian Government. Development of policies and improvement of clinical practice has been some of the groups major societal contributions. Maintaining research databases are also essential contributions. Extensive dissemination through standard outlet channels have taken place as well as in an evening school, which strived to address stigma related to SUD and treatment thereof. An app has also been developed.

The group is evaluated to have a very good level of dissemination and engagement with the clinic. The political commitment on regional and national level is also evaluated to be very good. In addition, the engagement with users with lived experience who are involved in research projects, also as co-designers, is likely to be a relatively novel element.

Recommendations:

Given that the research group has network partners in many venues, it might be considered to organize regular events of exchange and networking, such as a yearly conference or workshops, if this is not already taking place. This could also provide opportunity to collect feedback on research and new ideas, i.e. by ensuring bottom-up communication. It might also be considered to involve people with lived experiences into dissemination. Less conventional dissemination sources might be explored.

Appendices

Evaluation of Life Sciences in Norway 2022-2024

Evaluation of Medicine and Health 2023-2024

Mandate Expert panels

The Research Council of Norway (RCN) is given the task by the Ministry of Education and Research to perform subject-specific evaluations. The Portfolio board for Life Sciences in the Research Council of Norway has decided to carry out an evaluation of medicine and health in 2023-2024 as the second of two evaluations within Life Sciences. The evaluation of biosciences takes place in 2022-2023.

1. The objective of the evaluation

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), by the institute sector and by health trusts.

The results of the evaluation will be used as recommendations to the institutions, the Research Council, and the ministries.

2. Tasks of the expert panels

The panels are requested to:

- evaluate the strategy, resources and organisation of/for the research groups.
- evaluate research production and quality of the research groups.
- grade and write a short evaluation text to the evaluated research groups.

Each of the expert panels will write a brief report with evaluations of the different research groups as well as specific recommendations.

3. Time schedule

Digital panel meetings will take place in the period March 15. - June 15. 2024.

Deadline for submitting panel report to the Research Council: June 15. 2024.

4. Miscellaneous

Other important aspects of Norwegian life sciences research that ought to be given consideration.

EVALMEDHELSE 2023-2024 – Panel group description – January 2024

Panel group	Description	Panel no.
Group 1 PHYSIOLOGY Physiology-related disciplines (human physiology), including corresponding translational research	Anatomy, physiology, embryology, nutritional physiology, pathology, basic odontological research, exercise physiology, neurobiology, toxicology, pharmacology, medicinal chemistry, chemistry, biology, pathology.	Panel 1a Panel 1b
Group 2 MOLECULAR BIOLOGY Molecular Biology, including corresponding translational research	Microbiology, bacteriology, inflammation and infection disease research, forensic medicine, genetics, immunology, vaccine development, microbiological diagnostics, pharmaceutical microbiology, cell biology, molecular medicine and -biophysics, medical biochemistry, omics, organoids, imaging, toxicology, pathology, drug development, cancer research, translational research, systems biology, personalized medicine, biomarkers, oncology, genetics, genomics, epigenetics, proteomics, bioinformatics-/statistics, computational science, AI, biology, virology, radiology, ionisation, molecular biology, microbiology, pharmacology, pharmacogenomics, regenerative medicine and related subjects.	Panel 2a Panel 2b Panel 2c
Group 3a CLINICAL RESEARCH	Clinical Research, including surgery and translational research within: paediatrics, women's health, gynaecology, otorhinolaryngology, head and neck surgery, oncology, haematology, radiology and medical imaging.	Panel 3a_1 Panel 3b_2
Group 3b CLINICAL RESEARCH	Clinical Research, including surgery and translational research within: general medicine, emergency medicine, anaesthesiology, neurology, geriatric medicine, rehabilitation medicine, cardiology, nephrology/urology, endocrinology, pulmonary medicine, orthopaedics, rheumatology, Infection, gastroenterology.	Panel 3b_1 Panel 3b_2 Panel 3b_3
Group 4 PUBLIC HEALTH Public Health and Health-related Research	Public health, community research, epidemiology, preventive medicine, mental health, behavioural research and ethics, medical statistics, environment, nutrition, preventive medicine, physiotherapy, sports medicine, implementation research, public health, health care services research, global health, nursing	Panel 4a Panel 4b Panel 4c

	sciences, rehabilitation sciences, public health systems, digital health care services, ICT, HTA, health competence, genetic and epigenetic epidemiology, non-communicable diseases, pharmacology, nursing research, professional research, occupational medicine.	Panel 4d Panel 4e Panel 4f
Group 5 PSYCHOLOGY Psychology and Psychiatry	Clinical psychology, personality psychology, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, biological psychology and forensic psychology, psychiatry, including geriatric psychiatry, child and adolescent psychiatry and biological psychiatry, social-, community- and workplace psychology, organizational psychology, developmental psychology, behavioural and health psychology, health promotion and well-being.	Panel 5a Panel 5b

Panel group 5 PSYCHOLOGY

Expert panel 5b

Name	Title	Institution
Richard Hastings (chair)	Professor	University of Warwick
Anja Wittkowski	Senior Lecturer	Clinical Psychology, University of Manchester
Mads Uffe Pedersen	Professor	Center for rusmiddelforskning, Aarhus Universitet
Yvonne Forsell	Professor	Department of global Public Health, Karolinska institute
Anette Erlangsen	Professor	Danish Institute for Suicidal Prevention
Frances Rice	Professor	Cardiff University

Mads Uff Pedersen had a conflict of interest with the evaluation of KORFOR at Stravanger (report 16). Annette Erlangsen had a conflict of interest with the National Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention (report 15). She also had a conflict of interest with the evaluation of the Mental Health and Suicide Research Group within the FHI (report 3). Lastly, Richard Hastings had a conflict of interest with Behavioural principles -from animal modes to human cultures at OsloMet (report 12).

This meant that for those evaluations they did not have access to the self assessments or survey data and they did not participate in the discussion of the research group, nor did they participate in the preparation and completion of the evaluation report.



Evaluation of Medicine and Health (EVALMEDHELSE) 2023-2024

Self-assessment for research groups

Date of dispatch: **15. September 2023**
Deadline for submission: **31. January 2024**

Updated: **13. October 2023**

Institution (name and short name): _____

Administrative unit (name and short name): _____

Research group (name and short name): _____

Date: _____

Contact person: _____

Contact details (email): _____

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Introduction

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), the institute sector and the health trusts. 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 responsible and 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 a research group. The self-assessment contains questions regarding the group's research- and innovation related activities and developments over the years 2012-2022. All submitted data will be evaluated by expert panels.

Deadline for submitting the self- assessment to your administrative unit – 26 January 2024

The administrative unit will submit the research groups' completed self-assessments and the administrative unit's own completed self-assessment to the Research Council within 31 January 2024. Please submit completed self- assessment to the administrative unit no later than 26 January 2024.

Please use the following format when naming your document: [short name of the institution]_[short name of the administrative unit]_[short name of the research group], e.g. *UiT_DepPsy_Short name of the research group*.

For questions concerning the self-assessment or EVALMEDHELSE in general, please contact RCN at evalmedhelse@forskningsradet.no.

Thank you!

Guidelines for completing the self-assessment

- Please read the entire self-assessment document before answering.
- The evaluation language is English.
- Please link to websites/documents in the self-assessment where relevant.
- Please be sure that all documents linked to in the self- assessment are written in English and are accessible.
- The page format must be A4 with 2 cm margins, single spacing and Calibri and 11-point font.
- The self-assessment follows the same structure as the [evaluation protocol](#). In order to be evaluated on the two evaluation criteria described in the evaluation protocol, the research group must answer all questions.
 - ⇒ Provide information – provide documents and other relevant data or figures about the research group, 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 research group and inform the reader about the research group.
 - ⇒ Reflect – comment in a reflective and evaluative manner how the research group operates.
- Data on personnel should refer to data reported to DBH on 1 October 2022 for HEIs and to the yearly reporting for 2022 for the institute sector and the health authorities. Other data should refer to 31 December 2022 if not specified otherwise.
- It is possible to extend the textboxes when filling in the form. **NB!** A completed self- assessment form cannot exceed 25 pages (pdf file). Expert panels are not requested to read more than the maximum of 25 pages. Pages exceeding maximum limit of 25 pages **might not** be evaluated.
- Submit the self- assessment as a pdf (max 25 pages) to the administrative unit within **26 January 2024**. Before submission, please be sure that all text are readable after the conversion of the document to pdf. The self- assessment should be sent from the administrative unit to evalmedhelse@forskningsradet.no within **31 January 2024**.

Please note that information you write in the self assessment and the links to documents/websites in the self-assessment are the only available information for the expert panel.

In exceptional cases, documents/publications that are not openly available must be submitted as attachment(s) to the self- assessment (pdf file(s)).

1. Organisation and strategy

1.1 Research group's organisation

Describe the establishment and the development of the research group, including its leadership (e.g. centralised or distributed etc.), researcher roles (e.g. technical staff, PhD, post docs, junior positions, senior positions or other researcher positions), the group's role in researcher training, mobility and how research is organised (e.g. core funding organisation versus project based organisation etc.).

Table 1. List of number of personnel by categories

Instructions: Please provide number of your personnel by categories.

For institutions in the higher education sector, please use the categories used in DBH, <https://dbh.hkdir.no/datainnhold/kodeverk/stillingskoder>. Please add new lines or delete lines which are not in use.

	Position by category	No. of researcher per category	Share of women per category (%)	No. of researchers who are part of multiple (other) research groups at the admin unit	No. of temporary positions
No. of Personnel by position	Position A (Fill in)				
	Position B (Fill in)				
	Position C (Fill in)				
	Position D (Fill in)				

1.2 Research group's strategy

a) Describe the research group's main goals, objectives and strategies to obtain these (e.g. funding, plans for recruitment, internationalization etc.) within the period 2012-2022.

b) Please describe the benchmark of the research group. The benchmark for the research group should be written by the administrative unit in collaboration with the research group. The benchmark can be a reference to an academic level of performance (national or international) or to the group's contributions to other institutional or sectoral purposes.

Example: A benchmark for a research group is related to the research groups' aim which again is included in the strategy for the administrative unit. A guidance for the administrative unit to set a benchmark for the research group(s) can e.g. be: What do the administrative unit expect from the research group(s)?

c) Describe the research group's contribution to education (master's degree and/or PhD).

d) Describe the support the host institution provides to the research group (i.e., research infrastructure, access to databases, administrative support etc.).

1.3 Relevance to the institutions

Describe the role of the research group within the administrative unit. Consider the research group's contribution towards the institutional strategies and objectives, and relate the research group's benchmark to these.

1.4 Research group's resources

Describe the funding portfolio of the research group for the last five years (2018-2022).

Table 2. Describe the sources of R&D funding for the research group in the period 2018-2022.

	2018 (NOK)	2019 (NOK)	2020 (NOK)	2021 (NOK)	2022 (NOK)
Basic funding					
Funding from industry and other private sector sources					
Commissioned research for public sector					
Research Council of Norway					
Grant funding from other national sources					
International funding e.g. NIH, NSF, EU framework programmes					
Other					

1.5 Research group's infrastructures

Research infrastructures are facilities that provide resources and services for the research communities to conduct research and foster innovation in their fields. [These](#) include major equipment or sets of instruments, knowledge-related facilities such as collections, archives or scientific data infrastructures, computing systems communication networks. Include both internal and external infrastructures.

- Describe which national infrastructures the research group manages or co-manages.
- Describe the most important research infrastructures used by the research group.

1.6 Research group's cooperations

Table 3. Reflect on the current interactions of the research group with other disciplines, non-academic stakeholders and the potential importance of these for the research (e.g. informing research questions, access to competence, data and infrastructure, broadening the perspectives, short/long-term relations).

<p>Interdisciplinary (within and beyond the group)</p>	<p>About 1/3 page</p>
<p>Collaboration with other research sectors e.g. higher education, research institutes, health trusts and industry.</p>	<p>About 1/3 page</p>
<p><u>Transdisciplinary</u> (including non academic stakeholders)</p> <p><i>Transdisciplinary research involves the integration of knowledge from different science disciplines and (non-academic) stakeholder communities with the aim to help address complex societal challenges.</i></p>	<p>About 1/3 page</p>

2. Research quality

2.1 Research group's scientific quality

Describe the research profile of the research group and the activities that contribute to the research group's scientific quality. Consider how the research group's work contributes to the wider research within the research group's field nationally and internationally.

Please add a link to the research group's website:

Short version

Table 4. List of projects

Instructions: Please select 5-10 projects you consider to be representative/the best of the work in the period 1 January 2012 – 31 December 2022. The list may include projects lead by other institutions nationally or internationally. Please delete tables that are not used.

Project 1 -10: <i>Project title/Project period (year from – year to)</i>	Project owner(s) (project leaders organisation)	
	Total budget and share allocated to research group	
	Objectives and outcomes (planned or actual) and link to website	

Table 5. Research group's contribution to publications

Instructions: Please select 5-15 publications from the last 5 years (2018-2022) with emphasis on recent publications where group members have a significant role. **If the publication is not openly available, it should be submitted as a pdf file attached to the self-assessment.** We invite you to refer to the Contributor Roles Taxonomy in your description: <https://credit.niso.org/>.

Cf. Table 1. List of personell by categories: Research groups up to 15 group members: 5 publications. Research groups up to 30 group members: 10 publications. Research groups above 30 group members: 15 publications.

Please delete tables that are not used.

Publication 1 -15: <i>Project title/Journal/Year/DOI/URL</i>	Authors (Please highlight group members)	
	Short description	
	Research group's contribution	

Table 6. Please add a list with the research group's monographs/scientific books.

Please delete lines which are not used.

1	Title - Authors (Please highlight group members)- link to webpage (if possible)
2	

2.2 Research group's societal contribution

Describe the societal impact of the research group's research. Consider contribution to education, economic, societal and cultural development in Norway and internationally.

Table 7. The research group's societal contribution, including user-oriented publications, products (including patents, software or process innovations

Instructions: Please select 5–10 of your most important user-oriented publications or other products from the last 5–10 years with emphasis on recent publications/products. For each item, please use the following formatting. Please delete lines which are not used.

3. Challenges and opportunities

Information about the strengths and weaknesses of the research group is obtained through the questions above. In this chapter, please reflect on what might be the challenges and opportunities for developing and strengthening the research and the position of the research group.

Short version

Scales for research group assessment

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 https://credit.niso.org/
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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