

Platform for strengthening research groups, expertise and the knowledge base in the areas of international migration and immigration to Norway under the Research Programme on Welfare, Working Life and Migration (2009-2018) (VAM)

Objective

To develop and strengthen research expertise and research groups in Norway in the area of international migration and immigration to Norway. The research initiative is designed to produce relevant, research-based knowledge for use in policy formulation, public administration and by organisations in the area of migration and immigration, including relevant segments of the integration and development fields.

Background

In general, the longer-term research targeted towards policy formulation in the area of migration, funded via the Research Council by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and previous ministries with responsibilities in this sector, has focused primarily on various aspects of ethnic relations and integration in Norway. Very little of the research activity funded by the Research Council in the IMER field¹ has addressed issues of international migration and the large waves of migration and asylum seekers on a global scale or the migrants and migration to Norway, although there have been some exceptions, such as an increasing focus on transnational relations and, most recently, on the new wave of labour migration. Similarly, little research has been conducted on immigration administration, the regulatory framework, issues related to refugees and asylum seekers, immigration regulations and the like, or on the impacts of migration on sending countries or the driving forces underlying migration.

The Department of Migration under the Ministry of Justice and the Police seeks a better understanding of immigration to Norway in a broad sense and has decided to contribute financially to a long-term research initiative on the under-investigated parts of the broad field of international migration described above. This field has been the focus of considerable attention from society in general, and it is essential to ensure that policymaking and administrative activities relating to migration and immigration are adequately based on research and knowledge that takes into account the situation in Norway as well as that of the sending countries. Studies of migration also necessarily entail an interface with the area of integration and development. This memorandum explains the background of the research initiative and proposes a thematic and organisational approach.

State-of-the-art review and knowledge needs

In spring 2009, the Department of Migration launched a state-of-the-art review of knowledge in the immigration and refugee field in Norway. A preliminary report presented at the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion on 5 November 2009 defines the area of migration and immigration as a separate research field, while the authors make special note of the close ties between this field and other, overlapping fields such as integration and labour migration. The review provides a great deal of crucial input regarding how to target activities under the

¹ IMER: International migration and ethnic relations. A smaller research programme under the Research Council since 1993 and now incorporated into the VAM programme. It is also the term used for the research field both nationally and internationally.

auspices of the Research Council and the VAM programme, as it identifies existing knowledge and expertise as well as gaps in these (cf. Thematic areas and perspectives below). However, the state-of-the-art review gives less attention to the international waves of migration and the connections between migration and development, etc. than is planned in the new research initiative outlined here.

The most crucial need identified in the review is for studies and analyses of *the connections between migration and integration*, in addition to migration and development. Migration and integration are viewed as two sides of the same coin – by policymakers and the public alike – even though the structural changes undertaken in the ministry in autumn 2009 indicates a clear distinction between these two areas. Other areas in which gaps in knowledge were identified include:

- Comparative studies, legal studies, and links to and cooperation between the field of law and other scientific approaches;
- A more international focus;
- Irregular migrants;
- A more cohesive view of family immigration, cf. the integration dimension of immigration;
- Educational migration;
- Return of irregular migrants, re-entry or circular migration for refugees and other migrants;
- Refugee studies;
- Immigration administration.

The proposed thematic areas for this initiative will cover many of the deficiencies in knowledge in the field, and in addition they conform well to the thematic priority areas set out for the VAM programme as described in the work programme.

R&D strategy for the Department of Migration

The Department of Migration identifies many issues and areas in which more knowledge is needed in its R&D strategy for 2010-2013. A number of these are not particularly suitable for inclusion in research initiatives administered by the Research Council; knowledge for use in effective immigration administration, for example, can be obtained just as easily through various forms of evaluation and mapping and other more short-term R&D measures under the auspices of the department itself.

Several of the main areas outlined in the department's R&D strategy overlap with the needs identified by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, cf. below. Others are related more to needs within immigration administration and do not have as much in common, even though they could also conceivably be encompassed by the VAM programme.

Dialogue between the Research Council and the Department of Migration under the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion/ the Ministry of Justice and the Police

In 2009 the Research Council took part in a dialogue with the Department of Migration about a new research initiative designed to strengthen research groups, expertise, capacity and quality on the knowledge side and to provide a better knowledge base for use in policy formulation and public administration, cf. the R&D strategy. It is in keeping with national

research policy in general to organise a long-term initiative of this nature via the Research Council.

The parties quickly realised that they should also cooperate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad, cf. the connection between migration and development and previous cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad in this area. On 19 October 2009, the Research Council received a memorandum expressing support for the research initiative from the Education and Research Department, the Global Health and AIDS Department, and the Peace, Gender and Democracy Department under Norad, as well as from the Department of Global Initiatives and Gender Equality under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Research in this area will also provide an important knowledge base for international development policy and administration. The thematic areas and content of the initiative were among the topics discussed at a meeting between the Research Council and Norad on 17 December 2009.

Migration – development – integration

Internationally, migration has had a major impact, economically and otherwise, on most countries in the world, both on the poor sending countries in the South and East and on the wealthy receiving countries in the North and West. Although most migration occurs within the same country as part of centuries-old traditions, over 200 million migrants on a worldwide basis cross national borders for a wide variety of reasons – from war, persecution and oppression to the desire to obtain employment, a means of support and a better, more dignified life for themselves and their families.

In this overall context, the areas of migration, development and integration are closely linked. As an example, two key aspects in understanding the major waves of migration are the “push perspective”, referring to the limited opportunities from a lack of inclusion/integration in the labour markets in the countries of origin, and the “pull perspective”, meaning the greater opportunities arising from the need for labour and more opportunities for inclusion in the labour markets in the receiving countries. Moreover, remittances from migrants working abroad to their respective home countries – about four times the total amount of development cooperation funds – may have an impact on development in the sending countries. Migrants who return with more experience, expertise and capital may also serve as constructive entrepreneurs in their home countries. If they do not return home, these migrants contribute to “brain drain”, which depletes the poor countries of vital resources.

The United Nations Development Programme’s most recent “Human Development Report” identifies migration in general as a crucial factor in development and increased welfare, both in poorer sending countries and in wealthier receiving countries. The development of our own society will also benefit from more knowledge about the driving forces underlying migration in those countries where immigrants to Norway come from, as well as about the underlying perspectives, conditions and transnational relations of which these migrants are a part – before, during and after they have arrived in Europe and Norway. The international aspects of immigration to Norway, and the legislation, regulations and conventions involved in governing and regulating it, provide complementary and important insight on the VAM programme’s overall focus on the sustainability of the welfare society.

In addition to refugees who migrate due to war and conflict, within or between countries, it is believed that the impacts of global climate change will lead to an increasing number of “climate refugees” from the most vulnerable and poorest parts of the world. This will have

major ramifications for both sending and receiving countries. Little research has been conducted on these issues in Norway, cf. a new report by the Norwegian Refugee Council entitled “Climate Changed: People Displaced”. Issues relating to new waves of migration due to climate change may also be addressed under this initiative on migration.

Research initiative under the VAM programme: Link to integration and welfare research

As mentioned above, it will be relevant to view a research initiative on migration in connection with key aspects of the integration field and thus with the broad-based welfare research conducted under the VAM programme. The broad scope of the VAM work programme already extends to studies of international waves of migration, conditions in relevant sending countries, transnational relations and national immigration policies and international conventions in the area. The initiative described here will help to strengthen such research areas under the VAM programme – which despite its large budget cannot automatically ensure that research will be conducted in all of these areas. Research on migration and immigration should also be linked to the areas of development and the environment in connection with issues relating to climate refugees. Migration, development and integration fit naturally together in terms of knowledge production as well as policy formulation, and an expansion of the perspective so that these areas are viewed in connection with each other will enhance the quality and relevance of research. All these areas have an impact on each other. By organising the initiative under the Research Council and the VAM programme, it will be possible to achieve important synergy effects, e.g. with a view to achieving full utilisation of capacity and “recycling” expertise.

Thematic areas and perspectives

The research initiative will be a key component in achieving the VAM programme's primary objective to "generate new knowledge of high scientific merit on the foundation, operation and processes of the welfare society", as well as to promote "long-term knowledge development for use in policy formulation and public administration".

Immigration to Norway is a crucial factor that affects the sustainability of the welfare society, and as previously mentioned, immigration and integration have international and transnational dimensions. Research that produces more knowledge about the conditions in sending countries and the international waves of migration, which affect development issues in a variety of ways, is clearly well within the scope of the VAM programme's broad sphere of activity. The work programme refers explicitly to these issues in Section 4.1.10 "International migration".

The section below presents thematic areas where more knowledge is needed and/or where it is essential to strengthen and develop expertise within Norwegian research groups. Several of these areas overlap each other.

Thematic areas for research and knowledge development

- *Migration – development – integration*
Research in this area involves, among other things, studies of the driving forces underlying migration, including inclusion and exclusion perspectives in both sending and receiving countries. This area also encompasses cooperation with and studies of sending countries, the return of migrants without legal residency, private money transfers, links to development measures and Norwegian development cooperation, the impacts of migration on the sending countries, labour migration and development in Norway and other receiving countries, etc.
- *Direction and scale of migration waves*
This research area addresses the international waves of migration that are relevant for Norway and its neighbouring countries – who comes here and why. It investigates the individual's motives and reasons for emigrating and looks at the conditions "out there" as well as national practices, the statutory framework and regulations on immigration. Relevant topics in this area include family immigration, illegal immigration, international conventions and regulations, the impacts of the environment and climate change on migration, and welfare benefits for asylum seekers and other migrants. Welfare migration and other forms of emigration from Norway is also a relevant topic and, similar to many of the other topics, clearly overlap with the broad welfare research conducted under the VAM programme. The driving forces and reasons underlying the migration of various groups may give rise to different adaptations in the countries they come to – and these countries may have different practices for receiving and integrating immigrants.
- *Links between immigrants in Norway and the sending countries*
This research area addresses family immigration, chain immigration, human trafficking, diasporas, transnational relations and the flow of people, services, goods and cultures between the emigrant countries and various immigrant countries, circular migration, affiliation with two or three different countries, etc. Typically development-related issues in connection with remittances, assistance to countries of origin from diasporas, etc. also fall within this area.

- *Knowledge for use in the development of policy, public administration, legislation and regulations in the immigration field*

There is a great need for knowledge about incentives and instruments used in immigration policy in terms of their potential for controlling and regulating immigration, international conventions, cooperation and regulatory measures, especially in relation to EU policy and migration in connection with development and international cooperation policy. This includes, for example, knowledge about the legal aspects of immigration administration and the statutory framework and practices related to immigration regulations. A key question, which intersects several of the other thematic areas, is what the social impacts of the regulation of immigration to Norway are on e.g. integration processes.

The VAM programme is an action-oriented research programme, and it is important to note that the initiative on migration is also designed to generate vital knowledge for use in policy formulation and public administration, as well as by other users and the general public. In this sense, it is also crucial that research and knowledge development under this initiative are targeted at issues and areas that are clearly relevant for Norwegian society, institutions and organisations.

Subject areas

Studies and contributions from many different subject areas are needed to produce reliable, relevant knowledge in the wide-ranging field of migration. There is a particular need for studies on legal issues pertaining to immigration and asylum seekers and to relevant international conventions and the like. Other areas of social science will also be crucial, not least in interdisciplinary collaboration between law and the sociology of law as well as perspectives from the humanities.

Development of research groups and expertise

A primary objective of this research initiative is to strengthen Norwegian expertise and research groups in this wide-ranging field. Research relevant to development issues is being conducted at many independent research institutes as well as at several university departments in areas such as economics, geography, political science and anthropology. In other words, Norwegian researchers have substantial expertise in this field, although only a few have focused on aspects of migration. As mentioned above, there is a clear need to strengthen expertise on the legal issues pertaining to the migration and integration fields and to link these to more general social science perspectives, whether this is in relation to immigration and immigration control, the international waves of migration, international commitments, etc. It will be necessary to build and strengthen broad-based, reliable and sustainable expertise, and correspondingly dynamic research groups, so that policymakers, the public administration and NGOs can apply this to their more narrowly delimited thematic areas and knowledge needs.

International cooperation

In a highly internationalised field such as migration, comparative studies and international research cooperation are especially important for enhancing the quality of research and ensuring that the findings have a practical application. Funding for cooperation between researchers from Norwegian institutions and institutions in countries in the South should also be considered, given that the driving forces underlying migration and the impacts of migration on the sending countries are an integral part of these research areas. This will increase vital research capacity in this field in countries in the South, while providing Norwegian researchers with access to other elements of these fields. This type of research cooperation can be financed through special funding (“03-midler”) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Instruments: Large-scale project with clearly-defined requirements for content and organisation

The Department of Migration is interested in providing support to research groups, and in cooperation with the Research Council it has drafted a plan for a (virtual) centre which comprises networking and dissemination functions, including Internet resources, in addition to conducting research in the field. The centre is to be attached to an existing research group in cooperation with other institutions and groups. Recruitment, such as in the area of legal science, is also a key task in such an initiative, cf. the need for long-term competence development.

It is the view of the Research Council that the instruments must be suitable for achieving the objective of the research initiative. Many of the solutions sought by the Department of Migration can be addressed by issuing a funding announcement for one, or possibly two, large-scale research project(s) with a five-year project period and an annual budget of NOK 4-5 million. It is essential that the call for proposals – and thereby the project selected – clearly defines overall requirements extending beyond the specific research-related content of the project(s), for example in relation to:

- Scientific expertise (in legal science and other areas);
- Dissemination to and dialogue with the public administration and others, including Internet portals/Internet resources, e.g. the establishment and administration of an Internet portal for migration research with the primary focus as defined in the platform²;
- Competence-building and recruitment;
- The need for the host institution to enter into binding cooperation with other institutions and researchers;
- Links to and cooperation with related research with funding from other activities under the Research Council as well as from other institutions;
- Network-building and network functions;
- International cooperation;
- Seminar series;
- Other criteria and requirements.

Alternatively, the funding could be announced as a Research Institution-based Strategic Project (ISP³) which sets forth the same criteria and considerations. Depending on the budget, it would be possible to fund two large-scale projects or modules carried out at different

² Existing Internet portals and information servers, such as the VAM programme's webpages and project archives (www.forskningsradet.no/vam) and the Norwegian Network for Migration Research (www.migrasjonsforskning.no/), should be reviewed with a view to establishing cooperation or strengthening activities. Alternatively, an independent Internet portal could be established under the auspices of the main project which focuses on international migration and immigration to Norway and less on integration research and the broad field of welfare research.

³ The objective of the Research Institution-based Research Project (ISP) is to enable existing research groups to maintain a high calibre within their given spheres of responsibility or *build up new expertise in areas of strategic importance* (authors' emphasis) through basic research, applied research or competence building. The project must be in keeping with the strategies laid down by the administration of the applicant institution and/or relevant subject-specific evaluations and research agendas, and/or descriptions of priority areas given in the call for proposals.

institutions in close collaboration. However, it is important not to divide up the projects too much, e.g. the connections between legal science and social science, as well as other subject areas, must be kept intact. Regardless of the type of instrument selected, it is the tasks and functions of the project and research initiative that are paramount. If the initiative is subsequently granted additional funding, new projects can be linked to it so research and knowledge development can be conducted in as many of the thematic areas as possible.

The call for proposals will follow the usual procedures, with the final decision being taken by the VAM programme board subsequent to a scientific assessment by referees. It may be beneficial to involve the NORGLOBAL programme board or experts in various ways as support for the VAM programme board and to ensure that the development aspect and global perspectives are adequately addressed in the project.

Size and budget

The breadth of the research initiative depends on the funding available, both with regard to size and guiding principles. This applies especially to the amount of research that can be related to the area of development. At present only funding from the Department of Justice and the Police has been secured. One approach would be to launch the initiative with a call for proposals focusing less on the development aspects and studies in sending countries, even though the driving forces underlying migration and the direction and scale of migration waves (to Norway and its neighbouring countries) are considered to be part of the overall research initiative. The scope can later be expanded thematically or in another way as the pieces (financial and otherwise) fall into place; for instance, Norad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs may provide funding after some time has passed. Any funding from Norad could be distributed in the same way that funding under the Norway – Global Partner programme (NORGLOBAL) is divided among other programmes (e.g. the Globalisation of Environment, Energy and Climate Research programme (GLOBMEK)). This was among the issues raised by the Research Council with Norad in their ordinary consultation meeting of 17 December 2009.

Based on the needs, the Research Council envisions a five-year research initiative with start-up in 2010. The Department of Migration under the Ministry of Justice and the Police will provide NOK 3 million in funding for 2010, in addition to NOK 0.5 million already allocated for 2009. The Research Council has drawn up a budget based on NOK 3 million per year, which assumes zero growth for the period 2011-2014, but the initiative should have an annual budget of *at least* NOK 5 million for the five-year period if it is to achieve its objectives. An increase in funding from the Department of Migration will be essential in this regard, as will funding from Norad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which would help to highlight the global aspects of the field. A budget of at least NOK 25 million over a five-year period will ensure that the research initiative achieves the necessary scale and promotes the desired degree of competence in the migration field, which can range from the situation in the sending countries to immigration administration in addition to new, essential knowledge. At the same time, the initiative will benefit in many ways from the research being conducted on the many related and relevant areas under the VAM programme, which is an argument for incorporating the initiative into the VAM programme.

Timeline

Action should be taken quickly. The Research Council is planning to issue a call for proposals with an application deadline of 21 April 2010 at the earliest, or alternatively 2 June 2010. This means that the activity could begin in autumn 2010. It is crucial that the research groups have

sufficient time to prepare, not least with regard to establishing cooperation across subject areas and institutions. Most of the issues related to the budgetary framework – and thus also certain aspects of the thematic breadth of the initiative – must be clarified rather quickly so this can be presented in the upcoming call.

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The decision of the programme board

The VAM programme board discussed the initiative on migration in its meeting of 28 January 2010. During this meeting, the board reviewed the commissioning letter from the Ministry of Justice and the Police that focused on thematic areas 2 and 4 (*Direction and scale of migration waves* and *Knowledge for use in the development of policy, public administration, legislation and regulations in the immigration field*) in the start-up phase of the initiative. The programme board approved the scientific basis of the initiative and decided to announce funding for the initiative in spring 2010 with an application deadline of 2 June 2010 (which has been postponed to September 1, 2010).