

# Regulation relating to the Regional Research Funds

*Unofficial translation commissioned by the City of Oslo*

**Legal basis:** Issued by the Ministry of Education and Research on 18 December 2019, pursuant to the Storting's annual budget resolution.

## **Section 1. *Scope of application***

This regulation applies to the management of the grant scheme for Regional Research Funds, the county councils' management of the funds and collaboration with the Research Council of Norway.

## **Section 2. *The purpose of the grant scheme***

The purpose of the grant scheme is to strengthen the research capacity of the regions through grants for research and innovation and through mobilisation to increase R&D efforts.

Regional Research Funds aim to:

- a) strengthen research for regional innovation and regional development by
  - i. funding good quality research projects
  - ii. contributing to the ability of businesses and public enterprises sector organisations to increasing their competence, capacity for innovation, value creation and competitiveness by initiating research and adopting applying R&D results
  - iii. stimulating closer collaboration between R&D institutions and strengthening linkages with business and industry and the public sector
- b) increase R&D efforts by
  - i. mobilising and qualifying businesses and public sector organisations to participate in national and international research
  - ii. supporting R&D projects initiated by business and industry, the voluntary sector and public sector organisations, including universities, university colleges and other research environments
- c) contribute to increased research quality and to the development of good and competitive R&D environments by
  - i. supporting long-term, basic competence building in relevant research environments
  - ii. linking the institutions' R&D competence to other regional R&D activities and viewing them in context
  - iii. stimulating multi- and interdisciplinary collaboration in research projects
- d) work for close collaboration between activities in the regions and their relationships with other national and international research programmes and research activities.

The county councils shall provide information about the fund and disseminate the fund's research results, including raising awareness about and interest in the fund among relevant target groups/applicants.

The county councils of Troms og Finnmark, Nordland, Trøndelag, and Innlandet shall also attend to Sami research interests and needs through consultation with the Sami Parliament.

### **Section 3. *Distribution of funds to the county councils***

The total grant amount for the scheme is stipulated in the annual national budgets and distributed to the county councils as follows:

- a) 5 per cent of the grant funds are set aside for the county councils Troms og Finnmark and Nordland, with an equal amount to each county council. Of the remainder, 60 per cent is allocated with an equal amount to each county council and 40 per cent on the basis of the county councils' population.
- b) up to 10 per cent of the allocated funds can be used for administration. In the annual letters of appropriation, the Ministry may exceptionally set a higher percentage rate for certain county councils. Expenses for managing the scheme, as well as measures for mobilising and qualifying businesses and public sector organisations to participate in research are considered administration.

The grant funds and any return shall be used in accordance with the purpose of the grant.

### **Section 4. *Responsibilities and tasks of the county councils***

#### *a) Responsibility for the grant scheme*

The county councils are responsible for calls for proposals and allocation of funds.

The county councils can cooperate on the use of the funds through joint research initiatives, joint calls for proposals, etc. The funds can be granted to projects located within and outside the individual county council.

The use of the grant funds shall be based on regional goals and strategies.

The county councils select areas/topics for the calls, target groups, project period and the funds available for each call for proposals. The county councils shall use the Research Council's types of applications and the Research Council's system for assessing applications for project support.

In addition, the county councils can allocate funds for qualification and mobilisation projects.

#### *b) Conditions for allocation of funds*

When allocating grant funds the county councils shall set the terms and conditions necessary to ensure that the grants from the Regional Research Funds are used in accordance with the Storting's stated intentions, conditions in grant letter from the Ministry and this regulation.

Funds from this grant scheme can be combined with other public measures within the current regulations for public aid. The aid allocations must be within the rules of the EEA Agreement on state aid.

#### *c) Collaboration with the Research Council of Norway*

The county councils and the Research Council of Norway shall enter into one joint agreement on the Research Council's assistance in managing the grant scheme. At a minimum, the agreement shall cover the collaboration and procedures for calls for proposals, application

processing and project follow-up, as well as reporting and developing learning arenas and exchange of experience between the county councils.

d) *Financial management and reporting*

Management of the grant funds shall be done in accordance with the Regulations on Financial Management in Central Government as far as applicable. The county councils shall ensure sufficient monitoring and control of the grant funds throughout the grant chain. The county council may demand repayment of a grant if the stated intention for the grant is not complied with.

The county councils shall submit an annual report to the Ministry and to the Research Council of Norway within the deadline stipulated in the annual letters of appropriation.

The reporting shall address how the allocated funds have been utilised to realise the objective of the Regional Research Funds, based in part on the Research Council's indicators of goal achievement, see Section 5. The reporting shall have two main parts, reporting of results and financial reporting.

The report shall show how grant funds are distributed by types of applications, thematic areas and recipient groups. Reporting will include funds spent on administration.

The Ministry may provide further rules for reporting in the letters of appropriation.

**Section 5. *Responsibilities and tasks of the Research Council of Norway***

The Research Council of Norway shall assist the county councils in the management of the Regional Research Funds. The collaboration is governed by the agreement between the Research Council and the county councils pursuant to Section 4 c.

In particular, the Research Council shall contribute to ensuring the quality of research at all levels from the calls for proposals to the allocation of R&D funding. The Research Council shall provide support services for the management of the Regional Research Funds and serve as a link to national and international research programmes and expertise.

The Research Council shall specify indicators of goal achievement, based on the purpose of the grant scheme, following dialogue with the county councils.

The Research Council shall prepare an annual report for the Ministry on the overall activities and results of the Regional Research Funds, and on the Research Council's collaboration with the county councils.

**Section 6. *Appeal***

The Research Council of Norway is the appeals body for single decisions made by the county council on the allocation of aid. There is no right of appeal in respect of the county councils' exercise of judgment.

**Section 7. *Financial accountability***

The Ministry may exercise control to ensure that the funds are used in accordance with the stated intentions, and has the right to access all documents pertaining to the management of the grant. The Ministry can demand repayment of the grant in whole or in part from the county councils if it is not used in accordance with applicable regulations.

**Section 8. *Entry into force***

This regulation enters into force on 1. January 2020.