

Mobilising our researchers for Horizon Europe collaborative proposals

Insights into NTNU's approaches



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Overview

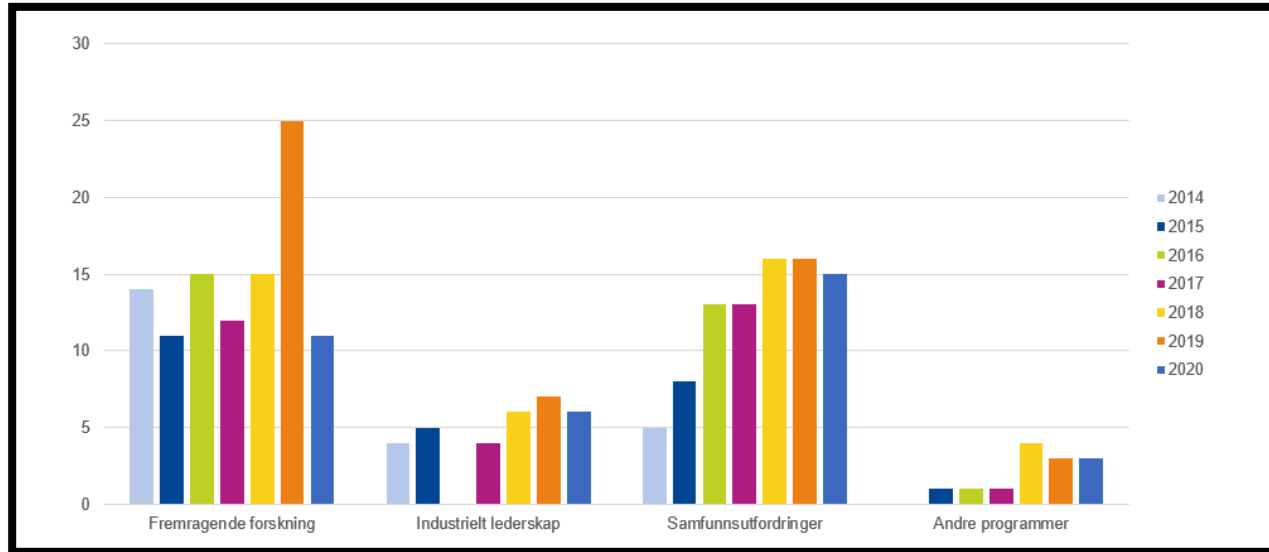
- Looking back & looking ahead
- Key institutional-level initiatives
- Preparatory steps for Horizon Europe
- Playing the long game...

**NTNU's motto:
Knowledge for a better world**

Important drivers

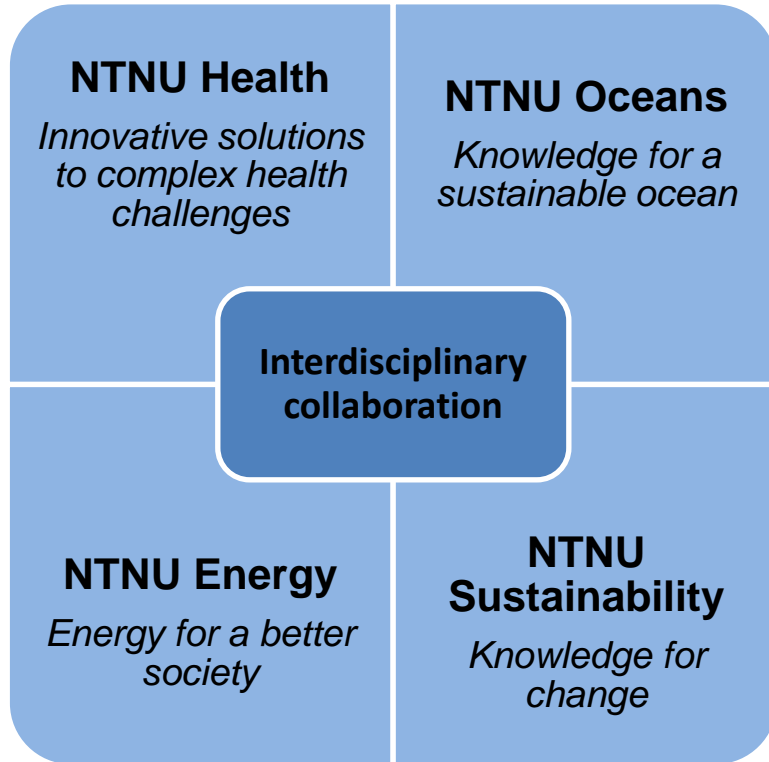
- ❖ **Improve success rates**
- ❖ **Increase collaboration**
- ❖ **Diversify portfolio**
- ❖ **Above funding threshold**
- ❖ ***(and many more...)***

Historical overview – H2020



- A relatively large portfolio of H2020 projects across the thematic areas
- Actively engaged with both basic and applied research
- Relatively high Technology Readiness Levels possible
- Strong collaborations with the private and public sectors

NTNU's Strategic Research Areas (2014-23)



- Address **global challenges**
- Aligned to key **EU policy priorities** & **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
- **Internally:** Stimulate interdisciplinary collaboration, research & innovation
 - **Bring researchers** from different Departments & Faculties **together**
 - Meeting points & concrete initiatives
- **Externally:** Support development of strong **partnerships with stakeholders**, including industry partners & end-user organisations

Some concrete examples

NTNU Oceans – Breakfast meetings

- Opportunities for researchers to come together at regular intervals
- Presentation of forthcoming funding opportunities (targeted)
- Roundtable discussions – Interests? How to move forward?

Meeting
places

Small-scale
funding
opportunities

NTNU Health – Funding opportunities (Småforsknmidler)

- NOK 20,000 to 200,000 for workshops, proof of concept studies, etc.
- Must involve researchers from at least 2 Faculties
- Concrete support to facilitate long-term interdisciplinary collaboration

NTNU Energy (Team Wind) – Conferences

- 2021 EERA DeepWind Conference → International event to present the ongoing R&I related to deep sea offshore wind farms. Hosted by SINTEF and NTNU

Showcasing,
networking

NTNU's Brussels Office

Increase visibility of NTNU in Brussels

- Promotion and representation (e.g. information days, brokerage events)
- Positioning in relevant EU-based initiatives & bodies
 - Eva Falch, Vice-President of the Management Board of the Europ. Food Forum
 - Ole Dahlhaug, Coordinator of the EERA JP Hydropower

Improve external awareness of NTNU's competences

- Organisation of high-profile policy debates (e.g. Childhood obesity event)



- Facilitate bilateral discussions on possible collaboration opportunities

NTNU Food Forum

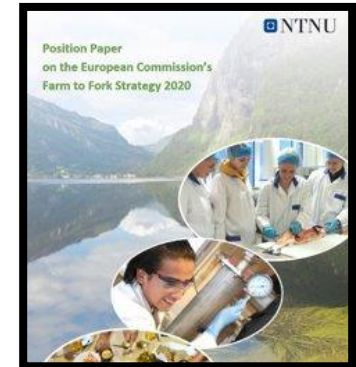
- NTNU is actively involved in several EU food-related networks and platforms (e.g. European Food Forum)

Internally

- Stimulating interactions between researchers at different career stages and from various Departments & Faculties
- Getting to know each other better
 - **Expertise & competency mapping exercise**
- **Activities not limited to potential funding opportunities**
 - Influence EU dialogues (e.g. respond to strategic documents)

Externally

- Gaining momentum → Receive invitations to collaborate



Preparing for Horizon Europe

Awareness &
competence
building

Proposal
development

Project
management

Raise awareness, develop competences

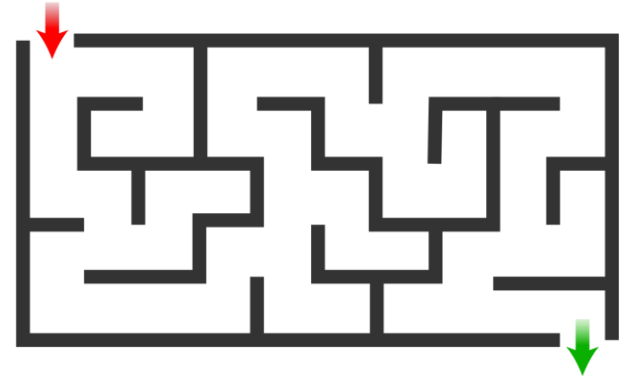
- Each Faculty has its own **Action Plan** for Horizon Europe
 - Engagement with Deans & Department/Centre Leaders
 - Strengths & weaknesses; objectives & priorities
 - **Create ownership** («anchor»)
- Outreach activities & **pro-active engagement** with researchers
 - Detailed presentations of calls likely to be of interest (targeted)
 - Key novelties under Horizon Europe («sales pitch»)
- Hands-on **workshops to build competences**, including:
 - How to write a grant application
 - Effective writing in English
 - CV development

Coordinating or partnering?



- The never-ending headache...
- **Refrain** from encouraging *and* supporting everyone to coordinate
- Focus instead on the most established researchers & those who are able (i.e. capacity) to lead a collaborative proposal
 - Reaching out
- Pro-actively (attempting to) discourage the others
 - **Courageous conversations** *and*
 - **Re-directing** towards partnering and/or other funding opportunities

Coordinating proposals



- A very demanding role
- Rarely an easy and straightforward journey
- Research Advisors *must* provide **comprehensive** proposal development support
 - How can we support researchers better to ensure greater chance of success?
 - What are the **needs of our coordinating Principal Investigators**?
 - Where can we help **reduce the administrative** (i.e. non-scientific) **burden**?
- **Partnership approach** - «We are in this together»
 - Build confidence

Checklist of tasks & responsibilities

- A demanding process
 - PIs must be committed
 - Department Leaders must be supportive
- A joint-approach
 - Team effort with clearly attributed responsibilities

**Horizon Europe –
Checklist of tasks and responsibilities for proposals that NTNU coordinates**

- The Research Advisors at the MH Faculty (euresearch@mh.ntnu.no) have developed this checklist to support Researchers, Research Advisors and Financial Advisors with the development of coordinated proposals. This checklist is neither comprehensive nor prescriptive:

- Some key tasks may have been omitted – We welcome feedback and suggestions for improvement.
- The order, content and/or person responsible for each task may vary from one Faculty to the other, etc.

#	Task	Description / Logic	Responsibility	Deadline
1	Inform of potential intention to coordinate a proposal	-The PI informs the Research Advisor that they intend to coordinate an application. They provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The name of the funding call, including the link to the funding opportunity,• A preliminary overview of who within NTNU is likely to be involved with the proposal,• A short summary of the project proposal.	PI	6 months <u>minimum</u>
2	Allocation of Financial Advisors	-The Research Advisor informs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Financial Advisors of this potential application.• The Research/Financial Advisors within another Faculty (if applicable).	Research Advisor	6 months – immediately after Task 1
3	Organisation of a start-up workshop <i>Plan for 2 to 2.5 hours</i>	-The Research Advisor organises a start-up workshop with the PI, the NTNU project team members and the Financial Advisors. This meeting aims to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clarify the expectations and workload associated with coordinating a proposal → Determine whether there is capacity and commitment to take this forward2. Explain the key requirements of the call, including the policy context → Research Advisors present Pillar 2 of Horizon Europe; the specific topic, including 'expected outcomes', 'expected impacts' and key features of winning consortia; the structure of the application3. Discuss the project proposal, how it aligns against the topic and where the gaps are4. Show the PI and the NTNU project team members partnering tools (e.g. CrowdHelix)5. Agree on a timeline of actions	Research Advisor	6 months – immediately after Task 2



Explain the Strategic Plan & the logic flow of the WPs

... in plain English

Discuss & clarify the topic of interest

- **Read it together** – point by point

This destination is directed towards the **Key Strategic Orientation** KSO-D 'Creating a more resilient, inclusive and democratic European society' of Horizon Europe's Strategic Plan 2021-2024. Projects supported under this destination should contribute to the **impact area** 'Good health and high-quality accessible healthcare' and in particular to the **expected impact** 1 of cluster 1 'health': **citizens of all ages stay healthy and independent in a rapidly changing society thanks to healthier lifestyles and behaviours, healthier diets, healthier environments, improved evidence-based health policies, and more effective solutions for health promotion and disease prevention**. In addition, research and innovation supported under this destination could also contribute to the following impact areas: 'high quality digital services for all', 'sustainable food systems from farm to fork on land and sea', and 'climate change mitigation and adaptation'.

- Implications for project activities?
- Implications for consortium membership?

Topic Requirements	Does the project address it? Yes, No, Insufficiently	How will the gap be addressed?



- Conversations enable us to identify PIs' **areas of uncertainty & competency gaps**
- **What tools** do we need to develop to support our researchers better?
- **What areas** do we, Research Advisors, need to become more competent at?

✓ IN PROGRESS

Partnering

- Same approach
 - Explain the Strategic Plan & the logic underlying the WPs & Topics
- “I am interested but I do not have any networks outside NTNU/Norway”
- **Factsheet on partnering tools**
 - Offer **practical support** to help researchers offer their expertise to join consortia (e.g. Crowdhelix)
 - Top tips to **increase visibility**
 - Active promotion of **COST Actions** of possible relevance to their interests

PRIORITY

BUT there is a limit to what we can offer as Research Advisors...
Researchers must also be pro-active.

Post-award support

- If proposals are successful, the partnership approach continues
 - **Enhanced start up meetings** – Grant Agreement obligations, reporting requirements, etc.
 - Clearly attributed **roles & responsibilities**
 - Reduce the administrative burden on PIs as much as possible

Playing the long game...

- Encourage **multi-disciplinarity** within the Work Packages NTNU is responsible for
 - Build on relationships formed via NTNU's Research Areas, Food Forum, etc.
- Encourage **inclusion of Early Career Researchers** in the collaborative proposals
 - Fantastic first-hand experience of working on a (EU-funded) collaborative project
 - Excellent for their CVs... (European Research Council application at some point?)
- Whether NTNU coordinated or partnered, whether the proposal was successful or not, **what can be 'recycled'?**
 - MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships?
- **Feedback loop**
 - What can we learn post-award that should inform proposal developments moving forward?

Thank you very much for listening
(and for your patience while I learn Norwegian)

Please feel free to contact me
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