



The Norwegian CoE Scheme: **Evaluation of Added Value and Financial Aspects**

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Main evaluation objectives

- **Identify conditions for added value**
 - for the involved research groups
 - for the involved research institutions
 - for Norwegian research/the research system

- **Financial implications of the scheme**

- **Understanding negative effects/lack of added value**

- **Advise on improvement**

Data sources

■ Existing material/sources

- National R&D statistic/databases
- Annual reports from the CoEs / RCN's key figures for the CoEs
- Midterm evaluation of the first generation Norwegian CoEs/self-evaluation reports
- Electronic archive national mass media (A-tekst/Retriever)

■ Questionnaires (open reply/comment boxes)

- 21 CoE directors (20 replied)
- 18 CoE finalists (all replied)

■ 76 interviewees (18 individually; 58 in groups)

- CoE Directors
- CoE Host institutions / Partners / Board members
- CoE Research Fellows/PhD students
- CoE Finalists
- RCN Administration; RCN Board
- Panel chairs (CoE selection committee and midterm evaluation)

Studying impacts

■ **Compare impacts for various**

- research areas
- institutional contexts
- CoEs types (co-localisation; size; organisation)
- 1st vs. 2nd generation CoEs

■ **Impact of CoE-funding and CoE-status**

- CoEs vs. non-successful finalists

■ **Purpose**

- Understanding conditions for added value and financial impacts

Conclusions I: Financial aspects

■ **Financial success**

- More external funding and better financial terms than most other research groups
- CoE funding only 20% of the total income of the CoEs (large variation)

■ **No national impacts on other groups in the field?**

- No evidence that other researchers in the relevant fields are worse off because of the CoEs
- The CoEs have much additional RCN-funding, but normally not more than the average for the relevant field

■ **Impact of local co-payment**

- Host co-payment shares for CoEs are lower than the average university core funding (due to much external funding)
- Harder competition for local resources
 - Half the informants think co-payments imply less resources to other groups
 - Two thinks financial net effect for other groups are positive
 - No accounts displaying local costs / reallocations
- Different interpretations of the terms for host co-payments and covering of overhead costs

Conclusions II: Added value

- **Long-term lump sum funding**
 - Enables strong research communities
 - Attracts highly qualified scholars
- **Attracts much additional funding**
- **Increased international collaboration and visibility**
- **Increased national and interdisciplinary collaboration**
- **Added value also for the finalists**
 - Increased funding
 - Increased international collaboration

Variation in added value

■ **Virtual CoEs report less international impacts**

- Because they already are very international?
- Have more national objectives/orientation?
- Less time/resources for international collaboration?

■ **CoEs with good relations to host report increase in local, national, interdisciplinary and industry collaboration**

- Because they are generally better at collaboration?
- They have more time/energy for such collaboration?
- Because such collaboration is supported/enabled by host?

■ **Different importance for universities and independent research institutes:**

- Universities: impacts scholarly leadership role, ability to make priorities and organise research
- Institutes: more long-term basic research, international collaboration and involvement in dr. training

Conclusions III: Lasting effects

- **Increased competition between Norwegian universities**
 - Impacts work-sharing
 - Heightened ambitions – aspirations for excellence
- **Strengthening the internationalisation of Norwegian research**
 - International collaboration and visibility
- **Promotes recruitment to particular fields**
 - CoEs encompass a large part of researcher recruits in several fields
 - CoEs encompass a large part of seniors in some fields
- **“Enforced” institutional learning**
 - Impacts universities’ abilities to make research priorities, organise research and appreciate scholarly leadership

Recommendations

■ Selection of CoEs

- Clear mandate for comparing research areas
 - Enhance transparency and legitimacy

■ Financial terms, organisation and national role

- Better communication/guidance on financial terms:
 - how to avoid negative effects of co-payments etc
- CoEs need to clarify ambitions for local/host integration
 - adequate organisation to fulfil ambitions
- CoEs should enhancing the research fields nationally (prime priority still excellence and international collaboration)

■ Maintaining competence and excellence in the post-CoE period

- Host institution's assistance needed
- Will be facilitated by local integration in the CoE period

What did it take?

- **Access to established data sources / databases**
- **5 person months**
- **Small team**
 - 2 professor-level experts and 1 PhD student
 - Expertise in research evaluation, research quality and the organisation of research work, research and innovation policy instruments/organisation, policy making at higher education institutions.
 - Insight in national R&D and HE system and databases
- **Advisory group**
 - RCN
 - Author relevant prior report
 - Key informant university administration of CoE

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