NordForsk

NordForsk Impact Report 2026

Director's preface

Research remains one of the most important tools we have for understanding and addressing the challenges facing our societies. Whether the issue is health, climate, security, technological change or economic development, research provides knowledge that helps us make better decisions and develop better solutions.

At the same time, expectations of research are broad. Strong societies depend both on scientific excellence and on the ability to apply knowledge where it can make a difference. This is one of the reasons why Nordic research co-operation continues to be important. Many of the questions we face are shared across the Nordic countries, and there is considerable value in addressing them together. By combining expertise, resources and perspectives across national borders, Nordic co-operation can create results that would be difficult to achieve individually.

We see strong interest in this approach. Competition for NordForsk funding remains high, and we experience growing interest from organisations and international partners. This reflects both the quality of Nordic research and the continued relevance of the Nordic model for collaboration.

Research funding is an investment, and it is reasonable to ask what value that investment creates. For NordForsk, impact is therefore a central part of our work. Understanding how research contributes to new knowledge, stronger research environments, policy development and societal benefits helps us learn, improve and make better funding decisions. It also strengthens transparency and accountability.

The purpose of this report is to highlight some of these contributions. It illustrate the many ways in which Nordic research co-operation creates value, often over long periods of time and sometimes extening beyond the original objectives of individual projects.

Finally, I would like to thank all researchers who have contributed their experiences and reflections to this report. Their work and data contributions form the foundation of the results presented in these pages.

Johnny Mogensen, Director of NordForsk

About the data

Our annual Impact Report and the method behind it, ranging from philosophy to data infrastructure, continues to garner attention. We have been happy to share the experiences and insights with partners and stakeholders in our network, and it is an enlightening learning process for us. We are continuously iterating toward a direction that makes sense in the light of what we now know, considering ease of access, readability, epistemological validity, processes, and feasibility. A key change since previous releases is that we have chosen to delimit the impact report data to our active portfolio. That is, this report contains data reported by the projects that are active at the time of the measurement cross section.

For context, this covers 164 projects in total, of which 134 reported in this years submission period, yielding a 81.71 per cent response rate. The lower rate relative to prior years (92 per cent last year) is not a surprise as the active portfolio is young. Many projects were initiated in large scale calls in 2025 and 2026 and are running through to 2031. Early-stage projects naturally have less to report, and some are still finding their footing in the data collection process. We consider the response rate a reasonable reflection of engagement.

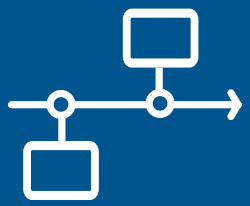
Methodologically, this year we also a took step toward greater internal consistency. We have systematised how we define and apply three analytical frames: the full historical portfolio, the active portfolio, and the actively reporting portfolio. This makes the distinctions between them explicit and replicable. This is less visible to the reader but matters a great deal to us as it is part of building our data infrastructure.

Heading towards 2027, we are working on revamping our reporting infrastructure. This gives us the opportunity to streamline and revise our own protocols and processes, and we aim for a lean, easy-to-use, end product. The objective is that this will provide even better documentation of the outputs, outcomes and impact of NordForsk-funded research.

Happy insights,
Simon Jernroth, Analytics officer

Key Figures

2026



164
Active projects

332
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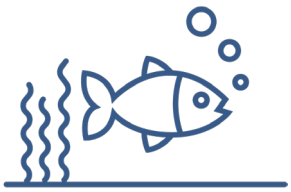
Influence on policy, patients, practice, and the public

Impact stories

Impact stories are a short format we use to provide an overview of the research process from results and outputs, to outcomes and impact. These are constructed to swiftly communicate the significance of projects we have chosen to highlight.



Researchers have discovered three things that are crucial for the survival of farmed salmon

High mortality among farmed salmon poses a major challenge for sustainable aquaculture in the Nordic region. The Happy Salmon research project investigated how salmon better can cope with the critical transition from fresh to seawater.

The project identified three key factors that may increase survival rates: ensuring full development of gill, kidney and intestinal functions before transfer; reducing or rethinking fasting practices; and using energy-rich feed to strengthen fish before the transition. It also generated new biological data and practical knowledge for farmers and feed producers.

These insights provide actionable guidance for the aquaculture sector, contributing to improved fish welfare and fewer losses. This is important for a sustainable seafood industry in the region.

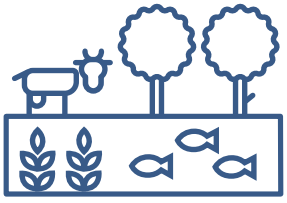
Children with cancer can receive treatment across the Nordic region

Childhood cancer is rare but remains a leading cause of death among children over one year old, especially when standard treatments fail. The Nordic research network NOPHOmatch is ensuring that children with cancer can access personalised treatment in neighbouring countries.

The network has strengthened collaboration among paediatric oncology specialists to improve access to new and personalised treatments. By sharing clinical knowledge and discussing complex cases in regular cross-border meetings, clinicians can quickly identify alternative therapies and treatment options for children with difficult or relapsing cancers.

The network established expanded opportunities for participation in clinical trials, and created two specialised trial centres in the region.

Together, these advances broaden access to cutting-edge therapies and show how coordinated healthcare efforts can improve outcomes for patients with rare and complex conditions.



Promising results for the first commercial perennial grain crop in northern Europe

Agriculture in northern Europe must balance food production with climate targets while protecting soil health and biodiversity. Perennial crops like Kernza could reshape agriculture as we know it.

The Viking project tested the potential of the intermediate wheatgrass Kernza, a climate-friendly crop that regrows each year and provides both grain and forage. The project assessed how Kernza performs across the Nordics and Baltics by examining fertilisation strategies, intercropping with legumes, harvesting approaches and winter resilience under different conditions.

The preliminary findings show a lot of potential for Kernza. The crop grows well in the Baltic region and has a strong winter resistance. The forage contains high protein levels and much energy.

These results highlight that developing perennial grain crops can enable more resource-efficient farming systems and support the transition to more climate-resilient agriculture.

Physical activity and trust are keys to better health for elderly immigrants

Elderly immigrants in the Nordics are at higher risk of health problems, yet the welfare systems have limited experience in supporting this group. The HEALTHCOM project explores how physical activity can promote both health and social integration among elderly migrants.

Using participatory methods, researchers worked directly with communities across several countries to identify barriers to participation and co-develop suitable activities in local contexts. They tested activity models such as group walking, yoga and swimming, and generated practical knowledge on how to build trust and engagement.

The project informs more inclusive and responsive welfare services, supporting healthier ageing and greater social participation among diverse populations across the Nordic region.

Pandemic preparedness: Wastewater treatment plants can reveal if a superbug outbreak is coming

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the most serious health threats of our time. Wastewater can be an important source of knowledge about AMR. Wastewater treatment plants should therefore be part of the emergency response strategy to notify authorities of precursors to potentially dangerous events.

The TruSTme research project has investigated how wastewater treatment plants can be used to monitor the spread of resistant bacteria and pathogens. The researchers developed a prototype set of early warning tools for detecting AMR directly at treatment plants and compiled knowledge on monitoring untreated and treated wastewater.

This strengthens the societal resilience in the Nordic region by supporting public health surveillance and faster as well as more proactive responses to outbreaks.

Nordic added value

NordForsk funded projects create Nordic added value in a number of ways. For example, by enhancing the scientific quality and building critical expertise at the Nordic level.

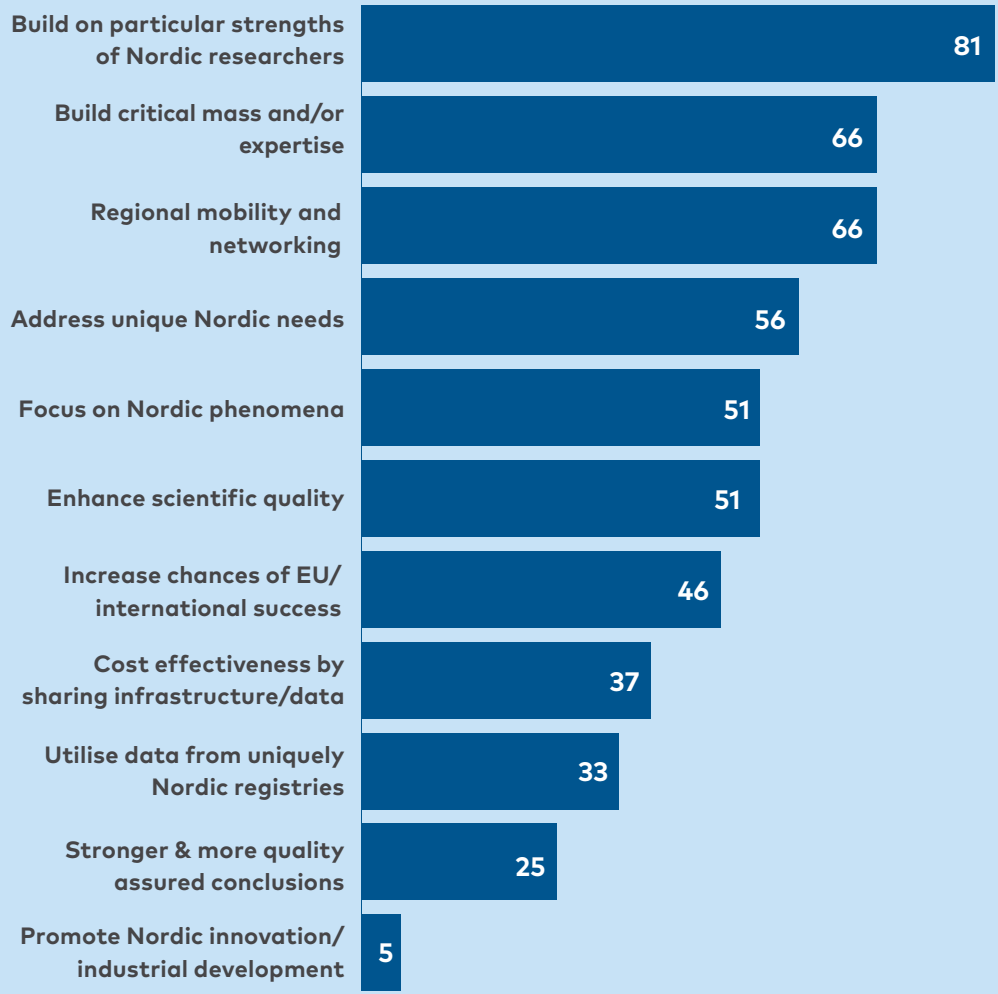
We have decided our own definition of Nordic added value to be used when developing research areas, designing calls for proposals, assessing grant applications and reporting impact.

In all, we have 11 categories reflective of our strategic goals on how research creates Nordic added value. Our projects create Nordic added value within all the different categories.

The Nordic added value reported here is based on project data from their whole funding periods.

Read more about Nordic added value at **nordforsk.org**.

Nordic added value in active NordForsk projects



Total number of projects having reported Nordic added value: 96

Output, outcomes & impact

The following section showcases what has been reported by all projects in our active portfolio. This provides a representative cross-section of all activities, which outputs are generated, and, to some extent, what difference they make.

Publications

Research outcome can be presented in various ways. Of the many different outcome types the funded NordForsk projects can register in Researchfish, publications are among the most commonly reported.

The researchers can choose among 16 different publication types, such as book chapters, monographs, technical reports and conference papers. Publications are results in of themselves, but can also be considered mediators between research and its dissemination, and thus a proxy indicator of any effect.

332
Original publications

46
Projects reporting at least one publication

7.2
Average number of publications for projects reporting at least one publication

186
Journal Articles

68
Conference Proceeding Abstracts

37
Other
Eg. thesis, books, consultancy or technical reports, books edited, working papers.

23
Book Chapters

10
Preprints

8
Policy briefings

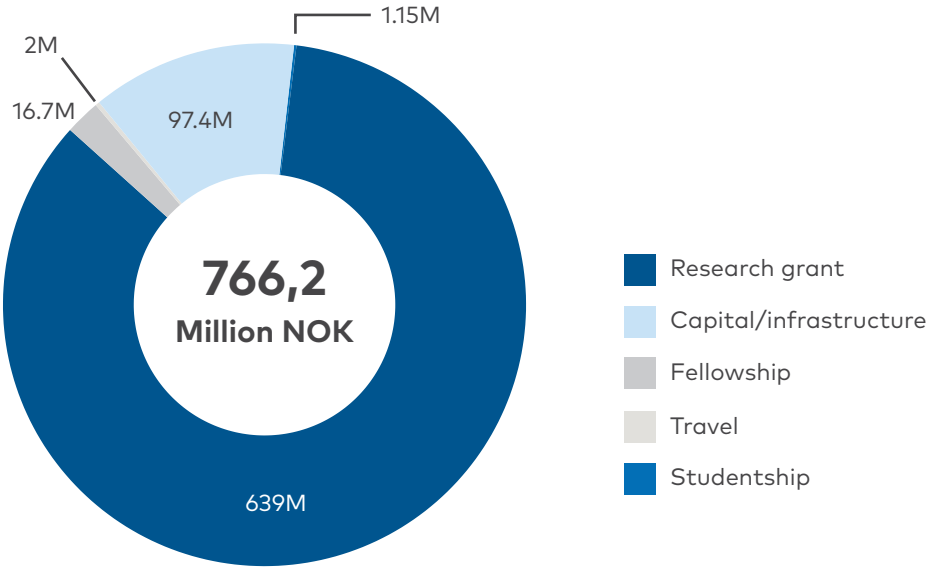
Funding

When projects successfully receive new research grants and other funding, this is an indicator of the excellence of the research consortium, of added value and of sustainability of the research collaboration.

NordForsk funded projects report further funding to quite a large extent. The most frequent further funding purpose are general research grants, including intramural ones.

This section contains a cross-section of the funding allocation of our active portfolio as well as an overview of the reported instances of success in receiving further funding.

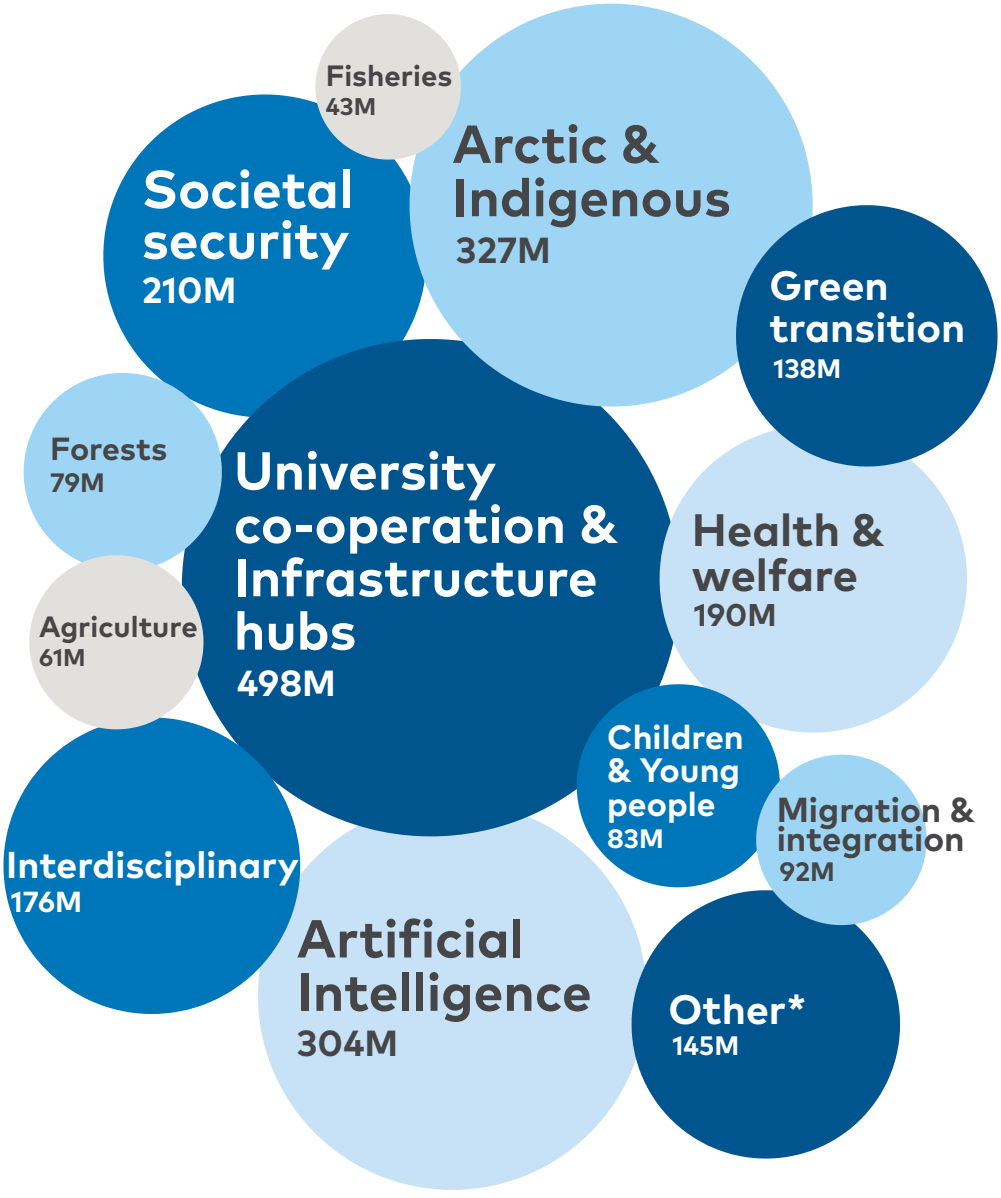
Further funding by type



102

Instances of further funding

NordForsk funding value by research area (NOK)



*Our other research initiatives include project on future working life, exploratory networks in humanities and social sciences as well as in natural sciences and engineering, and a Nordic research school in innovation and entrepreneurship.

Policy influence

When researchers inform on policymaking processes and decisions they have societal impact. Thus, we ask the projects to report on policy influence, more specifically the count of instances and what kind of influence, as well as reported outcomes.

We expect this quantification of policy influence to be an indicator of the scope, character, and impact of the influence that the research and researchers have had.

15

Projects reporting at least one policy influence

41

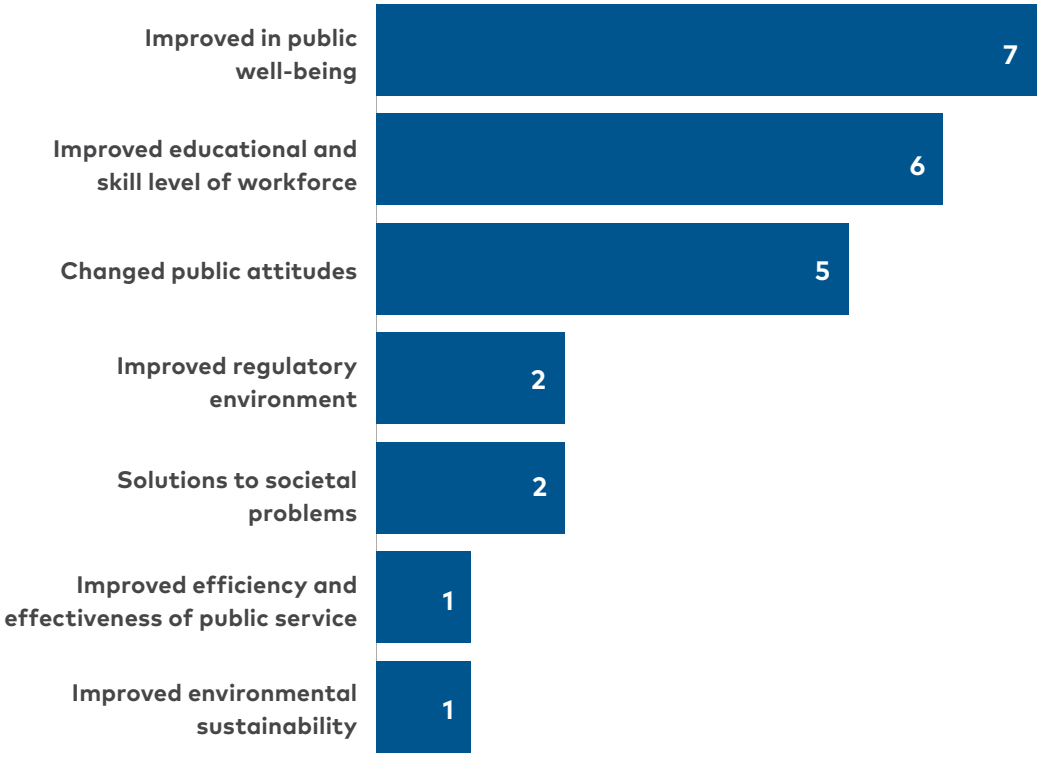
Unique policy influences

2.7

Average number of policy influence for projects reporting at least one policy influence

Policy influence by type

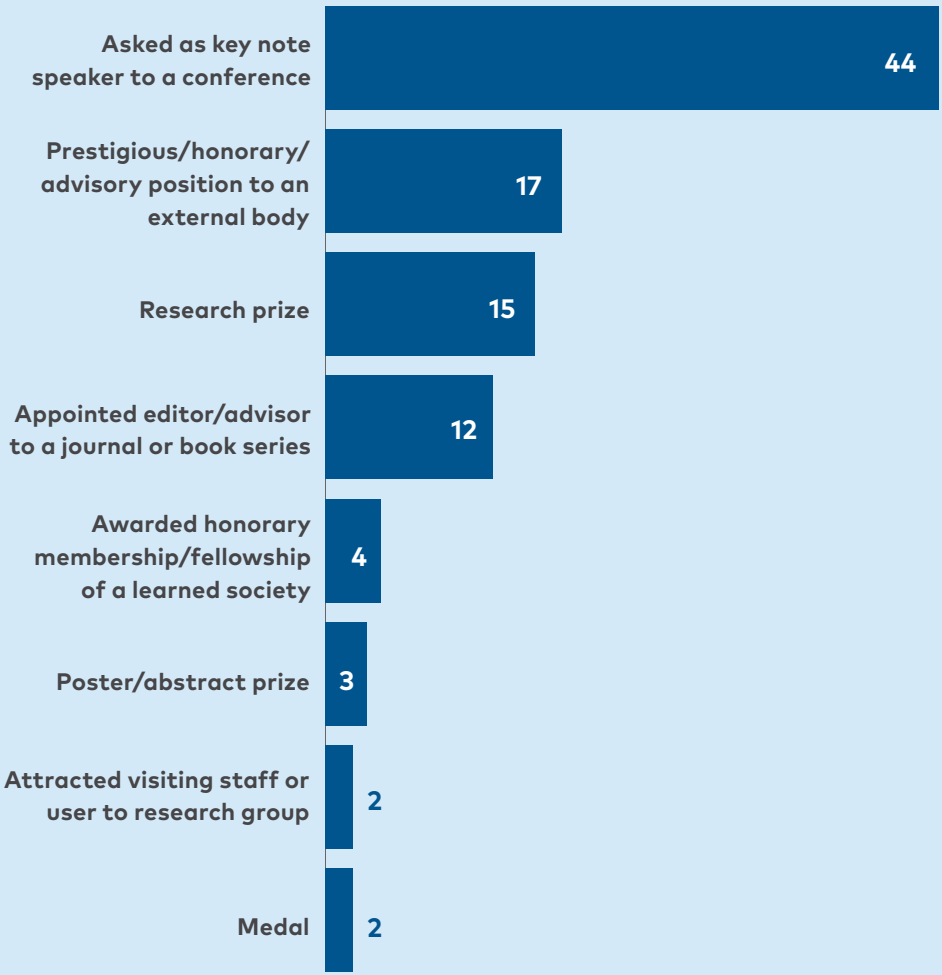
Policy influence by reported impact



Awards and recognitions

This figure shows the external recognition received by researchers, such as keynote invitations, prizes and advisory roles.

These records indicate scientific prestige, visibility and esteem, and suggest that NordForsk-funded work gains recognition in relevant scientific communities.



Dissemination

Researchers communicate beyond journals, books and other scientific publications. They tell the public what they do, why, and what results they produce. Communicating research can inform audiences and key stakeholders of results, solutions and desired actions. It can also build support for science and promote understanding of the wider relevance of research to society, and encourage more informed decision-making.

All our projects produce a communication plan, and report on how they communicate. This quantification includes the type of communication, the main target groups that have been engaged, outcome, and extent. In contrast to policy influence, this measure focuses on the broader public audience.

72

Projects reporting at least one dissemination

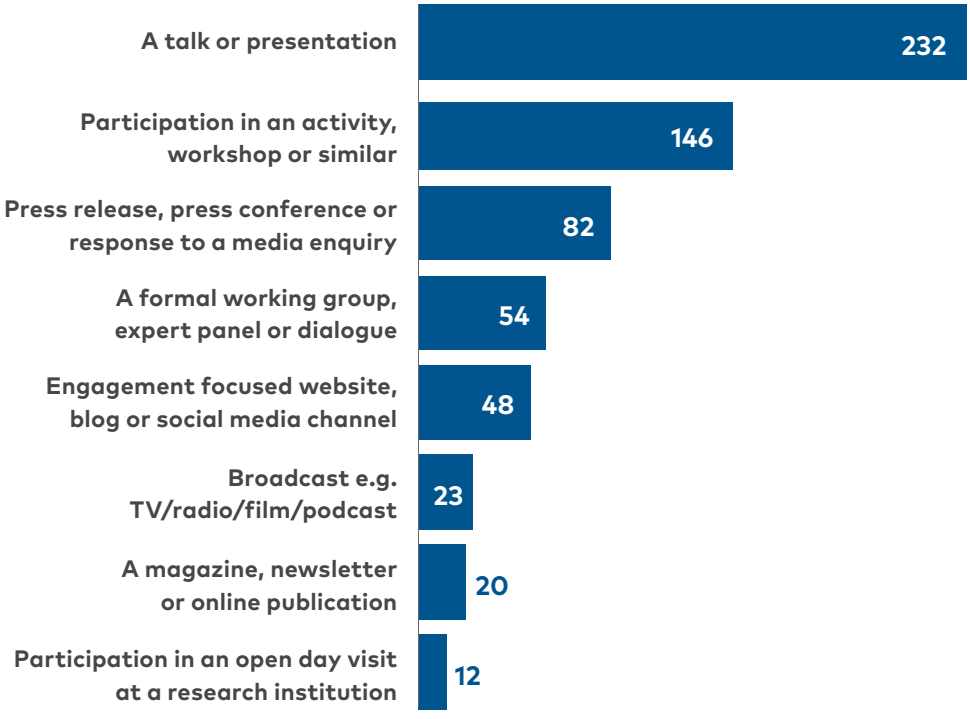
617

Unique disseminations

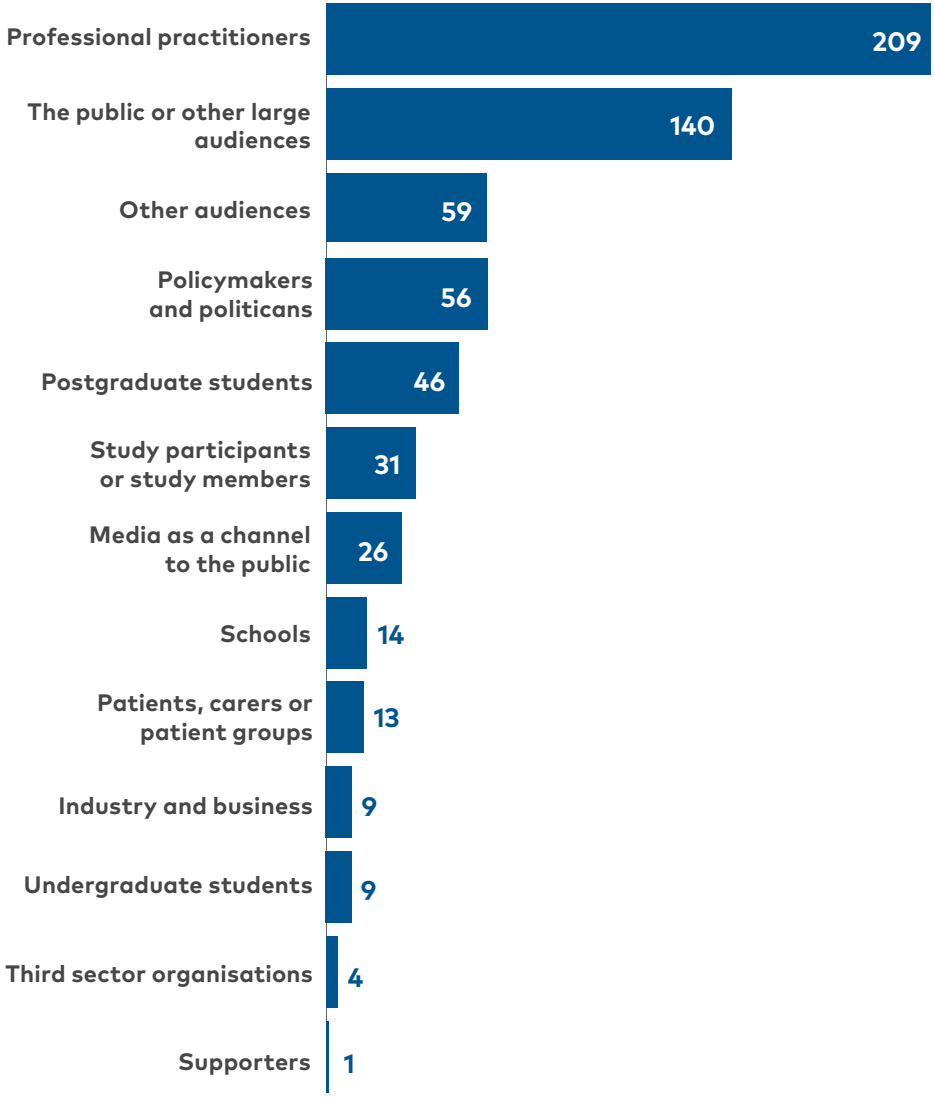
8.6

Average number of disseminations for projects reporting at least one dissemination

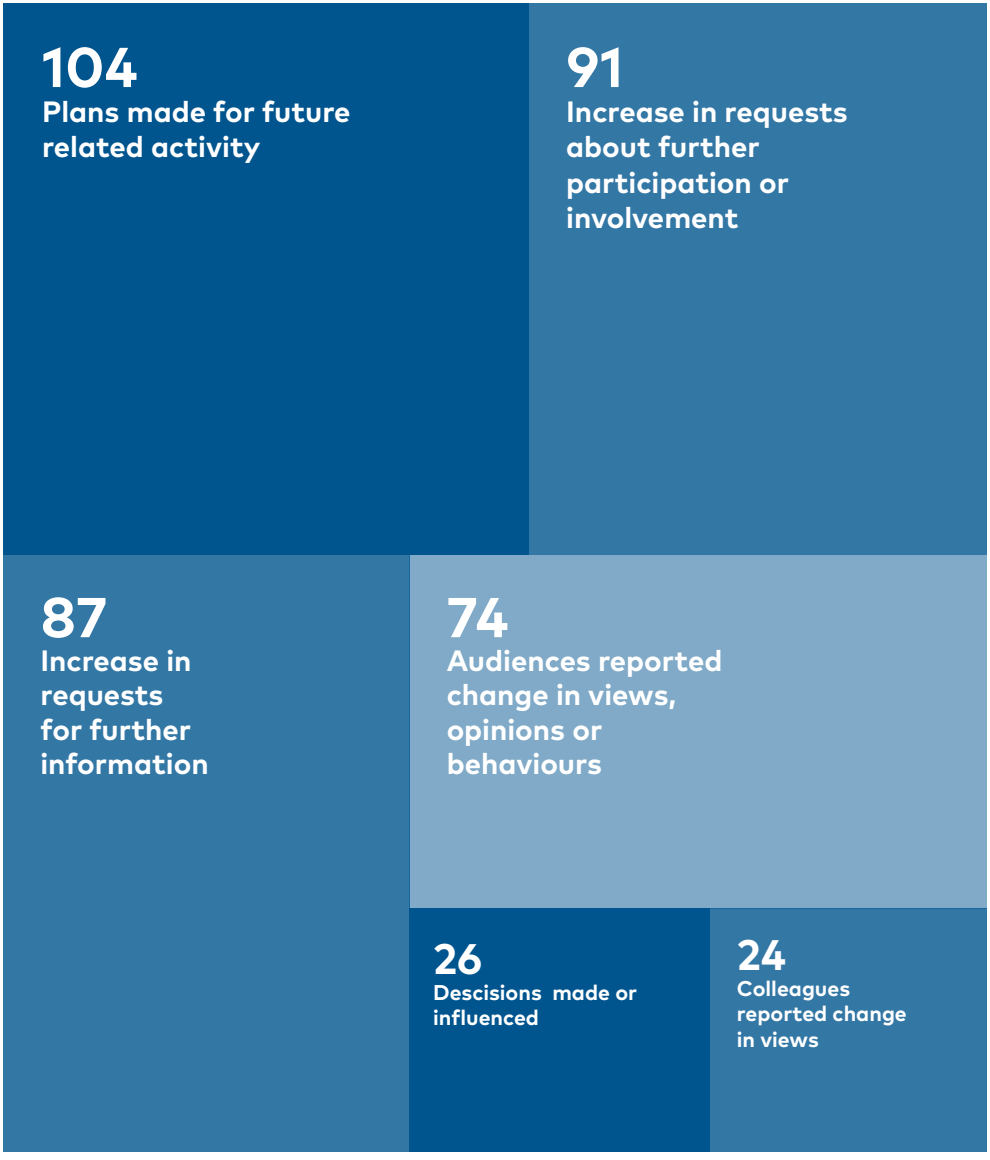
Dissemination activities by type



Dissemination activities by primary audience



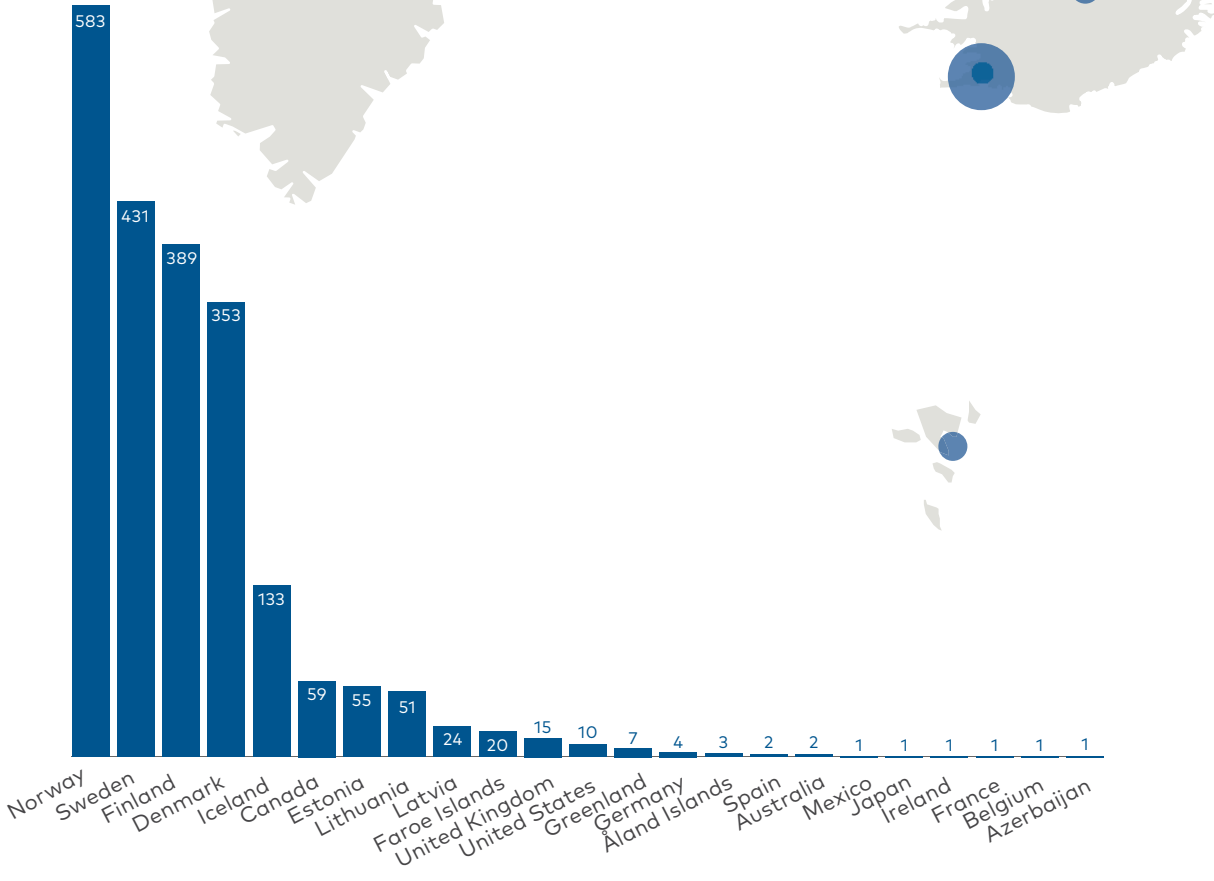
Disseminations by reported outcomes

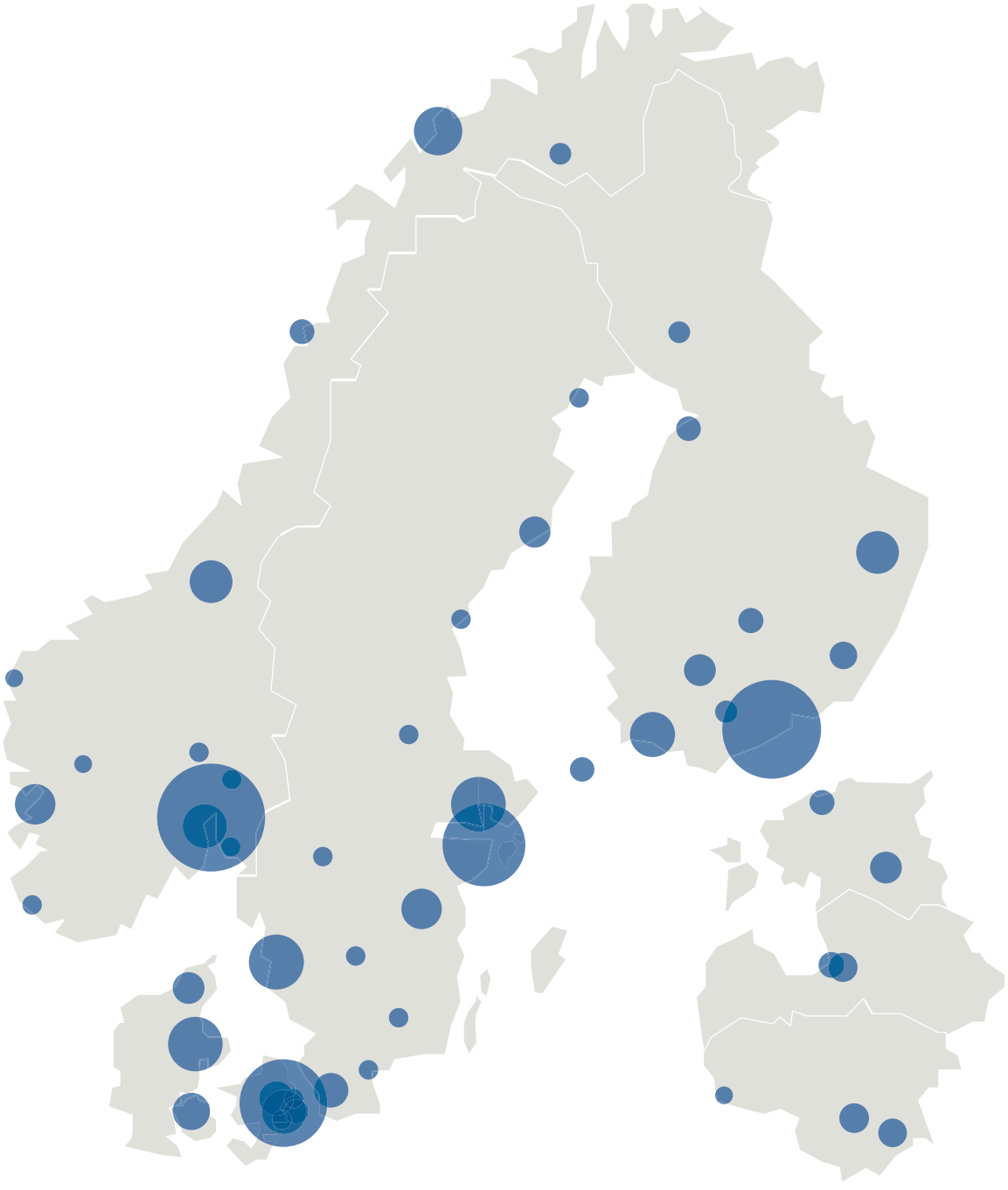


NordForsk research by geography

One of the criteria for Nordic added value in research is regional mobility and networking among the Nordic countries. A benchmark for assessing whether this succeeds is to look at the geographical location of the projects and researchers.

The map represents the location and count of researchers in NordForsk funded research projects in the Nordics and Baltics. Each circle represents an institution. The size represents the count of researchers in NordForsk funded research projects within that institution. The graph shows active researchers in reporting cohort by country.





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