



Department of International Environment and
Development Studies, Noragric

Strategy 2019 - 2023



STRATEGY 2019–2023

Preface

The Department of International Environment and Development Studies (Noragric) is committed to critical, independent, interdisciplinary research and teaching with a global orientation within the mandated areas of international relations, environment and global development studies. The Department forms part of the faculty for Landscape and Society (LANDSAM) established on 1 January 2017, within the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU).

The vision outlined in the LANDSAM Strategy for 2019–2023 is based on NMBU's 'Knowledge for Life' approach, which places excellence in research, education, communication and innovation at the center of a secure 'basis for life of future generations'. NMBU's mandate to address 'complex challenges in areas such as climate change, environmental pollution, population growth, migration, poverty, public and animal health, food and water supply, energy, use and protection of natural resources and areas, is operationalized in the strategy for the period 2019-2023 through particular attention to the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Faculty contributes to these major challenges through a focus on globalization, urbanization and climate change on the interface of environment and society.

Noragric is implementing the University strategy through interdisciplinary studies revolving around international, environment and global development studies as they pertain to global challenges between social and natural processes. Noragric's research is grounded and empirical, often focused on 'north-south' relations and interactions in local contexts, and on a variety of issues including: resources, governance, economy, culture, sustainability, security, conflict, poverty, food, ecological systems, climate, biodiversity, energy, institutions, policy, and agriculture. The Department's objective is to contribute to society through research and education, and reflect upon as well as impact transformation processes, including policy/politics, governance systems, capacity and institution-building, decolonization of discourses and practices, collaboration, access to knowledge, and empowerment.

Ås, 07.05.2019

Dr. Shai A. Divon

Head of Department

The Strategy is approved by Dean Eva Falleth, Ås, 07.05.2019

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VISION, VALUES AND ROLES

The Department is a cohesive research and education community and leading academic institution with a global orientation, known for its unique interdisciplinary research and education across the fields of Environment, Global Development and International Relations, and recognized for its ability to use that knowledge to engage in professional and public debates.

Building on the history and competence in interdisciplinary research and education, the Department's main mission is **to contribute to a better, more just and sustainable society through academic work, research and education**. To achieve this, Noragric continues its tradition of being at the forefront of research, strengthening the tradition of high quality research and education, and ensuring that the Department's contributions are visible and meaningful to critical societal debates.

As an interdisciplinary institution with a particular focus on addressing global challenges through a range of approaches incorporating environment, development and international relations across the social and natural sciences, Noragric is committed to **academic freedom, tolerance of ideas and approaches, cooperation and collegiality**. Noragric prides itself in being a **research community** unified through our shared concern for contributing to a better society through our interests in processes across our core thematic fields. We aim for high ethical standards in our work, striving to demonstrate respect for the rights of current and future generations, and for nature.

THE MAIN INITIATIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT

Carved from NMBU and LANDSAM Strategy Documents for 2019-2023, Noragric's strategy is structured around four focus areas:

1. Strong interdisciplinary academic environment with national and international positions
2. Synergies and societal impacts
3. Lifelong learning
4. Working environment

1. STRONG INTERDISCIPLINARY ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT, RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

The Department's internal research and education organization enhances our ability to project our individual and collective excellence and uniqueness, both internally (within the Faculty and the University) and externally (nationally and internationally).

The University, Research, and Higher Education sector in Norway has determined that the guiding principles, directions and funding mechanisms for research and education will be aligned with a number of policy frameworks, all anchored first and foremost in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a global agenda.

Noragric has a demonstrated record of excellence in research and education. The Department generates a sustainable income through research, education, international academic collaborations, as well as studies and appraisals for the public sector.

Our ambitions are to remain at the forefront of research and education, and to bring about periodical adaptation to global and national priorities and opportunities for our academic and professional expertise to meet global challenges.

To accommodate these and continue supporting society through research and education, Noragric adapts its competence and capacity both internally and externally to ensure that our merit and relevance both in research and education are visible and in demand.

This requires adaptation in terms of research organisation and a pro-active communication of the departments' contributions to knowledge through research and education and the various ways through which we add to the assessment of the societal and biological impacts of policy changes.

Measures:

- Enhance our inclusive and democratic processes that reflect our commitment to a strong cohesive research and education community.
- Review, and if necessary reform, the internal research organization at the department.
- Periodical review and further development of our relevance to society.
- Continue applying for research funding provided by the Research Council of Norway (RCN), European Research Council (ERC) and European Union (EU).
- Enhance our impacts through continued work with government ministries, international organizations and civil society.
- Participate in international expert panels such as Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and others.
- Continue, locate and establish creative collaborations with new private and public partners.
- Streamline application support and enhance project leadership support in collaboration with the Faculty administration.
- Create attractive platforms for communicating knowledge and research.
- Recruit new academic staff based on our long-term vision, goals and identified gaps.

2. SYNERGIES AND SOCIETAL IMPACTS

The Department draws on the links between Environment, Global Development and International Relations to propagate an outstanding multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research and education profile, and create an environment relevant for a wide array of collaborations at the faculty/university, as well as nationally and internationally.

Noragric is a brand with an exceptional research and education profile, combining in-house expertise resting on the pillars of global studies: Environment, Development, and International Relations. Noragric stands-out as an interdisciplinary platform, where social and natural sciences are combined and operationalized through critical research that provide new insights linking global and local perspectives.

This combination offers opportunities to create synergies across a variety of disciplines and approaches within the faculty/university, as well externally both on the national and international levels.

Anchored in a pro-active communication strategy and active networking, Noragric is an attractive and sought-after Department that offers both research and education combining natural and social sciences. Building on these strengths, Noragric collaborates with the other Departments at LANDSAM and Faculties at NMBU, enhancing the visibility and reputation of both.

The Department is a sought-after partner for collaboration in research and education in Norway as well as internationally.

Measures:

- Establish a communication strategy to enhance the Department's international and national visibility that demonstrate the value of Noragric's work.
- Enhance synergies within the faculty through joint programs/teaching/research projects.
- Enhances synergies with other faculties at NMBU through joint teaching/research projects.
- Continue working with government agencies and non-governmental actors as providers of academic expertise, research-based knowledge and advice.
- Continue to support ongoing research and education exchanges and build new ones with major or internationally recognized institutions.
- Continue partnership with institutions around the world.
- Invite scholars to spend time as visiting fellows at the department.

3. LIFELONG LEARNING

The Department's educational programs attract high quality students on all levels. Our programs are interconnected and reflect Noragric's mandate as an institution at NMBU. Students are given tools to become change makers that respect the rights of current and future generations and nature. Noragric students are employable and sought-after by a variety of private and public institutions. Noragric engages with stakeholders in research and education capacities in the process of co-production of knowledge.

International relations, environmental studies and global development studies are the three pillars upon which our research is founded. Our educational programs co-exist under one roof because they offer complementary theoretical and methodological perspectives on our common areas of interest, and allow various degrees of added value and academic insight into global challenges. Our educational programs are platforms that prepare our students to advanced degrees and for professional work in the public and private sectors.

The department's education programs present curricula that combine core theories with our empirical based experience, offering students the ability to link complex ideas and concept to contextual applications from the local to the global. We use our networks to offer added values to students, such as participation in ongoing research, exchange opportunities, courses abroad and internship placements. Through this we allow our student to gain practical experience based on academic knowledge and tools.

Through our education programs our students gain the ability to think critically, understand diversity, and exhibit respect for nature, culture and society. Upon completion of an education program at Noragric our students are not only employable, but also sought after by a variety of actors.

Our research centres on the concept of the co-creation of knowledge. Through this process, we engage with a variety of stakeholders in the process of lifelong learning through workshops and seminars.

Measures:

- Ensure that we have in house competence to deliver high quality and innovative teaching.
- Dedicate resources for a close follow-up of all our education programs to ensure cohesion, high-quality education, updated and attractive curricula.
- Streamline our education programs, offer common courses and increase learning opportunities across global development, environment and international relations.
- Locate and enter into agreements with private and public sector agencies and organizations, international institutions and academic partners to facilitate student exchange and offer pathways to employment.
- Publish a textbook for students reflecting our perspectives on global studies.
- Create and apply innovative and attractive teaching methods.
- Increase our engagement with the public and stakeholders regarding our research finds and the content of research-based teaching.

4. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Department is an academic collegium that operates under the principals of respect, tolerance, support and academic freedom. Staff are present and contribute to a vibrant academic environment and the generation of new ideas and discussions. The Department is governed based on participatory processes.

The Department is located as one unit at the Tivoli building, which offers all the necessary facilities to conduct productive research and education. Academic staff have access to high quality administrative support for research, education and logistics. The Tivoli building offers a safe and green working environment where staff are present and comfortable in their workspaces. As a collegium, staff contributes to a vibrant professional and social environment as the basis for generation of new ideas and mutual support. While we host a variety of disciplinary and thematic backgrounds, we operate under the principals of respect, tolerance, support and academic freedom. The Department is committed to the support of gender equality and diversity.

Measures:

- Provide a safe, comfortable, friendly, attractive and positive work environment, where staff are present in their offices on a daily basis, enjoy good working conditions and contribute to academic development and teaching at the department.
- Continue to support gender equality and diversity on all levels.
- Enable the development of staff competence.
- Work with the Faculty administration to streamline processes and procedures to minimize administrative work and allow staff to conduct research, teach and supervise students.
- Create inclusive processes where staff are involved in strategic decisions about the department future and governance.
- Enable social activities and collegiality at the department level.