

# NOR⇄C

NORWEGIAN AGENCY FOR  
EXCHANGE COOPERATION



## STRATEGY 2022



## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

For more than 50 years, Norec has been facilitating the exchange of people between countries and cultures. In our Strategy 2022 programme, new thinking and learning play key roles in both our projects and our internal administration. When organisations in a partnership set goals together, they contribute to each other's development. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 will guide both our own organisation and the partnerships we support.

Exchanging employees makes it possible to challenge, change and generate knowledge and understanding. Exchanging workplaces develops expertise and attitudes that contribute to sustainable development. Those who take part in our projects gain a personal engagement in international development issues. This makes both individual participants and the organisations they represent better equipped to find good solutions to global challenges.

We aim to encourage more organisations to benefit from exchange programmes, with a view to generating knowledge for the future. International cooperation is improved by mutual exchanges. Exchanges lead to new perspectives, knowledge and skills, enabling people, businesses and local communities to develop and grow. Norec aims to be the best when it comes to the practice of international exchanges. Our ambition is to develop Norec as an international centre of excellence in the field.

Our core value is reciprocity. We share, learn and teach. Sharing knowledge and expertise in the best interests of our partnerships is an objective of all exchanges. Norec is an integral part of Norway's development aid work, and cooperation with Norad's Knowledge Bank has a key role to play in this strategy.

Now that Norec is to be consolidated and developed in Førde, we must exploit the opportunities that a digital society opens up for us. Our ambition is for Norec to be a pioneering body in modern work methods, and to succeed in being an attractive partner and employer.

Best regards,

Jan Olav Baarøy

Director







## OUR VISION

The world is full of knowledge and skills. Through mutual exchanges, we teach each other to think bigger, live more sustainably, and build responsible local communities.







## NOREC'S MISSION

Norec is a governmental agency under the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Through the exchange of people, we contribute to the realisation of Norway's overarching foreign policy goals. The exchanges we facilitate are part of Norway's collaboration with countries in the Global South.

International cooperation is a precondition for realising Agenda 2030. Norec strengthens partnerships between businesses in Norway and our partner countries. Our approaches are built on the exchange of employees or volunteers between organisations that have worked together to set individual goals. Partnerships are organised such that the exchanges produce mutual learning.

Norec is the only centre of excellence for international exchanges in Norway. We exist to spread knowledge and provide inspiration for both businesses and individuals. The organisations benefit from arenas for the exchange of experience and long-term follow-up. Individuals develop both the ability and desire to create a better future after their exchange period has come to an end.







## RECIPROCITY - our core value

Reciprocity is an overarching value and guiding light for Norec. That a partnership is reciprocal - or mutual - means that everyone contributes to and benefits from it.

All parties are equal in a mutual partnership. Every actor has a say in processes and decisions that affect them. The partners must work together to shape the project and its goals, recruit and follow up participants, and maintain transparency with respect to budgets and the allocation of resources. They set their own goals, but as partners they commit to helping each other to achieve them.

Trust takes time to build. We know that reciprocity in a partnership develops over time. The trust that emerges leads to the sharing of responsibility, ownership of each other's results and a shared understanding of the challenges. Reciprocity fosters respect, highlights each party's contributions and ownership of their own objectives, and allows people to participate in the development of their own society.

In addition to reciprocity, Norec has some standards of behaviour that both employees and participants are expected to abide by. They are formed as value pairs, and show how we are expected to tackle several dimensions at the same time:

**Challenge and show respect. Be engaged and professional.**

# NOREC'S METHOD exchange for development

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 are among the pillars that support Norway's foreign policy. Together with other countries, Norway wishes to contribute to a peaceful and just world, where extreme poverty has been eradicated. In all things, Norway attaches particular importance to human rights, women's rights and equality, the climate and environment, and the battle against corruption.

Through the mechanism of exchanges, Norec strengthens partnerships that are working to find solutions to these challenges. Exchanges provide greater knowledge, new skills and perspectives for both individuals and organisations.

Norec provides training courses for and follows up its partnerships before, during and after an exchange has taken place. The courses are designed to encourage active participation and make use of a variety of teaching methods to increase motivation to be a proponent of change and to foster personal reflection. In this way, we ensure that all those involved reflect over the development partnership and put it in a global context.







## PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships between organisations is a core aspect of the Norec method. A partnership may comprise two or more actors who exchange people between Norway and countries in the Global South or between countries in the Global South themselves. The partners exchange employees or volunteers to share knowledge, experience, skills and perspectives.

Partnerships have the latitude to change their activities and goals progressively as they learn. Processes linked to relationship building and the exploration of shared goals help to reinforce efforts in support of Agenda 2030.

The Norec model generates results on several levels at the same time. It has an impact on individuals who take part in an exchange, on the organisations that participate in exchanges, and on the wider community of which they are a part.



## EXCHANGE PARTICIPANTS

To live in another culture and tackle other professional challenges over time changes people. Understanding grows, perspectives and attitudes change, and new knowledge and skills are acquired. Our experience shows that these changes are decisive for participants' engagement and careers decades after their exchange period.

Interacting closely with, and seeking to understand, their new surroundings enables participants to share their knowledge and to challenge organisations to work in new ways.

However, after decades of facilitating exchanges, our experience indicates that it is when they return from their exchange that participants contribute most to the organisation. They know the organisation best and are familiar with the local culture and context. They can therefore adapt the solutions they have learned abroad to match local needs.

They are also more likely to engage in voluntary organisations and aid projects in their own homelands. At Norec, young leadership means inspiring participants to show commitment, and strengthening their capacity to participate in decision-making processes that affect them.



## PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Partner organisations must make it possible for participants, both during and after the exchange, to teach and inspire, and to learn and be inspired.

Organisations that are keen to change, and dare to be challenged, are inspired to work in new ways through Norec projects. They acquire knowledge and skills both from the exchange participants they are hosting, and from those who return from an exchange. If they succeed in benefiting from this competence, they will strengthen their ability to supply services to vulnerable groups and those with fewest resources, according to a review of Norec's performance that was carried out in 2018.

Several rounds of exchanges build close relations between the organisations in a partnership. People at various levels in the organisation will be involved, and relationships will develop between many people. These relationships provide access to multiple perspectives and can help organisations make more conscious, sustainable and socially responsible choices.







# NEW THINKING AND LEARNING

For the strategy period, Norec has two focus areas that will continuously improve both development projects and its own organisation: new thinking and learning. These must be seen in conjunction. At Norec, there must be room to think in new and different ways, at the same time as we constantly seek out new knowledge by examining why some things work, while others do not.

New methods can produce new knowledge and different perspectives. Norec will foster new thinking by collaborating with a wide variety of actors in all our areas of activity. Norec will be flexible in its interaction with partnerships and how it shapes its projects, and we will learn from the different approaches these organisations apply. Norec wants its partnerships to use their own methods to assess and learn from their projects. Norec encourages partners, think-tanks and academic institutions to learn from and study exchange projects using new methods and perspectives.

In and of itself, however, thinking along new lines does not necessarily produce better results. Systematic learning will characterise all of Norec's activities. It will be a cornerstone of Norec's knowledge accumulation and management, as well as the projects Norec supports.







## Increase the use of exchange in international partnerships

Norec is keen to stimulate increased use of exchange in international working relationships. If international exchange as a method were better known, more people could benefit from the positive impact exchanges can have. This applies equally to the individuals, organisations and partnerships concerned. Norec-facilitated exchanges ensure more sustainable development and a greater diversity of perspectives for the actors who take part in them.

Norec now wishes to expand its reach by seeking out actors who have a high priority within the Norwegian government's key focus areas. We wish to reach out to those who are not part of the development aid sector, but who we feel offer the potential for a collaboration that will contribute to the achievement of Agenda 2030. Norec will communicate the results of its development collaborations in arenas where we meet organisations that could benefit from exchanges facilitated by Norec. We will reach out to international collaborations that could benefit from our expertise to improve their own partnerships. Norec will work with Norad's Knowledge Bank on courses and seminars aimed at public sector institutions, with a view to complementing one another and informing one another about their respective arrangements.

Norec will seek to offer flexible, user-oriented arrangements for new recipients of financial support, and in this way ensure that more people have the opportunity to gain personal experience by participating in mutual exchanges. Our arrangements can be utilised by international partnerships. In addition, Norec will offer exchange components to partnerships that collaborate with the Knowledge Bank. Norec will facilitate reflection and learning, in conjunction with trainings, guidance and the follow-up on partnerships to ensure the professional development. Norec's partners, exchange participants and alumni will have access to a professional network and opportunities to share their experiences.

Partnerships will be organised such that both parties to an exchange learn from the experience. The objective is for many of the partnerships to work together strategically in ways which, over time, lead to the development of all concerned. Every project that receives support from Norec contributes to one or more of Norec's overarching goals: Develop participants' engagement in global challenges, work together for further professional development, and cause organisations to change in ways that contribute to the realisation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.







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## Consolidate Norec as a centre of excellence

Norec will devote this strategy period to consolidating our position as a centre of excellence in the field of international exchange. This entails establishing methods for collecting, producing, systematising and communicating knowledge related to exchange activities in international partnerships.

Norec will update frameworks and change theory as and when new knowledge is established. What we know about the effects of successful exchanges, and about the preconditions for success, will be published in a series of separate reports. Norec knows how to identify the elements that affect the results of a development project, and is happy to share its knowledge in this area.

Norec uses innovative methods and sources in the quest for new knowledge. We will constantly search for new and better solutions. In order to gain the best possible insight into different types of exchange, we seek to work closely with a wide variety of actors. Where appropriate, Norec will work with Norad's Knowledge Bank to generate new knowledge, and will otherwise establish mechanisms by which the Knowledge Bank and Norec keep each apprised when new knowledge emerges. We make use of communications channels, networks and arenas for training to both acquire and disseminate knowledge about the benefits and results of international exchanges.

Norec aims to communicate exchange-related knowledge to those we support through a variety of activities. We also strive to reach out to organisations that work internationally, or are involved in international partnerships. Norec provides information about how individuals and institutions can help to create a better world.



## Be a pioneer in the field of modern work methods

Norec will be a pioneer in the field of modern work methods. In order to communicate knowledge and inspire action, Norec employs flexible, efficient and adaptable administration and case management processes. We continuously develop our learning arenas, including the professional support we offer in the form of consulting and advisory services.

Norec makes highly professional contributions to national and international fora, where exchange-related issues are discussed, and where exchange-related expertise is in demand. Norec will offer flexible arrangements and aim to meet the needs of users. The recommendations ensuing from the 2018 performance review have been followed up with a decision to streamline administrative processes through digital and user-oriented solutions. Norec will play an active role in and seek out networks and partners in order to establish the best possible corporate governance practices. At the conclusion of the strategy period, our ambition is to be viewed as a leading centre of expertise in the use of international exchanges to boost development. We aim to be a sought-after and relevant participant in international partnerships.

To succeed, Norec must be a popular workplace that attracts and develops staff with skills in the area of exchange. Norec must be an inclusive and responsible organisation that takes its ethical and environmental obligations into account in everything it does. The working environment must be open and safe, and give staff the room they need to innovate, to make mistakes and to disagree. Norec offers systematic competence development for all employees, which enables them to make use of and develop their expertise through the work they do.







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