



Norwegian Institute of Public Health

Division plan 2022-2024
Mental and Physical Health

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1. Background

The Norwegian Institute of Public Health's (NIPH) mission is to produce, summarize and communicate knowledge to contribute to good public health work and good health and care services.

The division plan is a management document for the Division of mental and physical health (PF) at NIPH. It contains targets for the division up to 2024.

The plan is based on guidelines from Instruction, and annual award letter (version 1 is based on preliminary award letter dated 29.11.2021), Strategy 2019-2024 , annual business plan for NIPH and annual disposition letter for the division . Figure 1 shows the connection between the internal management documents at NIPH.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the division in 2021, with extensive efforts focused on managing the pandemic and enhancing the knowledge necessary for handling present and future health crises. These ongoing initiatives, along with several other projects, will continue to receive attention and influence the division's future ambitions.

The division plan serves as a guide, outlining the direction and setting expectations for the division. It does not provide a comprehensive overview of all ongoing activities but rather highlights the key areas that require particular attention.

2. Description of the division

PF aims to generate knowledge regarding national and local trends in physical and mental well-being, as well as identifying key risk factors and understanding the reasons behind changes and stability over time. It also focuses on studying developmental processes in various stages of life and investigating the causes and consequences of different processes. Additionally, the field provides information on current measures to prevent imbalanced development at both the individual and societal levels. The primary activities within the field revolve around:

Knowledge production: Conducting research and analysis in multiple areas, often supported by national and international research and innovation funds obtained through competitive processes. At the beginning of the year, the field had 85 externally funded projects.

Management, summarization, and dissemination of knowledge: Monitoring the state of knowledge in several fields and addressing inquiries at a broader level, potentially referring individuals to specialized professional environments. Prioritized areas for strengthening knowledge production up to 2024 are outlined in point 3.

The division consists of nine departments engaged in research and analysis related to the covered areas, employing a total of 180 personnel. The division also oversees three research and innovation centers: the Center for the Burden of Disease, Centre for Genetic Epidemiology and Mental Health and the Center for the Evaluation of Public Health Measures.

The division director has the overall responsibility for coordinating research at the NIPH. Two main steps have been taken in this regard: the Research and Innovation Committee (FIU) and the Department for Research administration management (FAS). In addition, the division is responsible for coordinating the institute's work

with the Public Health Report, and in connection with this has employed an editor and set up an editorial board. Both the FAS department and the library provide services to the entire institute. The division is also responsible for providing library services to the central health administration.

The divisions budget amounts to approximately 130 million NOK. Additionally, there are 85 externally funded projects, primarily secured through competitive research funding. The yearly allocation letter, from the ministry, provides clear guidelines for the spending within the budget framework, while the use of external funds is regulated through contracts with the funding sources.

3. Goals towards 2024

The division's goals are reformulated in the division plan. The reason for this is that NIPH's strategy up to 2024 has recently been revised. The revised goals are based on revised strategy, as well as discussions in management meetings and division manager meetings, and the processes in the departments leading up to these meetings.

In NIPH's revised strategy for 2019-2024 nine focus areas are described (see Figure 1). PF has activities that support all areas of focus. The initiatives that are and have been the most important for our goals and activities as described below are Major societal challenges, Measures that work, Strong in crisis and Health data in real time.

Our overall aim is to produce knowledge of high quality and relevance for public health work, and to be the leading knowledge producer in the public health field in Norway.

The division has the following goals until 2024:

1. We have a clear national role in the field of public health

- We identify and describe the most important public health challenges now and in the future, through studying disease incidence, disease burden and causal and risk factors.
- We identify knowledge gaps and create new, relevant knowledge in the field of public health.
- We have further developed monitoring of the lifestyle habits of diet, physical activity, tobacco and alcohol.
- We have further developed the national coordination responsibility for NCD indicators
- We have established the national coordination responsibility for knowledge in mental health
- We evaluate central public health initiatives and provide support in evaluation methodology to the municipalities

2. We have strengthened knowledge production within selected development divisions

- Comorbidity and shared risk factors
- Work and health
- Quality of life
- Mental health and prevention in children and young people
- Structural measures in public health work

3. We have a clear role in emergency preparedness

- We deliver knowledge for handling the corona pandemic
- We develop systems and build knowledge for handling future health crises
- We provide knowledge about possible effects of the pandemic, including various effects on mental health, incidence of disease, vaccine side effects and risk factors

4. We have good products/systems for the dissemination of knowledge to decision-makers and the population

- The public health report helps set the agenda for public health work
- New figures are published continuously in a user-friendly format

5. Our production, summarization and dissemination of knowledge largely covers the entire population

- Social inequality in health is a pervasive perspective
- We have strengthened knowledge about immigrants' health
- We have a life course perspective and strengthened knowledge about the health of the elderly

4. Activities and priorities

Our primary objective, along with the goals set for 2024, is to be a leader in the field and to guide the activities of the departments and centers-

To enhance our progress towards achieving the five goals by 2024, we have proposed certain prioritized activities for the division. These activities are categorized under the respective goals, although some may contribute to multiple goals simultaneously. When an activity is designated as a priority, it signifies that it will receive additional attention throughout the year. We must also evaluate whether we can allocate resources, both in terms of funds and workforce capacity, towards the identified priorities.

Goal 1: We have a clear national role in the field of public health

In recent years, we have taken several steps to clarify and strengthen our national role in the field of public health, with an emphasis on topics where Ministry of Health and Care Services (“owner ministry”) has asked us to take a national role.

The Center for the Burden of Disease serves as Norway's representative in the global burden of disease project called Global Burden of Disease. In 2021, the center established its primary focus and efforts to enhance its activities. One of the ongoing tasks involves expanding the work on projecting disease burdens and identifying

risk factors. Continuously addressing knowledge gaps and generating new essential knowledge in the field of public health is an ongoing commitment. This knowledge serves as the foundation for our contributions to the Public Health Report and various other initiatives.

Over several years, the division has been responsible for the national indicator group for NCDs, which has been a fruitful collaboration for strengthened research and analysis within the subject. Since 2020, we have also been given national coordination responsibility for knowledge in mental health and prevention. Building up the activity in connection with the coordination responsibility will continue.

Interventions that work are one of nine focus divisions in NIPH's revised strategy. We have a national role in the implementation of the Program for public health work in the municipalities, which runs over ten years until 2027. The Center for the Evaluation of Public Health Initiatives is an important resource in both contexts.

Priority activity

- Record the work on the new Public Health Notice.
- Assess whether we use the resources for data collection in relation to national monitoring responsibility for lifestyles to establish a robust and cost-effective system for frequent collection of high quality data.
- Strengthen the activity in connection with the national coordination responsibility for mental health, cf. ongoing working group.
- Strengthen policy research in the division and, as part of this, evaluate the center for the evaluation of public health measures (cf. chapter 8).

Goal 2: We have strengthened knowledge production within selected areas

The division has written plans for how we will work within the division to strengthen knowledge production within five thematic initiatives.

We will also work on a plan for research and analysis activities related to the health of the elderly. The work is coordinated from the department for physical health and ageing.

Th five thematic initiatives.

Development plans	Departments/centres with primary responsibility
Comorbidity and shared risk factors	Mental disorders and Chronic diseases
Work and health	Health promotion work
Quality of life	Mental health and suicide
Mental health and prevention in children and young people	Children's health and development
Structural tools in public health work	Center for the evaluation of public health initiatives

Priority activity

- Comorbidity and shared risk factors
 - o Acquire new knowledge about the development of non-communicable diseases and multimorbidity
 - o Strengthen the field through increased collaboration and knowledge sharing
 - o Establish a series of specialist meetings on disease occurrence and co-morbidity for the division
- Work and health

- Update the chapter on Work and health in the public health report
- Conduct an internal webinar to bring together researchers with projects relevant to the venture to stimulate more collaboration
- Establish an internal working group to strengthen collaboration on Work and health across NIPH
- Quality of life
 - Establish an internal working group to strengthen cooperation on quality of life across NIPH.
 - Establish a research file on quality of life with data from FHUS (NCPHS – Norwegian Counties Public Health Surveys).
- Mental health and prevention in children and young people
 - Pilot incidence survey among young people.
 - Establish an annual register link for incidence figures for mental disorders in primary and specialist healthcare.
- Structural measures
 - Evaluation of the new school food scheme.
 - Evaluation of alcohol warning labelling.
- Prepare a development plan related to the health of the elderly.

Goal 3: We have a clearly defined role in emergency preparedness

The division has been important in handling the corona pandemic with its strong methodological expertise, overview of central data sources and knowledge of physical and mental health, lifestyle and drug epidemiology. In addition to contributing to ongoing preparedness work, we have led two specialist initiatives under the National Knowledge Program for Covid-19:

Compliance with infection control advice. The specialist initiative provides knowledge about the population's compliance with infection control advice and about conditions that affect behavior in connection with covid-19.

EpiCorona: Analysis of risk factors and consequences. The professional effort is about acquiring more knowledge about risk factors and risk groups for infection, serious illness, and death from covid-19, and whether patients develop sequelae or new diseases afterwards.

In addition, the Center for the Evaluation of Public Health Measures has a close collaboration with the Center for Epidemic Measures (CEIR) on research into the effects of non-medicinal pandemic measures. We have also contributed to the monitoring of public service provision for children and young people, and to mapping the effect of measures that have particularly affected children and young people.

The division also contributes heavily to the Corona vaccination program.

Crisis management is one of ten priorities in NIPH's revised strategy. It will be important to continue the work we have started and to clarify the division's role in the preparedness work going forward.

Priority activity

- Continue the work to build up a robust monitoring system for mental and physical health and lifestyles based on registers and health examinations, including NHUS and FHUS/ NCPHS. Such a system will be crucial both for ongoing public health work and in health crises.
- Continue the work to build up research around the psychological consequences of pandemics and other health crises, and the measures that are implemented during such events. Also, to clarify whether this can be included as a specialist initiative in the National knowledge program for Covid-19.

- Summarize the division's efforts in relation to handling the corona pandemic.
- Clarify our role in preparedness work at NIPH and make arrangements so that we can make a good contribution in future crises.

Goal 4: We have high quality products/systems for the dissemination of knowledge to decision-makers and the population

The work on the Public Health Report has been significantly strengthened and is under further development. This is continuous work with many people involved throughout the institute. From and including 2021, annual thematic reports will be published that address current topics.

Priority activity

- Write an article about NIPH's experiences in supporting decision-makers with statistics and analyses over the past decade, in light of the Public Health Act's 10-year anniversary
- Look more holistically at the various products at our disposal, that we use to present statistics and analyzes to decision-makers at various levels. As part of this, plan to build up and further develop a more robust and coordinated production system and (further) develop products that better meet users' needs.
- Contribute to ensuring a good presentation solution for the publication of statistics at NIPH where the statistical aspects are also taken care of.

Goal 5: Our production, summarization and dissemination of knowledge covers the entire population to a greater extent

Over several years, we have highlighted social inequality in health as an important perspective, and various activities take place to strengthen the perspective in our research and analysis activity. It is, among other things, adopted a professional initiative which is being designed. Demographic changes in the population mean that we also need to strengthen knowledge about immigrants' health and the health of the elderly.

Priority activity

- Strengthen knowledge about social inequality in health
 - o The departments identify relevant issues that they will continue to work on, based on a note from the working group for the specialist focus on social health differences.
 - o Raise social inequality as a theme in various forums (professional forums, upbringing profiles, etc.).
- Strengthen knowledge about immigrants' health
 - o Establish a link between FHUS/NCPHS, data from health registers and Statistics Norway's registers for research on adult immigrants' mental and physical health.
 - o Elucidate immigrants' somatic health by analyzing data from NCDNOR
 - o Analyze opioid use among immigrants.
 - o Elucidate physical activity and sedentary behavior among immigrants by including measurements of physical activity among immigrants in the KAN3 survey.
- Strengthen knowledge about the health of the elderly (see also target 3 on development plans)
 - o Ensure good longitudinal data on aging by participating in the upcoming Tromsø8, which is being planned.
 - o Prepare a frailty indicator based on content in registers (KPR/NPR).

5. Coordination/process ownership research and library services

The division director has an overall responsibility for coordinating research at the Institute. In addition, the division is responsible for library services at NIPH, central health administration and a national offer in the drug field.

Coordination/process ownership research

Two main measures have been taken in connection with the responsibility for coordinating research at NIPH: the Research and Innovation Committee (FIU) and the department for research administration management (FAS).

FIU consists of representatives from all divisions, and the directors for research have a particular responsibility for coordinating the institute's research activity.

One of the main tasks of the committee is to prepare and implement an overall plan for strategic follow-up of the institute's work with research and research-based innovation. For the time being, an overall development plan for research and innovation and a sub-plan for quality in research have been drawn up.

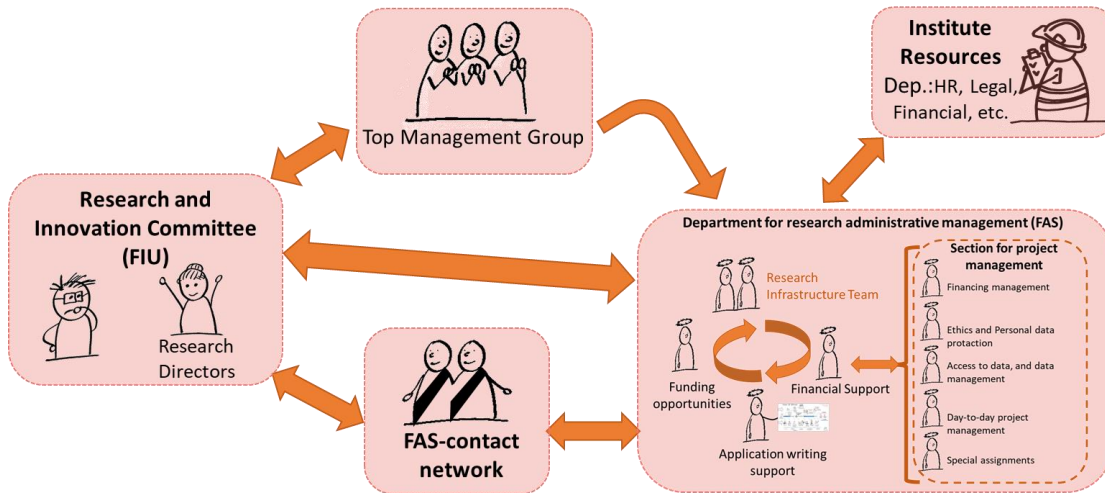
In 2020, the committee prepared the memorandum Coordination of research and health analysis at the Institute of Public Health and further development of Research and the health analysis committee. The memorandum was the basis for the name change to the Research and Innovation Committee (FIU) and revised mandate.

The department for research administrative management (FAS) provides good support and research administrative tasks. In the department, a section has been set up consisting of project coordinators who work on assignment in research projects throughout the department. The department has also established a Research Infrastructure Team, with responsibility for, among other things, DPIA (GDPR article 35 Data protection impact assessment) guidance and implementation and operation of eProtocol (GDPR article 30 - record of processing activities). FAS has a network of FAS contacts in every division of the institute.

See Figure 2 for a description of the various elements included in the coordination of research and research administrative support at NIPH and how they are connected.

Figure 2. Coordination of research and research support at NIPH.

Research support at NIPH: FAS, FIU, Research Directors, FAS-contacts, Top Management Group and Institute Resources



Prioritized activities

- Complete plan for external financing .
- Establish common project methodology for research projects, cf. ongoing working group.
- Start an internal Research School at NIPH, cf. ongoing working group.
- Follow up the Norwegian Health Authority's report from supervision of medical and health-related research by, among other things, NIPH.
- Follow up measures following the audit report on DPIA at NIPH together with the GDPR improvement project.
- Implement eProtocol at NIPH.
- Contribute to new price model for research infrastructure.
- Carry out a ROS analysis of research administrative support at NIPH.

Library services

The library provides services to the entire institute. The division is also responsible for providing library services to the central health administration which is a national offer.

Prioritized activities

- Through the Library, we will ensure efficient operations for NIPH and administration through good agreements for publishing, good knowledge support and access to the most important sources.
- We will work to fulfill our obligations to open publication.
- We will prepare an annual publication analysis as a tool for managing and managing research at NIPH.

6. Prerequisites for achieving the goals

To achieve the goals in the division plan it is important that we focus on high quality research infrastructure, good division management and creating a positive and collaborative working environment. It is also important to work well with our collaboration both within the division and with other parts of the institute. There is a lot of collaboration with the other divisions in connection with coordination of and process ownership for research and the library's services (cf. point 5). In this section, we focus on collaboration beyond these arenas. In the same way, efforts are being made to ensure a good research infrastructure within the coordination of research. Activity that is carried out especially in our division is therefore mentioned here.

Efficiently managed division

- We ensure that we have an appropriate organization. We make a continuous assessment of whether we are properly organized to achieve the division's goals, and we learn from our organizational processes.
- We focus on strengthening and further developing good management, control, and support processes in the division of planning, administration, HR and financial management.
- We are further developing the project catalog as a planning tool that provides an overview of externally and internally funded projects and research activities.
- We work systematically to obtain funding for research and innovation projects within our core divisions and ventures. We motivate application activity and have processes linked to the most important announcements. We will evaluate the established application processes and revise and follow up measures for several projects with support from the EU.
- We ensure that we have the necessary subject and methodological expertise to deliver high-quality research and analyses and make use of data from central sources through both strategic recruitment and training. The division has a leading competence environment in epidemiology. This has, among other things, been important in the preparedness work related to covid-19.

High quality research infrastructure

- We prioritize obtaining high-quality data.
- We will review how we work with DPIA in PF.
- We enter the division's projects in eProtokoll.

Positive and collaborative working environment

- We encourage joint activities to help share knowledge and strengthen the professional and social environment through monthly professional meetings, regular general meetings, annual department meetings and division meetings.
- We follow up the employee survey and the HSE work in all departments and for the division.
- We ensure good information and participation through e.g. general meetings and regular monthly meetings with shop stewards in the division.
- We focus on the transformation in the workplace, and how to work well in new work formats.
- We work continuously to ensure good cooperation across departments and with other divisions.