

Norad's strategy towards 2030



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With the UN's Sustainable Development Goals as the framework for Norad's work – Facts inform policy

JUST IMAGINE...

A greener future in a world without poverty. Perhaps unrealistic, but possible. Yes, more than possible. The only thing we can say for certain about the future is that change will take place. At the end of World War II, Europe lay in ruins. Very few countries globally were democracies – almost all African countries were colonies. All this changed over the course of a couple of generations. In 1990, 61 per cent of people in East Asia lived in extreme poverty. In 2015, less than a generation later, this applied to only 2 per cent.

We need to be aware of two important things about the future. The first is that it will be very different from the present. The second is that it is us - we humans - who create development. Norad is part of this, and we will use our mandate to create positive change that we believe in.

TOWARDS 2030

Norad's strategy looks towards 2030, which is the year by which the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should

be reached. We are also committed to follow up other international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement. On one hand, 2030 seems far away. Technological advances, social change or unexpected crises may create changes we cannot foresee today. Therefore, our strategy is not an attempt to plan for 2030 but a tool we can use to navigate towards 2030.

On the other hand, 2030 is approaching fast. Progress is slow, and it is difficult to change major development trends that impact a large part of Norad's work. If the SDGs are to be achieved globally, the level of investment must increase rapidly, and the pace of progress must accelerate. Only then, ownership of the SDGs will grow across all strains of society.

As a result, we have chosen a long-term perspective in our strategy. While our strategy must function on a daily basis, the specific strategic priorities will be assessed and revised along the way. Nevertheless, the strategic direction is firmly set.



«Norway regards the 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a transformative global roadmap for our national and international efforts aimed at eradicating extreme poverty while protecting planetary boundaries and promoting prosperity, peace and justice.»

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A WORLD AT THE TIPPING POINT

What will the future bring? This is one of the eternal questions we ask ourselves as individuals and as a society. Our strategy is shaped at a time when the world has made enormous social and economic progress.

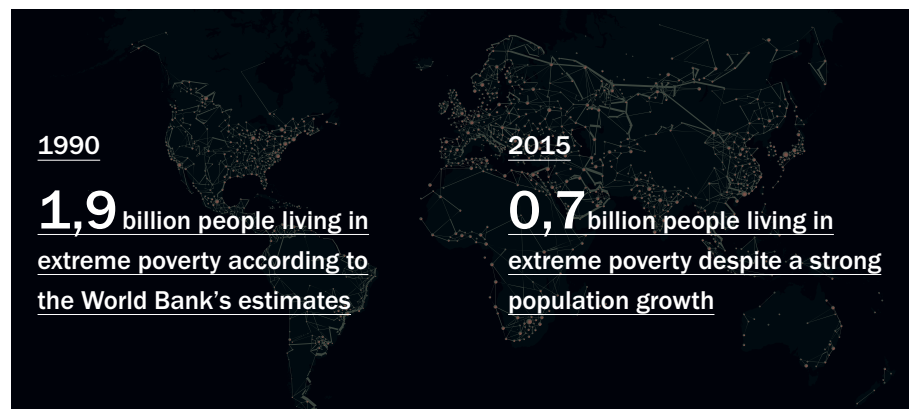
In 1990, approximately 1.9 billion people were living in extreme poverty according to the World Bank’s estimates. This constituted 36 per cent of the global population. In 2015, this number had declined to 737 million people. Despite a strong population growth, the percentage of those living in extreme poverty had been reduced to 10 per cent of the world’s population.¹ Additionally, access to education, health services and clean energy has increased, and child mortality decreased. While many people still have little to live on and are

vulnerable, this represents outstanding progress.

This substantial progress has been unequally distributed, and there are strong regional differences. Sub-Saharan Africa has made far less progress than other regions globally. While extreme poverty is nearly eradicated in East Asia, there are presently more people living in extreme poverty in Africa than was the case in 1990.² In 2015, over half of the poorest people globally lived in sub-Saharan Africa, a total of 420 million people.³

From our current standpoint in 2021, there are indications that the upward trend is flattening out. The decline in poverty has been weaker in recent years. Growth for the next decade is forecasted to be lower than in the previous decades,

The World Bank’s estimation of people living in extreme poverty



a trend that may be further reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Growing inequality between countries contributes to the reduction in growth and the increase in poverty.

Meanwhile, technological changes lead to new development opportunities for poor countries that did not have such opportunities a generation ago, and for development cooperation.

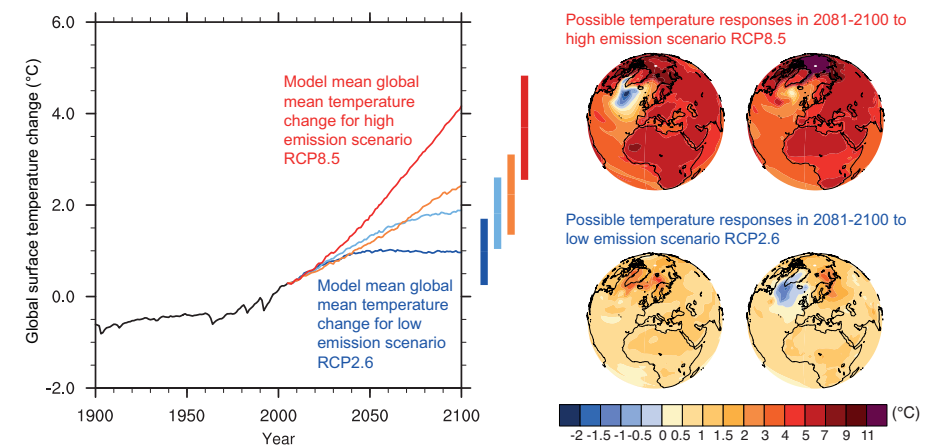
Another development trend is that an increasing number of those living in extreme poverty live in areas affected by fragility, conflict and violence – currently over 40 per cent.⁴ This requires a new and innovative approach to how we can reach the poorest people and simultaneously promote development by providing support interventions based on

understanding the context of individual countries and regions.

While great progress has been made on social and economic human rights, we are seeing a deterioration in civil and political rights. Local partners working together with civil society constantly report threats and more challenging work conditions. This requires more attention from Norad. Important global initiatives to combat global challenges have increasingly met greater opposition.

As our strategy comes into effect, a pandemic that impacts all sectors is the dominating challenge for the entire world. The problem and its solution have genuine global dimensions in common with other issues such as inequality, peace and security.

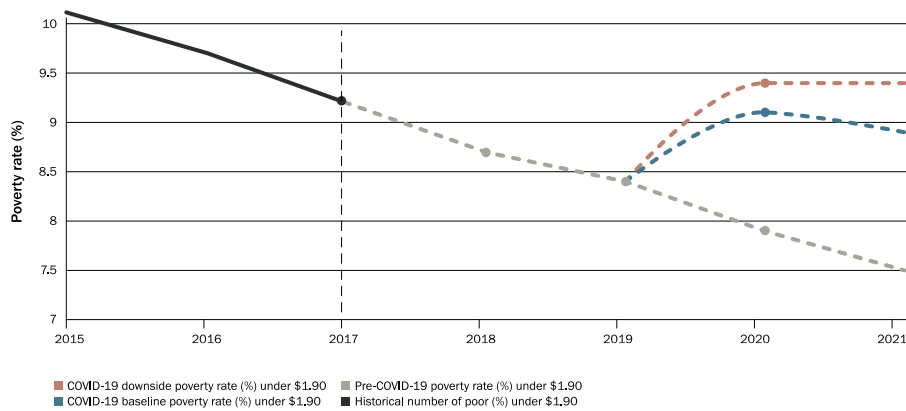
Greenhouse gas emissions



However, the fundamental changes we are experiencing in the basis of human existence constitute one of the most dramatic development trends globally: the climate crisis and biodiversity loss. Global climate change has already impacted humans and society. Even with the fulfilment of the Paris Agreement, it is likely that global temperatures will increase by around three degrees Celsius, leading to grave consequences. Biodiversity loss is closely linked to climate change, and according to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), it will have an even greater impact on humans than climate change. This is not so surprising: we humans are completely dependent on nature for food, clothing, energy and medicines – for most things in fact.

Poor countries are worst affected. At the same time, these are the countries with the fewest resources for adaptation. The World Bank estimates an increase of around 100 million people living in extreme poverty towards 2030 as a result of climate change alone.⁵ Researchers have now documented a connection between human-caused climate change and more extreme weather such as hurricanes, floods, and drought. Environmental degradation and climate change affect temperature and soil, precipitation patterns and local flora and fauna. This in turn may give rise to major negative impacts on food production. Both the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) predict widespread migration as a result.

Rise in global extreme poverty



Even today, far more people flee as a result of natural disasters and climate change than because of warfare and conflict. This will challenge the thinking of Norad and other actors about the bridge between short-term humanitarian efforts and long-term development cooperation and community building.

Major ecological changes are creating a world at the tipping point. These changes pose a threat to economic and social progress in poor countries. We must prepare ourselves for a decade with an increased number of unforeseen crises. We can expect needs to change rapidly and that crises will necessitate new work methods, such as what happened during the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world in 2020.

THE SDGS REPRESENT A GLOBAL ACTION PLAN – AND PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR NORAD'S WORK

Former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland introduced the concept of sustainable development in the Brundtland Commission's 1987 report: Our Common Future.

In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 SDGs was adopted by all UN Member States. Norway bases its work both nationally and internationally on the SDGs. The Solberg Government states that 'The Government has resolved that the SDGs constitute the main policy direction for tackling the greatest national and global challenges of our time. The Government's development policy priorities are firmly anchored in the 2030 agenda'.⁶ As a result, it is natural

UN Sustainable Development Goals



that the SDGs provide the framework for our work in the period leading up to 2030.

The SDGs differ in several ways from earlier goals and other international agreements. First, they represent a holistic agenda. The SDGs view the economy, the environment and social development in conjunction. There are 17 different goals, but they are interdependent, cohesive and must be seen in the same context.

Second, the SDGs are common to all; they do not only apply to developing countries. The SDGs are not founded on the idea that we should help those in need. They are founded on partnership and equality.

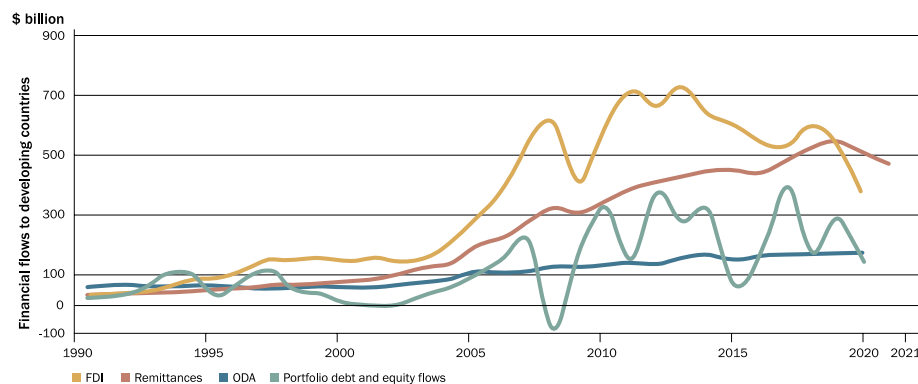
'We are all developing countries,' said Prime Minister Erna Solberg when she presented Norway's follow-up of the

SDGs in 2016. The SDGs require the joint efforts of government, civil society, the private sector, and academia in all countries. It is an agenda for resource mobilisation rather than a legally binding agreement.

Finally, an important principle is embedded in the agenda that is fundamental to Norad's work – Leave no one behind. The most vulnerable and marginalised people worldwide must be included in development.

We assume responsibility for Norway's work internationally to ensure that developing countries reach these goals. We will organise our work on development cooperation to achieve these goals to the greatest degree possible.

Decrease in financial flows



**NORAD'S NEW TASKS:
INVEST MORE STRATEGICALLY**

In 2020, Norad's role and mission changed after a reform in development aid administration.

From Norad's point of view, the greatest change is that we must administer a considerably larger share of the development aid budget based on overarching results-based management under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Climate and Environment. If we are to succeed, Norad must invest more strategically to achieve the development policy goals set by Norway and the world at large.

In 2015, Norad administered approximately NOK 4.7 billion. In 2020, this increased to just over NOK 18 billion. This constituted almost half of the Norwegian development aid budget for 2020 and the majority of long-term development cooperation.

Norad's main task in the years ahead will be to invest more strategically to achieve results through establishing initiatives that can create the big changes we are seeking. This includes increased strategic dialogue with our partners to create and co-create results. It also means communicating results and creating arenas that can trigger action and encourage investment from others. Consequently, Norad must evaluate its efforts more systematically with an ambition to use knowledge

from both good and less desirable results in order to improve.

All in all, this entails a change in Norad's role, even though many of the tasks we will undertake are well-known to us.

FACTS INFORM POLICY

Having responsibility for a greater share of the development aid budget requires comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge about how we can spend money in ways that contribute to the SDGs and Norwegian development policy goals in the best possible manner.


Towards 2030, Norad will have clear goals that we will strive to achieve. We will assess how these goals can be achieved in the best possible way – across partners, channels, and sectors. This will require a more holistic and strategic approach than today, as well as integrated and systematic use of knowledge of and insight into all areas of our work. It will also require a more extensive dialogue with our partners and partner countries. Norad must therefore be able to mobilise different kinds of actors to achieve the SDGs.

This is the core of our strategy, embodied in the slogan 'Facts inform policy'. Facts must always be the basis of our actions.

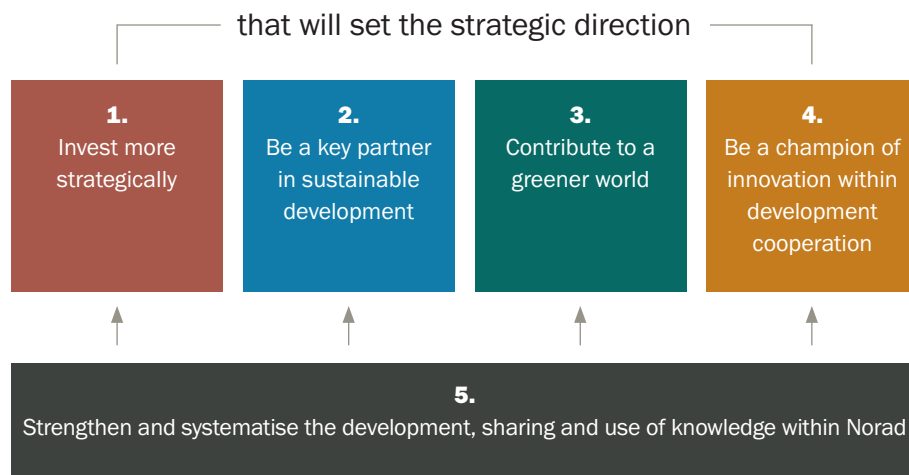
Insight and understanding based on research and other knowledge should always be applied, and this outclasses tradition, routine or established preconceptions.

Norad's strategy in a nutshell

- The Sustainable Development Goals are the framework for Norad's work. We will make every effort to ensure the goals are achieved!
- Our main task is to invest more strategically in cooperation with our partners.
- Our work must be based on knowledge and insight – Facts inform policy.



Norad's five strategic priorities



Strategic initiatives and activities will be launched under each strategic priority. Strategic priorities 1-4 are externally focused, while strategic priority 5 is targeted mainly at internal conditions.



Photo: Espen Røst

FIVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The new strategy looks towards 2030. To ensure our success, we have identified five strategic priorities that set a clear course and focus for the work that lies ahead of us.

The strategic priorities will help to achieve the SDGs and promote more strategic use of development aid funding. Strategic initiatives and activities will be launched under each strategic priority. Strategic priorities 1-4 are externally focused, while strategic priority 5 is targeted mainly at internal conditions.

Five strategic priorities that will set the strategic direction



Photo: Espen Røst

1. Invest more strategically

Our goal is that the development aid budget will be a strategic instrument for ending poverty, mitigating the climate and environmental crisis, and combatting various forms of inequality.

2. Be a key partner in sustainable development

Our goal is that Norad will be a key partner that brings together various stakeholders to help developing countries achieve the SDGs.



Photo: Aleksander Ramslund/Scream Media

3. Contribute to a greener world

Our goal is that climate and environmental concerns will be integrated into all our work and be a guiding principle when developing new partnerships and initiatives.



Photo: Ken Opprann



Photo: Marte Lid

4. Be a champion of innovation within development cooperation

Our goal is that Norad will have a culture of innovation and creativity that tries out new partners, channels, and methods of implementation.

5. Strengthen and systematise the development, sharing and use of knowledge within Norad

Our goal is that Norad will continually develop its expertise and work methods, empower its employees, and encourage knowledge sharing internally and with our partners.



Photo: Espen Røst

1. Invest more strategically

Our goal is that the development aid budget will be a strategic instrument for ending poverty, mitigating the climate and environmental crisis, and combatting all forms of inequality.

Norad manages half of the Norwegian Government's development aid budget and has major responsibility for getting as much development effect as possible – some would say increase the return on investment.

We engage in strategic dialogue with our partners before, during and after specific initiatives. We will concentrate our efforts on systemic changes and create large, cohesive portfolios where long-term effect and results from all initiatives are interconnected.

In order to succeed, we must gain a better understanding of the context in which our funded initiatives are intended to function and facilitate the use of up-to-date knowledge and management methods. We will also take a more systematic and nuanced approach to risk and work



Access to clean and affordable energy has social, environmental, and economic impacts. Dorcas Mcheri (pictured) is working at a power station in Mbagala in Dar Es Salaam. Photo: Espen Røst

across channels and partners. At Norad, technical expertise and grant management are an integrated process.

2. Be a key partner in sustainable development

Our goal is that Norad will be a key partner that brings together various stakeholders to help developing countries achieve the SDGs.

This means the Norad will play an even larger role as an actor within development cooperation, both nationally and internationally, and assume a clear role as an expert within the field in the public sphere through various tools and channels.

Norad will be a toolbox for development. We will establish arenas, networks, finance mechanisms and partnerships that spark action, and be a hub for all those working in the development field.

We will be the agency with ownership of sustainable development in the public sphere. We will promote engagement in and knowledge about the SDGs, as well as convey an understanding of development cooperation and sustainable development and its impact, both among decision-makers and within the broader society.



Photo: Aleksander Ramsland/Scream Media

3. Contribute to a greener world

Our goal is that climate and the environment will be integrated into all our work and be a leading principle when developing new partnerships and initiatives.

This means that Norad will ensure that all development assistance is in line with the Paris Agreement and other global environmental targets and agreements.

We will systematically integrate climate and environment at the project and portfolio level and clearly underscore this in our dialogue with partners. We will strive to become a leader in the Norwegian public administration as a green agency.



Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) is supporting the work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Photo: Ken Opprann

4. Be a champion of innovation within development cooperation

Our goal is that Norad will have a culture of innovation and creativity that tries out new partners, channels, and methods of implementation.

This means more actively assessing new methods, channels and partners that will help us to progress.

Norad will think creatively about how we can create more impact at the local, national, and global level. We will work more systematically in developing the academic and experience-based knowledge base for development cooperation and follow and understand new development trends among our partners. Important parts of our knowledge base will come from our partners and research actors in developing countries.

Norad will develop internal expertise and a culture and curiosity for innovation within the agency and will try out new ideas as well as promote the best ideas that give good results. As a part of this, we will explore the impact of creating a



Conan Obame from AEGOS uses aerial drones to surveil the rainforests in Gabon, and to detect illegal logging or mining which is destroying the rainforest. The rainforest in Gabon is part of the world's second largest rainforest, the Congo Basin. Photo: Marte Lid

dedicated finance mechanism directed towards innovation and upscaling of successful initiatives.

5. Strengthen and systematise the development, sharing and use of knowledge within Norad

Our goal is that Norad will continuously develop our expertise and work methods, empower our employees through more autonomy and authority in decisions, and encourage knowledge sharing internally and with our partners.

In order to succeed, we will strengthen Norad's culture of learning and encourage the exchange of knowledge and experience. We will work across organisational boundaries and promote more autonomy and responsibility among managers and employees within the organisation. Norad will prioritise competence enhancement and career development through the strategic use of competence development measures. We will encourage internal mobility and give employees the opportunity to assume new responsibilities.

Norad will adopt the use of technology and digital tools that will improve and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our work. To reach our goals, we must make major progress on our digitalisation agenda in the decade leading up to 2030.



George King from Sierra Leone shared his reflections on digital technologies and development at the Norad Conference in 2019.
Photo: Espen Røst

We will strive to increase diversity among Norad's employees along multiple dimensions.

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50 years of energy collaboration between Norway and Tanzania: When the village of Hondogo in the Chalinze District, Pwani region got electricity, it gave the people living there completely new opportunities. Photo: Espen Røst

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