Cluster for Systematic Review and Health Technology Assessments Strategy 2024-2029

Developed through a voluntary process with cluster employees in December 2023. This strategy is based on our experiences, the NIPH Institute strategy, a SWOT analysis and our target picture description (Målbildebeskrivelse).

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The Cluster for Systematic Review and Health Technology Assessments is a unit in rapid development and restructuring. In 2022, we reduced the number of employees in the cluster by 20%. At the end of 2023, a further 45% reduction when employees were transferred to the Norwegian Medical Products Agency (former name: Norwegian Medicines Agency) at the end of 2023.

From 2024 onwards, we will be faced with a demanding financial and staffing situation. Strict prioritisation will be necessary, while adhering to our social mission and commissioners' needs.

The institutions long-term development goals are well-established. The cluster's strategy mirrors the strategy and goals of the NIPH while highlighting our mandate and areas of expertise. In the time ahead, however, we will need to adjust our level of ambition and cannot expect the same rate of development in all areas.

We have four priorities within our three core strategy areas of Knowledge, Innovation, and Quality and transparency.

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What is an evidence synthesis product?

Throughout this strategy document we refer to evidence synthesis products. This term covers the broad range of approaches we use to meet the needs of our commissioners.

The term evidence synthesis products encompasses, but is not limited to, the following:

- Systematic reviews

- Health Technology Assessments including economic, ethical and organisational analysis

- Health economic evaluations

- Systematic scoping reviews

- Search and sort reports (a list over relevant literature in a field)

- Rapid reviews

- Mini Health Technology Assessments

- Short summaries of existing systematic reviews

Three core strategy areas

Knowledge

Employees high level of methods knowledge

Innovative knowledge for evidence synthesis methods development

Providing and helping to interpret knowledge for commissioners for evidence-based practice and implementation

HTV conducts research, summarizes and communicates knowledge on matters of importance to the fields of health as well as social and welfare questions.

We have employees who are experts in the methods for conducting evidence synthesis, primary research and health economic assessments, as well as developing and implementing new and innovative methods for conducting evidence synthesis.

A key responsibility is to provide evidence to our commissioners in order for them to make informed, evidence-based decisions for the implementation of new health and social services. Within this we also help with the facilitation of provision and interpretation of the knowledge.

Finally, staff are involved in teaching and dissemination activities with the aim of others to use evidence synthesis methods with the goal of implementing, evaluating or using the evidence.

Innovation

Machine learning

Systematic review methods

How we communicate and implement the results of our work

HTV is one of the leading research groups in the world in innovation linked to methods for conducting systematic reviews.

Over the next five years we will continue our tradition of innovation through focusing on evaluating and increasing the implementation of machine learning tools to maintain or increase the quality and reduce the production time of knowledge synthesis products.

We will continue our work on exploring, evaluating and implementing new methods within systematic reviews and qualitative evidence syntheses.

Finally, we will focus on how we can use innovation to better communicate and implement the results of our evidence synthesis products to different stakeholders.

Quality and transparency

High quality evidence synthesis products through transparent methods

Our aim is to produce high quality evidence synthesis products using transparent methods. All of the work we do is aimed at maintaining or increasing the quality of our reports.

Transparency of our working methods through our methods handbook is one of the cornerstones of our focus on high quality evidence synthesis.

We adopt the values of quality and transparency in the other areas of our work including primary research, dissemination, mini Health Technology Assesments and support Evidence to Decision processes for guidelines.

4 Priorities

By focusing on our priorities we will be a cluster in continuous professional and organisational development. The aim is to ensure capacity and expertise to implement the measures prioritised by the cluster, together with timely, high-quality deliveries of our commissions.

1

Continue delivering and developing high quality commissions

We will ensure our ability to respond to the questions we receive from our commissioners.

We will continue to deliver high quality evidence synthesis products to our existing commissioners. This will include:

- Further develop a knowledge support system for municipal health and care services (knowledge support for decision-making).

- Carrying out knowledge summaries, reports and other types of research on behalf of the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir).

- Carry out knowledge summaries and health technology assessments (various types) on behalf of the Norwegian Directorate of Health (Hdir).

- Conduct health technology assessments on behalf of the Commissioning Forum for New Methods, for procedures, organisational measures and digital solutions in the specialist health service.

We will also aim to assist other actors (e.g. HOD, the Norwegian Board of Health Supervision, the Regional Health Authorities, municipalities, other areas of NIPH) with health technology assessments and knowledge summaries that they need to develop and implement evidence-based practice.

2

Methods development and expansion

Our goal is retain our position as a leader within innovation for systematic review methods and the use of machine learning

Over the next five years we will expand our research portfolio to:
- Facilitate applied quantitative and qualitative primary research, including register-based studies, either as a supplement to knowledge summaries or as separate projects.
- Increase the number of externally financed projects we are applying for and involved in.
- Explore ways to expand the use and implementation of health economic evaluations across a wider variety of products.
- Further investigate how to improve our workflow processes internally and with external partners

We will also aim to maintain our focus on the implementation and use of machine learning in evidence synthesis products by establishing machine learning and digital solutions as a standard approach to help improve and speed up knowledge delivery.

Finally, we will continue to offer teaching and supervision linked to the methods we use in our work.

3

Interdisciplinary cooperation

We will focus on maintaining and creating interdisciplinary partnerships for teaching, guidance and cooperation both internally within NIPH and externally with other research groups and institutions

We are a group of employees with high levels of methodological and topic area expertise. Through increasing interdisciplinary cooperation, we can support other areas of the institute that are conducting evidence synthesis through mentoring, teaching and e learning opportunities.

We will continue to build our interdisciplinary network internally and externally in order to build on our existing areas of expertise and expand into new areas that are relevant to our work. In raising the visibility of our employees, we hope to increase the opportunity for cooperation.

We will aim to improve collaboration across a number of areas linked to innovation, dissemination, teaching and production of evidence synthesis methods / methods support.

4

Communication and visibility

Our communication will be open, inclusive and accessible

In recent years the visibility of our research group has declined. Over the next five years we aim to increase the visibility of our research group and our evidence synthesis products and research through networking, adding DOIs to our reports, having a clear communication and visibility strategy, disseminating our work more broadly and publishing in international journals.

We aim to be a visible player inside and outside NIPH, through media, podcasts, webinars, debates, networks, professional forums, project presentations, scientific articles, etc.

We will continue and further develop our services related to dissemination, teaching and expertise development. These will mainly contribute to knowledge-based practice in health, care and welfare services, and may include implementation, research methods, the path from knowledge to decision-making, etc. We will utilize various technologies in this work, such as Massive Open Online Course, videos, podcasts, e-learning.

Summary

Impact

We will be a cluster in continuous professional and organisational development. We will ensure capacity and expertise to implement our strategies of delivering and developing high quality evidence, developing new methods and expanding the methods we use in our work, increasing interdisciplinary cooperation and clearly communicating and implementing the results of our work in a visible way.

Excellence

We will produce high quality knowledge through the use of transparent and innovative methods that meets the needs of our commissioners to make evidence informed decisions.

Implementation

We will achieve this by:

- Continuing to follow our methods handbook
- Identifying, evaluating and implementing new and innovative methods for conducting systematic reviews
- Focusing on making our work more visible through improving the communication of our results to various stakeholders and increasing the visibility of our work through DOIs and publications in international journals
- Networking and increasing our level of interdisciplinary cooperation within the NIPH and externally through conferences, working groups and project applications

The UN Sustainable Development Goals

Public Health Goals in Norway

Live Longer
Live Better
More Equitable Conditions