
*Research and Innovation Strategy
2020-24*



*Department of Global Public Health and
Primary Care
University of Bergen*

Vision

Knowledge for better health and a better society

The Department of Global Public Health and Primary Care (IGS) will increase knowledge relating to health and health services, nationally and globally, and will particularly aim to reduce socially and politically driven inequalities in health.

Three pillars

Public health, primary health care and global health

We will contribute to better health and a better society through high quality inclusive research, innovation, and educational activities within public health, primary health care and global health.

Primary goal

IGS will work to fulfil the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, with emphasis on SDG3: *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.*

The Department aims to excel in **research** on public health issues, primary health care and global health. It will play a leading role in the University of Bergen's (UiB's) priority area "Global Challenges". The Department will take responsibility for locally and nationally important research infrastructures. It will be capable of responding to acute health-related social challenges with relevant, research-based expertise.

Innovation is critical for attaining better health globally. IGS has considerable potential to contribute to research-based innovations such as developing new methods for disease prevention, expanding knowledge relating to health service organisation, as well as testing new treatment methods and new technologies. In the coming period, we will expand our understanding of creative, novel approaches within the areas of society with which we engage. This activity will benefit society, patients, families, and health personnel, and we will collaborate with stakeholders within and beyond academia. We will contribute to sustainable innovations that benefit society and involve value creation.

The **Alrek Health Cluster** provides a foundation for the Department. A strong, shared IGS culture and interprofessional collaborations will provide the basis for novel research and innovation activity.

We will contribute both nationally and globally to

- (i) reduce socially and politically driven inequalities in health
- (ii) advance knowledge for effective, egalitarian health services that collaborate well
- (iii) produce knowledge about public health challenges in the broadest sense
- (iv) increase knowledge about the causes and consequences of illness and disease
- (v) be on the forefront of healthcare innovation
- (vi) develop research-based teaching-methods within our subject disciplines

Research Groups at IGS

Central themes for research at IGS are represented by our research groups, here placed under their IGS sections:

Public Health, Occupational & Environmental Medicine, Health Management - SAMLET

- Occupational and Environmental Medicine

Elderly Medicine, Social Pharmacy and Interprofessional Workplace Learning - FEST

- Elderly and Nursing Home Medicine / SEFAS
- Social Pharmacy

General Practice - FAM

- Health Promotion, Migration and Health
- Health Service Research
- Research in Medical Education
- Sleep, Musculoskeletal Disorders, Infectious Diseases and Laboratory Medicine

Epidemiology and Medical Statistics - EPISTAT

- Genetic Epidemiology
- Lifestyle Epidemiology
- Registry-Based Reproductive Epidemiology
- Centre for Translational Epidemiology (TrEpi)

Ethics and Health Economics - ETØK

- Bergen Centre for Ethics and Priority Setting (BCEPS)
- Health Economics, Leadership, and Translational Ethics

Health Sciences- HELSEVIT

- Phenomenological Studies in Health Sciences
- Physiotherapy
- Praxeology (ending as research group at IGS by June 2021)

Global Health (GLOBAL) / Centre for International Health (CIH)

- Global Health Anthropology
- Global Mental Health
- Global Health
- Greenness, Air Pollution and Health
- Tuberculosis

Strategic priority areas

Our research will be high quality, and methodologically innovative both theoretically and technically, and of high visibility. IGS has significant breadth within its research and innovation activity. We will maintain this breadth, but here identify some specific goals which we will particularly focus on during this period.

GOALS – WE WILL

- Be coordinated and united as we build knowledge relating to concrete public health challenges, nationally and globally
- Generate new information about fair, accessible and effective health services
- Build interprofessional knowledge about and perspectives on health and health services in communities and regions nationally and globally

MEASURES – WE WILL

- Particularly strengthen the following research and innovation areas:
 - Health problems contributing to heavy disease burdens nationally and globally
 - Social inequalities in health, including health challenges relating to migration, as well as climate and environmental changes
 - Preventative medicine, infection control and preparedness
- Strengthen the disciplines of public health, geriatric medicine, health leadership and health economics within the Department
- Use centres as tools for developing innovative and ground-breaking research and innovation. We will plan, establish, and strengthen the following research and innovation centres during this period:
 - Bergen Centre for Ethics and Priority Setting
 - Bergen Centre for Translational Epidemiology
 - Centre for Multigenerational Research
 - Centre for Research-driven Innovation in Elderly Medicine
 - Centre for Pandemics
- Develop strategies for the continuation of our Centre of Excellence, CISMAC, together with the Faculty of Medicine
- Use the Alrek Health Cluster to build an interprofessional research and innovation environment in close collaboration with the health services, government organisations, and the private sector, including both established and start-up businesses
- Identify innovation potential within the Department's academic disciplines and educational activities
- Stimulate education research and innovation within all the Department's areas of education
- Actively pursue collaborations with UiB's inter-faculty group for artificial intelligence and with the Faculty of Medicine's initiatives in the new incubator building
- Continue to expand and use local and national strategically valuable infrastructures within registry research (BIOS and Biobank Norway) and primary healthcare research (PraksisNett)

Organisation and leadership

Good organisation and leadership will form the basis for a proactive and dynamic IGS. The Department has a Board as well as a Leader Group, which includes the Head of Department, Head of Administration, Head of Research, Head of Education, Head of Innovation, and the leaders of the 7 Sections. Research at IGS is organised through research groups. A significant portion of the research is externally funded.

GOALS – WE WILL

- Strengthen the employees' bonds to the Department, as well as increasing the sense of belonging in the Alrek Health Cluster
- Develop good organisation and leadership at all levels
- Continue to develop our work environment to promote creativity, safety and critical reflection
- Create a milieu supporting the development and establishment of more externally financed research and innovation projects
- Strengthen the collaboration between the administrative and scientific staff
- Contribute to the dynamic organisation of the Alrek Health Cluster

MEASURES – WE WILL

- Create and expand existing meeting opportunities within the Department
- Continue to work on leadership development at all levels within IGS
- Clarify the mandates for the different roles and units at the Department
- Build a culture for sharing both success and failures
- Strengthen Public Health as an academic discipline by actively participating in national arenas, promoting specialist competency among the scientific staff, and supporting research in this field
- Make use of the Alrek Health Cluster to develop new research and innovation projects
- Collaborate with partners in the Health Cluster to build it into a highly visible and attractive place for external stakeholders and academics
- Establish academic and administrative routines that will contribute to more competitive applications from the Department and increase the collaboration with other Departments and Faculties at UiB
- Increase our competency in the application processes for innovation calls
- Work for systematic competency development in project leaders
- Use digitalisation to liberate time for increasing competency development for the administrative staff to enable high quality administrative follow-up of this strategy

Collaboration, internationalisation, and user involvement

IGS has and will continue to have strong local, national, and international collaborations. Such relationships require effort to build and maintain. We will strengthen our international research collaborations including those with researchers in low- and middle-income countries, as well as with researchers from world-leading research institutions. We will also establish and strengthen collaborations within the Alrek Health Cluster.

Research and innovation projects at IGS have varying levels of user involvement today. IGS has research groups that are studying user involvement, and we would like to use their expertise in this area more widely. The end users for our projects can include patients, health personnel, or health management.

GOALS – WE WILL

- Establish projects across research groups at the Department
- Strengthen research and innovation collaborations with Bergen Municipality and the other members of the Alrek Health Cluster
- Develop concrete research and teaching collaborations with other Faculties at UiB
- Establish collaborations with health services, government agencies, relevant companies and businesses
- Maintain and strengthen international collaborations via shared research and innovation activities, as well as stimulating new project activity
- Develop research and innovation projects that comply with the end-users' needs

MEASURES – WE WILL

- Establish and participate in meeting places, seminars and social gatherings at the Department and at the Alrek Health Cluster
- Use our areas of special research expertise to share advice and build new collaborations
- Prioritise sabbatical stays that strengthen international collaborations and support the development of student and staff exchanges abroad
- Use digital media and webinars to establish contact and collaborations with international researchers and the business sector
- Attain concrete results such as joint publications and research projects with international partners
- Strengthen good, reciprocal collaborations with researchers in low- and middle-income countries
- Take advantage of the incubator building and innovation-supporting companies (for example Vestlandets innovasjonsselskap (VIS) and the Norwegian Smart Care Cluster) to help us establish collaborations with companies and private industry
- Enable user representatives to have genuine impact on our research- and innovation-projects, for example by establishing user forums or inviting users to participate in project groups where relevant, as well as making active use of the user panel at the Alrek Health Cluster
- Use the expertise our own research groups have gained in working with user participation
- Assess the equitability and environmental perspectives of projects where relevant

Recruitment and researcher training

IGS' greatest resource is its employees. We will attain our ambitious research goals by recruiting talented individuals and working to continuously update the competencies of our employees.

IGS has a stable group of scientific staff and is an attractive research milieu. There have been a number of new staff additions in the past few years due to newly opened positions, and the replacement of natural losses. Through the Professor emeritus scheme, IGS is able to retain valuable expertise. The administrative staff contribute to attaining the Department's goals in all areas.

We have around 150 PhD candidates with varying affiliations both nationally and internationally. Researcher training has become increasingly competitive in Norway over the past few years with increasing numbers of universities and university colleges. IGS has two research schools (research school in Public Health, and the CIH-CISMAC research school), and actively participates in a number of national research schools.

GOALS – WE WILL

- Be an attractive workplace for employees within our scientific disciplines and administration
- Recruit and continuously develop excellent researchers, supervisors and research leaders
- Carry out researcher training with opportunities for international collaboration
- Ensure that research ethics form part of the researcher training at the Department
- Maintain high completion rates for our PhD candidates, giving them skills that are attractive for academia, public administration, health services and private industry

MEASURES – WE WILL

- Actively support our employees in achieving their scientific goals, and encourage them to strive even further
- Create a supportive academic culture by including our PhD candidates, research track medical students and Master students in our research groups
- Contribute to the new building at Årstadveien 17 becoming a place that staff, collaborative partners, students, and others actively use; where we establish an open, creative and engaging milieu
- Contribute to the courses and programs we are responsible for by including Master students, research track medical students and PhD candidates in our research groups
- Use our study programmes and the Faculty of Medicine's research track programme to recruit good research candidates
- Make our Research Groups attractive meeting places for our PhD Candidates and Master students by ensuring that the groups develop both academic and social activities
- Continue to develop our two research schools, as well as to actively participate in national research schools
- Contribute to academic development within research ethics, and offer necessary training in established research ethic norms for researchers, supervisors and research leaders
- Use a mentor scheme and systematically create a career development plan for post-doctoral fellows
- Involve more scientific staff from various career phases during project development
- Establish a project development seminar for post-doctoral fellows and associate professors where all staff are welcome as participants
- Encourage younger researchers to apply for external financing, particularly in those programmes focussing on young researchers, such as mobility grants and research projects for younger talent

Dissemination and community relations

IGS will be visible, as both a source of information and a contributor to public discourse. We have a Communication Plan that promotes our values for participation in the public arena.

Many IGS employees are already active in the public eye through interviews, newspaper columns, and participation in advisory and committee roles. We will recruit and motivate even more of our employees to participate actively in public debates.

GOALS – WE WILL

- Be a visible Department that is a recognised resource for contributing to a well-informed general public
- Ensure that our research and innovation is of interest to the public and the media
- Contribute to open debate consistent with good research practice
- Contribute to creating new venues for debate
- Be accessible as experts for health authorities and others

MEASURES – WE WILL

- Contribute to the implementation of our research results in policy recommendations and guidelines, as well as being visible in political processes
- Actively participate in arenas where we meet central administrations nationally and internationally
- Nominate our researchers and partners for awards when we have good candidates
- Use the Alrek Health Cluster as a starting point for actively participating in collaboration processes with the local municipalities in our region
- Encourage our employees and research groups to engage actively in social debates
- Actively use our Communication Plan and the Faculty of Medicine communication advisors
- Make our affiliation to IGS, the Centres and the University of Bergen visible in all academic and political contexts, and in the media