

Newsletter

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATICS, UiB
No.11/2025, 13.06.2025

SUMMER
FEATURE!



Editor-in-chief: Inge Jonassen. Editor: Randi Heggernes Eilertsen.
Contributions or comments to the newsletter are very welcome.
Old newsletters can be found [here](#).

Dear Colleagues,

On Tuesday the research council – together with the government – announced the six AI center proposals that will be funded. Unfortunately, the center proposal we coordinated was not on the list – and neither were any of the other proposals where we played important roles. I want to thank all that contributed to the proposals and encourage you to look for ways to further explore the ideas and the collaborations developed in the application process. I also want to congratulate Barbara Wasson – at UiB – who leads one of the funded proposals and look forward to what she and the other centers can develop in the coming years. I also know that the research council has some additional funding to support the funded centers and hopefully also the broader community. We will look for opportunities to contribute going forward.

This week I am at a physical gathering at Dekanskolen (“dean school”) learning about leadership, strategic planning, leader groups, work for diversity, equity, inclusion and more. It is good to have an opportunity to reflect and discuss with other leaders in the sector and I will bring back some new insights and perspectives that will hopefully benefit the department going forward.

Yesterday was Linda’s last day as head of

administration at our department. I want again to thank her for her great contribution and wish her the best of luck at the Geophysical Institute. Luckily, we have been able to recruit a very competent new head of administration, Espen Rotevatn. Espen is currently rector of a “folkehøyskole” at Svalbard and will join us from August 1st. I look forward to getting Espen on the team. In the meantime, Eirik is going to function as head of administration from today and out the month of July.

I also want to congratulate Mikhail on multiple awards at the conferences STAF2025 and SLE2025 currently happening in Koblenz (see separate piece).

Summer is approaching, and I would like to thank you all for the hard work you’ve done this year, especially in this hectic exam period. I hope you are all able to take a well-deserved vacation and wish you a nice summer!

I wish you all a very nice weekend!

Inge



The Dean’s Blog - Gunn Mangerud

[The Dean’s blog](#) aims to inform us of ongoing work and processes at The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Her latest posts:

[Godt UHR MNT-møte i Tromsø](#)

[Flere unge velger realfag og teknologi hos oss](#)

Greetings from Koblenz!



We have received a travel report from SLE/ STAF 2025 in Koblenz, where Mikhail Barash accepted the awards for both Distinguished Paper Award and Distinguished Artifact Award!

Mikhail presented the double-winning article (“Optimal Language Design is Hard: A Case Study in ECMAScript (JavaScript) Standardization”) with his former exchange student Philipp Riemer (the two other co-authors, Yury Nikulin and Ashley Claymore, were not attending).

Congratulations to Mikhail & co!

(Thank you for the photos, Anya Bagge!)

Welcome, new colleagues!



Ehsan Hossein Zadeh Khezri

Ehsan did his PhD at the Department of Physics and Technology here at UiB. He is now a researcher working on the Ocean Charger project with the optimization group.

Welcome, Ehsan!



Nooshin Heidari

Nooshin has been doing her PhD in the optimization group and is continuing there as a researcher working on the ocean charger project.

Welcome (back), Nooshin!



Flaviane de Almeida Rocha

Flaviane is a software developer who has started working on – you guessed it – the ocean charger project at optimization.

Welcome, Flaviane!



Marius Binner

Marius has taken his master's degree here at our department and has now started his PhD at the machine learning group. You may remember him from the talk he held at the department gathering at Solstrand.

Welcome (back), Marius!

Current issues

Machine learning double header:



Nicholas Bishop (University of Oxford)

“Learning Likelihood-Free Reference Priors”

June 18th, Stort auditorium
11:00-12:00 (starts 11:00 sharp)

Abstract: Simulation modeling offers a flexible approach to constructing high-fidelity synthetic representations of complex real-world systems. However, the increased complexity of such models introduces additional complications, for example when carrying out statistical inference procedures. This has motivated a large and growing literature on likelihood-free or simulation-based inference methods, which approximate (e.g., Bayesian) inference without assuming access to the simulator’s intractable likelihood function. A hitherto neglected problem in the simulation-based Bayesian inference literature is the challenge of constructing minimally informative reference priors for complex simulation models. Such priors maximise an expected Kullback-Leibler distance from the prior to the posterior, thereby influencing posterior inferences minimally and enabling an “objective” approach to Bayesian inference that does not necessitate the incorporation of strong subjective prior beliefs. In this talk, we propose and test a selection of likelihood-free methods for learning reference priors for simulation models, using variational approximations to these priors and a variety of mutual information estimators. Our experiments demonstrate that good approximations to reference priors for simulation models are in this way attainable, providing a first step towards the development of likelihood-free objective Bayesian inference procedures.



Joel Dyer (University of Oxford)

“Interventionally Consistent Surrogates for Agent-based Simulators”

June 18th, Stort auditorium
13:00-14:00 (starts 13:00 sharp)

Abstract: Agent-based simulators provide granular representations of complex intelligent systems by directly modelling the interactions of the system’s constituent agents. Their high-fidelity nature enables hyper-local policy evaluation and testing of what-if scenarios, but is associated with large computational costs that inhibits their widespread use. Surrogate models can address these computational limitations, but they must behave consistently with the agent-based model under policy interventions of interest. In this talk we will discuss how we can capitalise on recent developments on causal abstractions to develop a framework for learning interventionally consistent surrogate models for agent-based simulators. Our proposed approach facilitates rapid experimentation with policy interventions in complex systems, while inducing surrogates to behave consistently with high probability with respect to the agent-based simulator across interventions of interest. We demonstrate with empirical studies that observationally trained surrogates can misjudge the effect of interventions and misguide policymakers towards suboptimal policies, while surrogates trained for interventional consistency with our proposed method closely mimic the behaviour of an agent-based model under interventions of interest.



UiB Ferd Career Centre supports doctoral candidates, postdoctoral fellows, researchers and associate professors. We offer a range of services designed to help you develop your career within or beyond the university. [You can read more and sign up for the UiB Ferd newsletter here.](#)

[See UiB Ferd calendar.](#)

Our competitors in newsletterology

Did you know there are other people who also make newsletters?

Here are a few that may be relevant to you:

- [UiB Ferd newsletter](#)
- [Nytt fra W4-prosjektet \(In Norwegian, only available to UiB employees\)](#)
- [Eitri Medical Incubator](#)
- [Newsletter for international UiB staff](#)



International HR Newsletter

Are you an international researcher or staff member?

Read about upcoming events that may be relevant to you in the [Summer edition of the newsletter.](#)

Please visit the **HSE page on uib.no** for info about health and safety efforts at our department, as well as info about your representatives



UPCOMING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

CONTACT

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[Research support services](#)

ERC news

Changes to the 2026 and 2027 Work Programs

There will be:

1. **Changes to the templates:**
Incl. (a) new proposal templates to avoid overlap between Part I and Part II. (b) new page limits for Part II (7 pages for StG, CoG, and AdG; 10 pages for SyG).
2. **Changes in the evaluation:**
Incl. feasibility no longer being assessed at Step 1. All aspects relating to feasibility should be covered in Part II of the Scientific Proposal.
3. **Changes to the budget** (ref. additional funding)
4. **Changes to the eligibility:**
Incl. (a) widening of the eligibility period for StG (0-10 years after PhD) and CoG (5-15 years after PhD) – from 2027. (b) various new (re)submission restrictions.

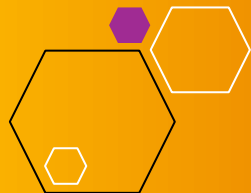
The final details will become available once the ERC has officially published the new work program. In the meantime, [you can read more about the planned changes in this press release](#).

Stay tuned CAS Research Grant: “All faculty members who hold permanent, full-time, tenured academic positions at CAS’ partner institutions can apply for a [CAS Research Grant](#) and receive funding for a one-year stay at the Centre together with their handpicked team of internationally renowned researchers. [...] The project should be a contribution to basic research, blue-sky, challenge given truths and have the potential to advance the research frontier in the relevant field(s). Scholars in all fields can apply but note that laboratory-based research is not possible at CAS.”

Application deadline: The next call will be announced in June 2025.

New Research Council of Norway – Recruitment of Talented Researchers to Norway: “The Research Council supports the [recruitment of talented international researchers to the Research Council's centre calls and for projects funded through FRIPRO's call for experienced scientists](#). [...] The aim of the scheme is for Norwegian research organisations to have a special opportunity to recruit talented international researchers [from outside Europe] who can establish themselves in Norway. [...] The project must start and end while the centre or the FRIPRO experienced scientists project still has active funding from the Research Council.”

Application deadline: will be open-ended



UPCOMING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

COST: [“COST funds interdisciplinary research networks called COST Actions.](#) These Actions bring together researchers, innovators and other professionals including industry specialists, who are based in Europe and beyond, to collaborate on research topics for a period of 4 years. The funding a COST Action receives covers the expenses of networking activities rather than research. As such is used to organise and fund events, Short-term Scientific Missions, Training Schools, communication activities, grants to attend interesting international conferences, and virtual networking tools.”

Application deadline: 21 October 2025

EU - Potential EU topics in Climate, Energy and Mobility:

- [Improved reliability and optimised operations and maintenance for wind energy systems](#) (17 February 2026)
- [Innovative tools and services to manage and empower energy communities](#) (17 February 2026)
- [Critical elements for energy security of grid and storage technologies](#) (2 September 2025)
- [Knowledge sharing and dissemination to support road transport R&I in EU and around the world increasing global EU competitiveness](#) (4 September 2025)

EU - Potential EU topics in Digital, Industry and Space:

- [Software Engineering for AI and generative AI \(RIA\) \(AI/Data/Robotics Partnership\)](#) (2 October 2025)

EU - MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (PFs): “The objective of PFs is to support researchers’ careers and foster excellence in research. The [Postdoctoral Fellowships](#) action targets researchers holding a PhD who wish to carry out their research activities abroad, acquire new skills and develop their careers. PFs help researchers gain experience in other countries, disciplines and non-academic sectors.”

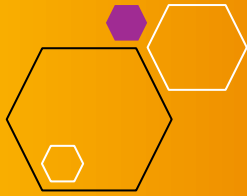
Application deadline: [10 September 2025](#)

EU - Potential EU topics in Health:

- [Leveraging artificial intelligence for pandemic preparedness and response](#) (16 September 2025)
- [End user-driven application of Generative Artificial Intelligence models in healthcare \(GenAI4EU\)](#) (16 September 2025)
- [Leveraging multimodal data to advance Generative Artificial Intelligence applicability in biomedical research \(GenAI4EU\)](#) (16 September 2025)

EU - Potential EU topics in Civil Security for Society:

- [Open topic on testing / validating tools, technologies and data used in cross-border prevention, preparedness and responses to climate extreme and geological events and chemical, biological or radiological emergency threats](#) (12 November 2025)



UPCOMING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Research Council of Norway – ICT research: The

Research Council of Norway has a call for [Researcher Project for ICT Renewal and Development](#). «The purpose of this call is to promote innovation and development in research that can contribute to advancing the international research front in ICT, including digital security and sovereignty, the next generation of data processing/ICT systems and other ICT research areas.»

NB! Application deadline: 2 July 2025

Research Council of Norway – Groundbreaking research:

- [Researcher Project for Experienced Scientists \(FRIPRO\)](#)
- [Researcher Project for Early Career Scientists \(FRIPRO\)](#)
- [Three-year Researcher Project with International Mobility \(FRIPRO\)](#)

Application deadline: open-ended

Research Council of Norway – Radical Research Ideas for

Early Career Scientists: This call is aimed at [early career researchers \(2-7 years after PhD\) who want to test particularly bold research ideas](#). “The purpose of this call is to fund curiosity-driven and bold research that can contribute to advancing the state-of-the-art. This call is the first step in phased funding and is aimed at researchers who want to test particularly bold research ideas. The ideas must be so bold that the risk of failure is too high to justify starting a large project, but where the research could have a significant impact on the field if the project is successful. Project managers for successful research idea projects may later apply for larger FRIPRO projects and be prioritized there.”

Application deadline: open-ended

Research Council of Norway – Top Researchers:

Researcher Projects to Develop World Leading Research Communities: This call will support [projects where collaboration between two or more researchers is a prerequisite for achieving the project’s research objectives](#). “The purpose of this call is to fund curiosity-driven and bold research that can contribute to advancing the state-of-the-art. This call aims to give good, Norwegian research environments the opportunity to develop into being world-leading within their fields.” It is expected that project leaders will, later on, also apply for an ERC grant.

Application deadline: open-ended

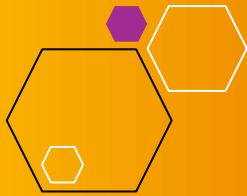
Research Council of Norway – Support for events: You can apply for [funding to organize conferences, workshops and seminars](#). **NB: There is no funding left for events within ICT.**

Application deadline: open-ended

New Research Council of Norway – Funding for

Research Stays Abroad: “The scheme applies to [doctoral and post-doctoral research fellows who are wholly or partly funded by the Research Council and affiliated with an ongoing project for a minimum of 36 months](#). The research stay abroad can be a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 12 months.”

Application deadline: open-ended



UPCOMING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Research Council of Norway – Research

Infrastructures of National Importance: The published information is still preliminary. The [announcement will most likely be divided into two parts](#): Part 1 will be aimed at named research infrastructures with particular strategic importance for Norway. Part 2 will be open to all other research infrastructures.

Application deadline: 12 November (tentative)

Research Council of Norway – Center for Quantum Technology Research:

“The purpose of this announcement is to [build strong Norwegian research communities at a high international level within quantum computing, quantum sensors, and quantum communication](#).”

Application deadline: 24 September (tentative)

Abel Prize: “[The Abel Prize recognises pioneering scientific achievements in mathematics](#). [...]

The right to nominate is open to anyone. Nominations are confidential and a nomination should not be made known to the nominee. The prize can be awarded to a single person or shared for closely related fundamental contributions.”

Nomination deadline: 1 September

New EU – MSCA Doctoral Networks (DN): “MSCA Doctoral Networks will [implement doctoral programmes, by partnerships of universities, research institutions and research infrastructures, businesses including SMEs, and other socio-economic actors](#) from different countries across Europe and beyond.” This funding scheme supports standard academic DNs, industrial doctorates and joint doctorates.

Application deadline: 25 November 2025

Research Council of Norway – Norwegian

Centres of Excellence (SFF, stage 1): “[The SFF scheme gives Norway's leading scientific communities the opportunity to organize themselves into centers to achieve ambitious scientific goals](#) through collaboration and long-term basic funding. The research at the centers should be innovative and have great potential for groundbreaking results that advance the international research frontier. The centers should work with ambitious ideas and complex problems where coordinated and long-term research efforts within or across disciplines are important to achieve the goals.” Centres are funded for up to ten years (six + four years).

Application deadline: 12 November (tentative)

NordForsk - Nordic research networks within natural science and related engineering fields:

“The aim of a [Nordic initiative for research networks within natural science and related engineering fields](#) is to promote research collaboration and support the establishment of new research networks in the natural sciences and engineering in the Nordic countries, which seek to explore novel research directions, build a strong Nordic platform at the cutting edge of emerging fields, or form new and potentially transformative links across what is usually considered distinct disciplines. [...] Network activities should include a strong component in the training of the next generation of researchers with interdisciplinary skills in natural sciences and related engineering topics in the Nordic countries. [...] To ensure the novelty of the network, the network's researchers should not have existing active collaboration.”

Application deadline: 14 August 2025