

Work programme

2019–2023

Research Programme on the Culture and Media Sector - KULMEDIA

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Contents

Research Programme on the Culture and Media Sector - KULMEDIA.....	1
1 Summary	4
2 Background and challenges.....	4
3 Objectives for the programme	5
3.1 Primary objective	5
3.2 Secondary objectives.....	5
4 Thematic and scientific priority areas	6
4.1 Thematic priority areas	7
4.1.1 Digitalisation.....	7
4.1.2 Changes in economic conditions	7
4.1.3 Cultural and media policy.....	8
5 Priorities for structuring the research effort.....	8
5.1 Promoting research	8
5.2 Strengthening and developing research groups	9
5.3 Internationalisation	9
5.4 Communication, dissemination and social dialogue.....	9
5.5 Types of support.....	9
6 Cooperation with related instruments.....	10
7 Anticipated results, impacts and societal outcomes.....	10
8 Resources and budget	11
9 Governance and organisation	11

1 Summary

Cultural life and the media are undergoing major changes. Among the forces at work are globalisation, digitalisation and altered economic frameworks. The resulting changes entail both opportunities and challenges for the media and cultural life, including their roles in society and the conditions that influence media and cultural policy design.

The Research Programme on the Culture and Media Sector (KULMEDIA) is designed to help produce research of high quality in the cultural and media fields. Knowledge accumulated under the programme is to be of relevance for policy development and public administration as well as for stakeholders active in these fields.

To achieve its objectives the programme will provide funding to high-quality research and facilitate use of the research results by actors in the field. The programme will encourage collaboration between disciplines and methodological approaches while helping to strengthen research environments and facilitate research that is internationally oriented.

For the 2019–2023 period, the KULMEDIA programme has identified three thematic priority areas: 1) digitalisation, 2) changes in economic conditions, and 3) cultural and media policy.

2 Background and challenges

Cultural life and the media play important roles in society as arenas, infrastructures and facilitators for diversity and freedom of expression and for social cohesion and civic participation. A vibrant cultural life and free independent media are the prerequisites to achieving a well-informed public, democracy and social inclusiveness.

The media and cultural life are undergoing major changes. Among the forces at work are globalisation, digitalisation and altered economic frameworks, and the resulting changes entail both opportunities and challenges. What remains highly uncertain, however, is whether and how the forces of change will affect different segments of the media and culture sector; how framework conditions for producers, practitioners and organisations will evolve; how different stakeholders will exploit the opportunities that arise; what the economic conditions will be; and what role media and cultural policy can and will play.

In this situation, research-based knowledge is important to policy development and public administration as well as to stakeholders in the cultural and media fields. A number of reports and studies in recent years have pointed this out (see, for example, *Et kunnskapsbasert kulturpolitikk* (“A Knowledge-based Cultural Policy”, Grundutvalget 2012)), Official Norwegian Report on cultural policy (“Cultural Policy 2014”, NOU 2013: 4), Official Norwegian Report on media diversity (NOU 2017:1) and white paper (Meld. St. 8 (2018–2019)) on cultural policy for the future). These documents typically highlight the need for knowledge about the roles of the media and cultural institutions in society and about relevant technological and economic developments. This focus aligns well with the Government’s *Long-term plan for research and higher education* (Meld. St. 4 (2018–2019)), which emphasises the wide-ranging changes associated with digitalisation and their effect on public debate and democratic development.

The KULMEDIA programme 2014–2018

The KULMEDIA programme was launched in 2014 as a research programme on the culture and media sector. It was initially a five-year programme (2014–2018) with an annual allocation from the

Ministry of Culture of approximately NOK 15 million. Its objective was to generate new, research-based knowledge about the role of cultural life and the media in society and the economic and technological framework underlying this, as well as to enhance the knowledge base for policy development.

Research activities under the programme have shed light, in particular, on how culture and the media are used in practice. Emphasis has been placed on cultural citizenship as well as the role of media and cultural institutions in respect of diversity and participation. Studies on media use and media policy measures have been carried out, as have analyses of institutions and industries in the sector. The programme has provided new understanding of freedom of information; of how media and cultural arenas affect people's relationship to the public sphere; of how user preferences and new digital services influence repertoire, consumption and economic conditions; and of accessibility and dissemination in museums and libraries. All projects have touched on user aspects.

The KULMEDIA programme 2019–2023

In the 2019–2023 programme period, the programme will build upon the main focus areas and objectives of the initial programme period, but with adjustments to the thematic, scientific and structural priorities. Attention has been paid to important recent developments in the fields and to thematic research areas which to date are relatively unexplored.

During the programme's initial period, a number of projects were launched to study how changes in the media and culture sector have influenced the public sphere and audiences. The present work programme (2019–2023) places greater emphasis on production processes, producers and framework conditions and on the importance of technological, economic and policy development within the culture and media sector.

3 Objectives for the programme

3.1 Primary objective

The KULMEDIA programme will promote high-quality research in the cultural and media fields. Knowledge accumulated under the programme is to be of relevance for policy development and public administration as well as for stakeholders active in these fields.

The programme will generate knowledge about the challenges and opportunities associated with technological and economic changes, and about media and cultural policy.

3.2 Secondary objectives

Activities under the KULMEDIA programme will in addition be based on the following secondary objectives:

- The KULMEDIA programme is to contribute to high-quality research within the programme's priority areas.
- The KULMEDIA programme is to facilitate use of the research results in policy development, public administration and public debate as well as by stakeholders in the cultural and media fields.

- The KULMEDIA programme is to encourage collaboration between disciplines and methodological approaches.
- The KULMEDIA programme is to help to strengthen and promote research groups:
 - The programme is to strengthen competent research groups that are able assert themselves internationally in thematic areas addressed by the programme.
 - The programme is to promote research groups in fields with less established research traditions and to facilitate competence building.
- The KULMEDIA programme is to facilitate research that is internationally oriented and has its foundation in international research.

4 Thematic and scientific priority areas

A key point of departure for the KULMEDIA programme is the way important contemporary change processes give rise to both challenges and new opportunities for the media and for cultural life, and for the role they play in society and democracy. A closer look at these change processes shows there are a variety of trends influencing cultural life and the media simultaneously, and that these appear to be somewhat in opposition to one another. Examples include:

Relationship between change and stability: The development and use of digital technology contributes to the creation of new financial market structures, value chains and cash flows that alter production and distribution factors for media content, art and other forms of cultural expression. Amidst these change processes we also see a large degree of stability. Established institutions and businesses adapt, and media and cultural policy objectives are slow to change.

The relationship between global and local: Global companies and platforms such as Google and Facebook have become increasingly important to the value chains now emerging. The changes taking place affect information flows, cash flows, power structures and market structures, which challenges national stakeholders in the media and cultural fields. At the same time, these platforms and other social networks provide local practitioners and content producers with new opportunities to share and collaborate.

The relationship between digital and analogue: Production processes, distribution and the media and cultural consumption are increasingly digital. Yet non-digital experiences are still important and exist side by side with experiences taking place in digital space. That is the case in the media field, where newspapers are still printed on paper, but even more so in the cultural field, where the performing arts and exhibitions often use digital tools in production and staging, but are still predicated on the physicality of the experience.

Relationship between humans and machines: Machine learning and other artificial intelligence techniques are used to customise news feeds for individual users, to create digital art experiences or to develop recommendation systems. Algorithmic suggestions and decision-making are thus of growing importance. That makes algorithm transparency and the ability of individuals to evaluate the systems' suggestions and decisions especially vital.

These trends and the tensions between them are far from new; nor are they alone in the media/cultural landscape. They are highlighted here primarily to illustrate two points. One is that the developments seen in cultural life and the media are not linear or one-dimensional. There are in fact

multiple trends at work simultaneously, and they manifest themselves differently across different media and in different segments of the cultural field. Secondly, the trends in question entail challenges and opportunities alike for media and cultural stakeholders and for the roles that the media, art and culture play in society.

To seize opportunities and meet challenges wisely, it will be important to acquire a more thorough understanding of such trends. This will be important for the actors active in the arts, culture and media themselves; for political leaders and administrators who seek to design sound framework conditions; and for the general public debate.

4.1 Thematic priority areas

The programme's thematic priority areas are as follows: 1) digitalisation, 2) changes in economic conditions, and 3) cultural and media policy. While these areas are described separately, they are closely linked. The KULMEDIA programme is seeking research activities that view them in a unified context.

4.1.1 Digitalisation

“Digitalisation” can be understood both as the development and use of specific digital technologies and the social, cultural and economic change processes associated with digital technology development. In both meanings of the word, digitalisation is an important change agent in the arts, culture and the media. Although Norwegian and international research in recent years has generated important knowledge and insight in this area, a better understanding of what digitalisation means for the media and for cultural life is still needed.

Digitalisation is prevalent throughout the fields of culture and the media. Although the implications of digitalisation are most apparent in the media sector and in the arts and other cultural offerings that are digitally produced, distributed and consumed, “analogue” art forms are also affected by their incorporation into digital networks. Cultural events are often streamed, and even performing arts that seem essentially analogue in nature may enter into digitalised culture through production, marketing and other activities.

The KULMEDIA programme will support research examining the opportunities and challenges that cultural life and the media encounter as a result of digitalisation. In particular, the programme is seeking research on the implications of digitalisation for the production and content of art, cultural and media offerings, and research to enhance understanding of the connections between technology, culture and the media. This includes research on production, production processes and production technology; actors taking part in production, distribution and public administration (enterprises, practitioners, creators, users); production results (content, genre, forms of expression); and production framework conditions (including globalisation, distribution, platforms, and policies).

4.1.2 Changes in economic conditions

The programme will place emphasis on the changes in economic conditions taking place in the cultural and media fields. Industries, institutions and practitioners alike face changed circumstances for their operations, funding sources and value creation strategies.

In the media industry, digitalisation has brought about a shift in the relationship between the media, media consumers and advertisers, thereby challenging the linear value chains and the traditional two-sided business model in media markets. Media market globalisation and the internet's role as a

platform for distribution and consumption of most types of digitalised content has led to extensive changes in competitive relationships and media usage.

For cultural life, the changes differ depending on the funding model and which artistic, cultural or media form is being studied. While music and film have experienced major changes in both production and consumption, there has been less change to the performing and visual arts. This does not mean that they are untouched by changes in their financial and digital frameworks, but that the changes seen to date appear to be more indirect.

The KULMEDIA programme will promote research-based knowledge about changes in economic conditions, market structures, value chains, business models and cash flows in the fields of culture and the media. This includes research on characteristics of the media and cultural economy; links between economic conditions for industries, enterprises and practitioners; and the importance of economic and political framework conditions for production and value creation, including non-market value.

4.1.3 Cultural and media policy

The media and cultural life play a special role in society, including as facilitator and arena for diversity, freedom of expression, inclusion and participation in the public sphere. That is why special political objectives and instruments have been established for the cultural and media fields. In this sector, political objectives typically have to be achieved while ensuring autonomy and freedom of expression of the stakeholders involved.

The conditions underpinning cultural and media policy are facing difficulties in the wake of globalisation, digitalisation and forces of economic change. There is a need for knowledge about long-term trends as well as current political processes. Research questions of key interest include the political room to manoeuvre and local and national administrative instruments, the importance of public support schemes, ownership, and regulatory frameworks in markets which are becoming increasingly global.

The KULMEDIA programme will increase research-based knowledge about the evolution of media and cultural policy, the content of such policy and the impacts it has. This includes research on the stakeholders and other interested parties that influence the policy; on political decision-making processes at international, national, regional and local levels; on media and cultural policy development; on the relationship between media and cultural policy and other policy areas; on administrative and governance principles in media and cultural policy; and on how cultural and media policy functions.

5 Priorities for structuring the research effort

5.1 Promoting research

The KULMEDIA programme is seeking both in-depth research in the media or cultural fields and research that views culture and the media in an overall context. The programme as a whole is intended to cover the sector's cultural and media aspects alike.

The programme is designed to encourage interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research. Individual research projects in the programme are to incorporate the expertise and the scientific perspectives

and methods relevant to addressing their research questions and the programme's thematic priorities.

5.2 Strengthening and developing research groups

The KULMEDIA programme will strengthen and develop research groups in the cultural and media fields. Importance will be attached to strengthening and developing research groups that currently perform cultural and media research and on promoting such research in other disciplines and research groups where cultural life and the media have not traditionally been included as the object of research.

Because of Norway's specialised institutes and study programmes, media sector research in the country is relatively well developed and institutionalised, but there is still a need to strengthen the quality and international focus of such research through national competition. Cultural sector research is less institutionalised and more in need of scientific community building. Projects under the KULMEDIA programme should therefore show how they help to strengthen and/or develop the scientific community, with researcher recruitment positions as one relevant instrument.

5.3 Internationalisation

The KULMEDIA programme will contribute to collaboration and network building between the cultural research community, the media research community and other relevant research communities in Norway and other countries. Where appropriate, research projects should employ a comparative international perspective to shed light on the programme's research areas.

5.4 Communication, dissemination and social dialogue

The programme places great emphasis on user-oriented dissemination, communication and dialogue. Research results obtained under the programme should be available and applicable for policy development and public administration and for public debate participants in the cultural and media fields. Where relevant, research projects may involve the authorities and actors from cultural life and the media.

5.5 Types of support

The programme will promote research of high quality, strengthen and enhance the profile of research groups and open the door to research collaboration. The programme will also promote research that generates knowledge relevant to the cultural and media fields. The Researcher Project application type will be the most relevant for this programme. Collaboration Projects on Societal Challenges may also be used. In addition, the programme will provide funding for internationalisation and other measures that expand the value of the portfolio. Calls for proposals will contain more detailed specifications. Grant applications will be assessed in relation to the Research Council of Norway's three assessment criteria: Excellence, Impact, and Implementation.

Gender, ethnic and sociocultural differences

The programme will encourage a focus on the importance of gender, ethnic and other sociocultural differences where this is relevant to the research activities.

6 Cooperation with related instruments

The KULMEDIA programme is targeted towards challenges in the culture and media sector but encompasses topics and issues of relevance to other areas of society as well. The programme shares a thematic interface with several Research Council programmes and initiatives, and collaboration that provides added value and helps to achieve the programme's objectives may be of interest. One possible area of collaboration would be communication and dissemination.

The most relevant programmes and initiatives are:

- Programme on Cultural Conditions Underlying Social Change (SAMKUL);
- Research Programme on Welfare, Working Life and Migration (VAM);
- Programme on Democratic and Effective Governance, Planning and Public Administration (DEMOS);
- Research Programme on Societal Security and Safety (SAMRISK).
- IKTPLUSS Initiative for ICT and Digital Innovation

7 Anticipated results, impacts and societal outcomes

Results

- The KULMEDIA programme is expected to help to provide new research-based knowledge about cultural life.
- The KULMEDIA programme is expected to help to provide new research-based knowledge about the media.
- All KULMEDIA projects are expected to publish high-quality scientific articles.
- The projects are expected to conduct dissemination activities targeted towards the general public and directly towards users.
- The programme is expected to enhance competence building by such means as providing recruitment positions.
- The programme is expected to encourage collaboration between disciplines and methodological approaches, such as between research groups with media and cultural expertise and groups with specialised expertise in framework conditions (such as regulation, economics, technology or humanities).
- The KULMEDIA programme is expected to promote more internationally oriented research in the programme's thematic priority areas.

Impacts

- Research results from KULMEDIA projects are expected to be used in policy development and public administration and by stakeholders in the fields.

- Research results are expected to help generate better-targeted policies and to facilitate informed decision-making in the sector.
- The KULMEDIA programme’s research results are expected to help to inform the ongoing public debate.
- The programme is expected to strengthen research groups engaged in the programme’s thematic priority areas.
- The programme is expected to help to promote and develop research areas which have less established research traditions but are still within the programme’s thematic priority areas.

Societal outcomes

- The KULMEDIA programme is expected to strengthen the societal roles of the media and cultural life as arenas, infrastructures and facilitators for diversity and freedom of expression and for social cohesion and participation in society and culture.
- The KULMEDIA programme is expected to promote a vibrant cultural life and free, independent media as the prerequisites to achieving a well-informed public, democracy and social inclusiveness.

8 Resources and budget

The Ministry of Culture is planning a financial framework of approximately NOK 16 million a year over five years (2019–2023) for the programme, totalling NOK 80 million as the overall programme framework for this period. The KULMEDIA programme will submit annual reports on the programme’s activities in accordance with the guidelines set out in allocation letters from the Ministry and in accordance with the Ministry’s sectoral responsibility.

9 Governance and organisation

The programme is administered under the portfolio board for Welfare, culture and society. The portfolio board is responsible for a number of programmes and helps to realise the investment targets and budget objectives of the overall portfolio. The board ensures that analyses are conducted within the portfolio’s area of responsibility and uses these as the basis for drawing up portfolio plans and action plans. Activities within the portfolio are also to reflect guidelines set out by the Executive Board, the allocating ministries and other funding sources. The portfolio board acts on behalf of the Research Council and reports to the Executive Board via the Research Council administration.

See [HERE](#) for an overview of the portfolio boards and their respective members.

Portfolio administration

The portfolio administration works closely with all the programmes encompassed by the portfolio and carries out the day-to-day activities as well as administrative tasks relating to the portfolio board, portfolio and budget objectives. The portfolio administration is also responsible for ensuring that the decisions of the portfolio board are implemented.

A schematic presentation of the KULMEDIA programme logic model is provided below:

