

## **Strategic Research Programmes within Nanotechnology and Advanced Materials in Norway**

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In the end of 2011 The Research Council of Norway (RCN)'s Programme on Nanotechnology and New Materials (NANOMAT) was concluded after ten years of pioneering activity. The external final evaluation of NANOMAT, conducted by the international consulting firms DAMVAD of Denmark and Econ Pöyry of Norway, concluded that it has succeeded in building knowledge and capacity, coordinating national research communities and developing research groups in the areas of the ethical, legal and social aspects of biotechnology, nanotechnology, and HSE (health, safety and environment).

Education in the field was given a major boost during the NANOMAT programme period as well. All of the largest educational institutions in Norway introduced their own study programmes in nanotechnology at the bachelor, master and doctoral levels. NANOMAT was also very active on international co-operation, as being one of the key partners within the ERA NET MATERA, where also Latvia participated.

NANOMAT was established as a follow up of the external evaluation of RCN, an earlier RCN programme within basic materials science, plus initiatives from the Norwegian universities and largest research institutes. During the NANOMAT programme the Norwegian Government through RCN invested more than Euro 95 mill. In addition, the project partners, mainly from the industry, have invested almost Euro 24 mill.

When a national research programme comes to an end, there is no automatic start-up of a new programme with the same economic funding per year. In 2006 the Research Council of Norway completed a national strategy on Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, which was handed over to the Ministry of Science and Education. In 2009 RCN started an open process where relevant stakeholders from the academy, research institutes, industry and others were asked about priorities and directions for a new programme on nanotechnology and advanced materials. Based upon these processes and the evaluation of NANOMAT, the new strategic programme NANO2021 was established this year with a 10 years programme period and an annual programme budget of appr. Euro 12.5 mill. More insights into NANOMAT, NANO2021 and the process of establishing the Norwegian Government's national strategy on nanotechnology will be given.