

Annual Plan 2020 – 2022

Status 2 October 2020

The annual plan for 2020 - 2022 sets out ARENA Centre for European Studies' priorities and measures to further develop the centre within the framework of the Faculty of Social Sciences and the University of Oslo. In doing so, the plan is in line with the key priorities and objectives of the University of Oslo and the Faculty of Social Sciences. The goal of the University of Oslo to strengthen its position internationally is of particular importance to ARENA as a leading research institution in its field. The annual plan has a three year scope and is reviewed annually.

High quality, innovative research units ensure that the University of Oslo remains competitive nationally and internationally. According to the Faculty of Social Sciences, ground-breaking research and providing knowledge based premises for the public debate are pivotal goals. The Annual plan of ARENA Centre for European Studies aligns closely with this, defining local measures to be pursued in order to comply with these overall aims.

Status as per 2019

The start of the year was overshadowed by disquiet following the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences proposing a merger of ARENA Centre for European Studies and the Department of Political Science. This process brought with it potential serious effects for ARENA's autonomy, its future and status as a research centre. There were also concerns over future employment conditions for staff. In March, after widespread reservations were voiced by Faculty departments, trade unions and the affected research centres, the Faculty board chose to negate any further investigation into the matter.

Another important parameter for the year is the new financial model passed by the Faculty of Social Sciences in September 2018, which intrinsically changed ARENA's framework conditions. With the new model, all employees at ARENA are in effect externally funded, and therefore need to contribute to the future funding of their own position. Moreover, the model reduces the incentives to apply for national funding (Research Council of Norway), and increases the incentives for EU funding. The financial model makes it even more important for ARENA to pursue EU funding possibilities, also because of the built in financial reward (RBO) from the University attached to such funds.

As of 1 February 2019, ARENA is coordinating three large EU-funded projects (EU3D, GLOBUS, PLATO) and one NFR-toppporsk project (REFLEX). These are long-term (4 years) and require extensive efforts in terms of both scientific and administrative coordination. Other projects include EUREX, LEGOF and Benchmark financed by the Research Council of Norway (RCN), Plurispac funded by Humanities in the European Research Area and several EU-funded networks.

In the evaluation report of Norwegian Social Sciences (SAMEVAL) in 2018 ARENA achieved the highest score and was recognized as 'a center of excellence in Norway'. Under the new



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circumstances described above, ARENA's aim in the three-year period is to continue to be a vibrant research environment with well-integrated research activities. It is critical that ARENA focuses on how best to continue to produce quality research, maintain its high publishing rate and its active international research collaboration.

ARENA's main objective

ARENA's main objective is to continue as **a centre of excellence** for research on the political integration of Europe.

The core goal of ARENA is theoretically informed, empirically based, frontier research. International publications in high-ranking journals and dissemination of research are intrinsic to this goal. In order to secure its status as a leading centre, three main priorities are identified.

Main priorities 2020-2022

1. Development and specification of ARENA's research agenda
2. Secure funding to maintain ARENA's leading position
3. Establish new leadership and a thriving work environment in the new location.

1. Development of research agenda

ARENA's current research focus is the direction, dynamics and sustainability of the evolving European political order, which encompasses four key dimensions: A European democratic order, the EU's executive order, expertise and knowledge and European foreign and security policy. Does this cover the centre's ambitions in the future? Refining the centre's current research agenda was initially discussed with the members of staff at the staff seminar that took place in Son in January 2019. The discussion focused on the lingering question of the Europeanization of the nation states in relation to the recent crises in the EU and the new (populist) political climate in Europe.

Measures:

Research agenda

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Status as of 2 October 2020</i>
a. Develop and specify the research agenda with reference to concrete research tasks.	<i>This was last discussed with ARENA's staff at the staff seminar in Son in January 2019. The discussion will be reintroduced under the new Centre Director.</i>

b. Clarify what cross-disciplinarity means in research on the multilevel constellation that makes up the EU.	
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Research groups

c. Reestablish and redefine <i>research groups</i> . All academic staff should belong to at least one research group led by a senior member of staff.	
d. Development of research ideas: more active use of research group meetings, both with the purpose of developing new initiatives, facilitate strategic discussions as well as a forum to discuss day-to-day issues, including junior staff.	<i>Meetings have taken place between senior researchers, the centre director and the administration to develop ideas and plan the centre's applications in order to meet the RCN deadline in May, and in August to discuss the SFF application.</i>
e. Evaluation of application processes post-deadline, including junior staff, for learning purposes in order to increase competitiveness amongst an increased staff.	

Publications

f. The ARENA Tuesday seminar series, research in progress seminars, and other colloquia such as publication seminars should be actively used to encourage own research, promote publications in leading international journals, and promote younger research staff.	<i>By the time the University closed in March, two Tuesday seminars with invited speakers and two research in progress seminars were held before the summer. This Autumn, one Tuesday seminar has been held via Zoom and another three digital Tuesday seminars are scheduled before the end of term.</i>
g. An overall strategy for publication channels including aim for publication	

points over a three year period should be implemented.	
h. Maintain focus on Open Access, especially through archiving publications in DUO, to increase visibility and citations. Information and staff guidelines will continue, and funds for open access publishing will be included in all project applications.	<i>Information on updates on exhaustion of quotas and specification of procedures have been sent all members of staff and was an item at the last staff meeting in September. Designated members of the administration strive to be continuously up to date on regulations and practices in order to support the academic staff efficiently.</i>

Research/data management

i. Continue work on establishing internal routines for data management and compliance with new regulations (GDPR). Information seminars will be held, and an in-house data management officer will be appointed.	
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2. Secure funding to maintain ARENA's leading position

Overall, ARENA will continue to develop applications for externally funded projects that fit in, strengthen and develop its research profile. Coordination of new large-scale project proposals are necessary to maintain the current level of activity in the long term. ARENA will also seek to become partner in EU funded projects.

The research agenda of ARENA as well as the projects and international networks testify to the multifaceted nature of the object under study. European studies is by definition cross-disciplinary, Several disciplines are represented at ARENA, and the centre regularly interacts with interdisciplinary networks through the large-scale projects coordinated by the centre.

Measures:***Refining application routines***

a. Workshops assigned to support the development of application ideas, will be arranged with project leaders and relevant participants.	<i>The Centre director called in senior and administrative staff to a meeting in February to discuss application initiatives, strategy and plan for the Centre's RCN applications. After the University closed, bilateral contact has been upheld with project participants and the administration. The Centre director summoned senior staff at the end of August to discuss the upcoming SFF application.</i>
b. Timeframe for the preparation of applications towards the application deadline will be outlined.	<i>The administration keeps an overview and delegates the various tasks in the seven applications currently in progress for the RCN deadline in May. An overview of upcoming deadlines were presented at the staff meeting in September.</i>
c. Structure application processes: time perspective, administrative support, time allocation, external assistance from the Faculty/UiO, and internal and external review from peers.	<i>In progress, see above.</i>
d. An analysis of previous unsuccessful as well as successful project proposals will be undertaken, and conclusions presented to the staff.	

EU research funding programmes

e. At least one application annually to each of the ERC calls for Starting Grants, Consolidator Grants and Advanced Grants. Some fluctuation from year to year is to be expected depending on staff size etc.	<i>One application to the ERC Starting Grants went through to the second round of evaluation in Spring 2020, but did not secure funding. There are plans to resend this in the upcoming round, as well as an application to the Consolidator Grant deadline in 2021.</i>
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f. At least one application for ERC Synergy Grant in 2020 or 2021.	<i>It has been announced that there will be no synergy grants announced before 2022.</i>
g. Due to the extensive efforts needed in terms of both scientific and administrative coordination when it comes to coordinating EU funded projects, ARENA will seek to be partner in such projects, at least one project per year.	
h. Application for an MSCA ITN in 2020 or 2021 – based on the experience from PLATO.	<i>The application submitted to the MSCA ITN deadline in January 2020 received excellent evaluation (90/100), but did not receive funding. The project application will be developed and resubmitted in the next application round, expected in March 2021.</i>

Other funding

i. ARENA will prioritize applications that have long-term funding horizon.	
j. ARENA will continue work to establish more Norwegian funding for research on Europe's political order.	

Exploring new possibilities for income

k. Exploring potential for own educational programmes (MA and/or PhD level).	<i>ARENA's application for an MA programme in European Studies was resubmitted to the Faculty early 2020. At the same time, discussions concerning a Joint Degree with the University of Kent continue.</i>
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3. Establishing new leadership and thriving work environment in new location

ARENA's Centre Director of the last 12 years is to retire from his post, and a new director is to take over from 2020. The position - combining leadership of the centre, its employees, finances and research priorities with own research commitments – has been announced in the Autumn of 2019. Ensuring a proper and expedient succession, providing the new leader with the necessary capabilities and support, is paramount.

Alongside the change in its leadership, ARENA coincidentally moves premises. This brings ARENA closer to Blindern campus, as the move to Gaustadalléen 30 took place late September 2019.

Measures:

Research leadership

a. Establish more firm research groups with clear leadership responsibilities.	
b. Establish a forum of (senior) researchers as a consultative body for scientific and strategic advice.	<i>The Centre Director calls upon the senior researchers that are present in order to discuss various matters. This arrangement will be discussed with the new centre director.</i>

Gender equality

c. Female researchers are prioritised to attend career building courses offered at the University of Oslo.	<i>No such courses have been available thus far in 2020.</i>
d. ARENA ensures that female post-doctoral fellows apply to the University of Oslo mentoring programme.	<i>Both female post-doctors at the centre have been invited.</i>
e. Emphasis will be placed on academic excellence that in the longer run will qualify female scientists for senior positions by having them take central	

positions in supervising PhD candidates.	
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Work environment

f. Establish awareness and local routines in line with new University regulations focusing on harassment and misconduct.	
g. Initiate process of developing a plan for ARENA's long-term location. The offices in Gaustadalléen are a temporary solution, as the University plans a considerable reconstruction of the premises for the Faculty of Odontology from 2024 at the earliest. The overall long-term aim is to be closer to campus and the Faculty.	<i>The Centre Director has had discussions with the senior architect at UiO's Estate department in relation to allocation of premises at the University.</i>
h. 2019 marks ARENA's 25 year jubilee, which is an occasion that ought to be marked. ARENA's anniversary conference From Rupture to Renewal in Europe takes place in November. A housewarming party as well as Christmas seminar are to take place in the new premises. To be described in the annual report for 2019 that is to be developed early 2020.	<i>The anniversary conference in November was fully booked. The Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ine Eriksen Søreide, Vice-rector Åse Gornitzka, key note speaker Brigid Laffan as well as a senior academic panel partook in the half-day public conference at the House of Literature on 18 November 2019. A housewarming party was arranged on 29 October, where pizza and an interactive quiz were served, and ARENA's Christmas seminar 2019 was also held in our new premises in Gaustadalléen 30. The Annual Report is delayed due to the discontinuation of the administrative position in the summer, but will be finalized shortly.</i>

<p>i. Actively ensure that all staff, including guest researchers and students are included in an open and fulfilling work environment in new premises through social events.</p>	<p><i>ARENA welcomed one new student and three new members of staff, in addition to several guest researchers in the Spring term. Another three new members of staff have commenced their positions since the summer (post-doctor, researcher, centre director). Social events have not been possible due to the covid-situation, but inclusion in lunches etc have been sought.</i></p>
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