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DANISH COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION POLICY

Strengthening the Nordic Research and Innovation System

Prioritising Nordic Added Value in a Changing Geopolitical Landscape

Recommendations from the Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy (DFIR) to Nordic Decision-Makers



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Foreword

In 2026, the Danish and Faroese Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers has prioritized strengthening the Nordic region's competitiveness, resilience, and adoption of new technologies to accelerate the green transition. Research and innovation systems play a critical role in building robust and competitive economies. As stated in the 2026 Presidency Programme, the Nordic countries are well-positioned to lead efforts toward a stronger Europe.

Against this backdrop, the Danish and Faroese Presidency requested that the Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy (DFIR) analyse the Nordic research and innovation system. The project was funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. DFIR is an independent council established in 2014 to advise the Danish government and parliament on strengthening research, technology development, and innovation in Denmark. DFIR has framed and carried out the project entirely independently of the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Digital Affairs.

The overarching aim of the project is to strengthen the foundation for more strategic and effective Nordic cooperation in research and innovation and provide support for the Nordic research and innovation community in operating effectively within a landscape of increasing political attention. More specifically, the project focuses on the joint Nordic institutions that finance research and innovation on behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers, that is, NordForsk, Nordic Innovation, and Nordic Energy Research.

Understood in this way, "the Nordic research and innovation funding system" refers specifically throughout this policy brief to the shared, supranational layer of funding that the Nordic countries have built up alongside their own national systems and their participation in Horizon Europe and other EU frameworks. The project clarifies the division of labour among Nordic, national, and European actors and identifies how Nordic initiatives can best create added value and how the Nordic system might evolve in response to changing political, technological and economic conditions.

Deliverables of the project include a research report, *The Nordics as an R&I Region*, commissioned by DFIR and prepared by the Danish Centre for Studies in Research and Research Policy (CFA), Department of Political Science, Aarhus University, as well as recommendations to the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic research and innovation funding system, which are presented in this policy brief. The report by CFA draws on desk research, a two-round Delphi survey involving Nordic R&I stakeholders, and interviews with experts and senior stakeholders across the Nordic research and innovation ecosystem.[i] The project culminates in a conference for 150 Nordic stakeholders to be held in Copenhagen on the 25th of November 2026.

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(chair of DFIR).

1. Introduction and background: The Nordics as a region in shifting geopolitical power balances

The Nordic countries have cooperated on research and innovation for decades. However, joint Nordic funding remains small, dispersed across many purposes, and only loosely connected to shared strategic priorities. Recent developments now create an opening to change this. The Nordic region currently experiences unusual political momentum behind deepening regional cooperation, driven by growing geopolitical tension, technological competition as well as democratic decline internationally. This has led to an increasing attention to competitiveness and resilience in Europe and in the Nordic countries.

The Nordic welfare states share a range of common strengths and challenges, often characterized by a high degree of complexity and sparked by demographic changes. Since the adoption of Vision 2030, Nordic governments have repeatedly signalled a wish to deepen Nordic cooperation in response to a harsher international environment. This political momentum is reinforced by the increasing interest of private philanthropic foundations in channelling philanthropic capital through a credible, well-governed Nordic research funder.

Taken together, common challenges, geopolitical pressures, the political will, and the growing interest of private foundations raise the question of whether a diffuse, good-will-based Nordic research and innovation system is still adequate to realize common Nordic ambitions, or if it needs to be repositioned as a more strategic tool.

This brief argues that the Nordic countries should make Nordic research and innovation funding more strategic, more politically anchored and more clearly tied to demonstrable Nordic added value, while stepping back from fields where Nordic funding adds little that national, EU or global instruments do not already provide. The result would be a more coherent, strategically coordinated and internationally visible Nordic research and innovation ecosystem.[ii]

The recommendations therefore aim to ensure a clear division of labour between Nordic, national and European funding. Nordic funding should be directed at challenges where the Nordic countries can create added value that neither the national or European levels can deliver alone, building on shared geography and climate, comparable data and institutional infrastructure, a common regional security situation and a high degree of mutual trust.

The Nordic region is currently seeing a wave of initiatives aimed at strengthening competitiveness and resilience. Inspired by the 2024 Draghi report on Europe's future competitiveness, the Nordic Council of Ministers has commissioned a Nordic counterpart, *Analysis of Competitiveness in a Nordic Perspective,* which was presented on October 2026.[iii] Nordic Compass is an industry-led alliance to advance competitiveness and resilience across the Nordic region, which brings business and political leaders together around joint action. These efforts are timely and important. They are, however, largely pitched at the level of the overarching societal and economic challenges: productivity, access to capital, the green and digital transitions, and economic security.

This brief considers the Nordic agenda from another angle and is intended to sit alongside these initiatives. It focuses on the organisation of the Nordic research and innovation funding system and its place in the international research and innovation ecosystem, including the division of labour with the national and European levels, and the role of the Nordic funders as international partners and partners for private philanthropy. Together, the different perspectives contribute to a fuller picture of how Nordic cooperation can support Nordic research and innovation and enhance Nordic competitiveness and resillience.

The challenge

The Nordic research and innovation funding organisations need to stay relevant not only in the Nordic research and innovation landscape, but also among Nordic policy makers. The analysis carried out by CFA, and the 2023 evaluation of NordForsk, both show that stakeholders regard the Nordic research and innovation funding system as overall well-functioning and valued platforms for Nordic research and innovation cooperation. The picture that emerges is one of a system with real strengths that has, over time, nonetheless developed a set of structural weaknesses worth addressing. Stakeholders thus underline that there is considerable unrealised potential in the Nordic research and innovation funding organisations.[iv] The greatest, and as of yet unrealised, potential of the Nordic research and innovation funding system lies in strengthening its complementary role by bringing together research, innovation, industry and research infrastructures within a more coherent, strategically coordinated and internationally visible Nordic research and innovation ecosystem, operating with more explicit priority setting.

First, it must be stated that the funding volume of the Nordic research and innovation funding organisations is modest relative to national research budgets, and their secretariats are relatively small. Small funding pots give limited strategic capacity. Any diagnosis of the system's weaknesses therefore needs to be read against this basic resource constraint, rather than treating limited reach as evidence of poor design.

In 2025, the budget of NordForsk amounted to EUR 43.3 million, the budget of Nordic Energy Research to EUR 6.7 million and the budget of Nordic Innovation to EUR 8.6 million. For comparison, the combined national government budget allocations for research and development of the Nordic countries amounted to EUR 15.2 billion in 2025, of which the budgets of the three organisations correspond to 0.4 percent.[v] Basic funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers makes up only part of the budgets for both NordForsk and Nordic Energy Research, with the remainder coming primarily from national contributions.[vi]

Furthermore, this brief primarily treats NordForsk, Nordic Innovation and Nordic Energy Research as research and innovation funding institutions. This is a deliberate simplification, made to allow for a coherent analysis of funding structures and the division of labour between the Nordic, national and EU levels. It should not be read as suggesting that the three institutions have identical roles. Their mandates differ in scope and character. In particular, Nordic Energy Research is not only a funder but also a platform for Nordic energy cooperation, with an important role in research-based policy development, knowledge sharing and coordination among the Nordic countries. The analysis and recommendations should therefore be read with these differences in mind, and any further integration or coordination of the institutions' funding activities should take account of their distinct mandates and the other functions they perform.

With the existing financial framework conditions, it is difficult for the Nordic research and innovation funding institutions to respond proactively to emerging strategic opportunities. Many respondents in the CFA report shared the observation that the limited mandates of the three organisations, their relatively small secretariats and constrained resources make it difficult for them to respond proactively to emerging strategic opportunities. They saw lack of ambition, fragmentation of activities within and across institutions and limited visibility as key obstacles to closer Nordic collaboration. They pointed in particular to fragmented national priorities and funding systems, limited political commitment and limited funding, complex institutional arrangements, and competition with national and European agendas. Moreover, respondents noted that the added value of Nordic cooperation is not sufficiently recognized in the research and innovation ecosystem. And national funding logics dominate across the Nordic institutions, with the lack of authority of the institutions as a consequence.

Within NordForsk, the largest of the three organisations, funding decisions still lean heavily on the priorities of the national funding bodies that co-finance calls. The Open Invitation mechanism, while flexible and responsive to national interests, leaves comparatively limited room for active portfolio management at the Nordic level.

In addition, many Nordic instruments are built on an arm's-length, peer-review basis that often aggregates national funders' own priorities and favours bottom-up, curiosity-driven proposals. Political priorities are translated into funding in different ways across the three organisations, and the fact that they report to different ministerial councils means there is no shared framework for doing so. Anchoring the institutions' work more firmly in shared political priorities could give them a more prominent role and strengthen the political legitimacy of the system over time.

At the heart of the prospects of strengthening the Nordic research and innovation system lies one open question that two decades of cooperation have not fully answered: what exactly constitutes "Nordic added value"?

Clarifying this, and with it, the system's distinct role between the national and EU levels, is less a correction of failure than a natural next step in maturing an already valuable Nordic collaboration.

Sharpening what constitutes distinctly "Nordic added value" would also pave the way for external partners to find a natural way into Nordic-level funding. This same clarity would especially help the system meet the growing international interest, including from outside the Nordic region, in partnering especially with NordForsk.

With a clearer political mandate, the Nordic research and innovation system could use the concept of Nordic added value itself as the strategic platform for defining its contribution to the Nordic countries. This could potentially pave the way for a more fully-fledged mission-oriented approach. In other words, the Nordic research and innovation system should build a distinct value proposition around what only Nordic-level cooperation can deliver: combining knowledge, comparing national experiences, or building shared infrastructure and networks that no single country would fund alone. Nordic added value could thus become the organising principle through which the Nordic research and innovation funding system articulates a role that is realistic given its scale, while still being politically meaningful.

There is also potential to be realised in much closer coordination between NordForsk, Nordic Innovation, and Nordic Energy Research, whose calls currently run largely in parallel even where their mandates in areas like green transition or digitalisation overlap.

This suggests that the way forward begins with a more strategic use of the budget for the Nordic research and innovation funding system to play a more ambitious role in the future. Scaling up can follow later, once such a model has demonstrated its value. Hence, the following recommendations by DFIR.

2. Recommendations: A stepwise model for Nordic funding reform

DFIR's recommendations outlined below calls for a Nordic research and innovation funding system that more clearly positions itself as a complementary layer between the national and European funding systems. This entails an explicit division of labour, in which Nordic funding is concentrated in the areas where shared Nordic conditions create added value that neither national nor European instruments can deliver on their own. This applies to:

- Shared geography and climate.
- Comparable population level data.
- Shared security risks and mutual trust.
- Shared languages, culture and societal models.[vii]

To create a more strategic Nordic research and innovation funding system, the political level must define a small number of strategic priority areas based on the above criteria for Nordic added value.

Provided that the institutions succeed in adopting a more sharply prioritised and strategic approach to allocating research and innovation funding, DFIR recommends strengthening the Nordic research and innovation funding system with more funding and capacity, and rethinking the funding architecture. In other words, a demonstrated track record of success should come before a possible structural reform and a possible increase in the overall Nordic research and innovation budget.

Towards this end, DFIR recommends a sequenced, four-step model in which each step creates the conditions for the next. In other words, step 3 and 4 are conditional upon the success of step 1, which will be evaluated in step 2.

Step 1. Make Nordic funding more strategic and politically prioritized.

1.1 The political level agrees on a short list of strategic priority areas with clear Nordic added value.

Nordic funding already combines political direction with input from the research and innovation communities. But to strengthen the coherence of the system, the relevant Nordic ministers should jointly decide, and regularly review, a limited number of strategic priority areas that guide the funding of all three organisations. The aim is for Nordic funding to reflect shared strategic interests alongside the priorities of the research communities.

Priority areas should be selected where Nordic-level funding demonstrably achieves something that national, EU or global instruments do not, i.e. where the Nordic

context is integral to the research. DFIR has identified four criteria for assessing Nordic added value: Shared geography and climate, comparable population level data, shared security risks and mutual trust, and shared languages, culture and societal models (see chapter three). Conversely, Nordic funding should be directed away from fields of a more universal character, i.e. research topics and data that are not tied to the Nordic context and that could just as well be pursued with partners outside the region. Funding for this type of research is better sought through national and European instruments, where Nordic researchers can collaborate with the widest possible range of international peers.

The Nordic research and innovation funding system is moreover particularly suited for cooperation in research and early-stage innovation and for investing in shared infrastructure, test and demonstration facilities and data. Nordic funding should therefore focus on pre-competitive activities. Closer to the market, competition between firms and national interests intensifies, which makes the Nordic level less suited as a funder.

1.2 Nordic funding institutions implement the strategic priority areas through fewer, larger, strategically mandated programmes.
Within the strategic priority areas set by the political level, the Nordic research funding institutions should decide how the priority areas are put into practice, including the design of calls. A larger share of joint Nordic public research and innovation funding should move away from small, dispersed, demand-driven calls and toward fewer, larger, strategically mandated programmes tied to the agreed priority areas. The political level sets the direction and the funding institutions retain responsibility for the detailed design and scientific quality of the calls.

1.3 The joint Nordic research and innovation institutions should collaborate with private foundations within these larger, strategically mandated programmes.
The joint Nordic institutions must be able to enter into an equal partnership with interested private foundations on the agreed strategic priority areas. This can be facilitated by creating standard models of co-funding across the Nordic countries to allow easier collaboration between public and private funders of research and the universities and other organisations in the research and innovation eco-systems.

Step 2. Evaluate.

2.1 Agree on an evaluation framework before the first calls are launched.
The Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic funding institutions should agree, before the first calls are issued, on how the revised model will be evaluated: which criteria apply, which data are collected from the outset, when the evaluation takes place and who carries it out. Agreeing the framework in advance ensures that the model is assessed against clear expectations rather than judged after the fact, and it makes it possible to collect baseline data from the start. The evaluation should be carried out independently of the institutions responsible for implementation.

2.2 Evaluate the revised model against four criteria and decide on the way forward.
After an agreed period, the revised model should be evaluated against four criteria: 1. additionality, i.e. whether the funding creates something that would not otherwise have happened; 2. the scientific and innovation quality of the funded activities; 3. the extent to which the results are taken up and applied; and 4. whether real Nordic added value can be demonstrated. On this basis, the political level should decide whether to continue, adjust, scale up or discontinue the model.

Step 3. Restructure the financing architecture and mandate of the Nordic research and innovation funding organisations if the new practice has proven itself.

3.1 Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Nordic research and innovation funding system.
Managing larger, strategically mandated portfolios calls for stronger analytical and programme management capacity at the Nordic research and innovation funding system, clearer division of labour with other Nordic bodies, and, in all likelihood, an updated mandate or statutes, alongside firmer political representation on the board.

3.2 Strengthen collaboration between NordForsk, Nordic Innovation and Nordic Energy Research.
NordForsk, Nordic Energy Research and Nordic Innovation already share an office, face similar structural challenges, and work on related themes. DFIR therefore encourages a clearer shared understanding of how the mandates and activities of the three institutions complement one another. Although the three institutions often address different parts of the research and innovation chain and serve different purposes, they should strengthen their collaboration and coordination on relevant calls. This would also give the region a clearer entry point for private and international partners. Thematic proximity does not in itself imply overlapping mandates or duplication of activities, but there may be areas where closer coordination could help ensure complementarity and make the most of the combined Nordic effort.

Step 4. Increase the Nordic research and innovation budget if the new practice has proven itself.

4.1. Use the evaluation results and potential for more private co-investment as an argument for scaling up.
Positive results from the trial alongside the potential for more private co-investment should be used explicitly to make the political case for a larger joint Nordic research and innovation budget. This could potentially pave the way for a more fully-fledged mission-oriented approach.

4.2. Increase the Nordic research and innovation budget if the new practice yields positive results.
The current joint Nordic research and innovation budget is minimal compared to national research and innovation efforts and to the ambitions expressed in Nordic political declarations. A budget increase is justified in principle, but it should follow documentation that a stronger strategic prioritisation and a more empowered Nordic funding system actually generate additional Nordic value. Scale the budget conditional on positive results.

3. A more strategic Nordic research and innovation funding system based on Nordic added value

This chapter turns to the question of what a more strategic Nordic research and innovation system should fund. DFIR proposes that Nordic funding should be reserved for strategic priority areas that meet the following criteria:

1. The area is distinctively Nordic; that is, it satisfies at least one of the four criteria set out below, rather than simply being important to all Nordic countries.

2. Research cooperation produces something more than the sum of national efforts, through shared infrastructure or data, scale or common standards, and mutual trust.

Priority areas of a more universal character, i.e. research topics and data that are not tied to the Nordic context and that could just as well be pursued with partners outside the region, such as a range of fundamental fields of science and technology, fail this test. Nordic added value, by contrast, is concentrated in areas with a genuinely regional character.

The final selection of a limited number of strategic priority areas remains a political decision for the Nordic Council of Ministers, informed by dialogue with the Nordic research and innovation funding system and national research communities.

The following four criteria carry genuine Nordic added value, and are therefore worth the joint institution's resources.

Four criteria for identifying strategic priority areas with Nordic added value

The concept of Nordic added value has long served as a guiding principle for Nordic research and innovation funding, but there is wide consensus that it remains too loosely defined to steer real funding decisions. To let Nordic added value determine the choice of strategic priority areas, a priority area must satisfy at least one of the following four criteria:

Shared geography and climate

Arctic and sub-Arctic conditions and the shared Baltic Sea ecosystem are physical conditions found nowhere else at comparable scale. Because they cross national borders, they cannot be addressed by national efforts alone. Themes qualify where the research problem is itself defined by these conditions and requires coordinated, cross-border solutions.

Comparable population-level data
Population-wide registers, biobanks and cohorts, built on shared institutional and legal foundations, give the Nordic countries a unique and comparable empirical basis for research across life sciences, public health, education and social research. A theme qualifies where its research questions depend on such data, and where combining Nordic datasets adds statistical power or analytical leverage that no single country can offer.

Shared security risks and mutual trust
The Nordic countries face a shared regional security environment, and long-standing mutual trust allows them to cooperate on research and innovation that other countries would find too sensitive to share, such as dual-use technology, critical infrastructure (e.g. distributed energy systems), and strategic dependencies. Themes qualify where this trust is a precondition for the cooperation itself.

Shared languages, culture and societal models
The Nordic countries share related languages, a common cultural heritage and similar societal models, characterised by strong institutions, comparable welfare systems and labour markets, high social trust and societal cohesion. Themes qualify where the object of study is this societal model itself, including its welfare systems, labour markets, governance, languages, history and culture, and where its distinctiveness gives comparative research a value beyond the region.

Existing definitions on Nordic added value

Nordic added value has long been the central guiding principle for NordForsk's funding activities alongside scientific quality.[viii] NordForsk's framework distinguishes between added value that strengthens the research system itself (critical mass, cost-efficiency through shared infrastructure and data, mobility, competitiveness) and added value that benefits society (addressing needs distinctive to the Nordic region, drawing on shared social structures and cultural heritage, feeding into better-informed policy and regulation, and supporting innovation and industrial cooperation).

The suggested revision above is informed by previous understandings of Nordic added value, but differs from it in emphasis and purpose. Where NordForsk's categories are largely process-oriented, i.e. describing *how* Nordic cooperation generates value once a theme has already been chosen, the suggested revision is content-oriented. It asks *which* areas should qualify for Nordic funding in the first place, independent of how the resulting cooperation is organised.

4. Implementation: What will it require?

Moving from the current, dispersed model to the more strategic model is a governance and institutional undertaking, not simply a reallocation of funds. It will require sustained commitment across several dimensions.

Political anchoring and mandate
The Nordic Council of Ministers and the relevant ministers need to formally adopt the new model of strategic prioritisation and give the Nordic research and innovation funding system an updated mandate to act on it. This is a precondition for everything that follows. Without explicit political ownership, thematic prioritisation will default back to bottom-up demand.

Institutional and legal change
Enabling the Nordic research and innovation funding system to prioritise thematically from the top down is likely to require more than an internal reorganisation. It will probably involve revising statutes and mandate and possibly new agreements at Nordic Council of Ministers level to give the arrangement a firm legal basis.

Institutional capacity
Managing fewer, larger, strategically mandated programmes is a different task from administering many small, demand-driven grants. The Nordic research and innovation funding system will need strengthened analytical and portfolio-management capacity, clearer thematic programme leadership, and a board composition that gives ministries a stronger and more direct role in setting priorities.

Financial architecture
The financing structure should distinguish between a limited number of larger, longer-term programmes tied to the agreed strategic priority areas. If retained at all, a residual track for open, bottom-up Nordic cooperation can be maintained, possibly with focus on research networks and PhD schools. Clear rules will be needed for blending public Nordic funding with private philanthropic capital, including safeguards on independence and conflicts of interest to secure that the joint Nordic research and innovation funding organisations take on a genuine co-investment role.

Sequencing and conditionality
A pilot phase, followed by a formal evaluation against pre-agreed criteria, should precede any decision to scale up. Nordic governments should commit in advance to consider a budget increase if the evaluation criteria are met, to ensure that success under the new model has a concrete, credible follow-on rather than leaving reform to prove itself without reward.

External coordination and stakeholder engagement
Coordination with the EU's own research and innovation and strategic technology agenda is essential to avoid duplication. Continued

dialogue with external stakeholders is needed to convert current interest into concrete co-investment, alongside engagement with national research and innovation communities to manage the transition away from broad, discipline-driven funding.

Risks to manage

As Nordic research and innovation funding becomes more strategic and mission-oriented, some potential concerns should be addressed from the outset. First, there are national concerns about reduced influence over "their" share of joint funding as priorities become more centrally set. Second, there is a risk that top-down thematic selection of strategic priority areas displaces excellent bottom-up research. This risk can be mitigated by choosing priority areas on the basis of transparent, evidence-based criteria and by revisiting them periodically. Third, scientific independence and academic freedom must be safeguarded, even as Nordic funding takes on a stronger strategic orientation. Taken together, these concerns suggest that closer strategic steering of Nordic cooperation will command legitimacy and deliver results only if it is accompanied by clear rules for national co-determination, open selection processes and explicit guarantees for the freedom of research.

Members of the Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy 2026-2029

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Christine Nellemann, Provost, DTU.

Notes

i Carter Walter Bloch, Simon Fuglsang, Ebbe Krogh Graversen, Maria-Theresa Norn: *The Nordics as an R&I Region*, 2026.

ii Bloch et al.: *The Nordics as an R&I Region.*

iii Nordic Council of Ministers: *Analysis of Competitiveness in a Nordic Perspective,* 2026. https://pub.norden.org/temanord2026-538/.

iv The strategy 2022-2024 of Nordic Energy Research was subject to an external evaluation in 2023, which focused, among other things, on relevance and Nordic added value. See Gaia Consulting Oy and Sweco Sweden: *Evaluation of Nordic Energy Research Impact and Strategy for Vision 2030,* 2023.

v Eurostat, *Government budget allocations for R&D,* 2025.

vi The figures are based on budget data provided by the organisations and DFIR's own calculations, converted to EUR at annual average exchange rates. At NordForsk, basic funding accounted for 31 percent of the 2025 budget and national contributions for calls for 69 percent. From 2023 to 2025, the total budget increased by 13 percent, driven by a 40 percent rise in national contributions, while basic funding remained largely unchanged. At Nordic Energy Research, basic funding made up 21 percent, the remainder being project funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers, national contributions and EU projects; the total budget decreased by 12 percent over the same period. At Nordic Innovation, basic funding made up 97 percent and project funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers 3 percent; the total budget decreased by 14 percent. The comparison is made against national research and development budget allocations rather than relative budget shares, as the Nordic Council of Ministers' budget and the national government budgets differ considerably in scope, which limits the comparability of such shares.

vii See chapter three for further elaboration.

viii See Tuire Liimatainen: *Nordic added value in Nordic research co-operation: Concept and practice,* 2023 and Frederik Forrai Ørskov et al.: *Nordic Added Value in Inter-Ministerial Nordic Co-operation: Past and Present Perspectives.* Nordic Council of Ministers, 2024.

The Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy aims to promote the development of Danish research, technological advancement, and innovation for the benefit of society. The Council is responsible for providing the Minister for Science, Higher Education and Digital Affairs, the Danish Parliament, and other ministers with independent and expert advice on research, technological advancement, and innovation at a strategic level, including future needs. The Council must incorporate relevant national and international experience and trends when offering such advice, which should be based on documentation, studies, analyses, and reviews in the fields of research, technological advancement, and innovation.

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