

## What are the situation for Norway?



*The Alomar facilities at Andøya, Northern Norway ensure Norwegian scientists and international colleagues access to modern research facilities for basis space research.  
Photo: Norwegian Space Centre*

In 2002 Norway spent around three billion Euros in R&D. That is a real growth from 2001 at three percent. It was the public grants that increased while the trade and industry had a small decrease. The share of the Gross Domestic Product was only 1.67 percent and it is a relatively long way to go before the share is on the average OECD-level at 2.3 percent at present, a goal it is planned to reach by 2005. And not the least to mention the 3 percent level, which seems to be even further away.

The Norwegian research activities are hopefully going in the right direction. From large interest and top investment in oil and gas research in the 70s and 80s, the interest for such research has decreased. Although the benefit for the Norwegian economy is obvious, research within alternative areas is difficult to increase again. The government has in recent years underlined their goal to increase these activities, but to reach the goal within 2005 seems difficult.

Norway has, as a raw material supplier through the oil and gas production, a low share of the Gross Domestic Product connected to R&D. The situation is a little better if one sees the share per capita, but the share is still too low. To develop alternative activities for the oil and gas production must be a preferential task for the politicians who decide the framework and for the industry that is supposed to carry out the research. Norway must use parts of the wealth on oil

and gas to create alternative products and industries before the natural resources end.

EU's sixth framework programme is running for the first period. "How is the participation from Norway?", we ask?

"Norway is an active part in the EU's research programmes", Kari Kveseth continued; "In spite of the fact that we only have an alternative connection to the organisation. In the first application round for the sixth framework programme 25 percent of the Norwegian applications was accepted. The level for the EU was 19 percent and that shows that Norway both is a popular partner and has research programmes of high quality. In the small countries there was a lot of scepticism to the EU's introduction of the new financial instruments "Network of Excellence", "Integrated Projects" and ERA-NET (program cooperation across national borders in EU). However, Norway has maintained itself very well in the new research "instruments" and participate in around 50 percent of the ERA-NETs that are established".

"Norway, as one of the richer countries in the world, must in general take it's share of contributing to the international knowledge development. The main purpose with all research", Director Kari Kveseth concluded, "is that the research and development results are going to lead to products and services that can bring the society forward. Innovation based on the results is necessary, if the research is going to attain one's objective".



*Intensive research has given Norway a leading position within exploration and utilisation of oil and gas offshore. Here a pipelay vessel ready for working in the North Sea.*

*Photo: Nordic Space Activities*