



An evaluation of The Nordic Institute for Advanced Training in Occupational Health's activities  
2003-2012

## Evaluation of NIVA

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## Executive summary

This report presents the evaluation of NIVA, the Nordic Institute for Advanced Training in Occupational Health. NIVA, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM), is a Nordic institute for highly advanced education and dissemination of research in the field of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), NIVA functions by arranging different educational activities, such as courses, seminars, or workshops, with the main objective 'to further work-related well-being in the Nordic and other countries'.

In April 2013, Oxford Research was commissioned by the NCM Department for Growth and Climate (VK) to evaluate NIVA. The purpose of the evaluation is twofold. First, it is to be a technical evaluation of the institute's performance over the past ten years. Second, it is to supply alternatives and recommendations for the future organisation and operation of the institute.

The evaluation has been conducted using a variety of both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure the reliability of the results. The methodology has consisted of an extensive interview programme with stakeholders, OSH experts and participants in NIVA's training; a survey of all NIVA training participants of the last ten years; extensive document studies and analyses; and a participant observation.

In short, the overarching results of the evaluation are that

- NIVA's activities are of highest quality and are relevant in the field.
- NIVA's activities have a significant impact on national OSH research and practices.
- NIVA fulfils the objectives and role given to the institute but steering is weak on several levels due to lack of knowledge and of clear communication.

By surveying participants that have attended the training, from interviews with Nordic experts in the field of OSH and by compiling NIVA's own end of survey questionnaires it can be concluded that the courses offered are of very high quality. The participants at the courses are highly satisfied with all aspects surrounding the courses such as the quality of the lectures, possibilities to network and the service of NIVA's secretariat. The courses are also relevant as the academic level is found to be just right and since the courses are in sufficient demand to fill the

In the survey given to participants a clear majority state that they have used what they learned at NIVA training and applied it in their day to day work and that NIVA training have contributed to the participants' national research communities. The study also shows that the lecturers at NIVA's courses see them as an important venue to disseminate their research. Several specific examples have also been given of how knowledge spread through NIVA's activities has contributed to national research and OSH practices. These facts all demonstrate the significant impact of NIVA's activities.

NIVA to a good extent fulfils its role and objectives with regards to target group, number of activities and content. NIVA has managed to redirect the thematic focus of its activities and to diversify the composition of the participants. However, vague governing documents and the low level of familiarity of the NCM with NIVA indicate a weakness in the steering of NIVA. This is paired with a similar vagueness in NIVA's communication of its achievements, which may be an indication of weak steering on the agency level.

Several conclusions follow from the evaluation results, the main ones being that

- NIVA does contribute a specific Nordic added value to the member countries of the NCM.
- NIVA clearly furthers work-related well-being in the Nordic and other countries.

The added value is manifested in the way that NIVA manages to promote Nordic research and policy within OSH, that Nordic utility is created through the collaborations and network that NIVA give rise to and in the way NIVA manages to gather a critical mass of participants for courses that would not have been able to stage separately in each of the Nordic countries. That NIVA furthers work-related well-being is demonstrated by the significant impact of the activities on national OSH research and practices.

Further conclusions are that it is possible to improve the cost-efficiency of NIVA and that the course offering is contemporary but that innovation can increase. Excluding costs that NIVA could potentially reduce, i.e. the costs associated with organising courses which are not covered by the course fee, the courses could be made self-supporting. By reducing the costs of each course to the level of the fixed costs, NIVA would be able to reduce its financial risk. As regards the course offerings, the process for generating courses is based on a weak analysis of the needs of the potential target audience, emphasizing the experiences of the Director or researchers already within NIVA's network. This process has resulted in courses of high quality gathering a sufficient number of participants from Nordic and non-Nordic countries. However, by using existing channels to generate courses, NIVA risks to unintentionally overlook topics relevant to the target audience.

As this study shows, NIVA adheres to its contracts, provide high quality training, possesses a clear Nordic added value and has an impact on national research communities and OSH policy. Our main recommendation to the Nordic Council of Ministers is therefore to keep NIVA as a mean of strengthening Nordic collaboration in this field. In order to achieve a high impact the training should be marketed to and tailored for researchers, practitioners and stakeholders that have the possibility to impact national research communities and OSH policies.

Further recommendations are that:

- 1. NIVA should continue to exist**
- 2. NIVA should be brought closer to the Nordic Council of Ministers**
- 3. The marketing of NIVA needs to improve**
- 4. NIVA's high quality must be upheld**
- 5. NIVA should try to diversify their course offering**
- 6. The new NIVA director should be recruited with the other recommendations in mind**

NIVA's high quality, added value and consistent ability to deliver expected results motivate the continued funding of the institute. However, to fully utilise NIVA's strengths, the NCM should increase its knowledge of the work performed and take more active ownership of the organisation. The rudimentary methods for communicating NIVA's results and course offerings, and the lack of knowledge about NIVA's activities and performance, also suggest a need to improve the institute's marketing.

NIVA's relevance and added value rest on the high quality of the training offered. Hence it is crucial to maintain this quality by continuing provide the more extensive types of courses. However, the marginal cost of arranging more courses is low and a widened course offering could be done without expanding the budget from the NCM. This gives a possibility to diversify NIVA's course offering and provide expensive multi-day courses as well as shorter ones.

Finally, all recommendations should be taken into account when the new NIVA director is recruited. The director of NIVA plays a vital role with regards to the contacts with the NCM, the communication of NIVA's activities, and the generation of activities. It is therefore essential that the new director has the necessary qualifications to implement the suggested improvements.

# Chapter 1. Introduction

Oxford Research was in April 2013 commissioned by the Nordic Councils of Ministers' (NCM) Department for Growth and Climate (VK) to carry out an evaluation of The Nordic Institute for Advanced Training in Occupational Health (NIVA).

The evaluation has two overall purposes; to present a prospective analysis regarding the institute's future organisation and role and a retrospective evaluation on performance during 2003-2012. The evaluation presents recommendations on how NIVA could be developed and what changes that could be implemented in order to meet future challenges.

In this chapter we will present the methodology used in this study and the main outline of the report.

## 1.1 Methodology

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In order to answer the evaluation questions and to identify critical factors that allow us to provide recommendations for the future development of NIVA, Oxford Research selected an evaluation approach involving both quantitative and qualitative methods. The approach is presented in the sections below.

### 1.1.1 Desk research

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Collecting quantitative information through desk research was crucial in order to answer questions about NIVA's performance, the quantity of their courses as well as discussing effects of possible changes in the budgetary framework. The majority of the information was provided to Oxford Research from NIVA's secretariat, i.e. with the help from NIVA's staff. Sources that have been investigated include:

- NIVA's Annual reports
- The contracts between NIVA and the NCMS
- NIVA's course catalogues
- Previous evaluations of NIVA

### 1.1.2 Survey

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In order to investigate the quality of NIVA's courses Oxford Research carried out a web based survey targeting a total of 1,930 participants, lecturers and course leaders whose names were provided by NIVA. The answers from the survey especially facilitated answering questions concerning the impact of NIVA's activities. The survey was deployed in late June 2013 and ran until September 2013. It resulted in a response rate of 23 % (439 respondents).

The large numbers of responses ensure high statistical reliability of the results. Assuming a completely random sample, for two-choice questions confidence intervals are maximally around 4 %, and smaller than this when answers show very clear tendencies. The overwhelming tendency of the survey responses is thus very likely to correspond well to the real distribution of opinions within the population. All complementary sources of infor-

mation, such as the end of course questionnaire and the interviews with key individuals, confirm the clear tendency in the evaluation of NIVA and its activities. Hence, there is no indication of non-response bias towards more positively inclined respondents, strengthening the argument for representativeness. Furthermore, internal non-response bias in the survey is of no concern since all questions were answered by nearly 100 % of the respondents.

The survey served us with background information about the participants, such as gender, country of origin, profession and educational background of the participants. The background information has also made it possible to break down results to compare and find connections between different target groups, which contribute to a deeper understanding of the results.

The survey was carried out as a complement to NIVA's own End of Course Questionnaire (ECQ), of the results of which are also summarized in this report. We have summarized the ECQ's given in the years 2009-2012 since the questionnaire was revised in 2009.<sup>1</sup> It covers the following topics:

- Content of the course
- Composition of the group
- Opportunities for useful contacts at the course/training
- Duration of the course/training
- Practical organization surrounding the course/training
- Objectives of the course/training

### 1.1.3 In-depth Interviews

Oxford Research has included a broad group of actors in this evaluation to get a thorough understanding of the activities and impact of NIVA. Following the initial desk research Oxford Research initiated an interview program where 39 in-depth qualitative interviews with actors on the policy level, agency level, operational level and among the target group were carried out. These four groups are presented in figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1 Actors engaged in the evaluation**



<sup>1</sup> NIVA has handed out end of course questionnaires to participants at their activities since 1991.

The interview program is one of the most important methodological elements in the evaluation approach, as it enables Oxford Research to grasp the complexity of NIVA and the views of multiple stakeholders.

The advantage of the in-depth interviews is that they generate high level of detail in the data. In relation to the evaluation's forward-looking evaluation approach, the interviews also serve numerous stakeholders with the opportunity to express different ideas about how NIVA can optimize its work to promote and improve Nordic OSH research and research cooperation.

All the interviews have been carried out using semi-structured interview guidelines, facilitating cross-national comparison while permitting sufficient flexibility to allow national specificities, such as national policy, to be explored.

#### 1.1.4 Strategy seminar

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A key element in Oxford Research's evaluation approach was a final strategy seminar. The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the evaluations preliminary results and focus on strategy and forward-looking recommendations. The seminar was held in Copenhagen on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2013 and 11 of the key stakeholders in relation to NIVA participated and debated the preliminary conclusions of this report. The input from the seminar was later incorporated into this final report.

## 1.2 Outline of the report

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In this chapter a brief introduction to the task and our methodology was presented.

**Chapter 2** gives an introduction to NIVA by presenting a short historical background to the institute and its objectives. The chapter also gives a description on how the objectives have developed since 2003 until today.

**Chapter 3** presents the organisation of NIVA and how its activities are controlled by the NMR and NIVA's board. The chapter also investigates NIVA's cooperation with other actors in the field of occupational health and safety research.

**Chapter 4** answers the question on what NIVA does. It presents the output of NIVA in the form of number of courses provided and number of participants over the years but also more qualitative aspects of NIVA's course offering by for example providing information on trends regarding the topics of courses provided.

**Chapter 5** deals with NIVA's performance by assessing the quality, the relevance and the impact of NIVA's training. This is done by presenting results from surveys and interviews with stakeholders within the field of occupational health and safety and course participants.

**Chapter 6** is a synthesis of the prior chapters in the form of conclusions of the report and recommendations for the future of NIVA.

## Chapter 2. What is NIVA?

This chapter will give an introduction to NIVA as an organization as well as to the objectives of NIVA. First we present a short historical background of NIVA. Thereafter the objectives of NIVA are summed up along with a short description of how they have changed over the last decade.

### 2.1 Historical background

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The Nordic Institute for Advanced Training in Occupational Health (NIVA) was founded 1982 in Helsinki under the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). NIVA was given a mandate from the Council Resolution of the Nordic Co-operation Ministers to provide cooperation and advanced level training forums for highly experienced researchers and practitioners in the field of occupational safety and health (OSH).

Today, NIVA is one of the institutions under the NCM aiming at improving living and working conditions and disseminating knowledge in the Nordic countries. The target group has traditionally been researchers and professionals in the Nordic countries and their surroundings, but this group has been extended to include both a greater variety of countries and an increasing number of people with different backgrounds.

### 2.2 The objectives of NIVA

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The contract between NIVA and the NCM sets up objectives and guidelines for the direction of NIVA. According to the current contract of the years of 2012-2014, NIVA has one main objective:

*'to further work-related well-being in the Nordic and other countries'.*

NIVA is to fulfil the objective by offering researchers and other professionals in the field of OSH a platform for cooperation and education. The mode of function of NIVA is to arrange post-graduate and specialist training in OSH in the form of courses, symposia, workshops and seminars. The training is meant to be a forum for innovation and development, for dissemination of knowledge, for the application of well-tested practices, and for building specialist networks. One of NIVA's Board Members explains NIVA's role:

*'NIVA's role is foremost to be a mediator of knowledge, rather than a research institute. NIVA could easily be defined as an educational institute. NIVA binds Nordic experts to different kinds of networks in order to strengthen the knowledge within the OSH field.'*

NIVA's activities are stated to be especially important in fields of research where there are few experts in each country. In the current contract, activities are organized in three areas:

1. Education (course provision),
2. Preparation and marketing
3. Cooperation in the neighbouring region (specifically with Russia).

Within each area, more specific quality and production objectives are defined. Quality objectives include elements such as level and contents of courses and the reach of marketing. The production objectives specify numbers of courses, participants, newsletters and such, and the development of communication tools.

NIVA's quality objectives for the on-going contract period states that the training offered by NIVA shall reflect the frontier of the working environment research and disseminate knowledge from Nordics and from Nordic projects in all Nordic countries. NIVA should also broaden its target audience and acknowledge differences in training needs among the target audience. Furthermore, NIVA shall continuously evaluate and develop its activities. In summary, NIVA's production goals for the contracting period 2012-2014 are:

## **2.2.1 Changes in objectives between 2003 and 2014**

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### **Production objectives for 2012-2014**

#### **The content of the courses**

- More courses/activities than in the contracting period 2009-2011 should address psychosocial issues in work organizations.
- Courses should also address issues related to methodology and epidemiology, the prevention of accidents and occupational diseases, the prevention of stress and sickness absence, return to work, sustainable development in employment, promotion of work ability, ergonomics, toxicology, industrial hygiene, asthma, allergy and dermatology, and development of the work environment.

#### **The courses and number of participants**

- NIVA shall continue to offer a variety of educational activities, especially seminars, short courses and thematic meetings, at least eight and up to 15 courses/seminars/symposia annually.
- At least one or two activities per year should be directed to authorities and industrial health services.
- The distribution of participants should ideally reflect each country's share of the contribution to NCMS
- NIVA can arrange seminars for Nordic projects.
- Training activities should at least reach 25 participants. Training in particularly high priority themes should reach a larger audience, for example using Nordic Tours.
- The target in number of participants is 300 per year.

#### **Expression of the results and suggestions for improvement of quality**

- Course evaluation forms shall be used to assess the quality of the courses with the aim to achieve average responses of good or higher.
- The results of the course activities are reported in the Annual Report and the financial statements of NIVA
- The Director evaluates the activities on an annual basis and delivers suggestions for improving the quality of the courses

The contract between NIVA and the NCM is based on the NIVA bylaws effective since 2000. Comparing the different contract periods it is possible to trace a shift in focus and objectives. In the NIVA bylaws, and in the NIVA contracts for the contract periods 2003-2005, 2006-2008 and 2009-2011, two additional elements can be interpreted as overarching objectives, besides the main objective stated above.

First, general Nordic cooperation and added value are stressed as objectives in themselves. This is for example formulated as the fact that NIVA's activities should contribute to:

*“a Nordic added value beyond simply cooperation within the research community”<sup>2</sup>.*

This exact sentence is present in the bylaws and in contracts up until 2011. The fact that the sentence is repeated by default gives the impression of a gradual loss of context and understanding of the objective. This may explain why it is not present in the latest contract.

Second, the concept of OSH is described both in terms of work environment and the more general term of working life. In the bylaws and contract of 2003-2005 this focus includes the task of furthering the concept of the *good work*, (“det goda arbetet”). The *good work* is not mentioned in any documents starting 2006, but the term *working life* is highlighted next to the term work environment (*arbetsmiljöområdet* in Swedish) in all contracts in the period 2003-2011. In the latest contract also this term has been removed reducing NIVA’s mandate to simply the work environment area. However, the scope of this term is unclear, as a discussion of the distinction between the more qualitative working life research and work environment research, present in the NIVA guidelines of 2006-2008 and 2009-2011, is not present in the last contract.

In addition, according to the contract of 2003-2005, NIVA’s activities are to be based on Nordic work environment and working life *politics*. This ambition is lost in the coming period but mention of the *Nordic model* as a concept to export to other countries has entered the contracts starting from 2009. This may indicate a shift in the understanding of the field of policy under consideration to a non-political conception of a static *Nordic model*.

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<sup>2</sup> ett nordiskt mervärde utöver de rent fackliga samarbetsresultaten

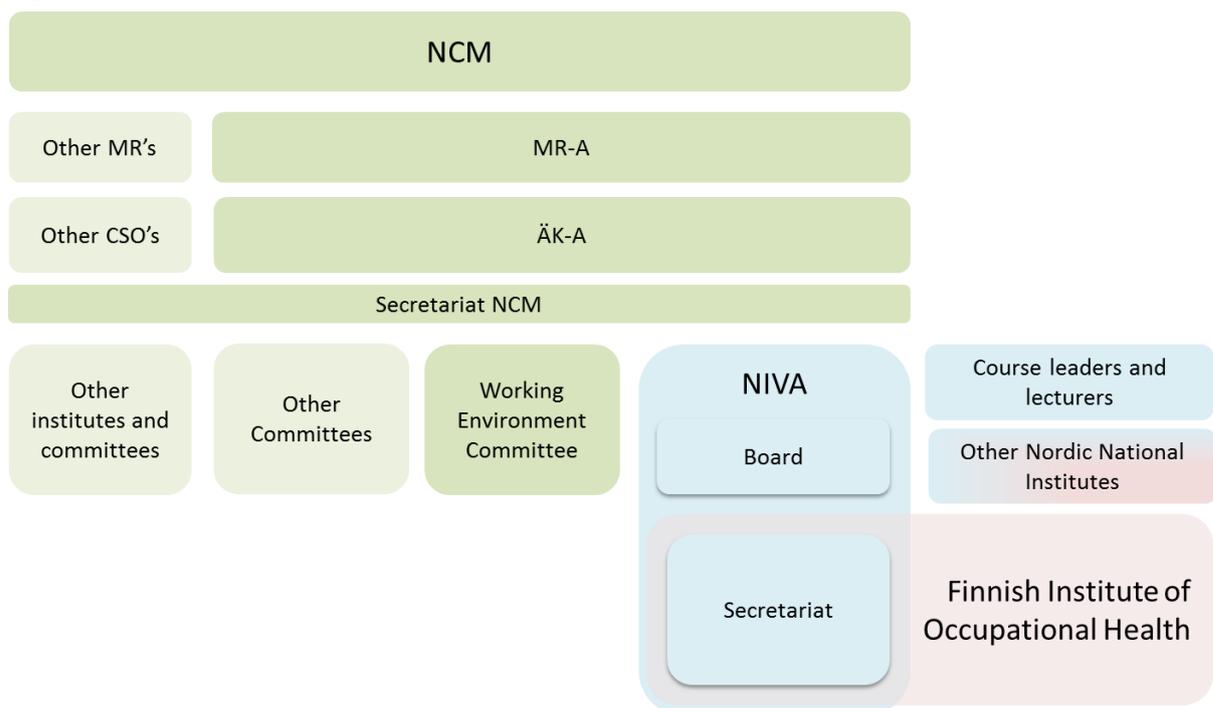
## Chapter 3. NIVA's organization and steering

In this chapter, we describe how NIVA is organized internally and in relation to the NCM. Thereafter, using the same internal and external perspectives, we present the steering mechanisms of NIVA. Lastly, NIVA's role in the field of OSH is presented.

### 3.1 Organization of NIVA

NIVA as an institute lies under the umbrella of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). The organisation and structure of NIVA can be read out from the institute's bylaws, which together with contracts and annual reports form the basis for this section. The organization and structure of NIVA is presented in the figure below and thereafter described.

Figure 3.1 The organizational setting of NIVA



The NCM as an organisation is an umbrella collecting councils within several central areas of policy. One of these is the Nordic Council of Ministers for Labour, the MR-A, which is responsible for NIVA. In addition to the MR-A there is within the field of labour policy a cooperative body of administrative staff. This body is called the Nordic Committee of Senior Officials for Labour (ÅK-A) and consists of staff from national ministries. Both the council of ministers and the committee of officials are serviced by associated staff in the NCM secretariat (NCMS).

Each council of ministers in the NCM coordinates a number of institutions and cooperative bodies. In the case of MR-A, there are three committees and one institution, NIVA. In the context of this evaluation, the most notable of the committees is the Working Environment Committee, consisting of experts in the work environment field.

It is the council of ministers that ultimately decides on NIVA's organization, task and budget. In practice, the organization is set up such that a board is responsible for NIVA's activities. The board consists of members that according to the NIVA bylaws are to be appointed by the national ministries of employment in the Nordics. NIVA's function, role and objectives are defined in the contracts between the institute and the council of ministers. The contracts run on three year periods, the latest of these periods starting in 2012. The board consists of one representative from each of the Nordic countries, generally from a work environment or occupational health institute. The chairmanship of the board rotates between the five countries.

NIVA's board sets up the strategy of the institute in accordance with the objectives defined by the MR-A. Within this framework the board functions as a policy-maker. It decides on targets, organization, staffing, budget, and evaluation of the institute. NIVA's director is then in turn responsible for executing the board's decisions. The autonomy of NIVA is to be balanced by close contact with other parts of the NCM's labour section. For example, the NCM's secretariat is expected to be represented at the board meetings and is to receive the board's records.

Currently, NIVA is staffed with one director and three course administrators, one of which is also responsible for communication. These make up the NIVA secretariat, located in the premises of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH) in Helsinki. NIVA's staffing and organization has been stable during several years, at least since 2005. The current director, Mia Latta, assumed her position in 2006, and has been heading the institute since. The administrative staff has consistently been made up of a group of three employees. One of these positions was part time (60 %) until 2009 when two of the coordinators left the organization. These were replaced by two full time employees.

The NIVA secretariat annually organizes different types of post-graduate level educational activities within the field of occupational safety and health. The education is funded in part by NIVA's budget, in part by fees. Course leaders and lecturers are recruited on a course-wise basis. They consist of Nordic and international experts in various fields of occupational safety and health. For the purpose of recruiting lecturers NIVA maintains a network of experts, which also functions as a venue for marketing the NIVA courses.

## 3.2 The steering of NIVA

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Since NIVA is based on intergovernmental Nordic cooperation under the NCM, the rules and guidelines presumed to apply for NIVA must be entrenched in the respective countries. As explained above, NIVA is guided by a contract between NIVA and the NCM. The overall responsibility for NIVA as an organization and as a provider of activities relies on NIVA's Board. The Board is responsible for the strategic planning of NIVA as well as for goals and implementation of activities, making it the most important governing body of NIVA.

The Board is guided by the contract agreed upon with the NCM through the committee of senior officials. In order for NIVA to reach an optimal mode of functioning, the guidelines from the NCM must lay the cornerstones of NIVA in a way suitable for NIVA to develop in the direction towards the NCM's aims for the organization. One of NIVA's Board Members state that:

*"[...] the NCM has to put forward appropriate expectations that are reasonable related to the budget. It is also important not only to focus on quantitative measures but also try to understand more deeply the function and value of the institute."*

It has been indicated in the interviews that the NCM, the committee of senior officials and the secretariat, has little knowledge of NIVA's activities and of the field in which it operates, and that the NCM shows limited interest in steering NIVA into a prominent actor in its field. Therefore, one Board Member argues that NIVA has focused on informing the secretariat of NCM on:

*"NIVA has tried to visualize the institute for the NCM, which has resulted in that the council is rather tired of NIVA. NIVA has fulfilled the goals that been set up by the NCM and is in relation to such criteria successful. If one consider the way of how NIVA is measured it is in some way blurred and undefined."*

In order for NIVA to deliver results and effects in accordance with the expectations of the NCM several criteria have to be fulfilled at all organizational levels. On the one hand, the NCM's expectations of NIVA should be clarified and articulated, so that NIVA can directly link its activities to a clear aim of the its owner. On the other hand, NIVA's board must seek to adhere to these expectations both in its planning processes and by steering the administration of NIVA.

One of the critical aspects of steering an organization towards aims and goals, without actively participating in carrying out activities is to secure active ownership<sup>3</sup>. The most important part of improving the way in which the NCM steer NIVA is to enhance the level of ownership of NIVA. Requests for the NCM to take more interest in NIVA and to have a better knowledge of NIVA's organization and activities have been present throughout the interviews. By getting to know NIVA better, the steering of NIVA could improve. By setting out short- and long-term goals and clarifying the aims of NIVA, the NCM would be able to improve the efficiency of its own steering as well as of the work carried out by NIVA.

### **3.3 Cooperation with organizations and stakeholders**

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NIVA mainly focuses on enhancing knowledge and spreading ideas within the field of occupational health within the Nordic countries. To do so, NIVA is dependent on Nordic cooperation and on actively engaging other Nordic stakeholders in their work.

Therefore, NIVA cooperates with a substantial number of actors in all Nordic countries, some of which are pointed out in the figure above describing the organization of NIVA. In addition to the organizations that are linked to the NCM, NIVA cooperates with other Nordic organizations as well as with organizations in the rest of Europe and Northwest Russia.

#### **3.3.1 NIVA and the Presidency of the NCM**

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Besides providing training NIVA has been contributed to activities during the Finnish Presidency in 2011 and the Swedish Presidency in 2013. The events that took place during these years were a session on Work environment and career that focused on measures that can help older workers to work longer and a seminar on work environment for young people during the autumn of 2013 in Stockholm. During these two occasions NIVA has collaborated with responsible ministries both on practical matters surrounding the arrangements and on putting together the programme.

In addition to these Presidency events, NIVA has hosted two special initiatives aimed at labour inspectors. One was a workshop on market control in 2011, and the other was a workshop on labour immigrants in 2013. The workshop on market control was based on a project that was finishing in the Work Environment Committee (AMU), and the one on labour immigrants was based on one of the globalization projects of the NCM.

#### **3.3.2 The importance of Nordic cooperation**

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The Nordic added value of cooperation and collaboration has been emphasized throughout the interviews that Oxford Research has conducted. It has been argued that Nordic collaboration is based on cultural as well as political similarities. The similarities of social systems, industrial relations models and socioeconomic conditions of the Nordic countries make up a suitable context for cooperation within the field of occupational safety and health. Therefore, several interviewees argue that Nordic courses have a prominent international status attracting non-Nordic scientists. One of the interviewees state that there is great potential in the Nordic cooperation:

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<sup>3</sup> See Brulin, G. & Svensson, L. (2012) *Managing Sustainable Development Programmes*. Gower Publishing Ltd.

*“The Nordic countries were the first in the world to focus on wellbeing at work. Even if the individual countries are small, the Nordic countries altogether consists of 26 million inhabitants. If Scandinavia put more effort on being a part of a larger community in order to be able to organize professional training at the Nordic level that would increase the impact.”*

Another reasoning put forward for NIVA to focus on Nordic cooperation has been highlighted by the EU-membership. The northern and southern parts of Europe diverge on several issues in OSH. The differences make the Nordic countries a suitable forum for dissemination of Nordic knowledge on OSH within the EU.

### **3.3.3 Cooperation with stakeholders in the field of OSH in the Nordics**

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According to the statutes of NIVA, the organization should contribute to increase the Nordic cooperation within the field of OSH. Cooperation with stakeholders in the field also is natural to NIVA, since the organization relies on the contribution of researchers from Nordic universities in order to provide courses in the field of OSH. However, most collaborative activities regarding courses are directed at specific researchers within NIVA's network, for example prior course leaders, and consist of collaboration on an ad hoc basis.

Since 2003, NIVA has also carried out continuous activities to establish cooperation with organization in the Nordic countries. Some of the organizations and forums for cooperation which NIVA has had contact with during these years are:

- The Finnish Medical Convention (Finland)
- National Research Centre for the Working Environment (Denmark)
- The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (Finland)
- The Swedish Institute for Work Environment - ALI (Sweden) until 2007
- The Administration of Occupational Safety and Health (Iceland)
- The National Institute of Occupational Health - STAMI (Norway)
- The Nordic School of Public Health (NHV)
- The Nordic Work Environment Meeting (NAM)
- Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Issues (NVC)
- The Icelandic Rehabilitation Fund (VIRK)

Despite the similarities within the field of OSH in the Nordic countries, there are also several differences between the Nordic countries affecting NIVA's anchorage as an important stakeholder in Nordic OSH. Since Sweden closed down its work environment institute in 2007, Sweden's role in the OSH field has diminished, causing NIVA to lose an important institutional contact. Due to the lack of a work environment institute in Sweden, NIVA is currently operating in a context with fewer strong national institutes of work environment. Currently there are institutes in Denmark, Norway and Finland, but, according to several interviewees, the institutes in Denmark and Finland are facing upcoming budget cuts. Finland has an influential role in NIVA and the OSH field as a whole, partly since NIVA is located at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH).

For NIVA, the different roles of the work environment institutes in the Nordic countries affect the possibility to attract participants and course leaders. Several experts in the field of OSH points to that the discontinuation of the Swedish Work Environment Institute affected NIVA negatively, and some argue that there is therefore an increased need of an institute that has the function of channelling Swedish knowledge towards the other Nordic countries. One of them says:

*“The incident in 2006 when the Swedish work environment institute was closed down. The “Swedish” activity within NIVA diminished both regarding participants and course organizers.”*

Other interviewees emphasizes that there are differences in how NIVA has managed to establish itself as a brand in different countries. In Norway, it is argued that NIVA is only known through (and within) the national institute, STAMI. For example one of the interviewees, head of a public working environment agency in one of the Nordic countries, did not have any knowledge about NIVA or its activities and emphasizes that it is:

*"[...] an important input per se, when a national relatively central governmental authority doesn't have an idea of what NIVA is."*

Apart from collaboration on a national level, establishing collaboration with Nordic institutions has been complicated for NIVA. One of the interviewees maintained that this is caused by a lack of transparency within the NCM. One strategy for creating cooperation for knowledge-sharing, as proposed by several stakeholders, is through the recently established Nordic Association of Occupational Safety and Health (NOROSH), established and financed by the work environment institutes in the Nordic countries (except Sweden) and by scientists who pay a fee to publish their work on the website with open access. NOROSH is a channel to publish scientific work in the OSH field and thereby to share new knowledge.

### **3.3.4 NIVA's role in non-Nordic collaboration**

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In addition to the attempts to establish cooperation with organization in the Nordic countries, NIVA has carried out activities to collaborate with non-Nordic actors such as the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA). NIVA has also attempted to broaden its activities geographically, focusing on the Baltic countries and Russia. In order to do so, collaborative activities have been directed at the International Labour Organization (ILO).

NIVA's ambition to collaborate with EU-OSHA and Eurofound has developed over the years, even though the cooperation is not formalized. One of the reasons why the cooperation has been established for such a long time, yet not reaching a formalized point has been pointed out as being the substantial bureaucracy and administrative burdens associated with cooperating with EU institutions. Instead the collaboration to a great extent depends on personal contacts established by the Director, causing the collaboration to be highly dependent on individuals and vulnerable for organizational changes.

## Chapter 4. NIVA's activities and budget

Several Board members have highlighted that the objective of NIVA is to provide advanced training in small fields engaging few specialists in the Nordic countries. In this light it may be questioned whether or not it is important that NIVA's activities are self-sufficient, provide surplus or if they should be subsidized more by the NCM. Depending on what kind of added value the NCM aims for NIVA to have, the answer to this question may differ. The focal points of this chapter are NIVA's activities and budget, especially focusing on how the revenues and expenses impact NIVA's financial stability.

The first part of the chapter focuses on describing what training NIVA offers and how this offer has changed over the years, regarding coverage of topics and activity length. Thereafter, the NIVA training participants are described, focusing on the number and characteristics of participants over the past decade. In the last part of the chapter NIVA's budget is described and analysed.

### 4.1 Courses offered by NIVA

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The aim of NIVA is "to further work-related well-being in the Nordic and other countries". In order to do so, NIVA offers researchers and other professionals in the field of OSH courses in a broad range of OSH topics. This part of the chapter provides an overview of the training offered by NIVA.

#### 4.1.1 Number of courses and topics covered

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NIVA has arranged over 130 courses with a total of more than 3330 participants since 2003. The courses cover a broad range of topics in the field of OSH. Oxford Research has been able to identify five comprehensive course themes using NIVA's categorization of courses as a starting point. The purpose of the themes is to facilitate an analysis of the direction of NIVA's activities during the past ten years<sup>4</sup>.

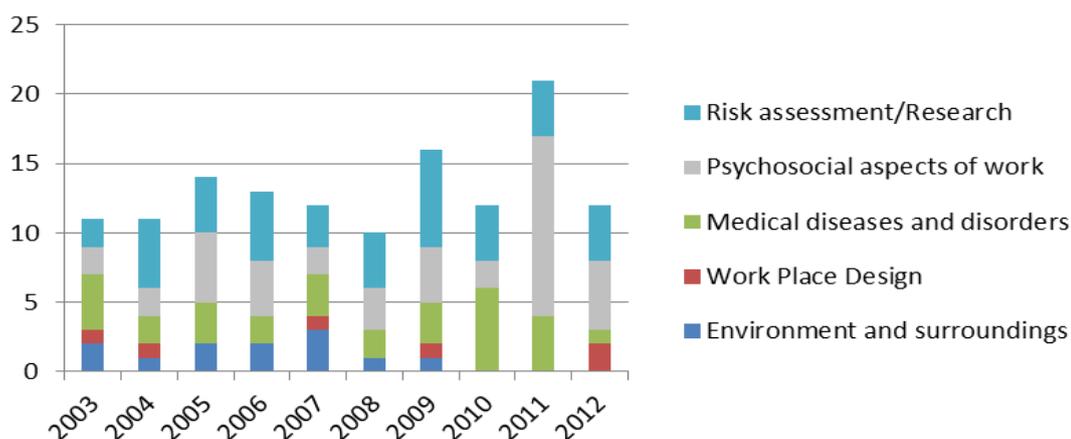
As shown in figure 4.1 below, the number of courses offered each year has fluctuated, from as low as ten in 2008 to as many as 21<sup>5</sup> in 2011. The average number of 13.2 courses per year between 2003 and 2012 indicates that NIVA has fulfilled its production goals, as specified in the contracts for each three year contracting period, since 2003. In total, there is also a slight positive trend in the number of courses offered by NIVA.

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<sup>4</sup> More information about the categorization of the course themes is found in Appendix 3

<sup>5</sup> Including two Nordic tours

**Figure 4.1 The number of courses offered and topics covered 2003-2012**



The figures indicate that the themes covered by NIVA's courses have been kept quite stable over the contract periods. The themes create, what an interviewee calls, a 'mosaic' of courses. In addition to the regular courses offered, NIVA has attempted to arrange specific courses to attract professionals within specific sectors, for example attracting professionals and researchers in sectors characterized by certain challenges in relation to OSH, for example seafarers.

For the first two contract periods that are relevant for the evaluation, 2003-2005 and 2006-2008, courses in *Risk assessment/Research*, followed by courses about *Psychosocial aspects of work*, were the most common. During the last contract period, 2009-2011 as well as in the on-going period, courses regarding the *Psychosocial aspects of work* have been more common than those concerning *Risk assessment/Research*.

A total of 42 courses have been carried out in each of two of the themes; *Psychosocial aspects of work* and *Risk assessment/research*. 13 of the *Psychosocial aspects of work* courses were arranged in 2011, causing a substantial increase in the total number of courses on the topic over the contract period. As indicated in figure 4.1 above, the most common theme of NIVA's courses is *Psychosocial aspects of work*. These courses deal with topics such as ageing and work, violence, bullying and harassments, work-life balance, and aspects concerning diversity and gender. The courses concerning *Risk assessment/research* deal with topics such as quality standards, safety and risk assessments in the workplace. The number of psychosocially oriented courses has increased during the past ten years. This change of focus has resulted in that NIVA has managed to exceed the objectives for courses on this topic. One interviewee states that:

*"It shakes the 'old vision' of NIVA: we do not only do medically focused courses for experts. We also have many courses on other topics, for example, psychosocial issues, Nordic Tours and issues related to work organization."*

Other interviewees emphasize that NIVA's focus has changed throughout the years, from topics such as chemical exposures to a broader perspective of OSH including topics concerning social relations at the work place. This is in line with the contracts from the NCM that state that a wide array of course subjects are to be addressed.

A steady number of courses, 30 in total during the last ten years, have been carried out in the area of *Medical diseases and disorders*. These courses tend to focus on medical specialties or conditions like cardiovascular diseases, neurology, musculoskeletal disorders, occupational medicine, dermatology, epidemiology and respiration. Despite the fact that the epidemiology course may overlap with courses offered by other institutions several interviewees pointed out that:

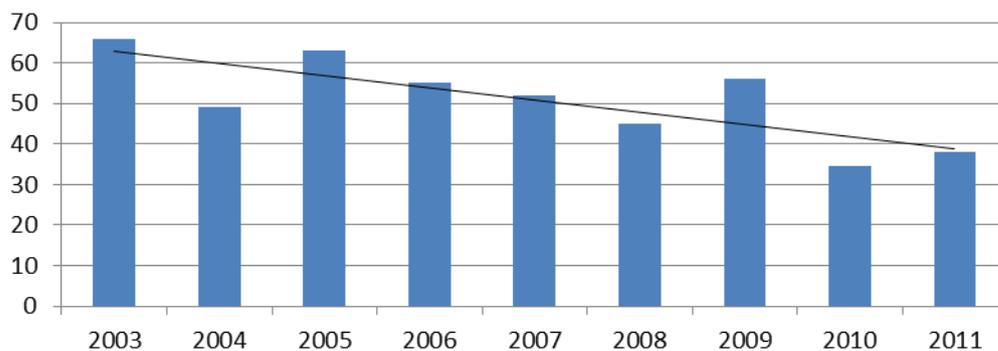
*"NIVA's role does not generally overlap with any others, but there is one course in epidemiology that could be considered to overlap. NIVA should teach the epidemiology course since it would give NIVA a competitive edge compared to national actors. A strong epidemiology course would also attract students."*

Twelve courses were carried out in the area of *Environment and Surroundings*, focusing on monitoring of workplace air and occupational toxicology, and six in *Workplace design* dealing with workplace absenteeism, early retirement, ergonomics and participatory approaches to workplace design. The figures indicate that courses concerning topics related to *Workplace design* have been the least common, followed by *Environment and Surroundings*. NIVA has not offered any courses at all within these areas some of the years in each contracting period.

#### 4.1.2 The length of NIVA's courses

As indicated in figure 4.2 below, the total number of course days offered by NIVA has decreased from 66 in 2003 to 38 in 2011<sup>6</sup>. The number of courses has increased during the same time period, resulting in a steady decrease in the average course length from six days in 2003 to 1.8 days in 2011.

**Figure 4.2 Number of course days**



One explanation of the decrease in average course length is the decrease in the number of five-day-courses. Five days has been regarded the standard course length for NIVA courses. The most common course length for NIVA courses is 3-4 days. These courses are supplemented with shorter one-day sessions.

Most interviewees are content with the shortened courses. The demand for shorter courses is a result of a changing working life with higher pressure and demands of efficiency. The interviewees argue that it is difficult to combine attending longer courses with managing the daily workload. Several of the interviewees highlight that there has been a shift in focus during the past 15 years and that longer courses reduce the chances of participation to a higher degree nowadays than it would have done 15 years ago. The impact of participating in longer course on the participants' daily work is more severe now, due to busy work schedules:

*"The courses are shorter with fewer days per course and that is a necessity since it has become more and more difficult for the participants to get time off from their ordinary work."*

However, some interviewees have questioned to what extent NIVA should shorten its courses. Instead of focusing on one or two day courses, arranging 3-4 day courses is proposed as standard in order to maintain the high quality of the courses. In order for NIVA to maintain the quality of the courses the shortened courses must be adapted to cover fewer topics than before. One of the interviewees even argues that NIVA covers too many areas of research and should focus more on specific aspects of different topics. Another interviewee, however, argues that NIVA should arrange meetings that attract participants from different research environments within the field of OSH.

<sup>6</sup> No data available for 2012

### 4.1.3 Nordic tours

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One measure taken from the Board to increase the number of participants in NIVA's activities and to create a gateway to the rest of NIVA's courses is to initiate the concept of "road shows" called Nordic tours. The Nordic tours consist of one-day seminars held in all of the Nordic countries. The same topic is covered in all countries. The objective is to share high quality training among researchers and practitioners in all countries, in order to attract participants to the other activities.

On the one hand, the Nordic tours may have helped to increase the number of participants in NIVA courses. In comparison to the depth offered in NIVA's regular courses, the Nordic tours are easier to access for laymen. Some of the interviewees have, on the other hand, argued that this strategy may hurt the reputation of NIVA as an institution for high level training in the field of OSH.

Oxford Research has investigated if the Nordic tours act as an entry point to other NIVA activities and can suspect that this is not the case. Results from our survey show that 74 out of the 439 respondents that answered the survey have attended a Nordic Tour. Out of these 74, only five persons have attended a conventional NIVA course only after attending a Nordic tour event. It cannot be ruled out that there is a time lag as regards to any possible effect and that participants at Nordic tours will attend a more in-depth NIVA course later on. At this point there is no evidence to support this claim. One Board member argues that Nordic tours and regular courses target different audiences. Nordic tours should therefore not be expected to function as an entry point to NIVA courses.

### 4.1.4 Generating NIVA courses

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The topics of the NIVA courses are decided upon through a process primarily influenced by the Director and the researchers within NIVA's network. The Director is responsible for gathering relevant themes from the different work environment institutes and researchers in NIVA's network.

The Board makes the ultimate decisions about which of the presented topics shall be provided as courses. Some topics may be merged with others to shape specific course themes. In those cases, the Director takes on the role of a mediator to make sure that the research teams responsible for providing the course will coordinate their work.

In practice, the details concerning each specific course is decided upon by the course leaders analysing educational needs related to the topic. However, the process for generating courses does not rely on any formal analyses of the demands of potential participants. The researchers arranging NIVA courses are prominent in their particular fields, and are expected to identify course topics taking into account scientific accuracy and the needs within the research fields. By engaging prominent researchers in the process NIVA aims to keep up to date with new topics in the field.

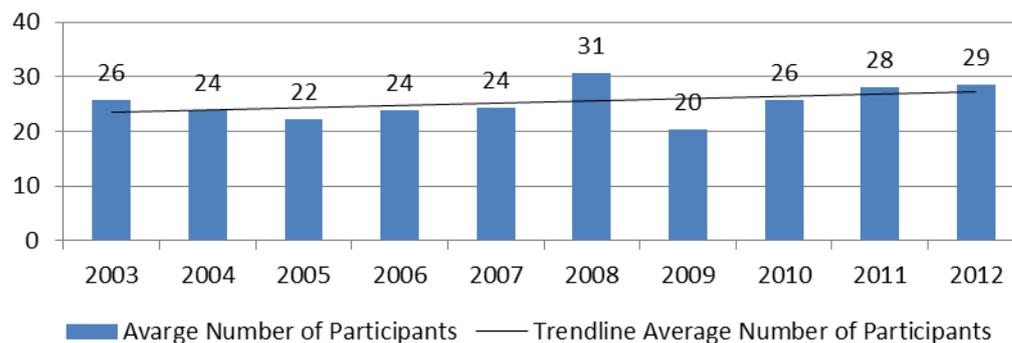
One of the Board members argues that the fundamental idea of NIVA is to arrange training on topics for which it is impossible to gather a critical mass of participants in each country. For some topics the target group may not even gather a sufficient group of participants to be carried out by NIVA or to break even. To expect that each Board member would be able to take on the responsibility to cover all such potential topics in the respective country is unrealistic. This especially holds for Sweden and Iceland that for the time being cannot rely on a national working environment institute to help supply an overview of the field.

One of the interviewees argue that the ideal process of generating courses would be to invite a group of Nordic researchers who receive funding from the working committee of the Nordic Council of Ministers to generate a course using the output of the research project. It is Oxford Research opinion that this type of arrangement could strengthen the connections between NIVA and the NCM, both with the secretariat and the committee of senior officials, and thereby increase the understanding of NIVA's work. It would also be a good venue for the researchers receiving funding from NCM to disseminate their research.

## 4.2 The participants of NIVA training

The number of participants taking part in NIVA training has increased slightly between 2003 and 2012 as figure 4.3 below show. The most striking increase in number of participants occurred between 2010 and 2011 and corresponds to a simultaneous increase in the number of courses provided.

**Figure 4.3 Average Number of Participants per course**

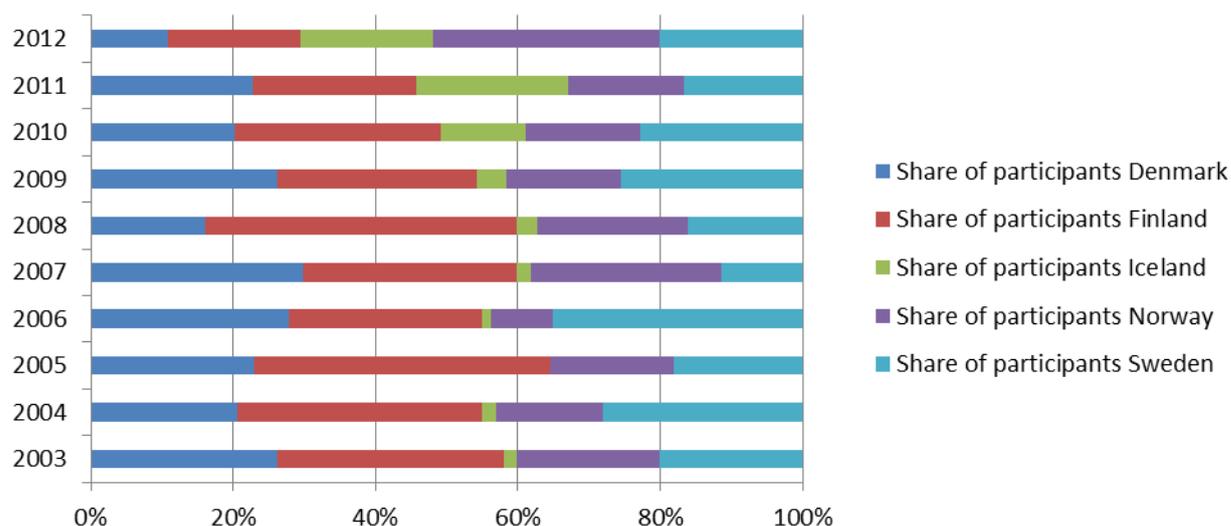


### 4.2.1 Which countries do the participants come from?

NIVA should aim at achieving a distribution of course participants from the Nordics that corresponds to the financial contributions made by each Nordic country to the NCM. This goal is stipulated in the contract between the NCMS and NIVA. The national contributions to the NCM have been rather stable during the past ten years and imply that the distribution of Nordic participants roughly should be around 22 % for Denmark, 18 % for Finland, 1 % for Iceland, 29 % for Norway and 30 % for Sweden.

Figure 4.4 below describe the distribution of Nordic participants, which does not fully correspond to the one set out by the contract. The most substantial divergences between the national contribution and the actual distribution are found for Finland. During the past ten years, the participants from Finland have made up a larger share of the total number of participants than the share the country has contributed with to the NCM budget. One explanation for the relatively high share of participants from Finland is NIVA's close cooperation with the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH). In comparison with the financial contributions to the NCM made by Sweden and Norway, both of these countries contribute with a too small share of participants. Starting in 2009, the share of Icelandic participants has risen well above the country's corresponding share of the contributions to the NCM.

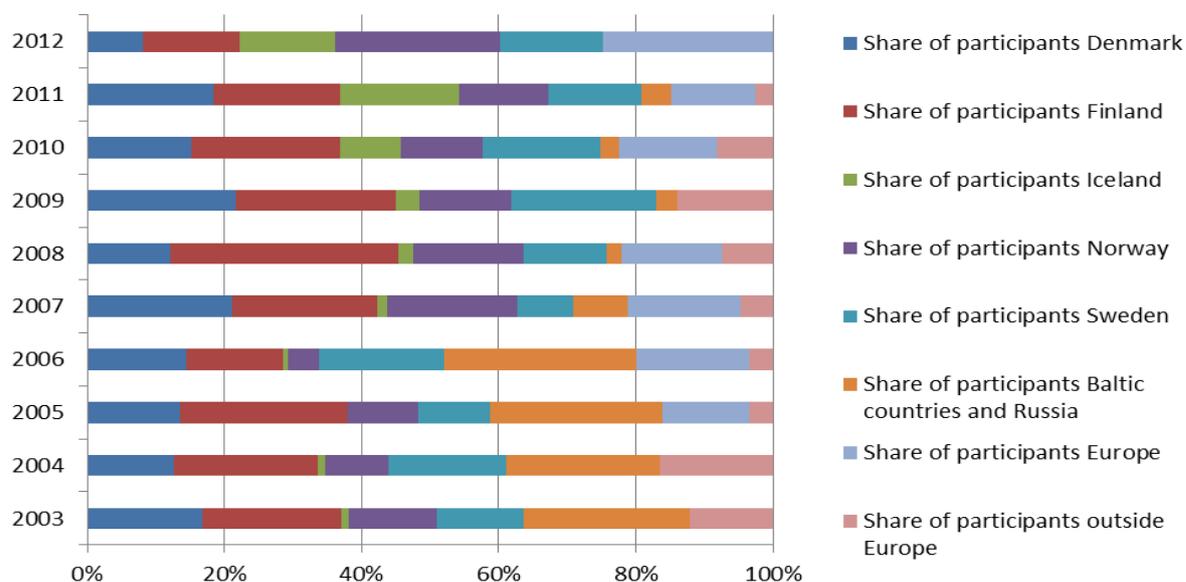
**Figure 4.4 Representation from the Nordic countries at NIVA training**



Following a trend of a decreasing share of Nordic participation in the first contract period, the number of Nordic participants started to increase in 2007. The figure below, 4.5, describes the nationalities represented among all participants in NIVA training. The participants from the Nordic countries have made up about 60 % of the total number of participants every year during the past decade. The only exception is the year of 2008 when the Nordic participants made up as many as 80 % of the total participation. The rest, almost 700 participants in total, come from non-Nordic countries.

In absolute numbers, the distribution of participants from the Nordic countries has been rather stable. However, given that Sweden has a larger population than the other Nordic countries, the number of participants from Sweden is low. One of the reasons for the relatively low participation from Sweden was, as stated in chapter three, the discontinuation of the Swedish Work Environment Institute in 2007 causing the number of participants from Sweden to decrease. However, in absolute numbers, the Swedish participation has not decreased since 2007.

**Figure 4.5 Nationalities represented at NIVA training (shares of total number of participants)**



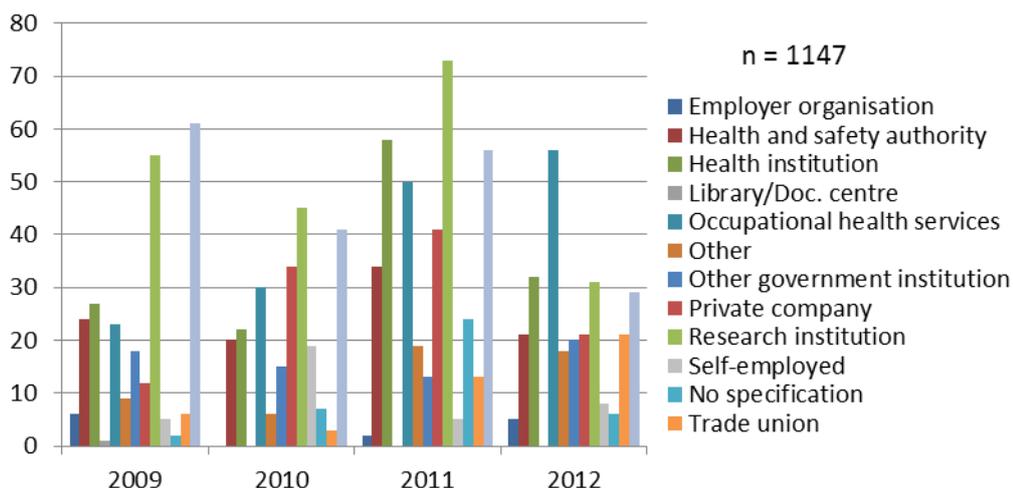
In the same year as the discontinuation of the Swedish Work Environment Institute, 2007, the share of participation from non-Nordic researchers and professionals began to decrease. Due to inconsistencies in reporting, the figures for non-Nordic participants in and outside Europe has been grouped together for 2003, 2004 and 2009. For 2012, all non-Nordic participants have been grouped.

NIVA has approached the Baltic area and Russia to organize courses, but found that it was difficult to arrange courses that both assured high quality and were suitable for all relevant participants. NIVA especially struggled with simultaneously supplying training to a broad target audience while also assuring to include the Nordic perspective in the courses.

#### 4.2.2 Where do they work?

Figure 4.6 below indicates that most participants are affiliated to a research or university institution, i.e. correspond to the researcher part of the target group. These participants are found in the categories *research institution* and *university institution*.

**Figure 4.6 Number of participants per year per affiliation**



The domination of research or university institute affiliates was most striking in 2009, but was later balanced by participants from organizations with other activities in the field of OSH. In 2010 and 2011 a substantial share of the participants were private company representatives. The participating number of affiliates in health institutions, occupational health services or health and safety authorities increased in 2011.

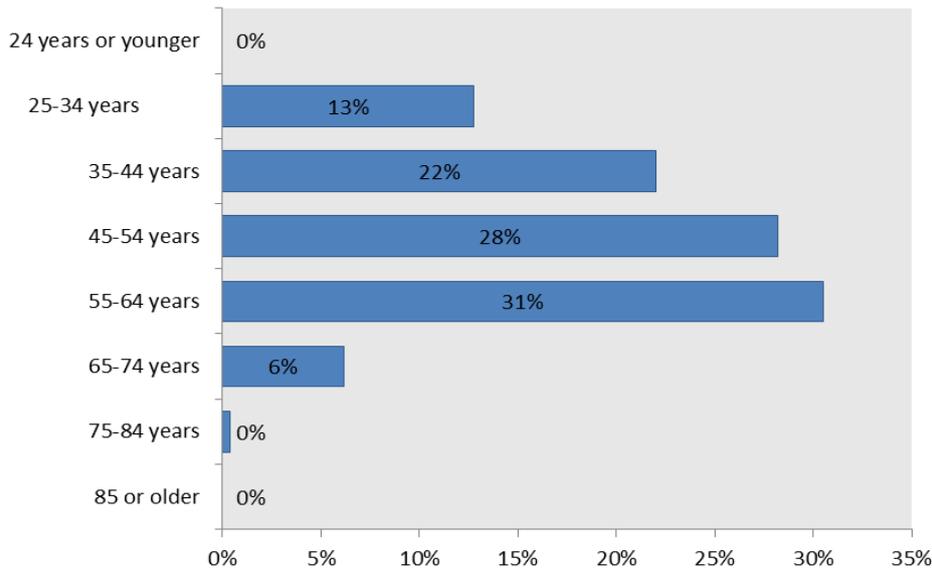
The shares of participants from libraries, documentation centres and employer organizations have been relatively stable over the years. Only one participant from a library or documentation centre participated in a NIVA course between 2009 and 2012. Employer organizations have been represented by up to five participants every year, apart from 2010 when no such participants took part in a NIVA course. The figures for employer organizations may be compared to those regarding trade union representatives, which rose steadily between 2010 and 2012 from three to over 20 participants.

#### 4.2.3 The gender and age of course participants

NIVA targets mainly experienced researchers at Nordic universities or at the national institutes in OSH research. This is evident when looking at the age distribution of the participants at NIVA training.

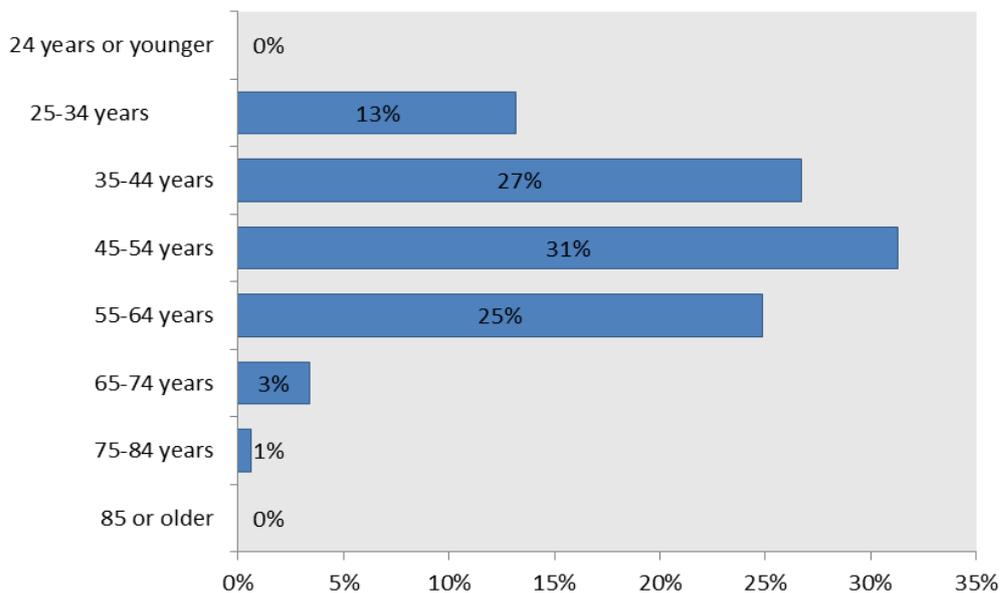
The age pyramid of those course participants and course lecturers answered Oxford Research’s survey, as shown in figure 4.9, indicates that most of the respondents were between 55 and 64 years old. Most respondents in the largest age group can thus be expected to reach the age of retirement in about ten years, as they reach an age of 65 or more. Six percent of the respondents are between 65 and 74 years and are thus probable to retire earlier.

**Figure 4.9 The age of respondents of Oxford Research’s survey (both lecturers and participants) (n=434)**



The main difference between the age distribution among the participants in NIVA courses and the respondents in Oxford Research’s survey is that the dominant generation in the whole population is 45-55 years of age. A larger share of the respondents are above the age of 55. The figures indicate that NIVA manages to reach a broad variety of participants. A substantial share of the participants consists of experienced researchers and professionals in the field of OSH. Several Board Members have argued that it is difficult to attract young researchers, for example PhD students, to NIVA courses. This is supported by the numbers in figure 4.10 which shows that only 13 percent of the participants are aged less than 34 years.

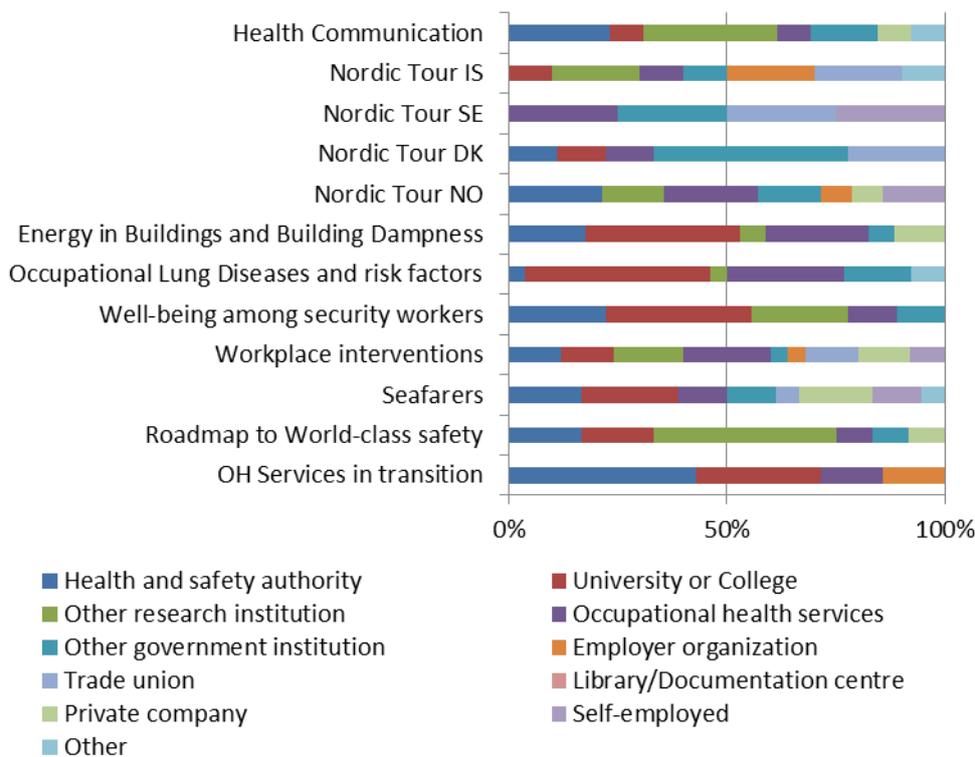
**Figure 4.10 The age of participants of NIVA training answering Oxford Research’s survey (n=326)**



#### 4.2.4 A wide variety of participants at NIVA training

To investigate whether participants with different affiliations tend to attend different courses we have chosen to use 2012 as a sample year. The figure below indicates that the courses in 2012 attracted a diverse group of participants. Several of the courses attracted as many as nine groups of participants, indicating that no group of participants is particularly focused on any specific kind of course and that NIVA manages to attract a wide variety of both researchers and practitioners to its courses.

**Figure 4.11 Affiliation of the participants per course in 2012**



University or college representatives and representatives from occupational health services make up a substantial share of the participants in all of the courses except the Nordic tours on bullying. The highest share of private company representatives are found in the Seafarers' course, while the course where the largest share of self-employed is the Nordic tour on bullying and harassments. Regarding course type, the pattern of participation is rather evenly distributed between trade union and employer organization representative. Both to the greatest extent participate in Nordic tours. One of the most common courses to attend among these participants is the one on Workplace interventions.

## 4.3 NIVA's budget and course costs

In this part of the chapter NIVA's budget is discussed in relation to the cost-efficiency of the courses offered, over time. First we provide an overview of NIVA's budget. Thereafter, we investigate the cost-efficiency of NIVA's activities along with a discussion on the potential impact that a reduction in funding from the NCM would have on NIVA.

### 4.3.1 NIVA's budget from 2003 to 2012

NIVA is primarily funded by the NCM. The NCM provides annual ordinary funding to NIVA as well as project funding for specific activities. The budget is approved by the committee of senior officials after a framework is set by the secretariat. In addition to the funding from the NCM, the training activities are funded by revenues from course fees. In order to investigate the potential impact of changes in the budget we need an overview of NIVA's budget during the past decade. The table below sums up the NIVA budget between the years 2003 and 2012.

**Table 4.1 The NIVA budget 2003-2012**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>REVENUE</b>										
Ordinary funding from the NCM	370,100	372,000	378,700	383,700	407,344	442,400	400,400	399,700	441,800	430,300
Project funding from the NCM	67,094	58,949	53,628	100,843	56,827	43,926	-13,465	62,742	28,757	7,072
Course revenue	118,629	100,294	102,709	107,952	83,508	116,686	112,811	88,140	134,939	137,750
Other revenue	-457	1,280	1,017	400	1,615	2,233	1,918	158	163	566
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>555,366</b>	<b>532,523</b>	<b>536,054</b>	<b>592,895</b>	<b>549,293</b>	<b>605,245</b>	<b>501,663</b>	<b>550,740</b>	<b>605,659</b>	<b>575,688</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>										
Staff costs related to pay	179,906	196,155	204,609	227,928	211,922	241,211	279,882	248,900	318,316	250,213
Other staff costs	43,567	59,410	33,702	37,462	45,852	52,757	49,346	34,656	38,842	45,246
External services	270,151	281,399	354,657	346,606	213,232	216,195	233,881	159,606	226,054	218,424
Other expenses	40,291	29,853	34,075	32,827	22,773	61,718	55,186	21,437	15,256	28,065
<b>Expenses by budget item</b>										
Training activities	-	360,210	411,067	362,254	287,924	337,103	379,670	271,470	330,569	342,779
Marketing	-	-	-	16,471	12,716	41,538	39,378	47,975	44,615	45,945
Cooperation	-	47,249	-	66,116	43,589	40,360	1,557	2,493	-	5,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>533,915</b>	<b>566,817</b>	<b>627,043</b>	<b>644,823</b>	<b>493,779</b>	<b>571,880</b>	<b>618,295</b>	<b>464,599</b>	<b>598,467</b>	<b>541,948</b>
<b>RESULT</b>	<b>21,451</b>	<b>-34,294</b>	<b>-90,989</b>	<b>-51,928</b>	<b>55,514</b>	<b>33,365</b>	<b>-116,632</b>	<b>86,142</b>	<b>7,191</b>	<b>33,740</b>

The figures above indicate that NIVA has experienced a decade of diverse financial results. In four years, 2004-2006 and 2009, NIVA had negative financial results. This financial situation and the shortage of liquid assets in 2007 risked to impact NIVA's possibilities to pay staff wages, which gave rise to the initiation of a recovery plan for NIVA. A strategy focusing on broadening the course supply as well as the target groups was accepted by the Board, along with measures to reduce expenses by limiting the number of course leaders per course, limiting the compensation to course leaders and to increase revenues by implementing higher course fees.

The financial vulnerability of NIVA was however still significant. The financial difficulties following the negative result in 2009 were further ameliorated by the actions of the committee of senior officials. On the one hand, NIVA received increased funding, essentially by the amounts requested by the institute. On the other hand, the committee urged NIVA to build an economic buffer and stricter rules for regular economic reports to the NCMS were implemented.

The combination of years with negative and years with positive results indicates, on the one hand, that NIVA's financial performance fluctuates on an annual basis but, on the other hand, that NIVA is capable of making ends

meet. The distribution of financial results coincides with an equally diverse distribution of expenses and revenues.

The table above also indicates that NIVA's overall financial result is to a greater extent correlated to the level of *total expenses* than to the level of *total revenue* received each year. Two of the budgetary items with the highest degree of direct correlation to the results are *staff costs related to pay*, which has increased during the past ten years, and *external services*, which have decreased since the recovery process in 2007 and since 2009. *External services* include compensation to course leaders and represent a majority of the costs defined as *training activities*. This budget item includes all NIVA's costs associated with arranging training activities. Another budgetary item is *other staff costs* which mostly consist of travel expenses for NIVA personnel and has been relatively high and steady throughout the years.

The most stable budget item is the *ordinary funding from the NCM*, while the revenue from courses has fluctuated over time. During the past decade, there has however been a slight decrease in the share of NIVA's revenues that are made up by NCM funding. Another stable budget item is the cost for the NIVA secretariat. Several interviewees have argued that it is subsidized by being located in the premises of the FIOH. In the next part of this chapter we focus on the cost-efficiency of NIVA activities.

#### 4.3.2 The cost-efficiency of NIVA's activities

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The funding that NIVA receive from the NCM is crucial for NIVA's ability to provide training activities one of the focal points of this evaluation is the cost-efficiency of NIVA's activities. In order to investigate the cost-efficiency, we are also interested in the way in which NIVA uses the funding from the NCM and the course revenues. The costs for attending NIVA courses is generally considered low in relation to the training gained<sup>7</sup>, compared to relevant university courses and compared to conferences. One of the interviewees state that:

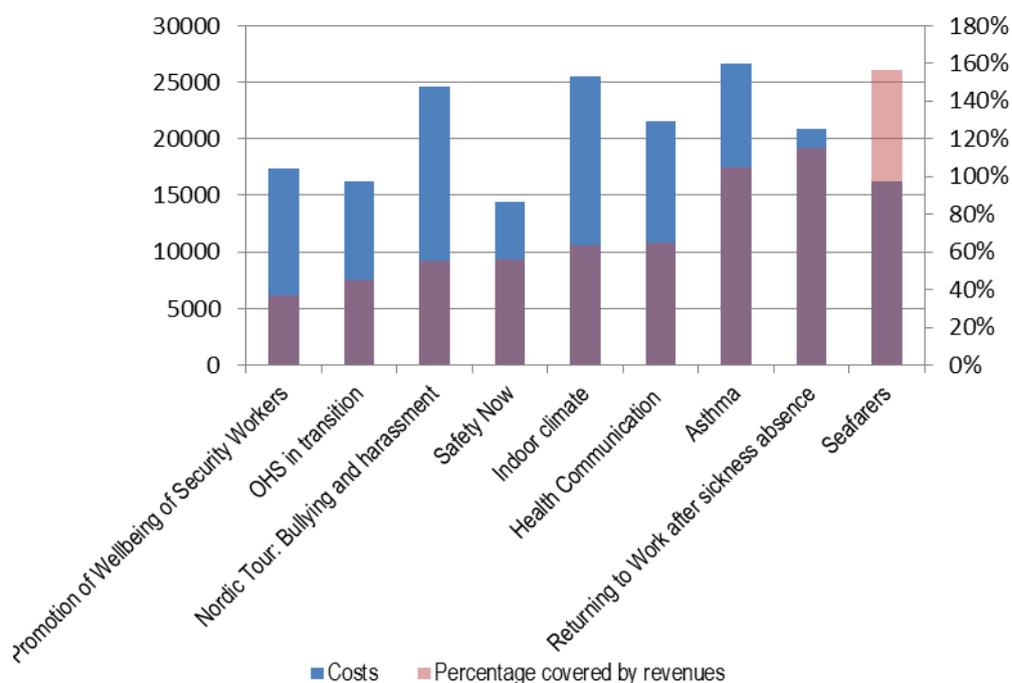
*"The prize of the courses are not expensive, it is the travel to the location and accommodation that is expensive."*

Since the courses are NIVA's main activities the course costs are also the most important factors in the assessment of NIVA's cost efficiency. The costs for NIVA to arrange a course differ depending on the length and type of course. The figure below shows both the costs of arranging NIVA courses in 2012 as well as the percentage of these costs that are covered by course revenues.

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<sup>7</sup> Please, see chapter five for more information about the level of course satisfaction among the course participants.

**Figure 4.12 Costs of arranging NIVA courses in 2012**



As indicated above, the costs of arranging NIVA courses differ from as high as EUR 25,000 for an Asthma course and EUR 14,000 for the Safety Now course. The figures also indicate that the shares of the course costs that are covered by course revenues (course fees paid by the participants) differ. Most courses' costs are at least partly covered by fees paid by the participants while the costs of the Seafarers course, the Returning to Work after sickness absence course and the Asthma course are almost fully or fully covered by the revenues. However, the shares of the course costs that are covered by revenues only to a limited extent answer the questions about the efficiency of NIVA's work to organize courses. The figure above does, for example, not include figures on the number of participants in the course. By breaking down the costs of the courses into budget items we can investigate which of the costs that NIVA can affect in order to improve the efficiency of its courses.

The table below contains information about the costs for one of NIVA's courses in 2013. The course example illustrates the budget items involved in organizing a course:

**Table 4.1: Costs for a sample course 2013**

Lecturers	Lecture fee	Flights	Accommodation		Total cost per lecturer
			Number of nights	Price	
A	200	250	4	1,035	1,485
B	208	200	4	1,035	1,443
C	208	200	4	1,035	1,443
D	208	500	4	1,035	1,743
E	208	600	4	1,035	1,843
F	208	500	4	1,035	1,743
G	1,500	2,000	4	1,035	4,535
H	104	200	3	855	1,159
I	208	1,700	2	600	2,508
J	104	200	2	600	904
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>3,156</b>	<b>6,350</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>9,300</b>	<b>18,806</b>
<b>Average cost per lecturer</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>1,881</b>
<b>Planning costs</b>	<b>1,000</b>				
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>19,806</b>				
<b>Budget</b>	<b>20,000</b>				
<b>Total number of participants</b>	<b>26</b>				
<b>Fee</b>	<b>500</b>				
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>13,000</b>				
<b>Result</b>	<b>-6,806</b>				

The table above indicates that there are five different kinds of budget items involved in planning a course. A planning cost of EUR 1,000 for every course, lecture fees for each lecturer, costs for flights and costs for accommodation. Other costs, such as the costs for the course venues are covered by the individual participants. In order to guarantee high quality courses, NIVA cannot be expected to reduce the lecture fees. The lecturers are the core of NIVA's ability to assure high quality courses and should engaged in courses as necessary for NIVA keep its high level of course quality satisfaction. Limitations for the level of compensation for lecturers were moreover imposed as part of the recovery plan in 2006-2007. Similarly, NIVA cannot affect the flight costs for the lecturers.

However, one of the major budget items is the accommodation for the lecturers, which make up almost 50% of the course costs in this case. Excluding the costs for accommodation, the courses are self-supporting, resulting in a low marginal cost for arranging extra courses. Making the courses self-supporting while covering the fixed costs would minimize the financial risks of NIVA.

Board members have stated that NIVA training activities should be carried out in close connection to the capital cities in the Nordic countries. Despite this statement, several of the interviewees have questioned the necessity of organizing courses at costly course venues, some of which are located far from city centres. Assuring that courses are organized at course venues and in locations that are less costly could help increase NIVA's

course cost efficiency by reducing the costs for lecturers' accommodation and also to attract younger participants with a lower ability to pay the course fee, travel costs and accommodation.

One option to do so would be to cooperate with Nordic universities instead of using conference centres. By offering course venues at universities or in city centres of the largest cities of the Nordic countries, it would be possible to reduce the costs for accommodation as well as for the course venues. Moreover, it would be possible for participants to choose accommodation in accordance with their own budget constraints. One of the major challenges for NIVA is to attract more and younger course participants. Therefore, another option to improve the cost-efficiency of NIVA could be to offer diversified course fees, for example a lower fee for PhD students. This and other strategies to stabilize NIVA's financial situation, in the light of potentially reduced funding from the NCM, are elaborated on below.

#### **4.3.3 Potential impact of reductions in funding from the NCM on NIVA's activities**

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The need to stabilize NIVA's financial situation has already impacted the planning of NIVA in terms of the recovery plan. One of the questions that Oxford Research received from the NCM concerned how potential reductions in funding from the NCM would affect NIVA. In an interview one of NIVA's Board Members argues that a reduction in budget would lead to a reduction of the numbers of courses offered by NIVA:

*"The number of participants would be reduced and the activities would be impossible to carry out. The immediate effect would be a reduced staff."*

However, when comparing the number of courses during the past ten years to the funding received from NIVA, there is no clear pattern between decreased funding from the NCM and the number of courses provided by NIVA. However, the pattern of total expenses over time coincides with the numbers of courses offered per year.

Oxford Research has carried out a scenario analysis to investigate the impact of budgetary changes on NIVA's results, using the budgets from the past decade as an example. The results indicate that NIVA could manage slight decreases in ordinary funding without causing years of positive results to turn negative, *ceteris paribus*. Minor decreases in funding would not severely impact the degree to which NIVA manages to make ends meet. A decrease in NIVA funding by as much as five or ten percent would have caused the results in years such as 2003 and 2011 to turn negative. For 2008, only a ten percent decrease in funding would have turned the results negative. NIVA would have been able to maintain positive results in the years 2003, 2007-2008 and 2010-2012.

Given that there are already several years of negative results and given that the financial performance already has given rise to a recovery plan, any decreases in funding may affect NIVA's overall financial performance and ability to maintain sound finances. Regardless of how efficient NIVA may become the organization could not face substantial decreases in financing without it causing severe impact on NIVA's financial stability, thus increasing the level of financial risk of the organization.

The impact of reductions in funding would depend on the extent to which NIVA would take actions to mend the potential risks caused by reductions in funding from the NCM. There are several strategies which NIVA can apply several strategies to reduce the financial risks or to mend the impact of potential budgetary cuts. Some of the potential strategies may be to:

- Make the courses self-sufficient by reducing the expenses associated with organizing courses which are not covered by course fees. This strategy may be carried out by opting the choice of course venue or by potentially reducing the expenses for external services.
- Several interviewees have regarded NIVA courses as cheap. Therefore, NIVA should investigate the possibility to increase course fees.
- Increase the use of diversified prices to different target groups. Such a strategy may attract new participants to NIVA's training activities.

- Consider making use of the possibilities to recruit personnel that are open to work time flexibility, for example university students in relevant fields as student employees or internships.
- Reduce the substantial amount of *other staff costs* severely impacting the level of total expenses for NIVA. This budgetary item mostly consists of travel expenses for NIVA staff.

In order to understand the impact that such strategies may have on NIVA's financial performance, Oxford Research has tested some of the possible scenarios in case of NIVA facing budgetary reductions by 10 % of the ordinary funding from the NCM. These analyses indicate that it would be difficult for NIVA to stabilize its financial situation using only measures that increase the revenues to compensate for loss of funding.

In order to stabilize the financial situation and turn negative results into positive, a combination of strategies may be used. For instance, a reduction in staff costs, an increase in course revenues and a reduction in costs for external services by 5 % each would substantially improve the financial performance in all years, including turning negative results in 2003, 2008, 2011 and 2012 into positive. However, not even these kinds of changes would manage to turn the negative results in 2004-2006 and 2009 into positive.

In combination with substantially improved positive results before and after these years it may be possible for NIVA to somewhat reduce its financial risks imposed by a reduction in funding. Even more so, a reduction in staff costs, an increase in course revenues and a reduction in costs for external services by 10 % each would cut the negative results by half for the years 2004-2006. Hence, even if NIVA cannot be expected to fully compensate for a loss of funding by increasing course revenues or reducing expenses, it would be possible to use such changes as a means to improve the financial performance and to reduce the financial risks.

## Chapter 5. NIVA's performance

This chapter presents different aspects of NIVA's performance. By performance we mean the relevance that NIVA has in the field of OSH, the satisfaction of those attending NIVA's activities, and the Nordic added value of NIVA as expressed in interviews with leading actors in the OSH-field, members of the board, NIVA's staff, course participants and representatives from national agencies in the different Nordic countries. We also assess the impact of NIVA's activities on the participants and on national OSH research and labour inspection work and finally we answer the question of whether NIVA possesses Nordic added value.

### 5.1 The relevance of NIVA

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Relevance can be defined as the appropriateness of the explicit objectives of an initiative, measure, project or programme in relation to the problems it is supposed to address. In the case of NIVA the overarching goal is "to further work-related well-being in the Nordic and other countries". This aim is intended to be reached by providing courses that can act as a forum for innovation and development. In this section we will look at the relevance of NIVA from three points of view. Firstly we will see if NIVA adheres to the statutes and the contracts that guide NIVA's activities. Secondly an assessment of the relevance of the courses for the target group is presented. Finally this section will assess the relevance of NIVA by investigating if there are any existing alternatives to NIVA. If there are no alternatives to NIVA the relevance of NIVA can be judged as high. In short this section answers three questions:

- To what extent has NIVA adhered to the statutes and the contracts?
- Are the courses relevant to the target group?
- Are there any alternatives to NIVA?

#### 5.1.1 To what extent has NIVA adhered to the statutes and the contracts?

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NIVA to a good extent adheres to the basic production objectives described in the institute's contracts. As presented in the preceding chapter, the number of courses and of participants, and the mean number of participants per course, generally lie above the required levels. However, the contracts contain some 30 separate objectives made up of a mix of quantitative and qualitative aspects, some of which are accounted for in NIVA's annual reports. The main problem of determining NIVA's adherence to these objectives is that many objectives, and corresponding accounts, are unclear and inconsistent. NIVA should try to operationalize these in order to be able to follow up if they reach the goals set in the contracts or not.

In general, the annual reports are somewhat formulaic, with several sentences appearing verbatim year after year. They also do not account for or problematize all of the objectives present in the contracts, meaning that the adherence to these objectives cannot be tracked in the annual reports. However, the contracts themselves are also formulaic in character, and the objectives are not all well stated and defined. For example, one of the production objectives in the contract of 2009-2011 is to "Send out major e-mail dispatches as necessary"<sup>8</sup>. This objective is at the same time very detailed and not very specific, which makes it difficult to implement and not very suitable for follow-up.

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<sup>8</sup> Att göra stora e-postningar vid behov

Despite inconsistencies such as this, based on the preceding chapter it can be argued that *some* of the additional objectives are met. For example, it has consistently been an objective to increase the number of courses on psychosocial aspects of work<sup>9</sup>. From the preceding chapter, it is clear that there has been such an increase: during the years 2009-2011, 19 out of the 49 courses have topics within this field, compared to 9 out of 35 in the preceding contract period. Inconsistently, in NIVA's contract of 2012-2014, the number for 2009-2011 is stated as 11 courses out of 47, a decidedly lower share.

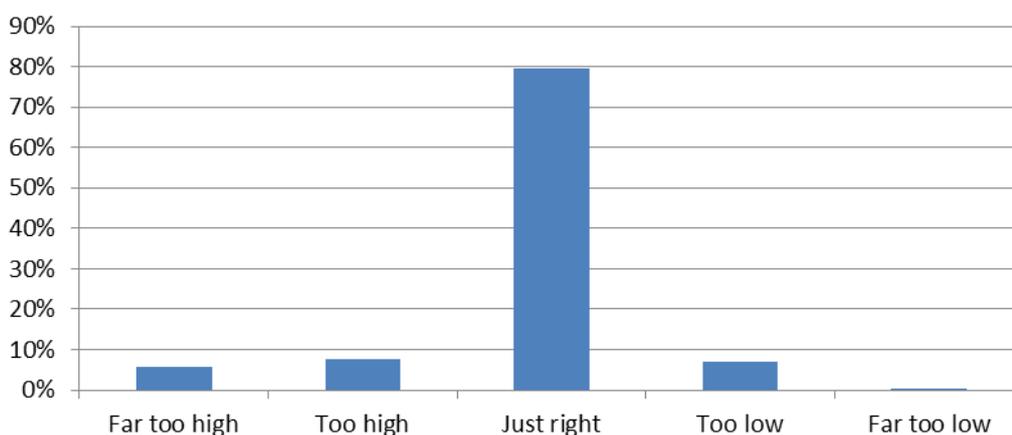
Another example is that NIVA should "broaden the target group for knowledge sharing and keep in mind the needs of researchers and experts for education in OSH"<sup>10</sup>. This should be done simultaneously "taking into account the needs of other target groups"<sup>11</sup>. From the description it is unclear what is to be the focus of the objective. However, interpreting it as a call for an increased share of participants other than researchers and expert, this objective has also been met. Again referring to the preceding chapter, the last four years there has been a consistent decrease in the share of researchers, teachers and doctoral students as participants in NIVA's training.

### 5.1.2 Are the activities of NIVA relevant to the target group?

When evaluating the relevance of NIVA one aspect that should be taken into consideration is if the courses adhere to the needs of the participants of NIVA's training. The most important indication that this is the case is that NIVA manages to fulfil its production goals when it comes to number of participants, which is an indication of the relevance of the courses offered.

Given the results in the end of course questionnaires, filled out by over 1,000 participants attending NIVA training between 2009 and 2012, the relevance can also be assessed as high. When answering the question if the theoretical level of the course was adequate a large majority of the respondents (80 %) answered that the theoretical level was just right as shown in figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1. The theoretical level of the course for your specific requirements was? (n=1116)**



NIVA's courses are relevant for the large majority of the persons taking the courses which can be assumed since they have chosen to attend NIVA training. It has not been possible to survey a wider group of potential course participants within the frame of this evaluation. Some hints as to whom the relevance is not as high is given in one interview with a Nordic expert in the field of OSH:

<sup>9</sup> These are aspects such as ageing and work, violence, bullying and harassments, work-life balance, and aspects concerning diversity and gender.

<sup>10</sup> *bredda målgruppen för kunskapsspridning och ta fasta på forskares och experters behov av arbetsmiljöutbildning*. NIVA contract 2012-2014.

<sup>11</sup> *Samtidigt bör man beakta också andra målgruppers behov*. NIVA contract 2012-2014.

*“I feel that NIVA has not recognized the new form of scientific research that is emerging concerning how to manage the requirements of constant availability and digitalisation. The standards and norms of the industrial society are not applicable in today’s work life. I have a sense that traditional research within OSH is blind to this structural change.”*

Also in Oxford Research’s survey of the people in NIVA registry there are voices for a broader variety of courses in order to stay relevant in the field of OSH:

*“NIVA is far too conventional in their choice of topics. They have to regard the scientific development in the field and broaden their perspective, Topics like absenteeism, occupational rehabilitation; organization of occupational health etc. needs to be addressed to a much larger extent. [...] For example mindfulness and working life is a hot topic at the moment. NIVA should be adventurous enough to address topics like that.”*

Several interviewees also express the perception that NIVA is mostly supplying courses in occupational medicine and toxicology and not arranging any courses on the psychosocial aspects of well-being at work. As chapter 4 shows there is a much wider variety of courses than most respondents think. This can be seen as an indication of lack of effective marketing of NIVA and its courses.

### **5.1.3 Are there any competing alternatives to NIVA?**

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The relevance and NIVA’s added value is also dependent on what available alternatives there are. If NIVA provides services that would not exist without budget support from the Nordic council of ministers the relevance of NIVA can be evaluated as high.

In the interviews with Nordic experts in the area of OSH and the board members of NIVA few competing alternatives are mentioned. There are national alternatives to some of the courses which are given by universities in each country but in the sense of training combined with knowledge sharing between the Nordic countries in the field of occupational health and safety no respondent sees any alternatives. As one board member puts it:

*“There are no other means of knowledge sharing that would be able to take over the role of NIVA in the Nordic countries as well as in Europe. There are scientific conferences in Europe and the USA but they are not focused on a formal education experience as what the NIVA courses offer. Conferences do not have the same educational value since the primary focus is on presentations.”*

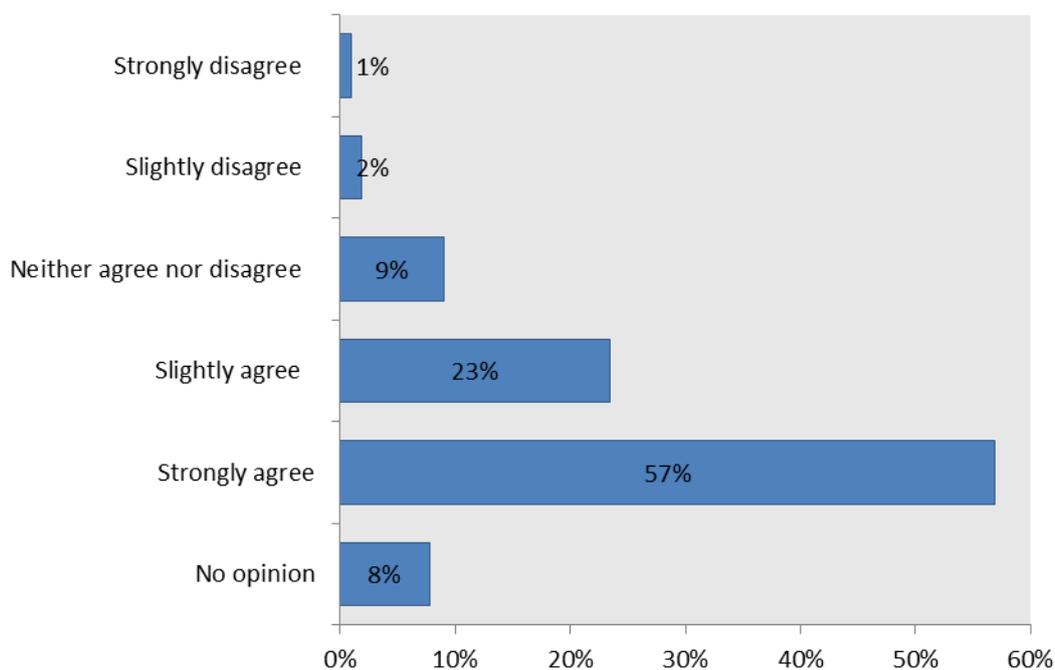
In order to verify the interviewee’s statements about the lack of alternatives to NIVA we asked in the survey if the respondents know of any alternatives to NIVA training. Just like in the interviews many of the respondents do not see any alternatives to NIVA. Out of the 145 respondents answering the open question “What alternatives to the NIVA training you have participated in, organized by other actors than NIVA, do you know of?” roughly a third answered that there are no alternatives to NIVA training. The second third answered that there are national alternatives to NIVA. Among those being mentioned were courses organized by national organizations and departments, private companies and university courses. In the two first categories some of the respondents have pointed out that the academic level is higher at NIVA training. It is also important to bear in mind that the national alternatives do not possess the added value of being Nordic or international.

The remaining third of the respondents see international conferences as an alternative to NIVA training. Especially those that are closely linked to NIVA’s course topics. Examples given are conferences and workshops of IMHA (International Maritime Health Association), International conferences on bullying and harassment in the workplace and congresses of occupational dermatology and patch testing arranged by the different national dermatological societies. These conferences are seen as competitors by some respondents but differ from NIVA training in the sense that NIVA courses’ primary focus is lecturing.

In the survey we have carried out with course participants they were asked if they were satisfied with choosing NIVA over competing alternatives. The answers are shown in figure 5.2. A majority of the respondents, 80 %, slightly or strongly agree in the statement “I am satisfied that I chose NIVA’s training over competing alterna-

tives, which means that even if alternatives are seen to exist the participants are very content with choosing NIVA.

**Figure 5.2 I am satisfied that I chose NIVA's training over competing alternatives (n=320)**



## 5.2 The quality of NIVA's courses

When assessing the quality of NIVA's courses it is important to first define quality. The definition of quality that we have chosen in this evaluation is based on the view of the course participants and the view of Nordic experts within occupational health and safety. If the participants consider the quality of the courses to be high this means the courses are of high quality. Another validation of the quality in terms of scientific height is the fact that some of the courses give university credits to the participants after completing the course.

In this section the quality of the courses will be assessed by using four data sources. Firstly we will look at the results of the surveys that NIVA urges every participant to complete straight after the course has finished. Secondly we have carried out our own survey within the frame of this evaluation which also touches upon the issue of the quality of the courses. Our third data source is interviews with experts in the field of OSH in the Nordic countries and finally the fourth way of assessing the quality of the courses is a case study visit at one of the courses offered by NIVA.

### 5.2.1 NIVA's evaluation of course survey

As a supplement to NIVA's own end of course questionnaire Oxford Research carried out a survey on those registered in NIVA's register. At the end of every course participants in the training are urged to complete a survey about how they view the NIVA training in regards to six different aspects:

- Content of the course
- Composition of the group
- Opportunities for useful contacts at the course/training

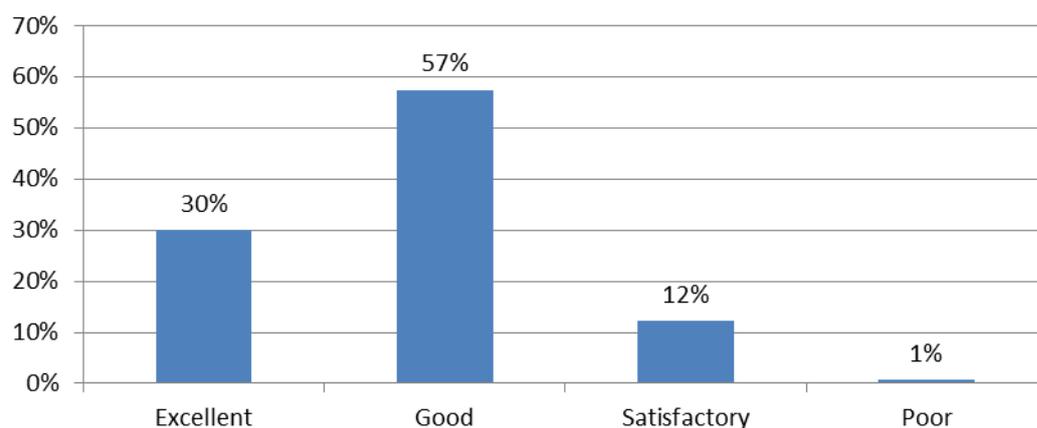
- Duration of the course/training
- Practical organization surrounding the course/training
- Objectives of the course/training

End of course questionnaires have been used by NIVA since 1991 but the survey was revised in 2009. In total 1,148 respondents has filled out the survey in the years 2009-2012. Oxford Research's compilation of the survey answers show that the course participants hold NIVA's courses in high regard in all six aspects. These results are presented below.

### The content of the course

The general level of the lectures is considered good or excellent by a large majority of the course participants. Figure 5.3 shows that 30 percent view the level of the courses as excellent and 57 percent consider that the general level is good. Only one percent of the 1,116 course participants that answered the survey considered the general level to be poor. These results verify the statements by experts in the field given in the previous chapter - NIVA's courses are of highest international quality.

**Figure 5.3 The general level of the lectures 2009-2012 (n=1116)**

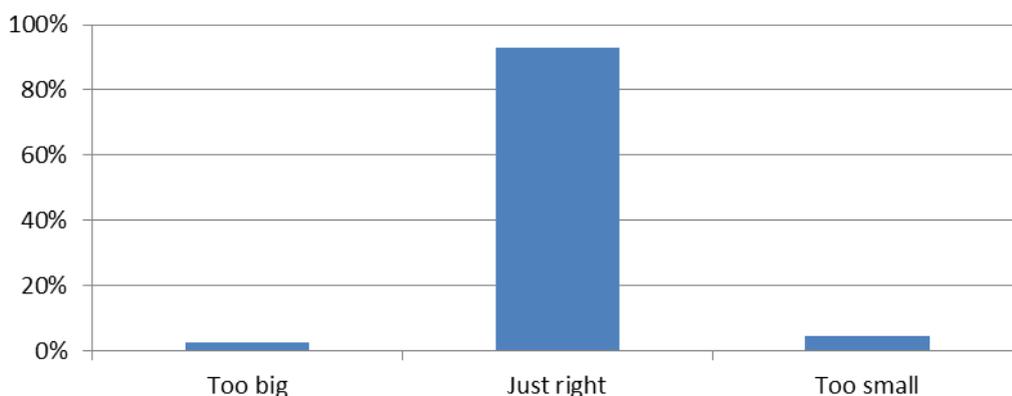


### The composition of the group

An important aspect of the quality of NIVA's courses is the size of the course groups. A too large group can affect the quality of the course by including participants without sufficient prerequisites, by making it harder to get discussions going or that the lecturer gets less time to interact with all participants.

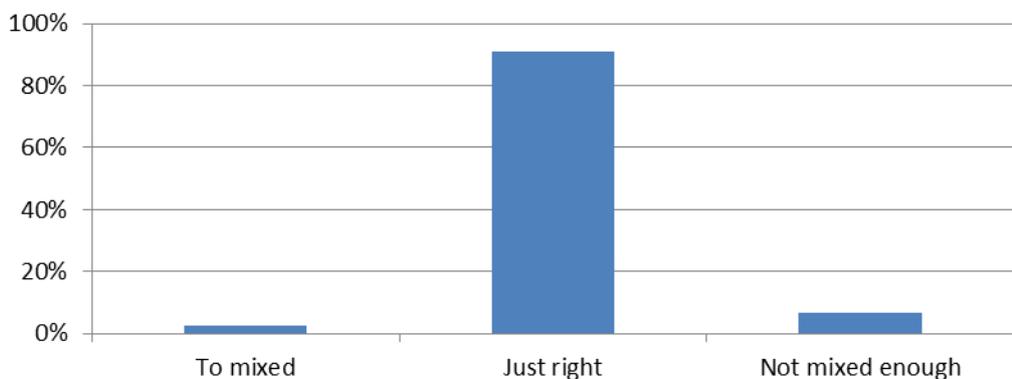
The size of the groups in NIVA's training is considered to be optimal by almost all respondents. A large majority of 93 percent sees the size of the group in the training that they participated in as just the right size.

**Figure 5.4 The size of the group 2009-2012 (n=1119)**



Related to the size of the group is the mixture of professional backgrounds of the participants. A wide variety of professional backgrounds at the courses can enhance the utility of the course in such a way that you as a participant can get new viewpoints and influences from participants with another background than your own. In figure 5.5 the responses to the question “The mixture of professional backgrounds of the participants was...” is presented. The graph shows that 91 percent of the respondents consider the mixture as just right. This result indicate that the participants view the mixture of participants at NIVA’s courses as well balanced but it does not necessarily mean that there is representation of participants with different kinds of professional backgrounds. The mixture can be considered to be just right by a respondent even if only, for example, researchers have participated in the course.

**Figure 5.5 The mixture of professional background of the participants 2009-2012 (n=1065)**



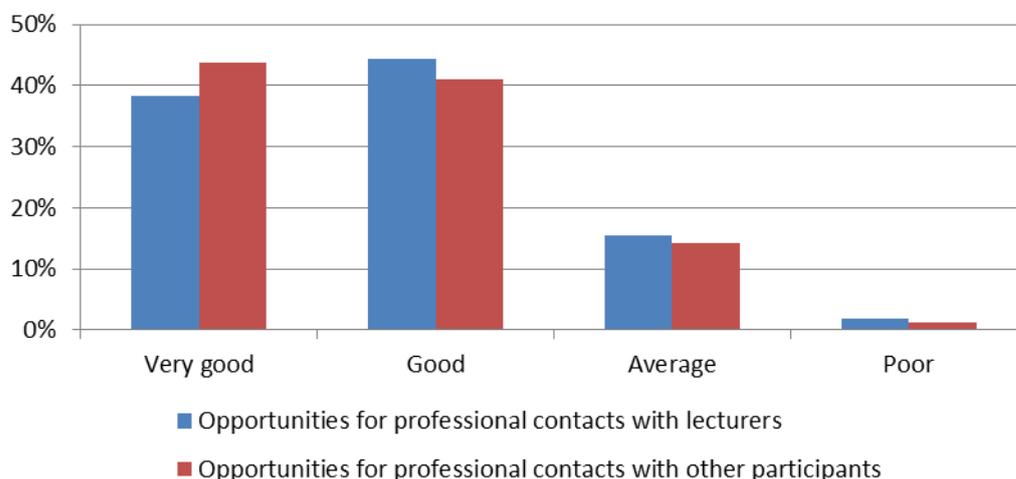
### **Opportunities for useful contacts at the NIVA training**

An aspect of the quality of the courses which can be related to the impact of participation in a NIVA-course is the opportunity of making useful contacts at the training. The Nordic added value of the NIVA courses is that it is a forum for knowledge sharing between the Nordic countries and between the Nordics and other countries. This requires that there is time for the participants to interact and mingle. This can be done at the lectures but is usually also a part of the programme of many courses. The longer courses usually have social activities such as dinners and boat trips.

In general the opportunities for professional contacts are regarded as good by the respondents. Figure 5.6 displays the opinions of the respondents regarding opportunities for professional contacts with both other participants and with lecturers. There are no significant differences between the opportunities of interacting with lecturers or participants. The good opportunities to interact with the lecturers of the courses should be seen as a large added value for participants in NIVA’s activities. To be able to create professional networks with

the top scientists in the OSH-field in the Nordic countries is an added value primarily for younger researchers but also for participants with other professions.

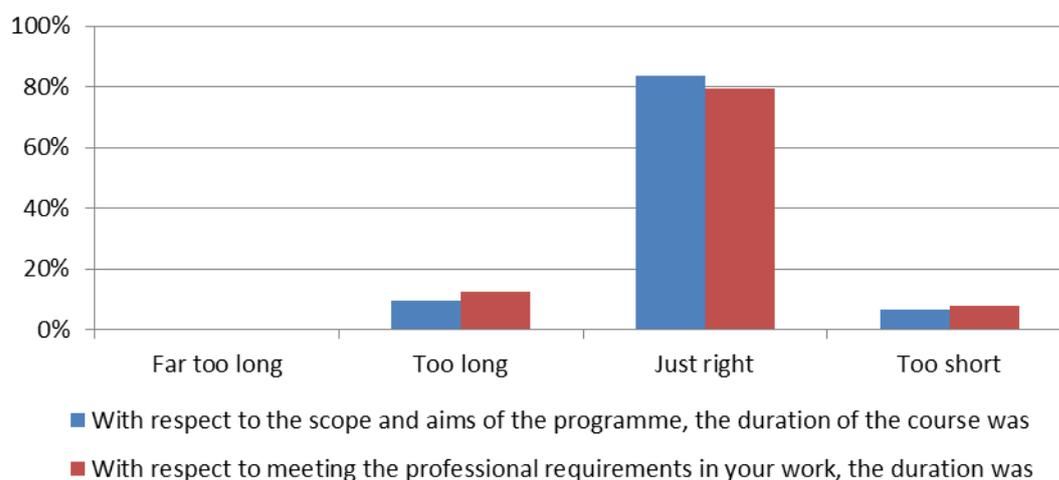
**Figure 5.6 Opportunities for professional contacts with lecturers and other participants 2009-2012 (n=1123 & 1127)**



#### The duration of the course/training

As discussed in chapter four, the duration of the courses has shortened. As the participants in NIVA’s survey have gone through training in the years 2009 through 2012 it is hard to see any trends in the answers regarding the length of the courses. The results in figure 5.7 indicate that NIVA has been able to adjust well to society’s demands of shorter courses. Both with respect to the scope and aims of the course and with respect to meeting professional requirements in the participants’ work, a large majority view the length of the course as just right (84 % and 79 %).

**Figure 5.7 Appropriateness of the length of the course 2009-2012 (n=1115 & 1098)**

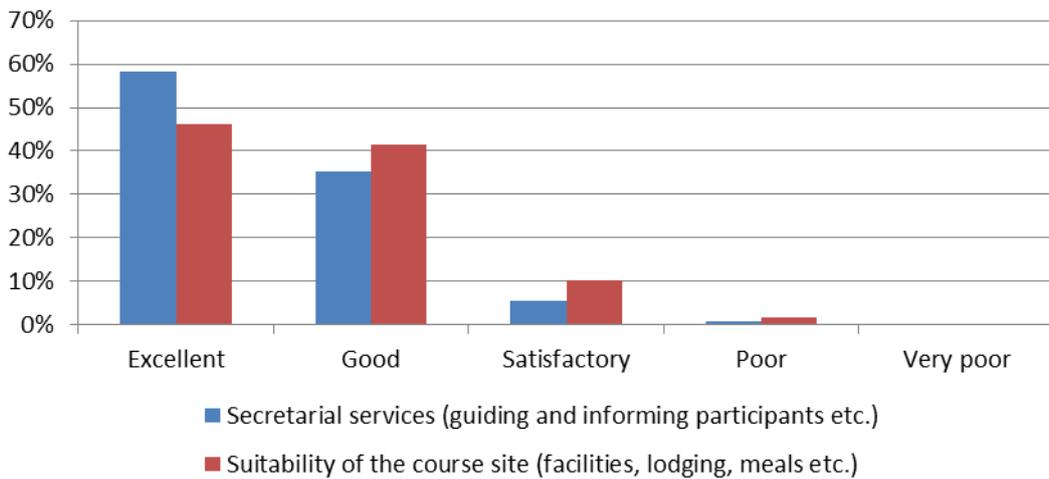


#### The practical organization surrounding the course/training

Besides the quality of the actual lectures the administrative service of NIVA is evaluated in the end of course questionnaires. Also in this regard the course participants are highly satisfied, both with the service given by NIVA’s secretariat and with the suitability of the course site. Regarding course sites there has been a slight change in the last years. More exotic course destinations have been rejected for more easily accessible ones in

order to keep course costs down. This does not seem to have affected the overall impression of the course sites judging from the results below in figure 5.8.

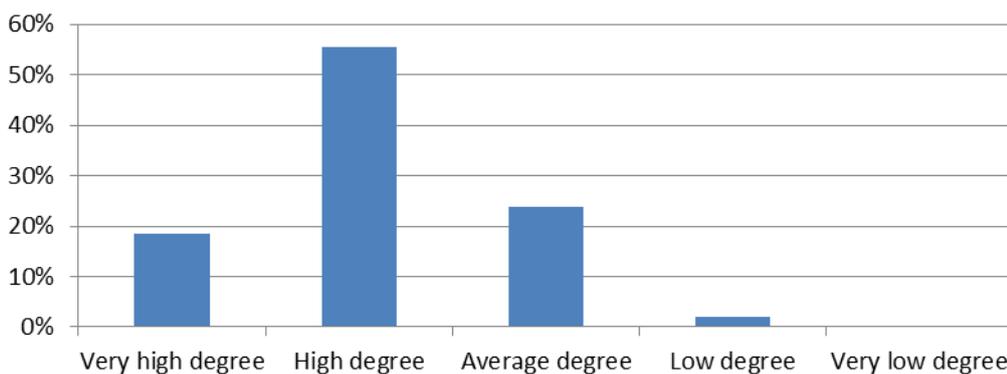
**Figure 5.8 Secretarial services and facilities 2009-2012 (n=1120 & 1124)**



**The objectives of the course/training**

The last aspect of the quality of the training NIVA arranges is whether the objectives of the courses are met. The question presented in figure 5.9 below is presented to the respondent together with the objective of the specific course he or she attends<sup>12</sup>. A clear majority considers the objective of the course to be met. Only two percent of the respondents state that the objectives of the courses were met to a low or very low degree.

**Figure 5.9 The objectives of the course in your case were met to a: (n=1070)**



To sum up, the results from the end of course questionnaires completed in 2009-2012 the quality of NIVA’s courses and training is considered to be very high by the participants. The participants are very satisfied within all six aspects of the quality of the courses surveyed in the questionnaire. As a complement to the end of course questionnaire, Oxford Research has carried out a survey that will be presented in the next section.

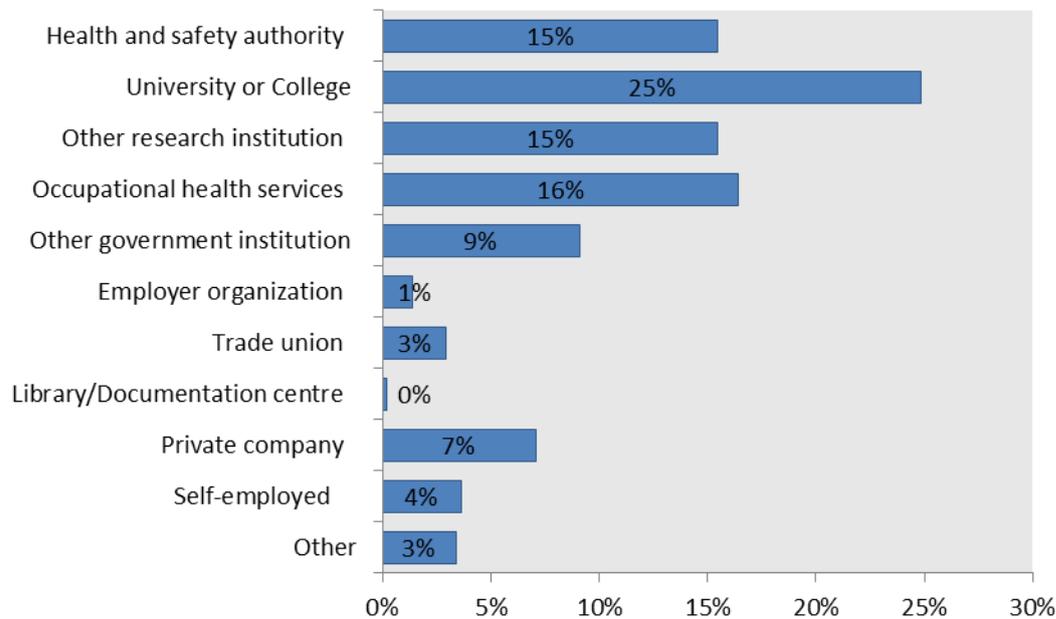
<sup>12</sup> In the case of for instance the course on Positive psychology one of the objectives are: “How to develop successful workplaces in which work tasks and social relationships at work at the same time provide people with best opportunities for self-fulfillment, growth and good performance?”

## 5.2.2 Survey to course participants

As a supplement to NIVA's own end of course questionnaire Oxford Research carried out a survey with the participants in NIVA's register. The survey was deployed in late June 2013 and ran until September 2013. It was sent out to 1,930 participants, lecturers and course leaders. 439 individuals answered the survey which gives a response rate of 23 %. Out of the respondents, 66 persons (15 %) were lecturers and 46 persons (10 %) labelled themselves as both participants and lecturers. What differs from NIVA's own questionnaire besides the questions is the difference in time. In our survey respondents from classes all the way back to 2003 have given their opinions about NIVA and their activities.

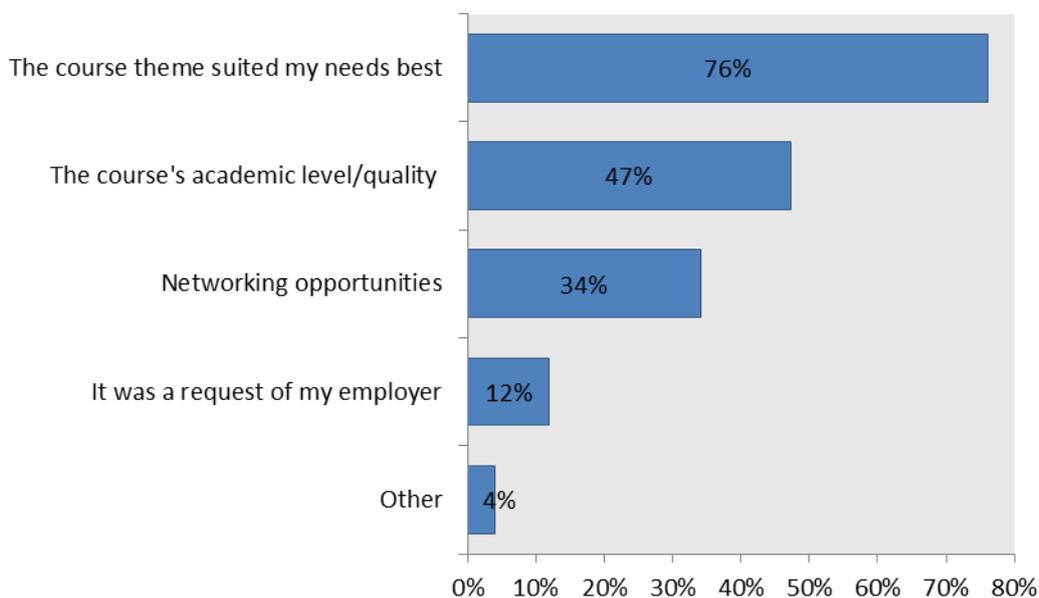
The respondents of the survey are varied but with a bias towards the research community. The second biggest group of respondents is those participants that come from Occupational health services and health and safety authorities.

**Figure 5.10 Affiliation of respondents to Oxford Research's survey (n=439)**



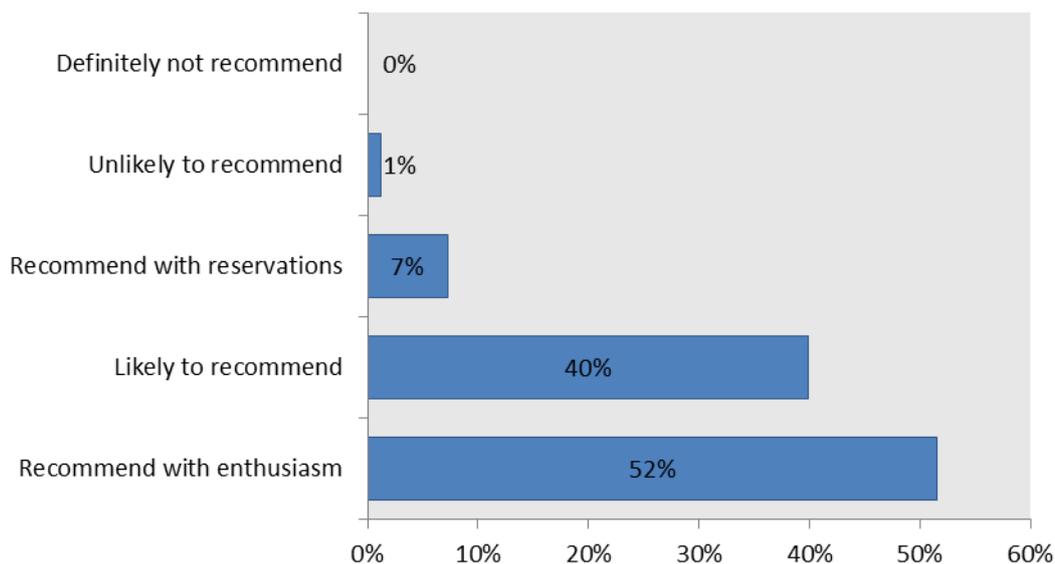
The result of the survey reinforces the picture given by NIVA's own survey. A majority of the participants that have answered the survey are highly satisfied with the courses they have attended and indicate the quality of the training as a strong reason for attendance as shown in figure 5.11 below.

**Figure 5.11 Reasons for attending NIVA training? (multiple answers) (n=327)**



Further evidence on the quality of the training is the share of satisfied participants. 52 percent would recommend the NIVA training they have attended with enthusiasm and 40 percent are likely to recommend NIVA training to someone else.

**Figure 5.12 Would you recommend the NIVA training you attended, or other training by NIVA? (n=318)**



### 5.2.3 Interviews with Nordic actors and experts in the field of OSH

As described in the introduction Oxford Research has carried out 36 in-depth interviews with Nordic actors in the field of OSH. In the interviews we have asked the respondents to assess the quality of the courses provided by NIVA. The overall result is that the quality is regarded as very high. Bearing in mind that many of the interviewees have a personal or professional connection to NIVA their judgment of the courses might be biased to favour NIVA. Nevertheless this is still a strong result considering the research focus NIVA has through the contractual agreement with NCM. The experts that we have interviewed are all prominent researchers within the

field of OSH in the Nordic countries and their high regards for NIVA's activities should be taken as a water stamp for the high quality of the courses that Oxford Research's three other data collection methods indicate.

The interviewees have all answered a question on how they assess the quality of the courses from their specific expertise in the field and all agree on the high quality. One respondent in the bio-chemical field explains the need for NIVA training this way:

*"The quality of the NIVA courses in my specific field, bio-chemical work communities, is high. The national research communities in this field are too limited to be able to provide high-quality interdisciplinary courses to the same extent as NIVA. For these reasons it has been critical both for me but also for the national research environments that courses like the ones NIVA is providing have been available in the Nordic countries."*

Also two interviewed experts in the field of OSH explain how NIVA's courses differ from international conferences and how this gives an added quality:

*"The difference between an international conference and participating in one NIVA courses is that it is easier to discuss OSH considerations in-depth which should be considered as something extraordinary. The in-depth focus can be explained by the common view on OSH considerations. International conferences are more focused on short lectures."*

*"There is definitely another quality dimension if you compare NIVA to ordinary scientific conferences. NIVA courses have 25 participants interacting for four to five days. Such a course structure is more efficient from a networking perspective."*

Another aspect of the quality of the courses is the level of knowledge among the participants. One respondent sees this as a crucial factor in order to maintain the quality of the courses when expanding the target group for the courses:

*"The key issue of quality is how NIVA should select the students who apply for participation in NIVA course. From NIVA's point of view, you need many students to keep running the courses with the result of unqualified participants. On the other hand, the course leader is striving for advanced course content reaching a certain scientific level. The courses demand a certain level of knowledge in order to understand the course leader."*

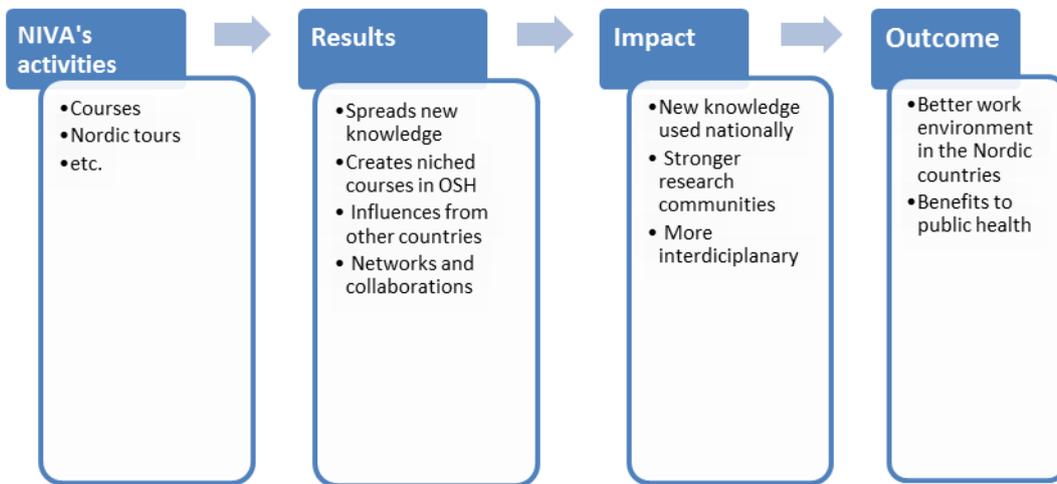
The tension between fulfilling the goals in numbers of participants at the courses and keeping a narrow specialization within the courses in order to maintain the high quality is something we will get back to in the conclusions and recommendations. In the next section we will look at the impact of NIVA's activities.

### **5.3 The impact of NIVA's activities**

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As explained in previous chapters the explicit goal of NIVA is "to further work-related well-being in the Nordics and other countries". This means that NIVA should spread knowledge in order to foster a good work environment. This goal is to be achieved by conducting multidisciplinary advanced level training. The intervention logic of NIVA can therefore be described as that the courses should provide researchers with new knowledge which they in turn can spread to their national research community. The national research community then has the possibility to influence national policy and practices in the area of OSH in order to improve the working environment in the Nordic countries. The intervention logic in terms of what the activities can result in and then what the impact of the results will be can be illustrated as below:

**Figure 5.13 NIVA's intervention logic**

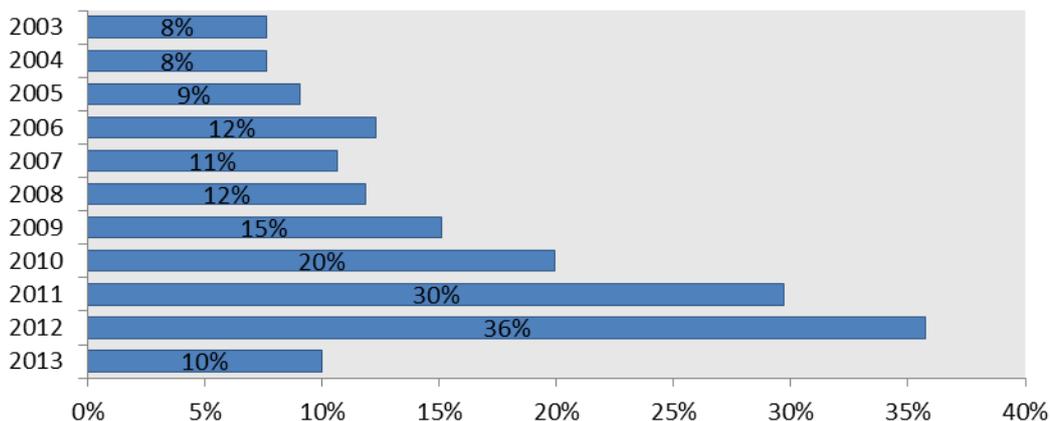


In this section, Oxford Research will test if this intervention logic has succeeded. The further to the right in the figure above, the harder it is to trace the outcomes back to the intervention (in this case NIVA's activities). However, by having participants of NIVA training answering question about what use they have had of the training we can get a good picture of what impact NIVA's training has. Most important to find out regarding the impact of the courses is therefore:

- Have the participants gained new knowledge and increased personal skills through the NIVA training?
- Did the courses give expanded networks/contacts or collaborations?
- Has the knowledge and experienced gained from the courses been passed on by the course participants?
- Has knowledge gained through NIVA training been implemented on a national level?

These four questions will be addressed in the coming sections. In order to trace the impact of NIVA's activities we have included participants and lecturers all the way from 2003 in the survey. In figure 5.14 below the distribution of which years the respondents attended NIVA training is shown. There is a bias in the population towards the latest years but still a good number of respondents attended training in the years 2003-2008, not covered in NIVA's end of course questionnaire.

**Figure 5.14 The years the respondents of Oxford Research's survey participated in NIVA training (multiple answers possible). (n=439)**

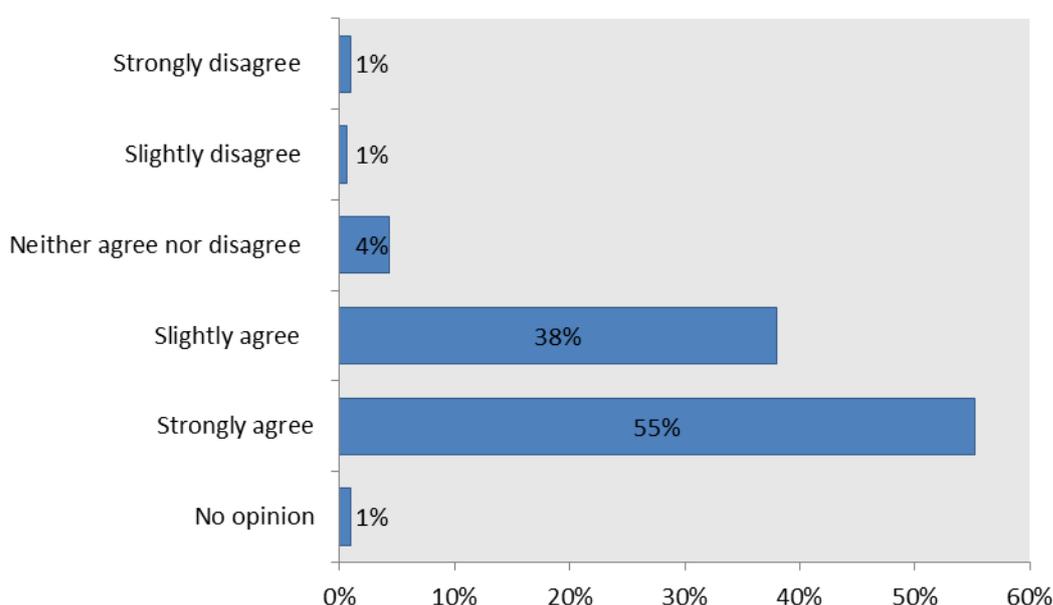


### 5.3.1 NIVA's impact on the skill sets of the participants

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In order for NIVA's activities to further work-related well-being in the Nordic countries the training offered need to be absorbed in a good way by the participants. As section 6.2, which dealt with the quality of the activities, showed, a large majority of the participants are satisfied with courses and consider the course objectives to be met. In order to go one step further and identify if the courses have had a lasting impact on the professional development of the participants we have in our survey asked the participants to choose how well the statement "The NIVA training contributed to my personal development and ability to carry out my job" corresponds with their view. More than half of the respondents (55 %) strongly agree with this statement while 38 % slightly agree with the statement. Based on the answers it is clear that NIVA's activities has given the participants new knowledge and personal skills that they are able to use in their day-to-day job.

**Figure 5.15 The NIVA training contributed to my personal development and ability to carry out my job (n=324)**

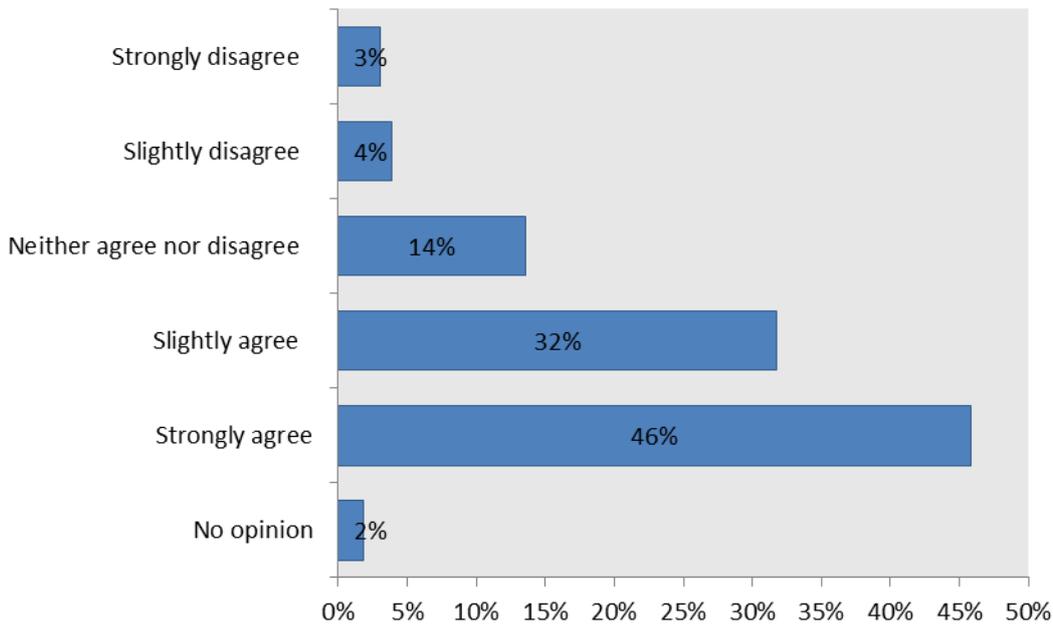


### 5.3.2 NIVA's impact on creating networks and collaborations

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In the section that dealt with the quality of NIVA we touched on the possibilities for participants to create professional contacts with both lecturers and other participants. The possibilities of this are very high at NIVA training according to the respondents of the end of course questionnaires. There is however a difference between the opportunity to form networks and collaborations and if NIVA's activities actually lead to new professional contacts. For natural reasons, this is not possible to investigate in an end of course questionnaire since it is given at the end of the training. To find out if the opportunities have been exploited Oxford Research has asked the respondents to what degree they agree with the statement "The NIVA training gave me new professional contacts". The results are that a majority of those that have attended and lectured at NIVA training and answered our survey have gained new professional contacts from the training. As shown in figure 5.16 only seven percent of the respondents disagree to some degree with the statement. It can be concluded that NIVA's activities not only give the opportunity for participants to create professional contacts, form networks and initiate collaboration but also fosters it.

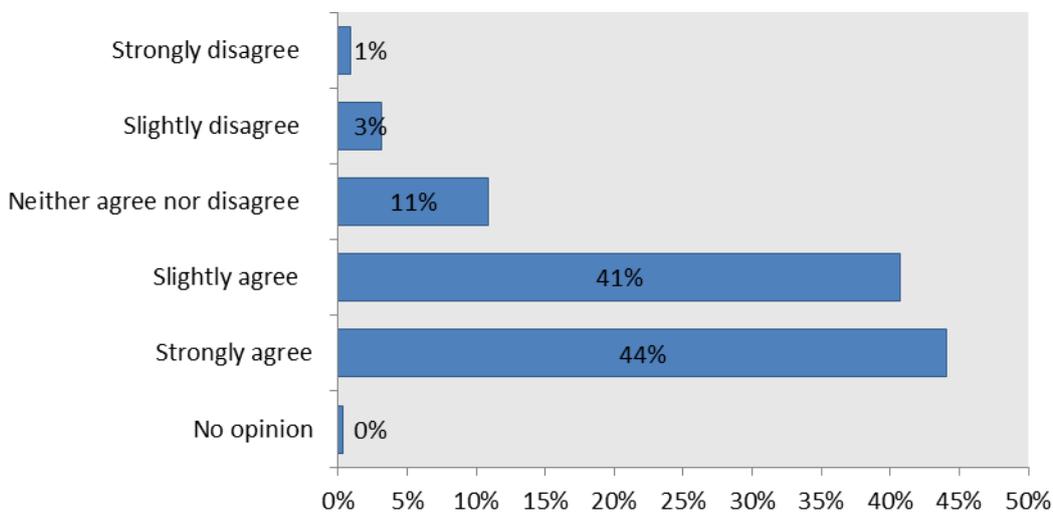
**Figure 5.16 The NIVA training gave me new professional contacts. (n=434)**



### 5.3.3 NIVA's impact on others than those attending the training

For the intervention logic of NIVA to function properly the course participants need to be able to take the knowledge gained and apply it in their own organization. If not it will be hard for NIVA to reach its goal of creating better well-being at work in the different Nordic countries. By sharing knowledge at NIVA trainings best practices and new research can be implemented in the participant's home country. Through asking the respondents to what degree they agree with the statement "I took what I had learned from the NIVA training and applied it in my work/organization" insight to if the knowledge and experienced gained from the courses has been passed on by the course participants can be acquired. The results shown in figure 5.17 suggest that this is the case to a high degree. 44 percent strongly agree with the statement while almost as many (41 %) slightly agree.

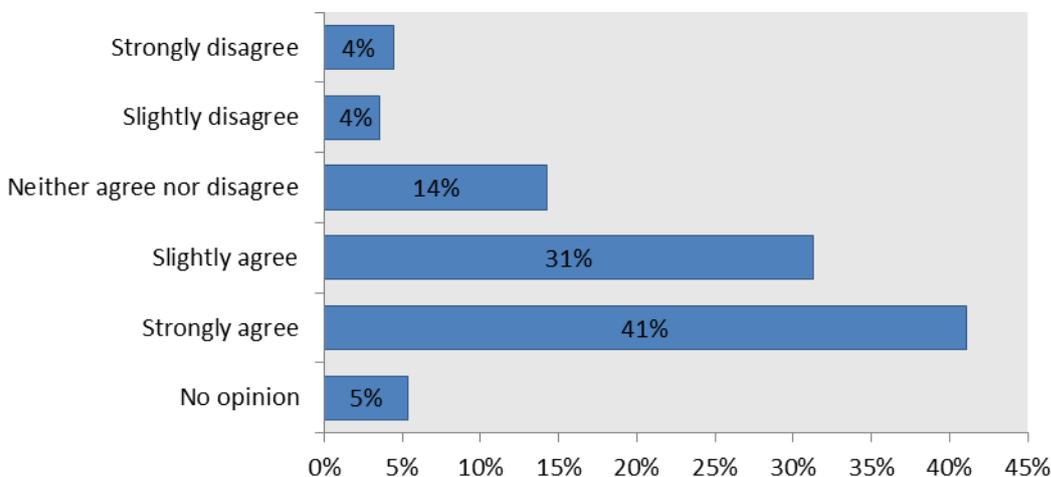
**Figure 5.17 I took what I had learned from the NIVA training and applied it in my work/organization (n=322)**



### 5.3.4 NIVA's impact on national OSH policy

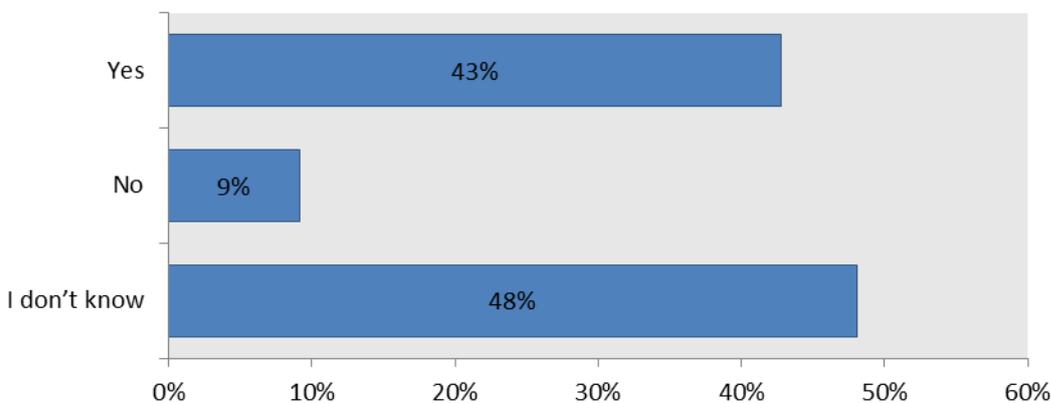
Connected with the question of whether NIVA's activities have the possibility to affect others or not is the possibility for the knowledge shared at NIVA training to improve national OSH policy and in the longer run to improve work-related well-being in the Nordic countries. A prerequisite for this transmission of knowledge to happen is that the lecturers see NIVA as an important venue to disseminate their research. In figure 5.18 below the lecturers of NIVA courses have been asked to answer in what degree they agree with the statement "Compared to other alternatives the NIVA training is an important venue for disseminating my research." Out of the 112 lecturers that answered the question, 72 percent agree with the statement. The results show that NIVA training has the potential to be used to spread new research to other Nordic countries

**Figure 5.18 Compared to other alternatives, the NIVA training is an important venue for disseminating my research. (n=112)**



The results of our survey point to that NIVA training has the possibility to affect national OSH policy. As shown in figure 5.19 below, 43 percent of the respondents state that the NIVA training has contributed to the national research community in their field. Only nine percent say that it has not contributed to the national research community. The large share of respondents that does not know if the NIVA training has contributed to the national research community can be explained by the fact that a large percentage of the respondents are not part of the research community and therefore are not able to answer the question.

**Figure 5.19 Has NIVA's training contributed to the national research community in your field? (n=437)**



Knowing that NIVA training has contributed to the national research community is an important conclusion but it is at least as important how this has been done. In Oxford Research's survey we have asked the respondents that answered yes to give an example or to describe how their research community was affected in practice.

### **New networks**

A large part of the respondents explain that NIVA has helped them create new networks that contributed to their national and international research community. As two respondents put it:

*"Meeting other researchers at NIVA courses have created new contacts used in co-operation aiming to write good scientific applications for research funding. Contacts between researchers and persons working practically to solve problems with damp and mouldy buildings have improved the handling of these problems, especially when informing the users of the buildings about the health risks."*

*"The in-depth discussions in the course increased the understanding of and interest in the specific professional field of medicine. [...] Particularly in seafaring the instruments are international, and the most important way to achieve better health for seafarers is through international cooperation. The influence on the international development is closely related to how the countries outside the Nordic region see us. NIVA contributes strongly to our impact."*

### **New knowledge**

The way in which most respondents say NIVA training has contributed to their national research community is by them acquiring new knowledge at the courses and then applying it in their home country. Several respondents from outside the Nordic countries have stated that they have gained valuable insights that have led to concrete changes in their home country. One example is given by a Dutch course participant:

*"A board member of one of the largest Dutch occupational health services also participated in the course. This health service was in the process of focusing on a positive approach (i.e. improving employee engagement) instead of the traditional negative approach (i.e. preventing sickness absence). The course certainly had a positive impact on this process."*

Also in regards to the revision of documents that steer OSH policy examples exist of NIVA having an impact on those:

*"New criteria-documents for important chemicals to my country's industry were produced, which made it possible to re-evaluate existing occupational exposure limits."*

As the answers above indicate NIVA works as a forum for promoting the Nordic way at looking at OSH issues and can thereby affect policies in countries outside the Nordics. Another example of this comes from the UK:

*"We are currently having issues with bullying and harassment in our workplace. There is a difference between the Nordic countries and the UK's attitude dealing with this manner. The lectures provided a clear understanding and provided valuable background which concluded with good discussions."*

Further the NIVA training can raise awareness and identify risks within OSH:

*"The NIVA seafarer workshops contributed to recognition that seafarer medical examination procedures should be investigated in terms of the available evidence base on risk and on the effectiveness of different types of intervention in managing that risk. As such they contributed to international initiatives with ILO and IMO to develop improved international fitness criteria for seafarers worldwide. These have now borne fruit in international guidelines and a supporting handbook that is key to the implementation of international conventions aimed at decent working and living conditions for seafarers and for safety at sea."*

## Textbox: Examples of the impact of NIVA's work

### Discovery of the harm of solvents

One example is the research on solvents which became known as a “Nordic phenomenon” since it was the Nordic countries that found out the harm of such products. Institutes like NIVA contributed to share this new knowledge across borders and also towards the EU-level. The development regarding solvents was promoted by recommendations from the Nordic Expert Group on criteria documents on chemicals (NEG).

Source: Björn Erikson, Arbejdstilsynet Norway

### Asthma prevention in the aluminum industry

In the 1980's Henrik Norman lectured on courses on occupational lung diseases. One of the participants was Ebba Wergeland, today employed at the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority. Some of the insights she gained from the course was later used in her work to promote health in the aluminum industry where the frequency of asthma today is much lower than it was thanks to her contribution.

Source: Jan Vilhelm Bakke Chief Physician, Arbejdstilsynet, Norway

### Assessment and classification of chemicals

According to Chief physician Jan Vilhelm Bakke, the courses in occupational pulmonary medicine have been important as an academic platform for labour inspection professionals within this field. The course was given by Henrik Norman in the 1980s. The course contributed to the implementation of projects for assessment and classification of chemical substances that may cause specific sensitization of the respiratory tract and contribute to the development of asthma. An international consensus project for risk assessment of isocyanides and Nordic cooperation on audit projects targeted this highly prevalent and potent risk.

Source: Jan Vilhelm Bakke Chief Physician, Arbejdstilsynet, Norway

## 5.4 NIVA's Nordic added value

NCM's instructions to its agencies emphasize that all cooperative actions between the Nordic countries should be guided by the concept *Nordic utility*. The basis of the concept is that all activities that the agencies are involved in should:

- Regard matters that, even though they could be carried out in each country, gain from the creation of Nordic solutions
- Manifest and develop Nordic solidarity
- Enhance Nordic competences and competitiveness

Similarly, the NCMS' instructions state that all agencies' governing boards should make sure that the agencies contribute to the:

1. Promotion of a high Nordic profile

2. Creation of Nordic utility
3. Creation of Nordic added value, in addition to the professional value created in each agency's area of work

According to the instructions, the statutes of each agency shall reflect these objectives, and aim at fulfilling the concept of added value in terms of positive impact through promoting Nordic utility as described above.

Neither NIVA's annual reports nor the contracts between NIVA and the NCM contain definitions of the concept of Nordic added value. However, in accordance with the instructions from NCM the following is stated in every annual report for NIVA during the last ten years:

*"all NIVA's activities should maintain a high Nordic profile and create a Nordic added value".*

Despite the absence of a clear definition of the concept of added value, the 2003-2005 contract for NIVA specify the goals of NIVA's Nordic utility to be that NIVA shall offer training in the field of occupational safety and health on a higher level than the training offered nationally across the Nordic countries. NIVA shall also make it possible to gather critical masses of target groups in specific fields of OSH as well as to offer highly qualified lectures by Nordic and international experts.

Despite not being directly connected to the concept of added value, these goals suggest that NIVA's usage of the concepts of Nordic added value and Nordic utility revolves around the creation of a platform for Nordic knowledge-sharing within the field of OSH, and especially in fields where national target groups do not add up to sufficient numbers for organizing national courses. According to the 2003-2005 contract NIVA shall also, through its courses, act as a junction for Nordic research collaboration and stimulate coordination of national research activities and networking between participants. Similar, but less clear formulations are used in subsequent contracts.

In addition to creating an added value stemming from the research community NIVA shall, according to the contracts, also promote safety and health in the Nordic business context by spreading OSH methods and promote good working conditions. NIVA shall also work internationally by facilitating the use of OSH supervision in the Nordic neighbouring countries and spread the Nordic perspective of OSH in the EU and internationally.

#### **5.4.1 NIVA creates Nordic Added Value**

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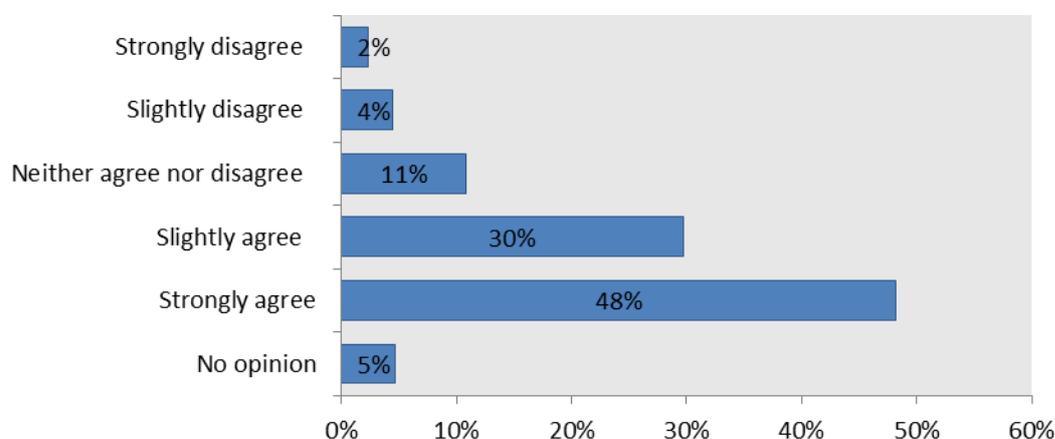
Even if it is not always articulated in the contracts this study shows that NIVA contributes to Nordic Added Value in all three ways stipulated in the NMC's instructions. Below is explained how NIVA achieves Nordic added value.

##### **1. Promotion of a high Nordic profile**

As shown in chapter 5, roughly 25 percent of the participants at NIVA training come from other countries than the Nordic. This gives a chance for NIVA to promote Nordic research and approaches to occupational health and safety to a wider audience. The Nordic countries have a long tradition of cutting edge research within OSH and have in many ways been ground-breaking in policy making. NIVA is thereby a venue for marketing the Nordic countries' high standing within in this area and to promote a high Nordic profile.

The claim that NIVA promotes a high Nordic profile is also proven in our survey to the course participants. As shown in figure 5.20, 78 percent of the respondents agree that the training gave knowledge of OSH issues from a Nordic perspective.

**Figure 5.20 The NIVA training gave me knowledge of occupational health and safety issues from a Nordic perspective (n=434)**



## 2. Creation of Nordic utility

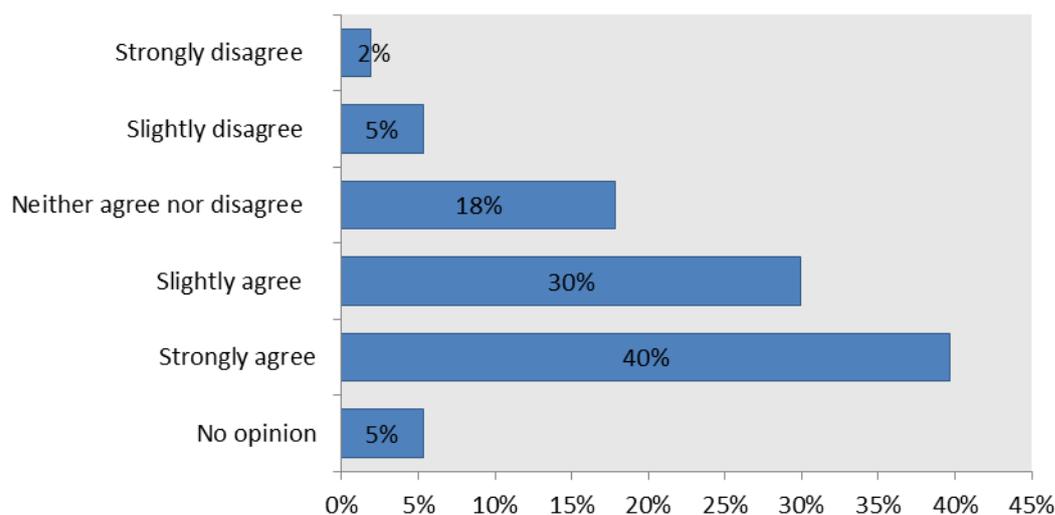
As this chapter has shown NIVA has an impact on national research and national policies and thereby a clear Nordic utility. By gathering researchers and practitioners from all Nordic countries and enabling those to form new collaborations and networks and to share knowledge between each other, NIVA creates Nordic utility that in the long run can form reinforce research communities in the Nordic countries.

## 3. Creation of Nordic added value

The definition of Nordic added value is not specified by the Nordic council of Ministers but can be interpreted as that by collaboration you achieve higher gains than doing things separately in each of the Nordic countries. When it comes to NIVA the added value is high since it would not be possible to carry out highly specialized courses on a high academic level in the small Nordic countries. There is not enough critical mass of researchers and practitioners within some of the research areas for national courses to be arranged. For instance Iceland would not be able to stage courses within OSH because there are not enough potential participants.

We have asked the participants if they consider NIVA training to have a clear Nordic added value and the majority, as shown in figure 5.21, answer that this is the case.

**Figure 5.21 The NIVA training had a clear Nordic added value (n=431)**



## Chapter 6. Conclusions and recommendations

This final chapter sums up the prior chapters and presents Oxford Research's conclusions regarding the organization of NIVA and the quality and impact of NIVA's activities. The conclusions constitute the base for the recommendations that aim at developing NIVA's function, role, and organization. The recommendations are divided into a set of general recommendations and recommendations specifically addressing the policy level (NCMS and the committee of senior officials), the agency level (NIVA's board) and the operational level (NIVA's secretariat).

### 6.1 Conclusions

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This section presents the main conclusions of the report. The main conclusions of the report are:

#### 1. There is a need for NIVA and the institute possesses Nordic added value

The study shows that the relevance of NIVA is high. This, combined with the lack of adequate alternatives, motivate the existence of NIVA.

The activities of NIVA are also relevant because of the high Nordic added value they possess. The added value is manifested in the way that NIVA manages to promote Nordic research and policy within OSH, that Nordic utility is created through the collaborations and networks that NIVA give rise to and in the way NIVA manages to gather a critical mass of participants for courses that would not be possible to stage separately in each of the Nordic countries.

#### 2. NIVA adheres to its guidelines and the courses are of high quality

Through examining the guidelines that guide NIVA's activities and the training carried out it can be concluded that NIVA adheres to its guidelines. Covering a broad range of topics in the field of OSH, NIVA has arranged 130 courses with a total of more than 3330 participants since 2003 and has been able to fulfil the production goals set up in the contracts between The Nordic Council of Ministers and NIVA.

By surveying participants that have attended the training, through interviews with Nordic experts in the field of OSH and by compiling NIVA's own end of survey questionnaires it can also be concluded that the courses offered are of very high quality. The participants at the courses are highly satisfied with all aspects surrounding the courses such as the quality of the lectures, possibilities to network and the services of NIVA's secretariat.

#### 3. NIVA has an impact on national research communities and national OSH policy

NIVA's explicit goal is "to further work-related well-being in the Nordics and other countries". This means that NIVA should spread knowledge in order to foster a good work environment. This goal is to be achieved by conducting multidisciplinary advanced level training. The study shows that this goal is achieved and that NIVA has an impact on both national research communities and on national OSH policy. In the survey, a clear majority state that they have used what they learned at NIVA training and applied it in their day to day work and that the NIVA training has contributed to the participants' national research communities. The study also shows that the lecturers at NIVA's courses see them as an important venue to disseminate their research.

#### 4. It is possible to improve the cost-efficiency of NIVA

NIVA organizes courses of high quality, resulting in satisfied participants. The number of courses offered has increased during the past ten years, despite a slight decrease in funding. The general costs of NIVA as an organ-

ization, and especially the costs of the Director, has to be assessed in relation to how the Board assesses the gains of the Director's competences to the organization.

By breaking down the costs of organizing a NIVA course, Oxford Research can conclude that NIVA has the potential to improve the efficiency of how the courses are organized. Excluding costs that NIVA could potentially reduce, i.e. the costs associated with organizing courses which are not covered by the course fee, the courses could be made self-sufficient. By reducing the costs of each course to the level of the fixed costs, NIVA would be able to reduce its financial risk. The financial risk of NIVA is dependent on the variable costs associated with lecturers' accommodation, which could be solved by choosing other course venues.

However, the degree to which NIVA should prioritize providing courses that are self-sufficient in order to maintain sound finances or prioritize meeting the needs of advanced training within small specialist fields must be clarified by the NCM.

### **5. NIVA's steering can improve**

NIVA is based on intergovernmental Nordic cooperation under the NCM. NIVA is guided by a contract between NIVA and the NCM. The overall responsibility for NIVA as an organization and as a provider of activities relies on NIVA's Board. The Board is responsible for the strategic planning of NIVA, and is guided by the contract agreed on by the NCM through the committee of senior officials. The Board therefore holds a crucial role in NIVA's development. NIVA's courses are generated in a dynamic process to a great extent dependent on the Board, which mostly consist of well renowned research representatives from each country. Each Board member has an as broad overview of the field in each country as possible for each person. However, especially in the countries where there is no work environment institute responsible for keeping such overviews of the field, there is a risk that the overviews provided by the Board or the Director are not enough not map the needs and target groups within the narrow fields in which NIVA could provide training.

NIVA must be supplied with adequate prerequisites in order to reach an optimal mode of functioning. However, Oxford Research can conclude that there are unclaritys in the steering of NIVA, complicating the Board's and NIVA's work towards its goals. For example, it has been indicated that, except for budgetary concerns, the NCM shows little interest in expressing how they want to use NIVA and that the objectives are unclear. Therefore, one of the critical aspects of steering NIVA is for the NCM to take active ownership of the organization.

### **6. The course offering is contemporary but innovation can increase**

The courses are generated through a dynamic process, relying on information from the Director as well as interests among researchers. The researcher may be known to the Board or the Director, or have led or participated in prior courses. This process have resulted in courses of high quality where gathering a sufficient number of participants from Nordic and non-Nordic countries.

However, the process for generating courses is based on a weak analysis of the needs of the potential target audience, emphasizing the experiences of the Director or researchers already within NIVA's network. By using existing channels to generate courses, NIVA runs the risk of being biased in its course provision. The bias may result in NIVA offering courses on topics irrelevant for the target audience or, most importantly, that NIVA risks to unintentionally overlook topics relevant to the target audience. The same logic holds for NIVA's activities to attract participants, which mostly relies on NIVA's existing networks.

### **7. The knowledge about NIVA is in some instances low**

A number of respondents within for instance ministries in the Nordic countries, contacted when compiling this report, have little knowledge about NIVA and its activities. There is a misconception that NIVA only deals with courses geared towards the physiological aspects of OSH and that there is a lack of sufficient numbers of participants at the trainings. These misconceptions among delegates from labour market ministries in the Nordic countries are to be taken serious and need to be addressed.

## 6.2 Recommendations

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The purpose of this evaluation is to generate a number of key recommendations regarding the future opportunities for NIVA and what alternatives to organizing and running NIVA there is. Our key recommendations are given below.

### 1. NIVA should continue to exist

As this study show NIVA adheres to its contracts, provide high quality training, possesses a clear Nordic added value and has an impact on national research communities and OSH policy. Our main recommendation to the Nordic Council of Ministers is therefore to keep NIVA as a mean of strengthening Nordic collaboration in this field. In order to achieve a high impact the training should be marketed to and tailored for researchers, practitioners and stakeholders that have the possibility to impact national research communities and OSH policies.

### 2. NIVA should be brought closer to the Nordic Council of Ministers

This report shows that The Nordic council of ministers' knowledge of NIVA is in general low and that this causes problems when it comes to clear directives from the different instances within the NCM on what they want to achieve with NIVA. A higher understanding of the activities that NIVA carries out would lead to smarter and better formulated goals for NIVA to aim against.

The responsibility of increasing the NCM's knowledge and understanding of NIVA lies both with the NCM that need to take an active role in the steering of NIVA and with NIVA itself that needs to become better at communicating NIVA's activities.

### 3. The marketing of NIVA needs to improve

Today NIVA relies to a high degree on word of mouth marketing, which our survey gives evidence to. More than half of the participants that we have surveyed received information about the course from a professional or colleague in their field and about 40 percent received information through NIVA's newsletter.

In order to improve the marketing, the secretariat must proactively seek out new potential participants and update its registry continuously with researchers and practitioners within the field of OSH. The director and the secretariat must also to a higher degree communicate clearly and purposefully with the NCM and officials from the Nordic ministries responsible for OSH policy about NIVA and its activities in order to increase the interest in and knowledge of NIVA. This is needed since the knowledge is low at the moment.

NIVA must also focus its marketing towards organizations rather than towards individuals. To establish good and long standing relations with, for instance, the labour inspection authorities in the Nordic countries, the relations must be on an institutional level in order not to run the risk of them being lost when someone change jobs.

### 4. NIVA's high quality must be upheld

This study shows that the key competitive advantage of NIVA's training in comparison to international conferences and national courses is the high level advanced training in relative small groups that enable networks and collaborations to form between the participants. This is important to bear in mind when formulating goals for the future work of NIVA. Oxford Research's recommendation is therefore to widen the supply of courses instead of making them more accessible.

### 5. NIVA should try to diversify their course offering

This study shows that some of the courses to a high degree are self-sufficient in the sense that the course fee can finance almost all costs associated with the course. The marginal cost of arranging more courses is therefore low and a widened course offering could be done without expanding the budget from the NCM. This gives a possibility to diversify NIVA's course offering and provide expensive multi-day courses as well as shorter ones. A variation of the courses in terms of course venue should be considered in order to attract younger course

participants with lower budgets. Today a lot of NIVA's courses are arranged in less densely populated areas of the Nordics at relatively expensive hotels. This is important for the networking aspects of the courses and one of the keys to NIVA's success. Nonetheless NIVA should arrange both this traditional type of courses and try to stage courses at less expensive locations to be able to attract younger participants.

## **6. The new NIVA director should be recruited with the other recommendations in mind**

The director of NIVA plays a key role in the generation of courses by getting course leaders to commit and through networking with stakeholders in the Nordic countries. The director therefore needs to have a good understanding of what topics in OSH are relevant and that can be of interest. He or she also has to have good contact with national research institutes and universities in order to engage researchers as course leaders. In addition to this, she or he also has a vital role to play when it comes to the contacts with the NCM. A person with established contacts with the NCM organisation could have an easier task of communicating NIVA's activities and be suited to promote the agency towards the bodies in the NCM. The recruitment of the new director is therefore important for NIVA to stay up to date and relevant in the field of OSH and its contacts with the NCM and should be a priority for the NCM and the board of NIVA. The vital role of the director is also a vulnerability and steps should be taken to ensure the functioning of the institute in the event of the director becoming unavailable or if the recruitment process is extended in time.

### **6.2.1 Policy level**

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Recommendations addressed at the policy level are aimed at the national officials in the Nordic Committee of Senior Officials for Labour and officials at the NCMS. As explained above, knowledge about NIVA's activities are limited in this group. For the utility of NIVA, it is important to raise awareness and understanding of NIVA's activities in this group. Once this has been done the Committee of Senior Officials for Labour needs to formulate a clear strategy on what they want to achieve with NIVA. The current structure and methods of NIVA have, as this evaluation shows, been successful in furthering well-being at work in the Nordic countries and can play a key role in the future given that NIVA training remains an attractive venue for sharing knowledge and forming collaborations.

### **6.2.2 Agency level**

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This report shows that there are high Nordic Added Value of NIVA's activities and that they have an impact on national research and policymaking. However, the marketing of NIVA needs to improve and the board plays an important role in this aspect since the representatives from each country can provide information on potential course leaders and be a contact point for the director into each of the five Nordic countries' research communities.

The board also needs to have a sound and creative discussion with the NCM in order to formulate the best possible goals for NIVA. On-going discussions about the adequacy of the goals and how to reach them must be on the agenda of the board.

### **6.2.3 Operational level**

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On the operational level the secretariat of NIVA first and foremost need to enhance the marketing of NIVA. Today almost all participants that attend NIVA training have heard about it by recommendation or by receiving newsletters from NIVA. This is a sign of the high quality of the training provided by NIVA but also a sign that few new potential participants are being reached by the secretariat's marketing. A joint effort from the board, director and the course coordinators is therefore needed in order to reach out to, in particular, the few younger researchers around and also to practitioners in the field of OSH.

The secretariat also needs to gain understanding of how the demand for advanced training looks like among the target group. In order to do so NIVA should carry out need analyses of what type of courses is demanded by potential participants. This is important for NIVA in order to stay relevant and to attract new groups of participants to the courses.

### 6.3 Actions in the light of a reduced budget from the NCM

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When ordering this evaluation the NCM wanted to know what a reduced budget would mean to NIVA's operational abilities. As this evaluation explains, NIVA has the possibility to become even more cost-efficient and it is Oxford Research's standpoint that NIVA can handle smaller budget cuts without having to do major adjustments in their activities. Minor budget cuts can for example be off-set by a higher self-supportive ratio of the courses provided by NIVA as explained above and in chapter 4.

However if there are to be major cuts in NIVA's budget in the future or if the NCM decides to cut their funding completely alternative ways of organising NIVA must be explored. When interviewing stakeholders and experts within the field of OSH they have come up with suggestions for how NIVA could be restructured to meet these possible challenges.

One suggestion regarding a new organization is to let the director of NIVA be closer connected to the NCM, for instance as the secretary of the Working Environment Committee. This would provide a possible solution to the lack of understanding of NIVA's activities from the NCM's side and could improve NCM's steering of NIVA. Having the director of NIVA closer to the NCM could possibly also reduce the vulnerability of NIVA in the sense that the director, as NIVA is organized now, does not have any replacement or deputy. A risk of having the director employed by the NCM as secretary for the Working Environment Committee would be that he or she would lose the impartiality as one respondent put it:

*"The director would lose its impartial role and if the strategy further ahead would be to connect NIVA more with the national institutes such organizational structure would problematize the impartial scientific work."*

Another suggestion of action to take if NIVA's budget would diminish is a reduction of NIVA's staff. This would according to NIVA mean that the number of courses provided would also be reduced which in turn would mean that NIVA would not be able to meet its production goals stated by the NCM. Not everyone interviewed agrees with this analysis and a reduction of course coordinators could be off-set by giving the course leaders more responsibility for having direct contact with scientific and practical key actors. NIVA could then spend more time enhancing the contact with NOROSH and the institutes. The role of the secretariat could in such a setting be more of coordinating and strengthening the Nordic profile and safeguarding the scientific quality than using time on administratively arranging courses. This would perhaps free time that could be used for improving the marketing of NIVA. As a member of NIVA's board puts it:

*"There are an over load of places where one can buy practical administrative solutions, one doesn't have to have a paid employee to solve such tasks for NIVA."*

One suggestion on how to cope with a reduced budget is to cut down the number of courses and to focus on the ones that are attracting a lot of participants. The risk of taking this path is that NIVA's Nordic added value of providing courses when there is not enough critical mass in each of the countries will most certainly diminish or completely cease to exist.

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Aasen, Tor 31 May 2013

Ahonen, Guy 12 Jun 2013

Bakke, Jan Vilhelm 27 May 2013

Bonde, Jens Peter 30 May 2013

Bye, Sture 19 June 2013

Danielsen, Tor Erik 7 June 2013

Einarsen, Ståle 5 June 2013

Eklund, Jörgen 3 June 2013

Erikson, Bjørn 30 May 2013

Ewaldsson, Per 30 September 2013

Garde, Anne Helene 7 June 2013

Grannas, Dan 28 October 2013

Hakanen, Jari 10 June 2013

Hansen, Thorfrid 2 October 2013

Hansen, Åse Marie 3 June 2013

Henriksen, Lone 4 October 2013

Ilmarinen, Juhani 7 June 2013  
Kantelius, Hannes 10 June 2013  
Köhler Krantz, Barbro 30 May 2013  
Latta, Mia 12 June 2013  
Melchior Poulsen, Otto 28 May 2013  
Norbäck, Dan 28 May 2013  
Nylenna, Magne 27 May 2013  
Rafnsson, Vilhjálmur 26 May 2013  
Räsänen, Tuula 28 May 2013  
Stålhammar, Hannu 28 May 2013  
Suomaa, Leo 4 June 2013  
Svensson, Måns 10 June 2013  
Taskinen, Helena 27 May 2013  
Thóren, Kjell 29 May 2013  
Tómasson, Kristinn 19 June 2013  
Vainio, Harri 12 June 2013  
Valur Johansson, Ingi 2 October 2013  
Veiersted, Kaj Bo 3 June 2013  
Westerholm, Peter 31 May 2013  
Wolkoff, Peder 29 June 2013  
Ylikoski, Matti 31 May 2013  
Zachariassen, Sigvart 10 June 2013

# Appendix 1. Survey questionnaire

## Survey of the impact of NIVA

The Nordic Institute for Advanced Training in Occupational Health (NIVA) has delivered advanced level training in occupational health for over 30 years. The goal of NIVA is to spread knowledge and contribute to the promotion of an overall better work environment. The goal is to be achieved by conducting multidisciplinary advanced level training and specialist training in occupational health and safety. This survey is part of the Nordic Council of Ministers external evaluation of NIVA's function, role and achievements; the quantity, quality and relevance of NIVA's courses.

The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your views will help towards making the overall course offerings more adequate and efficient.

## Introduction

### In what way have you participated in NIVA's training?

(State one answer only)

- Course leader/Lecturer
- Participant
- Both

### 1. Please select the years that you have participated in NIVA training.

(Multiple answers allowed)

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2003                     | 2004                     | 2005                     | 2006                     | 2007                     | 2008                     | 2009                     | 2010                     | 2011                     | 2012                     | 2013                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Please select the NIVA training you participated in 2003.

(Multiple answers allowed)

- Assessment of Psychosocial Factors at Work
- Evaluation and Good Occupational Health Practice

- Principles of Etiologic/Etiognostic Research
- Toxicokinetic and Toxicodynamic Modeling in Occupational Health
- Work-related Respiratory Hypersensitivity
- Bullying and Harassment at Work
- Workplace Health Promotion – Practice and Evaluation
- Indoor Air Quality Problems – Links between Indoor Pollution, Psychosocial Factors, and Complaints
- Occupational Health Risk Assessment and Management
- Introduction to Occupational Epidemiology
- Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders: Current Research Trends

**Please select the NIVA training you participated in 2004.**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- Workplace Health Promotion- Practice and Evaluation: Part II
- Age Management in the information Society
- Ergonomic Intervention Research for Musculoskeletal Health
- Modern Statistical Methods in Exposure Assessment and its implication for Research and Practice
- Occupational Hazards and Reproductive Health
- Safety Research – Accidents and Risks
- Intervention Research
- Occupational Indoor Air Problems caused by Mouldy Buildings
- Occupational Skin and Airway Allergies – Exposure, Risk Assessment and Prevention
- Risk Management at the Workplace
- Prevention of Work-related Cardiovascular Disorders

**Please select the NIVA training you participated in 2005.**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- Safety Research: Safety Promotion
- Leaders of Interdisciplinary Research Projects
- Biological Monitoring as a Tool for the Evaluation of Chemical Risks and Exposure at Work
- Epidemiologic Study Design
- Ethical, Scientific and Social Aspects of Predictivity Testing in Occupational Health Practices
- Work-related Violence in Different Organisational Settings
- Occupational Health Risk Assessment and Management
- Occupational Dermatology
- Occupational Exposure Limits
- Absence from Work and early retirement
- Work Environment in the Health Care Sector
- Introduction to Occupational Epidemiology
- Age Management follow-up seminar
- Return to work

**Please select the NIVA training you participated in 2006.**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- Vocational Rehabilitation – Biopsychosocial and Health Promoting Factors
- Age Management: Working after 60?
- Seafarers' Occupational Risks and Health Examinations
- The Evidence-based Approach for Occupational Health Practitioners – How to use research information to improve the quality of occupational health practice
- Work/Life Balance - Challenges and Opportunities
- Biomarkers of Stress in Relation to Occupational Health
- Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders – Current Research Trends
- Applications of Toxicology in Occupational Health

- Modern Statistical Methods in Exposure Assessment and its Implication for Research and Practice
- Indoor Air Quality – Link between Indoor Air Pollution, Sensory Effects, and Psychological Factors
- Modern Trends and Needs in Occupational Safety and Health
- Promoting the Health and Safety of Security Workers by Risk Management
- Workshop on "Job Stress, Chronic Disease, and Heart Rate Variability"

**Please select the NIVA training you participated in 2007.**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- Health Risk Management of Occupational Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields (EMFs)
- An Inclusive Working Life for All
- Good Occupational Indoor Environment – Our Common Goal
- Bullying and Harassment at Work
- Safety Research
- Reading and Writing Review Articles in Occupational Epidemiology
- Intervention Research
- Safety Climate Concepts and Measurements
- Occupational Skin and Airway Allergies – Exposure, Risk Assessment and Prevention
- Occupational Indoor Air Problems caused by Mould
- Introduction to Occupational Epidemiology
- Occupational Health and Safety in the Construction Industry

**Please select the NIVA training you participated in 2008.**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- Fifth international course on Age management: Life course and work
- Sixth international course on Safety research
- Nordic Leadership Forum: Multicultural management in health care

- Disability at the workplace
- Second international course on Seafarers' occupational risks and health examinations
- First international course on chemical hazards at the workplace – Occupational exposure limits and implications of REACH
- Eight international course on occupational dermatology
- NAM-NIVA workshop on Chronic Occupational Obstructive Pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Safety and risks of nanotechnologies and nanoparticles to workers and citizens
- Improved occupational safety and health (OSH) system in Northwest Russia

**Please select the NIVA training you participated in 2009.**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- Workshop on health risk management of exposure to optical radiation
- Sixth international course on occupational hazards and reproductive health
- Nordic Summer Symposium: Does size matter?
- The safe and healthy professional driver – the human factor in traffic safety
- Positive Psychology at work: towards flourishing workplaces
- Occupational health and alcohol: prevention and intervention
- Fourth international course on bullying and harassment at work
- Psychosocial epidemiology
- Introduction to occupational epidemiology
- Seventh international course on indoor air quality: links with health, environmental perception and productivity
- Obstructive airway diseases in the workplace: asthma and COPD
- Nordic Tour 2009: Does age matter more than work ability in extending work careers?

**Please select the NIVA training you participated in 2010.**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- Safety Research

- Breaking the myths of longer work lives and retirement
- Seafarers' occupational health examinations
- Recognition, prevention and control of work-related cardiovascular disorders
- Psychosocial risk assessment and prevention at work
- Biomonitoring in occupational health practice
- Nordic Tour: Health Effects and risks of nanoparticles

**Please select the NIVA training you participated in 2011.**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- International course on safety research
- Occupational exposure to electromagnetic fields and optical radiation – detection and prevention of health risks
- Musculoskeletal disorders – risk factors and solutions at work
- Occupational skin diseases
- Exposure to unintentionally formed nanoparticles: is there any difference in health effects?
- Nordic occupational cancer (NOCCA) studies
- Bullying and harassment at work
- Biological measures of stress in relation to occupational health
- Well-being and flexicurity workshop
- Nordisk workshop: arbetsmiljö och arbetskarriär
- Workshop on market surveillance
- Nordic Tour: Creating good practices for elderly care work
- Nordic Tour: Mental health and return to work – can we improve return to work and retention for employees with mental health problems?

**Please select the NIVA training you participated in 2012.**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- Occupational Health Services in Transition

- Roadmap to World-class safety – new approaches in safety research
- Seafarers' fitness and emergency situations aboard a ship
- Workplace interventions – how can employees' return to work be facilitated after sickness absence?
- A holistic approach to well-being among security workers
- 9th International course on Occupational Lung Diseases – prevention and risk factors
- Use of Energy in Buildings and Building Dampness. Impact on Air Quality, Health, Comfort and Productivity
- Nordic Tour 2012: Bullying and Harassment at Work – recent developments in research and practice/NO
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- Nordic Tour 2012: Bullying and Harassment at Work – recent developments in research and practice/SE
- Nordic Tour 2012: Bullying and Harassment at Work – recent developments in research and practice/IS
- Health Communication and Research Dissemination

**Please select the NIVA training you participated in 2013.**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- New approaches to safety research
- Age management
- Workshop on Immigrants' work environment and safety

**2. Please select your main affiliation.**

**(State one answer only)**

- Health and safety authority
- University or College
- Other research institution
- Occupational health services
- Other government institution
- Employer organization

- Trade union
- Library/Documentation centre
- Private company
- Self-employed

Other

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**3. How did you hear about the NIVA training?**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- NIVA's newsletter
- Newsletter/other information source provided by a university or research institution
- Newsletter/other information source provided by a public authority
- A colleague or a professional in my field
- Through a network I am part of

Other

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**Impact**

**4. Please choose the response you think is most equivalent with your overall impression of the NIVA training.**

**(State only one answer per question)**

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
The NIVA training contributed to my personal development and ability to carry out my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The NIVA training gave me new professional contacts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I took what I had learned from the NIVA training and applied it in my work/organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I've shared what I've learned with colleagues and/or other professionals in my field	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The NIVA training gave me knowledge of occupational health and safety issues from a Nordic perspective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The NIVA training had a clear Nordic added value	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied that I chose NIVA's training over competing alternatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

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**5. Please choose the response you think is most equivalent with your opinion regarding the following statement: Compared to other alternatives, the NIVA training is an important venue for disseminating my research.**

**(State one answer only)**

Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**6. Has NIVA's training contributed to the national research community in your field?**

**(State one answer only)**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Please give an example or describe how your research community was affected in practice.**

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**7. What were the strengths of the NIVA training you have participated in or organized?**

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**Future design and improvement**

**8. How can the NIVA training be improved?**

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**9. During your course participation, were there topic(s) you wished there was additional or follow-up training on?**

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**10. Why did you choose to attend NIVA training?**

**(Multiple answers allowed)**

- The course theme suited my needs best
- The course's academic level/quality
- Networking opportunities
- It was a request of my employer

Other

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**11. Do you perceive yourself as part of the main target group of NIVA's training?**

**(State one answer only)**

Yes

No

I don't know

**Comments**

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**12. What alternatives to the NIVA training you have participated in, organized by other actors than NIVA, do you know of?**

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**13. Would you recommend the NIVA training you attended, or other training by NIVA?**  
**(State one answer only)**

Definitely not recommend	Unlikely to recommend	Recommend with reservations	Likely to recommend	Recommend with enthusiasm
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**General information**

**14. What is your age?**  
**(State one answer only)**

24 years or younger	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75-84 years	85 or older
<input type="checkbox"/>							

**15. Select your sex.**  
**(State one answer only)**

Male	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**16. Select your nationality.**  
**(State one answer only)**

Icelandic	Norwegian	Danish	Finnish	Swedish	Russian	Estonian	Latvian	Lithuanian	Other EU-country	Other country
<input type="checkbox"/>										

**17. Do you have any comments and/or additional remarks?**

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-----  
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**You're done!**

Thank you for taking the time and effort to respond to this survey. To submit your response, please click the next-button.

For question about this survey or about the evaluation please contact [jan.persson@oxfordresearch.se](mailto:jan.persson@oxfordresearch.se).

## Appendix 2. Interview guides

### Interview guide – CSO Labour

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#### The respondent

- What is your background and what organisation do you represent?

#### Introduction

Introduction to the evaluation

- Short information about the aim of the evaluation and the different phases of the evaluation

#### Impressions of NIVA

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- What is your role in ÄK-A, with regards to NIVA?
- Do the activities carried out by NIVA adhere to your expectations? Why or why not?
- How has your overall impression of NIVA changed during your time in ÄK-A?

#### NIVA's role and added value

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- What do you consider NIVA's role to be in the field of occupational health and safety in the Nordic countries?
- Do you consider that the role of NIVA has changed in the last couple of years?
- Does NIVA's role overlap with any other activities carried out in the Nordic countries?
- In what way can NIVA stimulate cross-border knowledge sharing within the field of occupational health and safety?
- What other means of knowledge sharing are there between the Nordic countries in the field of occupational health and safety?
- What are the primary advantages of working across the Nordic countries?
- What kind of Nordic added value does NIVA give compared to other national courses within the field of occupational health and safety?
- What kind of Nordic added value created by NIVA is particularly relevant in your country?

#### NIVA's organisation

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- To what extent do the organisation of NIVA (including money, management and organisation) contribute to NIVA's fulfilment of the contract between NIVA and the NCM?
- Are any of the expectations from NCM that are difficult for NIVA to fulfil? Why?
- What are the main barriers and success factors of the organisation of NIVA?

- What organisational changes would you carry out in the event of a minimized budget for NIVA? In terms of:
  - Organisation?
  - Number and types of courses?
  - Target groups?
  - Financing the courses?

## **NIVA's future**

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- How could NIVA improve its ability to meet:
  - Expectations from NCM?
- What is NIVA's future role in the Nordic field of occupational health and safety?

## Interview guide – Board

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### The respondent

- What is your background and what organisation do you represent?

### Introduction

#### Introduction to the evaluation

- Short information about the aim of the evaluation and the different phases of the evaluation

### Impressions of NIVA

---

- What is your role in NIVA's Board?
- Do the activities carried out by NIVA adhere to your expectations? Why or why not?
- How has your overall impression of NIVA changed during your time on the Board?

### NIVA's role and added value

---

- What do you consider NIVA's role to be in the field of occupational health and safety in the Nordic countries?
- Do you consider that the role of NIVA has changed in the last couple of years?
- Does NIVA's role overlap with any other activities carried out in the Nordic countries?
- In what way can NIVA stimulate cross-border knowledge sharing within the field of occupational health and safety?
- What other means of knowledge sharing are there between the Nordic countries in the field of occupational health and safety?
- What are the primary advantages of working across the Nordic countries?
- What kind of Nordic added value does NIVA give compared to other national courses within the field of occupational health and safety?
- What kind of Nordic added value created by NIVA is particularly relevant in your country?

### NIVA's courses

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- How do you assess the quality of the courses provided by NIVA? How do you assess the academic level of the courses?
  - In comparison to other courses?
- Are the courses relevant in a Nordic the field of occupational health and safety?
- Are there any Nordic or national target groups that are not yet met by NIVA's courses?

## **NIVA's organisation**

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- To what extent do the organisation of NIVA (including money, management and organisation) contribute to NIVA's fulfilment of the contract between NIVA and the NCM and the Board's annual plans?
- Are any of the expectations from NCM or the Board that are difficult for NIVA to fulfil? Why?
- What are the main barriers and success factors of the organisation of NIVA?
- What organisational changes would you carry out in the event of a minimized budget for NIVA? In terms of:
  - Organisation?
  - Number and types of courses?
  - Target groups?
  - Financing the courses?

## **NIVA's future**

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- How could NIVA improve its ability to meet:
  - Expectations from NCM and the Board's annual plans?
- What is NIVA's future role in the Nordic field of occupational health and safety?

## Interview guide – Expert group

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### The respondent

Background?

Relationship to NIVA?

### Introduction

Introduction to the evaluation

- Short information about the aim of the evaluation and the different phases of the evaluation

### Experiences of NIVA

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- Have you been in contact with NIVA?
  - How? (through courses etc.)
  - Why? (reason for taking a part in NIVA's activities)
- What was your overall impression of the contact with NIVA?

### NIVA's role and added value

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- What do you consider NIVA's role to be in the field of occupational health and safety in the Nordic countries?
- Do you consider that the role of NIVA has changed in the last couple of years?
- What kind of Nordic added value does NIVA give compared to other national courses within the field of occupational health and safety?
- In what way can NIVA stimulate cross-border knowledge sharing within the field of occupational health and safety?
- What other means of knowledge sharing are there between the Nordic countries in the field of occupational health and safety?
- Does NIVA have an impact on your day to day-work? In what way?

### NIVA's courses

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- What do you know about the courses that NIVA offer?
- How do you assess the quality of the courses provided by NIVA?
- Are the courses relevant in a Nordic the field of occupational health and safety?

## **NIVA's future**

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- What educational needs exist within OSH in the Nordic countries?
- What role can NIVA play in relationship to these needs?
- What is NIVA's future role in the Nordic field of occupational health and safety?

## Interview guide – National actors within OSH

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### The respondent

- What is your background and what organisation do you represent?

### Introduction

#### Introduction to the evaluation

- Short information about the aim of the evaluation and the different phases of the evaluation.

### Experiences of NIVA

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- Have you been in contact with NIVA?
  - How? (through courses etc.)
  - Why? (reason for taking a part in NIVA's activities)
- What was your overall impression of the contact with NIVA?

### NIVA's role and added value

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- What do you consider NIVA's role to be in the field of occupational health and safety in the Nordic countries?
- Do you consider that the role of NIVA has changed in the last five years?
- Does NIVA's role overlap with any other activities carried out in the Nordic countries?
- In what way can NIVA stimulate cross-border knowledge sharing within the field of occupational health and safety?
- What other means of knowledge sharing are there between the Nordic countries in the field of occupational health and safety?
- What are the primary advantages of working across the Nordic countries?
- What kind of Nordic added value does NIVA give compared to national courses within the field of occupational health and safety?
- Does NIVA have an impact on your day-to-day work? In what way?

### NIVA's courses

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- What do you know about the courses that NIVA offer?
- How do you assess the quality of the courses provided by NIVA?
- Are the courses relevant in a Nordic the field of occupational health and safety?

## **NIVA's future**

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- What is NIVA's future role in the Nordic field of occupational health and safety?

## Interview guide –Director

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### The respondent

Background?

Relationship to NIVA?

### Introduction

Introduction to the evaluation

- Short information about the aim of the evaluation and the different phases

### NIVA's role and added value

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- What do you consider NIVA's role to be in the field of occupational health and safety in the Nordic countries?
- Do you consider that the role of NIVA has changed in the last five years?
- Does NIVA's role overlap with any other activities carried out in the Nordic countries?
- In what way can NIVA stimulate cross-border knowledge sharing within the field of occupational health and safety?
- What other means of knowledge sharing are there between the Nordic countries in the field of occupational health and safety?
- What are the primary advantages of working across the Nordic countries?
- What kind of Nordic added value does NIVA give compared to national courses within the field of occupational health and safety?

### NIVA's courses

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- How are the courses generated? Who decides the topics?
- How do you guarantee that the courses are relevant in a Nordic the field of occupational health and safety?
- How do you assess the quality of the courses?
- Who is the target group for the courses?
- How are the courses marketed? How does one get information about the courses?

### NIVA's scholarships and international outreach

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- How is the work with offering stipends for other nationalities than Nordic organised?

- What does the international presence at the courses mean for their;
  - Content?
  - Organisation?
  - Quality?
  - Relevance for Nordic participants?
  - New or expanded networks?
  
- How is the cooperation with Eurofound and the European Agency for OSH organized?
  
- How can NIVA create Nordic added value through cooperation with other organizations?

### **NIVA's organisation**

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- To what extent do the organisation of NIVA (including money, management and organisation) contribute to NIVA's fulfilment of the contract between NIVA and the NCM and the Board's annual plans?
  
- Are any of the expectations from NCMS or the Board that are difficult for NIVA to fulfil? Why?
  
- What are the main barriers and success factors of the organisation of NIVA?
  
- What organisational changes would you carry out in the event of a minimized budget for NIVA? In terms of:
  - Organisation?
  - Number and types of courses?
  - Target groups?
  - Financing the courses?

### **NIVA's goals**

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- How are the goals of NIVA's activities set?
  
- What priorities determine the goals of NIVA?
  - How are the goals of number of course participants determined?

### **NIVA's resources**

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- Are NIVA's resources sufficient to carry out the goals set in the contract between NIVA and NCM?
  
- If so, what additional resources are needed to reach the goals of NIVA?

### **NIVA's future**

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- How could NIVA be reorganised in order to improve its ability to meet:
  - Expectations from NCMS and the Board's annual plans?
  - Changes in demand proven by increasing competition by other courses?
  
- What is NIVA's future role in the Nordic field of occupational health and safety?

## Appendix 3. Categorisation of courses

The categorization of the courses is based on the focus areas which are listed on the NIVA webpage. The overarching themes have subsequently been checked and approved by the director of NIVA. The organisation of the focus areas into themes is laid out in the table below.

Categorization of topics	
Theme	Focus areas
<b>Environment and surroundings</b>	Monitoring of workplace air; Occupational toxicology; Radiation
<b>Work Place Design</b>	Ergonomics; Participatory approaches to workplace design; Workplace absenteeism/sick leaves/early retirement
<b>Medical diseases and disorders</b>	Cardiovascular diseases; Neurology; Musculoskeletal disorders; Occupational medicine; Dermatology; Epidemiology; Respiration
<b>Psychosocial aspects of work</b>	Psychosocial aspects of work; Combining work and family/gender issues; Ethical issues; Ethnicity/diversity; Ageing and work; Violence, bullying and harassment at work
<b>Risk assessment</b>	Quality standards; Safety research; Risk assessment



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