



National Research Centre
for the Working Environment

Strategy

2025-2028





Framework for the Strategy

Denmark faces significant challenges, including geopolitical, technological, demographic, and structural issues (e.g. labor shortages). Additionally, there is the green transition. Sustaining growth and welfare in the future will require a sustainable labor market with a sufficient workforce equipped with the necessary skills.

This is addressed in the Ministry of Employment's strategic joint goal: As many people as possible in jobs within a sustainable labor market.

Research demonstrates that work impacts employees' health and safety both positively and negatively. Currently, Denmark lacks comprehensive economic estimates for the costs of workrelated accidents and health issues. Estimates from EU OSHA indicate a total annual cost of 3.3 percent of GDP across the European Union.

Following the Danish 2019 labor environment agreement, a tripartite agreement was established in December 2020 to set new national goals for the working environment efforts.

The national goals are further specified with industry-specific targets in selected industries. The 2023 labor environment agreement also emphasises the importance of preventing accidents, illnesses, and attrition.

The National Research Centre for the Working Environment (NFA) contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (3 and 8), the political objectives of the tripartite agreement, the Ministry of Employment's goals, and supports the national strategy for labor environment research.

The national goals are:

- Strong safety culture in workplaces – fewer individuals should be exposed to workplace accidents.
- Safe and healthy work with chemicals – fewer individuals should be exposed to hazardous chemicals in the workplace.
- Safe and healthy ergonomic working environments – fewer individuals should experience significant physical strain.
- Safe and healthy psychosocial working environments – fewer individuals should face significant psychosocial stressors.

The strategy process also involved extensive consultation with NFA's key stakeholders regarding expectations for NFA's research and dissemination. There exists strong support for the strategic direction during the previous strategy period.

Therefore, NFA maintains the strategic direction outlined in the 2021-2024 strategy. However, the balance within the research portfolio is further

adjusted, with a larger proportion of intervention, implementation, and economic research compared to epidemiological research. Similarly, there is support for continuing the strategic focus on NFA's dissemination efforts.

In 2024, international evaluations of NFA's scientific and societal impact were conducted. The evaluations concluded that NFA's research is of very high to excellent quality, and its strategy for societal impact is remarkably well thoughtful and executed.

Maintaining high international research quality remains crucial for NFA's credibility and societal impact. This necessitates ongoing collaboration with leading international research environments.

NFA's research must balance various considerations, such as focus on knowledge generation

versus productivity, quantity versus quality in publications, and academic versus societal impact. Additionally, there must be a balance between compliant public administration (e.g., GDPR, information security, financial management) and innovation and core task execution. These balances require continuous organisational prioritisation in response to changing framework conditions. The strategy's objectives reflect a current stocktaking of these considerations.

Overall Purpose

NFA's institutional strategy can be summarised as a **mission** that addresses challenges

This mission translates into several contributions – **effects** – towards which NFA's research is directed.

Mission

NFA contributes to a healthy and safe working environment through research, dissemination, education, and scientific advice.



Societal Effects

NFA's research must identify and explore current and future challenges and opportunities in the labor environment, contributing to the prevention and management of labor environment challenges through research-informed solutions. Thus, NFA's research should:

- Support the achievement of national working environment goals.
- Contribute to the realisation of the national working environment research strategy.
- Create societal impact in policy and practice.
- Generate knowledge about a healthy and safe workforce.

These contributions are a direct continuation of the previous strategy period.



A Strategy with Four **Overall** Objectives

The strategic objectives for the upcoming strategy period build upon the previous strategy.

However, one aspect is emphasised more strongly in the new strategy period: **Digitalisation**.

The technological development has intensified, influencing both *how* and *what* NFA researches.

Therefore, independent objectives regarding digitalisation have been developed.

The Overall and Specific Objectives are as Follows



1

More Innovative Research

NFA's research areas include chemical, microbiological, musculoskeletal, ergonomic, and psychosocial working environments, accidents and safety culture, and the economic consequences thereof.

NFA's research is already of high international quality. This position of strength must be maintained.

Additional focus will be on conducting more intervention, implementation, and economic research in the labor environment.

Furthermore, potential in interdisciplinary collaborations internally and externally and opportunities in new digital technologies must be exploited.

- a.** NFA's research must continue to be of the highest international quality.
- b.** The proportion of intervention research in NFA's research portfolio must increase annually.
- c.** Economic evaluation must be integrated into NFA's intervention projects as a rule.
- d.** The proportion of NFA's interdisciplinary research must increase annually.
- e.** NFA must achieve an international leadership position in research on digital technologies' impact on working life, including health and safety.



2

Greater Societal Impact

NFA must maintain its focus on researching factors that promote workforce health and safety through continuous dialogue with key stakeholders and potential strategic partnerships.

Research knowledge must be effectively disseminated through relevant (digital) channels with tailored content.

Societal impact must be documented using methods that position NFA as an internationally recognised leader in Knowledge Transfer and Exchange (KTE) research.

- a.** NFA's digital presence across platforms must increase.
- b.** Societal impact must grow by ten per cent.
- c.** NFA must develop its position as an internationally recognised thought leader in KTE research.
- d.** NFA must publish impact cases for all significant pathways.



3

Leverage Digital Potential

Digital technologies are rapidly transforming society, including workplaces.

New technologies will also change how we conduct research.

NFA must identify and utilise digital potentials across processes in both research and support functions.

Overall, this will significantly enhance and transform NFA's task execution.

- a.** NFA must be a digital frontrunner in labor environment research.
- b.** NFA must make all relevant data available for collaboration and research.
- c.** Ethically responsible AI solutions must optimise processes in both support functions and research.
- d.** All NFA employees must possess digital competencies.



4

Enhanced Organisational Resilience

Work at NFA should be characterised by job satisfaction, high professionalism, mutual respect, influence over one's work, and good management.

Focus on staff development must be strengthened and supported by an infrastructure that facilitates organisational learning.


Given funding developments and competition for research grants, a solid financial foundation enabling relevant high-quality international research must be ensured.


- a.** Overall job satisfaction must increase.
- b.** Organisational learning must be strengthened.
- c.** NFA must secure an average of DKK 65 million annually in external funding.
- d.** High-quality management practices must be further developed.

Appendix 1. Key Indicators for Objectives


A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a white lab coat, is leaning over a desk in a laboratory. She is looking through the eyepiece of a white and black microscope. Her left hand is resting on the desk. The background is a blurred laboratory environment with blue lighting.


For each objective, key indicators (Appendix 1) have been established to inform stakeholders about strategy implementation.

Overall Objective	Specific Objective	Key Indicators
 1 More Innovative Research	<p>Objective 1.a.</p> <p>NFA's research shall continue to be of the highest international quality.</p>	<p>The proportion of NFA's research published in selected top journals annually.</p> <p>The proportion of NFA's research in Q1 JCI journals annually.</p> <p>TBD (based on bibliometric work package).</p> <p>Specific Objective</p>
	<p>Objective 1.b.</p> <p>The proportion of intervention research in NFA's research portfolio shall increase annually.</p>	<p>The proportion of intervention projects in NFA's research portfolio annually.</p> <p>The percentage of funding allocated to intervention projects in NFA's research portfolio annually.</p>
	<p>Objective 1.c.</p> <p>Economic evaluation shall be integrated into NFA's intervention projects.</p>	<p>The proportion of intervention research projects incorporating economic research questions annually.</p> <p>The proportion of economist hours dedicated to intervention research projects annually.</p> <p>The number of economist full-time equivalents employed for research annually.</p>
	<p>Objective 1.d.</p> <p>The proportion of NFA's research that is interdisciplinary shall increase annually.</p>	<p>The proportion of projects staffed across NFA's research areas annually.</p> <p>The proportion of projects with external staff from other disciplines annually.</p> <p>To be clarified.</p>
	<p>Objective 1.e.</p> <p>NFA shall hold an international leading position in research on the impact of digital technologies on working life, including health and safety.</p>	<p>NFA has initiated at least five strategic research projects on the impact of digital technologies during the strategy period.</p> <p>The number of research full-time equivalents dedicated to projects concerning digital technologies annually.</p>

Overall Objective	Specific Objective	Key Indicators
 <p>Greater Societal Impact</p>	<p>Objective 2.a.</p> <p>NFA shall enhance its digital presence across digital platforms.</p>	<p>To be clarified.</p>
	<p>Objective 2.b.</p> <p>NFA's societal impact shall increase by 10%.</p>	<p>Annual index score on SII:OHSR* – NFA overall. Annual index score on SII:OHSR* – per research area.</p>
	<p>Objective 2.c.</p> <p>NFA shall develop its position as a recognised international thought leader in KTE research.</p>	<p>The number of published peer-reviewed articles on KTE annually.</p> <p>The number of published peer-reviewed articles on KTE in selected top journals annually.</p>
	<p>Objective 2.d.</p> <p>NFA shall publish impact cases for all significant pathways of influence.</p>	<p>The number of impact cases published during the strategy period.</p> <p>The number of impact cases published per pathway of influence during the strategy period.</p>

* SII:OHSR: The Societal Impact Instrument for Occupational Health and Safety Research

Overall Objective	Specific Objective	Key Indicators
 <p>Leverage Digital Potential</p>	<p>Objective 3.a.</p> <p>NFA shall be a digital frontrunner in occupational health research.</p>	<p>The proportion of research staff using AI solutions in the research process [specific measurement method to be established] annually.</p> <p>The number of research projects examining the consequences of digital technologies on occupational health annually.</p>
	<p>Objective 3.b.</p> <p>NFA shall make all relevant data available for collaboration and research.</p>	<p>The number of datasets displayed on NFA’s website (baseline: 21 datasets) during the strategy period.</p>
	<p>Objective 3.c.</p> <p>Ethically responsible AI solutions shall streamline and optimise processes in support functions and research.</p>	<p>The proportion of research staff using AI solutions in the research process [specific measurement method to be established] annually.</p> <p>The proportion of research staff reporting increased productivity through AI solutions in the research process [specific measurement method to be established] annually.</p> <p>The proportion of research staff reporting increased quality through AI solutions in the research process [specific measurement method to be established] annually.</p> <p>The proportion of support staff reporting increased productivity through AI solutions in task performance [specific measurement method to be established] annually.</p> <p>The proportion of support staff reporting increased quality through AI solutions in task performance [specific measurement method to be established] annually.</p>
	<p>Objective 3.d.</p> <p>All NFA employees shall have digital competencies.</p>	<p>Annual index score on digital competence measurement [specific measurement method to be established].</p>

Overall Objective	Specific Objective	Key Indicators
 <p data-bbox="181 510 384 607">Enhanced Organisational Resilience</p>	<p data-bbox="475 331 663 360">Objective 4.a.</p> <p data-bbox="475 389 847 450">Employee job satisfaction shall increase.</p>	<p data-bbox="943 331 1433 360">Overall job satisfaction score biannually.</p> <p data-bbox="943 389 1417 450">Collaboration with immediate manager score biannually.</p> <p data-bbox="943 479 1369 539">Collaboration with colleagues score biannually.</p>
	<p data-bbox="475 584 663 613">Objective 4.b.</p> <p data-bbox="475 642 858 703">Organisational learning shall be strengthened.</p>	<p data-bbox="943 584 1390 645">Annual index score on organisational learning instrument [to be clarified].</p>
	<p data-bbox="475 752 663 781">Objective 4.c.</p> <p data-bbox="475 810 847 871">NFA shall secure an average of 65 million DKK annually.</p>	<p data-bbox="943 752 1385 813">The amount of millions DKK secured from external sources annually.</p> <p data-bbox="943 842 1369 927">The proportion of secured funds distributed across external sources annually.</p>
	<p data-bbox="475 976 663 1005">Objective 4.d.</p> <p data-bbox="475 1034 847 1095">NFA shall further develop high-quality management practices.</p>	<p data-bbox="943 976 1401 1061">[The number of significant remarks in state audits]. To be clarified.</p>



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