



The Concept research programme

Front-end Management of Major Projects

- The Concept research programme develops knowledge to ensure efficient use of resources and enhance the benefits of major public investments. The attention is on project governance, and the projects' long term benefits as seen from the society's perspective. This calls for interdisciplinary research, where the social sciences merge with project management and engineering.
- We focus on the front-end phase, from the initial idea until the decision to implement is made. This is the period when the most essential decisions are made. There is also an urgency, since the possibility to make major changes decreases as projects enter into their engineering phase.
- A main activity is to do formative research on major public investments under the Norwegian Quality Assurance scheme, see text box. Large amounts of information are compiled from the projects to be used as the basis for empirical and theoretical research.
- The Concept research programme is located at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and co-operates with several research institutions both in Norway and abroad.
- The program is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Finance
- Results are openly available and published in a series of scientific reports, in addition to textbooks, working

papers, scientific papers in journals and conference proceedings, etc. We have developed curricula in several Masters and PhD level courses, and students are directly involved in the program in various ways.

- The projects that were subjected to external QA after the scheme was introduced year 2000, have now been

The Norwegian scheme for quality assurance of major public investments

Compulsive for land based public investment projects with an expected budget exceeding NOK 1 bill. (about EUR 100 million).

Front-end appraisal and decision documents to be prepared by the ministries according to a common format issued by the Ministry of Finance.

Documents to be reviewed by external Quality assurers pre-qualified by the Ministry of Finance.

Two decision gates:

- QA1- Quality assurance of the analyses of alternative conceptual solution. The Government will choose among the alternatives and decide whether or not to proceed to a pre-project phase
- QA2 - Quality assurance of the management base and cost estimates. The Parliament makes the final approval whether or not to implement, and set the budget for the project.

completed and are in their operational phase. These are evaluated *ex post* to ascertain their effects, societal relevance, and sustainability.

- Year 2019 a comprehensive review of research literature by the US based Project Management Institute demonstrated that the group of Concept researches are in the forefront internationally in terms of being quoted for their research and findings.
- The Concept International Symposium on Project Governance is held biannually. This is a forum for decision makers, project managers,

consultants and researchers at home and abroad for networking and exchange of experiences and ideas in this field. The Concept Symposium 2020 will be held in Oslo, and is entitled *The Investment Case – from Idea to Confirmed Outcome*

- Contacts:
 - Program director, professor Knut Samset, knut.samset@ntnu.no, tel. +47 900 84 811
 - Research director Gro Holst Volden, gro.holst.volden@ntnu.no, tel. +47 957 45 565