# Fresh start or old wine in new bottles?

Designing the next cycle of external quality assurance in Norwegian higher education

The Norwegian context for external quality assurance of higher education

- Focus on *periodic review with institutional quality assurance practices*

- Starting point for modern EQA in Norway: **Quality Reform 2003**
  - Enhance institutional autonomy ➜ different degree of self-accrediting rights
  - Responsibility for EQA transferred to public agency ➜ **NOKUT**

- Development of EQA in Norwegian HE: previous review cycles
  - **First cycle (2003–2011)**: establishment of internal QA systems at HEIs
  - **Second cycle (2009–2016)**: evaluation of QA systems
  - **Third cycle (2017–2024)**: emphasis on "quality work" and knowledge sharing

---
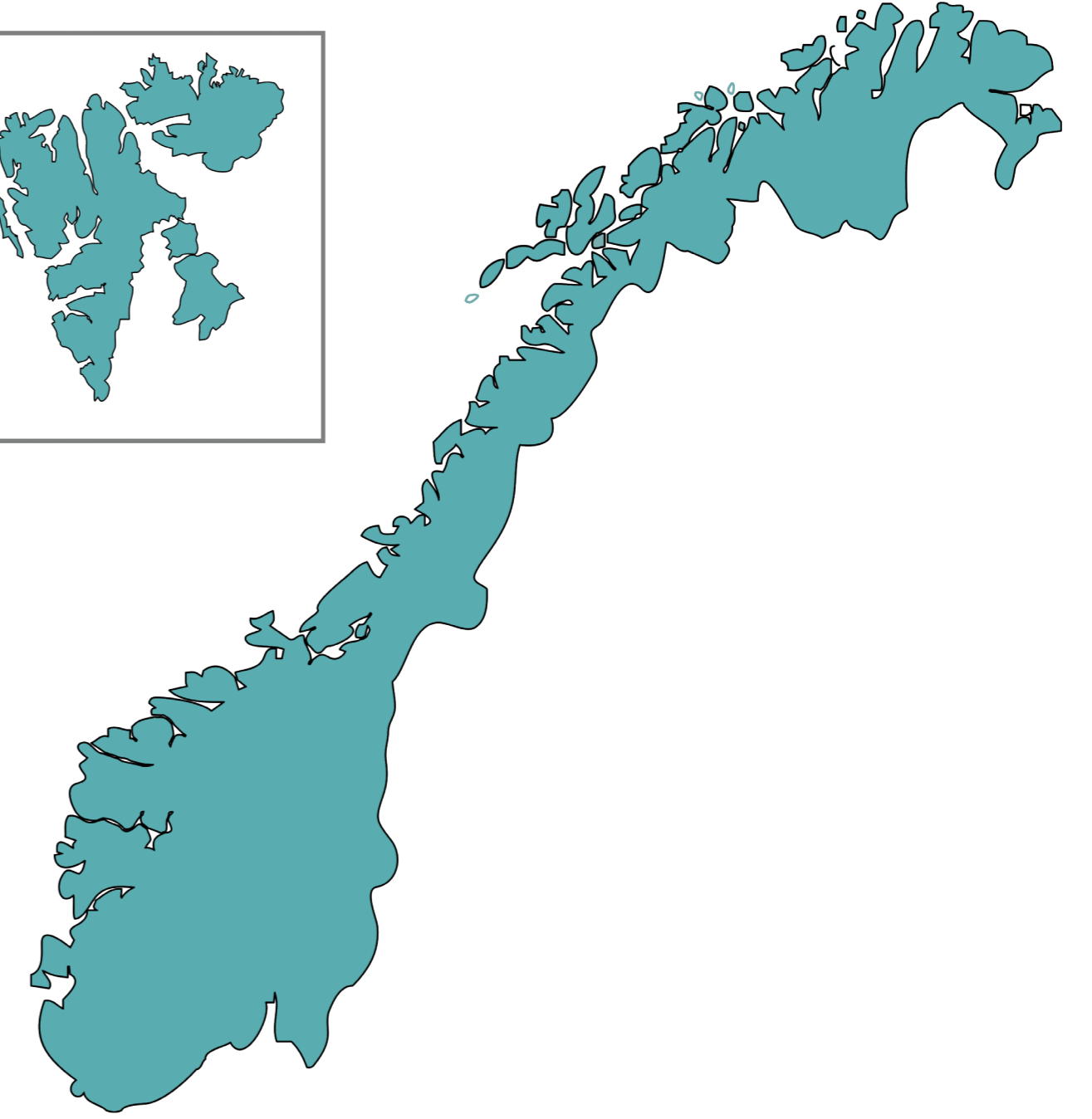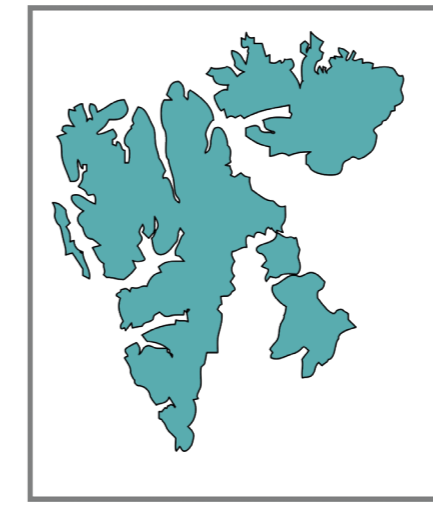
PROJECT 7: Testing methodological adjustments

Guiding principle: ESG 2.2 "Designing methodologies fit-for-purpose"
  - Inclusion of internal and external reference groups in project development

UiT Norges arktiske universitet   UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN   NTNU   UiO : Universitetet i Oslo

Reference groups

- Internal reference groups
- External/international reference group
- Institutional reference groups
- Meetings with relevant QA agencies

Main changes

1. Focus on more relevant and targeted documentation
2. Stronger focus on enhancement themes during site visit
3. Better knowledge sharing (before, during and after review)
4. Appointment of resource persons/observers

Designing Cycle 4

- **Project 7** as stepping-stone for the development of **Cycle 4**
- Basic considerations and challenges in developing next cycle of EQA:
  - Rethinking the way NOKUT's different QA instruments can be used jointly
  - Adjustments in regulatory framework
  - Different levels of maturity in the sector concerning QA
  - Different application of NOKUT's QA instruments / greater differentiation necessary in the future?

ENQA targeted review – enhancement area (ESG 2.2. ➜ P7)

- NOKUT: targeted review by ENQA in 2022
- Enhancement area: ESG 2.2
- Project 7 as key element in enhancement area

European/international dimension

- Stronger focus on differentiation of EQA in mature and complex HE systems?
- Counteract evaluation fatigue and reduce administrative burden?
- More emphasis on enhancement instead of mere compliance?

NOKUT