

SINTEF – an independent research foundation

[SINTEF](#) is an independent, non-profit research foundation aimed at contributing to the development of society through research. SINTEF's vision is "Technology for a better society."

Research ethics that ensure independence

The independence of research is a fundamental pillar of research ethics, protected through laws, regulations, and conventions. This includes, among other things, the Research Ethics Act, research ethical guidelines from the National Committees for Research Ethics, and The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, which SINTEF has adhered to. The Research Ethics Act and the general research ethical guidelines require both individual researchers and research institutions to ensure that all research is conducted in accordance with recognized research ethical norms. This includes the principle of impartiality.

In addition to the legally regulated frameworks, SINTEF has internal guidelines to ensure that SINTEF and its employees diligently seek to maintain neutrality, impartiality, and independence as far as possible, and act in accordance with research ethical norms. The regulations state that research is about developing new knowledge, which must be subject to critical assessment through peer review or systematic verification.

SINTEF is a self-owned foundation

SINTEF is a non-profit, self-owned research foundation without owners. No authorities, clients, or partners have the right to instruct SINTEF's decisions, nor do they have the opportunity to decide the results of our research.

No one can extract financial profit or inject capital into SINTEF. Financial surpluses are invested in knowledge, laboratories, scientific equipment, and other infrastructure for research and innovation.

Is contract research independent?

The same ethical rules apply to contract research as to other research, including the requirement for independence. This is regulated through the Research Ethics Act of 2017, which aims to ensure that research conducted in public and private sectors is in accordance with recognized research ethical norms.

SINTEF's relationship with clients has several dimensions, which can sometimes be conflicting. On one hand, we are dependent on the clients' assignments, and we work on their research issues. On the other hand, it is crucial for both SINTEF and the clients that SINTEF is objective and that our research results are based on professional knowledge and science. This creates a shared interest in ensuring that SINTEF is and is perceived as independent.

In contract research, it is often the case that issues, scope, finances, and publication are agreed upon between the client and researchers, while methods, data collection, and execution are determined by the researchers. SINTEF's ethical regulations state that clients cannot improperly influence research findings or results. In research for companies involving the development of new technology, patents, or other business-critical matters, confidentiality and protection of intellectual property rights are accepted and may be essential, and researchers have a duty of confidentiality regarding business relationships with clients. Research results are published based on the principle of "as open as possible, as closed as necessary."

Thousands of clients demanding objectivity and professional integrity

Independence is critically important for SINTEF's credibility as a provider of research. In 2024, SINTEF conducted research worth 4,4 billion Norwegian kroner in approximately 6,300 large and small projects for 3,300 clients. This involves research commissioned by all types of private and public clients with various interests. Integrity and objectivity are crucial in such contexts, equally important in commissioned projects as in all other research. For the clients, it is important that SINTEF is known for being independent.

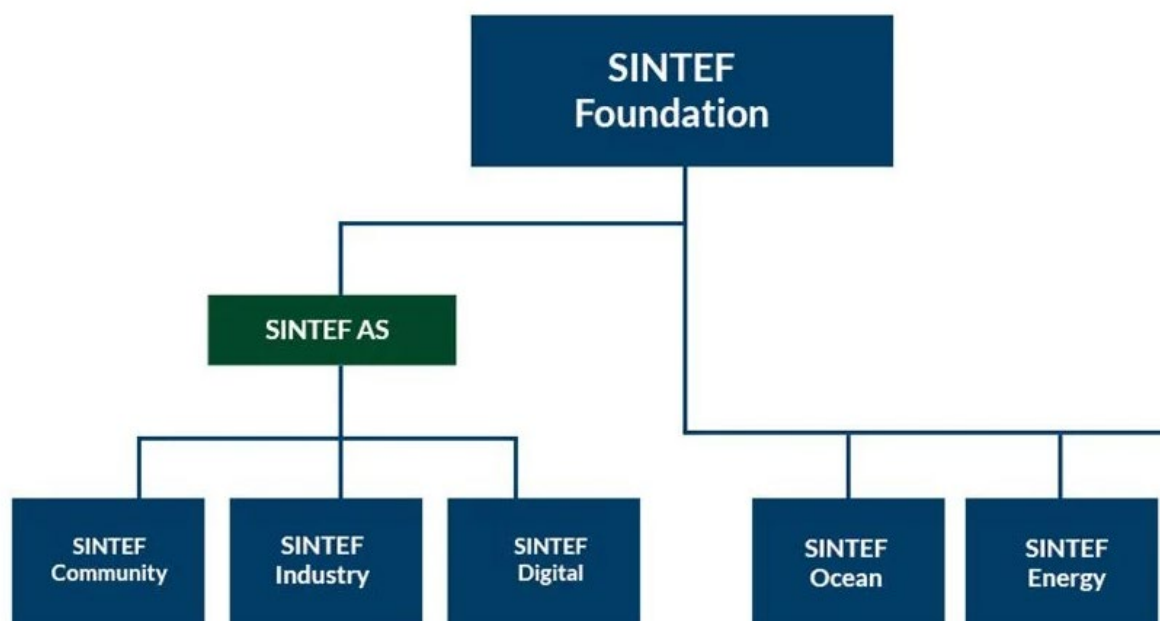
SINTEF has lower public funding than other research actors in Europe. Basic funding from the government constitutes about eight percent of gross revenue. Ninety-two percent of the income comes from projects for and with private and public actors. More than seventy percent of the project volume has co-funding from the Research Council of Norway or the EU. These are projects obtained through open competition.

SINTEF's organization

SINTEF is organized as a group, with five research institutes and several other subsidiaries. The SINTEF Foundation is the parent company and is the sole or majority owner of all research institutes.

Three of the five research institutes are 100 percent owned by the SINTEF Foundation (through the wholly owned subsidiary SINTEF AS). Three of the research institutes have external minority shareholders in addition to the SINTEF Foundation, which is the majority owner in all. The historical background for this is that several Norwegian research institutes were released from state control in the 1980s and merged into the SINTEF Foundation with various user organizations as minority owners. Today, these organizations contribute knowledge about the technological challenges of industries, thus enhancing the relevance of SINTEF's research activities.

A group model has been established with articles of association, shareholder agreements, and group agreements that provide guidelines for common goals and strategies within the SINTEF Foundation and support its purpose, independence, and prohibition on profit distribution. This means that the requirement for independence applies equally to all research institutes and all research within SINTEF.



Research institutes in SINTEF:

[SINTEF Industry](#) offers high expertise in materials technology, manufacturing, biotechnology, applied geoscience, applied chemistry, and biology. Laboratories in Trondheim, Raufoss and Oslo. 640 employees. Owned 100% by the SINTEF Foundation.

[SINTEF Digital](#) conducts research related to digital transformation, cybersecurity, applied mathematics, communication technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, technology management, and health. Laboratories in Oslo and Trondheim. 460 employees. Owned 100% by the SINTEF Foundation.

[SINTEF Community](#) is a research institute for sustainable development of buildings, infrastructure, and mobility, conducting research and development, research-based consultancy, certification, and knowledge dissemination. Specialized expertise and laboratories in Trondheim and Oslo. 300 employees. Owned 100% by the SINTEF Foundation.

[SINTEF Energy Research](#) conducts applied research that creates innovative energy solutions. Research and laboratories in Trondheim related to energy systems, renewable energy, electrical power technology, gas technology, and thermal energy. 310 employees. Owners: The SINTEF Foundation (61%), Renewables Norway (33%), The Federation of Norwegian Industries (6%).

[SINTEF Ocean](#) conducts research and innovation related to the ocean space for Norwegian and international industry. The ambition is to maintain Norway's leading position in marine technology and biomarine research. 400 employees, advanced laboratories in Trondheim. Owners: The SINTEF Foundation (71.6%), The Norwegian Shipowners' Association (16.2%), DNV (5.4%), The Federation of Norwegian Industries (2.7%), The Norwegian Maritime Authority (2.7%), The Norwegian Fishermen's Association (0.8%), NHO Shipping (0.5%).

The board of the SINTEF Foundation serves as the group board and the board for SINTEF AS. The other three research limited companies have their own boards.

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