



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Hiring a CGI Studio in Norway

Why light is the hardest part of a Norwegian render, how a facade shows its energy standard, and the per-image light brief that stops a studio lighting Oslo like Marseille.



START HERE

Light is the whole problem

Everything else about commissioning here is ordinary. The light is not. A Norwegian viewer looks at an exterior for two seconds and knows it was lit by somebody who has never stood in the place — and will usually not be able to tell you why. The image is not wrong in any single detail. It is wrong in its sun.

THE CONDITION	WHAT IT DOES TO AN IMAGE	WHAT STUDIOS DO INSTEAD
A sun that stays low	Raking light across facades, shadows many times longer than the things casting them, the sun often in or near the frame.	Default to a high, convenient sun, because it is the easiest light to work with. The building then reads as being somewhere much further south.
A very long blue hour	An extended period, not a five-minute window, where the sky is deep and even and the building is carried by its own interior light.	Treat dusk as a quick filter over a daylight render, rather than as the working condition it is for months of the year.
Summer nights that never darken	A June evening image is not dark, and the sky keeps colour all the way round.	Sell a midsummer scheme against a black sky with a moon in it.
A great deal of overcast	Flat white sky, no shadow, materials showing their real colour, everything soft.	Give every image in the package the same unbroken blue sky, which makes the whole set feel bought rather than made.
Snow with low sun	Light bounces up off the ground into soffits, eaves and window heads. The underside of things is lit.	Model snow as a flat white carpet with no drift, no melt line and no bounce.

The instruction that fixes most of it

Give a **date and a time** for every image, not a mood word. “Warm and inviting” is how you get a Mediterranean noon. “14 February, 13:30” is a sun position, and a sun position is something a studio can be held to and you can check.



Maverick Frame production render.

STEP 01

The facade shows its energy standard

Norwegian building envelopes are thick. That is not an abstract fact about performance — it is visible. Walls are deep, reveals are deep, the glass sits well back in the opening and there is usually a third pane. In low raking light, the shadow thrown by a deep reveal is most of what gives the elevation its relief.

A studio that models the wall as a thin plane and pushes the glass to the outer face produces an elevation that is flat, slightly papery, and wrong in a way nobody on your side will name in the comment round. They will just keep asking for more contrast.

01 Send the wall build-up, not only the elevations

Wall thickness at each condition, and where the glazing sits within the opening. One line in an email, and the single biggest improvement you can make to a Norwegian exterior render.

02 Treat reveal depth as a shadow, not a detail

At low sun the reveal is the strongest line on the facade. Ask to see a close crop of one window head and jamb on the first frame.

03 Triple glazing does not look like a shop window

More internal reflection, more layering, a slight shift in the transmitted colour. Glass modelled as a single sheet reads as too clear and too clean.

04 Eaves, soffits and overhangs are lit from below

They shelter the facade and carry snow, and with snow on the ground their undersides catch bounce. If they are modelled as a zero-thickness edge it shows immediately.

05 Say what happens to the cladding

Untreated timber silvers unevenly and does it faster on the weather side. Stained or painted timber does not. Decide which, and at what age the image is set.

06 Cladding joints are geometry

Board rhythm, ventilation gaps and the shadow line between boards. Painted onto a texture, they collapse the moment anybody looks at a crop.

Nothing here is a statement about what any regulation requires. Performance standards are a question for **your architect and your own adviser**. What a rendering studio needs is narrower and entirely factual: the built thickness from your own sections, and the position of the glass in the opening.

STEP 02

The light brief, written per image

Fill this in once for each view and attach it to the shot list. It takes ten minutes and it removes the entire class of problem on page 02, before anyone has rendered anything.

IMAGE ____ of ____ VIEW _____

DATE ____ / ____ TIME ____ : ____ (local)
 SUN low and raking / mid / none, overcast
 SKY clear / broken / flat overcast / blue hour
 GROUND dry / wet / snow, depth ____ / slush
 SNOW ON roofs ____ eaves ____ ground ____ cleared paths ____
 CARRIED BY the sun, from outside / the windows, from inside
 INTERIORS lights on? ____ which rooms are visible? _____
 PEOPLE dressed for roughly ____ degrees
 PURPOSE one line, what this image is for: _____

Lit from inside is a real category

For a long stretch of the year the building is a lantern: warm interior against a deep blue exterior, and it is the most recognisably Norwegian image there is. It is also the most demanding one to produce, because every room visible through glass has to be genuinely furnished and genuinely lit. Ask whether that is in the scope or whether you are getting curtains drawn across the problem.

Buy one test frame first

One view, rendered at the date and time you stated, before the rest of the package is produced. Changing the sun on one frame is a conversation. Changing it after eight views are finished is the whole set again.

This form specifies **content**, not schedule. It says what is in the picture and when it is set, and it makes no promise about how long any of it takes — that is a separate conversation and belongs in the contract, not here.

STEP 03

Local cost, and going outside Norway

Studio rates here reflect Norwegian salaries and Norwegian overheads. Commissioning abroad is common, reasonable, and frequently the right answer. It is a trade rather than a discount, and what you give up is predictable enough to cover.

What you still get

Modelling, materials, lighting and post are not local skills. A good studio anywhere can build your building correctly from your drawings and make a beautiful image of it.

What you now have to supply

Light literacy and site knowledge. Nobody abroad has stood on your plot in February, and nobody will drive out to photograph it. Both gaps are yours to close, in writing, before work starts.

Ten checks before you brief a studio outside Norway

- ☐ Ask to see work set at a high latitude — and ask what date it was lit for
- ☐ Ask for one blue-hour or lit-from-inside image in their portfolio
- ☐ Send the wall build-up and a section with the plans, not just elevations
- ☐ Confirm the north point and sun direction on the first test frame
- ☐ Snow treatment agreed per image, in writing, not per project
- ☐ Who photographs the site, in what season, to what written specification
- ☐ Their holiday and shutdown dates, checked against your programme
- ☐ Currency, and who carries exchange movement
- ☐ Tax treatment on a service bought abroad — put to your own accountant
- ☐ Who holds the model afterwards, in which formats, under what licence

If you only do one of them

Ask each shortlisted studio to show you one northern image and tell you the date and time it represents. A studio that can answer has lit it deliberately. A studio that cannot has lit it by eye, and lighting by eye is precisely the failure this guide is about.

WORKING WITH A STUDIO

Cost, and how to brief it

Two things people ask us before anything else. Both answers are short.

COMMISSIONED WORK	FREELANCER	STUDIO
Single exterior still	\$100 – 300	\$250 – 600
Single interior still	\$120 – 350	\$300 – 700
Package, 5–8 views	\$600 – 1,500	\$1,500 – 4,000
Animation, per minute	\$1,000 – 3,000	\$3,000 – 8,000

Market ranges we are willing to publish. Turnaround and revision-round figures are deliberately not in this table: ours vary too much by project type to state as a benchmark, and an invented number here would be worse than none.

How to brief it — shorter is better

This is the opposite of what most people assume. Four things:

- What you need — **how many images, and of what**
- The plans and elevations, as they are
- A few reference images for mood and light
- One clear line on what the images are *for*

Inflating a small job into a fifty-page specification backfires: taken literally it comes out ugly, and it misleads the people doing the work. Tell them the intent and let the team that does this daily handle the detail.

The mistake that costs the most

The biggest failure we see is not choosing the wrong vendor. It is **timing**. People start looking only after the first supplier has already failed and the deadline is on fire, then choose in a panic.

Line up and vet rendering partners **before** you need one. One, ideally a few, briefed and ready to take work. It costs an afternoon now and saves a project later.

10+

YEARS RENDERING
VISUAL STORYTELLING

350+

BRANDS & AGENCIES
EMPOWERED GLOBALLY

95%

CLIENT
SATISFACTION RATE

40%+

OF OUR COMMISSIONS NOW
INCLUDE MOTION OR 360

When the image has to hold up, **talk to us**

We are a CGI studio: architectural and product rendering, 3D modelling, animation, 360 tours and VR. Ten years, 350+ brands and agencies, and the kind of work that still looks right when somebody counts the windows.

Send us the plans and a line on what the images are for. You get a scope and a price, and no obligation to use either.

START HERE

maverickframe.com/contacts

SEE THE WORK

maverickframe.com/gallery

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Maverick Frame production render. · Cost ranges are market ranges as of 2026 and are not a quotation.