

UTFORSK Partnership Programme



Call for applications 2017 Four-year project funding

1 INVITATION

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) is pleased to issue this call for applications for funding of joint projects between higher education institutions in Norway and Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia and South Africa under the *UTFORSK Partnership Programme*.

The **overall aim** of the programme is to enhance long-term cooperation in higher education with the countries encompassed by the Norwegian government's *Panorama* strategy. The programme will support academic partnerships based on the mutual, strategic interests of the partner institutions. The programme also aims to enhance the quality of international cooperation in education by encouraging integration with research cooperation and involvement of non-academic partners.

Applicants are encouraged to engage in cross-disciplinary and/or multi-institutional collaboration in order to enhance the quality of the partnership.

The programme is funded by the Ministry of Education and Research and is administered by SIU.

The call is open to **four-year project cooperation** with a project period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2021. The final deadline for submitting applications is **31 May 2017, at 15:00 Norwegian time**. The applications should be prepared jointly by the applicant institution in Norway and the partner institution(s).

The total funds made available in this call are 30 million Norwegian kroner (NOK).

Below you will find more information on the objectives and funding framework of the programme, eligibility requirements and selection criteria, and an outline of the administrative process of project selection under the programme.

2 OBJECTIVES AND FUNDING FRAMEWORK OF THE CALL

2.1 Objectives

The programme shall lead to establishment and strengthening of partnerships between higher education institutions in Norway and the partner countries, through:

- development and implementation of joint educational activities;
- increased mobility of students between Norway and the partner countries, including mobility in connection with internships/work placements;
- increased integration of higher education and research in the collaboration between Norway and the partner countries;
- increased involvement of non-academic partners (industry, companies, organisations, etc.) in relevant project activities.

2.2 Project funding and activities

Each project may be awarded up to NOK 2 million. SIU may reduce the amount awarded based on an assessment of the merits of the individual applications.

The project budget included in the application form shall only include funds applied for through this call.

Activities may include all levels of higher education (Bachelor, Master and PhD), all fields of education, and involve multiple fields and disciplines.

The project may include funds for salaries and indirect expenses (including administration and overhead), limited to 20 per cent of the total allocation. The funds may be shared between the partner institutions.

Please note that investment in scientific equipment and infrastructure is not an eligible cost and may not be included in the application. The same applies to costs related to research activities *not clearly linked to* educational activities.

For more information on eligible project activities, please see the attached “Guidelines for applicants”.

2.3 Expected project results

SIU will monitor project results and the degree to which project activities contribute to fulfil the project goals and the programme objectives. Applicants are requested to describe the expected results of the project as specifically as possible, including the number of mobile students and new courses and degree programmes that will be developed.

3 ELIGIBILITY REQUIRMENTS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

3.1 Who may apply?

- Applications must be submitted by the main partner institution in Norway.
- The Norwegian institution must apply together with one main partner institution from the eligible partner countries: Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia and South Africa.
- Applications may also involve other institutions in Norway and the partner countries as network partners. Research institutes and non-governmental organizations, public agencies or public and private enterprises in Norway or in the partner countries may also be involved as network partners.

3.2 Formal eligibility requirements

In order to be eligible, applications must meet the following requirements:

- **The main partner institution in Norway** must be an accredited Norwegian higher education institution, or an institution with accredited higher education programmes.
- **The main partner institution outside Norway** must be an accredited higher education institution, public or private, in Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia or South Africa, providing accredited education programmes that are relevant to the proposal and at a level equivalent to that offered at the Norwegian applicant institution.
- **Applications** must include a **Letter of commitment** from the main partner institution outside Norway, documenting interest in and commitment to the partnership by leadership at relevant level.
- **Applications** must be written in English and be submitted fully completed, **including attachments**, through SIU's online platform for applications and reporting ([Espresso](#)) within the call's final deadline. Non-required attachments will not be taken into consideration.
- **The project activities** described in the application must be implemented within the project period.

Please note that failure to meet the above requirements will lead to dismissal of the application.

3.3 Selection criteria

The eligible applications' relative strength will be assessed on the degree to which they are deemed able to meet the following selection criteria:

- The project's relevance to the objectives of the programme.
- The quality of the project design, hereunder the application's overall clarity and quality, correspondence between proposed activities and budget allocations, demonstration of cost-effectiveness, the sustainability of the project results, and the project's feasibility.
- The quality of the partnership, hereunder the project team and the cooperation arrangements, history of cooperation, the partners' complementarity, experience and expertise, the project's level of formalised commitment, relevance to the institutions' strategic priorities, and the potential for long-term collaboration between the partner institutions.
- If relevant, the level and quality of involvement from non-academic partners (industry, companies, organisations, etc.), hereunder their contribution to the project activities and the value they add to and gain from the collaboration.

SIU presumes that all projects adhere to a high ethical standard in research and higher education. SIU emphasises the importance of gender equality, inclusive practices and anti-corruption measures in all project activities.

Please note that these criteria correspond to various compulsory fields in the online Espresso application form, and that the application's ability to meet these relative criteria will be assessed on the basis of the description provided. In order to ensure coherence and a logical order in the description of your project, please read the relevant help texts in the online application form as well as the "Guidelines for applicants" carefully. Remaining questions may be directed to SIU.

4 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

4.1 Assessment of applications and response to applicants

Each application will be assessed by a panel of reviewers from SIU and at least one external evaluator on the basis of its individual merits with regard to the selection criteria set out above (item 3.3), and its relative standing to other competing project applications. Applications will be

evaluated on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). SIU uses the evaluators' assessment as a basis on which to recommend grant allocation.

The applications and recommendations are submitted to a programme board for grant allocation. The programme board allocates funds based on the selection criteria set out above. As part of the assessment, the programme board may take into consideration the geographic, academic and/or institutional distribution of the projects. New partnerships may be given priority.

In case the applicant has received a similar grant from SIU in recent years, the programme board may also take into consideration past performance, such as good quality in the implementation of the previous project(s) and sound financial management.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the application process, tentatively in November 2017.

4.2 Contracts and reporting obligations

The main partner institution in Norway will be required to enter into a contract with SIU. The contract will be subject to SIU's standard terms and conditions, and must be signed by a representative holding the requisite authority to legally bind the main partner institution in Norway. The obligations on part of the institution include a duty to submit progress reports, project accounts, and a final report upon completion of the project.

Until a binding contract has been entered into, SIU reserves the right to at any time revisit any evaluation and decision on the basis of newly discovered facts which may adversely affect the planned implementation of a project.

4.3 Contact information

For further information on UTFORSK or how to apply, please contact SIU by email (utforsk@siu.no) or by telephone (+47 55 30 38 00).

Attachment 1 – Budget guidelines

Project budgets will be assessed on basis of their cost-effectiveness and reasonableness. The official Norwegian travel regulations (*Statens reiseregulativ*) will be used as a starting point in SIU's assessment of the reasonableness of budgeted travel and accommodation costs. Where available, moderately priced alternatives for travel and accommodation must be chosen. Please explain the budgeted amounts as necessary in the *Comments* fields in the application.

Student mobility

The tables below describe eligible costs that may be included in project applications with regard to incoming/outgoing student mobility related to each of the eligible levels of education (Bachelor/Master/PhD).

Mobility up to 4 weeks

	Bachelor, Master and PhD
To/from Norway	Project applications may include accommodation and living costs for students related to the planned project activities (e.g. intensive courses, field work, workshops, supervision, research activities, excursions, work placements, etc.).

Mobility exceeding 4 weeks

	Bachelor/Master	PhD
To Norway	Project applications may include scholarships to cover accommodation and living costs for students up to the applicable rate set by the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund. In 2016/17 the monthly rate is NOK 10 395.	Project applications may include accommodation and living costs associated with the PhD students stay in Norway up to the applicable monthly rate set by the Norwegian Research Council («Overseas Research Grants») for individuals. In 2016/17 the rate is NOK 16 000. Additional grants for dependents are not given.

From Norway	Project applications may include scholarships to cover costs which are not covered by student funding attainable from the State Educational Loan Fund. Such extra costs are limited to NOK 6 000 per student per month . These rates also apply to international mobility for work placements.	Project applications may include specified cost items which are not covered by other external funding, up to the applicable monthly rate set by the Norwegian Research Council («Overseas Research Grants») for individuals. In 2016/17 the rate is NOK 16 000. Additional grants for dependents are not given.

The rates for student accommodation and living costs are based on rates and net amounts paid out to students from the State Educational Loan Fund (Bachelor/Master) and the Norwegian Research Council (PhD). The rates cover the individual student's costs, and additional funding for dependents/family members may not be included in the budget. As the relevant rates are adjusted annually according to the retail price inflation, the rates may be adjusted accordingly for coming years.

Travel, visa and insurance costs incurred in connection with student mobility may be supported if not covered by funding attainable from the State Education Loan Fund or other external funding sources.

Please ensure that the project budget distinguishes between mobility up to 4 weeks and mobility exceeding 4 weeks.

Travel costs for staff

Projects may include reasonable travel costs and expenses for academic and administrative staff related to the project activities. Please note the general guidelines set out above regarding reasonableness and cost levels.

Infrastructure and scientific equipment

Please note that investments in scientific equipment and infrastructure may not be included in the application. The same applies to costs related to research activities *not clearly linked to* educational activities at Master's and PhD level. However, lab fees and consumables related to students' research may be included to a reasonable extent.

Project related salary costs

The aggregate cost of salaries, remuneration of consultants, honorariums and indirect costs involved in a project may not exceed **20 per cent** of the total project budget. The amount may be shared among the project partners, based on agreement between the partners. Please specify how these costs have been calculated and how many months of work will be carried out by whom on basis of the costs budgeted.

All such costs must be included under the budget item “Salary and indirect costs”, not as part of the individual activities.