

# Norwegian Partnership Programme for Global Academic Cooperation – NORPART

## Call for Applications 2024

The Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir) announces the call for applications for project partnerships between higher education institutions in Norway and partner institutions in selected partner countries in the Global South. The budget for the programme is NOK 35 million per year for the period 2024 to 2028, subject to annual approval by the Parliament. The next call for applications is foreseen in 2028, subject to approval by the Parliament.

**Application deadline:** 3 June 2024, at 12.00 (CEST)

*Please note the following clarifications of 16. April 2024:*

- *Full degrees at master and PhD level cannot be funded by the program.*
- *Maximum long term academic stays are 12 months at Master level and 18 months at PhD level.*

## Who can apply?

Under this call, the following types of organisations can apply for funding:

- An accredited Norwegian higher education institution or a Norwegian institution with accredited higher education programs.

Each application must include at least one accredited higher education institution in a NORPART partner country. NORPART partner countries are listed in appendix 1.

Applicants are generally encouraged to establish collaboration with other actors where this can strengthen the project. Partners may include other higher education institutions, public or private enterprises, research institutes, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or other organisations in Norway or in a partner country. Partners outside Norway or the NORPART partner countries may in certain cases be included, if they bring added value.

NORPART recognises both North-South and North-South-South partnership as important means to reach the partnership goals.

Please note that requirements may apply to the involvement of partners. Any such requirements can be found under 'Requirements of the application'.

Previously funded NORPART projects may apply if the proposed project provides added value and is clearly innovative compared to the previously funded project.

## Goals

The overall aim of NORPART is to contribute to enhanced quality of higher education in Norway and selected partner countries, through academic cooperation and mutual student mobility. Furthermore, the projects should contribute to the graduation of qualified candidates with knowledge and skills relevant for the local labour market, and to the development of knowledge that can effectively address local and global challenges.

The purpose of this call is to fund projects that aim to achieve the following objectives:

- Strengthened partnerships for education and research between partner countries and Norway.
- Increased quality and internationalisation of academic programmes at participating institutions.
- Increased mobility of students from the partner countries to Norway, including mobility in connection with work placements.
- Increased mobility of students from Norway to partner countries, including mobility in connection with work placements.

The project's planned results will be assessed based on their ability to contribute to these goals.

Based on a needs assessment, the applicants should design their project in the way that they consider best suited to achieve the goals of the programme. The proposed project activities should be based on jointly identified challenges and opportunities.

Projects may target all academic fields at master and PhD-level.

## Student mobility

NORPART supports student mobility that contributes to achieving the overall aim of enhanced quality in higher education. NORPART focuses on master's students. It is also possible to fund some PhD activities. The program does not provide funding for full-degree programs at the master's or PhD level, nor does it support student mobility at the Bachelor's level. \*

*\*Clarification as of April 16, 2024: Full degrees at master and PhD level cannot be funded by the program*

Types of student mobility supported:

- **Physical student mobility:** short or long-term academic stays or work placements in Norway or partner country institution/ organisation. Maximum long term academic stays are 12 months at master level and 18 months at PhD level. \*
- **Virtual student mobility:** mobility that uses information and communication technologies to facilitate academic exchange between NORPART institutions.
- **Hybrid (blended) mobility:** combines elements of both physical and virtual mobility.

All projects must include strategies for recruitment of students for physical mobility stays at partner institutions in a NORPART partner country and in Norway, and measures for how their experience and knowledge will be shared with non-mobile students (internationalisation at home).

The academic degrees of the students from the partner countries must be issued by the home institution or as a joint degree.

If the partner institution does not yet offer accredited study programme at the relevant level, Norwegian institutions may issue the degree. In such cases, the application must justify the reason, and a description of plans/strategies for developing relevant academic programmes at the partner institution must be included.

Exchange students in the NORPART programme will be exempted from paying tuition fees in Norway.

*\*Clarification as of April 16, 2024: maximum long term academic stays are 12 months at master level and 18 months at PhD level.*

## What can you apply for?

### Grant amount and duration of project

You may apply for up to NOK 5 million in funding per project.

Projects must start between 1 November and 31 December 2024, and be scheduled to end by 31 December 2028.

Note that the project must have at least one budgeted activity in each project year.

Note also that the first payment of 20% of the total budget to approved projects will be made in 2024. Annual payments of 20% of total project budget will be paid each year until 2028.

### Requirement for own contribution

There is no requirement for own contribution in the project budget.

### What can the funding be used for?

The funding you apply for from HK-dir can be used to cover the following types of costs:

- Personnel and administration costs
- Procurement costs for services
- Procurement costs for equipment
- Master's and PhD exchange costs
- Travel and accommodation costs
- Other project-related costs

[Learn more about what the different types of costs include and how to budget and calculate them.](#)

## How to apply

Information is provided below about the minimum requirements that apply to this call, and which criteria will be used to assess the applications.

Applications must be submitted through the HK-dir application portal [Espresso](#).

The application form includes texts that provide guidance on the information requested in the different fields.

The applicant is responsible for ensuring that Norwegian laws and regulations are adhered to, and that different types of risks are identified and addressed.

HK-dir and the Research Council of Norway have jointly developed [national guidelines for responsible international knowledge cooperation](#). The guidelines offer tools for managing risks and enhancing security. Applicants are especially encouraged to read the sections *What characterises a successful partnership?* and *How to achieve equality in a partnership?* under the chapter [Partnerships in the research field](#).

## Requirements of the application

The following minimum requirements apply:

- The application must be submitted by the deadline applicable to the call.
- The application must be submitted through the HK-dir application portal ([Espresso](#)).
- The application must be written in English.
- The application must be submitted on behalf of an organisation that can be entered as applicant under this call (see section “Who can apply”).
- The application must include at least one partner institution that is an accredited higher education institution in a NORPART partner country.
- The application must meet the duration requirements that apply to the call.
- The application must include a signed version of [HK-dir’s declaration of participation](#) from the person in the applicant organisation with legal responsibility for the application.
- The following attachments must be included:
  - Letters of commitment from all project partners, excluding the applicant institution, documenting their interest in and commitment to the project by the leadership at the relevant level.
  - A curriculum vitae (CV) for the project coordinator at the applicant institution.

Applications that do not meet these requirements may be rejected or considered incomplete. Applications with errors will be given a short additional deadline to correct such errors where possible. The content of attachments/links that are not a requirement will not be included in the assessment of the application.

## **What will be emphasised in the assessment?**

Applications that meet the requirements that apply to the call will be assessed based on the following criteria:

### **Relevance of the project (30%)**

Under this criterion, the following factors will be considered:

- 1.1 To what extent the need for the project and its significance for the target group(s) are clearly demonstrated.
- 1.2 To what extent the project's planned results are concrete and suitable to achieve the call's objectives.
- 1.3 Level of ambition of the results.
- 1.4 To what extent the project is innovative and/or complementary to other initiatives/activities already initiated by the participating institutions/actors.

### **Quality of project design and implementation (30 %)**

Under this criterion, the following factors will be considered:

- 2.1 To what extent the project has a concrete, comprehensive and realistic implementation plan.
- 2.2 Frequency and quality of risk assessments.
- 2.3 The extent to which the project is cost-effective and has allocated sufficient resources to the implementation of the activities.
- 2.4 The ability of the project to take into account the needs and interests of the target groups.
- 2.5 To what extent the NORPART project aim for gender balance in all aspects of the project.
- 2.6 To what extent the number of mobile students planned for is realistic in relation to the actual student recruitment base in the NORPART partner country and in Norway, and the size of the academic programme.

### **Quality of the project group and collaborative structures (20 %)**

Under this criterion, the following factors will be considered:

- 3.1 The complementarity of the participating institutions/actors and the overall experience and expertise of the project group.
- 3.2 Whether the division of tasks and responsibilities shows commitment and active contribution from all participating institutions/actors.
- 3.3 To what extent the project has a clear and comprehensive plan for interaction between the participating institutions/actors as well as with any stakeholders.

## **Project impact (20%)**

Under this criterion, the following factors will be considered:

- 4.1 Potential impact for the project's target groups, participating institutions and actors in and outside the project.
- 4.2 The quality of planned measures to ensure that the impacts are maintained after the end of the project period.
- 4.3 The quality of planned measures to evaluate and document the project's impact.

The criteria will be weighted according to the percentage indicated in brackets behind the individual criteria.

[Further guidance is available here on how these criteria will be understood and applied when assessing applications.](#) Assessment factors 2.5 and 2.6 are NORPART-specific and further described [here](#).

## **How the application is processed**

Applications will be considered by two people with special expertise and knowledge of the areas covered by the call. In these individual assessments the applications are given a sub-grade for each assessment criterion that applies to the call, according to the [HK-dir grading scale](#). The assessments will then be consolidated, so that each application receives one set of grades. In case of disagreement about the grading of applications, the application will also be considered by a third person.

In order to qualify for a grant, all of the final sub-grades must be higher than 2, and at least three out of four sub-grades must be 4 or higher.

The overall grades for the applications are calculated based on the final sub-grades and the weighting indicated for the criteria (weighted average grade). In cases where two or more applications are awarded the same overall grade, the applications will be ranked based on the highest sub-grade for the criteria in the order they are listed. In the case of applications that are still equal, their ranking will be determined by lottery.

Final decisions on grants are made by HK-dir based on the final ranking of the applications.

## **When can you expect an answer to the application?**

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of the application process. We estimate that grant decisions will be published by the end of October 2024. The grounds for the grading of the applications will follow as an appendix to the grant decision.

## **What conditions will apply to projects that receive a grant?**

[HK-dir's standard terms for project grants](#) will apply to the implementation of projects that receive grants. [Here you will find a detailed guide on how HK-dir follows up and monitors projects that receive grants.](#)

Projects subject to restrictions under the Export Control Act and regulations based on this act, must ensure that all required assessments/licences are obtained.

## **Guidance and contact**

If you need guidance during the application process HK-dir can answer questions about the call but cannot read through or comment on specific application drafts. You may send an email to [norpart@hkdir.no](mailto:norpart@hkdir.no) or contact a member of the NORPART team at HK-dir:

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## **About NORPART**

NORPART supports Norwegian higher education policy through funding from the Norwegian Ministry for Higher Education and Research.

NORPART supports close academic cooperation and mutual student mobility between higher education institutions in Norway and in the partner countries, based on common academic interests and strategic priorities of the institutions. NORPART supports North-South-South cooperation.

NORPART acknowledges that global challenges require global cooperation. The relevance and quality of higher education will improve in Norway and in the partner countries as a result of international cooperation.

NORPART aims to contribute to all aspects of the 2030 Agenda, however the programme is particularly relevant to SDG 4 – ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; SDG 5 – achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls; SDG 13 – take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts and SDG 17 – revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development.

Please see the [NORPART website](#) and the [NORPART Programme Document](#) for more information.

# Appendix 1

## NORPART Partner Countries 2024

- Angola
- Bolivia
- Cameroon
- Cuba
- East Timor
- Ethiopia
- Guatemala
- Indonesia
- Liberia
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Nepal
- Niger
- Palestine
- Rwanda
- South Africa\*
- Sri Lanka
- Tanzania
- Vietnam
- Zimbabwe
- Bangladesh
- Burkina Faso
- Colombia
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Egypt
- Ghana
- Haiti
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Mali
- Myanmar
- Nicaragua
- Pakistan
- Peru
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan
- Uganda
- Zambia

### \* Eligible Higher Education Institutions in South Africa - Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs)

- University of Fort Hare
- University of Limpopo
- University of Venda
- Walter Sisulu University
- University of Western Cape
- University of Zululand
- Mangosuthu University of Technology
- Sefako Makgatho University of Health Sciences