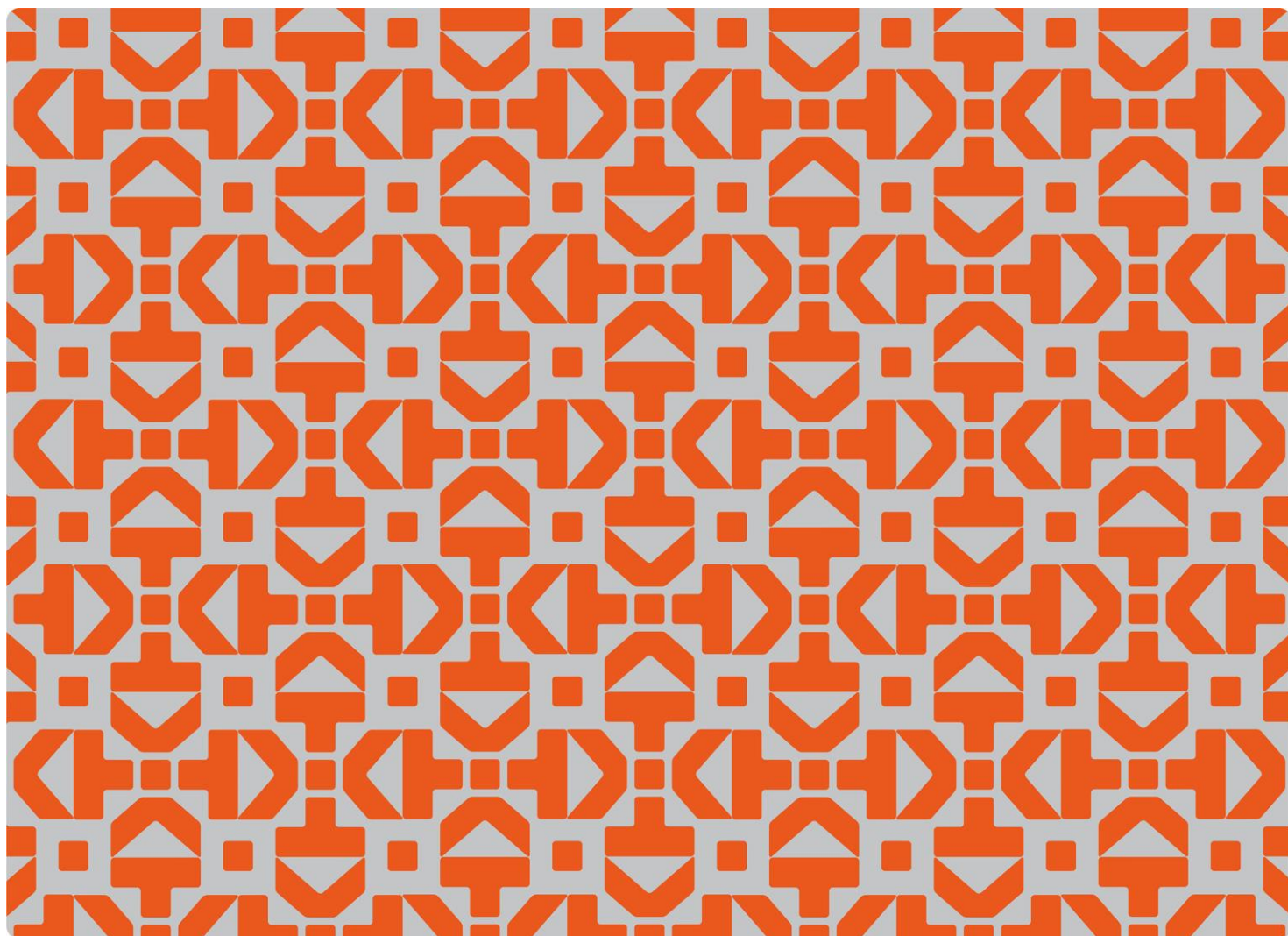


# **NORPART: The Norwegian Partnership Programme for Global Academic Cooperation**

Annual report 2021





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## **Executive summary**

Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir) is pleased to present the annual report of the NORPART programme for 2021. The administration of NORPART is part of the Division for Higher Education and Research, in the Department for Global collaboration and Capacity building.

The report describes the process and results of the NORPART 2021 Call for applications and introduces the total portfolio of 74 projects. The report also presents project activities and results, based on information provided by the 45 ongoing NORPART projects, through their annual progress reports to HK-dir, for the year 2021.

In February 2021, the third NORPART Call for applications was issued. By the application deadline HK-dir received 150 applications from 19 Norwegian higher education institutions. 28 projects were selected for funding. The high number of applications compared to the two previous calls in 2016 and 2018, illustrates the sustained relevance of NORPART to the higher education sector in Norway and the partner countries.

Since the start of the project activities in 2017, a total of 1153 students have been on a mobility stay in Norway or in a partner country with support from NORPART, by 2021. Of these, 648 have been incoming students to Norway, and 311 have travelled from Norway to a partner country.

The annual project reports for 2021 showed that the partner institutions continued their project activities under very challenging circumstances. In response to the widespread disruption caused by COVID-19, HK-dir provided existing project partners with the opportunity to apply for a one-year no cost extension, which has been further extended to two years for the NORPART 2017-21 portfolio.

The continuation of travel restrictions in 2021 meant that student and staff mobilities were significantly reduced and many educational activities were postponed or cancelled. Despite these significant setbacks, some projects have welcomed students and staff on mobility stays. Several projects faced challenges with online education activities due to the poor IT enabling environments of partner institutions, but as a main rule, digitization continues to sustain collaboration between partners.

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

The Norwegian Partnership Programme for Global Academic Cooperation, NORPART, was developed to meet new priorities and opportunities in higher education cooperation with countries in the Global South. NORPART acknowledges that global challenges necessitate global responsibility and cooperation, joint development of new knowledge and up-to-date education, and mutual exchange of ideas and promising practices.

NORPART is funded through the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is administered by Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir). The programme is ambitious, addressing both higher education policy and development policy goals. NORPART responds to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, Quality education, goal 17, Partnership for the goals, and goal 5, Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Other goals are also addressed through the thematic focus of the projects.

The first call for applications was issued in in 2016, the second in 2018 and the third in 2021. The first call received 114 applications from which 21 projects were selected (the NORPART 2017–21 project portfolio). The second call received 86 applications from which 25 projects were selected for funding (the NORPART 2019–23 project portfolio). The third call was issued in February 2021 and received 150 applications from which 28 projects were selected (the NORPART 2022–26 project portfolio).

## **1.2 Aim and objectives**

The overall aim of NORPART is to contribute towards enhancing the quality of higher education in Norway and selected partner countries in the Global South, through academic cooperation and mutual student mobility.

To reach this overall aim, the programme shall fulfil four objectives:

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

### **1.3 NORPART 2021 Call for applications**

The third NORPART call for applications was issued on 26 February 2021. The application deadline was 27 May. By the deadline HK-dir received 150 eligible applications from 19 Norwegian higher education institutions with project partners in 33 NORPART countries, including, for the first time, South Africa. There were no applications with Afghanistan, Angola, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Liberia, Niger or Sudan as a partner country.

The total amount available for new projects was NOK 130 mill., in addition to NOK 30 mill. for funding of full degree master's scholarships to Norway, for students from partner countries in the Global South. The application acceptance rate was 19 per cent, and 28 new NORPART projects and 112 full degree scholarships were approved for funding for the period 2022–2026.

The projects from the first and second call have a five-year project period and could receive a maximum allocation of NOK 5 million. For the third call the maximum project allocation was raised to NOK 6 million in addition to NOK 350 000 per full degree Master scholarship for students from the Global South.

HK-dir released the NORPART Programme Document 2022–2026, in conjunction with the new Call for applications in 2021. The programme document outlines the purpose and the expected results of NORPART from 2022 to 2026. The document is also intended as a guideline for the development and administration of NORPART and is based on HK-dir's experience with the administration of the programme since its inception in 2016, as well as recommendations from the midterm evaluation of NORPART in 2020.

#### **1.3.1 The assessment of the project applications**

In the two previous calls in 2016 and 2018, the applications were evaluated by Diku<sup>1</sup> () and an external evaluator, and finally approved by the NORPART Programme board. However, since the Programme board's term of services ended in 2020, it was decided not to prolong or elect a new programme board for NORPART. HK-dir therefore established a new assessment model made up of seven evaluation teams, each consisting of two external evaluators and one internal evaluator from HK-dir. One external evaluator was selected from the Global South's higher education sector, while the second external evaluator represented and was selected from the Global North's higher education sector.

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<sup>1</sup> Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education, merged into HK-dir in July 2021.

All the 150 eligible applications were evaluated according to the 2021 Call document, the NORPART Programme document, HK-dir's general guidelines for external evaluators, and the Guide for the assessment of NORPART applications 2021. This guide describes the assessment process, the evaluation and selection criteria, the online application form, and the seven-point assessment scale. The evaluators in each team first assessed the applications individually and graded them according to four categories: relevance, impact, partnership and implementation.

By the end of September 2021, each evaluation team agreed on final subgrades for the applications assigned to them, in consolidation meetings. The highest ranked applications, based on average grades, were selected for support.

When the selection process was finalized in October 2021, the external evaluators were invited to share their experiences in a survey, which gave the NORPART team useful feedback on the format of the call documents and the overall assessment process. Based this information, HK-dir will decide to implement the same or a modified assessment procedure for the new call for applications planned for in 2023.

The outcome of the selection process was 28 new projects selected for support, for the years 2022 to 2026. The projects have partner institutions in 24 NORPART countries and the total budget for the new portfolio is appr. NOK 205,7 million, including NOK 39 million for full degree Master studies in Norway, for students from the partner countries.

The projects plan to welcome a total of 569 incoming long term students to Norway, and a total of 112 full degree Master students. Four projects plan a total of 134 blended mobilities (with digital components).

Of the Norwegian applicant institutions, NTNU submitted the highest number of applications; 21. The partner institution involved in most applications was Makerere University, Uganda with a total of 18 applications.

The applicant institutions that received the highest number of NORPART projects in 2021 Call were NTNU, NMBU, University of Oslo, University of South-Eastern Norway and University of Bergen with 4-5 projects each. Nord University and VID Specialized University college received NORPART projects for the first time. 73 partner institutions outside Norway participate in the projects in the new portfolio. The University of Makerere has the highest number of new NORPART projects and is represented in 7 projects. The University of Dar es Salaam is represented in 5 NORPART projects.

Two new NORPART projects are based on projects established under the 2016 and 2018 project portfolio. For another project, synergetic effects are foreseen through networking and collaboration with a UTFORSK project in the Asia region. Three new projects are based on NORHED, NORHED II as well as other previously Norad-funded projects and are expected to further develop and reinforce them through activities such as mobility of students and academic staff, curriculum development and e learning platforms.

As underlined in the Programme document, NORPART encourages the development of online learning, education, and training. Strategic use of open and flexible learning platforms, virtual and “blended mobility”, as well as open educational resources, can improve access and facilitate wider sharing of project results and outputs. All the 28 projects selected for the 2022-26 portfolio therefore include such elements in their project design.



## 2 The project portfolio

### 2.1 Partner countries and institutions

A total of 40 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America are eligible as NORPART partner countries. South Africa was included as partner country in 2021, but limited to Historically Disadvantaged Institutions, as defined by South African higher education authorities.<sup>2</sup> The geographical concentration of NORPART projects is often related to a history of bilateral cooperation between Norway and the partner countries within previous capacity building programmes in higher education. Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia were countries frequently represented in programmes like NUFU (1991–2012)<sup>3</sup> and NOMA (2006–2014),<sup>4</sup> the Quota Scholarship Programme<sup>5</sup> (1962–2016), as well as in NORHED (2013–).<sup>6</sup> This is also the case for Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, the countries with the highest representation in Asia. Many NORPART countries have been prioritised countries for Norwegian development aid for several decades, and some of them are still defined as prioritised partner countries for development support.<sup>7</sup> The geographical concentration of projects may also be related to the representation of large and acknowledged universities in the Global South.

As mentioned above, the new 2022–26 portfolio has partners in 24 NORPART partner countries. The portfolio includes six new countries: Colombia, Egypt, DR Kongo, Pakistan, Peru and South Africa. Several projects have partners in at least two partner countries. Two projects have partners in multiple continents (Asia and Africa or Africa and Latin America) in addition to Norway.

From 2021, the combined NORPART project portfolio of 74 projects, including accepted projects from all three Calls for applications, covers 33 partner countries and extends across all academic disciplines (see Figure 1).

In 2021, the projects from the first two calls could apply for one year no-cost extension, connected to COVID-19, consequently no NORPART projects has so far finalized their project period.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix for a list of eligible NORPART countries and South African institutions.

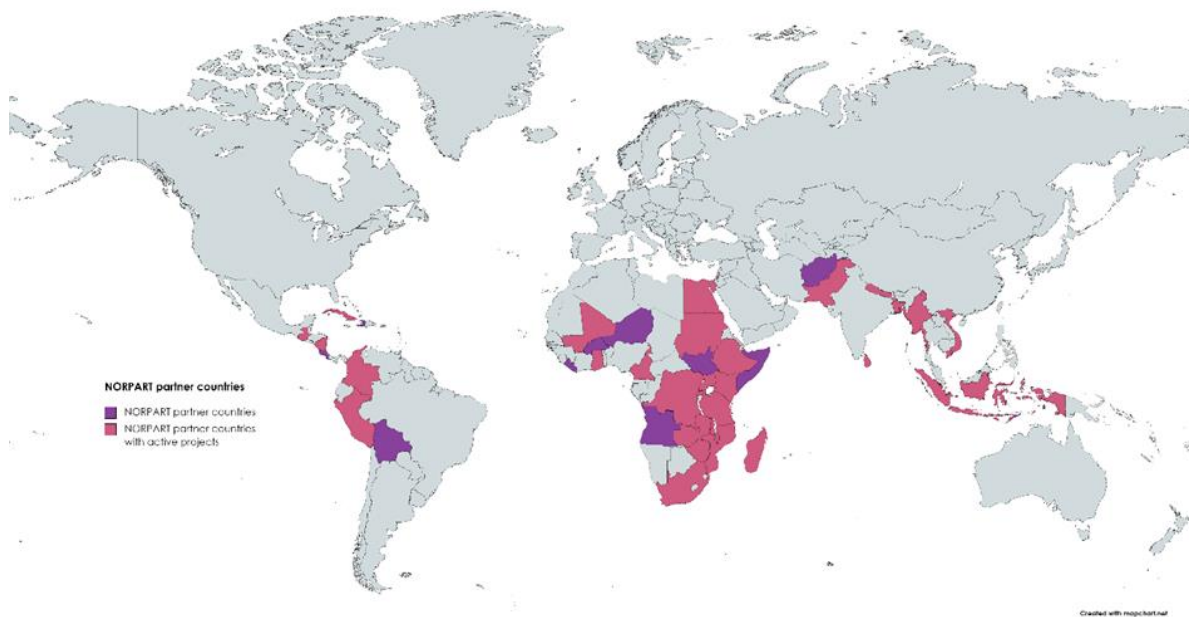
<sup>3</sup> Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU).

<sup>4</sup> Norad's Programme for Master Studies (NOMA).

<sup>5</sup> The Quota Scholarship Programme 1962–2016.

<sup>6</sup> The Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (2013–), administered by Norad.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/utenrikssaker/utviklingssamarbeid/partnerland/id2514932/>.



*Figure 1: NORPART Partner Countries in new total Programme portfolio (three NORPART Calls for applications).*

Figure 2 below illustrates the number of allocated NORPART projects per Norwegian applicant institution for each portfolio. 16 Norwegian higher education institutions are currently represented as coordinators in NORPART, with NTNU, University of Oslo, University of Bergen and University of South-Eastern Norway hosting more than half of the projects. The number of projects per institution varies from one to fourteen. Five institutions have received NORPART projects under one Call for applications, four institutions received projects in two Calls for application, while seven institutions have received NORPART projects in all three Calls.

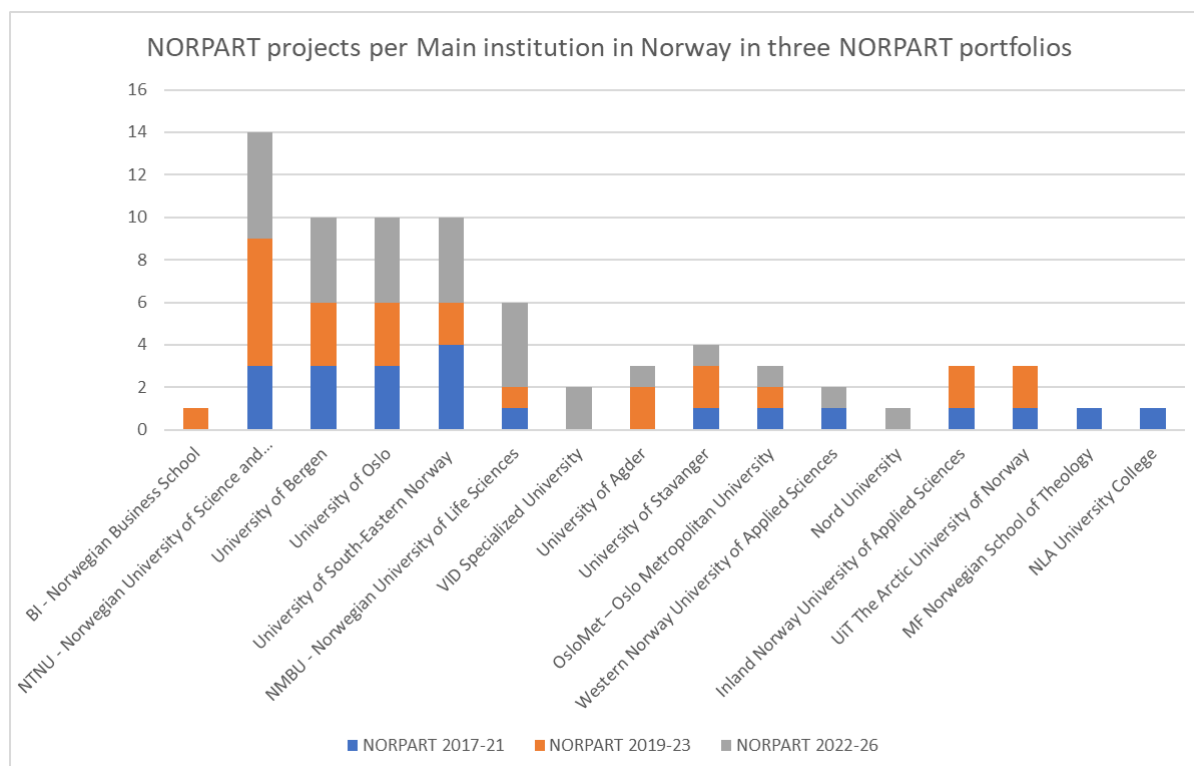
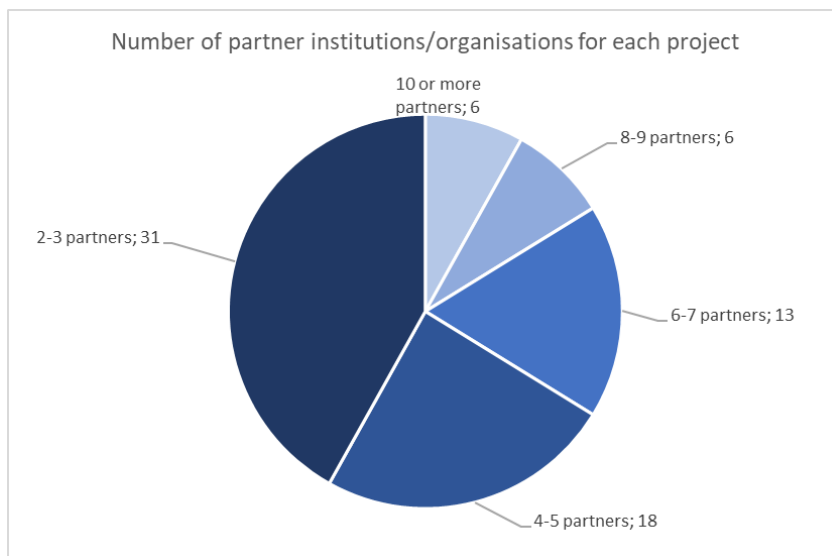


Figure 2: Number of NORPART projects per institution in Norway in the three NORPART portfolios.

The partner institutions that are participating in the highest number of NORPART projects, are Makerere University (14 projects), Addis Ababa University (10 projects), University of Dar es Salaam (8 projects), Jimma University (5 projects) and University of Zambia (5 projects).

As shown in Figure 3, the size and make-up of the partnerships vary from project to project. Some projects consist of two higher education institutions, while other projects involve several higher education institutions in more than one country. Some projects include other organisations and institutions in their network, in addition to higher education institutions.



*Figure 3: Number of partner institutions per project.*

A broad range of network partners is sometimes involved in the projects. Network partners typically include research institutes, public agencies, private enterprises, hospitals, non-governmental organisations, and other associations. The purpose of their involvement can be to strengthen the collaboration, improve the quality of educational activities, or to offer work placement opportunities for students, at for instance schools or hospitals, as part of student mobility stays in a partner country.

## **2.2 Academic disciplines**

The NORPART portfolio continues to be diverse when it comes to academic disciplines. Figure 4 below gives a glimpse of the academic disciplines as represented in the combined NORPART portfolio, and for each of the 2016, 2018 and 2021 portfolios.<sup>8</sup> Compared with the two first NORPART portfolios, the new portfolio 2022-26 has a larger share of projects identifying within the academic disciplines of engineering and technology and agriculture, and a smaller share of projects within social sciences and pedagogy. Many of the projects are multidisciplinary.

<sup>8</sup> Academic disciplines for the projects are self-reported. Typically, one to three disciplines, sometimes four, are reported in the application. In the diagram showing distribution of academic disciplines, each project as a whole is weighted equally.

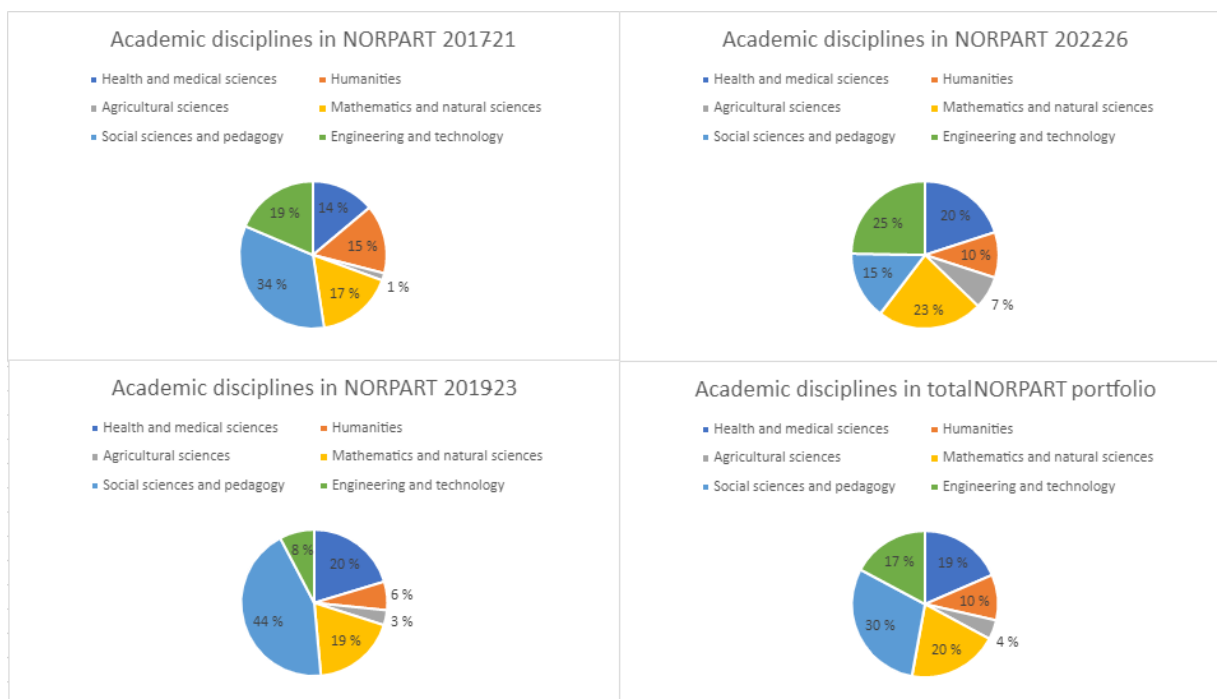


Figure 4: The distribution of academic disciplines in each NORPART portfolio as well as in total NORPART portfolio.

## 2.3 Synergies with other funding programmes

Several of the NORPART partnerships have been established as a continuation of or in synergy with projects funded by other programmes. Synergies with other programmes may improve the results and impact of the projects and contribute to the sustainability of institutional partnerships. They are also beneficial for the individual students involved. In the current project portfolio, there are projects that are interlinked with projects supported by NORHED, UTFORSK, Erasmus+, the Eurasia Programme, and INTPART.

### **Project example: NORPART-2021/10027 North-South-Alliance for inclusive water, sanitation, and hygiene (All4WASH)**

**The All4Wash project** has synergies with many ongoing research and educational projects and initiatives in NTNU and the Partner Universities. Water and sanitation challenges are global, and countries in sub-Saharan Africa are disproportionately affected. A review of the study programs in NTNU has stressed the need to train students in water & sanitation fields to be “global citizens” with the capacity to address local and global challenges. The research thematic areas identified by the partners in the All4Wash project also have synergies with the following ongoing projects at NTNU: NORHED II – Water Essence Project, aimed at capacity building in water in the Global South; NORAD-UPERCRET Project– with a focus on Bioenergy, Smart Water Project, which has a focus on digitalization of water and wastewater infrastructure; Action Ocean Plastics & Sustainability

Analytics. All the Partner Universities are part of the African Centers of Excellence for Water Supply and Sanitation in East (Ethiopia, Tanzania) & West Africa (Ghana). The Centers aim to build Alliances for academic and research cooperation with the Global North. The All4WasH project will strengthen activities of the Centers through co-curriculum development, eLearning platforms development, joint research projects, engagement with key stakeholders and mobility of students/academic staff. The All4WasH project will also have synergistic relationship with the following ongoing educational & research initiatives at the SPUs: NORHED II- ONE Health (Ethiopia), ERASMUS+, WELLCOME TRUST African SNOWS projects (South Africa), eLearning project (Mali), resource recovery & sustainability project (Ghana), Water Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy (WISE - Futures) (Tanzania & Uganda).

### **3 Programme objectives – Results in 2021**

As mentioned in section 1.2, the overall aim of NORPART is to contribute towards enhancing the quality of higher education in Norway and selected partner countries in the Global South, through academic cooperation and mutual student mobility. In the following, we outline how the projects have sought to meet NORPART's objectives so far, and reflect on challenges that have been identified as well as potential solutions. These observations are primarily based on the annual project reports for 2021, provided by the project coordinators.

#### **3.1 Strengthened partnerships for education and research between partner countries in the Global South and Norway**

Strengthened partnerships for education and research is an independent objective of NORPART, but partnerships also serve as a framework for student mobility, and as quality enhancement in higher education. Educational cooperation facilitates knowledge sharing, professional networking and the direct improvement of academic programmes. The objective of strengthened partnerships is therefore strongly intertwined with the objective of enhanced quality in education. It is useful to consider the two goals separately; therefore, this section will mainly address partners at the institutional level, while 3.2 below will address internationalisation and student learning. Most of the projects in NORPART are based on long standing partnerships within education and research, while a few of the partnerships have been established more recently. This is also the case for the new 2022–2026 project portfolio. The partnerships are based on mutual academic interests and formalised commitment to project implementation. Among the selection criteria for the three calls for applications were the following: quality of the partnership (including complementarity), experience and expertise of the project team, level of formalized commitment, potential for long-term collaboration between the partners, and the degree to which the partnership is based on mutual academic interests and capacity within relevant academic programmes.

Several partnerships have signed bilateral Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), which strengthens the formal commitment between the partners. Another indicator of the degree of strengthened commitment and complementarity is the numbers of joint courses and programmes that have been developed during the project period. Joint courses and programmes may contribute to internationalisation for all, thereby also reaching students who for various reasons do not travel abroad. The pandemic-related travel restrictions continued to have

impact on student and staff mobility throughout 2021. Consequently, the joint development of academic programmes became central to sustain collaboration in 2021.

**Project example: NORPART-2016/10480 “Project to Strengthen Health Economics Capacity at Bergen and Muhimbili Universities (SHEC)”**

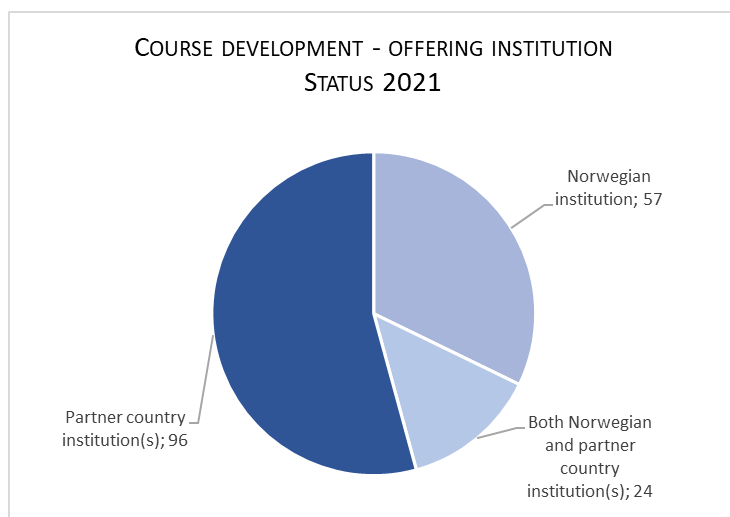
“Covid-19 has seriously impeded implementation of student and staff mobility as well as conduction of meetings, seminars and dissemination activities such as in person attendance in conferences. As a result, meetings and seminars as well as conferences will rely more on online platforms such as zoom, google meet, Team, skype etc. We did this in 2021 for some activities and we plan to continue in 2022. For mobility of students we have moved these activities to 2022 and 2023, hoping travel restrictions will be relaxed. In parallel, we are improving our robustness and sustainability by adapting courses for online delivery.”

Many projects have developed joint courses and degrees at the Master or Ph.D. level, and 177 courses are reported as having started by 2021. The courses differ in length, volume, and level of formalized institutional frames: short courses, intensive courses, summer school courses, and modular courses which are integrated into a master or Ph.D. programme, as well as whole degrees.

The courses and degrees differ from 0 to 120 ECTS, although most courses award between 5 and 10 ECTS. Course development is often closely linked to plans for increasing student mobility to Norway, where students from Norway and partner countries attend the courses together.

Figure 5 shows the course development at Norwegian institutions versus institutions in the partner countries. The number of joint courses developed and offered at both institutions, in and outside of Norway, reveals that the institutions involved are committed and see the relevance of the partnership to improving education.





*Figure 5: Status – Number of courses developed in NORPART projects in the period 2017–2021.*

Most of the courses developed within the frames of the NORPART projects are established and offered at the partner country institutions, which is also the case for most of the master's degree programmes that will be or are already developed. This indicates that the need and desire for new courses and capacity building is larger in the partner countries. However, the number of courses established at Norwegian institutions is also high, which shows that there are mutual benefits of the collaboration.

To facilitate collaboration, NORPART supports staff exchange of both academic and administrative personnel. As Figure 6 demonstrates below, a significant portion of mobilities relate to project meetings, course development and attendance at workshops, seminars and conferences.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Please note that staff visits may have multiple purposes, but only one can be reported in HK-dir's online report.

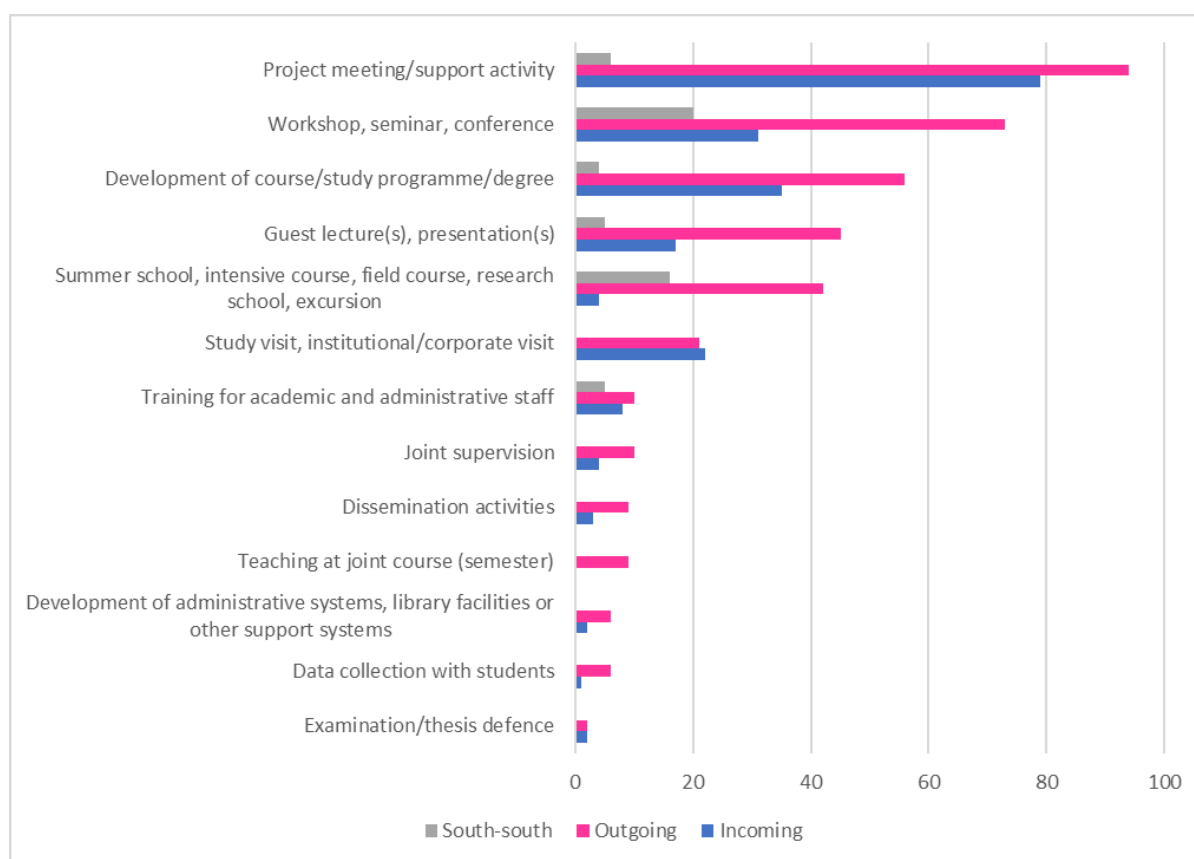


Figure 6: Purpose of staff mobility stays (reported for the period 2017–2021).

The purpose of mobility differs between outgoing and incoming staff. A substantially higher number of outgoing staff from Norway travel to serve as guest lecturers and to participate in summer schools, and also to attend workshops, seminars and conferences.

### 3.2 Increased quality and internationalisation of academic programmes at participating institutions

One way to achieve increased quality in education and in the academic programmes is to strive for research-based, student-active, and internationally oriented education (cf. Meld. St. 16). For the NORPART programme, this may include jointly reviewed curricula, development of new educational tools and methodologies, and the involvement of students in international research collaborations.

Joint development and revision of courses and programmes, together with other forms of educational cooperation, can scale the impact of NORPART by enabling the broader student community to benefit from activities, rather than just mobile students. Increased quality and internationalisation of academic programmes introduce incoming and outgoing students to alternate perspectives and build capacity at all partner institutions.

### **3.3 Connection between education and research**

As mentioned above, one way to achieve increased quality in education and in the academic programmes is to strive for research-based education. Many of the NORPART projects develop new courses around research collaboration and allow students to participate in research projects. Many projects also use funding to enable joint supervision of research projects for master and Ph.D. students. Some students do field work in the partner country as part of their master or Ph.D. thesis. These activities are good examples of how projects achieve internationalisation at the home institution. Guest lectures at partner institutions also contribute to internationalisation of the learning environment and quality enhancement.

Many projects report that master and Ph.D. students are involved in activities related to research projects and disseminations, such as conferences, seminars, and workshops, as part of the NORPART project. Research collaborations in NORPART projects have so far resulted in several journal articles, papers, and other research publications, as well as development of teaching curricula.

### **3.4 Student mobility**

All NORPART projects support student mobility stays of longer or shorter durations, both to and from Norway. Student mobility from partner countries to study at higher education institutions in Norway constitutes a core element of each NORPART funded project, and consequently a large share of scholarships is awarded to incoming students to Norway.

The purpose of the stays varies, as shown in figure 7. For incoming students, semester exchange is by far the most frequent purpose, while for outgoing students, summer schools, joint courses and data collection are the most frequent purposes.

Both incoming and outgoing students in many cases attend courses on topics not given at their home institutions. In addition to the academic output, the mobile students gain international understanding, intercultural competences, and access to international networks. When returning, the students bring new experiences and international perspectives that may contribute to internationalisation at their home institution, thereby benefiting students who are unable to participate in an international mobility programme. This is, for example, described in the report for the “international semester”, which is organized by the University of Bergen and attended by students from two NORPART projects (NORPART-2018/10039 Collaboration in Higher Education in Mental Health between Nepal and Norway and NORPART-2018/10052 Adverse Childhood Experiences. A partnership between VNU-UED and INN Universities to strengthen academic activities in psychology,

education and other social sciences). One of the students who was not able to travel writes:

“We managed to meet amazing and very knowledgeable people, read, listen, and learn about important subjects, that some of us did not even think about when studying psychology before. The two first courses are there to prepare us for the project and working internationally. As the practical part is important, we got to practice on each other, such as trying to convey the manuals for children. We challenged each other with the roles of children and helped one another to find ways to manage some of the difficult/challenging/chaotic situations that children can create. We were also presented with a lot of examples from real life, which made it easier to understand the context and concepts. As not being able to travel, I understand that the exchange and internationalization happened really in two ways. Firstly, by welcoming the physically traveling students here in Norway, and secondly through the digital internationalization we all experienced. The global aspect in this semester focused on adaptation, flexibility, and making the best we can out of the situation we were in. Not being able to travel physically did not stop us from getting to know each other, sharing and becoming friends. This international semester gives opportunities for friendships and for future work and cooperation. As I confidently can say, all of us experienced and enjoyed the whole program to the fullest.”

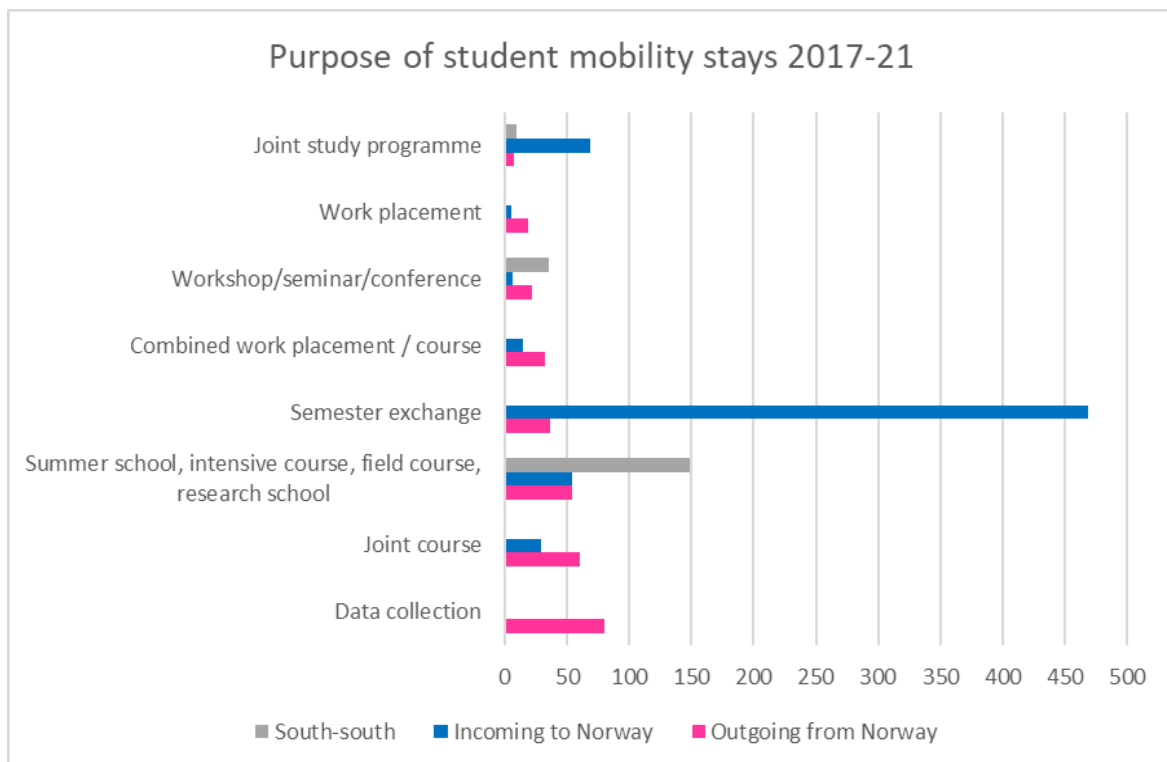


Figure 7: Purpose of student mobility stays (reported for the period 2017-2021).

### 3.4.1 Mobility in numbers

A total of 1153 students have been on a mobility stay in Norway or in a partner country with support from NORPART by 2021. Of these, 648 have been incoming students to Norway, and 311 have travelled from Norway to a partner country. Figure 8 demonstrates that incoming students typically stay for more than 3 months, whereas outgoing students typically stay for less than 3 months. Some projects with multiple partners also support mobility stays between partner countries (South-South mobility; a total of 194 mobilities so far), which are typically shorter stays for summer schools or short courses and seminars.

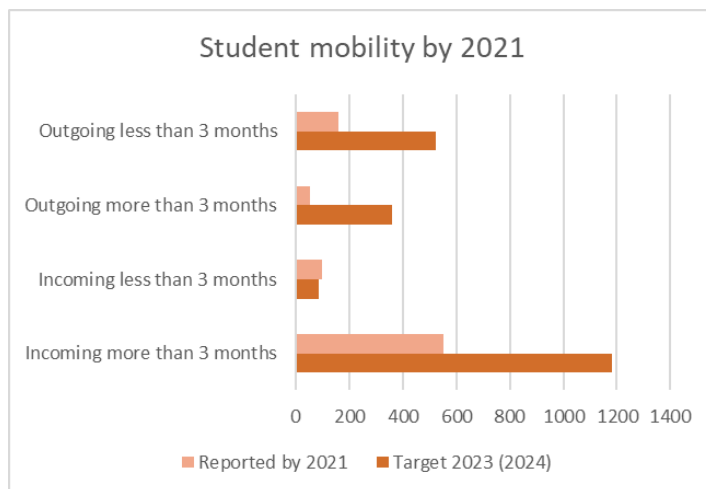


Figure 8: Student mobility by 2021 compared to target numbers.

The share of accomplished student mobilities in the first NORPART portfolio (2017) compared to target numbers is larger than for the second portfolio (2019), which started during Covid-19, as shown in figure 9. Projects have been more successful in accomplishing incoming mobilities as compared to outgoing mobilities. The second NORPART portfolio started in 2019 and many projects did not have the time to prepare mobilities before the Covid-19 pandemics. We expect these projects to accomplish their target numbers at a later stage.

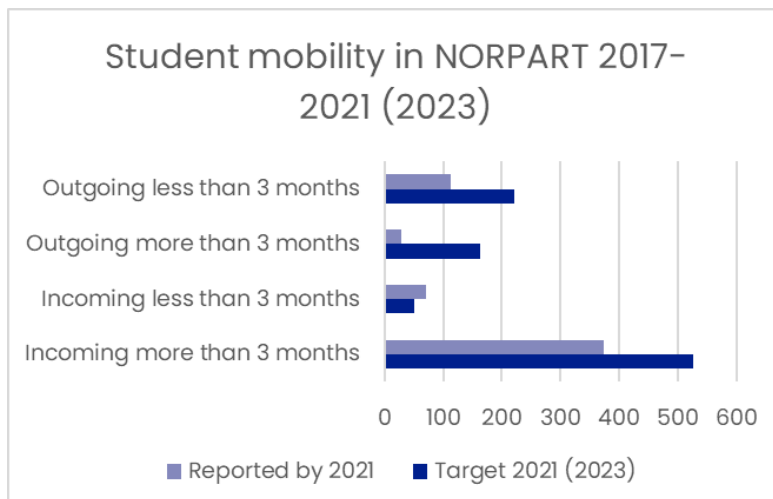


Figure 9: Student mobility by 2021 in NORPART 2017-21 portfolio compared to target numbers.

As Figure 10 demonstrates, student mobility has been increasing steadily year on year; however, the emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 has significantly restricted travel movements resulting in the lowest student mobility numbers since 2017. All forms of mobility were negatively impacted. Many Norwegian institutions had strict restrictions for outgoing mobilities during the pandemics. However, in 2021 the number of incoming long term mobilities was again rising above 2018 numbers, and in their 2021 annual reports, projects reported optimism concerning mobility in 2022.

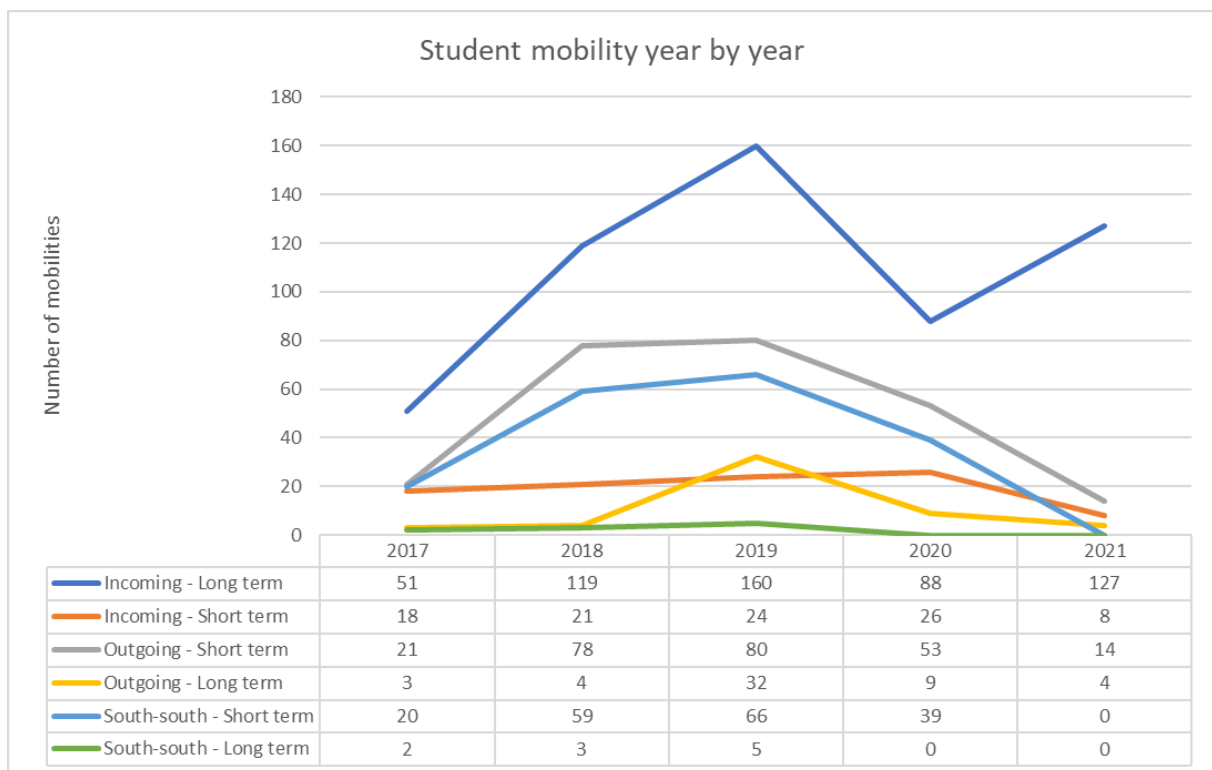


Figure 10: Student mobility year by year 2017-2021.

### 3.4.2 Incoming student mobility

Figure 11 shows the number of students coming to Norway from the different partner countries outside Norway, the majority being Ethiopia, Zambia, Sri Lanka and Tanzania. Although several projects received incoming students from these countries, certain projects stand out as particularly successful in accomplishing high mobility numbers to Norway. For example, NORPART-2016/10471, *Enhancing Norway-Ethiopia relations in Journalism and Communication education and research* received 29 student mobilities from Ethiopia to Norway in the project

period, and all the 35 mobilities from Bangladesh are accomplished in the project NORPART-2016/10285 *Policy and Governance Studies (PGS) in South Asia*.

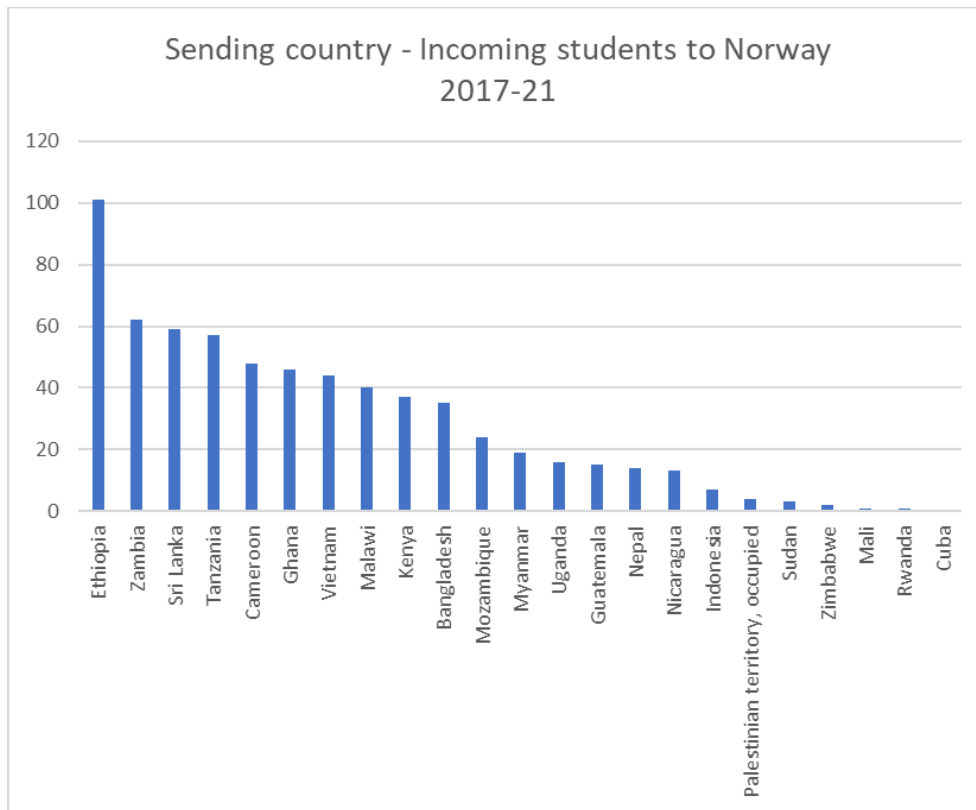


Figure 11: Sending countries – Incoming students to Norway 2017-21.

### 3.4.3 Outgoing student mobility

Most students travelling from Norway stay in Ghana, Malawi, Ethiopia and Tanzania (see Figure 12). NORPART greatly emphasizes the support for long term stays for incoming students to Norway, and this is reflected in the NORPART programme design and calls. For outgoing students, the emphasis on long term stays has not been as strong in the calls for applications in NORPART. The modest number of long-term exchanges for outgoing students (ref Figures 8 and 10) could also be related to availability of courses for exchange students, difficulties in establishment of credit transfer systems and differences in academic calendars.

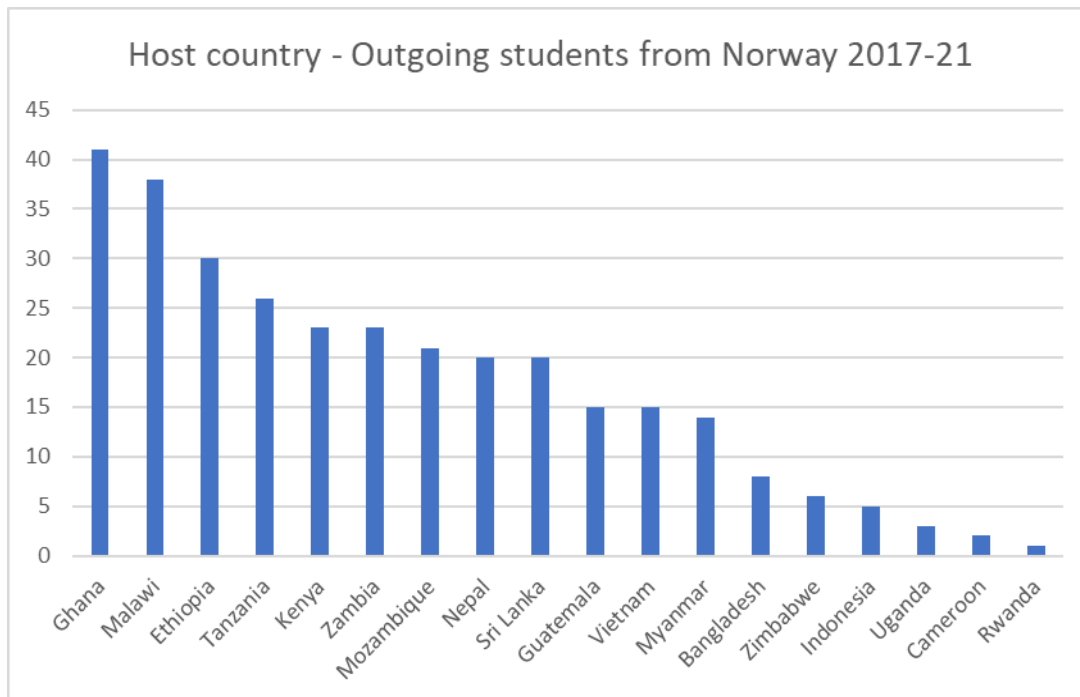


Figure 12: Host country – Outgoing students from Norway 2017-21.

Outgoing students mainly travel to attend joint courses, for data collection and for summer schools (ref Figure 7). Only a few students stay for a whole semester. NORPART project coordinators and the evaluation completed by Ideas2evidence in 2020 reported difficulties in recruiting Norwegian students to travel to their partner institutions outside Norway. Sometimes this is explained by students' reluctance to travel to the Global South or practical barriers to travel. Other times it is due to the academic interests of the student. During Covid-19 an additional explanation is the travel restrictions imposed by institutions and on a national level.

In other partnership programmes administered by HK-dir, student mobility is mainly short term, both for incoming and outgoing students. Evidence from project reports, in for example UTFORSK and NORPART, is that short-term exchanges happen where there is a close link between education and research.



#### **3.4.4 Full degree master scholarships**

In 2020 the Norwegian government allocated NOK 16 million to strengthen the NORPART programme. The funds were a contribution from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The funds were available from 2020 and onwards to support student mobility from countries in the Global South to Norway, making it possible for 53 students to complete a full master's degree at a Norwegian higher education institution under the framework of the NORPART programme. To be eligible, students from partner countries must be admitted to an international master's programme attended by Norwegian students.

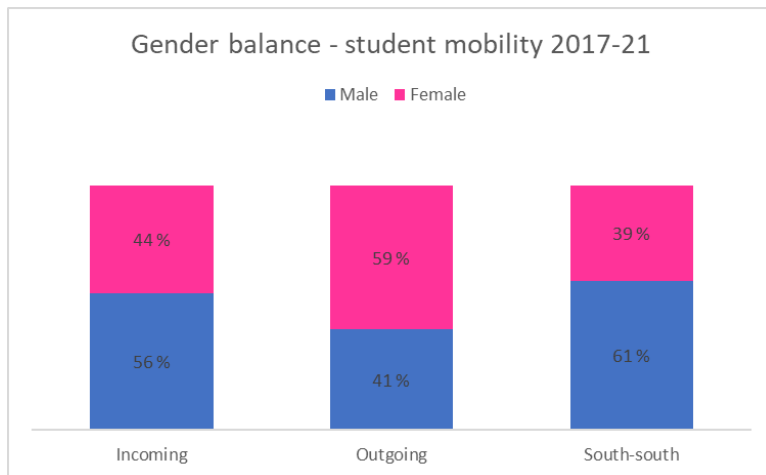
Regardless of the continued restrictions related to the pandemics in 2021, 35 of these 53 full degree students were accepted and registered as started in Norway in autumn 2021. Due to the ongoing pandemic the rest of the master candidate's uptake was postponed to 2022 or later.

In the third NORPART portfolio 25 of 28 projects applied for and received full degree master's scholarships. A total of 112 full degree master scholarships were awarded to the projects and we expect this batch of students to start their studies in Norway in 2022 or 2023.

#### **3.4.5 Promoting gender balance in student mobility**

NORPART projects should make every effort to recruit at least 50 percent female students for mobility in all directions under the framework of the partnership. This is in line with Norway's gender equality efforts and the Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Foreign and Development Policy 2016–2020. Under objective one of the Action Plan it is stated that Norway will promote equal opportunities for vocational training and higher education through channels that receive Norwegian funding, for example through university cooperation.

Although the reported mobility numbers are more balanced as compared to previous annual reports, the numbers reported on gender representation among scholarship holders in NORPART by 2021 show that 56 % of incoming students are male and 44 % are female, and continuous emphasis is still needed to facilitate equal opportunities and benefits for male and female students.



*Figure 13: Gender balance in reported student mobility in the period 2017-21.*

The projects' ability to recruit an equal share of female and male students greatly differs between the projects. Some projects have previously reported that they have made great efforts to secure gender equality among students who are offered an opportunity to study abroad. This is particularly so in subject fields where the student body is already either male or female dominated.

Inclusive practices towards indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable or marginalised groups of society has also been emphasised in the quality assessment of NORPART applications. Results connected to inclusive practices, however, have not been reported on so far in the projects.

## **4 Challenges and follow-up**

### **4.1 Challenges in project implementation**

The individual annual reports for 2021 show that projects were affected by COVID-19 and by increased costs related to travel, leading to cancelation or postponement of project activities. In addition to this, political unrest has put restrictions on project activities in several partner countries.

#### **4.1.1 COVID-19 travel restrictions**

The most significant impact from COVID-19 relates to the cancelation of student mobility activities due to the widespread implementation of travel restrictions and border control measures, as well as increased travel costs.

Some of the projects were able to send students and staff on exchange despite the travel restrictions. In some cases, the projects had to adjust the length of their planned mobilities because of factors related to the pandemic. COVID-19 severely restricted short-term mobility and Norwegian mobility to the Global South.

#### **4.1.2 Increased administrative burden**

Each year, projects report administrative burden due to the labour-intensive nature of delivering education partnerships in the Global South. In 2021 some projects reported an increased administrative burden due to the uncertainty presented by COVID-19. Many mobility activities were postponed, which necessitated travel cancelations, re-bookings, and refunds.

#### **4.1.3 Digitisation**

In many instances the pandemic has served as a catalyst for accelerating digital collaboration and several projects implemented digital teaching and supervision in direct response to COVID-19. Despite this progress, some projects noted that unstable internet connections and poor video conferencing facilities made it difficult to pivot cooperation towards digital solutions. Adaptation for digital participation was not always found suitable, particularly in subjects dependent on field or laboratory work.

#### **4.1.4 Political issues**

Political unrest in Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nicaragua and Palestine negatively impacted collaboration and student mobility in 2021.

Several projects with Ethiopian students on mobility stays in Norway in 2021 adjusted their plans to accommodate longer stays for those students who already were in Norway. In this manner, study progression was secured for the students involved, and the projects could uphold some activity in the challenging situation.

17 NORPART projects have partners in Ethiopia. 13 of these projects are bilateral projects between Norway and Ethiopia, while four projects have partners in other countries as well. We expect the political situation to affect all projects involved in Ethiopia. Projects in the 2022–26 portfolio plan 65 student mobilities from Norway to Ethiopia and 55 student mobilities from Ethiopia to Norway.

One project in Nicaragua was put to a halt in early 2021 due to a challenging political climate. The political situation in different partner countries will likely disrupt projects into the future, but this is to some degree dependent on local factors, as well as project design. Political issues are a perennial concern for NORPART, although the widespread disruption of outgoing mobility for Norwegian students due to COVID-19 reduced the risk profile of political issues in 2021.

## **4.2 Follow-up by HK-dir**

HK-dir typically monitors progress through annual reporting and project visits, as well as through continuous dialogue with projects that experience different challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that HK-dir was unable to participate in site visits for the entire year of 2021, which increased the importance of reporting and regular dialogue. In order to stay informed about the implications and limitations of political unrest on student and staff exchange, HK-dir has established a regular dialogue with UDI. In response to the widespread disruption caused by COVID-19, HK-dir provided existing project partners with the opportunity to apply for a one-year no cost extension, which has been further extended to two years for the NORPART 2017–21 portfolio. The no-cost extension process became an important ad hoc reporting mechanism for understanding the impact of COVID-19 on projects.

In addition to our national contacts, we are in close contact with our sister agencies both within Europe and beyond. HK-dir acts as coordinator for the Donor Harmonisation Group (DHG). This forum is designed to share expertise, experiences, to enhance co-operation among donors and capacity development programmes implementing agencies, or relevant resources organisations. DHG arranges ad hoc meetings to address current issues as well as an annual forum meeting hosted by one of the member organisations. This network is a valuable forum for discussion and advice, also in relation to the NORPART programme. It introduces us to promising practises, program designs and problem solving measures, and is of great importance for us.

## 5 Appendix

### 5.1 List of eligible NORPART partner countries outside of Norway

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

## 5.2 List of projects

<b>NORPART 2017–21 Portfolio</b>	
NORPART-2016/10003	Master of English education (finalized in 2021)
NORPART-2016/10009	Intercultural historical studies
NORPART-2016/10013	Collaborative learning in biodiversity, excellence in education through two-way North-South mobility
NORPART-2016/10014	Partnership Program Norway - Vietnam (paproNoVi)
NORPART-2016/10023	Norway-Vietnam Industry and Infrastructure Safety Consortium
NORPART-2016/10026	LEMS - Literacy Education in Multilingual Settings
NORPART-2016/10063	KeNoMo - Kenya-Norway Mobility Programme for Computer Science Education
NORPART-2016/10072	Cooperation on Religious Studies in Myanmar - CORSIM
NORPART-2016/10074	The VISCAM project - Visual Anthropology at the universities of Maroua, Ngaoundere and Tromsø
NORPART-2016/10134	ExTending Health Informatics Capacity (ETHIC)
NORPART-2016/10213	EXCEL SMART-Exceeding Learning through Strategic Mobility and Academic Partnership - JUiO-Jimma University, Ethiopia and University of Oslo, Norway - NORPART Project
NORPART-2016/10237	Higher education and Research collaboration on Nanomaterials for Clean Energy Technologies (HRNCET)
NORPART-2016/10239	Human rights and reconciliation in a post conflict multicultural society
NORPART-2016/10255	Education in the field of sustainable tourism and ecology in Norway and Guatemala
NORPART-2016/10285	Policy and Governance Studies (PGS) in South Asia
NORPART-2016/10380	Strengthening Health systems and health care Implementation through Network based graduate training and research Education in Zambia (BERGUNZA-SHINE)
NORPART-2016/10387	Mozambique/Norway Accessibility Partnership (MAP)
NORPART-2016/10470	Ghana-Norway Collaboration in Medical Physics and Radiography Education
NORPART-2016/10471	Enhancing Norway-Ethiopia relations in Journalism and Communication education and research
NORPART-2016/10480	Project to Strengthen Health Economics Capacity at Bergen and Muhimbili Universities (SHEC)

NORPART-2016/10498	Academic cooperation on sustainable, climate-smart agriculture between Zambia and Norway
<b>NORPART 2019–23 Portfolio</b>	
NORPART-2018/10001	UDSM-NTNU Mobility Program in Energy Technology
NORPART-2018/10005	Cuban and Nordic Welfare
NORPART-2018/10032	Striving for Excellence through Action Research and Capacity building in eHealth (SEARCH)
NORPART-2018/10039	Collaboration in Higher Education in Mental Health between Nepal and Norway
NORPART-2018/10045	NOR-LANKA BLUE – innovative network in fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic science
NORPART-2018/10048	Strengthening Education and Research in Conservation biology: a collaboration between Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia and the University of Oslo, Norway
NORPART-2018/10052	Adverse childhood experiences. A partnership between VNU-UED and INN University to strengthen academic activities in psychology, education and other social sciences
NORPART-2018/10068	AAU-NTNU Partnership to Promote Knowledge on Children and Sustainable Development
NORPART-2018/10074	SUSTAIN
NORPART-2018/10082	Transdisciplinary Education for a Sustainable Society (SAMAJ)
NORPART-2018/10091	IPDM NORPART Project: Indigenous, Peace and Diversity Management Programs at Universities of Dilla and Tromsø
NORPART-2018/10121	Enhancing Quality and Internationalisation of Study Programmes Through Mobile Transformative Pedagogy (EQIP)
NORPART-2018/10149	MA Programme in social anthropology – NTNU – Wollo University collaborative project
NORPART-2018/10166	Developing the Teacher Education in Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education and Early Elementary School in Palestine and Norway
NORPART-2018/10178	Malawi-Norway Mobility Programme in Mathematics and Mathematics Education (MaNoMME)
NORPART-2018/10182	Academic Partnership and Student Mobility Foster Evidence-based Practice, Innovation and Quality in Health Sciences Education in Ethiopia and Norway (NorEt Aptitude)

NORPART-2018/10198	Citizen Engagement and Natural Resource Governance Education (CitRes-Edu)
NORPART-2018/10207	Muhimbili-Bergen University Partnership to Enhance Pharmacy Education and Research (PEPER)
NORPART-2018/10213	FOSTERING QUALITY GRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE TRAINING AND RESEARCH THROUGH ENHANCED ACADEMIC COLLABORATION AND MUTUAL STUDENT EXCHANGE (FORTECASE-PROJECT)
NORPART-2018/10254	ANTENNA: Norwegian – African network for training a new generation of entomologists in DNA-based molecular methods
NORPART-2018/10260	UDBS – UiA-SBL: Entrepreneurship Facing Global Competition
NORPART-2018/10277	Establishment of joint research-based education in dentistry in Norway and East Africa
NORPART-2018/10296	NORCAM Exchange
NORPART-2018/10298	Capacity building for joint education and research in applied ecology
NORPART-2018/10304	Collaborative Action for Strengthening Training Capacities in Climate Risk and Natural Resource management (CoSTClim)
<b>NORPART 2022–26 Portfolio</b>	
NORPART-2021/10027	North-South-Alliance for inclusive water, sanitation, and hygiene (All4WASH)
NORPART-2021/10070	Capacity Building in Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for ONE HEALTH (WASH4ONEHEALTH)
NORPART-2021/10095	Higher education and Research collaboration on Nanomaterials for Clean Energy Technologies 2.0 (HRNCET 2.0)
NORPART-2021/10167	Ethiopian Norwegian network in computational mathematics (ENNCóMat)
NORPART-2021/10175	Instituting of research-based education systems for the development of renewable energy technology in circular economy; A joint project among the Universities in Norway, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (Re-Tech)
NORPART-2021/10205	Developing EDucation with Input from CoordinATED research students (DEDICATED)
NORPART-2021/10244	NORPART Expanding Horizons in Journalism and Media Studies



NORPART-2021/10265	Malawi, South Africa and Norway mobility programme in Sustainable Community Development and Eco-Social Change
NORPART-2021/10298	Building knowledge for sustainable biodiversity conservation, from virtual learning to hands-on experience (BIOCOVE)
NORPART-2021/10332	PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH GLOBAL COLLABORATION, STUDENT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, MOBILITY AND TRAINING (EDUPROMO)
NORPART-2021/10334	Ecological Connections: Cultural Studies in Cuba and Norway (ECOCON)
NORPART-2021/10345	Establishing the Circular Economy-based livestock sector through collaborative Educational and Research activities (CEER)
NORPART-2021/10348	Better health through partnership in higher education and bilateral student mobility: collaboration between Pakistan and Norway
NORPART-2021/10355	Collaborative Action for improving educational capacities in Renewable Energy to mitigate climate crisis(CARE)
NORPART-2021/10357	Common Ground – Multidisciplinary artistic practice in public space. Internationalising and nurturing local indigenous knowledge
NORPART-2021/10358	Improving Health Professional Education and capacity in Experimental epidemiology – Bergen-Makerere (HePEd)
NORPART-2021/10373	Strengthening education, research and innovation capacity in sustainable energy for economic development
NORPART-2021/10403	Applied Informatics for Energy System Integration (AIESI)
NORPART-2021/10406	Sustainability education in Guatemala, Colombia and Norway (SEEDs)
NORPART-2021/10434	Enhanced partnership for research capacity of next generation of nutrition researchers in Norway, Tanzania and DR-Congo (EPRENUT)
NORPART-2021/10436	Quantum Technology Education Consortium between Norway, South America and Cuba (QTECNOS)
NORPART-2021/10475	Exchanges between Norway and Latin America to facilitating excellent joint graduate education in biodiversity genomics
NORPART-2021/10488	EPHAM: Enhancing Public Health Capacity through Academic Network and Mobility – VID, Ambo, and Jimma Universities Collaborative Project

NORPART-2021/10502	Curricula Development and Capacity Building in Applied Computer Science for Pakistani Higher Education Institutions (CONNECT)
NORPART-2021/10508	Partnership for Education in Refugee-Host Contexts: Joint learning towards food security and sustainable development in Uganda
NORPART-2021/10543	Building Capacity for Innovation and Advancement of Climate Smart Agriculture in East and Southern Africa
NORPART-2021/10562	Palestine-Norway Partnership to Enhance Population Genomics Education, Research, and Outreach to the Professional-Community (PaNomics)
NORPART-2021/10586	Enhancing Ethics and Integrity Capacity in Medical Research and Clinical Practice (ETHIMED)

### 5.3 NORPART projects on the world map

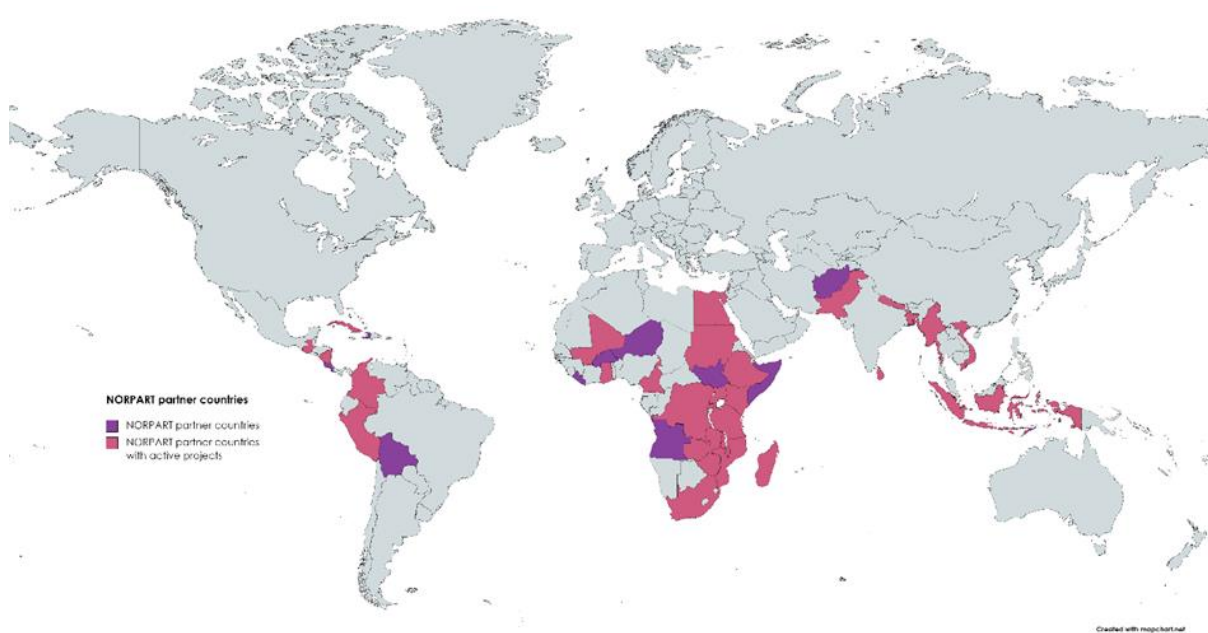
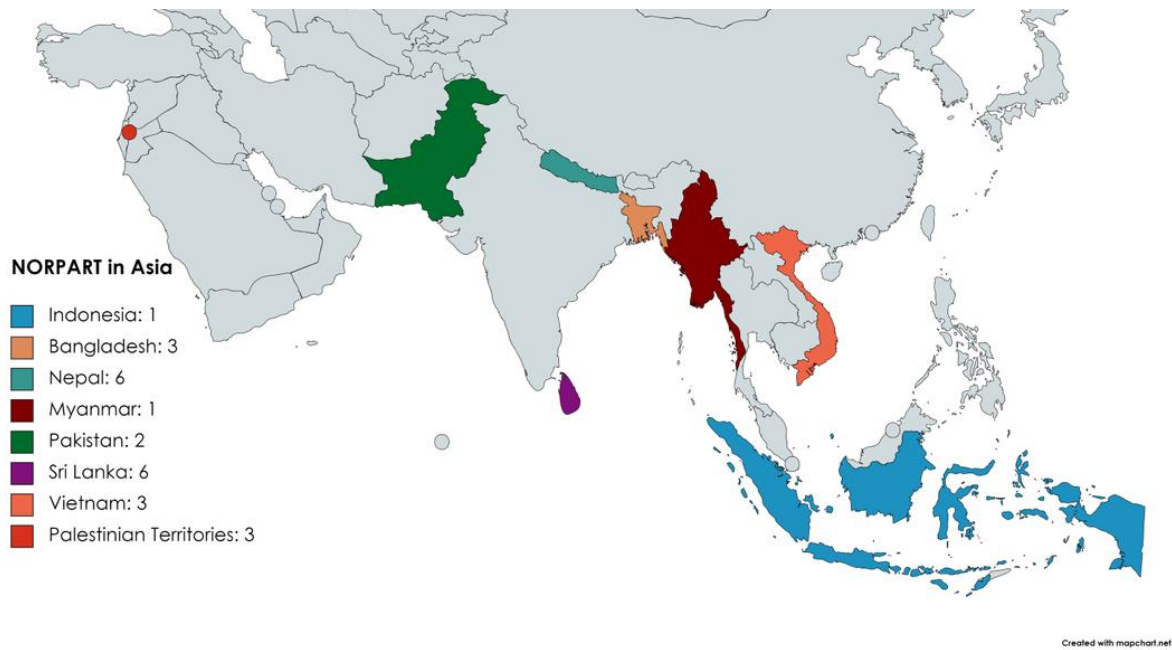


Figure A1: NORPART partner countries – eligible countries and countries with active projects.



*Figure A2: Number of active NORPART projects per country in Asia.*

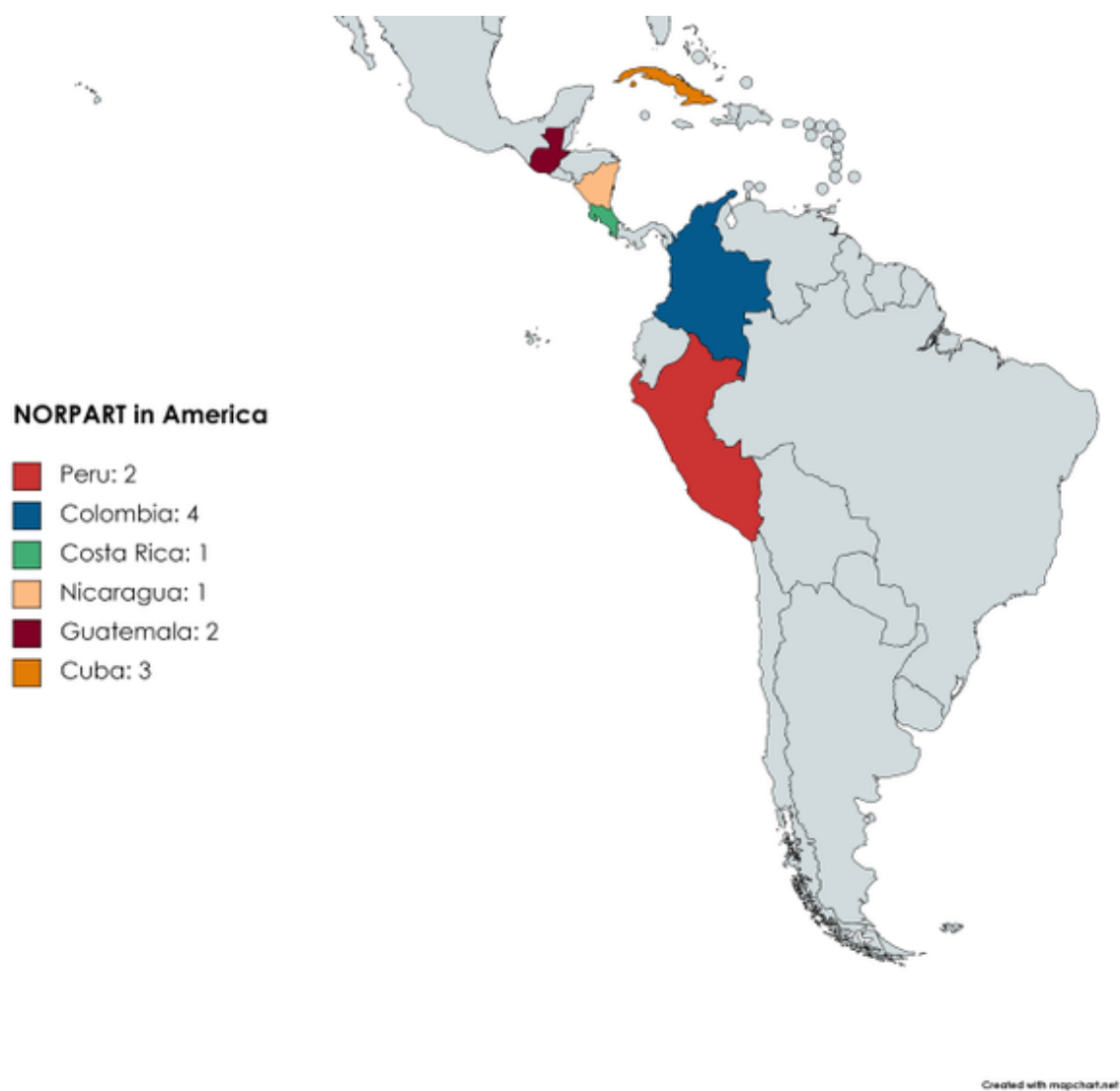


Figure A3: Number of active NORPART projects per country in America.

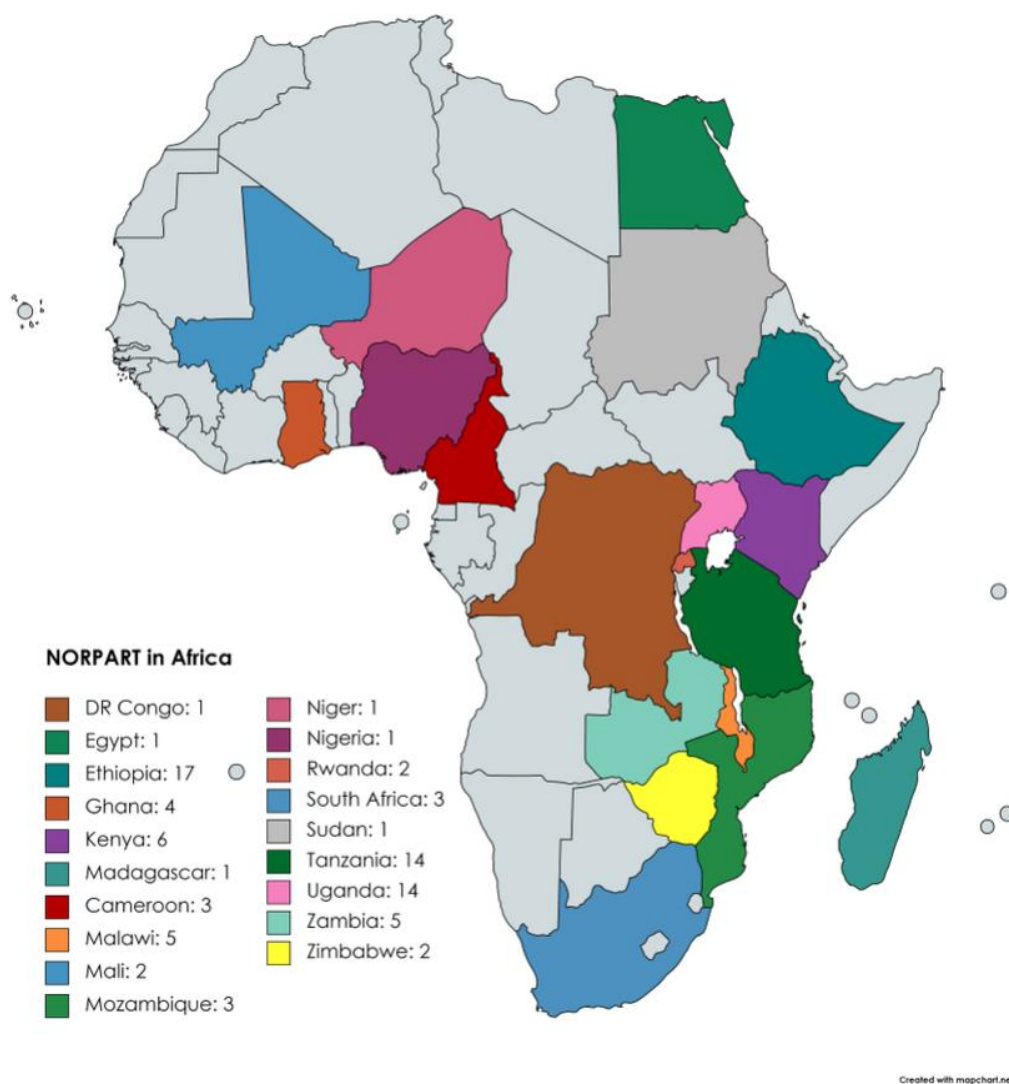


Figure A4: Number of active NORPART projects per country in Africa.

