

Communication plan for the cooperation between Norad and SIU – Research and research-based higher education in the development sector

Revised March 2008



1. Background

History

Norad finances several programmes administered by SIU in the field of higher education and research. These are: the NUFU Programme (Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education)¹, NOMA (Norad's Programme for Master Studies) and ACE (Norad Programme in Arts and Cultural Education). Norad has an increased focus on results, including results from collaboration in higher education and research. In this context Norad entered into a dialogue with SIU, discussing ways in which research results stemming from programmes administered by SIU could better reach Norad staff and thus make a contribution to the pool of resources used by Norad's expert advisers in their work. This dialogue resulted in the development of a communication plan for the cooperation between Norad and SIU on research and research-based higher education in the development sector.

The communication plan has been developed jointly by Norad and SIU and was approved by both organisations in the spring of 2007. The plan was jointly revised by Norad and SIU in March 2008.

From dissemination to communication

In the dialogue between Norad and SIU it has become clear that both parties want to focus on more than just dissemination of research results. An aim is to increase communication between the researchers and the users of the research results throughout the research process and in processes relating to the development of education programmes.

The need for a communication plan

There is considerable communication and dissemination taking place in connection with research projects supported by the NUFU Programme and educational activities supported by NOMA and the other programmes. This plan represents a comprehensive approach to communication. Until now communication relating to research and education has been left to the participating institutions and researchers, but with this plan Norad and SIU are taking an initiative to strengthen and improve the co-ordination of communication activities.

¹ Including NUCCOP (Norwegian University Cooperation Programme for Capacity Development in Sudan) and other additional contracts in the NUFU Programme.

2. Aims

By increasing communication in research and research-based higher education, Norad and SIU seek to:

- contribute towards increasing the relevance of research on development issues and global challenges in developing countries, and of cooperation in research between Norwegian and foreign participants.
- contribute towards increasing the relevance of new education programmes at institutions in the South.
- improve the knowledge and understanding of the importance of higher education and research in development work and to improve the quality and relevance of this work.
- increase the use of research-based knowledge and competence amongst Norway's partners in developing countries, in international organisations, in Civil Society Organisations and generally amongst government departments in their work on global challenges.
- improve the understanding among users of the need for independent, long-term research.

The aim of the plan is to promote increased communication about research and research-based higher education between researchers/educators, users and those responsible for research and development at Norad and SIU by:

- developing a common understanding of the importance of communication and of the various roles, expectations and duties.
- implementing specific measures described in this plan.

3. Higher education and research included in the plan

Communication about research and research results will mostly be linked to activities within the framework of the NUFU Programme. However, there is also research and development work taking place within the other programmes. Many NOMA projects are established as a result of cooperation in research, and the dissemination of research results might also be relevant in relation to such cooperation projects.

Communication about higher education and capacity building will primarily be linked to NOMA and ACE, although education and capacity building are important components also of the other programmes.

SIU also administers other programmes not financed by Norad, which could contribute to communication about research and research-based higher education in the development sector.

4. Clarification of roles

Norad's role

as a financier of higher education and research

While the administration of research activities in other sectors is done by the ministries themselves, Norad has a responsibility for research in the development sector. In addition, Norad administers development funds in the higher education sector. The main reason for this is that Norad shall be a provider of expertise in development cooperation. As a financier Norad shall, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, identify the key educational challenges to Norway's development policy, aid management and capacity building in a long-term perspective. In its administration of research funds Norad shall ensure that there is a good balance between the relevance to users and the long-term perspective of the research programmes. Norad shall also ensure that provisions are made for the increased use of research results and research competence in the development sector.

as a user of research results

Norad's strategy towards 2010 and Norad's personnel policy both emphasise that the organisation's management is responsible for encouraging individual employees to maintain and expand their professional competence. All employees are responsible for actively seeking to obtain knowledge of research taking place in their relevant fields and for keeping informed about new research developments in that field. Employees should also distribute and share this knowledge. All employees should identify their own needs and the needs of their specific field with regards to skills and expertise, and they should make a plan for how to further develop their level of competence. This forms a basis on which individual employees can provide advice and analysis at a high, professional level within the Norad organisation and is a prerequisite for individual employees being able to formulate the current needs for research within their field of expertise.

Norad plays an important role in organising and processing key information for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its diplomatic missions, and the organisation calls upon these institutions in the communications process when it is deemed relevant. Norad shall, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, establish a better framework for giving advice based on results from research and collaboration between institutions of higher education to the Norwegian diplomatic missions and for communicating with these.

SIU's role as a programme administrator

SIU is a public administrative agency with its own board, answerable to the Ministry of Education and Research. SIU shall be a centre of expertise for internationalisation and shall, through its activities, contribute to improving the quality of research and development. SIU administers several international programmes and initiatives. Most initiatives targeting partnerships with developing countries are financed by Norad.

SIU's role as a programme administrator involves some central processes relevant to the issue of communication. Every year SIU obtains reports from all projects supported by the programmes. The format of the reports is determined in cooperation with the individual programme boards. It may also be relevant to communicate with other participants in this process.

SIU takes a coordinating role vis-à-vis the projects and, to a certain extent, sets out guidelines and communicates its expectations of the programmes, especially at the start of a new programme period. SIU is

also responsible for the targeted communication of results and discoveries attributed to the programmes and for making publicly available details of the contents of the programmes. This plan will help SIU strengthen its role and duties in relation to communication about and from projects and institutions receiving support from SIU-administered programmes.

The role of the researchers/educators

Researchers and others involved in project partnerships that are funded by programmes administered by SIU have, in their applications, defined the aims, contents and expected outcome of the partnership, both in terms of research, capacity building and the establishing of higher education programmes. The main aims of the programmes are to create sustainable centres for research and research-based higher education in the South, to communicate research results to user groups in the South and the North and to contribute to capacity and competence building at the participating institutions and in society as a whole.

With this plan Norad and SIU have raised expectations and requirements to researchers and educators by putting more emphasis on communication about and from the activities and their results. It is expected that the researchers/educators will be prepared to enter into a dialogue with the user groups about contents and expected outcome. Such communication processes will strengthen research and educational activities and make these more relevant to the needs of the user groups.

The role of the institutions

The programmes affected by this plan are programmes for cooperation between institutions for higher education and research in Norway and partner institutions in the South. Most of the institutions in Norway are members of the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR).

Institutions for higher education and research receiving funding for cooperation projects from programmes administered by SIU will, at the start of the project, enter into a tripartite contract to which the two main partners for each project (at institution level) and SIU are the parties. These tripartite contracts also include regulations on intellectual property rights (IPR). The institutions are obliged to sign an agreement on the ownership, access and user rights to results generated by a project partnership. The IPR grant the institutions “ownership” of the research results. Nevertheless, they still have an ethical obligation to communicate to the general public details of research, education and results generated by their activities.

Many participating institutions have good infrastructure in place for communicating research and research results by way of in-house report series, journals, newsletters and similar, as well as on their websites. The institutions are encouraged to help ensure that projects in the development sector are promoted through these channels. They must support the projects so that dedicated websites can be set up. Links between these websites and SIU’s webpages must be in place.

The role of the programme boards

Most of the programmes affected by this plan have programme boards, of which the majority of members come from UHR member institutions.

Each programme has its own communication plan or contracted requirements regarding the type of communication activities that should take place. The programme board is a key part of the development and implementation of these plans. However, the communication of the results of a programme is about more than just publishing results and processing information. A programme can strengthen the dialogue between

institutions of higher education and research and the rest of society. The programme board is instrumental in this process.

The programme board shall encourage a dialogue about the programme content and priorities, it shall promote the programme in the community, make available the results of the projects and create final reports. The programme board has several means available for implementing communication initiatives directly with various user groups or by way of more general, public interest-oriented communication.

The composition of the programme boards is regulated by agreements. Norad appoints one member and can also name an observer with the right to speak at programme board meetings.

5. Target groups

Target groups for the plan

Primary target groups

- Norad
- SIU
- The programme boards for programmes administered by SIU

Secondary target groups

- Institutions of higher education and research in the South and the North that are partners in programmes administered by SIU
- Researchers who have been granted project funding from programmes administered by SIU

Target groups for communication

- Authorities and participants in development partnerships: Funding authorities, public sector institutions and civil society organisations (such as NGOs) working in development partnerships will be able to use research and research results as a resource for their work. The Norwegian authorities, including embassies in partner countries, are the most important target group here, also for communication about higher education.
- International research community: Researchers communicate their research – and particularly the results of their research – to colleagues and fellow experts by way of international publications and research conferences. Research results that become known to an international circle of experts can subsequently influence other target groups and can form the basis for new research and research-based higher education.
- Local, national and regional authorities and other public and private actors: The authorities can develop policies and improve practices based on the contents and results of research. Employers, professional organisations and the media are other important actors and possible target groups for communication about higher education and research.
- The local community: Most research carried out with support from the NUFU Programme relates to the solving of problems faced by local populations in a country or a region in the South in terms of life, health, education, the environment or similar. The local community and population are target groups for the communication of this research and its results. Much of this research will also have a global perspective and can have an impact far beyond the local context. The development of higher education programmes must be rooted in communication with local actors on local conditions and needs.

6. Measures

Level	Channel/measures	Description	Responsible
Programme	SIU's web pages	Information about the contents, participants and focus of the programmes. Presentation of projects funded by the programmes. Norad shall ensure that there are better and more visible links to the site and that the site is promoted within the organisation.	SIU, Norad
	Global Knowledge	Global Knowledge features topics relevant to international cooperation in higher education and research in addition to presenting research projects. Published twice a year.	SIU
	Conferences linked to the various phases of the programmes	NUFU: Annual project coordinators' seminar in Norway	SIU
		NUFU: Final/dissemination conference for the third programme period on 4-5 June 2007. SIU and Norad are working together to attract press coverage.	SIU, Norad
		NOMA: International conference in Mozambique, October 2007	SIU
		NOMA: Project coordinator and administrative seminar in Bangladesh, November 2008	SIU
		NUFU: Mid-term conference in Malawi, February 2009	SIU
		NOMA: Conference in the South in 2010 – after the first programme period (2006-2010)	SIU
		NUFU: Final conference 2011 (2012)	SIU

	Thematic seminars/workshops with researchers and various user groups	Annual thematic seminar in Norway, aimed at user groups. The seminar presents research projects supported by the NUFU Programme. Target groups for the seminar are Norad, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant users. SIU helps organise the seminar and acts as an intermediary to the projects. For 2007 this event is incorporated in the dissemination conference. In 2008 SIU and the NUFU Programme board will cooperate with GLOBVAC in the Research Council of Norway to organise a common conference/seminar.	SIU, Norad
	Press and media contact	SIU and Norad's information departments cooperate on strategic initiatives to attract media coverage of interesting research projects. The initiatives are particularly linked to relevant political events as well as events such as conferences and thematic seminars. A joint meeting will be held in 2008.	SIU, Norad
	General information materials/brochures	SIU shall at all times have updated and relevant information materials aimed at the general public, potential applicants for funding and other interested target groups.	SIU
	NOMA magazine	Issues will be published in 2007 and 2009.	
	Newsletter	SIU will develop a subscribable newsletter linked to its web pages. The newsletter shall meet the users' need for information about the programmes covered by this communication plan.	SIU
	Competence networks	Development of web-based competence catalogue in which the CVs of researchers participating in projects funded by SIU-administered programmes are made available to Norad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other users. In the future SIU may be able to give advice with regard to identifying relevant competence for various assignments or similar.	SIU

Projects and institutions	Publications	Publish articles in scientific journals, with emphasis on international peer-reviewed journals. Books, films, media and press coverage.	Individual projects and institutions
	Popular science presentations	Popular scientific presentations.. Use the website <i>forskning.no</i> for dissemination of research results to the Norwegian public.	Researchers / project coordinators
	Contact with the authorities	Establish relationships and networks involving the authorities on different levels in order that the research and research results can have an impact on political decision-making and policy implementation.	Project coordinators
	Information for / communication with the local community	Dialogue with the local communities where higher education and research take place. Presenting research results to communities and decision-makers in order that the results can contribute towards improved policies and practice in relevant areas of society. Development of educational activities in close collaboration with local actors. Communicate the results of the activities back to the local community.	Projects and institutions
	Local/national/regional press	Strategy for how the activities and results should be communicated to the public in the relevant country/countries in the South.	Projects

7. Process for further development of communications

This plan applies to the period 2007-2011. A report on activities related to the communications plan shall be presented annually at the second joint consultative meeting between Norad and SIU. At the joint consultative meeting in the second half of 2010 a self-evaluation of the plan shall be presented. The aim is to present a new communication plan for the next period for debate at the joint consultative meeting in the first half of 2011. The communication plan for the period after 2011 should include more user groups.