

The Norwegian Partnership Program for Collaboration in Higher Education with North America

Program document

1. General

The Norwegian Partnership Program for Collaboration in Higher Education with North America (the Partnership Program) is a four-year program for cooperation with the United States (US) and Canada. The program is funded through the Ministry of Education and Research's North America Strategy for Higher Education Cooperation (2012-2015). The program is administered by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU).

Norwegian institutions of higher education are invited to apply for funds related to higher education collaboration with institutions in the US and Canada. Projects should be faculty initiated and endorsed by the leadership of the institutions.

The total annual allocation for the program is NOK 6 million from 2012-2015*. The annual allocation per project is maximum NOK 500 000 (maximum NOK 2 000 000 in total). All funds will be awarded in 2012, and no new calls for applications are currently planned.

The program period is four years, starting in August 2012. Funding will be given through 2015, and all activities funded by the program must be completed by June 15, 2016.

2. Aim and objectives

The aim of the Partnership Program is to support high quality cooperation, in order to develop and strengthen robust, long-term institutional partnerships between Norway and the US and Canada.

The objectives of the Partnership Program are:

- to increase higher education collaboration between Norway and North America
- to develop strong and sustainable institutional partnerships between institutions in Norway and North America
- to encourage and strengthen the connection between higher education and research collaboration between Norway and North America.
- to contribute to increased mobility of students and staff between Norway and North America.

Increased collaboration with Canada is an important element of the North America Strategy for Higher Education Cooperation (2012-2015). Therefore, 25 per cent of the funds available in the

* subject to continued funding by the Norwegian Parliament.

Partnership Program will be conditionally earmarked for collaboration with Canadian partners, depending on the quality of the applications with Canadian partners.

3. Eligibility

All accredited Norwegian higher education institutions, public and private, are eligible applicants for the Partnership Program. Eligible partner countries are the US and Canada.

All higher education institutions in the partner countries, public or private, are eligible, provided they are fully recognized/accredited in their home country and they provide education at a level comparable to what is offered at the eligible institutions in Norway.

Relevant third party institutions in the US or Canada may be included in the project. The total number of institutions included in the application in any one project is limited to five (5).

Applications within all fields and disciplines are welcome, including multidisciplinary projects.

The projects should be faculty initiated, and must be endorsed by the leadership of the institutions. The proposed project may be linked to existing projects with funding from other sources, adding or developing a higher education dimension.

Projects that have received funding through the “Partnership Program for Collaboration in Higher Education with North America 2008-2011” will not be prolonged in the new program period.

4. Measures and activities

Projects are encouraged to be creative in exploring measures and activities that will contribute to the aims of the program and of the North America Strategy for Higher Education Cooperation (2012-2015). Measures and activities funded through the Partnership Program include, but are not limited to:

- Development of joint courses, study programs or degrees
- Joint teaching and supervision
- Student and faculty mobility (including student internships or work practice)
- Joint seminars, conferences and similar activities clearly linked to the project

Activities not eligible in the Partnership Program include research activities, research publications and participation in research seminars or conferences not clearly linked to higher education. Higher education collaboration is the focus and priority of the program.

5. Application procedures

Interested faculty at Norwegian institutions should submit applications to SIU, based on proposals jointly prepared by the collaborating institutions. All proposals must include objectives, activities, work plans, budget requirements and reflections on the sustainability and risk factors of the project/cooperation.

Applications must be submitted through SIUs administrative system for applications and reporting, Espresso: <http://espresso.siu.no>.

In addition to the online application, two documents must be submitted to SIU:

- A **signature page**, available in Espresso when the application is submitted. This page must be signed by the project coordinator and the Vice-Chancellor/Rector at the Norwegian institution.
- A **letter of intent** from the partner institution(s) in the US/Canada, confirming interest in the proposed collaboration project. The letter of intent should be project specific and signed by the project coordinator and the relevant academic dean at the main partner in North America.

The final deadline for applications is March 29, 2012 at 15.00/3 pm Norwegian time.

The signature page and letter of intent must be mailed to SIU and postmarked on or before 11.04.2012. Incomplete applications, late applications and applications without signature form and/or letter of intent will not be processed.

6. Application assessment; priorities and criteria

The activities of the proposed project must contribute to the aims of the Partnership Program and the North America Strategy for Higher Education Cooperation (2012-2015).

The projects will be assessed based on how they respond to the following priorities:

Institutional commitment: All applications must include information on how the project relates to existing institutional strategies and priorities. The projects must be endorsed by the institutional leadership at both the Norwegian and North American partner institution.

Connection between research and education: Projects should be based on existing research-related collaborations between institutions in Norway and North America, and the collaborative activities must be connected to higher education. Projects should include elements of education at PhD and/or Master levels (graduate level). Projects may include additional measures targeting Bachelor level students.

Mobility: The project must describe strategies for encouraging student mobility, in particular for encouraging North American students to study in Norway.

Sustainability: All applications must include reflections on the completion of the program period, and plans for how the activities introduced and the results achieved during the project period can be sustained beyond the funding period.

Project assessment criteria

The selection process will also include assessment of the following criteria:

- The application demonstrates commitment to the project from both the Norwegian institution and the partner(s) in the US or Canada.
- The application demonstrates faculty commitment to higher education collaboration.
- The application clearly states the connection between and expected synergies from research and higher education collaboration.
- The application demonstrates the complementary strengths of the partners, and the added value of the collaboration.
- The application clearly states how the students of the respective institutions will benefit from the synergy between research and higher education cooperation.
- The application includes plans for joint education activities, e.g. teaching, supervision, courses, degrees, etc.
- The application includes plans for student mobility.
- The application describes the project's perceived potential for creating sustainable institutional relationships.

7. Financial guidelines

The total project sum per application is limited to maximum NOK 2 000 000 over four years. The project may distribute the funds in the program period according to the plans of the project, but the maximum annual amount disbursed from SIU cannot exceed NOK 500 000 plus any remaining funds from previous years. The project period start-up date is August 1, 2012. All activities funded by the program must be concluded by June 15, 2016.

Budget

The budget allows for the following dispositions:

Travels

Travel expenses related to development of the collaboration, such as meetings, study visits, workshops and seminars. Travel expenses for both Norwegian and North American participants may be estimated according to the official Norwegian regulations (Statens reiseregulativ).

Networking/conferences/seminars/workshops

Expenses (other than travel) related to networking and meetings for planning purposes. This also includes expenses related to events included in the project plan that are hosted or contributed to by the project partners, i.e. conferences, workshops, schools, seminars etc.

Course/program development

This item covers costs related to development of new courses, study programs or degrees.

Promotion and dissemination

The project may include costs related to promotion and dissemination of the cooperation project, for example promotion of activities to students, or dissemination of results at partner institutions.

Other operating costs

This item covers expenditures related to the project's activities which are not covered under the previous items. Please describe in the comment section. The project may not include funding for scientific equipment, research publications and participation in research seminars or conferences not clearly linked to the project, or salary compensation.

Mobility – grants for students

The project may include funding for student grants and PhD fellowships to North American and Norwegian students in the budget (Note: the primary source of funding for Norwegian students should be Statens lånekasse for utdanning/The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund). The grants must be related to the project applied for.

Project administration

The project may include administrative overhead of 10 per cent of the total budget. Project administrative costs are intended to contribute to added administrative expenses on department or institutional level resulting from the cooperation project.

Contributions from partner institutions

Applications should include information on any financial contributions to the project from the Norwegian and North American partner institutions. Please include any financial and/or non-monetary contributions made by the partner institutions.

8. Selection procedures

A provisional program board will be appointed to select projects for funding in the Partnership Program. The selection will be aided by evaluations from a group of external evaluators. The program board will decide on projects for funding based on program priorities and the quality of the application.

The board of SIU will handle complaints regarding the process of awarding the program funds. Please refer to SIU's Complaint Regulations[†] on www.siu.no.

9. Reporting procedures

All institutions taking part in the Partnership Program are obliged to submit annual progress reports to SIU using the online reporting system, as well as a final report at the program's completion. SIU is responsible for reporting to the Ministry of Education and Research.

[†] SIU's Complaint Regulations are under revision, and this may affect the procedures for complaints in the Partnership Program. The current Complaint Regulations are valid until the new Regulations are in effect.