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## «Evaluation of the High North Programme»

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## Preface

This report presents the evaluation of the Norwegian High North Cooperation Programme in Education, which has been commissioned by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education, and carried out by ideas2evidence. The programme is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the evaluation assesses its design, administration and achievement of objectives.

Based on both a survey, indepth interviews and desk studies, the evaluation concludes that the programme contributes to the achievement of its overall goal: to expand, strenghten and disseminate knowledge about or relevant to the High North. The programme objectives are seen to be relevant for the overall goal, but to some more than others and there is a need to clarify the link between objectives and the overall goal.

The evaluation report gives clear recommendations for the further administration of the High North Programme in its present programme period, and for the development of the programme approaching a possible new programme period.

*The Norwegian Center for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) is a public sector agency reporting to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. On 1 January 2018, SIU, the Norwegian Agency for Digital Learning in Higher Education (NUV) and the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme (PKU) were merged. The new organisation is intended to promote quality in higher education, tertiary vocational education and artistic research through national and international incentive schemes. It will also strengthen quality through internationalisation in basic education.*

*One of SIU's most important tasks is to broaden and strengthen the knowledge base for further internationalisation of Norwegian education through reporting, analysis and counselling. The purpose of this activity is to improve the knowledge base on which the Government and institutions in the education sector shape their policies, strategies and actions.*

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## Executive summary

### *Programme design*

We consider the objectives to be relevant in order to reach the overall goal, but see a need to clarify the link between objectives and the overall goal. We also believe that opening up for more countries could contribute towards the overall goal. Further, it may be necessary to prolong the project period for the most ambitious projects, as we find that the time-frame is insufficient for many projects. The evaluation also uncovers a need to adjust the limitations on funding for salary, as lack of such funds makes it difficult to recruit academic staff to projects, and many projects generate a substantial administrative burden.

We find the list of eligible activities to be relevant and coherent with the programme's objectives and overall goal. Student participation in international research projects is considered particularly relevant to achieve several of the programme objectives. Further, mobility, which is the most commonly funded activity in the programme, is viewed as the most challenging, partly due to difficulties with recruitment. Dissemination activities are in our view under-used in the programme.

### *Programme administration*

We find the calls for proposals to be adequate, clear and informative. Further, we perceive the evaluation procedures to be both thorough and comprehensive, providing a solid basis for selecting projects that correspond to the objectives of the programme. We find that there is room for improvement in the reporting form, notably in reducing overlapping reporting categories, and in facilitating knowledge sharing between the projects.

### *Achievement of objectives and overall goal*

We find that the programme contributes to its objectives – although to some more than others – as well as to the achievement of the overall goal.

The programme contributes to a large degree to increase and strengthen higher education cooperation about matters relevant to the High North with the cooperating countries. This is indicated by the number of mobilities and joint courses, the projects' self-assessments, and the fact that one third of the projects are entirely new partnerships. The programme also contributes to strong and sustainable partnerships. Most of the completed projects have continued their collaboration with partners outside of Norway after the end of the project period, and all the incomplete projects plan to continue their collaboration.

The programme's contribution to strengthen the connection between higher education and research collaboration relating to the High North is more moderate. Student involvement in international research projects is not widespread, although it is an important activity for achieving this objective. Further, although 30% of the projects have a formal non-academic partner, strengthen the links between the private and public sectors is the objective to which the projects find they contribute the least. Field studies suggest that lack of interaction may be a problem. The programme contributes to some extent to achieve high and broad participation nationally, and in cooperation with the six countries. A geographical bias in the project portfolio, both in terms of Norwegian main institution and in terms of foreign main partner lowers our assessment of this objective.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### About the evaluation

This report presents the evaluation of the Norwegian High North Cooperation Programme in Education (hereafter: HNP). The evaluation has been commissioned by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (hereafter: SIU) and carried out by ideas2evidence.

The purpose of the evaluation has been threefold: 1) to assess the programme's achievements in light of (vis-à-vis) the overall goals, objectives and general success criteria as outlined in the agreement between SIU and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter: MFA), the HNP programme document and calls for proposals; 2) to give recommendations for the further operation of the HNP within the scope of the existing programme period, and 3) to give recommendations for development of a revised HNP in 2018.

The evaluation is based on the following data sources:

- 1) A survey directed at project coordinators at all Norwegian institutions that have received funding through the programme. The survey was sent to all 51 project coordinators, out of which 40 responded. This equals a response rate of 78%.
- 2) Interviews with programme coordinators and head of department at SIU, and with programme owner in the MFA.
- 3) Field studies of four projects that have received support through the programme, at three main partner institutions in Norway: The University of Tromsø - The Arctic University of Norway, campus Tromsø (hereafter UiT Tromsø) and campus Narvik (hereafter UiT Narvik), the University of Oslo and the University of Bergen. For each of the field visits, the following roles were interviewed: the Norwegian project coordinator, the project coordinator at the main partner institution outside of Norway, faculty and students who have participated in the projects and department heads at the Norwegian institution. The majority of the interviews were conducted during the field study. However, for practical reasons, some supplementary interviews were carried out by phone. In total, 21 people were interviewed as part of the field studies.
- 4) Data from Espresso, SIU's web-based system for application and reporting, including data on funding, partners, activities, mobility and project goal self-assessment.
- 5) Annual reports from the projects, calls for application, and policy documents.

In addition to the above, we have sent e-mails to the projects that received funding for preparatory visit but that did not result in a long-term project. However, none of the recipients have responded to our e-mails.

The report has five main chapters. This first chapter gives a brief introduction to the programme, its background, design and its development throughout the programme period. The second chapter provides an assessment of the programme design. Chapter three reviews the administration of the programme, including the calls for application, the selection process and the reporting and follow-up of the projects funded by the programme. In chapter four we assess the extent to which the

programme has contributed to achieving its objectives thus far in the programme period. The final chapter (five) provides recommendations for further development of the programme.

## The High North Programme

The Norwegian High North Policy has, since the launch of the Barents 2020 programme in 2005, acknowledged the crucial role of knowledge and research in handling the unique challenges facing the Arctic region and in exploiting its potential. Furthermore, academic cooperation has been seen as a means to strengthen the ties between the countries of the Arctic region, as well as strengthening the links between academia and the private sector.

Between 2007 and 2016, the Barents 2020 grant scheme funded a scholarship programme which promoted the mobility of students and faculty between HEIs in Northern-Norway and Russia, the U.S. and Canada. Japan and the Republic of Korea (hereafter: South Korea) were included in the programme in 2013.

The HNP was launched as a five-year programme in 2013. This programme expanded both the geographical and the collaborative scope of the scholarship programme by including HEIs nationwide, and by encouraging more ambitious collaboration projects, including a wider range of collaboration activities than mobility alone. The programme combines two areas of priority in the Norwegian High North Strategy: knowledge and international cooperation. By contributing to strengthening Norway's role as a leading nation in producing knowledge relevant to the High North while at the same time strengthening the bilateral relationships with the countries of the Arctic region, the HNP contributes to the aims of the High North Strategy. The HNP is funded through the MFA grant scheme, Arctic 2030, which was launched in 2014 as an extension of the Barents 2020 programme, and is administered by SIU.

The programme goal is to expand, strengthen and disseminate knowledge about or relevant to the High North. This is to be achieved by encouraging and funding cooperation initiatives between institutions of higher education in Norway and similar institutions in Canada, the U.S., Russia, China, Japan, and South Korea. Further, the programme supports projects involving two or more HEIs, as well as research institutes, NGOs, public agencies and private companies in Norway or in the partner countries. The programme emphasises educational activities, and the link between research and education is deemed important in order to establish more long-term and sustainable partnerships. The programme supports projects within all academic fields and includes all three levels of higher education.

The funding is split between two project categories:

- 1) Long-term cooperation projects with a project period of 4 years,<sup>1</sup> and an annual allocation per project up to 500,000 (max. 2 million in total).
- 2) Limited cooperation activities (short-term projects), with a project period of 2 years, and a total allocation of 300,000 per project.

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<sup>1</sup> In the 2015 call, the time frame was 3 years with an allocation of maximum 1,5 mill.

In addition to these two categories, the programme provides financial support up to 70,000 for preparatory visits in order for projects to develop an application for a long-term project with a partner in Japan or the South Korea.

Over the course of the programme period, the HNP has funded a total of 51 projects, out of which 26 are long-term projects and 25 are limited cooperation activities. In addition, the programme has funded nine preparatory visits. Data from SIU shows that there has been a tendency towards relatively more long-term projects and fewer short-term projects over the course of the programme period.<sup>2</sup> Table 1 gives an overview of the number of applications, the number of awarded projects, and the award rate per project category for the years 2013 through 2016. Within the long-term project category, both the number of applications and the number of awarded projects have increased from the first to the last call. The trend is different for the limited cooperation projects. While the number of applicants was high in the programme's first year, considerably fewer applied to this project category in the following two years. In 2016, when applying for long-term cooperation was no longer an option, the number of applicants for short-term cooperation was record high. The award rate has also fluctuated, with the highest rate of 56% in 2014, and the lowest rate in 2016. 13 applications for preparatory visits were received by SIU in the 2013-2015 time-span, of which 70% were awarded funding.

**Table 1: Number of applications, awarded projects, and award rates per project category, 2013-2016.**

	Long-term cooperation		Limited cooperation		Preparatory visits	
	Applications	Awarded projects	Applications	Awarded projects	Applications	Awarded projects
<b>2013</b>	17	5 (29 %)	24	8 (33 %)	1	0
<b>2014</b>	20	9 (45 %)	9	5 (56 %)	6	5
<b>2015</b>	25	13 (52 %)	9	4 (44 %)	6	4
<b>2016</b>	-	-	27	8 (30 %)	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: SIU (2016).

<sup>2</sup> With the exception of 2016, when the call only included limited cooperation activities.

## Chapter 2: Programme design

A coherent programme design is essential in order for a programme to achieve its goals and objectives. In this chapter we discuss the programme's design in view of the overall goal of the programme. The programme's design includes the objectives, its main features, such as the list of eligible countries, the timeframe and budget, and its content, i.e. the project categories and the range of activities that the programme supports.

### Objectives

The overall goal of the HNP is to expand, strengthen and disseminate knowledge about or relevant to the High North. In other words, the programme should contribute to producing new knowledge, and to spread new and existing knowledge to a wider audience.

Four objectives are outlined in the initial programme document:

- increase and strengthen higher education cooperation about matters relevant to the High North, between institutions in Norway and in Canada, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, and the U.S. This includes increasing the number of jointly developed courses, programmes and degrees as well as increasing mobility of students and faculty
- develop strong and sustainable institutional partnerships in higher education and research
- strengthen the connection between higher education and research collaboration related to High North issues
- strengthen the links between higher education and the public and private sectors

The agreement between SIU and the MFA includes a fifth objective: achieve high and broad participation in the programme nationally and in the cooperation with the six countries. The short- and long-term projects have the same objectives.

The programme's goal structure reflects a mix of educational and foreign policy goals. While the overall goal clearly harmonises with the aim of the Norwegian High North Strategy to strengthen Norway's role as a leading nation in producing knowledge relevant to the High North, the objectives reflect important national educational priorities that can be found in the recent white paper on Norwegian higher education (Meld. St. 16, 2016-17).

Although we consider all the objectives to be relevant in order to reach the overall goal, we believe that the programme's mix of policy goals contributes to weakening the link between the overall goal and the objectives. We therefore see a need to clarify the links between objectives and overall goal.

As an example, one of the objectives is to strengthen the links between higher education and the public and private sectors. Although this is an important educational goal per se, the tradition for such cooperation is still weak in parts of the HE-sector. Spelling out the links between objective and goal may lead the applicants and awarded projects to see the potential of such collaborations. Another example is the programme's emphasis on the development of strong and sustainable institutional partnerships. Although we acknowledge that it may be easier to produce new knowledge within stable and solid partnerships, they are not necessarily a prerequisite for doing so.

Essential knowledge may be produced and disseminated also within less formalised and temporary collaborations.

Further, we find some potential conflicts in the goal structure. As an example, the emphasis on building strong and sustainable institutional partnerships may conflict with the ambition to ensure broad participation in the programme. Building strong and sustainable institutional partnerships across different cultures and educational systems may be very resource-demanding. Successful achievement of this objective may therefore require channelling more funding to fewer projects. However, such a solution would reduce participation and therefore conflict with the objective to ensure high and broad participation.

## Countries

### Relevance

The current list of eligible countries represents three of the leading countries in the Arctic Council – The U.S., Canada and Russia – as well as three observer countries – Japan, South Korea and China. According to the MFA, these represent three of the most prominent observer countries.

In other words, these are all countries that are particularly relevant from a foreign policy perspective. The choice of countries is also in line with the Norwegian High North policy. The inclusion of Asian countries reflects an increased interest in the region of North East Asia in the Government's High North Strategy. According to the white paper outlining the strategy, China, Japan and South Korea will have significant influence on the development of the Arctic region in the years to come. The geographical extension of higher education collaboration to these three countries can thus be seen as a means to strengthen the dialogue between Norway and a region of importance to the High North (Meld. St. 7 (2011-2012)).

However, the overall goal of the programme is not primarily to strengthen the bilateral relationship between Norway and these countries, but to increase knowledge about the High North. One relevant criterion when selecting countries could therefore be their contribution to High North relevant knowledge, e.g. their research production. In this perspective, we find the choice of countries to be somewhat inadequate.

A recent literature study conducted by NIFU finds that the six countries' contribution to research on the Arctic varies greatly. While the U.S. produces most research articles on the Arctic and Canada ranks third, China, Japan and South Korea rank 9, 11 and 17 respectively (Aksnes, 2017, p.20). Other significant contributors to Arctic research, such as the UK, Denmark and Sweden, are not included in the programme on the grounds that collaboration with European countries should be channelled through the Erasmus+ and Nordplus programmes. They may, however, be included as network partners if their participation is central to the partnership, but are not eligible to receive funding through the programme. Although the decision not to include European countries is legitimate, we believe that they could have contributed positively to the overall goal of the programme. Some project coordinators also believe opening up for more main partner countries would strengthen the programme. Some countries that are specifically mentioned are Denmark/Greenland, and the UK. As one survey respondent says:

*The addition of new countries will strengthen the project. They do not have to be directly connected to the High North, but with research that could be relevant.*

Further, we find the communication regarding eligible network partner countries to be somewhat unclear. The possibility of including as network partners institutions from countries outside the main cooperation countries is outlined in the formal eligibility requirements in the calls for proposals. In the application form, however, this possibility is not clearly outlined. Here, eligible network partners are defined as institutions in Norway or in the partner countries.

### Experiences

The evaluation shows that the programme works better in some countries than in others. According to our survey, project coordinators who cooperate with institutions in Russia, Canada and South Korea<sup>3</sup> tend to be more satisfied with the collaboration process than other project coordinators.<sup>4</sup> Around 85% of the project coordinators who cooperate with Russia and Canada choose the term “excellent” when describing the collaboration with these countries, while none of them choose the term “challenging”. The positive experience with Canadian and Russian institutions may reflect a longer tradition for research collaboration on High North issues with these countries, and with Russia in particular. However, some projects report of language barriers as a challenge in the projects with Russian main partners.

From the survey, we find that projects with Japan and the U.S., together with China, although by a minority of the projects, are the only ones where the collaboration process is described as challenging. In projects with Japanese partners, different schedules that complicate communication and staff mobility, and challenges with recruiting students are mentioned as complicating factors in the projects’ final reports. In projects with American partners, recruiting students and staff for mobility is a main challenge. Programme coordinators at SIU confirm these findings, and report that it has been somewhat challenging involving American partners actively in the programme.

### Programme budget

The programme has a total budget of 53 million over a time-period of five years. Slightly less than 49 million have been allocated to project funding, of which approximately 1 million will remain unused due to reduced demand from some of the projects in the programme. 4,225 million have been set aside for programme administration.

From SIU’s records we find the total allocation towards project funding to be generous. The three calls that were planned in the programme all resulted in unused funds, and SIU therefore organised a fourth call to allocate these funds to qualified projects. Furthermore, most of the projects in both the short- and long-term project categories have received the amount applied for. Over the whole programme period, the discrepancy between the funded amount and the total amount that the awarded projects have applied for, is relatively low, 1.6 million.

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<sup>3</sup> Only two of the projects have South Korean institutions as main partners. Both of the project coordinators describe the collaboration process as excellent.

<sup>4</sup> The question also includes network partners.

On one hand, the under-use of funds can be seen as an indication that the budget frame has been too large in relation to the sector's capacity to participate in the programme. On the other hand, it may indicate limited awareness of the programme in the target group, which is not surprising, as building awareness of a new programme takes time and effort. Should the programme continue, more of the funding may be absorbed, as more institutions and researchers become aware of the programme. With the considerable High North relevant research being conducted at several Norwegian HEIs, we believe there is an unreleased potential for more HNP projects in the sector. More marketing could contribute to releasing this potential.

The budget for programme administration has been somewhat inadequate. According to SIU, the budget does not cover all costs related to the administration of the programme. Financial management, corresponding to approx. 67.500 annually, is currently funded entirely by SIU. Furthermore, running two parallel calls annually is costly, and SIU spends considerable resources on carrying out thorough evaluations of each application. If the number of applications increases, the programme may require more resources for administration, or the selection process may need to be rationalised.

### **Programme period**

Compared to the three-year scholarship programme, the HNP has a relatively long programme period. A five-year perspective is in our view necessary for a programme that includes partner countries with very different educational systems and cultures, and with which the Norwegian educational sector has a short history for collaboration. The ambitious objectives in the programme, notably to strengthen institutional collaboration and develop sustainable partnerships, also favour a long programme period.

However, with projects running for two and four years, adding a year to the programme period could be beneficial as it would have permitted a coupling of the two project categories, where short-term funding could serve as a preparation for a long-term project. There are some examples of partnerships that have started as limited collaboration activities, and that have later received funding to continue as a long-term project. However, within a programme period of five years, this has only been possible by reducing the time- and budgetary frame for the long-term project.

### **Short and long-term project categories**

The programme funds limited cooperation activities with up to 300 000 over two years, and long-term projects with up to 2 million over four years.<sup>5</sup> Of the total funded amount, the programme has allocated approx. 7,3 million to limited cooperation activities and 40,8 million to long-term projects.

### **Funding**

The project coordinators' assessment of their projects' contribution to achieve SIU's cross-programme objectives, suggest that a lot may be achieved within the current financial frames and time-limits. On a scale from 1-5, where 1 indicates low contribution to achievement of objective, and 5 indicates high contribution, the average score is above the middle value on six of the seven objectives that the project coordinators report on.

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<sup>5</sup> 1.5 million over three years in the last call.

**Table 2: Project coordinators' self-assessment on SIU's cross-programme objectives, average score among long- and short-term projects. N=35**

	Increased collaboration involving both research and higher education activities	Increased higher education collaboration involving enterprises in the public and private sectors	Increased mobility of students and academic staff between the partner countries	Increased number of students involved in international research projects	Improved quality of education offered at the institution in Norway	Strengthened institutional cooperation between Norwegian institutions and institutions in the partner countries	Sustainable partnerships that will last beyond the project period
<b>Long-term</b>	4,28	2,56	4,24	3,00	3,96	4,60	4,52
<b>Short-term</b>	3,67	3,11	3,56	2,78	3,56	3,78	3,44

Source: Espresso/SIU.

Unused funds may be an indication that the funding categories are adequate. When reviewing the eight completed projects that have submitted their final reports, we find that six projects report of unused funds. All of these are short-term projects.<sup>6</sup>

However, findings indicate a need for an adjustment of the limitations on funding for salary. This issue recurs across project reports, survey and interviews. The argument is that lack of funds for salary makes it difficult to recruit academic staff to the projects, as it often involves an extra effort that is not compensated for. This may also include staff at other institutions that are not part of the partnership, but that are necessary e.g. to develop new courses. According to one project coordinator who responded to the survey, it is:

*...hard to engage top level faculties with no funds/compensation for their hours spent on courses development and delivery, as well as doing research with students.*

Another argument is that the projects in some cases generate a substantial administrative workload, and that funding to cover salary for administrative support could reduce the burden. As one project coordinator says in the survey:

*Without adequate administrative support, these projects are extremely difficult to implement. They are also very time consuming, and not very profitable for academic production.*

### Time frame

Several findings suggest that the time-frame is insufficient for some projects. From the annual reports, we find that 38% of the project coordinators report some kind of delay during the process, the majority of which are long-term projects. Although not all delays have had consequences for the achievement of objectives, they illustrate the fact that collaboration processes need time to evolve.

A longer project period may be particularly relevant for the most ambitious projects, e.g. projects that include complex activities such as the development of joint courses and programmes with

<sup>6</sup> As none of the long-term projects are completed yet, we do not have similar data for this project category.

partners in countries where the collaboration is described as more challenging, such as Japan and China. One informant who calls for a longer time-frame, says:

*It takes so long setting up new educational practices within two countries of very different culture and administration, that we would really have benefited from extra time.*

Another project coordinator for a long-term project believes that:

*for modules, four years is enough. For a whole programme, we would need more people and more time.*

For the short-term projects, too, we question whether the current time-frame is sufficient given the ambitious objectives in the programme. In their self-assessments, the short-term projects report lower contribution to almost all programme objectives, compared to the long-term projects, and most markedly on objectives related to sustainable and strong partnerships. On the objective Strengthened institutional cooperation between Norwegian institutions and institutions in the partner countries, limited cooperation activities score 3,78 points on average, while long-term projects score 4,6 points. Similarly, on the objective Sustainable partnerships that will last beyond the project period, limited cooperation activities score 3,44 on average and long-term projects 4,52. A project coordinator for one of the limited cooperation activity projects suggest that the programme should allow for a “preparatory” period in the project, to learn to know the partners and establish a good relationship before implementing the actual project activities.

The fact that the two-year projects report lower contribution to objectives is not surprising, given that they work towards the same objectives as the long-term projects, but with substantially less time and funding. Although we find it expedient that all projects work towards the same programme objectives, the expectations as to what results the different project categories can produce, should be adjusted according to the given time- and budget frames. The programme document and the calls for proposals do not differentiate between the two categories when it comes to expected achievements, but we presume that SIU takes this into account when assessing the projects’ achievements.

### Preparatory visits

In addition to project funding, the programme has allocated approx. 430,000 for preparatory visits to institutions that want to apply for long-term project funding with partners in Japan, China and South Korea. We have limited information about these visits, but SIU’s records indicate that this funding so far has had a moderate effect in terms of awarded projects. Less than half of the funded visits have resulted in long-term projects.<sup>7</sup> When asked in the survey how important the funding for preparatory visits was for the realisation of their project, two of the project coordinators replied that it has been decisive, while one of them describes it as not decisive.<sup>8</sup> Despite moderate results, we believe that this kind of funding is necessary in order to stimulate collaboration with the Asian countries, due to cultural and educational differences and a shorter tradition for educational collaboration.

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<sup>7</sup> Of the nine funded visits, six have resulted in a project application. Four of these have been awarded funding.

<sup>8</sup> The respondents could choose between the categories “not decisive”, “of some importance” and “decisive”.

## Project activities

### Overview

The range of activities supported in the programme corresponds to a large extent to those of other SIU-programmes. The activities are split in three main categories: Project development, implementation of education activities, and collaboration with enterprises. Project development includes activities such as project meetings and dissemination activities. Education activities include mobility, seminars/workshop, joint teaching and supervision, and joint courses, programmes and degrees. Collaboration with enterprises include activities such as internships, guest lecturing and involvement in student projects. The projects may also include activities that are not specified in the programme. The table below presents the most commonly funded activities throughout the programme period.

**Table 3: Funded activities and share of projects<sup>9</sup>**

Activity	% of projects
Student and staff mobility (long-term and short-term)	76 %
Joint teaching and supervision incl. guest lecturing	61 %
Development of joint courses, programmes and degrees	47 %
Seminars and workshops	45 %
Publication and dissemination activities	35 %
Collaboration activities with enterprises	31 %
Student participation in research activities/project	24 %

Source: Espresso/SIU

Increasing mobility and the number of jointly developed courses, programmes and degrees, are part of objective 1. Table 3 shows that mobility is the most commonly funded activity in the programme, forming part of 76% of the projects, while almost half of the projects involve the development of joint courses, programmes or degrees. Considering that disseminating knowledge is an essential part of the overall goal of the programme, we find it somewhat unsatisfactory that no more than roughly a third of the projects include such activities.

### Relevance

On the whole, we find the list of activities to be coherent with the programme's objectives. As an example, dissemination and publication is directly relevant to the overall programme goal. We also find the development of joint courses or programmes to be highly relevant in this regard, as such courses and programmes may reach a broad group of future students once implemented. Joint development activities are also relevant for developing sustainable partnerships, as it requires close collaboration over time, and results in a product that all partners feel ownership to. Further, involving students in research activities is highly relevant to strengthen the links between research and education as it allows students to work closely with researchers over time.

In the survey, we asked for the project coordinators' assessment of their project activities' contribution to achieve each of the programme objectives. With the exception of collaboration

<sup>9</sup> The designation of some activities has changed over the course of the programme. We have merged all overlapping activities when carrying out the calculations. An example is student and staff mobility, which also include long-term mobility and short-term mobility.

activities with enterprises, all activities are considered by more than half of the project coordinators to contribute to a large extent to one or more of the programme objectives.

However, some activities are considered more relevant than others. Student participation in research activities, joint teaching and supervision (incl. guest lecturing) and seminars and workshops are considered by project coordinators to contribute the most to the programme's objectives. 75% of the project coordinators consider student participation in research activities to contribute to a large degree both to increased collaboration that involves both research and higher education activities as well as to developing sustainable partnerships.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, 75% consider joint teaching and supervision to contribute to a large degree to strengthened institutional cooperation, while 70% consider it to contribute to a large degree to developing sustainable partnerships. Activities such as the development of joint courses, programmes and degrees and publication and disseminating are also considered to a large extent to contribute to strengthened institutional cooperation, but less than other activities. Interestingly, we find that mobility is considered less relevant than other activities to reach these objectives.

### Implementation and challenges

According to the survey, mobility is the activity that the participants experience as most challenging. More than one of four projects with mobility answer "to a large extent", when asked whether they have experienced challenges in implementing the activity. An additional 33% answer "to some degree". Developing courses, programmes and degrees appears less challenging, despite the complex character of this activity. Only 11% of the relevant respondents answers that they have experienced challenges "to a large degree". However, an additional 56% has experienced challenges "to some degree". The least challenging activity is student participation in research activities and projects.

A review of the annual reports shows that difficulties with recruitment to mobility and other project activities is one of the most typical challenges in the projects. Several project coordinators experience difficulties recruiting students to mobility, in particular longer stays. The challenge applies to both Norwegian and international students. As one international project coordinator says:

*[It is] challenging to attract Norwegian students for incoming mobility. Maybe summer or winter school, (...), but not for the whole semester.*

Lack of funding to compensate researchers is frequently referred to as a barrier for recruitment of staff. As one project coordinator reports in the survey:

*It is quite hard to get academic staff to teach extra, as needed in this SIU project.*

Difficulties with recruitment may also be caused by more systemic differences. Differences in educational systems are reported as a challenge in one third of the reports that we have reviewed.<sup>11</sup> One example of systemic differences is that many graduate programmes in the U.S. lack the

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<sup>10</sup> Only eight of the project coordinators who responded to the survey, have included this activity in their projects.

<sup>11</sup> 32 reports have been reviewed. This includes all available reports that included the section "challenges and lessons learned".

necessary flexibility for students to go on exchange. Other systemic differences may relate to admission rules, credit systems or the academic calendar.

Scheduling is another challenge in many of the partnerships. Different timetables, holiday schedules and time zones make it difficult to find time for meetings, schedule guest lectures and organise exchanges. A substantial part of the projects also experiences financial restraints in the projects. High travel costs, limited funding for salary for academic staff and a substantial amount of administration are challenges mentioned by several projects.

Some projects also report of considerable challenges related to language barriers and cultural differences, although it is less frequently mentioned as a challenge than the factors described above. Misunderstandings due to cultural and language differences complicate communication and may be a barrier for student mobility. In one of the field studies the mobility stays were reduced due to language difficulties:

*The initial plan was to have students as interns for at least one month, but the students did not want to spend that long time (...), mainly because of the language barrier.*

In order to mitigate some of these challenges, a suggestion could be to channel more time and resources toward meetings between the institutions. As one of the informants in the field study says:

*The project coordinator should spend more time on visits. It should be specified in the programme that the project coordinator is expected to visit the partner institution. It creates trust, and would be good for recruitment and for spreading information [about the project].*

## Chapter 3: Programme administration

In this chapter, we will review the administration of the High North Programme. More specifically, this part of the review is an assessment of the various administrative processes of the programme. These include the calls for proposals, the selection of projects eligible for funding, reporting requirements and the follow-up of existing projects. The overarching question is whether the administration of the programme has been adequate in relation to the objectives of the programme and the administrative practice as established by SIU. It is SIU's role and performance as an administrator of the programme that is the focus of evaluation in this chapter.

### Calls for proposals

In our review of the calls for proposals, we have examined whether they clearly state the objectives of the programme, if they include all relevant and necessary information, and whether the selection criteria are clearly defined and easily understandable.

There have been four annual calls for proposals, from 2013 through 2016. The information in the calls is based on the *Programme Document 2013-2018*, which was developed in conjunction by SIU and the MFA. For each call, SIU has developed a new call document, based on the Programme Document. In addition to the calls, SIU has issued guidelines every year, which provides additional information, and instructions on how to fill out the application.

All four call documents clearly state the goal and objectives of the programme, and include other key information such as activities that are eligible for funding and submission deadlines. However, the calls have become more comprehensive over the years. While the 2013 call document did not include information about selection criteria,<sup>12</sup> the 2015 call is far more extensive and includes a more detailed description of the selection criteria.

Overall, the project coordinators consider the information in the calls to be largely sufficient. 70% answers "to a large degree" and none "to a small degree" when asked whether the calls include the information that was necessary to write the application. In line with our review of the calls, the survey also shows that they share of respondents that consider the calls to lack necessary information has decreased over the years. While 30% of the project coordinators that received funding in 2013 found that the calls "to some degree" included the information that was necessary to write the application, this applies to 20% in 2015.

The positive assessments are corroborated in interviews with project coordinators. The informants found the calls to be straightforward and easy to understand, and one informant found the guidelines to be helpful in that they make clear what the applicant should accentuate in the application.

Looking at the selection criteria, we find that they have become more specific and defined over the course of the programme period. We would describe the selection criteria as fairly general and vague

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<sup>12</sup> Selection criteria can be found in the Programme document, which the applicants are referred to for further information

in 2013.<sup>13</sup> In the 2015 call, they are more specific and comprehensive, comprising both *specific* selection criteria which concern the project’s ability to contribute to the objectives of the programme, and *general* selection criteria, which concerns the quality of the project proposal and the quality of the project team and collaborations.

The 2015 call clearly states that projects will be assessed on their ability to contribute to the fulfilment of each of the objectives of the programme, and each objective is written out in full text, thereby leaving no ambiguity as to what the objectives of the programme are. This is a significant improvement from the 2013 call, according to which “projects will be selected based on the priorities of the programme...”, and “The activities of the proposed project must contribute to the aims of the programme...”, without referring directly to neither the priorities nor the aims of the programme.

Findings from the survey also indicate that the selection criteria are clear and easily understandable. 75% of the project coordinators answers “to a large degree” when asked whether the conditions for funding are easily understandable, and none answers “to a small degree”. In line with our review of the calls, the survey shows that the share of project coordinators who found the conditions for funding to be easily understandable only “to some degree” decreased from 30 to 20%.

Overall, we find the selection criteria to be relevant in order to achieve the programme objectives. However, this is most clear in the 2015 call, where the selection criteria are more specified and refer to the programme objectives. The 2016 call is a step backwards, as only two of the four objectives are made explicit in the selection criteria.

## Selection process

The project applications that meet the eligibility requirements go through a two-step evaluation process, similar to those of other SIU programmes. All applications are evaluated by a minimum of two SIU employees, one of whom is responsible for writing the evaluation. Additionally, an external evaluator evaluates each long-term projects. The SIU evaluator team and the external evaluator give an independent assessment of each project, including a score on the rating scale.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 1. Relevance, 2. Quality of the project design and implementation, 3. Quality of the project team and cooperation arrangements, 4. Impact.

<sup>14</sup> Rating scale, 2015:

5. Excellent – the application addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question with great success. The application can be considered as a best-case-example, provides all the information and evidence needed and has no concerns or areas of weakness. The impact & sustainability of the project is considered as very high.

4. Very good – the application addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question convincingly and successfully. The answer provides all the information and evidence needed and there are no concerns or areas of weakness.

3. Good – the application addresses the criterion well, although some small improvements could be made. The answer gives clear information on all or nearly all the evidence needed.

2. Fair – the application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are some weaknesses. The answer gives some relevant information, but there are several areas where detail is lacking or where the information is unclear.

1. Weak – the application fails to address the criterion or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information. The answer does not address the question asked, or gives very little information.

The assessments of the long-term projects are then given to the Programme Board. They decide which projects to award funding to. The limited activities projects are awarded by SIU. The Programme Board is appointed by SIU's Board of Directors in consultation with the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions, and shall have three members from the Norwegian higher education sector, one international member and one student representative.

The members receive all applications and internal and external evaluations of these prior to the allocation meeting. Each board member is assigned a few applications to review, together with the evaluations of these applications. In the board meetings, each member will present the applications assigned to them, and their assessment of each project, and together the board decides on which projects to grant funding.

According to the minutes from the 2014 and 2015 Programme Board meetings, the Board finds SIU and the external experts' evaluations to be of high quality and helpful to their work. A review of Programme Board documents show that SIU and the external experts' assessments of the projects sometimes differ, and at times by several score points. In the 2015 summons and agenda for the Programme Board, SIU encourages the board to "...pay special attention to the applications with differing scores and the board's assessment must be well documented in the protocol".

Our assessment of the two-step selection process is that it is thorough, ensures impartiality and serves as a solid quality assurance system. The evaluators and the board utilise a clearly defined 5-point scale,<sup>15</sup> where each criterion is assigned a score, ensuring that each application is assessed on the same grounds.

The external experts' academic competence, geographical knowledge and experience with international educational cooperation are considered when the applications are distributed. Still, in SIU's experience, the quality of the external experts' evaluations varies a great deal. While some evaluations are comprehensive, others contain only limited information and make up a poor basis for the Programme Board that makes the final selection. In SIU's own view, the varying quality is partly due to inadequate training of the experts.

Projects that receive a low score, and that are not awarded funding, are typically projects that do not sufficiently clarify how they will contribute to the programme objectives. According to SIU, some most common grounds for rejection are that the projects are not sufficiently relevant to the High North, that they include too much research at the cost of educational activities, or that they do not sufficiently involve students.

Overall, we perceive the evaluation procedures to be both thorough and comprehensive, providing a solid basis for selecting projects that correspond to the objectives of the programme. However, there seems to be room for improvement in the training of the external experts. Furthermore, conducting a thorough evaluation process is time- and labour intensive. According to SIU, programme administrators spend minimum a whole workday evaluating one single application. If the number of applicants increases, it may be necessary to rationalise the process in order to make it less labour intensive.

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<sup>15</sup> This scale has become gradually more detailed in each call, from a three-point scale in 2013, a four-point scale in 2014 and a five-point scale in 2015 and 2016.

## Reporting

Projects awarded funding are required to submit reports to SIU at regular intervals. The long-term projects are required to submit reports annually, while the limited projects are required to do so after the first year, and after the project period is over. The projects report on progress, implemented activities, number of participants, deviations from the project plan, challenges, results, and expenditure. The reports are used to monitor the progress of the various projects, and as input to the annual report to the MFA. According to SIU, the project reports contain the necessary information categories to monitor the implementation and progress of the projects.

According to the four project coordinators we interviewed, the reporting instructions are fairly straightforward, and if they have questions, SIU provides helpful feedback. In SIU's experience, a number of project coordinators need follow-up on the reports. SIU finds that the main challenge in this process is project coordinators that do not use the feedback they get from SIU in order to improve reports that have not been accepted.

However, some project coordinators stated in both interviews and the survey that the reporting requirements are too comprehensive, and that they are not proportionate to the funds applied for:

*SIU's expectations to reporting are too high. The application and reporting processes need to be scaled down.*

Many reports repeat the same information under several questions, due to repetitive or partly overlapping questions or reporting categories. A specific request for the revision work from the project coordinators is therefore to reduce overlaps and repetitive questions. SIU points out that the reporting form has been through several revisions, and that reducing the reporting burden is important for them.

Furthermore, the review of project reports reveal that the reporting requirement for the limited activities projects are similar to those of the long-term projects, resulting in a considerably larger per kroner reporting burden for short-term projects. Thus, we believe that there is room for some differentiation between the two project categories in the reporting requirements.

Despite critique concerning the amount of reporting required, several project coordinators also find the required reporting to be a useful tool for tuning in on what they are supposed to achieve, and find it helpful to write about their projects.

A review of the reporting form reveals an idiosyncrasy which can have a disadvantageous effect on the measurable outcomes of the programme. It concerns section B.4, *Programme goal self-assessment*, in which project coordinators are asked to assess to what extent the project has contributed to achieving each of the programme objectives on a scale from 1 to 5. The seven objectives listed in the form are however *not* the programme objectives, but rather cross-programme objectives that SIU uses to monitor achievement of objectives across programmes.

The projects are asked to describe achievement of the actual programme objectives qualitatively in the next section. Although qualitative descriptions are valuable, they provide a less straight forward base for assessing achievement of objectives across and between projects. Further, the two sets of objectives may be confounding to the projects, and result in diffusing the objectives of this particular programme. We find this to be a weakness of the reporting system.

## Follow-up of projects

The evaluation has also looked at how SIU follows up on the selected projects and whether their effort is adequate and sufficient to meet the projects' needs.

Since the programme period started, SIU has organised two seminars for project coordinators of long-term projects, in 2014 and 2017. SIU has also been present at the Arctic Frontiers conference, where many of the projects attend, and in 2017, the project coordinator seminar took place in conjunction with the conference in order to ensure high participation. Additionally, SIU visits selected projects each year.

Project coordinators are satisfied with SIU's follow up on their projects. In the survey, three out of four project coordinators answered that SIU's effort to follow up on their project *to a large degree* is adequate to meet their project's needs. The interviews with project coordinators corroborated high levels of satisfaction with SIU, and specified that communication is good, and that they feel they get the help they need when contacting SIU. Still, they also felt they could get more follow-up and information from SIU. One project coordinator felt that SIU could do more to prepare the projects for challenges ahead:

*I feel like SIU should prepare us a little more for the problems. Because of the experience SIU has with these issues. There was no preparation for certain problems.*

Further, three of the four project coordinators that were interviewed called for SIU to facilitate knowledge sharing and interaction between the projects (unprompted). As the programme has a thematic focus, they felt that more should be done to facilitate synergy effects between the projects. Several of the project coordinators said they didn't know about the other projects at their institution, and suggested that SIU use their website actively to give an overview of the various projects, and also coordinate meet ups between the projects. The informants felt they could benefit academically from meeting the other projects, but also practically, in sharing experiences about partner countries etc.

## Chapter 4: Achievement of objectives and overall goal

In this chapter, we focus on what the programme has achieved thus far into the programme period. The agreement between SIU and the MFA from 2013 states the overall goal of the HNP, and with it - five objectives that are to contribute to realising the overall goal. As the programme is still ongoing, and only a third of the projects have been completed, it is too soon to assess the overall success of the programme. This review will therefore focus on whether, and to what extent, the programme *is on the right track* to achieve its objectives and goals.

### High North relevance

The overall goal pertains to expand, strengthen and disseminate knowledge about or relevant to the High North. In order to assess the overall goal, it is necessary to establish how the term “relevant to the High North” is understood and operationalised by SIU and the projects. What is considered relevant to the High North is a matter of definition in terms of both geographical delineation and academic disciplines, and will have consequences for what projects are awarded funding.

In the agreement between the MFA and SIU, the High North is geographically defined as “the circumpolar Arctic, including the Barents region”.<sup>16</sup> This definition is repeated in the calls for proposals. However, it is omitted from the 2015 and 2016 calls and guidelines. Project coordinators that were interviewed all equated “The High North” with “the Arctic”, which is a more established term, both nationally and internationally. We recommend including the geographical definition in potential future calls, in order to avoid ambiguity.

According to SIU’s programme coordinators, SIU’s understanding of a project that is “relevant to the High North” is a project that contributes to building knowledge about the High North, to establish the High North as a field, and that is in line with the government’s policy document “Norway’s Arctic policy” from 2014 (MFA, 2014).

The programme document and the calls for proposals lay out a broad understanding of what academic disciplines are “relevant to the High North”, opening up for applications from all fields and disciplines, including multidisciplinary projects. The calls list climate change, the environment, resources, transports/logistics, economy and issues relating to indigenous peoples as relevant topics.

The programme’s portfolio is an indicator of how SIU and the awarded projects operationalise the phrase. The range and distribution of disciplines represented is indicative of a broad understanding of the phrase. Half of the project portfolio consists of projects from the natural sciences and engineering, while another 20% are related to social science and legal studies. The remaining projects cover the disciplines of business and administration (12%), education (8%), health and welfare (8%), and agriculture and fisheries (4%) (SIU, 2016). If we compare the project portfolio to the distribution of polar research articles published 2012-2014, the HNP’s project portfolio appears significantly broader, as a total of 90% of the published research were in the natural sciences (Aksnes, 2017).

We have not reviewed the applications that were rejected, which would give us a more complete understanding of SIU’s operationalisation of “relevant to the High North”. However, according to SIU,

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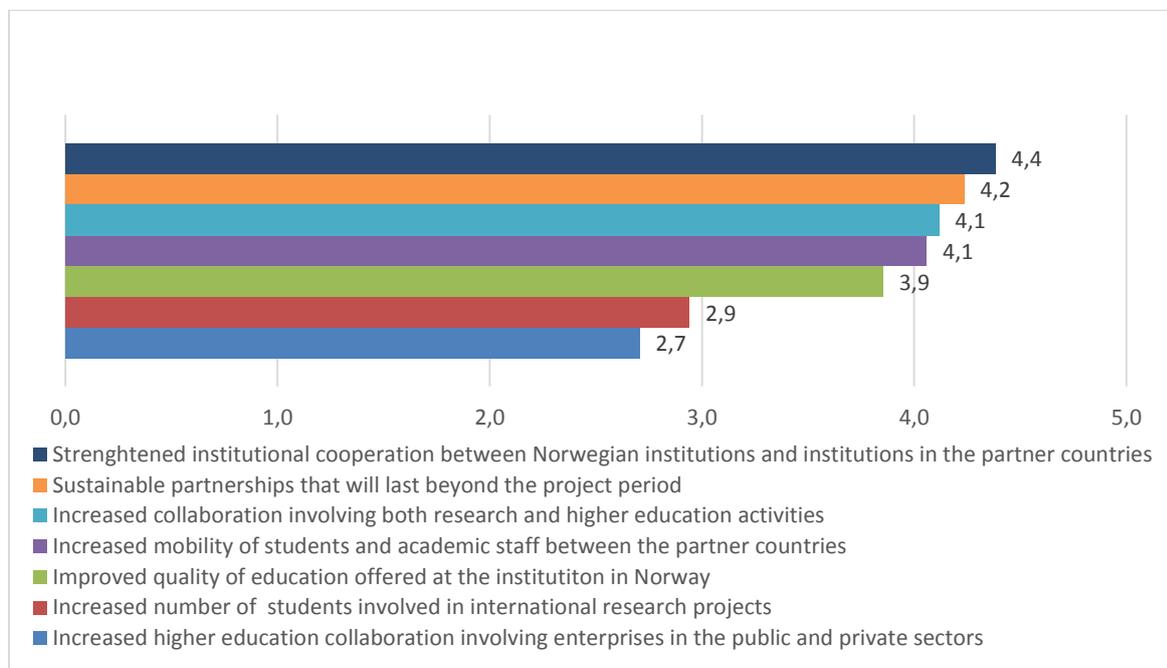
<sup>16</sup> Agreement number QZA-13/0451

they have rejected a number of applications because they deemed them as not relevant to the High North. When applications are rejected on these grounds, it is usually because the topics are not sufficiently specific to the High North.

### Achievement of the five objectives

One of the data sources for this chapter is the projects' self-assessments. In their annual reports, all awarded projects are asked to assess to which extent their project has contributed to the achievement of a list of seven objectives. These are general objectives for international partnerships in higher education, and are relevant to most partnership programmes that SIU administers. There is a great deal of overlap between these cross-programme objectives and the HNP specific objectives. We will therefore use these self-assessments as indicators of achievement of objectives, sorting them under the High North objective they are most relevant to. Figure 1 shows how the projects assess their contribution to the seven objectives on a scale from one to five, where 1 is defined as *to a small extent*, and 5 as *to a large extent*.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 1: Self-evaluation, achievement of objectives (N=35)<sup>18</sup>



Source: Espresso/SIU.

### Objective 1

Objective 1 is to *increase and strengthen higher education cooperation about matters relevant to the High North, between institutions in Norway and in Canada, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea,*

<sup>17</sup> The reporting form gives the project coordinators the option of choosing "N/A" (Not applicable) rather than a number on the scale from 1 to 5. For the purpose of evaluating the programme, we have given the N/As the value of 0, as N/A indicates that this objective is not relevant for a particular project.

<sup>18</sup> The self-evaluation battery was not included in the reporting forms for the limited activities projects awarded in 2013. First year of reporting for projects awarded in 2016 is 2018.

*Russia, and the U.S. This includes increasing the number of jointly developed courses, programmes and degrees as well as increasing mobility of students and faculty.*<sup>19</sup>

Available data indicate that the programme strengthens international cooperation between institutions. From the projects' self-evaluations in figure 1, we see that this is the objective to which the projects find they contribute the most, with an average of 4,4 on a scale from 1 to 5.

The programme contributes both to the further development of existing collaborations, and to the creation of new collaborations. According to the survey, two thirds of the projects extend or intensify existing collaboration activities, while one third of the projects initiate entirely new networks through their projects.

*Increased student and faculty mobility* are explicitly listed as indicators of this objective. Since the start of the programme, a total of 330 students and 295 staff and faculty have been on mobility stays.<sup>20</sup> The distribution of outgoing and incoming students and staff is fairly equal, with slightly more outgoing mobility than incoming. The projects themselves consider their contribution to this objective to be considerable. Figure 1 shows that the projects consider that they contribute to *increased mobility of students and academic staff* to a fairly large extent, with an average of 4,1.

**Table 4: High North programme staff and student mobility, 2014 – 2016.**

	Staff mobility	Student mobility
Outgoing mobility	150	153
Incoming mobility	118	145
Partner – partner mobility <sup>21</sup>	27	32
<b>Total mobility</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>330</b>

Source: Espresso/SIU

As the programme has not set any target numbers, and as the SIU programmes are too different for comparison of mobility numbers, we do not have a point of reference to assess whether these numbers are high or low – and hence *to what degree* the programme has succeeded in achieving this objective.<sup>22</sup>

Another indicator explicitly stated in the objective, *is increasing the number of jointly developed courses, programmes and degrees*. In the 2016-17 white paper *Quality Culture in Higher Education*, the development of joint programmes and degrees is defined as the most ambitious and complex form of internationalisation within higher education, while the development of joint courses is ranked the second most ambitious and complex internationalisation activity (Meld. St. 16 (2016-17), p. 63). SIU underscores that they at this stage only *encourage* this activity.

We find that the programme has contributed to *increase the number of jointly developed courses*. The programme has awarded funding to the development of 31 courses. Funding for eight of these

<sup>19</sup> Programme document 2013 – 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Within-country mobility is not included in these numbers. SIU's official mobility numbers include within-country mobility.

<sup>21</sup> Mobility between partner countries outside of Norway, e.g. from Russia to Canada.

<sup>22</sup> Comparing planned and completed mobilities, would be a relevant result indicator, however SIU does not have easily accessible data on planned mobilities.

courses was awarded in 2016, with first report on progress due in 2018. Of the 23 projects awarded before 2016, 17 aim to *both develop and conduct* a joint course<sup>23</sup>. 15 of these 17 have succeeded so far, which we consider a high success rate. The courses give between 0 and 10 ECTS, with 10 ECTS being the most common workload.

So far, one of the awarded projects, a limited activities project, has had the aim to develop a full joint study programme. Within the two-year project period, they have successfully developed a full master's programme consisting of six courses of 45 ECTS each with a Russian main partner institution. The programme is ready to go, but there are unsolved administrative, organisational and financial issues that need sorting.

The fact that this project has succeeded in developing the curriculum for a whole master's programme within a limited cooperation activities project indicates that it is possible to carry out complex activities within a limited timeframe, given the right circumstances. The partnership in question does for instance have a long history of cooperation. One of the main challenges in developing courses and programmes, however, seems to be making them compatible to both educational systems. Projects have problems ensuring that both institutions will give the students credit for the courses developed.

## Objective 2

Objective 2 is to *develop strong and sustainable institutional partnerships in higher education and research*. With *sustainable*, we understand partnerships that will last beyond the project period.

Thus far into the programme period, the achievement is high regarding the sustainability of the collaborations. According to the survey, 92% of the completed projects have continued their collaboration with one or more partner institutions outside of Norway. Still, we have no data on the nature of these collaborations, e.g. level of formalisation. As only a third of the projects had been completed at the time of the survey, we also asked the project coordinators of projects that had not yet been completed if they were planning to continue their collaboration after the project period ends. All project coordinators responded that they were planning to continue the collaboration with one or more partner institutions outside of Norway.

All the projects we interviewed plan to continue or expand the collaboration activity after the funding period ends. Some are eager to continue the activity/-ies they have invested so much effort to develop, and are already seeking funding to ensure continuation, while others plan to expand the collaboration. One project coordinator says that they *want to expand from educational activities to research activities*, while another says that *there is interest in developing Arctic engineering between UiT and our Chinese university and other Chinese universities*.

Some project coordinators have started looking into alternative grant schemes to secure future funding. Projects that have developed joint courses or conferences, i.e. projects that involve a labour intensive development phase and creating a momentum around recruitment, may have a particular

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<sup>23</sup> According to SIU, the definition of "joint" course varies between projects. While to SIU, to develop and implement a joint course means that the project partners develop and implement the course together, some projects may develop a course together, but implement in parallel at each their institution.

interest in seeing that the products of their labour continue past the project period. We found examples of this in our field studies.

The projects' self-assessment is further evidence of actual and planned sustainability. The project coordinators find that their projects contribute to *sustainable partnerships that will last beyond the project period* to a fairly large extent, with an average score of 4,2, which is the second highest score of the seven objectives.

The indicators of the *sustainability* of the partnerships are strong, but to what extent are these partnerships *institutional*? According to the guidelines that follow the calls for proposals, the projects need to be anchored at the level of head of department at both the main partner institution in Norway and outside of Norway. Several interviewees pointed out that this anchoring at a higher level of the organisation is positive for institutionalising the partnership. Two of the four projects in our field study also related that the project collaboration had led to the two institutions signing bilateral collaboration agreements. We have not investigated how widespread this outcome is among the projects.<sup>24</sup>

### Objective 3

Objective 3 is to *strengthen the connection between higher education and research collaboration related to High North issues*. We find limited relevant indicators to measure achievement on this objective. Hence, we recommend operationalisation of this objective into indicators.

Available data indicate that the programme contributes to this objective to some degree. The projects' self-assessment (figure 1) shows that the project coordinators find that their project contributes to *strengthen the collaboration between research and education*, with an average score of 4,1. Also, eleven projects have implemented intensive courses for students. These are courses where a small number of students work closely with researchers for a limited time, giving the students a chance to engage in research-based education.

However, another finding indicates that there is room for improvement on this objective. *Student involvement in international research projects* is another indicator of the connection between education and research. In chapter 2 we found that student participation in international research projects is considered to be the activity that contributes the most to increased collaboration including both research and higher education activities.<sup>25</sup> Students we interviewed as part of our field study, who had participated in international research projects, felt that they had benefited to a great deal, in particular through receiving supervision from experts in the partner country, and through having access to state-of-the art equipment at the other institution. Based on the reporting from all the projects, however, this is the objective to which they find that they contribute the second least. The average is 2,9 which is less than the middle value on a scale from one to five.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The 2013 call required signed institutional agreements between the collaborating institutions within the first year. This requirement was removed as SIU realised that it was too ambitious. Developing a close collaboration and mutual trust takes time.

<sup>25</sup> This assessment is based only on answers from projects that have included this activity

<sup>26</sup> A number of the projects indicated that student involvement in research was not an activity in their project, and consequentially did not give an assessment of this objective.

#### Objective 4

Objective 4 is *to strengthen the links between higher education and the public and private sectors*. This is an important priority for SIU, as it forms an essential part of the government's educational policy (Meld. St. 16 (2016–2017), p. 62).

The evaluation shows that the programme contributes to this objective, as 30% of the projects involve formal collaboration with a non-academic partner, while another 12% are involved in activities with a non-academic organisation (not a formal partner).

However, we do find that there is considerable room for improvement, both in increasing the share of projects with private or public sector involvement, and in how successful these collaborations are. Based on the projects' self-evaluations, the programme contributes the least to this objective. Among the projects that have a formal or more informal collaboration with a public or private enterprise, the average assessment is at the middle value, 3,1. One question to be further explored by SIU is whether there is any room for improvement in how SIU guides and facilitates the projects that are involved with public and private enterprises.

The collaborations seem to center on mainly two types of activities: joint teaching and supervision, and students that are involved with enterprises, either through participation in research activities and projects, or through student work placements or internships. The project portfolio and our field visits indicate that the role of the non-academic partner varies greatly from project to project, which implies that setting clearer guidelines or stricter requirements for the collaborations may prove challenging.

Findings from our field study indicate that lack of - or insufficient - interaction with the non-academic partner may be a reason many projects find they do not contribute sufficiently to this objective. Three of the four projects we interviewed had a non-academic partner. While one project had a close relationship with their non-academic partner and found it to be essential for the success of the project, the two others found that the potential for collaboration was not exploited, mostly because of lack of interaction with the non-academic partner. Encouraging frequent interaction with the non-academic partner is therefore a suggestion for improvement.

#### Objective 5

Objective 5 is *to achieve high and broad participation in the programme nationally, and in cooperation with the six countries*.

##### *High and broad participation nationally*

With *high participation nationally*, we understand a high number of applicants and awarded projects. Building a momentum around a new programme and awareness in the target group takes time. This is reflected in the under-use of the allotted budget for the first three years, resulting in an additional call in 2016. However, as pointed out in chapter 1, both the number of applications for long-term cooperation projects, and the award rate for such projects, increased during the three years of calls for long-term projects. Still, in a future programme, there would be room for growth in the applicant pool, as this could result in increased competition and improved quality of the selected projects.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> SIU set a quality threshold the first year to ensure that only high-quality projects were awarded funding.

With *broad participation* nationally, we understand representation of a range of institutions and variation in geographical location of the institutions. Over the course of the programme, the participation of Norwegian institutions has widened, both in terms of number of institutions participating, and in terms of the geographical spread of participating institutions.

In the first year, funding was awarded to projects at seven HEIs, and throughout the project period, projects at a total of twelve institutions have been awarded funding (SIU, 2016). The universities are well represented among the recipient institutions, with seven of eight universities receiving funding, while only one of the specialised universities, and three of the university colleges/colleges of applied sciences are among the recipient institutions.

In the first two years of the programme, we find a clear concentration of projects from Northern Norway. In 2014, the region counted for 70% of the projects. However, this picture changes substantially over the course of the programme period, as more institutions in other parts of the country are awarded funding. In 2016 the share of projects in Northern Norway was reduced to 38%.

Although representation has become more balanced at the regional level, there is still a bias at the institutional level. 40% of all projects that have been awarded funding are located at UiT. In 2016 the share was 50%. Although UiT is an important polar research institution in Norway, having produced 26 % of all polar research articles in the HE-sector between 2010 and 2014 (Aksnes, 2017),<sup>28</sup> we would expect the participation to be somewhat more balanced. A considerable amount of High North relevant research is produced also at other institutions in Norway. As an example, the University of Bergen and the University of Oslo produced 22% and 20% of all polar research articles in the HE-sector between 2010 and 2014 (Aksnes, 2017),<sup>29</sup> but represent only 6% and 14% of the projects in the programme. Programme coordinators at SIU also consider certain institutions to be underrepresented in the applicant pool.

### Participation of partner countries

Another aspect of this objective concerns *the participation of the partner countries*. Canada is the most frequent partner country for the Norwegian institutions in the programme. 40% of the projects include a main partner from Canada. The second most frequent partner country is Russia. Russian institutions are main partners in 25% of the projects and network partners in another 13%.

The large number of Canadian and Russian partnerships mirrors a long-standing tradition for research cooperation between Norwegian institution and these countries within the High North field. Considering the dominant position of the U.S. in polar research, we find U.S. institutions to be underrepresented in the project portfolio. American institutions are main partners in only 12% of the projects, and network partners in another 16%. However, there was a slight increase in the number of projects with main partners from the U.S. from 2013 to 2015.

Among the Asian countries, China and Japan are equally represented as main partner countries (10% each). Of all the six countries, the cooperation with South Korea is the least developed. South Korean institutions are main partners in only two projects (4%), both awarded as late as 2016. The low number of projects with South Korean partners may partly be explained by the brief history of

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<sup>28</sup> These numbers include co-authorships.

<sup>29</sup> These numbers include co-authorships.

cooperation between Norway and South Korea. The High North Programme is the first SIU programme to target South Korea, and building partnerships from scratch requires time.

Table 5 shows the total number of awarded projects per main partner country throughout the programme period.

**Table 5: Number of awarded projects per main partner country, 2013 – 2016.**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total	%
USA	1	2	3	0	6	12 %
Canada	5	9	5	1	20	39 %
Russia	5	1	3	4	13	25 %
Japan	2	0	3	0	5	10 %
China	0	1	3	1	5	10 %
South Korea	0	0	0	2	2	4 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>51</b>	

Source: SIU

### Achievement of overall goal of the programme

As we have seen, available data indicate that the programme contributes to the achievement of its objectives, although to some more than others. We also find that the five programme objectives are relevant in order to achieve the overall goal of the programme (cf. chapter 2), which is *to expand, strengthen and disseminate knowledge about or relevant to the High North*.

In order to further assess the achievement of the overall goal, we are reviewing relevant indicators such as the recruitment of researchers and students to the field, the production of new knowledge and dissemination of new and existing knowledge.

#### Recruitment

One aspect of strengthening and expanding the knowledge relevant to the High North has to do with increasing the human capital focusing on the field. An indicator of goal achievement is therefore *whether the programme has made the High North programme relevant to researchers and others that would otherwise not have worked in the field*.

In the survey, the project coordinators were asked if any of the individual participants were new to the High North as a field of study. 71% of the project coordinators responded affirmatively to this question, and of these, 76% believed it was “not likely” that those participants would be working in the High North field had it not been for this project. Some of the participants may be students, which was indicated in our field visits with projects (e.g. through master thesis topics suggested by advisors).

Another indicator of increased human capital focusing on this field is *whether more students are recruited to the High North field*. The projects may affect student recruitment in several ways. New courses and programmes may affect student recruitment directly, while e.g. the offer of student mobility may make the field more attractive. While we do not have data on how many students have joined HN-relevant courses due to these projects, 44% of the project coordinators found that the project “to a large degree” had contributed to increasing the number of students at courses relevant

to the High North, while another 34% found that the project had increased student recruitment “to some degree”.

### *Knowledge production*

The goal of expanding, strengthening and disseminating knowledge involves *production* of knowledge. According to 43% of the project coordinators, their project has to a large degree contributed to the production of new research relevant to the High North, while another 45% said it has contributed to some degree. Considering that only one third of the projects have been completed thus far, and that research takes time, we consider these numbers promising.

The number of PhD theses with a High North focus is also an indicator of knowledge production. However, only 10% of the project coordinators state that the project *to a large degree* has contributed to an increased number of PhD theses on subjects relevant to the High North, while another 20% find that the project has contributed to some degree. Still, 40% state that this question is not relevant for them, and it is worth noting that the programme does not provide funding for PhD positions.

### *Dissemination of knowledge*

A key component of the overall goal is to *disseminate knowledge* about or relevant to the High North. According to SIU, this is an area of the programme with room for improvement. Only one out of three projects includes dissemination activities. The potential dissemination effect of the dissemination activities included in the projects, also varies greatly. A newspaper article may reach a broader audience than a student blog, while presenting a paper at a conference primarily reaches an academic, and sometimes narrow, audience. Further, SIU finds the projects’ descriptions of dissemination activities to be vague, and that the projects often fail to demonstrate the relevance of their proposed dissemination activities.

More guidance from SIU on how best to communicate results from the projects could be necessary in order to improve this part of the projects. As a minimum the projects should be required to clearly specify the dissemination activities’ link to the project. We also believe adding dissemination to the list of programme objectives could be useful, to underline the importance of this part of the programme.

Still, many of the project coordinators believe that their projects do contribute to disseminating knowledge about the High North. More than half of the project coordinators believe their project to a large degree has contributed to disseminate knowledge about the High North *outside* of their institution, while another 40% believe that their project has contributed to some degree. This means that many projects find that they contribute to dissemination through activities that aren’t specified as dissemination activities per SIU’s definition. Such activities may be organising a conference and giving a series of lectures in one of the partner countries.

The field visits provided us with insight into some ways knowledge about the High North is being disseminated in the HNP. We found examples of how activities in the programme are increasing the interest for the Arctic and attracting new people to the field:

*The conference was born out of a smallish group of people that were already collaborating on the High North. But now I am seeing that we are getting a critical mass of researchers that are being enamored and interested in the science that is being done up in the High North.*

*Project coordinator, main partner institution USA*

We also found examples of how collaboration with the Norwegian partner institutions has led to increased knowledge about and focus on High North issues at the main partner institutions. Here illustrated by a collaboration with a Russian HEI:

*It helped us understand the processes and the trends in Arctic research. After this project we started developing more courses and programmes with an Arctic focus.*

*Project coordinator, main partner institution Russia*

A dean at UiT also related that the UiT leadership experiences increasing interest in Arctic research from around the world.

In summary, evidence from both the survey and the field visits indicate that the programme is contributing to disseminating knowledge about the High North. Nevertheless, the full potential for dissemination does not seem to be exploited. As one project coordinator expresses when asked about the extent to which she finds that their project contributes to the objectives and goal of the programme:

*We are least good at dissemination and communication outside of the project – telling the public about what we are doing.*

## **Does the HNP contribute to the visibility of Norwegian institutions in the field?**

SIU also wanted to know whether the programme contributes to making visible and relevant the participation of Norwegian institutions in the field. An analysis of Norwegian publications on the High North would be a relevant indicator. Within the scope of this evaluation, it has not been possible to conduct a thorough publication analysis<sup>30</sup>, and as a recent NIFU study (see text box below) only includes bibliometric data through 2014, we have to rely on findings from the survey and the interviews to respond to this question. These sources indicate that the programme has a positive effect on the visibility and relevance of Norwegian institutions.

New research may lead to higher visibility. As pointed out above, 43% of the project coordinators find that their project to a large degree has contributed to the production of new research relevant to the High North, while another 45% said it has contributed to some degree.

The interviews brought up several other ways in which the projects contribute to making Norwegian institutions visible and relevant in the field. In particular, project participants found that the project had expanded their network, both inside the project, but also outside the project, and in some cases new collaborations had mushroomed.

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<sup>30</sup> As all Norwegian research is supposed to be registered in Cristin, we attempted some searches through this database. However, as *subject* is not an obligatory field when registering new articles etc., the validity of the results of these searches is low. As an example: a search for articles relating to “the Arctic” in 2014 in Cristin yielded 18 results, while the NIFU study shows 450 Norwegian articles published on the Arctic that year, a clear indicator of low criterion validity of Cristin as a bibliometric instrument.

One of the projects in our field study organises an annual conference for Norwegian and American researchers in the field. The Norwegian interviewees related how this conference has given Norwegian researchers a new forum to present their research, and to make new connections.

A dean at UiT – the Arctic university, narrated that in developing higher education and research collaboration with China, the fact that UiT already had established collaborations with several Chinese institutions through the High North programme was beneficial in talks with Chinese educational authorities.

## Conclusions

Although the programme period is not over, available data indicate contribution to all five programme objectives, however, to some more than others. The evaluation also indicates that the programme is contributing to the achievement of the overall goal.

Available data indicate that the programme in particular contributes to objective 1, *to increase and strengthen higher education cooperation about matters relevant to the High North with the cooperating countries*. This is indicated by the projects' self-assessments, the fact that one third of the projects are entirely new partnerships (added-value of the programme), increasing mobility and the implementation of a number of joint courses.

The programme also contributes to the achievement of the parts of objective 2 that relates to *strong and sustainable partnerships*. Most of the projects that have completed their project have continued their collaboration with partners outside of Norway afterward, and all the projects that have not been completed, plan to continue their collaboration. We have not reviewed to what extent the partnerships have been institutionalised, e.g. number of signed bilateral institutional agreements.

Objectives 3 and 4 are the objectives with the most room for improvement. Although we find indication of contribution to objective 3, *to strengthen the connection between higher education and research collaboration relating to the High North*, projects find that they contribute to involving students in international research projects only to a moderate extent. At the same time, it is considered an important activity for achieving this objective. Objective 4 is *to strengthen the links between the private and public sectors*. Although we do find that the programme contributes to this, as 30% of the projects have a formal non-academic partner, this is the objective to which the projects find they contribute the least. Field studies indicate that lack of interaction may be a problem.

We find that the programme contributes to some extent to objective 5, *to achieve high and broad participation nationally, and in cooperation with the six countries*. A certain bias in the project portfolio, both in terms of Norwegian main institution and in terms of foreign main partner, lowers our assessment of this objective. There is also room for growth in the applicant pool, as the allotted budget was under-used in the first three years.

The evaluation also indicates that the programme is contributing to the overall goal through the recruitment of human capital to the High North field and the production of new research. We also find that the programme to some extent has contributed to the dissemination of knowledge, e.g. through the development and implementation of new courses. Still, there is potential to expand and improve the dissemination activities, and to develop guidelines for such activities.

## Chapter 5: Further development

### Programme objectives

In our review of the programme's goal structure, we find it to be somewhat unclear how each of the objectives is supposed to contribute to the overall goal. As an example, we question whether sustainable and strong institutional relationships will contribute to a larger extent than informal and ad hoc partnerships to the overall goal.

The "black box" between objectives and overall goal may be partly due to the mix of foreign policy and educational objectives and goals. While most of the objectives are familiar internationalisation of education objectives, the overall goal is primarily a foreign policy goal, which may contribute to the somewhat elusive links between objectives and goals.

We recommend that SIU spell out how they envision that the achievement of each objective will contribute to achievement of the overall goal. This may be particularly necessary for the objective to strengthen the links to the public and private sector, which is an important objective to SIU, but where the projects' contribution is lower than for other objectives.

Making the links between objectives and goal explicit may be a useful exercise to investigate whether adjustments to the objectives are necessary in order to maximise achievement of the overall goal. Further, it may help the projects tune in their projects towards the aims of the programme.

In particular, we see a need for the development of relevant indicators for objective 3.

Further, SIU should also consider the balance between the objectives. As argued in chapter two, broad participation in the programme and sustainable and strong institutional relationships are somewhat competing objectives. SIU should discuss whether some of the objectives contribute towards the overall goal to a larger extent than others, and therefore should be given more weight. The outcome of such a discussion will have consequences for the funding of each project category. As an example, if SIU decides that strong and sustainable partnerships are more important than broad participation, SIU should allocate more funding to long-term projects, and less to limited activities projects.

We also suggest including an additional objective on dissemination. This is a fundamental part of the programme, but the evaluation has shown that the projects' contribution on this area varies greatly. Therefore, we suggest operationalising an objective on dissemination that is also included in the selection criteria.

Finally, we believe it would be beneficial for evaluation purposes in particular to include a set of quantitative indicators to assess the achievement of the programme objectives. Some examples of quantitative indicators may be:

- Number of completed vs. planned mobilities
- Number of developed vs. planned courses
- Number of implemented vs. planned courses
- Number of partnerships continued after the end of the project period

- Number of new institutional agreements between institutions that have/have had a HNP project

## Programme design

### Eligible countries

We have assessed the relevance of the countries that are currently eligible for funding vis-à-vis the overall goal, and conclude that they should all be included in a future programme.

The current list of eligible countries is particularly relevant from a foreign policy point of view, as it responds to priorities outlined in the Norwegian High North strategy. Further, the MFA emphasises the programme's contribution to the bilateral relationships between Norway and notably Russia and the Asian countries.

However, as long as the overall goal is to expand, strengthen and disseminate knowledge on the High North, and not primarily to strengthen relationships to countries of political interest, we believe the programme could benefit from opening up for other countries. Although most of the eligible countries are significant contributors to research on the Arctic, the programme excludes several of the leading nations in the research field, notably the UK, Germany and Denmark. Including other leading nations on High North relevant research may give the programme a greater impact. However, a geographical expansion of the programme would perhaps need to be followed by an increased budgetary frame, to avoid spreading the funds too thinly.

### Project categories

We find the current funding model to be expedient, as it allows for projects with varying scope and ambition, and thus balances the ambitions of broad participation and strong and sustainable partnerships.

A long-term category is necessary in order to build strong and sustainable partnerships, and in order to implement complex activities such as the development of joint programmes and degrees. At the same time, we perceive the short-term project category (the limited cooperation activities) as an important mechanism to achieve the objective of broad participation. This is as a low-threshold category that can reach a broader group of participants and serve as a steppingstone to more extensive collaboration. We therefore recommend continuing this project category in a future programme.

Similarly, we see the funding for preparatory visits as a means to broaden participation in the programme. Although the evaluation shows that the preparatory visits have yielded moderate results in terms of projects awarded funds, we recommend the continuation of such funding.

Although we recommend the continuation of three different project categories, we suggest some adjustments to their current funding and time-frame.

First, SIU should consider increasing the maximum funding per project for the long-term cooperation and the limited cooperation activities for particularly ambitious projects, e.g. with the ambition of developing and/or implementing joint programmes. Within the current programme period, an increased per project funding would have been possible, as the budgeted allocations were under-

used in the first three calls. Prioritising increasing the per-project funding for the projects that meet the criteria for maximum funding may be a smart priority, as it may improve the effect of the programme, and reduce the administrative burden on SIU.

Second, we recommend that a larger share of funds be designated to salary. Although most of the project activities can be considered part of the faculties' core activities, the project work comes on top of existing work. For many projects, the lack of funding towards administration and salaries results in a high administrative burden on the part of the project coordinators. Allowing for a larger share of the funds to be utilised towards organisation and administration would enable project coordinators to pay someone to assist in this task. Further, salary may facilitate recruitment of faculty.

Further, we recommend continuing the practice of allowing projects to extend their project periods and transfer unspent funds from one year to the next. SIU has already allowed for this in several projects. We also suggest opening up for letting complex projects or projects with new partners (especially Asian institutions) apply for an extra year of funding. The evaluation shows that many projects need more time than the two project categories allot. Some projects need time to develop a good working relationship, some experience delays for external reasons over which they have little control, while other projects prove too ambitious and complex to complete within the timeframe. For this reason SIU should also consider extending the preparatory visits category to a preparatory period (e.g. 6 months), to allow for potential partners to learn to know each other before starting up with the actual project activities.

### Activities

We find that the activities supported by the programme are relevant given the current objectives and they should therefore be continued. We also believe that maintaining a wide range of activities is important in order to maintain flexibility in the programme. For the same reason, allowing the projects to suggest other activities than the ones specified in the programme, is valuable, as it may open for new and innovative combinations of education and research collaborations.

Still, we suggest that the future programme puts more emphasis on activities that are particularly relevant to the programme goal and objectives. There are several ways of doing this: 1) by including prioritised activities in the selection criteria, 2) by allocating designated funds to these activities, or 3) by "nudging" projects to include such activities through marketing and recommendations.

Most importantly, the future programme should put greater emphasis on activities that contribute to dissemination of knowledge, as such activities are directly relevant to the overall goal. As of today, only a third of the projects include publication and dissemination, and the quality of the dissemination activities varies. It may therefore be necessary to establish stricter requirements for the implementation of these activities. The accentuation of dissemination activities may also include giving higher priority to the development of new courses and programmes, as this has a strong dissemination potential.

The evaluation shows that the programme has had limited success in strengthening the links to public and private enterprises, even among the projects with such collaborations. One question to be further explored by SIU is therefore whether there is any room for improvement in how SIU guides

and facilitates the projects that are involved with public and private enterprises, especially since part of the HE-sector has limited experience with these types of collaborations.

We further suggest emphasising activities that combine research with education, such as including students in research activities. Involving students directly in the production of new knowledge about the High North relates directly to two aspects of the overall goal: expanding and disseminating knowledge. Further, including students in research is the activity that project coordinators consider to be most relevant to strengthen links between research and education.

## **Programme administration**

### **Calls for proposals and selection process**

In order to advance both broad participation and strong and sustainable partnerships, we have encouraged the continuation of all project categories. However, at the programme level, the administration of two annual calls and selection processes is considerable, and the programme coordinators express a need for reduction in the administrative burden.

We have two suggestions for reducing the administration concerning the calls and selection process. First, that the MFA increases the funding for the administration of the programme. Second, that SIU examines whether the selection process can be further rationalised and streamlined.

Further, we recommend that SIU ensures thorough training of experts, and sets clear expectations to what outputs are expected. The external experts have a central role in the long-term project selection, and the quality of these assessments varies considerably, which puts additional work on SIU. SIU is requesting input on whether the use of external experts is expedient. As this is a programme with a higher education and research focus, we believe that assistance from academic experts is necessary in order to achieve high quality projects, and we therefore recommend that this arrangement be continued.

Another suggestion is to examine whether it is possible to further reduce and rationalise the procedures of the limited cooperation activities, both on part of the projects on part of SIU, to further cultivate the low threshold profile of this project category. Limiting the application form, the reporting form, and rationalising the selection process of this category will reduce the administrative burden on both SIU and the applicants.

### **Follow up**

The projects are overall very content with the follow-up that their project receives from SIU. However, we find that this is an area with some unexploited potential.

Several of the project coordinators called for more information about the other projects that receive funding through the programme, and felt that they could benefit from sharing knowledge and experience across projects, both in terms of academic knowledge and potential collaboration, and regarding overcoming practical/cultural/systemic hurdles in the collaboration with a specific country. As the programme is thematic, networking and sharing of knowledge between projects could also contribute to the dissemination of knowledge about the High North, and have other positive synergy effects.

We therefore recommend that SIU puts more emphasis on its role as facilitator for knowledge sharing and networking between the High North projects, as this could further contribute to the achievement of the overall goal of the programme. SIU has organised two meetings for long-term projects that serve this purpose. Another way to ensure more knowledge sharing, is to put more information about the projects on SIU's website.

### **Reporting**

Although we find that the overall reporting is balanced against SIU's need for information, we find some room for improvement. The evaluation shows that many projects find the reporting to be unnecessarily extensive and repetitive. Over the course of the programme period, SIU has worked to improve the form. In order to reduce reporting fatigue, SIU should consider whether it is possible to consolidate and revise the form further to avoid repetition, e.g. by reducing overlapping reporting categories.

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## Appendix: Questionnaire

### intro

This survey concerns the project <sup>^f('projectTitle')^</sup>

### q1

Please indicate the main discipline of the project:

- 00 – Generic programmes and qualifications
- 01 – Education
- 02 – Arts and humanities
- 03 – Social sciences, journalism and information
- 04 – Business, administration and law
- 05 – Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics
- 06 – Information and Communication Technologies
- 07 – Engineering, manufacturing and construction
- 08 – Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary
- 09 – Health and welfare
- 10 – Services

### q2

Which of the following statements most accurately describes the significance of the funding from SIU?

- The funding enabled us to extend or intensify existing collaboration activities
- The funding enabled us to initiate an entirely new collaboration network

### q3

How important was the funding for preparatory visits for the realization of this project?

- Not decisive
- Of some importance
- Decisive

### q4

Project implementation and collaboration

Have the planned activities in the project been implemented (so far)?

- To a small degree
- To some degree
- To a large degree

### q5

How would you describe the collaboration process with partners in the following countries?

	Challenging	Satisfactory	Excellent
USA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Canada	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Russia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
China	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Japan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
South Korea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**q6**

Do you plan to continue the collaboration with one or more of the partner institutions outside of Norway after the project period?

- Yes  
 No

**q7**

Have you continued the collaboration with one or more of the partner institutions outside of Norway after the project period ended?

- Yes  
 No

**q8**

To what degree have you experienced challenges when implementing the activities?

*Please answer for each of the following activities:*

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Publication and dissemination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of joint courses, programmes and degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courses/programmes/degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars and workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision incl. guest lecturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student and staff mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student participation in research activities/project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive study programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive courses, field courses and summer schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student projects with involvement from enterprises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student work placements, internships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision with public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guest lecturing, workshops, seminars involving public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Achievement of objectives

In the following pages, we would like to have your opinion on the project activities' contribution to achieving the objectives of the High North Programme. We kindly ask you to answer for each of the seven programme objectives.

**q9\_1**

In your opinion, to what degree do the activities in your project contribute to achieving the following objective:

Increased collaboration involving both research and higher education activities

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Publication and dissemination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of joint courses, programmes and degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Courses/programmes/degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars and workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision incl. guest lecturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student and staff mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student participation in research activities/project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive study programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive courses, field courses and summer schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student projects with involvement from enterprises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student work placements, internships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision with public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guest lecturing, workshops, seminars involving public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### q9\_2

In your opinion, to what degree do the activities in your project contribute to achieving the following objective:

Increased higher education collaboration involving enterprises in the public and private sectors

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Publication and dissemination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of joint courses, programmes and degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courses/programmes/degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars and workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision incl. guest lecturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student and staff mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student participation in research activities/project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive study programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive courses, field courses and summer schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student projects with involvement from enterprises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student work placements, internships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision with public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guest lecturing, workshops, seminars involving public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### q9\_3

In your opinion, to what degree do the activities in your project contribute to achieving the following objective:

Increased mobility of students and academic staff between the partner countries

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Publication and dissemination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of joint courses, programmes and degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courses/programmes/degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars and workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Joint teaching and supervision incl. guest lecturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student and staff mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student participation in research activities/project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive study programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive courses, field courses and summer schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student projects with involvement from enterprises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student work placements, internships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision with public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guest lecturing, workshops, seminars involving public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### q9\_4

In your opinion, to what degree do the activities in your project contribute to achieving the following objective:

Increased number of students involved in international research projects

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Publication and dissemination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of joint courses, programmes and degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courses/programmes/degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars and workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision incl. guest lecturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student and staff mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student participation in research activities/project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive study programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive courses, field courses and summer schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student projects with involvement from enterprises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student work placements, internships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision with public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guest lecturing, workshops, seminars involving public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### q9\_5

In your opinion, to what degree do the activities in your project contribute to achieving the following objective:

Improved quality of education offered at the institution in Norway

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Publication and dissemination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of joint courses, programmes and degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courses/programmes/degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars and workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision incl. guest lecturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student and staff mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Long-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student participation in research activities/project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive study programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive courses, field courses and summer schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student projects with involvement from enterprises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student work placements, internships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision with public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guest lecturing, workshops, seminars involving public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### q9\_6

In your opinion, to what degree do the activities in your project contribute to achieving the following objective:

Strengthened institutional cooperation between Norwegian institutions and institutions in the partner countries

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Publication and dissemination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of joint courses, programmes and degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courses/programmes/degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars and workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision incl. guest lecturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student and staff mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student participation in research activities/project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive study programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive courses, field courses and summer schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student projects with involvement from enterprises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student work placements, internships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision with public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guest lecturing, workshops, seminars involving public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### q9\_7

In your opinion, to what degree do the activities in your project contribute to achieving the following objective:

Sustainable partnerships that will last beyond the project period

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Publication and dissemination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of joint courses, programmes and degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courses/programmes/degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminars and workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision incl. guest lecturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student and staff mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree
Student participation in research activities/project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short-term student mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive study programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive courses, field courses and summer schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student projects with involvement from enterprises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student work placements, internships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint teaching and supervision with public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guest lecturing, workshops, seminars involving public/private sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**q10 -**

Benefits of the project

To what extent has the project contributed to the following:

	To a small degree	To some degree	To a large degree	Not relevant
Jointly developed and permanent courses related to the High North at your institution?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jointly developed programmes and degrees related to the High North at your institution?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased number of students at courses relevant to the High North at your institution?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased number of ph.d. theses on subjects relevant to the High North at your institution?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New research relevant to the High North at your institution?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disseminating knowledge relevant to the High North outside of your institution?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**q11**

To your knowledge, were any of the individual participants in the project new to the High North as a field of study?

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know

**q12**

To your knowledge, how likely is it that these participants would have worked in the High North field without the project?

- Not likely  
 Likely  
 Very likely  
 Don't know

**q13 -**

Programme administration

In your opinion, do the calls for proposals include the information that is necessary to develop/write the application?

- To a small degree  
 To some degree  
 To a large degree

**q13\_comment**

You answered "To a small degree". Please elaborate.

**q14**

Are the conditions for funding easily understandable? (i.e. eligibility requirements and selection criteria)

- To a small degree
- To some degree
- To a large degree

**q14\_comment**

You answered "To a small degree". Please elaborate.

**q15**

Is SIUs effort to follow up on your project adequate in order to meet the project's needs?

- To a small degree
- To some degree
- To a large degree

**q15\_comment**

You answered "To a small degree". Please elaborate.

**q16**

Do you have any suggestions for changes to the programme that could increase its effect?

*(e.g. new activities, new countries, other suggestions)*