



Norwegian Agency for  
International Cooperation  
and Quality Enhancement  
in Higher Education



## Eurasia Programme

Call for applications 2019: Two-year project  
funding

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### 1. INVITATION

The Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) is pleased to issue this call for applications for funding of joint projects under the Eurasia Programme.

The programme supports collaboration projects with higher education institutions in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The overall aim of the programme is to contribute to renewal and internationalisation of higher education in the cooperating countries, as a means to provide a basis for political and economic reforms, stimulate to a sustainable development, increase the level of education in the population and increase respect for human rights.

The programme is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is administered by Diku.

This call is open for Norwegian higher education institutions wishing to form new partnerships with higher education institutions in Eurasia. Funds may also be allocated to joint projects that have received funding in the following calls:

- Eurasia Programme 2016 – short-term project funding
- Eurasia Programme 2017 – two-year project funding

Please note that ongoing long-term/three-year projects with funding from the Eurasia Programme are excluded from this call.<sup>1</sup>

The applicants may seek funding up to NOK 1.5 million for a two-year period.

The final deadline for submitting applications is [15 February 2019, at 15:00 Norwegian time](#).

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<sup>1</sup> This includes Eurasia Programme 2015 - Long-term project funding, Eurasia Programme 2016 - Long-term project funding and Eurasia Programme 2017 - Three-year project funding.

The funds made available in this call are minimum NOK 6 million.

Below you will find more information on the objectives and funding framework of the programme, eligibility requirements and selection criteria, and an outline of the administrative process of project selection under the programme.

## **2. OBJECTIVES AND FUNDING FRAMEWORK OF THE CALL**

### **2.1 Objectives**

The Eurasia programme funds may be allocated to joint projects that lead to the following outcomes:

- development of strong and lasting institutional partnerships through academic collaboration between higher education institutions in Norway and the cooperating countries;
- regional collaboration between higher education institutions in the cooperating countries;
- development and implementation of courses, study programmes and degrees that are considered relevant to the needs in the cooperating countries, e.g. for the labour market;
- more research-based and internationally oriented education at the institutions in the cooperating countries, promoting a high level of student activity;
- improved links between higher education and the public and private sectors in the cooperating countries;
- improvements in university management, including implementation of reforms related to the Bologna process;
- more awareness, interest and knowledge about the cooperating countries at Norwegian higher education institutions;
- increased mobility of students and staff between the cooperating countries and Norway.

### **2.2 Project funding and activities**

Each project may be awarded up to NOK 1.5 million. Diku may reduce the amount awarded based on an assessment of the merits of the individual applications.

The applications should be prepared jointly by the applicant institution in Norway and the partner institution(s). The project budget included in the application form shall only include funds applied for through this call. All project activities must be completed by 30 June 2021. The deadline for the final report will be 30 August 2021.

Project activities may include all levels of higher education (Bachelor, Master and PhD), all fields of education, and involve multiple fields and disciplines.

Research activities *not clearly linked* to educational activities cannot be supported. Projects should mainly target educational cooperation, not research activities.

The project may include funds for salaries and indirect expenses (including administration and overhead), limited to 30 per cent of the total budget. These funds may be shared between the partner institutions.

For more information on eligible project activities, please see the attached “Guidelines for applicants”.

### **2.3 Expected project results**

Applicants are requested to describe the expected results of the project as specifically as possible, for instance the number of mobile students and new courses and degree programmes. Diku will monitor project results and the degree to which project activities contribute to fulfil the project goals and the programme objectives.

## **3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

### **3.1 Formal eligibility requirements for applicants**

- Applications must be submitted by the main partner institution in Norway. The main partner institution must be an accredited Norwegian higher education institution, or an institution with accredited higher education programmes.
- The project application must include one main partner institution from the eligible partner countries: Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This must be an accredited higher education institution, public or private, providing accredited education programmes that are relevant to the proposal and at a level equivalent to that offered at the Norwegian applicant institution.
- Applications may also involve other institutions in Norway and the partner countries as network partners. Research institutes and non-governmental organisations, public agencies or public and private enterprises may also be involved as network partners. Network partners not based in Norway or the partner countries will be

judged on their contribution to goal achievements within the cooperating countries. Such partners may only play a minor and supporting role within a project.

**Please note** that failure to meet the requirements in 3.1 will lead to dismissal of the application.

### **3.2 Formal eligibility requirements for applications**

In order to be eligible, applications must meet the following requirements:

- Applications must include a Letter of commitment from the main partner institution outside Norway, documenting interest in and commitment to the project by management at the relevant level.
- Applications must be written in English and be submitted fully completed, including all required attachments, through Diku's online platform for applications and reporting (Espresso) within the call's final deadline. Non-required attachments will not be taken into consideration.
- The project activities described in the application must be implemented within the project period.
- The project activities supported through the Eurasia Programme must be in accordance with the applicable legislation regarding state aid, cf. the State Aid Act of 27 November 1992 No. 117 (incl. regulations enacted thereunder), as well as other relevant government regulations.

**Please note** that failure to meet the requirements in 3.2 will lead to dismissal of the application.

### **3.3 Selection criteria**

The eligible applications' relative strength will be assessed based on the degree to which they are deemed able to meet the following selection criteria:

- The project's relevance to the objectives of the programme.
- The quality of the project design, hereunder the application's overall clarity and quality, correspondence between proposed activities and budget allocations, demonstration of cost-effectiveness, the sustainability of the project results, and the project's feasibility.
- The quality of the partnership, hereunder the project team and the cooperation arrangements, history of cooperation, the partners' complementarity, experience and expertise, the project's level of formalised commitment, relevance to the institutions' strategic priorities, and the potential for long-term collaboration between the partner institutions.

- If relevant, the level and quality of involvement from non-academic partners (companies, organisations, etc.), hereunder their contribution to the project activities and the value they add to and gain from the collaboration.
- The project's feasibility including risk analysis and risk prevention measures. Diku emphasises the importance of gender equality, anti-corruption measures and inclusive practices in all project activities.

**Please note** that these criteria correspond to various compulsory fields in the online Espresso application form, and that the application's ability to meet these relative criteria will be assessed on the basis of the description provided. In order to ensure coherence and a logical order in the description of your project, please read the relevant help texts in the online application form as well as the "Guidelines for applicants" carefully. Remaining questions may be directed to Diku.

## **4. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS**

### **4.1 Assessment of applications and response to applicants**

Each application will be assessed by two evaluators from Diku and one external evaluator on the basis of its individual merits with regard to the selection criteria set out above (item 3.3), and its relative standing to other competing project applications. Applications will be evaluated on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Diku uses the evaluators' assessment as a basis on which to recommend grant allocation.

The applications and recommendations are submitted to a programme board for grant allocation. The programme board allocates funds based on the selection criteria set out above. As part of the assessment, the programme board may take into consideration the geographic, academic and/or institutional distribution of the projects. In this call, such preference may be given to projects including partners in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. New partnerships may also be given priority. It will be considered positive if the application can document integration or synergies with other international, national or regional educational initiatives, such as Erasmus+ global mobility.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the application process, tentatively in April 2019.

### **4.2 Contracts and reporting obligations**

The main partner institution in Norway will be required to enter into a contract with Diku. The contract will be subject to Diku's standard terms

and conditions, and must be signed by a representative holding the requisite authority to legally bind the main partner institution in Norway. The obligations on part of the institution include e.g. a duty to submit progress reports, project accounts, and a final report upon completion of the project.

Until a binding contract has been entered into, Diku reserves the right to at any time revisit any evaluation and decision on the basis of newly discovered facts which may adversely affect the planned implementation of a project.

#### **4.3 Contact information**

For further information on the Eurasia Programme or how to apply, please contact Diku by email ([eurasia@diku.no](mailto:eurasia@diku.no)) or by telephone (+47 55 30 38 00).