

Eurasia Programme

Call for proposals 2015



1 INVITATION

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education («SIU») is pleased to invite Norwegian institutions of higher education to apply for project funding under the Eurasia Programme.

The Programme is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the period 2015 to 2020.

The Programme supports collaboration projects with higher education institutions in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. If other aspects of competing applications are considered equal, preference may be given to projects including partners in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

The overall objective 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 call is open to long-term projects with a project period from 1 March 2016 to 31 December 2019. **The final deadline for sending in applications is 26 October 2015, at 15:00 Norwegian time (CET).**

SIU has also announced a separate call for seed money, to fund preparatory visits and the elaboration of project proposals. Applications for seed money are accepted from the date of announcement to 1 September 2015. Activities must take place in the period from the day of funding allocation to 26 October 2015.

Below you will find more information on the primary focus of the Programme, eligibility requirements and selection criteria, and an outline of the administrative process of project selection under the Programme.

2 MAIN OBJECTIVE AND FUNDING FRAMEWORK OF THE PROGRAMME

2.1 The primary objectives of the Programme

The primary objectives of the Programme are to contribute to:

- 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 study programmes that are considered relevant to the needs in the cooperating countries, i.a. 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 institutions of higher education;
- increased mobility of students and staff between the cooperating countries and Norway.

2.2 Individual project funding and primary project focus

Projects with two collaborating partners may be awarded up to NOK 5 000 000, of which minimum NOK 1 000 000 must be spent on student mobility. Projects without student mobility may receive up to NOK 4 000 000.

Projects with two or more partners in the cooperating countries outside Norway may be awarded up to NOK 6 000 000, of which minimum NOK 1 200 000 must be spent on student mobility. Projects without student mobility may receive up to NOK 4 800 000. SIU may adjust the amount awarded based on assessment of the merits of the individual applications. The total funds made available in this call are NOK 45 million.

Support may be granted to activities which contribute to fulfilling one or more of the programme's primary objectives. The following list of activities may be illustrative of typical activities eligible for support:

- **Project development**

E.g. international project meetings; development of joint courses, study programmes, degrees and/or intensive programmes; development of new educational materials and methods; joint publication and dissemination of project results.

- **Implementation of educational cooperation between higher education institutions**

E.g. intensive courses; summer schools; excursions and field courses; short term student exchange (up to 4 weeks); long term student exchange (more than 4 weeks); student participation in research activities and projects; joint teaching and supervision; guest lecturing; implementation of joint online courses; workshops and seminars (relevant to education activities); language courses; courses/trainings and study visits for employees (administrative, technical, academic) – especially with relation to Norwegian reforms connected to the Bologna process, ICT-based teaching, library services, university management; infrastructure, scientific equipment, literature, software.

- **Implementation of educationally relevant cooperation with enterprises in the public and private sectors**

E.g. implementation of student work placements, internships or trainee arrangements; facilitation of student involvement in R&D projects and/or involvement of private or public enterprises in student projects; facilitation of student entrepreneurship or innovation projects; and guest lecturing, workshops and seminars involving lecturers, supervisors or advisors from the public or private sector.

Activities may include all levels of higher education (Bachelor, Master and PhD), all fields of education, and involve multiple fields and disciplines (multidisciplinary projects).

The exchange period may not exceed 12 months on Bachelor and Master level or 18 months on PhD.

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

Please note, that network partners not based in Norway or the cooperating 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.

Salary and salary compensation may constitute a maximum of 25 per cent of the total project budget. Projects may include an administrative overhead cost of up to 7 per cent of the total budget, reflecting increased administrative expenses resulting from the project. For more information on budgeting and specification of eligible project activities, please see the Guidelines for the Eurasia Programme.

3 ELIGIBILITY REQUIRMENTS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

3.1 Formal eligibility requirements

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

- **The applicant** must be an accredited Norwegian institution for higher education, or an institution with accredited higher education programmes.
- **The main partner** must be an accredited institution for higher education in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine. Institutions in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan may be included only as network partners. The main partner institution must provide education programmes at a level equivalent to that offered at the Norwegian applicant institution.
- **Applications** must include a Letter of commitment from the main partner institution.
- **Applications** must be written in the English language and be submitted fully completed, including attachments, through [SIU's online platform for applications and reporting](#) (Espresso), latest within the call's final deadline.
- **The project activities** described in the application must be implemented within the project period: 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2019.

Please note that failure to meet the above criteria will lead to rejection of the application.

3.2 Project selection criteria

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

Selection criteria

- The project's relevance to the primary objectives of the Programme, including its ability to realise the objectives, to create added educational value for its target groups (institutions, enterprises, students and network partners), and to justify the need for financial support under the Programme to carry out the proposed activities.
- The overall clarity, completeness and quality of the project description, including the quality of the project structure, alignment of proposed activities with budget allocations, demonstration of cost-efficiency, and identification and mitigation of potential risk factors.

- The quality of the project team and the cooperation arrangements, including the parties' complementarity with regard to profile, experience and expertise, the level of formalised commitment and active contribution of the involved institutions/enterprises, and the project's sustainability.

In addition to the above general selection criteria, applicants are (insofar relevant) also required to describe how aspects relating to gender perspectives, gender balance and gender equality have been assessed and implemented in the project, e.g. in the composition of involved personnel, recruitment strategies, thematic priorities, project structure, content and impact, and any other aspects of the project where such aspects gain relevance.

It will be considered positive when a project can document integration or synergies with other national or regional educational initiatives, such as Erasmus+ Capacity Building.

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 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 each such field. The project budget included in the application form should only include funds applied for through SIU.

In order to ensure coherence in the description of your project, please carefully read the relevant help texts in the online application form as well as the Guidelines for the Eurasia Programme. Remaining questions may be directed to SIU.

4 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

4.1 Assessment of applications and response to applicants

Each application will be assessed by SIU and at least one external expert on the basis of its individual merits with regard to the general selection criteria set out above item 3.2, and its relative standing to other competing project applications. Norwegian embassies are given the possibility to comment on relevant applications. The Programme Board will make the final funding decision. If other aspects of competing applications are considered equal, the Programme Board may place emphasis on strategic and political factors deemed relevant to the Programme, such as geographical or disciplinary distribution of the project portfolio. In this call, such preference may be given to projects including partners in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the application process. Decisions are estimated to be announced in January 2016.

4.2 Contracts and reporting obligations

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a contract with SIU. The contract will be subject to SIU's standard terms and conditions, and must be signed by institution representative holding the requisite authority to legally bind the applicant institution. The obligations on part of the applicant include a duty to submit a final project report via Espresso, on completion of the project.

4.3 Contact information

For further information on the Programme or how to apply, please contact **SIU** via e-mail (bard.hekland@siu.no).