

UTFORSK Partnership Program Program Document

Background

The UTFORSK Partnership Program is a measure under the Norwegian Government's Panorama strategy. The program targets cooperation in higher education and research with Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, and the USA.

Theory of change

The UTFORSK Partnership Program's theory of change outlines the assumptions as to why cooperation in higher education between Norway and the countries in question is important for improving the quality of higher education, and for Norwegian bilateral interests in a broader sense. The theory of change is aligned with policies and objectives outlined in relevant policy documents, with particular reference to the White papers "Long-term plan for research and higher education 2019–2028" (2018–2019), and "Quality Culture in Higher Education" (2016-2017), as well as the "Panorama-strategy".

UTFORSK encompasses the following dimensions of change:

Sustainable development

Education is a key factor in the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, adopted by all UN nations in 2015. Quality education is a goal in itself, but education, research and innovation are also essential components for achieving the other SDGs, as expressed in SDG 17 - "Partnerships for the goals". International cooperation is a prerequisite for achieving Agenda 2030. The SDGs demonstrate that major economic, social, and environmental challenges facing the world today requires international cooperation and global solutions. Knowledge collaboration in the form of broad international partnerships, that include actors across disciplines and sectors, is an important part of the solution.

Education

International collaboration a precondition for improving the quality and increase the relevance of Norwegian higher education and research. International cooperation in education and research fosters comparative perspectives and approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. These perspectives and approaches are essential for development of new knowledge, critical thinking, dispositions, attitudes, values, and self-reflection.

The prioritized countries outside Europe are important for development of new knowledge, both for the world and for Norway, as they are host nations for some of the world's leading knowledge communities. Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia, and South-Africa are among the world's most advanced knowledge producers with importance both for the world and for Norway.

India and China are regional and global actors of great importance. In recent years, Norway has developed more extensive cooperation with both countries. As a large, neighbouring country, cooperation with Russia is essential for knowledge production that addresses common challenges,

especially in the Arctic and the high north. Japan is a central political and economic actor regionally and globally and is a key research and innovation partner for Norway. Brazil is Norway's most central partner for cooperation in Latin-America and South-Africa plays an important role in Africa's development and future position in the world, a position that makes the country a central partner for Norwegian research communities. Knowledge collaboration with the U.S. and Canada has played a vital role in the development of Norwegian higher education and research since the end of World War II and much of the world's innovative knowledge production takes place in North America.

International relations

'Knowledge diplomacy' refers to the role international higher education and research can play in building and strengthening relations between countries. Institutional partnerships in higher education and research represent arenas to build trust and networks outside traditional foreign policy channels, based on notions of cooperation, reciprocity, and mutual benefit. Thus, educational collaboration holds the potential to contribute to more resilient multi-faceted bilateral relations in support of broader foreign policy objectives.

Business and trade

The prioritized countries outside Europe represents markets of interest to Norwegian business and industry. For Norwegian business and industry, it is valuable to access research-driven innovation, infrastructure, and knowledge production in these countries to develop new technologies, services, and approaches. An education that generates future workers/employees with international experience and relevant competence, is important for a resilient and competitive business community.

Target groups

UTFORSK address the following target groups:

- **Institutions:** Through involvement in institutional partnerships and collaboration with non-academic organizations, higher education institutions get exposed to new knowledge and other ways of providing education to their students. They also get access to complementary expertise and new perspectives on their field. Partnerships are intended to lead to more internationalized and relevant study programs.
- **Individuals:** Students are participants in higher education. Provision of higher education that is characterized by active learning and research, internationalization and collaboration across sectors and disciplines, is intended to result in improved learning outcomes for students.
- **Society:** Partnerships that accommodate collaboration across countries, sectors, and disciplines, are intended to lead to knowledge production and sharing to the benefit of society. Through such partnerships, gradual solutions to major societal challenges can be found.

Program objectives and expected project results

The overall objective of UTFORSK is to enhance the quality of higher education and improve students' learning outcomes.

The program seeks to achieve this through supporting projects that lead to:

- Strengthened international partnerships within areas of mutual and strategic interest between higher education institutions in Norway and in the relevant countries, and
- Enhanced quality and relevance of study programs at involved institutions.

Of particular relevance to the objectives of the program are the following priorities:

- Mutual student exchange as a part of institutional cooperation
- Constructive interaction between higher education and research cooperation

- Productive connections to working life, trade, and industry
- Constructive interaction between bilateral and multilateral cooperation, with special emphasis on the EU programs.
- Agenda 2030 as an overarching principle when developing study programs.

Results framework

The results framework below outlines in more detail the expected effects and results of UTFORSK+, as well as indicators that may be used to measure achievement of results. The list of indicators is not exhaustive. Projects should be designed based on the partner institutions' and relevant stakeholders' own needs-assessment. Project objectives, expected results, and activities should be proposed by the partners based on jointly identified challenges and opportunities. The program acknowledges the partners' insight into their own institutions, academic fields, and contexts.

RESULTS	INDICATORS
Impact: Enhanced quality of higher education and improved learning outcomes for students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied knowledge and generic skills • Intercultural competence • Knowledge and competence related to the sustainability goals
<i>Outcome 1 Strengthened international partnerships within areas of mutual and strategic interest between higher education institutions in Norway and the relevant countries</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Balanced student mobility</i> • <i>Balanced staff mobility</i> • <i>Increased student mobility</i> • <i>Increased staff mobility</i> • <i>Increased virtual/ blended mobility</i> • <i>Increased virtual educational activities</i> • <i>Number of integrated joint educational activities</i>
Output 1.1 Established structures for student mobility, including work placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New/ revised agreements • Pre-approval/ integration of joint courses and degrees
Output 1.2 Integration of joint educational activities into regular programs offered at the partner institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised study programs • Wider application of methodology/practices • Credits
Output 1.3 Established joint courses and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of joint courses/ programs developed and implemented • Number jointly developed and implemented courses offered on digital platforms • Number of joint courses which includes internships/practice • Recruitment to joint courses/ programs • Credits
Output 1.4 Established arenas for knowledge production and sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared infrastructure and data • Networks • Joint supervision • Joint publication
Output 1.5 Synergies with EUs programs for education and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of joint applications to EUs programs • Number of joint EU projects awarded • Use of EU funds in combination with national funds
<i>Outcome 2 Enhanced quality and relevance of study programs at involved institutions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Coherent course content in the programs</i> • <i>Student evaluation</i> • <i>Project evaluations</i> • <i>Reference to existing research and surveys</i>
Output2.1 Good quality in student mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility windows established • Framework for reflections and analysis before and after student mobility • Access to complimentary study programs • Exchange opportunities at institutions and in academic environments of high quality • Exchange opportunities for students' work placements. • Students' participation in scientific work during exchange stays.
Output 2.2 Established structures for "internationalization at home"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest lectures • Joint supervision • Development of international curriculum • Integration of international students • Use of digital tools in education

Output 2.3 Integration of higher education and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of curriculum based on research collaboration/complimentary expertise • Student participation in research projects • Research schools • Field courses and fieldwork • Students' participation in scientific dissemination
Output 2.4 Integration of the world of work in education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures for knowledge sharing between the world of work and academia • Structures for internships/practices • Internships/practice • Research in/for business • Projects in/for business • Guest lectures
Output 2.5 Use Agenda 2030 as a framework for establishing new or reviewing existing courses/program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new/revised courses/programs • Development of multidisciplinary courses/programs
Output 2.6 Knowledge based innovation in education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New/revised teaching methods/practices • New/ revised infrastructure/ material for educational purposes • Development, testing and implementation of teaching methods and practices • Student-centered educational design
Output 2.7 Innovation through education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process innovation¹ (NIFU) • Entrepreneurial courses/programs • Student entrepreneurship • Academic entrepreneurship • Products/services developed

Financial framework and calls for applications

Financial framework

UTFORSK is funded by annual allocations from the Norwegian Ministry of Research and Education. Cooperation projects with Russia is expected to be partly funded by allocations from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. More information about available funding will be published in calls for applications under the program.

Calls for applications

A plan for calls for applications during the strategy period, detailing the expected number of calls and available funding, will be presented when the program is launched.

Administration

UTFORSK is administered by Diku. Applications to the program will be subject to peer review based on the selection criteria in the Call for applications. Diku will allocate funding on the basis of the expert recommendations. *More detailed information about the administrative and selection process will be available when the program is launched.*

Monitoring of project results and reporting

Projects that are funded by UTFORSK will be required to submit annual progress reports to Diku, as well as a final report when the project is ended. Diku will monitor project results and the degree to which project activities contribute to achieve the objectives of the program. Diku will facilitate systematic knowledge sharing between projects during the strategy period.

¹ Process innovation: Non-technological innovation such as organizational innovation, engagement or interaction with external actors, training related to creativity, entrepreneurship.