

Mid-term Review of the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED)

BY TECHNOPOLIS GROUP

Norad Collected Reviews **03/2018**

The report is presented in a series, compiled by Norad to disseminate and share analyses of development cooperation. The views and interpretations are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.



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31st January 2018

Mid-term Review of the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED)

Final report

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technopolis _{|group|} January 2018

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	6
1.1	Objectives of the mid-term review	6
1.2	Scale and scope of the review	6
1.3	Key considerations for the implementation of the review	7
2	Overview of the methodology	9
2.1	Overview of our methodology	9
2.2	Methodology applied.....	10
3	The NORHED Programme	14
3.1	Overview of the programme, headline figures	14
3.2	Financial reporting / budgetary spend.....	20
3.3	Key outputs of the funded projects – NORHED indicators.....	22
4	International benchmark	26
5	Findings of the mid-term review	34
5.1	Relevance	34
5.2	Effectiveness	43
5.3	Efficiency	47
5.4	Possible impact (including unintended effects)	58
5.5	Sustainability	59
6	Recommendations	61
	Appendix A Evaluation questions vs methodology applied	65
	Appendix B Appendix B List of NORHED projects and consultations undertaken	68

Figures

Figure 1	Logic model of NORHED	9
Figure 2	Methodological tools and the main evaluation question themes	10
Figure 3	Overview of the interview programme	11
Figure 4	Survey response rates	11
Figure 5	Overview of the planned and undertaken field visits	12
Figure 6	Project fiche structure used for the field visits	13
Figure 7	NORHED projects by areas.....	15
Figure 8	Total budget and expenditure to date by theme and type of partner	22
Figure 9	Number of new and revised curricula by theme and over time	23
Figure 10	Capacity to enrol students to Bachelor, Master and PhD NORHED programmes	24

Figure 11 Overview of the programmes and donors	27
Figure 12 Other donor funding received (multiple choices available, n=48).....	38
Figure 13 All LMIC partners benefit from this project set-up (n=85)	40
Figure 14 To which of the following sustainable development goals does your project contribute? (n=87, multiple responses)	42
Figure 15 LMIC coordinators' views on their biggest achievement or result in their NORHED-funded project (open ended question)	45
Figure 16 Internal and external factors influencing project implementation	46
Figure 17 Enabling factors and barriers (multiple responses).....	46
Figure 18 The project management by the lead LMIC partner is efficient (Norwegian PC, n=29 and LMIC PC, n=59)	50
Figure 19 The contribution by the Norwegian partner(s) is very valuable (LMIC PC, n=56)	50
Figure 20 More engagement by the Norwegian HEI partner(s) in the project activities	50
Figure 21 The reporting and monitoring obligations for Norad are easy to comply with (n=85)	54
Figure 22 The institution's capacity to meet the reporting and administrative requirements set by funders	54
Figure 23 Norad funding compared with other international donor funding (n=99 and 98 varies by answer option)	56
Figure 24 Characteristics of an 'ideal' NORHED project.....	61

Executive summary

This is the final report of the Mid-term review of the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED). The study was undertaken by Technopolis on behalf of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

The goal of this mid-term review, as set out in the Terms of Reference was to assess the progress of individual funded projects as well as the NORHED programme as a whole. In addition, the study was aimed at producing conclusions and recommendations to help improve the remaining programme period and provide lessons for potential future programme design and implementation.

The mid-term review was carried out during a six-month period between June and December 2017. It used a range of research tools and methods to collect robust evidence and arrive at well-founded findings. The main methodological tools and techniques used included desk research, a structured interview programme, online questionnaire surveys, field visits to project partners in selected low and middle-income countries (LMIC), two workshops with Norwegian HEI representatives and an international benchmark exercise.

The study sought to address 20 review questions that were posed by Norad across five broad themes: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, possible impact and sustainability. The subsequent paragraphs summarise the key findings of this study and highlight the recommendations put forward for the future development of NORHED.

Relevance

The study concluded that the NORHED programme design and activities are of very high relevance overall. They address the needs of the partner countries due to (intentional) programme design and successfully incorporate cultural and socio-economic aspects in the project implementation. All six areas of the programme - five thematic areas and Capacity building in South Sudan - address relevant and pressing issues and problems. The funded projects have high thematic relevance which is often coupled with strongly embedded outreach and community engagement.

Notwithstanding the high levels of relevance of the project activities to the local needs, the study also found that there is a need to put more emphasis on linking the project activities more strongly with relevant national stakeholders from the outset. Obtaining buy-in from the local authorities and stakeholders tends to be lower on the agendas of the grant holders but would increase the potential impact and sustainability of the projects.

All of the projects funded have a very clear focus on capacity building in higher education. Entrusting the LMIC partners with the management and coordination of the projects, a new feature in NORHED compared with its predecessor programmes, is regarded as an important stepping stone towards the achievement of the programme objectives. At the same time this new element meant that many of the LMIC partner organisations had to go through major and steep learning curves to be able to comply with the requirements. The projects' potential to generate sustainable impact through capacity building varies to a large extent. The study identified two types of capacity building activities in the projects:

- Capacity building focused predominantly on and limited to the participating institutions i.e. 'basic' capacity building, including MA and PhD student training, training university staff and increasing the administrative capacity of the institution. This represents the majority of the capacity building seen in the projects
- Capacity building beyond the institution, through engaging local stakeholders, staff from government agencies, private sector, NGOs, etc. This approach needs different conditions, level of advancement and maturity from the participating HEIs or project partners to think more strategically

There are different types of partnerships functioning across the project portfolio (South-South and South-North). The following provides some observations on the characteristics of the partnerships

- Partnerships where there is ‘capacity exchange’ among the partners, which is built on trust and respect. This is among the most advanced forms of partnerships
- Partnerships where the Norwegian partners play a mentoring role, alongside other project activities. This is also seen in the well-established and functioning partnerships, where there is recognition of the mutual benefits to be gained
- Partnerships focused on project implementation where there is evidence of collaboration, but the links between the institutions appear weaker
- Unbalanced partnerships, where the expectations and level of contribution do not match, and some project activities are unfulfilled or delayed
- Non-functioning partnerships, where the project partners are not aware of each other’s activities at all, operate in isolation or where there are examples of non-contributing partners

Most of the partnerships belong to the first few categories, however there are examples of the latter two as well, which need close monitoring and attention.

Norad is regarded as a highly unique and often dominant funder for education-related activities. While participating LMIC institutions gave accounts of a broad range of international funding sources used at institutional level, interviews revealed that concurrently very few project coordinators and their departments have other international funding.

The Sustainable Development Goals came into force while NORHED was already ongoing, therefore it was not designed having the SDGs as guiding principles. Engaged stakeholders however confirmed that gender equality and improving education are core principles embedded in the programme and projects.

Effectiveness

The 45 projects of NORHED - that are in the scope of this mid-term review - showcase diversity in terms of topics, thematic areas, balance across the project activities and partnership models used. At the same time, all projects are aligned with the overarching objectives of the programme, but with some unevenness in contribution (across education, research and institutional change). The general approach and programme design, however, provide good flexibility to enable tailoring the projects. The biggest achievements of the projects are reported to be in institutional capacity building.

There are some good examples which could be used as best practice for embedding the cross-cutting themes in the project activities and implementation. However, there is still too little evidence of systematic approaches to broader gender mainstreaming across the project portfolio.

There are a number of internal and external factors highlighted which influence project implementation. Internal enabling factors tend to relate to management and external enabling factors to the way in which the country works. Internal barriers relate to the flow of resources and the small pool of female candidates, external barriers once again focused on the political economy, stability and also exchange rates. The delayed consumption of funding, highlighted in many places in this review, tends to be related to external barriers. Risk analysis is built into the project reporting and most risks identified by the Southern partners concerned delays to project implementation, caused by external factors, related to physical and direct threats. Few projects identified personnel risks, emerging social issues or cultural differences.

An aspect of the project implementation that influences the overall effectiveness is that too many projects are still operating in isolation, in spite of growing numbers of good examples of cooperation. Addressing this issue through enhanced networking and knowledge exchange could significantly improve creating synergies across the portfolio and enhanced impact.

Efficiency

The study assessed efficiency from different angles along the review questions. Cost efficiency was mainly investigated through the project activities, reflecting the rather high-level nature of the

programme objectives, which are difficult to quantify. Cost efficiency at project level was predominantly explored through discussions during the field visits.

The review of the allocation of resources highlighted that the distribution of funding remains much the same as planned at the project outset with little advantage taken of potential flexibility in its use. In general, projects acknowledged that funding is adequate to achieve the objectives and the set targets, and the amount of overhead is relatively low. There is a lack of funding for staff which then manifests in additional workload in order to discharge the project activities. The funding for scholarships varied across the portfolio but was generally deemed sufficient.

Overall cost efficiency is not well understood by the projects. There is a very strong institution-focused approach in using the project funding, tailored to the specific needs of the participating institutions rather than focusing on cost-efficiency at the project level. There are many institutions with multiple projects which could have a clear advantage of concentrating the institutional development-related budgets and foster long lasting change. This aspect is however rather under-developed, although selected good practice examples exist. Enhanced efficiency could be better tackled by taking a more holistic view.

In terms of the programme and project management by Norad, there seems to be a lack of shared understanding about what it means to have cost-efficient projects. There were no standardised rates applied within countries, in terms of the scholarships or per diems, although there are institutional guidelines available at some NORHED project partner HEIs.

Overall projects do not consider the reporting to be overly burdensome anymore, but fulfilling the narrative reporting requires a certain level of institutional and administrative capacity and support. Norad's programme results framework, annual reporting and financial reviews are generally fit for purpose, however the indicators, developed through a well-received participatory approach, need to be better defined. There are issues of interpretation, quality of reporting and lack of baseline data. Projects also report on project-specific indicators which create additional burden in terms of reporting, and the value is not proportionate to the effort.

Efficiency has been hampered by the turnover of NORHED staff which caused some delays and problems for the project partners. This has led to multiple officers following projects over the lifetime of the programme and a loss of institutional memory. Project officers are expected to undertake a number of complex tasks which need a variety of skills. Although general training is available, and there is support through informal meetings, there is a need to codify institutional knowledge and have more guidelines available.

Norad has good relationships with many international donors and participates in the donor harmonisation conferences. This represents an opportunity, that could be used more strategically, to take on board good practices from other donors' working methods and systems.

Possible impact (including unintended effects) and sustainability

The NORHED programme, due to its design which puts institutional capacity building, education and research at its core, has great potential to achieve the intended impacts even after the funding has ceased. The education and research activities undertaken in the projects are closely linked and mutually reinforcing. The institutional capacity building is, however, somewhat disjointed from the other activities, receives less consideration and often limited activities take place.

The overall attention to sustainability seems very low in the design of the programme. Very few projects consider the future of their project activities, generally expecting further NORHED funding possibilities. There are, however, a number of areas, where programme results are likely to continue beyond the funding period. These include international collaborations among the partners from both South-South and South-North, the increased ability to seek international funding, infrastructure developed, knowledge transfer as well as many of the education and research activities. For the latter, sustainability is ensured through the trained staff and students. The curricula developed and revised can and will be used beyond the funding period. Better trained personnel can transfer more up-to-date and relevant

knowledge to the students, thereby creating graduates who have the right skills and knowledge for the world of work. To ensure increased sustainability of the results, it is vital to secure institutional management buy-in and similarly, at the national level, secure policy level buy-in.

Although the projects are still ongoing, there are already some unintended effects that can be observed in the partnerships. There are multiple good examples when the partners step up and share the risks of the projects or reach beyond the original tasks and remit and provide additional activities to advance training and capacity building to non-project participant organisations as well. Another important effect is the increased interdisciplinarity of the approaches adopted by the HEI partners.

Recommendations

The ‘ideal’ NORHED project:

There is no one-size-fits-all project for NORHED. The current project requirements should be kept as regards partnerships, types of activities and themes to ensure that partnerships are formed in alignment with the needs and objectives of the projects. There is a need for slight variations and changes in balance across the project portfolio, however these can be implemented within the current flexible framework conditions.

NORHED programme management:

To mitigate future risks caused by staff turnover, Norad should put in place more systematic support and harmonised guidelines to help project officers with a smooth takeover of projects, application of the rules of the programme and how they should be applied to the projects.

In addition, Norad should review the roles and responsibilities of the project officers to ensure the most efficient use of the available in-house resources, and decide if/when external support is advisable.

Institutional capacity building as a programme objective:

There is a need to support dedicated institutional capacity building activities in the projects to ensure these activities are used to their maximum benefit, as they are vital for sustainability. It is recommended to consider external partners and support channels to enhance the efficiency of these dedicated project activities.

Monitoring and reporting:

The reporting requirements both in terms of indicators and narrative content should be revisited and renewed, in particular the 14 standard indicators applied. It is recommended to introduce template-based online reporting, with the possibility of offline completion as needed. It is suggested to make a distinction in the content: capture a core set of standardised information from all projects (aggregation at programme level) and to keep flexibility, allow project specific descriptions and information as well (individual project-related information). Lastly, a monitoring database needs to be created for the programme that ensures easy access to the progress of the projects and provides programme level aggregated information.

Financial management of the projects:

Norad should be prepared to provide further assistance in the interpretation of the guidelines and clarification in terms of what can be funded from the projects. In addition, divorcing the financial management of the projects from the overall project coordination should be considered for partners where experience shows that there are major difficulties in ensuring the smooth financial running of the projects due to barriers created by national rules and regulations.

Sustainability of the results:

Norad should ensure that consideration is given towards the sustainability of the project results from the outset. In addition, a two-stream approach could be considered for the continuation of NORHED funding. The two streams could provide competitive funding for selected projects:

- Currently ongoing 'mature' projects - to ensure they can maximise their impact based on the achievements they accumulated during the current and previous funding cycles and become sustainable afterwards without Norad funding
- New partnerships or partnerships at an early stage of capacity building, that require further funding cycle(s) to arrive to a stage where impact and sustainability can be achieved

The role of institutional contacts at the project partners:

Norad should reconsider what is expected from an institutional contact person. Having a reinforced institutional contact person role would be an important step towards enhanced institutional capacity building.

International collaboration among the NORHED projects:

Overall, there is rather limited knowledge about other projects running under the umbrella of the NORHED programme. Norad should ensure that project have more opportunities to collaborate, especially if they are closely linked to each other based on the topics they address.

1 Introduction

This document is the final report of the Mid-term review of NORHED. The study was undertaken by Technopolis on behalf of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

The report describes the main findings of the study based on the data collection and analysis that was carried out during the six months of the study. It also puts forward suggestions and recommendations for the remaining programme period and lessons for the future programme design. This final report is structured as follows:

- The remaining part of this chapter presents the study objectives, the evaluation questions, and briefly sets out key considerations to set the context of the study and this review
- Chapter 2 provides an overview of our methodological approach
- Chapter 3 provides a summary of the key results of the NORHED programme to date
- Chapter 4 describes the international comparison task of the study
- Chapter 5 presents the main findings of this mid-term review
- Chapter 6 puts forward suggestions and recommendations for Norad's consideration
- The long list of study questions and the list of NORHED projects are set out in the Appendices

1.1 Objectives of the mid-term review

The primary purpose of this mid-term review is to assess the progress of individual funded projects as well as the NORHED programme as a whole. Additionally, Norad is interested in whether any programme or project adjustments are required to ensure that the programme objectives are met. The Terms of Reference (ToR) set out three main objectives for the study:

- To ascertain programme and project progress, preliminary results, outputs and outcomes
- To assess NORHED's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and as possible impact and sustainability
- To produce conclusions and recommendations to help improve the remaining programme period, and provide lessons for potential future programme design and implementation

1.2 Scale and scope of the review

Launched in 2012, NORHED is a successor programme to two other initiatives which provided financial support to higher education institutions in the South: NOMA (Norad's Programme for Master Studies), and NUFU (the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education). NORHED is one of Norad's highest profile programmes and the organisation sees it as its *"main avenue for strengthening higher education institutions in low and middle-income countries."*¹

There are 50 ongoing NORHED funded projects, out of which 45 are in scope for this mid-term review. These 45 projects were all funded as a result of the 2013 call for proposals. At the core of NORHED funded projects lay North-South international partnerships, engaging Norwegian universities in projects led by higher education institutions from Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa across six priority themes. The NORHED programme provides approximately NOK 756 million in project financing. Funding is allocated according to five fields of activity: PhD training and research, education (Master's and Bachelor), administrative support (or overhead costs), project management and institutional development.

¹ Norad (2017) *The Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development*, p1

1.3 Key considerations for the implementation of the review

The literature provided the study team with the context and an understanding of the situation in relation to capacity building development in low and middle-income countries (LMICs). In addition, the study team looked at the nature of higher education partnerships in developing countries. These pieces of background work facilitated the development of the most important considerations for the method of assessment applied in the current mid-term review and for the recommendations put forward for the future development of the overall NORHED programme design. A summary of some of the key issues is provided in this chapter.

There is a considerable amount of research into improving research capacity in low and middle-income countries and improving the links between research and policy making. An analysis on behalf of the World Health Organisation² found a gap between policy and research in LMICs, attributed to two factors:

- Limited resources leading to reduced capacity for productive research and pursuit of innovation
- Limited opportunities for academics and researchers to influence policy making processes

The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024³ also reinforces the need to create a culture of evidence among policy makers supported by researchers and research institutions. The strategy mentions that the capacity of HEIs is often dependent on the capacity of policy makers to positively influence the higher education sector. A report by RAND Europe focusing specifically on the African Institutions Initiative⁴ includes a number of key messages on the need for donor organisations to pay more attention to the input from local HEIs and the fact interventions aimed at strengthening HEIs need to take a long-term approach if they are to be sustainable. The WHO initiative ESSENCE published a good practice document⁵ designed for potential donors looking to fund capacity strengthening initiatives in LMICs. The document outlines seven key principles to help ensure that initiatives strengthening research capacity provide the maximum possible benefit:

- Network, collaborate, communicate and share experiences
- Understand the local context and accurately evaluate existing research capacity
- Ensure local ownership and secure active support
- Build on monitoring, evaluation and learning from the start
- Establish robust research governance and support structures while promoting effective leadership
- Embed strong support, supervision and mentorship structures
- Think long-term, be flexible and plan for continuity

These reports all have a common theme of understanding local conditions as a driver to developing high-quality funding programmes.

With respect to the changes in higher education, the relative neglect of this area in many developing countries has challenged the performance of higher education systems. Despite efforts that national governments and international organisations are making, increasing capacity in higher education so that it can better fulfil its role in development of countries, does not seem easy. Establishing effective higher education partnerships is seen by many to be a way forward to support the process. Wann, Hinz and Day⁶ define an effective educational partnership as: *“a dynamic collaborative process between educational institutions that brings mutual though not necessarily symmetrical benefits to the parties engaged in the partnership. Partners share ownership of the projects. Their relationship is based on respect, trust, transparency and reciprocity. They understand each other’s cultural and working*

² Koon A. D., Nambiar D., Rao K. D. (2012), Embedding of research into decision-making processes

³ Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024.

⁴ RAND Europe (2014), The African Institutions Initiative

⁵ WHO (2014), Seven principles for strengthening research capacity in LMIC: simple ideas in a complex world

⁶ Wann, N., Hinz, S. and Day, R. (2010) *Good Practices in Educational Partnerships Guide: UK-Africa Higher & Further Education Partnerships*

environment. Decisions are taken jointly after real negotiations take place between the partners. Each partner is open and clear about what they are bringing to the partnership and what their expectations are from it. Successful partnerships tend to change and evolve over time.”

Effective partnerships in higher education develop a shared leadership and vision, through effective strategic planning, maximising the resources of each partner as well as being collaborative in pursuit of funds which ultimately deliver assistance in research, teaching and learning, innovation strategies, professional and business development, strategic options, consultancy, knowledge transfer, shared services, cost savings and other services that are mutually beneficial and add value to the student, the workforce, the community and partner institutions. Partnerships challenge the traditional roles of universities as transmitters of discipline specific knowledge to students and research generation and see them as a fully engaged part of a wider system. Partnerships turn universities into active participants in change.

Since 2014, several papers focusing on higher education partnerships have been published. Power, Millington and Bengtsson⁷ argue that higher education partnerships can improve the quality and relevance of higher education and can exist at many levels. They range from the relatively formal private partnerships to more informal collaborative arrangements. Partnerships can be very beneficial but incredibly hard to deliver successfully and there are a number of common factors that may inhibit any such partnership. These include imbalances in resources, funding to initiate but not sustain the partnership (particularly affecting teaching and learning partnerships which are not as immediately effective as research partnerships), poor monitoring and evaluation, cultural divide and a lack of confidence in the weak research capacity for input into the innovation process. These are areas which are looked at as part of this programme evaluation.

In addition, the methodology developed for this mid-term review makes use of the findings of the NORHED evaluation series, where work has already taken place exploring the causal relationships present within the intervention and from which a theory of change was developed.⁸ We noted the key issues raised in the evaluation series of NORHED as well as in the evaluation studies into NUFU and NOMA: the lack of baseline data for outputs and outcomes in some projects,⁹ mixed level of data coverage for the key performance indicators and concerns over quality of survey data collected.

⁷ Power, L., Millington, K.A. and Bengtsson, S. (2015) *Building Capacity in Higher Education Topic Guide*

⁸ Evaluation Series of NORHED – Theory of Change and Evaluation Methods, 2014

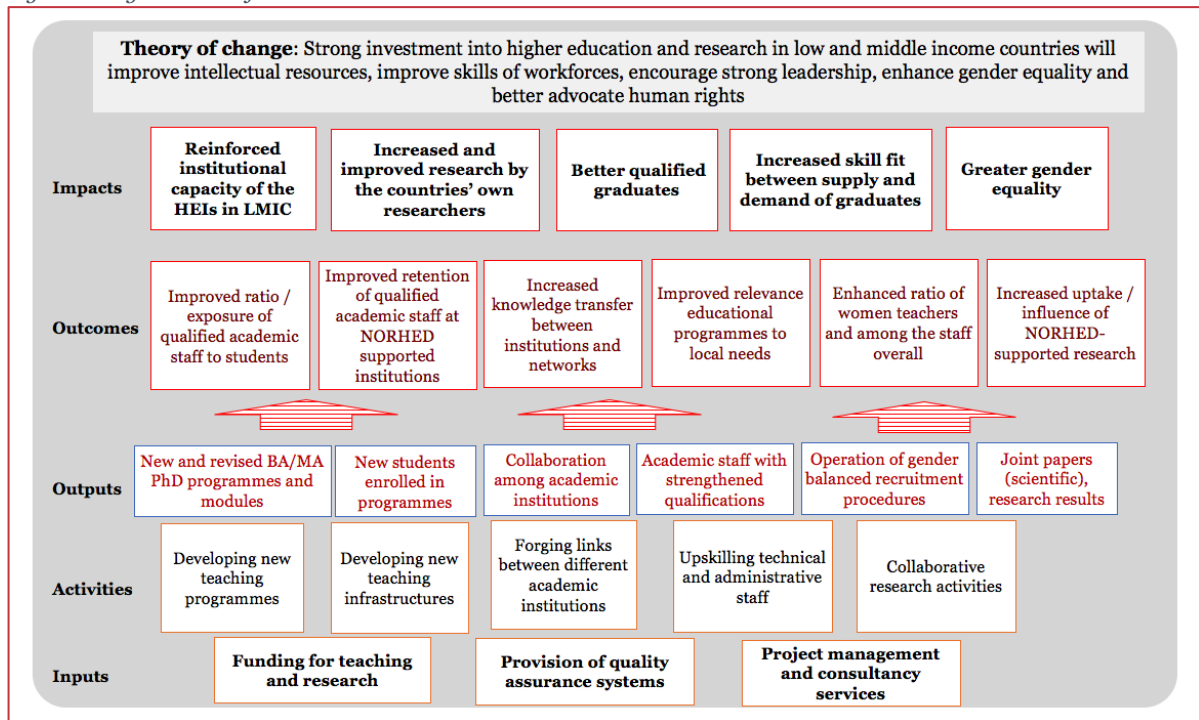
⁹ Norad (2015) *Evaluation Series of NORHED: Evaluability Study*, p. vii

2 Overview of the methodology

2.1 Overview of our methodology

Our study is based on a logic model approach that considers the causal effects associated with each stage of the intervention, from the inputs to the activities and processes taking place and then the (expected) impacts generated. We have developed a logic model for the programme, as a basis for this review to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, (possible) impacts and sustainability of NORHED. The logic model is reflected upon through the review questions answered in the subsequent chapters.

Figure 1 Logic model of NORHED



The study was carried out in three phases:

1. The **inception phase** focused on preliminary desk research and discussion with Norad – to establish the best methodology for the study including the design of the data collection tools
2. The **fieldwork phase** represented the largest and most resource intensive phase of the study, and consisted predominantly of stakeholder consultations through an interview programme, online surveys, field visits and the international comparison
3. The **final phase** of the review was synthesis and analysis to ensure that the findings of the different research methods are triangulated and that the study provides recommendations based on a solid evidence base bringing together all the results from the data collection. This phase also included validation workshops in Bergen and Oslo

We present the long list of evaluation questions and how our methodology addresses them in the appendix, while below we provide an overview of the methodological tools and the evaluation themes.

Figure 2 Methodological tools and the main evaluation question themes¹⁰

Evaluation question themes	Desk research, incl. document and lit. review	Structured interview programme	Field visits	Workshop with Norwegian HEIs	International comparison
Relevance	√√√	√√	√√√	√	√√
Effectiveness	√√√	√√	√√√	√√√	
Efficiency	√√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
(Possible) impact	√	√√√	√√√	√√√	√
Sustainability	√	√√√	√√√	√√√	√√

Note: the number of ticks represent the extent to which the different methodological tools address the evaluation question themes (√ represents low and √√√ high levels)

2.2 Methodology applied

Desk research

Desk research involved collecting and analysing secondary data, literature, programme documentation, monitoring data and reporting obtained from Norad, as well as other available studies and statistical data. We assessed the content of the documents received and extracted their content to:

- Build a database of contacts from LMIC and Norwegian HEIs for undertaking the surveys and telephone interviews. This database logs the names, emails and phone numbers of key stakeholders in every Southern and Norwegian HEI involved in a NORHED project (proposing unit, project coordinator, head of department and institutional contact)
- Generate an overview including project level information such as total budget allocation, agreement period, financial year and information on the participating institutions
- Review the indicators for each of the 45 projects, including the baseline values, achievements to date and targets for each project to understand the data availability, quality and gaps – this task proved to be extremely time-consuming and could not be carried out for all indicators due to the high variations in the quality of information captured through the reporting
- Carry out a review of the risk factors that are highlighted in the project reporting

We put an emphasis on extracting information from the documentation received to help us better understand the interpretation and reporting modes on the indicators across the projects and the reporting methods. Through the field visits the study team had the opportunity to complement the information collected from the reporting and engage many of the project partners in discussion about their progress, any deviation from the targets set as well as to explore more in depth their understanding and interpretation of the reporting requirements including the indicators used.

Structured interview programme

The interview programme was designed to obtain the views of multiple stakeholder groups:

1. Interviews with relevant national and international stakeholders, funding bodies and aid agencies - including interviews carried out as part of the international comparison task
2. Interviews with Norad programme management and quality assurance team – to gauge the understanding and views of the project managers on the progress of the projects, highlight any key issues and/or good examples the study team should be aware of, in addition the team spoke with Norad’s management to gain a better understanding on the overall programme portfolio of the Agency, strategic objectives and its division of labour with other funding bodies in Norway
3. Follow-up interviews with selected HEIs with a focus on the LMIC partners (Norwegian counterparts were offered the opportunity to participate in two workshops held in Norway). The objective of these interviews was to explore selected topics more in-depth, focusing on those projects that were not visited or were covered to a lesser extent by information collected. In

¹⁰ The full list of the evaluation questions is included in Appendix A

addition, telephone interviews were carried out with the project coordinators from Malawi instead of the field visit

The interviews were carried out mainly by telephone (or Skype) in a semi-structured format with interview guidelines tailored to the individuals consulted. The table below provides an overview of the types and number of interviews carried out compared to the target numbers set.

Figure 3 Overview of the interview programme

Stakeholder groups to consult	Number of interviews – target number	Number of interviewees contacted	Number of interviews undertaken
National and international funding bodies, agencies	8-10	8	7
Norad programme management and the Department of QA	5-6	11	10
Follow-up interviews with selected LMIC and Norwegian HEIs*	8-10	15	11
Total	21-26	34	28

Note: * due to the workshops organised with the Norwegian HEIs, the follow-up interviews focused on selected LMIC HEIs only

Surveys

To collect the views of the main stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the NORHED projects both on a project and institutional / departmental levels at the beneficiary institutions, three online surveys were designed and launched targeting the following stakeholder groups:

- Project coordinators at LMIC higher education institutions
- Higher education institutions’ management at the LMIC lead and partner institutions including the institutional contact points, the Head of Departments and the contact persons of the Proposing Units
- Project coordinators at the Norwegian HEI partners

The surveys were open for a month-long period. They were launched on Friday, the 1st September 2017 and closed on the 2nd October 2017 after reminder e-mails were sent out. The respondents were provided with the possibility to complete the survey offline, if they preferred to do so.

There were some overlaps among the first two survey populations. In those cases, when a person had multiple roles with regards the NORHED project(s), they were asked to complete only one of the surveys, the LMIC project coordinator survey instead of the HEI management survey. Still, there were eight duplicate completions, which were cleaned for the purposes of the analysis. The table below provides an overview of the number of people contacted, and the response rates achieved.

Figure 4 Survey response rates

Types of stakeholder	Total nr. of people contacted	Nr. of responses received	Response rate	Responses analysed (after cleaning)	Response rate (after cleaning)	Number of unique NORHED projects covered
LMIC HEI management	140	28	20%	20	14%	19
LMIC Project Coordinators	121	63	52%	62	51%	37
Norwegian Project Coordinators	48	30	63%	29	60%	27*
Total	309	121	39%	111	36%	44

Note: * there are two Norwegian project coordinators who are involved in multiple NORHED projects, therefore the total number unique projects covered by Norwegian project coordinators is 29.

The response rates for the LMIC Project Coordinators and Norwegian Project Coordinators with both being over 50% are regarded as high. The lower response rate for the HEI management can be explained by time constraints on their part as well as a more detached view of the projects, which is often a discouraging factor for survey completion.

Out of the 45 projects in scope of the current study, only one was not covered by any type of survey response. This project is however covered by data collection through the field visits.

Field visits

Field visits provided a key source of information and the opportunity for in-depth consultations with stakeholders, including MA and PhD students, staff – project coordinators, HEI management as well as researchers and lecturers, administrative staff involved in the project delivery - local stakeholders and Norwegian Embassies. Selecting field visit locations to offer high coverage of the project portfolio was highly important. The selected institutions have multiple participations, which provided the opportunity to explore institutional capacity development aspects better, while maintaining cost-efficiency for the study.

In agreement with Norad, the following countries and projects were selected for field visits.

Figure 5 Overview of the planned and undertaken field visits

Countries	Nr. of projects	Project ID*	HEIs to visit	Deviation from the planned visits
Ethiopia	11 projects	ETH130014, ETH130024 , SDN130013, SSD130020, TAN130037, UGA130021, ETH130016, ETH130017, ETH130019, ETH130025, SSD130022	Addis Ababa University, St. Paul Millennium Hospital Medical College, Hawassa University	St. Paul Millennium Hospital Medical College was not visited (ETH130024)
Malawi	6 projects	MWI130021, MWI130022, MWI130030, MWI130032, RSA130010, ZIB130009	University of Malawi, Queen Elisabeth Central Hospital (QECH), Blantyre	No visit was undertaken, instead telephone interviews were conducted
Nepal	5 projects	NPL130020, NPL130021, NPL130022, NPL130023, UGA130015	Tribhuvan University, College of Journalism and Mass Communication, Kathmandu University	The College of Journalism and Mass Communication was not visited (UGA130015)
Sri Lanka	4 projects	LKA130013, NPL130020, NPL130021, SRV130010	University of Peradeniya, University of Ruhuna	No change
Uganda	15 projects	KEN130021 , SDN130013, SSD130020, SSD130021, TAN130027, UGA130015, UGA130018, UGA130019, UGA130020 , UGA130021, UGA130023, UGA130024, UGA130025, UGA130030, UGA130031	Makerere University, Kyambogo University	12 projects were visited in total at Makerere and Kyambogo Universities (no visits to KEN-13/0021 and UGA130020)
Columbia	1 project	NIC130010	Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultral (UAIIN)	No change

Note: * strikethrough of the project ID shows which projects were not visited

Based on the initial selection, the field visits were to offer a coverage of 34 projects out of the 45 funded, in some cases enabling the study team to compare and contrast the views through visiting two partners – agreement partner and project partners - from the same project either through visits at different locations or through an organised joint meeting. Due to the cancellation of the Malawi trip, the number was reduced and in total 26 projects were visited out of the 45.

All field visits were undertaken between the 16th September and the 29th October 2017. The study team consulted a significant number of stakeholders – over 280 individuals - during the visits.

To facilitate the field visits a short background fiche was prepared on each of the projects visited, using information extracted from the project documentation. The project fiches were complemented by a set of questions to structure the information collected by the study team across all the visits.

Figure 6 Project fiche structure used for the field visits

<p>Practical information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title of the project and ID • LMIC and Norwegian HEIs involved • Key contact persons at the visited HEI including background information on the position/role, website links • Contact details, telephone and e-mail, exact visiting address (google map screenshot) <p>On the HEI visited</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief description of the HEIs, including the financial situation <p>On the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief description - overview of the project, objectives • The extracted indicators (baseline, target and actual) – gaps and highlights • Comments included in the 2016 narrative report - deviations, achievements, risks highlighted <p>Progress of data collection and key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the survey responses received • Key questions, observations – standard questions as well as project-related specific information
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Workshop with Norwegian HEI representatives

As a result of the changes in the field visits and due to the positive replies of the Norwegian HEI project coordinators to the question of the online survey asking for interest in attending a workshop, instead of the one foreseen workshop, two workshops were organised on the same day, the 4th December 2017. One workshop took place in Bergen and other one in Oslo, to facilitate participation of different HEIs. The workshops focused on the future programme design of NORHED and served as a discussion forum for the main findings of the study. Ideally, LMIC HEIs would have been present at the discussion, however this would have required a major financial and resource commitment both from Norad and the LMIC partners.

The workshops were designed and run by the study team. The key outputs of the workshops were:

- The engagement of the Norwegian NORHED project and institutional coordinators in a broader discussion about their experiences and suggestions for change to maintain the relevance of the programme
- Input collected by the study team to refine the recommendations put forward in the draft report with regards to the further development of the programme, which are incorporated into this final report

International comparison

This task involved collecting and bringing together information on the strategic decision making and practices of other donor organisations from different countries. The funders selected, in agreement with Norad, for the international comparison are:

- German Academic Exchange Service, DAAD
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, SIDA
- Nuffic, the Dutch Organisation for Internationalisation in Education
- The Finnish National Agency for Education, CIMO
- Department for International Development, DFID, United Kingdom

Through a series of telephone interviews with these funders, a set of high-level topics were discussed as described in Chapter 4.

3 The NORHED Programme

This chapter provides a description of the programme and introduces some key headline figures to help put the mid-term review into context. In addition, it provides an overview of the key themes and highlights some project results. The analysis of the evidence collected as part of this review is presented in the subsequent two chapters.

3.1 Overview of the programme, headline figures

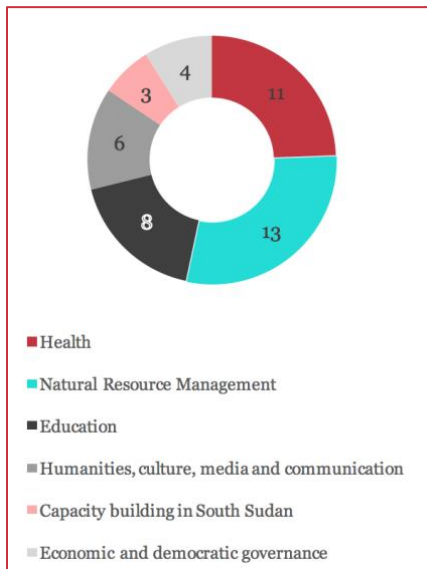
The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) launched the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development (NORHED) in 2012. This programme aims to build capacity of higher education institutions in the South to deal with the social, political and environmental issues faced by the countries in which it operates. The NORHED programme, as a result of the call for proposals launched in 2013, currently has 45 active projects operating within 25 countries across Asia, Africa, South America and the Middle East. The projects are partnered by at least one higher education institution (HEI) in a low and middle-income country (LMIC) and one in Norway.

The programme has the following objectives:

- To reinforce the capacity of higher education institutions in LMICs by:
 - Producing more and better research in its priority areas
 - Producing more and better qualified graduates, both men and women
- To increase and improve levels of research administered by the countries' own researchers, thereby improving knowledge within each country
- To produce a more qualified job candidate, enabling a larger and more skilled workforce
- To enable evidence-based policy and decision-making
- To enhance gender equality

NORHED is a successor programme to two other initiatives providing financial support to higher education institutions in the South: NOMA (Norad's Programme for Master Studies) and NUFU (the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education). NOMA was run from 2006-2010 and NUFU was run from 2007-2011. The 45 Norad funded projects are divided into six areas of focus or sub-programmes, which represent the priority areas of the Norwegian government at the time of launching the 2013 call for proposal.

Figure 7 NORHED projects by areas



Although projects are filed under one area, projects often hold relevance to more than one sub-programme (education and health for example). A more detailed summary of projects coordinated under each thematic area is given below.

The highest concentration of NORHED projects can be found in Africa, where 37 project partner institutions are located. Of these countries, the largest number of projects can be found in Uganda, where there are 16 projects underway. The lowest concentration of projects can be found in the Middle East, where only one project is being implemented.

In total, 71 higher education institutions in 25 LMIC countries are actively collaborating within the NORHED programme. The project agreement partners are all, but for four projects, in the LMIC countries, which is a key feature of the programme and represents a major shift in comparison to the predecessor programmes. The Norwegian University of Life Sciences partners in the highest number of projects among the Norwegian partner

HEIs, contributing to 16 different projects. Among the LMIC partner institutions, Makerere University, Uganda, partners in the highest number of projects from all LMIC countries. The following paragraphs highlight the key features of the different areas of NORHED funding.

Capacity building in South Sudan

Norad funds three projects under the capacity building in South Sudan sub-programme. These projects all aim to build capacity of higher education institutions, which have been weakened by years of civil war. South Sudan has been blighted in recent years by fighting and civil unrest, which displaced 2.2 million people from 2013-2015.¹¹ Such conflict has impaired institutional capacity in South Sudan and has contributed towards a weakened financial system and diaspora of inhabitants. Norad funding aims to build capacity in universities to ultimately reduce levels of poverty.

One project aims to fill capacity gaps in the areas of democratic governance following the conflict in the country. By building competence of staff in partner institutions and know-how of officials in local authorities, it is expected that NORHED funding will contribute to peace-building in the area.

South Sudan is endowed with vast natural resources, such as rangelands, arable land, forests and water most of which remain untapped. By understanding how to be more productive agriculturally, while ensuring sustainability of farming methods, graduates should be able to find solutions and create policies for contemporary environmental resource problems. Two other projects aim to strengthen academic competence in HEIs around South Sudan to learn more about how the region is affected by climate change and resource exploitation.

Natural resource management, climate change and environment

There is a necessity to create policies which reflect the state of natural resource management in low and middle-income countries in the South. These countries in the South are highly vulnerable to climate change, and often experience extreme weather conditions and natural disasters from rising global temperatures. Furthermore, there is evidence that poorer countries will be more adversely affected by climate change in the years to come.¹² Affording rising food and healthcare bills will also become unmanageable for less affluent countries.

Natural resource management receives the highest amount of funding from the NORHED portfolio. It also has the largest number of funded projects from any sub-programme (13). The projects are

¹¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14069082>

¹² <https://www.cgdev.org/topics/climate-change>

predominately implemented in African countries (Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia), but also take root in Asian countries (Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Nepal). All projects have sustainable management of resources as their focus. The overall objective of the natural resource management thematic area is thus to improve the academic capacity in higher education institutions, both in terms of students and staff, and to provide solutions pertinent to addressing climate change issues.

Sustainable forest management is a point of focus within NORHED's natural resource management funding. There is no doubt that the depletion of forests in countries like Uganda and Ethiopia is contributing negatively towards climate change. There is consequently a need to understand how to use forest and agricultural resources sustainably, while simultaneously researching into the opportunities such ecosystems can provide to local communities. NORHED funding contributes towards instructing academics and teachers in sustainable forest management, so that they, in turn, can disseminate knowledge to local farmers and policy makers.

As well as encouraging sustainable use of forest resources, NORHED funding also fosters for example teaching of Climate Smart Agriculture as a means of viable development. The project on climate smart agriculture (CSA) uses an approach that has been developed to guide countries through managing agricultural practices whilst ensuring food security within a changing climate. Funded NORHED projects also include topics of marine sciences. For example, one project explores the impacts of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture management, while another one focuses on the vulnerability and resilience of coastal ecosystems and local communities.

Project title: WIMEA-ICT, Improving Weather Information Management in East Africa (UGA-13/0018)

Project partners: Makerere University, the University of Bergen, the University of Juba and the Dar es Salaam Institute for Technology

The project's main goal is to increase capacity in higher education in South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania in postgraduate education and research in the field of weather management, and to contribute through applied research in better weather management in practice. Since its start, WIMEA-ICT has been able to train seven PhDs and 14 Master students, of which around 30% are women (the PI also being a woman). In addition, several interdisciplinary academic papers were produced, and three prototypes for affordable, solar-powered weather stations were launched.

Main challenges included the ongoing security situation in South Sudan, procurement delays, and the academic regulations that blocked the idea for a joint University of Bergen-Makarere University PhD degree. However, the project managed to stay on course despite these challenges, and with the help of a year extension, works towards its goals.

The project demonstrates good practice in its direct engagement with relevant policy stakeholders. WIMEA-ICT PhD students work directly with the Ugandan weather service to improve their prediction models and train their staff, which has already benefited the country in a direct way.

Humanities, culture, media and communication

Norad funds six projects under the humanities, culture, media and communication theme. These projects are widespread, with university partners in Uganda, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan, Nepal, Palestine, Ecuador, Colombia and Nicaragua. The main goal of the projects is to build capacity in higher education institutions to respond to pressing, contemporary issues in the countries concerned.

For instance, two of these projects deal with communication. Communication forms an essential role in development; to be represented on a personal level, as well as a national level, it is necessary that communication channels are effective. In recognition of the need to improve communication platforms which can, in turn, contribute towards development, Norad has funded two projects under this theme. One such project, with partner universities in Ecuador, Colombia and Nicaragua, looks to strengthen competences of indigenous peoples based in these countries. Indigenous, afrodescendant and Miskito people often face discrimination and marginalisation. This project is to create academic programmes encouraging students to research into struggles, historical and contemporary, of indigenous peoples in the area. In this way, solutions to development issues can be found, while exchanges of experience will be communicated between different cultural groups.

Another project in Ethiopia takes improved teaching of sign language as its point of focus. There are currently 2.5 million deaf or hard of hearing people living in Ethiopia. The vast majority of these people

live in isolation; in many places, deaf people are treated disrespectfully and marginalised. Most importantly, they do not have sufficient knowledge of sign language to communicate effectively with those around them. This project strengthens existing sign language courses at partner universities so graduates and local educators will be better placed to teach deaf children and adults to communicate.

Project title: Linguistic Capacity Building – Tools for the inclusive development of Ethiopia (ETH-13-0014)

Project partners: Addis Ababa University, Hawassa University, University of Oslo, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

The project addresses the high demand for mother tongue education following the post-1991 official multilingualism policy in Ethiopia that allowed speakers to learn in their mother tongue rather than only in Amharic. Many of the more than 80 languages in Ethiopia have no orthography, textbooks, or teachers. Therefore, the main aim of this project is to increase the knowledge and capacity to develop resources for disadvantaged spoken and signed languages through building capacity at Addis Ababa University and Hawassa University, as well as to offer new linguistic knowledge to local educators.

The project experienced an audit problem, thus, disbursement of funds was delayed for one year. Furthermore, some policy makers underestimated the timescale to design and launch language orthography. So far, one language has been introduced as mother tongue education with its orthography designed from scratch by the project members. Teachers have been trained, the language has been piloted in 4-5 schools, and a dictionary has also been published. Now it is being taught as a school subject in all 89 primary schools in the region. The project is focused on empowering communities and has consultation and engagement with affected communities at its core. It is driven bottom-up but is supported by policymakers and rolling out the language education to schools is budgeted from the federal structure. Project participants are confident that policymakers are becoming ambassadors for the work of the project, and future developments will advance the project's vision.

Media can also be used as a tool to communicate. A strong media presence becomes a more pertinent factor when trying to appease warring parties in times of conflict. Norad has funded two projects which aim to strengthen the roles of media and journalism in peace-making situations. One project seeks to instruct media professionals, journalists, teachers and researchers in the integral components of effective media practise. This project takes place at universities in South Sudan, Uganda and Nepal, where conflict plays a large part in daily life. A similar project is being run in Uganda, where capacity of academic staff is being built up to endow students with a more comprehensive knowledge of media practice.

As well as strengthening media and communication channels, Norad funding is invested in promoting peace and stability within specific geographical areas. For example, one project is dedicated to promoting education about borderland dynamics. This project aims to strengthen higher education institutions to develop programmes relating to borders, where conflict and unrest are typical. Norad also provides funding to strengthen capacity at Birzeit University. Southern Levant is currently experiencing great change in its physical environment. In collaboration with the University of Bergen, Birzeit University is developing programmes designed to produce a better understanding of modernisation, urbanisation and human geography in the area.

Project title: Borderland Dynamics in East Africa (SDN-13-0013)

Project partners: University of Khartoum, Makerere University, Addis Ababa University, University of Bergen

Borderland issues in East Africa contribute to marginalisation of borderland communities, and these problems are not taken on board in most political decisions that affect everyday life. The immediate aim of this project was to strengthen the capacity of three national universities to help them play a role in the fields of governance and policy by addressing relevant development problems. The project specifically targets competence development and advocacy on human rights, women's rights, the rights of marginal borderland groups, environmental concerns, and in human health and general human development concerns. Graduates from the programme are expected to return to the border areas to continue the work they started.

The project experienced problems due to security issues and economic sanctions in partner countries, which delayed activity and made fund transfer difficult. However, the project has already achieved a number of milestones. Importantly, it is engaging with local communities and policymakers through workshops and meetings, a number of these in various target borderland regions. These have facilitated important discussions and brought together many different stakeholders (e.g. border agent people, customs organisations) that were looking for change for the betterment of their areas, such as overcoming conflict or restoring peace.

The project is policy-oriented, and the partners see the research as knowledge production that affects people's lives. The activities work towards empowering communities, raising the attention on the key issues, and generating solutions for citizens in borderland areas. In addition, the project has shown that the potential for South-South collaboration is better than originally anticipated.

Education and training

Education is not only a thematic area, but the main focus of activity of all NORHED projects. Within the NORHED portfolio, there are eight projects concerned with boosting education and training levels in LMIC countries. Most of these projects are based in Africa, with a stronger weighting in Uganda. However, one project is based in Nepal. The implementation of ICT tools and non-traditional teaching methods to address the needs of vocational and distance learners is a common area of concentration for the NORHED funded projects. In Uganda, high rates of unemployment and the rising cost of living means that the opportunities afforded by non-traditional education have come to the fore. With the help of NORHED funding, a vocational pedagogy course is being created, whereby students are trained in a local industry to which to return as an employee upon the completion of their degree.

As well as this, NORHED funding contributes to building institutional capacity in Uganda to develop distance learning systems. Existing distance learning mechanisms do not provide sufficiently comprehensive ICT resources, meaning students are obliged to come to Makerere University in Uganda to study instead of studying online from a remote location. NORHED funding will open academic opportunities to a more diverse set of the populace; to those who hitherto could not physically reach the university to study. Enhanced distance learning is also made available to marginalised groups, or those who have been adversely affected by natural disaster or war. A similar project is run in Nepal, where access to education is unevenly distributed both geographically and socially. By improving ICT systems and upgrading the qualifications of teachers, NORHED funding assists in the delivery of more effective and inclusive online distance learning.

With regards to more normalised methods of education, evidence has shown that the lack of well-trained teachers in Southern African countries has led to the poor performance of primary and secondary school students in mathematics exams. This problem stems from a lack of funding from national governments into education.¹³ In two projects, NORHED funding bolsters teaching in Ethiopian and Malawian universities to produce more capable and better-informed graduates who can deliver improved mathematics education. Research capacity for mathematics and statistics is also strengthened in these higher education institutions.

Health

Achieving global healthcare for all is one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁴ However, many countries around the world do not receive adequate healthcare, with mortality rates much higher in LMICs than Western countries.¹⁵

NORHED has funded eleven projects within Eastern Africa and Asia to help alleviate health problems in these areas. Of the eleven projects, three projects are concerned with the improvement of maternal and baby care in childbirth. In Uganda, it is estimated that one in 49 women are likely to die from avoidable complications incurred during childbirth and Ethiopia is leading in reducing maternal mortality.¹⁶ If a comparison is made with the UK, where there is a one in 6,900 chance of dying in childbirth, it is clear that NORHED funding in this area is highly needed.¹⁷ Norad funded to build capacity of Zambian, Malawian and Zimbabwean universities to better train midwives and nurses. Another project in South Ethiopia aims to build capacity in universities to increase understanding of childbirth complications arising from malaria.

¹³ <http://www.ams.org/notices/199705/comm-lungu.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

¹⁵ <http://healthaffairs.org/blog/2017/02/16/hospitals-hospital-medicine-and-health-for-all/> Citing: Egypt, Jordan, Kenya, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, South Africa and Yemen

¹⁶ <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/2558-2310216-tfbrh2z/index.html>

¹⁷ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/news/11581302/Women-in-the-UK-more-than-twice-as-likely-to-die-in-pregnancy-and-childbirth-as-many-European-countries.html>

Project title: Reduction of injuries and diseases at workplaces in Tanzania and Ethiopia (TAN-13-0037)

Project partners: Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Addis Ababa University, University of Bergen

This project was developed to improve working conditions and reduce occupational injuries and diseases in Tanzania and Ethiopia, by educating students in occupational health at MUHAS and AAU in the period 2014-2018. In addition, the project seeks to establish teaching and research laboratories with necessary equipment for workplace evaluation.

Conducting research in a practical setting among the main industries of Ethiopia is regarded as an important achievement of the project. PhD students from Ethiopia are working on training a number of supervisors in the workplace. This is being undertaken so that supervisors may themselves assess workplace conditions and conduct monitoring on the reduction of injuries and illnesses. There is a broad industrial spectrum covered. One PhD candidate conducts research in textiles manufacturing, another works with coffee workers on exposure to noise, and another on regulatory issues related to pesticides in the flower industry. One of the PhD candidates in Addis Ababa works in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation on workers' health conditions.

In addition to engaging employers in training and capacity building of local industries, the University is also working with the public sector, which does not have the capacity, money or manpower to develop research and training themselves. The School of Public Health at Addis Ababa University has a Memorandum of Understanding with the regional bureau of health in Oromia for capacity building activities. The School is also trying to establish a similar collaborative agreement with the bureau in Addis Ababa.

Building capacity in Southern institutions also serves as a means to developing a more systematic and informed health service in LMICs. NORHED funding helps develop Master and PhD programmes at Southern universities which provide graduates with the research skills and necessary training to tackle the diseases challenging life expectancy in the project countries. In Malawi, 980,000 people are living with AIDS¹⁸, with malaria, respiratory infection and stroke also large causes of life loss. One NORHED project thus aims to train young men and women in biomedical sciences in Malawian and Mozambique universities. Similarly, a project coordinated in Ethiopia aims to build the competence of health professionals in the country. With the help of a Norwegian counterpart, universities in Ethiopia work towards improving the knowledge base of their staff, and in turn enhancement in research practices and health sciences understanding among graduates.

Project title: Development of a novel nursing and midwifery graduate and postgraduate training programme in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe (MWI-13-0032)

Project partners: University of Malawi (Kamuzu College of Nursing), University of Zimbabwe College of Health Sciences, University of Zambia, School of Medicine, University of Tromsø, University of Oslo

The project aims to address gaps in the training of nurses and midwives in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with mentorship from Universities of Tromsø and Oslo in Norway. It is conducting work to improve the quality of natal healthcare in its partner countries. The project seeks to develop a novel, competence and evidence-based nursing and midwifery curricula at M.Sc. and PhD levels, and to strengthen the B.Sc. curriculum as well. Nurses and midwives are being trained in partnership among the participating countries, with graduating nurses to be made capable of solving both current and emerging health challenges.

The project has experienced a number of challenges, including some initial capacity and governance issues among partners, and the unfortunate death of a student. However, it is progressing well in terms of revising curricula and recruiting students, offering (small) research grants for faculty, and the establishment of a collaborative multi-centre research project by all southern partners, in addition to small-scale research infrastructure investments in each country (e.g. office equipment).

Democratic and economic governance

There are four NORHED projects funded within the democratic and economic governance thematic area. This branch of funding aims to build capacity of higher education institutions to produce better qualified graduates able to form and influence public policy. The projects are undertaken across a wide geographical area, in countries that have experienced weak governance resulting from unstable political, social and economic environments, for example Malawi, Zimbabwe, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

In recent years Malawi has produced waves of public sector reforms, indicating that the country is eager to progress democratically and economically. However, a deterioration of public services, abundance of poverty, severe economic decline and lack of government effectiveness persist despite such reformative efforts.¹⁹ Although elections have recently been held in Malawi, the country has been left wanting with regards to productive and influential policies which have the ability to create much needed economic

¹⁸ <https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world/sub-saharan-africa/malawi>

¹⁹ <http://www.effective-states.org/researching-the-politics-of-public-sector-reforms-in-malawi/>

growth. To address this stasis of effectual policy making, Chancellor College at the University of Malawi and the University of Oslo have collaborated with the help of NORHED funding. Through this project, infrastructural and teaching capacity is being strengthened at Chancellor College to ultimately create graduates who are able to challenge the issues brought about by poor governance. Such graduates will also be able to inform the policies which can create change in the country.

Poor governance is also a problem experienced by some countries in South Asia. In Nepal, political unrest, conflict and uneven economic distribution are symptoms felt by inadequate governance. Although Sri Lanka has been growing at 5% per year for the past two decades, public administration has declined due to overstaffing in recent years. Corruption within governing bodies is also a problem here. Pakistan has also suffered from weak tax policies and administration challenges.

In response to such issues of weak governance, Norad has provided funding for two projects based in South-Asia. One of these projects, partnered by universities in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Norway, aims to build teaching and research capacity in these institutions to encourage graduates to respond to issues of conflict, peace, governance and gender in a more informed manner. Another project within these countries aims to tackle poor governance by establishing Master, PhD and post-doctoral research programmes within selected higher education partner institutions. Scientific works and a peer-reviewed journal will be the outcomes of the project. With the help of Norad funding, graduates will contribute towards improved policy decisions.

Project title: Strengthening Research, Education and Advocacy in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies NPL-13/0021

Project partners: Tribhuvan University, University of Ruhuna, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology Abbottabad, Norwegian University of Life Sciences

The project aims to establish a two-year Multidisciplinary Regional Master Degree Program in Conflict Peace and Development Studies (CPDS) with both teaching and research components. It will also develop mechanisms for establishing capacities in higher education institutions of Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan on conflict, governance and gender. The project has exploited synergy in its activities, in part by strengthening institutional recognition, and in part by streamlining contacts and consultations with each country within the consortium.

The project partners created a platform for international exposure, which not only gave a better recognition to the previously semi-isolated institutions, but also tools for understanding the parameters of cross-cultural encounters. Personal experiences with another culture and its specific beliefs and values removed prejudices and encouraged cooperation between the Southern partners, ensuring that borders are not barriers. The project was very successful in integrating gender perspectives in the project cycle: among the 200 Master students it managed to enrol 50% women.

Cross-cutting themes

There is a substantial focus on gender equality across the six sub-programmes and there is a specific focus on gender equality in every project as a cross-cutting theme embedded in the project activities. Gender inequality and low economic progress are often correlating issues in LMICs.²⁰ There is specific attention paid to addressing gender in the NORHED projects. This is more than just equality of opportunity, and takes the wider stance of gender mainstreaming which is about systematic inclusion of the needs of men and women in their higher education and research experience. Therefore, it may be tackled through policy, governance, decision making, planning, curriculum design, monitoring and evaluation, as well as facilitating equal access to education. In addition, most projects also try to engage the local community as much as possible.

3.2 Financial reporting / budgetary spend

This section provides an overview of the project funding and the expenditure by theme and type of partner.

Eight projects have been financed with NORHED funding in the education sub-programme. Education makes up 17% of the total budget allocated between the six sub-areas. An analysis of the total expenditure to date indicates that 16% of the total funding was spent on this sub programme to date. This means that there has not been a significant change between the budget predicted and what was

²⁰ <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2016/wp16111.pdf>

actually spent. There was also relatively little variation between what was budgeted for and what was spent on an individual project level. However, there was a large decrease (around 8%) in spending on two projects: the “TRANSLIED (Transformation, Language, Education and Development)” project and the “ENABLE (Higher Education and Multimedia in Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation)” project. There was also an increase of 9% in spending in the “Leapfrogging 1st Generation Distance Education into 4th and 5th Generation Distance Education: A Strategy for Enhancing ICT Pedagogical Integration” project.²¹

Natural Resource Management is the largest sub-programme in terms of number of projects. This area has 13 projects to its name and 28% of the total budget. At the time of this mid-term review, 25% of the total expenditure was spent on natural resource management, indicating a slight underspend so far. However, it must be noted that financial information for one project was partially missing, so an accurate depiction of the monetary situation was not possible. Within the separate projects, there were slight decreases in spending in two projects: “Water and Society (WaSo-Africa) – Institutional Capacity Building in Water Management and Climate Change Adaptation in the Nile Basin” and “Improving the governance and economics of protected areas, ecosystem services and poverty eradication through HEI capacity-building and transdisciplinary research”.

There are eleven projects financed under the health sub-programme. In total, 26% of the overall budget was attributed to health, of which 25% was actually spent according to reporting year figures. There was also very little variation between budget and total expenditure on a project level. However, there was a slight increase in expenditure for the “Capacity building in Zoonotic diseases management using the integrated approach to ecosystems health (CAPAZOMAMINTECO) at the human- livestock – wildlife interface in Eastern and Southern Africa” project, which saw an increase of 5% compared to its planned budget.

The economic and democratic governance sub-programme was budgeted with 9% of total Norad funding. The area saw a slight increase in expenditure (2%). This could be attributed to a large increase in expenditure (13%) for one project: “Policy and Governance Studies in South: regional Master and PhD Programs”.

There are three projects funded with Norad investment under Capacity building in South Sudan sub-programme. In total, 7% of overall funding was allocated to projects in South Sudan. At the close of the final reporting year (2016), the South Sudan area had spent exactly 7% of total funding, meaning the budget and actual expenditure were equal. Having said this, there was an overspend of 15% by one project, the “Regional Capacity Building for Sustainable Natural Resource Management and Agricultural Productivity under Climate Change” project and underspend in the other two projects, resulting in an overall balanced budget-expenditure figure.

The six projects under the humanities sub-programme were allocated 13% of the total budget. However, there was a slight increase in spending of 3% in this area. While there were slight increases and decreases in spending of budget within each project, there were no significant overspend or underspend to note.

Looking at the split between LMIC and Norwegian HEIs for the individual sub-programmes, the lowest proportion of Norwegian HEI budget was allocated to the South Sudan sub-programme (24%) and even less money than budgeted (15%) was spent here (see the highlighted cells in grey in the figure below). Overall, however, the budget allocation and the total expenditure to date shows a very even picture among the LMIC (69%) and Norwegian partners (31%). The figure below shows the breakdown of budget and expenditure to date for each area and by type of partner in more detail.

²¹ For one project under the natural resource management sub-programme (“Controlling diseases in sweet potato and enset in South Sudan and Ethiopia to improve productivity and livelihoods under changing climatic conditions using modern technologies”), the financial report did not contain cumulative figures over time. Subsequently, this project was excluded from the financial analysis.

Figure 8 Total budget and expenditure to date by theme and type of partner

NORHED themes or sub-programmes	Total budget 2013-2018 NOK			Total expenditure to date* NOK		
	Total budget (% of budget spent by theme from the total programme budget)	LMIC HEIs (% of total theme budget spent by type of partner)	Norwegian HEIs (% of total theme budget spent by type of partner)	Total expenditure (% of budget spent by theme from the total programme budget)	LMIC HEIs (% of total theme budget spent by type of partner)	Norwegian HEIs (% of total theme budget spent by type of partner)
Capacity Building in South Sudan	54,268,321 (7%)	41,503,260 (76%)	12,765,060 (24%)	20,471,223 (7%)	17,318,151 (85%)	3,153,072 (15%)
Education	113,844,761 (15%)	72,698,279 (64%)	41,146,481 (36%)	39,964,187 (14%)	23,795,797 (60%)	16,168,390 (40%)
Economic and Democratic Governance	70,539,886 (16%)	50,882,074 (72%)	19,657,812 (28%)	33,380,006 (12%)	24,721,185 (74%)	8,658,820 (26%)
Health	193,137,176 (26%)	138,301,214 (72%)	54,835,962 (28%)	71,798,045 (25%)	47,616,406 (66%)	24,181,638 (34%)
Humanities, Culture, Media and Communication	97,770,505 (13%)	68,714,686 (70%)	29,055,819 (30%)	48,206,725 (17%)	33,170,267 (69%)	15,036,457 (31%)
Natural Resource Management, Climate and Environment	205,005,462 (28%)	137,715,680 (67%)	67,289,782 (33%)	74,425,002 (26%)	52,045,677 (70%)	22,379,325 (30%)
Total	734,566,114 (100%)	509,815,195 (69%)	224,750,919 (31%)	288,234,151 (100%)	198,656,445 (69%)	89,577,705 (31%)

Note: * based on the 2016 reporting

As the table highlights the overall budget is split roughly two-thirds to one-third between the LMIC and Norwegian partners, which is in line with budget spent to date. In terms of the total spent to date based on the 2016 reporting, there were no modifications needed in the overall split.

3.3 Key outputs of the funded projects – NORHED indicators

The review of the progress of the funded NORHED projects has been carried out through the annual project reporting. The reports contain a set of 14 standard indicators, that were developed in collaboration with the project partners. These indicators monitor the progress made by the projects annually and compared them to the set targets to be achieved by the end of the project. The indicators are listed below:

1. Number of new and number of revised Bachelor/Master's/PhD programmes/ modules supported by NORHED
2. Number of Bachelor/Master's/PhD programmes/modules supported by NORHED with gender perspectives included
3. Capacity to enrol and graduate students in NORHED-supported programmes (Bachelor/Master/PhD)
4. Relevance of educational programmes and new graduates to local, national and regional needs and labour markets

5. Number of academic staff with strengthened qualifications (Master/PhD) by relevant institutional level (institute/department/faculty) supported by NORHED
6. Ratio of qualified academic staff (Master/PhD) to students by relevant unit (institute/faculty/department) supported by NORHED
7. Retention rates of qualified academic staff at relevant unit (institute/department/faculty) supported by NORHED
8. Number of scientific publications (peer reviewed and others)
9. Number and type of other dissemination activities
10. Uptake/influence of NORHED-supported research in public policies
11. Uptake/influence of NORHED-supported research findings/new technologies/innovations/solutions by local communities/civil society/private sector
12. Knowledge transfers within South-South and South-North networks and partnerships
13. Changes in the broader institutional environment at NORHED-supported institute/faculty/department which strengthened the capacity for education and research
14. Access to libraries, laboratories and ICT for staff and students in NORHED supported institutes/departments/faculties

In order to understand the project’s progress and the overall achievements at programme level an analysis of the reported indicators was made using the 2016 annual reports submitted to Norad. Due to the nature of the indicators, and the reporting quality – as discussed later in the findings chapter of this report – the study team could only aggregate some of the indicators in a meaningful way. These are presented below.

Number of new and number of revised Bachelor/Master’s/PhD programmes/ modules supported by NORHED

The first indicator laid out by Norad concerns the number of new and revised Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes supported by NORHED. The table below gives a summation of new and revised programmes and modules outlined in project annual reports. In general, the number of new programmes created, and the number of programmes revised are fairly equal. This suggests projects are modifying programmes and creating new programmes with equal measure. Natural resource management, the largest sub-programme in terms of project quantity, has unsurprisingly the highest number of new and revised programmes (84). Although South Sudan only has three projects to its name, it has the third highest number of new and revised programmes (37). This indicates that projects in this area have invested heavily into curriculum development with the help of Norad funding.

To show the progress over time, the headline figures from the 2014 and 2015 annual results reports are also presented in the table below. We also included the target numbers set by the projects in the proposals. Overall it seems that the programme has already achieved the target figures with regards the number of new and revised curricula. This is, however, not entirely true. The target numbers were counted based on the figures put forward by 37 projects in their proposals instead of the full portfolio of 45. For the remaining projects the figures were missing in the proposal.

Figure 9 Number of new and revised curricula by theme and over time

	New	Revised	Total	Target number final year (38 projects)	% current vs target
Education	13	5	18	15	120%
Governance	13	13	26	61	43%

	New	Revised	Total	Target number final year (38 projects)	% current vs target
Health	37	27	64	59	108%
Humanities	7	8	15	15	100%
Natural Resource Management	43	41	84	68	124%
South Sudan	22	15	37	10	370%
2016 total	135	109	244	228	107%
2015 total*	61	53	114		
2014 total*	56	49	105		

Note: * figures from the FAFO 2014 and 2015 annual results report

Capacity to enrol and graduate students in NORHED-supported programmes

Each project was asked to enumerate their capacity to enrol and graduate students in NORHED programmes at Bachelor, Master and PhD level. Projects were also asked to break down their enrolment and graduation figures by gender. After drawing together the numbers from all 45 projects, it became clear that there were outliers which affect the total sums. For instance, four projects indicated that no students had been enrolled in Master's or PhD programmes at all since 2016, although there were students enrolled in these courses in the baseline reporting year. Furthermore, despite enrolling both male and female students onto study programmes in the reporting year, these same four projects all suggest that none of the students graduated. Two projects in the Health sub-programme detailed unusually high enrolment figures for both the reporting year and the target number of students. All outliers have been demarcated in red in the table below and the two projects removed from the Health area.

Figure 10 Capacity to enrol students to Bachelor, Master and PhD NORHED programmes

Sub programme	Level of study	Target students (final year)			Enrolled students		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Education	Bachelor	180	120	300	0	0	0
	Masters	477	268	745	92	46	138
	PhD	60	28	88	50	12	62
	Sub-total	717	416	1133	142	58	200
Governance	Masters	506	418	924	297	281	578
	PhD	28	28	56	34	32	66
	Sub-total	534	446	980	331	313	644
Health*	Bachelor	30	20	50	54	52	106
	Masters	355	435	790	180	249	429
	PhD	71	58	129	24	42	66
	Not specified	42	46	88	0	0	0
	Sub-total	498	559	1057	258	343	601
Humanities	Masters	167	170	337	90	100	190
	PhD	69	35	104	53	15	68

Sub programme	Level of study	Target students (final year)			Enrolled students		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	Sub-total	236	205	441	143	115	258
Natural Resource Management	Bachelor	287	240	527	452	75	527
	Masters	724	548	1,272	464	234	698
	PhD	128	46	174	12	7	19
	Not specified	158	120	278	170	13	183
	Sub-total	1,297	954	2,251	1,098	329	1427
South Sudan	Bachelor	0	10	10	238	36	274
	Masters	74	28	102	0	0	0
	PhD	14	7	21	0	0	0
	Sub-total	88	45	133	238	36	274
Total		3,370	2,625	5,895	2,210	1,194	3,404

Note: * two projects with outlier figures included in the proposal and annual reports were removed (MMR-13/0049 and MWI-13/0032) from the Health figures

It also must be taken into account that some projects did not provide full information on indicators. For example, one project missed to fill in any information at all on the capacity to enrol and graduate students, while information for four projects was incomplete. Three projects amalgamated Master and PhD student numbers in their reports, making it impossible to separate figures for the two groups accurately (these figures are described as “not specified” in the table above²²). For these reasons, the figures above represent a highly aggregated approach to a final analysis of stock indicators.

In terms of capacity to enrol students to Bachelor programmes, four sub-programmes out of six included figures for Bachelor students. Of these, Natural Resource Management targeted the highest number of students to enrol (527). Although the number of enrolled students in 2016 equalled the target number, it is significant that only 75 out of 527 were female, which falls way below the target number of female Bachelor students. It is further significant that the number of enrolled students at Bachelor level within the Education sub-programme area totals at zero.

Again, due to the largest number of projects in the field, Natural Resource Management represents the sub-programme targeting the highest number of students to enrol on Master’s courses in LMIC partner institutions (1,272). In all sub-programmes, but one (Humanities), the number of females targeted to enrol at Master’s level is lower than males. This trend is mirrored exactly in the number of students currently enrolled. Although South Sudan aims to enrol 102 students to its Master’s programmes, there are no students enrolled presently according to the reported data.

While Natural Resource Management has targeted the largest number of PhD students to enrol at the end of the implementation period (174), the number of students it has currently enrolled to PhD courses is well below the target (19). All other areas have a smaller difference between their target number of PhD students enrolled and the number enrolled in actuality. The sub-programme Capacity building in South Sudan currently has zero students reported as enrolled to PhD programmes.

²² The projects are: KEN-13/0021, SRV-13/0010 and UGA-13/0021

4 International benchmark

In this chapter, we present the results of the international benchmark exercise, that was undertaken as part of this review. The task involved collecting and bringing together information - lessons learnt, key success and enabling factors and barriers overcome - on other international capacity building programmes or initiatives similar to NORHED (e.g. objectives, activities, geographical coverage), through interviews with the funders and programme managers. The table below presents the funders and the key features of the main programmes consulted as part of this review.

Interviews were conducted with the five development cooperation agencies implementing higher education capacity building programmes around the world.

The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) is a national development agency, formed through the merger of the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) and CIMO Centre for International Mobility at the beginning of 2017. It is responsible for developing educating and training, earlier childhood education and care and lifelong learning as well as promoting internationalisation. EDUFI is therefore unique in its kind in Europe as it covers both the Finnish National education system and international programmes.

DAAD and Nuffic are both agencies devoted to internationalisation in education. DAAD activities devoted to development cooperation make up roughly 10% of their overall mandate. They run different partnership programmes, scholarships and provides advisory services to promote development cooperation. Nuffic has been managing numerous capacity building programmes, each with different priorities across many countries for the past 50 years.

SIDA and DFID are development agencies which set up specific programmes for international cooperation in higher education. SPHEIR (DFID) is a competitive grant scheme managed by a consortium. For the UK Department of International Development (DFID), SPHEIR represents a reengagement in higher education as a development priority (embedding equity, access and transformation in the objectives).

SIDA is the Swedish state authority for development cooperation, SIDA has the power to decide about a half of the Swedish aid budget and is subject to the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Figure 11 Overview of the programmes and donors

Country	Programme title	Funding organisation	Programme administrator	Target groups / beneficiaries	Programme launch	Current implementation period	Objectives of the programme	Delivery mechanisms / instruments	Programme relevance to NORHED	Organisational relevance to Norad
DE	Higher Education Excellence in Development – Cooperation – exceed programme	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)	DAAD, The German Academic Exchange Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner institution and German students Graduates Visiting lecturers International academics 	2009	2015-2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To strengthen certain areas of higher education, such as teaching, research, and services To realise the UN development goals Graduates will be able to assume leadership positions after completing these study programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers an exchange opportunity between German institutions and their partners from the South New and optimised curricula and modules Set up of doctoral programmes Workshops International conferences 	High	High
FI	Higher Education Institutions - Cooperation Instrument	Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs (through development cooperation funds)	EDUFI (Finnish National Agency for Education) CIMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finnish and LMIC HEIs including universities and applied sciences The direct beneficiaries of the programme are staff and students in the participating southern HEIs 	2011	2017-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance higher education provision in developing countries The projects are designed to offer support to the higher education institutions as they develop their subject-specific, methodological, educational and administrative capacity The long-term objective of the programme is to strengthen the capacity of HEIs in the global south in order to contribute to well-functioning, efficient and equitable societies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment provision Staff training Revision or development of new study programmes / modules / courses, curriculum review, joint modules, study programmes, intensive courses, the training of trainers, mobility of staff and students Project management and monitoring Training in research methodology and application writing, joint publications, investments in research equipment and infrastructure 	High	High
NL	The Netherlands Initiative for Capacity Development in HE	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands	EP-Nuffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students Staff of LMIC HEIs 	2010	No new projects underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen TVET in partner countries Contribute to economic development Building capacity of organisations Strengthening higher education training Helps create conditions for entrepreneurship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dutch provide expertise Management development Staff upgrading Curriculum development Investment 	High	Medium

Country	Programme title	Funding organisation	Programme administrator	Target groups / beneficiaries	Programme launch	Current implementation period	Objectives of the programme	Delivery mechanisms / instruments	Programme relevance to NORHED	Organisation all relevance to Norrad
UK	SPHEIR (Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education and Innovation Reform)	DFID, British Council, PWC, Universities UK	DFID, British Council, PWC, Universities UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under-represented groups Graduates Private sector organisations Organisations with experience of higher education reform Civil society groups, foundations HE specialists Private sector employers, investors and suppliers 	2016	2016-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop solutions to make higher education accessible and available to more people Focus on delivering quality higher education that better meets labour market needs Boost the employability skills of graduates and support the social and economic development of focus countries Improve the quality of higher education in key areas Pilot and adapt solutions to ensure good quality higher education can be delivered to large numbers of people, creating lasting impact nationally and internationally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online learning Improved teaching and learning outcomes Supporting management Development of ICT systems 	High	High
SE	International Training Programmes	SIDA	Swedish public authorities, universities, private companies and NGOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMIC countries qualified to participate in reform and hold a mandate to run processes of change Experienced executives in middle and top management positions 	2013	Annual calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support and strengthen the participants' plans for change on organisational and sectoral levels In the long-term perspective, the programmes shall contribute to institutional strengthening and capacity development in the co-operating countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-4 training weeks in Sweden Lectures, workshops, process-oriented work and study visits Follow up meetings 	Medium	High

Priority objectives

The funding agencies all have their set objectives, which can be summarised as follows:

- Advancing capacity building (research and teaching capacities), governance and performance of higher education institutions (Nuffic, DFID, EDUFI)
- Expanding access to higher education and research e.g. through scholarships (DAAD, EDUFI)
- Improved quality of the higher education and research environment (EDUFI, DFID)
- Bringing expertise to worldwide academic cooperation (DAAD)
- Strengthening the role and relevance of HE in development of society (EDUFI)

Looking more in detail at DAAD, there are three main objectives with regards development cooperation:

1. To expand access to higher education through scholarships. DAAD looks closely at how they can use scholarships for development purposes, specifically ensuring that scholarships are granted to the best globally. They are currently considering how to follow up on this objective in order to employ the scholarships to their full advantage
2. To ensure quality higher education for all, to be achieved through partnerships between universities in Germany and in developing countries. This would also serve to support the internationalisation of German universities so they may develop globally open structures
3. To bring expertise to worldwide academic cooperation. That is to say, collect knowledge about higher education systems and policies from around the world and introduce this to German universities, ensuring the relevance of the higher education curricula in Germany and the relevance of what universities offer

Priority countries

All agencies have formalised their geographic targets in different ways, but most of the time, they rely on existing networks of partners. Distinction can be made between:

- Having no priority countries and allowing partners from anywhere in the world, but still tending to focus or favour Least Developed Countries (LDCs). For DAAD, for example, one-third of the participants have to come usually from LDCs in Africa, South America, Central America and South East Asia. SIDA provides interventions on four continents. The countries and areas which SIDA focuses its work on depends upon political decisions made by the Swedish government. Roughly two thirds of SIDA's development aid for education is channeled through bilateral aid to education sectors in partner countries. Afghanistan is the single largest recipient where SIDA, among others, supports the so-called Community Based Education programmes
- Focusing on a selection of priority countries, although the list is rather long: Nuffic has 52 priority countries, many of which are Middle Income Countries. EDUFI focuses first on Finnish bilateral partner countries, then countries identified among Finland's Development Policy priorities, and on Middle Income Countries with EDUFI representation, but they also allow other special cases. SPHEIR addresses a set of priority countries, but with some flexibility due to the understanding, that in practice, countries and universities located within the target countries usually have their own established networks that do not necessarily correspond to the 'target countries' that donors pick

Priority themes

Most agencies do not focus their overall strategies on any themes (DAAD, DFID (SPHEIR), Nuffic). Nevertheless, they do expect that programmes or calls for proposals would respond to some SDGs (DAAD, Nuffic). In general, DAAD allows for the projects to set the exact topics. This helps ensure sustainability of the activities as they are based on the self-interest of the participating universities. There are, however, three thematic programmes run by DAAD as well: a public health programme, a 'university-business partnerships' programme, and a biodiversity programme.

During the design phases of SPHEIR it was decided not to focus on specific areas of academic activity, such as disciplinary areas or particular sectors. The decision was made to generate innovative responses that have a good impact, and are driven by demand at the country level, rather than proposals that neatly fit the themes or priorities taken by SPHEIR in pre-conceived decisions.

Each SPHEIR call for proposals is based on a concept note that they have written and to which DFID has given its approval. There are a certain number of requirements that SPHEIR has based on DFID's requirements. This mainly takes the form of priority countries, insofar as DFID were interested in a proposal centred around the Syrian crisis as well as Sub-Saharan Africa, but also through the recommendation to focus in general on employability and job creation. SPHEIR has now finished its second call for proposals. When they receive proposals, they try to be much more accommodating of creativity and demand differences. They instead focus on quality, relevance, access, and affordability.

The Finnish HEI ICI Programme has many similar features to NORHED and SPHEIR, as the project themes and activities should be decided upon and undertaken jointly by the partnerships based on identified needs.

Nuffic tends to finance food security, rule of law and climate change across their programmes, and ensure that crosscutting issues such as labour market, gender equality and inclusiveness are taken up.

Swedish development aid follows broad thematic priorities including democracy and human rights, environment and climate change, gender equality and women's role. Together with efforts to promote economic development and humanitarian support, which encompass all of the activities.

Priority activities

Activities such as education, research, institutional capacity building, job creation and business support are seen across all different agency programmes. DAAD's university-business partnership programme has been an example of these activities and is considering expanding this portfolio with more strategic approaches to support job creation. Nuffic takes the angle of addressing labour market and inclusivity. DFID (SPHEIR) developed a graduate employability programme for Syrian refugees, which is very contextual.

In the Finnish HEI ICI Programme, the activities can include, for example, the revision or development of new study programmes/modules/courses, curriculum review, joint modules or joint study programmes, joint intensive courses, the training of trainers, mobility of staff and students, dissemination measures, equipment upgrading and training of administrative staff. Activities related to project management and monitoring progress should be also included. Any mobility activities included should be instrumental for achieving the project results and outputs. The projects may also include initiatives aimed at strengthening the research environment, research methods or the development of structures for post-graduate studies at the partner HEIs. Activities to strengthen research capacity can include training in research methodology and application writing, joint publications, investments in research equipment and infrastructure.

Paris/Cotonou declaration

Not all agencies consider aid effectiveness in their programmes, but most of the agencies (DAAD, Nuffic, EDUFI) abide by results-based monitoring, capacity development, subsidiarity (e.g. DAAD is not covering the full costs; Nuffic has regular meetings with partners), and harmonisation of aid. DFID (SPHEIR) does not consider these aspects intentionally, while DAAD for example has intentionally decreased their engagement in the programmes to ensure sustainability and ownership.

All Swedish development cooperation is governed by the following principles:

- The Swedish parliament has adapted a Policy for Global Development (PGD). This describes how different policy areas should work together for a positive global development
- The government's Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance highlights the overall objective to create prerequisites for better living conditions for

people living in poverty and under oppression, with a clear perspective that people themselves are agents of change who can influence their own development

Sweden's strategies for development assistance are focused on results, with the partner country's objectives and results framework as a starting point. As a signatory to the Paris Declaration on improving aid effectiveness, Sweden has committed itself to work for improved results-based management in Sweden's partner countries. The government monitors the results of development assistance each year. It includes SIDA's report - a special annex to the annual report - along with other forms of aid.

Decision-making behind programme establishment

Most agencies have had, so far, a very top-down approach to designing their programmes. Nuffic develops programmes through internal reviews and discussions carried out with Embassies. EDUFI receives instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, EDUFI has started to shift more towards a bottom-up approach with inclusion of beneficiary institutions and organisations. EDIFI has also implemented processes for learning from experience (external evaluations, participating in international networks of similar organisations engaged in higher education cooperation programmes). DAAD has recently adopted a bottom-up approach as well. It held discussions on its Africa strategy (2017) with relevant ministries to formulate its high-level priorities (increase in PhD scholarships, etc.). In terms of external coherence, similarly to EDUFI, DAAD also analyse what other donors are doing in higher education (the UK, France, China, India, etc.) in terms of their key priorities and how their scholarships are developed.

The steps to implementing a programme for SIDA are detailed through a case study example of an electrification programme in rural Mozambique. The intervention proceeded in several stages:

1. Setting a cooperation strategy
2. Dialogue with the regional authorities
3. Plan appraisal: SIDA received a proposal for a project for a cooperation partner and made a first assessment of whether or not the intervention is relevant
4. Project document: Based on the feasibility study, the electricity company establishes a formal project document, including proposals for funding, which is sent to SIDA along with an application for support. The entire process of developing a project or programme document can take several years. The cooperation country usually creates the document on their own, but should they lack the required technical expertise, SIDA can provide consultancy support. This help getting a successful result that meets SIDA's and other internationally recognised requirements
5. Assessment and decision: SIDA prepare an assessment and risk analysis of the project proposal, based on the project document and in dialogue with the cooperation partner. They look at the project's potential to reach its objectives as well as the organisation's capacity and internal steering and control functions. Moreover, the proposal is assessed against a rights and poverty perspective, and how it contributes to the three thematic priorities that should guide all SIDA's work: democracy and human rights, environment and climate change and gender equality and women's role in development.
6. Contribution agreement: SIDA signs the agreement with the country
7. Procurement
8. Implementation and monitoring
9. Payment
10. Results and evaluation

Local partners

Most agencies have local (university) partners involved in all their programmes. Agencies (or in the case of SPHEIR (DFID), projects) select their partner organisations (DAAD, SPHEIR). Nuffic rather works with its own national universities who have their networks with local partner universities. DAAD has local partners in all its programmes and often works with a co-funding scheme. For its regional scholarship programmes, DAAD revises its funding every three years and networks with the partners every second year.

SPHEIR (DFID) is only interested in proposals originating from partnerships and they are very explicit in terms of what they understand by a partnership ("a group of institutions that achieves something together that would not be possible without the partnership"). One partner will be self-designated by the partnership as the grant agreement holder. This does, however, have practical implications as there are

countries where it is highly unlikely a good proposal will emerge. In order to mitigate this, SPHEIR has taken a two-stage process, with a high level of support in the first stage to set up the project. The first application is also space restricted and designed to tease out what the actual vision is and to understand to what extent the partnership had a coherent understanding of their vision. Even with this intention, the programme has ended up with a large number of Northern-led partnerships.

The Finnish HEI ICI projects work with a wide range of partners locally: NGOs, SMEs, ministries, etc. The programmes rely on a set of stable relations established during previous programming periods (academics meeting in workshops, international research associations, Finnish university exchange reunions, etc). The 2014 evaluation produced by external consultants indicated that one weakness of the programme was the poor inclusion of the network of local Finnish embassies in the project timeline.

SIDA has developed important partnerships with regional partners in all the countries where it intervenes. Examples of regional cooperation in Africa include partnership with the African Union (AU), the East African Community (EAC), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), or the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Budget

Agencies have a set budget at the beginning of the programming period, with sometimes splits between countries or geographic areas at large (Nuffic, DAAD). The range of the project funding varies highly:

- SPHEIR (DFID) has a maximum budget of £5 million per project. This can only be exceeded with systematic proposals targeting every degree programme or every university in a national system
- Over five years, Nuffic receives 225 million Euros to spend for the 52 countries, the annual budget is not decreasing, the main difference is that they are not able to commit funding beyond these programmes.
- When DAAD applies for funding from the Ministry, the Ministry will usually state that a programme has to focus on Africa to a greater extent, or have a wider spread geographically. However, this is not entirely formalised: rather, they are general targets with no clear quota, whilst priorities can shift. For some projects, DAAD could easily choose to change the geographic coverage, but this involves a tricky negotiation.
- The state aid applied from the Finnish HEI ICI programme must fall between 300,000 and 700,000 euros. All HEI ICI projects must have a minimum of 20% of self-financing: State aid (max. 80%) + self-financing from HEIs (min. 20%) = total budget (100%). The total budget for the current programme period is €12million
- The Swedish government decides about how much money is allocated to development in the annual budget. It has long been about one per cent of Sweden's GDP. The Swedish state authority for development cooperation, SIDA, has the power to decide about a half of the Swedish aid budget and is subject to the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. With respect to the budget allocated to Education:
 - Just over a half of SIDA's development aid for education is allocated to basic education, to support the Millennium Development Goal 2 – education for all children and the Millennium Development Goal 3 – increased gender equality.
 - SIDA is increasingly allocating more support for vocational trainings, although it is still a relatively small portion of overall education aid.

Lessons learnt and recommendations for Norad

The findings of the international benchmark exercise highlight a number of areas for reflection for Norad, which need to be interpreted in light of the evidence presented in the following chapters.

Norad's approach is much in line with most of the practices used by other donor organisations, and the objectives of NORHED are reflected in other international programmes. There are some aspects and

activity areas that can provide useful input for the further development of NORHED programme and its management.

The Agencies have all adopted results-based monitoring, hence they organise mid-term reviews (Nuffic, SPHEIR), and/or final external public evaluations for individual programmes (DAAD, Nuffic, SPHEIR). SPHEIR is implementing a long-term evaluation, setting up early baselines at the beneficiary, institution and systems level. DAAD believes that results-based monitoring to evaluate the support provided is key to implementation and further programme renewal and help better understand through the monitoring results what size is the most optimal and sustainable for a programme. However, agencies that are not only focused on development cooperation, lack evaluations for the whole portfolio of these activities (DAAD, Nuffic) as yet. EDUFI is an exception, who evaluated its North-South-South programmes. Norad has launched a series of real-time evaluations and this mid-term review is to provide further input for future developments, however the monitoring of the programme is an area for further consideration.

Some of the agencies are keen on moving towards a service-design oriented approach to drafting programmes to better include practitioners in the design process, and to leave a level of adaptation to the local contexts (EDUFI, DAAD). Another good practice is not to subsidise everything e.g. the student tuition fees or the costs for teaching staff, but only additional activities (SPHEIR, DAAD). Similarly, to its counterparts, NORHED is designed in a way that secures the interest of both Norwegian and Southern partners and requires commitment from the local partners as it does not provide funding for staff wages. The same principle is applied in SPHEIR. The funds should not prop up students' tuition fees or the costs for teaching staff doing what they usually do. By subsidising everything, a question mark remains over what happens when the funding stops. As such, SPHEIR only provides funding for something additional (or indeed transformations) such as new pedagogically designed courses or even the establishment of a quality assurance system in country.

A lesson learnt from SPHEIR which is universally true though, is that there are clear differences between each partnership in the projects. Actors that have already been involved with each other do not take a long time to coalesce, whilst more recent partnerships take a much longer period. As SPHEIR works with two stages (grant stage and implementation) the differences can clearly be seen and have practical implications on the project implementation.

The importance of engaging local partners in the project implementation is seen as a basic prerequisite to the successful implementation of the projects as well as to generating sustainable results. All funders put a major emphasis on ensuring buy-in locally, although there are differences in the way the partners selected. A common denominator is the need-based approach and relevance to local needs when doing so.

5 Findings of the mid-term review

5.1 Relevance

Review questions

To what extent are the objectives and design of the NORHED programme still valid in terms of meeting partner country needs and the priorities of Norwegian international development assistance?

To what extent is the NORHED programme suited to the needs and priorities of higher education institutions in LMICs, and adapted to the enabling conditions of these institutions?

To what extent is the NORHED programme complementary to other donor programmes supporting higher education and research in LMICs, and to what extent is it overlapping and competing with other donors?

To what extent is the partnership model (Norwegian-LMIC institutional cooperation, with a preference for the LMIC institution being the Agreement partner) consistent with the overall programme goal and the intended impact? How do LMIC based and Norwegian HEIs respectively experience and benefit from this model?

To what extent is the NORHED programme in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the concept of “leave no-one behind”?

5.1.1 To what extent are the objectives and design of the NORHED programme still valid in terms of meeting partner country needs and the priorities of Norwegian international development assistance?

The programme design called for projects addressing local needs embedding an international perspective not only through the involvement of the Norwegian partners, but through South-South collaboration as well.

The consultations undertaken by the study team through the online surveys and during the field visits confirmed very high levels of relevance of the NORHED programme design as well as activities. Due to the needs-based development of the proposals, the projects do not only address topics of high relevance in the partner countries, but they also incorporate cultural and socio-economic aspects. In addition, the projects funded have very high thematic relevance for the localities and the regions, as exemplified by the topics of nutrition, sustainable/climate smart agriculture, just to name a few. Many of the projects also involved community outreach either as part of the research (from design through implementation) or through the dissemination of the results to empower the communities.

“This project has demonstrated that seamless integration of research, teaching and community outreach is possible and interesting.” Survey response (open field)

The programme operates with a very diverse project portfolio, with many different approaches taken by the projects and the partner institutions. The projects within countries and even the participating HEIs represent a broad variety of topics. The study team did not find evidence of one thematic area being more relevant than another locally and to the needs of the communities. Similarly, there seem to be no differences across the six broad themes in terms of their level of relevance, as all six themes address pressing issues and problems.

The overall ambitions of the Norwegian development assistance are:

- To eradicate extreme poverty by 2030
- To ensure good governance and respect for human rights for all by 2030

- To contribute to rights-based implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)²³
- To ensure that people in need receive assistance and protection
- To contribute to sustainable development and help to make countries independent of aid²⁴

All of these objectives are considered and reflected in the project set up, and the programme overall is very much in line with these ambitions. At the same time, it has to be noted, that due to the different pathways and levels of capacity building possible at the different participating organisations, the very last point highlighting the importance of making countries independent from aid, is the ambition where the least contribution should be expected from the current capacity-building programme. Even those organisations that represent a more advanced level of development among the grant holders do not seem to have an end-game in place. Sustainability of the programme results and plans for continuation, obtaining buy-in from the local authorities and stakeholders are topics that feature very low currently on many of the grant holders' agenda.

The requirements to link more strongly to stakeholders is not set out by NORHED at the outset. Strong links to national ministries and authorities, in particular are crucial to support the local institutions in their future plans and on their pathway to become more sustainable and independent from aid. The link also helps align the projects to any existing local and regional strategies. Addressing areas that represent or are linked to national priorities has the potential to generate impact beyond the funded institutions as broader engagement can be secured to support the advancement of the topic.

There are good examples at project level that manage to secure buy-in from ministries and align their activities with national strategies e.g. in Nepal, Sri Lanka or Columbia, where many of the projects address outward focusing topics.

The Autonomous Indigenous Intercultural University (UAIIN) is a project of the Council of Cauca (CRIC), Columbia aiming to develop an alternative educational model to the conventional one, based on the thinking and customs of the indigenous communities of Cauca. The CRIC's overall objectives are to claim their rights to land control and its autonomy in terms of governance; the protection of "Mother Earth"; the defence of their history, languages and customs; and the strengthening of their culture. CRIC's education and communication programmes are therefore a pillar of its platform. One of them is the Bilingual and Intercultural Education Programme (PEBI), which includes UAIIN's training programmes. The UAIIN, then, is governed by the same basic principles of the CRIC: unity, territory, culture and the search.

In contrast, low levels of intentions and considerations to create linkages with policies and embed national priorities was observed for projects that address more inward facing and rather academic topics. Such choices question the feasibility of getting policy support and buy-in to undertake any further activities once the NORHED project is concluded. The sustainability of the projects and their results is further explored in the subsequent chapters.

5.1.2 *To what extent is the NORHED programme suited to the needs and priorities of higher education institutions in LMICs, and adapted to the enabling conditions of these institutions?*

All of the projects funded have a very clear focus on capacity building in higher education. Coupled with the flexibility of the programme, that allows for some differences in the implementation of the project activities in terms of balance across the portfolio, the relevance of the programme to the participating HEIs is clear. This is to a large extent due to the fact, that the projects were designed with strong involvement of the local partners, taking into account the local and institutional needs and they are deeply rooted in the local environment. Although the projects have been implemented since 2013, they are still well underway, and the problems addressed still very much persist.

In most cases, the capacity building is focused predominantly on and limited to the participating institutions. This is, however, a result of the programme design and not a fault in the implementation.

Based on the consultations with project participants, two distinct types of capacity building take place in the projects due to the different activities and the type of engaged partners in them:

²³ Note: The NORHED programme was developed before the launch of the SDGs, therefore it is not designed to address them per se, although the programme has a very clear relevance to addressing these Goals

²⁴ https://www.norway.no/en/missions/un-rome/Norway_in_Rome/News/news/norwegian-development-cooperation/

- There is ‘basic’ capacity building, focusing on Master and PhD student training, training university staff and increasing the administrative capacity of the institution. This is the primary objective of the programme on the level of institutions, and as per design it is very much restricted to the participating institutions. These represent highly important activities and for many HEIs, in particular from South Sudan or Ethiopia, these are the necessary foundation steps to help advance higher education. At the same time, these activities that are part of every project in combination with the requirements set for them seem to represent some constraints to other more developed organisations. For example, for Makerere University, where the condition that all students had to be staff to participate in the programme represents a problem to some extent as being a lecturer at Makerere University already requires them to have completed a Master’s degree. The Programme offers flexibility in the design - e.g. setting a low target for Master’s students, if this activity is of low relevance – however this requires the project partners to have a full understanding of the possibilities within the programme. The financial figures of the projects reflect major variations across the budget allocated to education versus research in the University’s projects
- Through engaging local stakeholders, staff from government agencies, private sector, NGOs, etc. in the project activities, many have the potential to strengthen capacity beyond the institution as well. There are different ways of engagement observed in the portfolio. Some HEIs act as a training institution for other national and international institutions, selected projects conduct applied research and generate evidence-based research results disseminated to the relevant stakeholders. There are numerous projects that managed to link their activities more explicitly to policy and practice. This approach represents a very different mode of intervention compared to the institution-focused one, needs different conditions and level of advancement and maturity from the participating HEIs or project partners to think more strategically. Such examples include projects implemented at the University of Makerere or Addis Ababa University. In addition, some of the projects in the thematic area of democratic and economic governance – if successfully implemented – have a natural link to policy making, thereby the potential for increased levels of capacity building and ultimately impact generated

Both types are in line with the encompassing high-level objectives set by the NORHED programme. However, where the emphasis is put (for example on the different types of activities in the projects and therefore the capacity building fostered) does not seem to be strategically considered across the project portfolio. There are a large number of prerequisites to successful capacity building and the development level of the institutions participating has certainly had a major impact on the projects’ opportunity to address needs beyond the institutions themselves. Therefore, the projects’ potential to generate larger and ideally more sustainable impact through capacity building varies to a large extent in the NORHED programme.

International outlook

EDUFI, the Finnish development agency manages a higher education cooperation instrument similar to that of NORHED. It is currently in its third programming period (“HEI ICI” 2016-2018) covering 20 projects (700k each approximately) of 12M. The identification of appropriate project activities should be done jointly by the partnership, taking into account the indicators and results to be achieved, as well as needs identified by the partner institutions in the south. The project has to motivate the choice of activities and show that they are fit for purpose in relation to the results areas chosen. The funding can be used to finance a variety of Official Development Aid (ODA) eligible²⁵ capacity development activities in HEIs.

Activities can include, for example, the revision or development of new study programmes/modules/courses, curriculum review, joint modules or joint study programmes, joint intensive courses, the training of trainers, mobility of staff and students, dissemination measures, equipment upgrading and training of administrative staff. Also activities related to project management and monitoring progress should be included. Any mobility activities included should be instrumental for achieving the project results and outputs.

The projects may also include initiatives aimed at strengthening the research environment, research methods or the development of structures for post-graduate studies at the partner HEIs. Activities to strengthen research capacity can include training in

²⁵ www.oecd.org/dac/stats/methodology

research methodology and application writing, joint publications, investments in research equipment and infrastructure. It should be noted that funding is not to be used exclusively by Finnish researchers carrying out research in developing countries.

Ineligible activities. The funds cannot be used to support the acquisition of a degree in Finland, exclusively for short-term mobility activities or solely used for basic research. According to the general guidelines of the Finnish development cooperation, funding cannot be used to purchase land, to compensate for representational expenses or gifts, to compensate for basic education or university degrees of individuals, to spread ideologies, nor propagate religion.

The factors that represent major risks for the implementation of the projects are discussed in detail in the relevant chapter below. There are however some key factors that have a significant influence on the projects and require adaptation of the project implementation to better suit the institutions' needs and ensure more efficient project implementation. The following list is not exhaustive, but provides a first assessment of a set of issues that influence the relevance of the projects to the institutions in their political and economic environment:

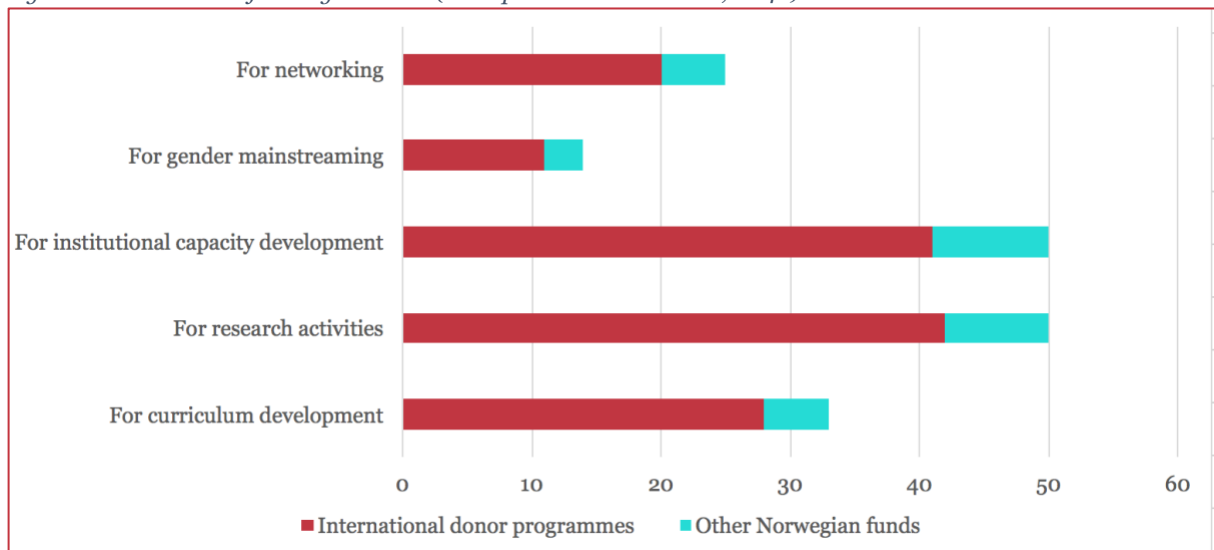
- The possibility to carry out infrastructure investment from the project funding to ensure basic, most needed infrastructure is welcome and enables project activities. However, not all project partners were aware of the opportunity to utilise funding for infrastructure and equipment to the same extent
- The financial leading role of the Southern agreement partners – problems with transfer of funds among the Southern partners due to financial regulations and lack of infrastructure, fluctuation of the Norwegian Kroner exchange rate causing reduced funding amount available to LMIC partners
- Gender balance and inclusion as a strong requirement is highly valuable in the projects, both in the activities and among the candidates and participants, until it poses constraints due to the lack of available candidate pool to participate.
- Requirements towards the affiliation of the Master students restricts the applicability and relevance of educational aspects of the programme to some more advanced institutions with highly trained staff
- Administrative capacity building aspects represent a somewhat divorced set of activity from the other activities funded by the programme, and are deeply influenced as well as constrained by the national framework conditions (especially procurements), as well as prevailing culture
- Addressing the needs of those most in need i.e. the partners in South Sudan, through capacity building activities of the scale and complexity as a NORHED project imposes major strains on already fragile institutions with no capacity to ensure efficient and smooth project implementation. The field visits to neighbouring countries and consultations with South Sudanese partners revealed a long list of issues that influence project implementation, which is especially a problem when they are the agreement partner in the project

Consultations with the stakeholders highlighted Norad's flexibility in tackling some of these issues and providing possible solutions. However, the programme design and objectives set a somewhat rigid framework, which can be mitigated by Norad's flexibility during the project implementation. Having said that, further tailoring for future programme design should be considered.

5.1.3 *To what extent is the NORHED programme complementary to other donor programmes supporting higher education and research in LMICs, and to what extent is it overlapping and competing with other donors?*

LMIC Project Coordinators and HEI management were asked in the online surveys about the other Norwegian and international funding sources their institution has access to, to support their activities. Out of all the respondents (n=82) in total 60% answered positively to the question, most of them highlighting other international funding sources for institutional capacity development and research activities. LMIC Project Coordinators reflected on their own activities, while HEI management on the broader institution in their response. Quite a few of the respondents (seven) commented however, that their only international funding is through the NORHED programme.

Figure 12 Other donor funding received (multiple choices available, n=48)



Source: Technopolis, based on the online surveys

As the chart shows, funding received for gender mainstreaming was mentioned the least, while institutional capacity building and research support the most. The total number of responses that indicated additional Norwegian funding for the listed activities was rather low (seven in total) indicating that Norad is the dominant funder of Southern partners. Some of the other Norwegian funding sources include country specific initiatives, such as the "Norway Capacity Building Initiative for Myanmar", funding received from the Fredskopset, the Norwegian Research Council and the Norwegian Embassies.

In addition to international organisations such as the European Union (Erasmus+ Programme), the World Bank and the UN, the following international donor funding sources and countries were highlighted the most often (the list is presented in a descending order by number of mentions) although the full list of donors is much longer:

- The USA including USAID, the National Institutes of Health and various foundations such as Bill and Melinda Gates and Rockefeller Foundations
- United Kingdom – DFID and British Council
- Sweden - SIDA
- Canada - IDRC
- Denmark - DANIDA
- The Netherlands - Nuffic

Interviews during the field visits revealed that concurrently very few project coordinators and their departments have other international funding. However, looking beyond the departments, at the level of schools and institutions, there are multiple ongoing projects at most higher education institutions. These are not run in parallel with similar objectives though, but address specific rather distinct objectives, often with a main focus on research or international mobility. It was also highlighted that projects are often interrupted by funding cycles and financing gaps which put project achievements at risk.

Norad is regarded as a highly unique funder for the education-related activities by many and it is often the dominant funder for the departments. This is for example the case for the University of Hawassa (Ethiopia). At the same time funding from SIDA is regarded as highly attractive by partners, who prioritise research activities and regard the research incentives offered for senior staff in the SIDA grants rather appealing. There are also many examples for bilateral cooperation of the NORHED partners with other international HEIs, that focus on student and PhD training and exchanges predominantly.

The positive views of the NORHED programme and the important role it fulfils in the institutions' development is clearly reflected in the fact, that almost all consulted participants expressed a strong view that they wish to continue their activities as part of a future NORHED programme if the opportunity arises.

5.1.4 To what extent is the partnership model (Norwegian-LMIC institutional cooperation, with a preference for the LMIC institution being the Agreement partner) consistent with the overall programme goal and the intended impact? How do LMIC based and Norwegian HEIs respectively experience and benefit from this model?

The programme has very clear objectives set with a strong focus on capacity building at the LMIC partners. Entrusting the LMIC partners with the management and coordination of the projects is regarded as an important stepping stone towards the achievement of the programme objectives. At the same time the shift to designate the LMIC partners as the agreement partner represented a major shift in programme design, set new expectations and demands and has required most organisations to undergo a major and often steep learning path.

Despite the difficulties experienced and reported by the stakeholders, this change in programme design was not without support, as most of the projects are based on previous partnerships and collaboration from projects funded under NUFU and NOMA. These predecessor projects already established the working methods and collaboration among the partners, therefore they laid the foundations on which the NORHED projects can build. Out of the 81 Norwegian and LMIC project coordinators who responded to the online surveys over 50% stated that they had previous Norad-funded projects in total out of the 44 projects that are covered by survey responses 29 stated that they had such prior projects.

The programme did not and could not set exact rules for engagement of the different partners, therefore there are significant variations in the partnership models across the projects:

- The most advanced level of cooperation among the partners takes the form of 'capacity exchange'. Many Norwegian partners highlighted during the workshops organised that this level, which requires a long time to establish and builds on trust and respect towards each other, represents true partnerships and can be found in some of the NORHED projects
- There are well-established and functioning partnerships, where the continued involvement of the Norwegian partners ensures further contribution and guidance to most aspects of the project implementation. Therefore, LMIC partners do not only have Norad's advice and guidance, but their experienced Norwegian HEI partners' support to embark on this challenging journey. In these cases, Norwegian partners go beyond the pure implementation of their project activities, and they play a strong mentoring role as well. These relationships are also built on trust, and partners have recognised the benefits delivered to all partners involved
- There are projects, where due to different factors such as weaker collaboration and links among the institutions the involvement of partners is less prominent and mainly concentrates on project specific tasks (this is even the case in some instances where the LMIC agreement partner has sufficient capacity and good management skills). While these partnerships are perfectly suitable for the purposes of the project implementation, they have less contribution to make to long term capacity building at the LMIC partners as most probably will not continue in the absence of funding
- There are also projects, where the expectations and level of contribution in the partnership become unbalanced, and a partner needs to replace others' activities (e.g. financial contributions made) or acknowledge that some parts might be unfulfilled or delayed (e.g. visits undertaken). These are not necessarily intentional changes, often there are external influencing factors that interfere and/or prevent the partner from contributing (e.g. frequent staff rotation in the project coordinator's role). There are however problems caused in the partnerships due to a lack of willingness to commit to engage more, with examples from among Southern and Norwegian institutions for such partners
- There are also examples of some non-functioning partnerships, where the project partners are not aware of each other's activities at all, operate in isolation or a member of the original project has not even started contributing, had to be replaced or excluded from the project

The relationships among the partners in a project are often a mixture of the above. Some partners might have known each other for a long-time and operate a trust-based relationship, while the inclusion of new project partners in the NORHED project requires the newcomers to ‘catch up’ and build up their relationship with the others often from scratch.

Considering the partnerships, it is another important feature of the projects, that the partnerships are not limited to South-North cooperation, but most of the projects also have South-South-North cooperation. There are projects, where the South-South relationships take place in-between continents, otherwise the partnerships are more regionally focused, often addressing topics of joint relevance for neighbouring countries. These partnerships have an important role to play in regional capacity development, however some of the Norwegian partners expressed the view that there are national systems/structures which harm the functionality of some partnerships, and that there have been cases of a lack of cohesion in South-South partnerships. It was also noted, that other comparable funders such as SIDA attempt to keep Southern partners apart to avoid these problems.

International outlook

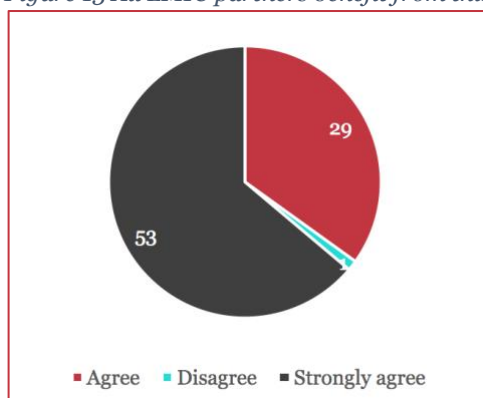
In terms of priority objectives, SPHEIR a programme operated by a consortium and funded by DFID in the UK, are intrinsically focused on the governance and performance of higher education institutions, seeking a systemic change through initiatives that focus on the delivery of degree programmes (not necessarily a single programme, could be a group of universities), quality assurance, and financing mechanisms.

SPHEIR is only interested in proposals originating from partnerships and they are very explicit in terms of what they understand by a partnership (“a group of institutions that achieves something together that would not be possible without the partnership”). One partner will be self-designated by the partnership as the grant agreement holder. This does, however, have practical implications. There are countries where they thought it would be highly unlikely that they would be able to put together a proposal. In the end, the majority of the SPHEIR partnerships are being led by the UK partner rather than the LMIC partner.

SPHEIR believes in the pre-establishment of partnerships, however the programme tries to level the playing field by making the online application fair. This application is space restricted and designed to tease out what the actual vision is and to understand to what extent the partnership had a coherent understanding of their vision. The first phase of the funding is for set up and thus allows time to develop the working relationship of the partnership before the launch of any activity.

The different levels of cooperation modulate the ease with which project coordinators can manage and navigate the process. Regardless of the problems encountered, the LMIC stakeholders consulted are very positive about the fact that they are entrusted as agreement partners. The message puts them in a stronger position in negotiation with other funders as well, as it gives them a ‘proof’, that they can deliver on their international project commitments. It is said to be regarded as a ‘token of trust’. The survey results expressed both by Norwegian and LMIC project coordinators strongly concur with these statements.

Figure 13 All LMIC partners benefit from this project set-up (n=85)



Source: Technopolis based on the survey responses

There are however some challenges that the projects face in ensuring that the LMIC-led projects can be beneficial for all. Some of the main topics highlighted during the consultation are set out in the subsequent paragraphs.

Efficient and effective communication and shared understanding are key to a well-functioning partnership that delivers benefits to all involved. It is not just about the use of a common language – which actually represents problem in a few projects where partners

Consultations also highlighted missed opportunities due to the lack of cooperation among the different NORHED funding projects. This was even the case, where multiple projects are present in one Southern institution, although the larger number of projects could provide a useful opportunity for mutual learning, sharing practices and simplified administrative procedures.

There are external factors regardless of the lead partner, that influence project implementation and collaboration among the partners. The insecurity in South Sudan has a major effect on the project implementation and is a major limiting factor for collaboration. This problem was often mentioned by partners in Uganda and Ethiopia, who work the most with South Sudanese partners.

A similarly important aspect is the function of the project coordinator. The role of the project coordinator, who has to motivate colleagues to contribute to the project implementation while coordinating the international partners and ensuring the quality of both academic and administrative deliverables is highly challenging. Therefore, successful project implementation requires a strong and well-trained project coordinator, who is equipped to tackle all circumstances.

Not only the training of a new project coordinator, but guidance and provision of consistent advice are of key importance for institutions that are at the early stages of managing such international projects. Therefore, having set requirements towards the projects where shared understanding is established between the funder and the LMIC project coordinator is highly valuable.

Consultations both with the project coordinators and Norad personnel revealed high turnover among project officers in Norad. The personnel changes at the funder coupled with personnel changes in the project coordinators resulted in instances of misunderstandings, delays and additional strains on the projects.

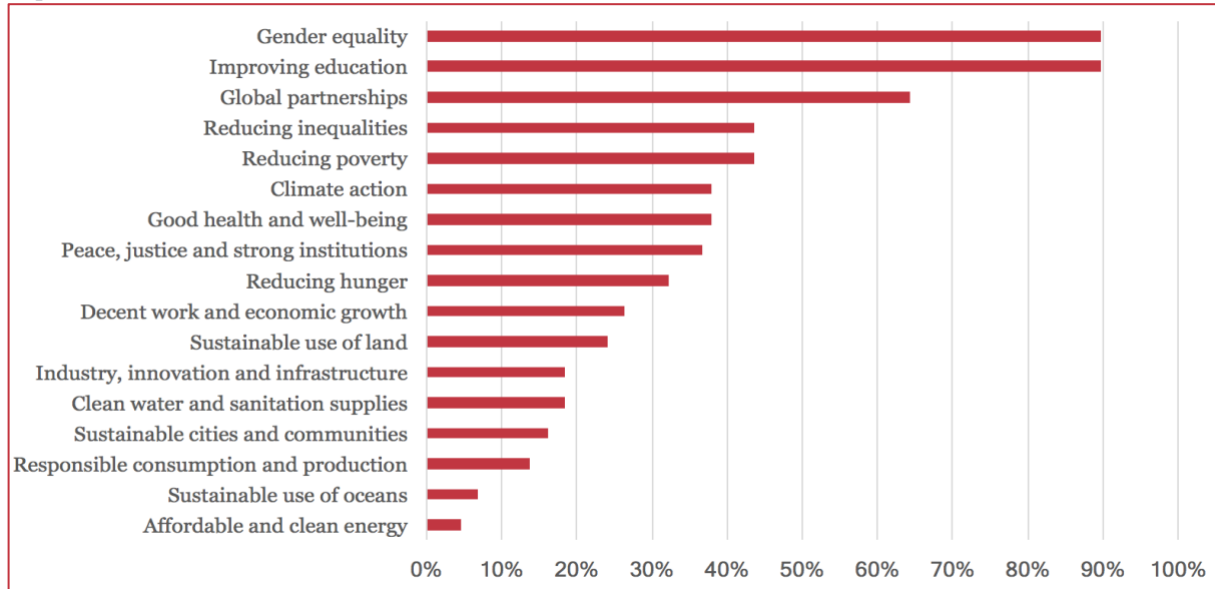
5.1.5 To what extent is the NORHED programme in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the concept of “leave no-one behind”?

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals – which came into force at the start of 2016 i.e. while NORHED was already ongoing - pledge to eradicate poverty, improve the standard of living globally, and protect the environment.²⁶ Even though the NORHED programme was not designed having the SDGs as guiding principles, the programme put gender equality and improving education at its core. Therefore, it is of no surprise that survey respondents confirmed that their projects contribute to these SDGs the most. At

²⁶ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

the same time, SDGs to which their projects contribute, were identified by the project coordinators, and all were covered, though the last two SDGs were only selected by 4-6 respondents respectively.

Figure 14 To which of the following sustainable development goals does your project contribute? (n=87, multiple responses)



Source: Technopolis based on the survey responses

International outlook

Most development agencies are not focused on any themes (DAAD, SPHEIR, Nuffic). Nevertheless, they do expect that programmes or calls for proposals would respond to some SDGs (DAAD, Nuffic). For example, DAAD has three specific programmes that are thematic: a public health programme, “university-business partnerships” programme, and a biodiversity programme. Nuffic tends to finance food security, rule of law and climate change across their programmes, and ensure that there are crosscutting issues such as labour market, gender equality and inclusiveness which are taken up.

The concept of the “leave no-one behind” term is defined by the United Nations as trying “to reach first those who are furthest behind”.²⁷ This endeavour manifests itself, for example, in improving maternal care for mothers in low income areas, in advancing healthcare in rural communities and in granting increased access to food for undernourished populations. In the NORHED programme there are indeed elements that are in line with the concept, as already described above.

The most obvious example of the implementation of the principle is the engagement of South Sudanese partners in the projects. The NORHED programme’s investment in South Sudanese institutions via a specific programme area was evidently needs-based, but the limitations and risks for doing so must also be recognised. The inclusion of (agreement) partners from South Sudan was seen by consortia as potentially advantageous for the success of the proposals. Political turmoil however has disrupted project implementation. Problems include difficulties in fund distribution among project partners, communication and knowledge exchange. In some cases, these also curtailed project activities, such as project meetings, staff and student exchanges and data collection in the field. In addition, some under-budgeting of resources has been apparent, as South Sudanese partners were often found to be in need of substantial investment. They started from a lower development stage than other partners due to the lack of capacity and infrastructure (e.g. academic buildings, equipment, facilities) available in the country.

Consultations during the field visits and discussions with the Norad project officers revealed major hurdles in the implementation of some of the projects, due to issues of security of travel, transfer of

²⁷ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/leaving-no-one-behind>

funds and access to the grant, basic functioning of the HEI partners and having sufficient capacity to contribute to the project implementation. Some aspects of the projects such as visits to the universities or exchange of students are often either not feasible or suffer major delays, which put burden on other project partners. While not all projects suffered major disruption in the activities, there are examples, where students were relocated to partner countries, or had to be provided with unforeseen financial assistance from partner institutions to help them undertake the field work and visits. These constraints result in asymmetric collaboration and limit the potential for having equal and effective partnerships, which is a core principle of the NORHED programme.

For the future, considerations are needed for how to better mitigate such risks and whether the collaboration model should be different to suit the needs of the partners both in South Sudan and elsewhere. It is not to say, that all projects involving a South Sudanese partner are struggling. On the contrary, there are very good examples of collaboration. However, one has to consider the external factors, such as the state of a country and ensure that the necessary flexibility is built in the project implementation in line with the results of a regular assessment of the risks and developments.

5.2 Effectiveness

Review questions

To what extent is the project portfolio consistent with the overall programme objectives and the intended impact?

To what extent is the NORHED programme, based on progress and preliminary results from the projects, likely to contribute to the intended programme objectives?

What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of programme objectives, at the programme and project level?

What specific recommendations can be made for overcoming risks and weaknesses, and for capitalizing on opportunities to meet the overall objectives, at the programme and project level?

5.2.1 To what extent is the project portfolio consistent with the overall programme objectives and the intended impact?

The portfolio of the NORHED programme (under review) consists of 45 projects as described already. They showcase a diversity in terms of topics, thematic areas, balance across the activities and partnership models used. At the same time, they all address the ultimate objectives of the programme, work towards improved education and research through fostering institutional capacity building. The variations among the projects are not due to a misfit with the programme objectives, but due to the flexibility of the programme that fosters and embraces diversity to enable the projects to be rooted in the local needs.

The projects showcase a high level of distinctive features and most of them seemingly operate in isolation. This mode of operation, however, influences the overall impact that can be delivered by the programme. Without intra-project knowledge sharing or synergies for at least the projects that are running in the same HEIs, the potential impact that can be generated is reduced. The lack of information sharing influences the efficiency of institutional capacity building, and it would be especially important to develop support structures for HEIs with multiple project participation.

There are some notable exceptions, where there are joint project activities between the projects. These activities include the organisation of joint research workshops, joint conferences, or for example between the two WASO projects, where the Asian project participants wanted to undertake field visits to the African counterparts (note: the decision on the visits was still pending upon the approval of the Norad project officer at the time of the field visit mid-October 2017).

5.2.2 To what extent is the NORHED programme, based on progress and preliminary results from the projects, likely to contribute to the intended programme objectives?

The logic model indicates a programme which has significant ambitions to impact on research capacity, education and institutional change. A major cross cutting theme of gender equality is also highlighted for attention.

There are numerous sources of data which provide evidence of the extent of the contribution of the projects - based on progress and preliminary results - to the overall programme objectives, including the data from the internal reporting, the field visits, interviews and the surveys.

First looking at the key outputs of the funded projects: the general progress of the projects (taking into account the issues of data aggregation) indicates an uneven contribution to the programme objectives. It is very positive with regard to curriculum development which in turn is contributing to increasing qualified graduates. There are also strong links between curriculum development and institutional capacity building. There are numerous examples of new leadership and governance modes supporting curriculum change (committees, working groups, cross departmental meetings), cross institutional collaborative actions and other new ways of working which impact on the institution.

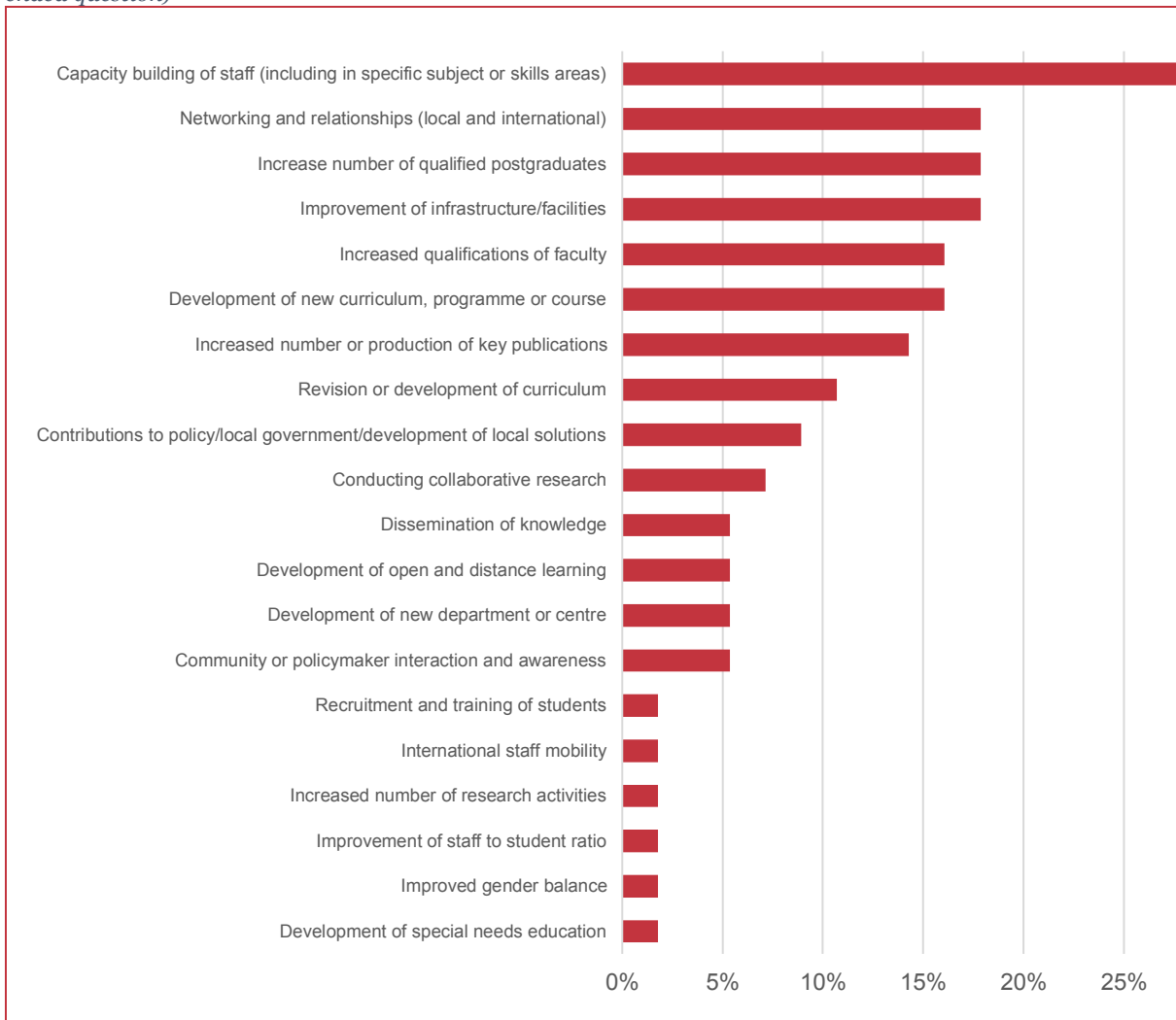
There is little evidence of systematic approaches to broad gender mainstreaming across the project portfolio. The topic is less well evenly addressed, as evidenced in the outputs from the annual reports, where some projects are far away from reaching their targets. In general, projects are working towards the gender targets set out in the project monitoring but have struggled with the broader concepts of gender inclusivity. In the project visits, most highlighted the numbers of women and the difficulties of recruiting women as PhD students, rather than wider policies and strategies. There are, however, good examples of mainstreaming gender in the curriculum, such as in the South Sudan and in Ethiopia; one department saw the number of female academic staff increase from 1 to 11 just because of the project.

There are clear indications from the fieldwork of capacity building within the HEIs, especially with those individuals directly involved in the implementation of the projects. However, as discussed in the prior sections, there is sometimes limited cross project collaboration and learning, even within institutions. If this could be addressed, it would further enhance this aspect. The administrative capacity building is also highlighted in the findings of this evaluation as an area where more could be achieved, although within the known constraints of the institutional rules and regulations.

In terms of the strengthening of research capacity, there are a number of very good examples of the participating institutions working together to support PhD supervision and summer schools. There are also some projects which are specifically using funds for small research grants. The role of the Norwegian partner is particularly important in relation to increasing research capacity. The co-supervision is also helping the LMIC professors to improve their skills in the supervision of PhD students in conducting research projects.

In the survey, LMIC project coordinators were invited to describe what they regard as the biggest achievement or result for their department so far. The question received eligible responses from 56 individuals. Respondents were not restricted in their responses, and so most offered multiple achievements or results in their description, which the study team coded individually for analysis. This is summarised in Figure 15 below. The results highlight a number of significant achievements which are in line with the overall programme objectives of capacity building, curriculum, qualifications and research as well as a number of factors which allow these objectives to be realised such as networking and infrastructure.

Figure 15 LMIC coordinators' views on their biggest achievement or result in their NORHED-funded project (open ended question)



Source: Technopolis, based on survey respondent data. Base = 56

5.2.3 What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of programme objectives, at the programme and project level?

There are a large number of factors influencing the project implementation, both at the level of the participating institutions and external to them. The following list provides the key factors that were identified during the consultations as having a major impact on the project implementation and progress either as enabling factors supporting the project implementation or as barriers hindering it. Some of the factors are regarded as enabling factors by some stakeholders, while they represent barriers to others. An example for the internal factors is resource availability for teaching and research, which is highly dependent on the national priorities and funding for higher education as well as the ability and capacity of the institutions to attract external funding for these purposes. These factors are listed in the table at both columns.

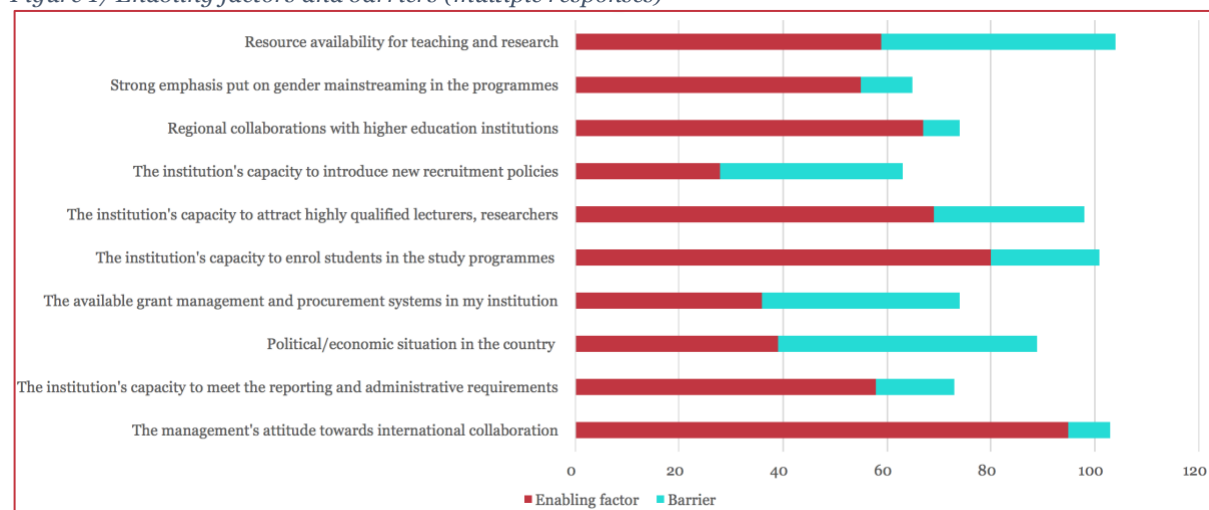
Figure 16 Internal and external factors influencing project implementation

Internal factors		External factors	
Enabling factors	Barriers	Enabling factors	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HEI management's attitude towards international collaboration The institution's capacity to meet the reporting and administrative requirements set by funders The available grant management and procurement systems in Southern institution (e.g. Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Malawi, Nepal, Uganda, Vietnam) The institution's capacity to enrol students in the study programmes The institution's capacity to attract highly qualified lecturers and researchers Resource availability for teaching and research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pool of female candidates for PhD and MA training is not large enough Delays in making financial transfers The available grant management and procurement systems in Southern institution (e.g. Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Malawi, Nepal, Uganda, Vietnam) The institution's capacity to introduce new recruitment policies Resource availability for teaching and research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political/economic situation in the country (Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania) Regional collaborations with higher education institutions Strong emphasis put on gender mainstreaming in the programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement rules are difficult and lengthy, causing major delays Political instability, crisis and natural disasters (e.g. Nepal) Political/economic situation in the country (e.g. South Sudan, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Nepal) Changes in the exchange rates significantly affecting project budget

Source: Technopolis analysis based on the survey responses and information collected during the field visits

The 2015-16 annual report findings also highlighted the problem of acquiring infrastructure due to cumbersome procurement procedures in many countries which was one of the main reasons behind the underutilisation of institutional capacity development budgets.

Figure 17 Enabling factors and barriers (multiple responses)



Source: Technopolis based on the survey responses

One significant issue which manifests itself is the delayed consumption of the funding. In terms of the spend over time, overall the projects consumed only 39% of the available budget by the reporting cut-off dates in 2016, which is rather low if the projects were to finish on time in 2018. The review of the project documentation, the financial figures and the consultations revealed delays for most projects, which will necessitate no cost extensions of one year after the initial end date. In particular there are

delays with the number of PhD students enrolled and to graduate by 2018. These figures are somewhat below the expected volume for a number of projects. The delays are often due to external factors (i.e. barriers) beyond the control of project partners (e.g. crisis situation, Nepalese earthquake), and have a rather large impact on the projects' progress and the deadline when they can deliver the targets agreed.

5.2.4 What specific recommendations can be made for overcoming risks and weaknesses, and for capitalizing on opportunities to meet the overall objectives, at the programme and project level?

Detailing the risks that influence project implementation is part of annual reporting by individual projects. We carried out an assessment of project risks as identified in these reports. In addition, we consulted project coordinators whether they regard these as risks or enabling factors, to gain a better overview of the most dominant issues in a given project or countries. In addition, we also sought this information during the field visits. The above-mentioned sources provided the study team with a wealth of information on the potential risks factors, that might need mitigation or intervention to ensure successful project implementation.

In the annual reports, the projects identified a total of 165 risk items. Looking across the institutions, Jimma University in Ethiopia identified the highest number of risks from all HEI partners, for the "Strategic and collaborative capacity development in Ethiopia and Africa (SACCADE)" project. Notably, however, there were three project coordinators that identified no risk factors in their reports and these should be warning signs for possible implementation issues in the future.

The highest number of risks identified were concerned with delays to project implementation. For instance, delays affecting the project start date, delays negatively influencing study progression, hold-ups in funding and auditing and delays caused by an excess of bureaucratic measures. Issues brought about by students were also identified as potential risk factors. Higher education institutions feared that students would sometimes fail to complete their studies or be reluctant to enrol in NORHED funded courses at all. The persistence of gender disparities also was mentioned as a risk factor. Problems arising from inadequate human and infrastructural resources figured highly on HEIs' indication of risk factors.

Having examined the areas where most risk was identified, it is necessary to identify which risks are of most concern to HEIs in the South. Understandably, the risk most mentioned was external factors linked to conflict and political insecurity. Several universities mentioned that conflict, whether ongoing or pre-empted, was a definitive risk factor with the potential to disrupt project progress. The lack of functioning resources and stable university infrastructure both emerged as common risk factors. Universities sometimes lacked necessary teaching materials or were waiting for funding to purchase such resources. Annual reports also suggested that the surrounding university infrastructure (i.e. often the lack of it) was a hindering factor to achieving project goals.

While the risks most commonly identified by HEIs in the South were mostly orientated around physical, direct threats, the risks least commonly mentioned are more personnel-related and indirect in nature. For instance, emerging social issues and cultural differences were among the least chosen risk factors. This could indicate that immediate financial, practical issues pose more of a threat to the programme's effectiveness than the surrounding social climate.

5.3 Efficiency

Review questions

To what extent is the NORHED programme and the 45 first NORHED projects cost efficient in terms of achieving the desired results?

To what extent is the NORHED partnership model, with an LMIC-led partnership and the requirement of a Norwegian partner, the most efficient way of strengthening institutional capacity in LMICs?

To what extent are Norad's grant and results-based management requirements efficient and contribute to programme goals? Do Norad's requirements have any unintended effects on the administrative and research management capacity of project partners?

To what extent do the project partners have sufficient capacity to meet the reporting and other administrative requirements set by Norad?

To what extent is Norad's use of resources to manage the programme, including human and financial resources, efficient and in support of programme goals?

To what extent is Norad's management of the programme in line with Norad's new responsibilities and recent restructuring of 2017?

5.3.1 To what extent is the NORHED programme and the 45 first NORHED projects cost efficient in terms of achieving the desired results?

This question explores the issue of cost efficiency at the level of the programme and at the level of the projects. In the subsequent paragraphs, we discuss the issues that influence cost-efficiency at project level, while cost efficiency at programme level – which includes aspects of the programme management at Norad – is discussed in more detail in chapter 5.3.5.

The overall objectives of the NORHED programme, as described already, are high level, therefore the question of cost efficiency can be explored at a more granular level focusing on the different types of activities within the projects. There cannot be a price tag attached to reinforced capacity of higher education institutions or enhanced gender balance. In addition, the programme operates in 25 different countries, which poses a challenge for the programme management to understand whether the costing of the different activities is reasonable, the activities are implemented in a cost-efficient manner, and whether aspects of the projects are over or under budgeted.

To gain an insight into the process of developing the budget for the different projects, and whether the costing is realistic and sufficient, we consulted project partners during the field visits. The study team also sought the views of the Norad project officers to understand their procedures for approving the budget, checking their appropriateness and to understand what they as regard cost efficient.

The study did not collect specific budgetary information on the elements of the projects – e.g. scholarship or per diem amounts, costs of library developments, research material-related expenses – as conducting an audit of the funding spent is not in the remit of this study. However, during the field visits budgetary aspects and their appropriateness were explored. Some projects gave accounts of reduced budgeting at the project design phase to ensure competitiveness of the proposal. Other projects acknowledged that the funding is adequate to achieve the objectives and the set targets. The amount of overhead allowed in the projects seems rather low at first in an international comparison with 7%, however direct comparison with other programmes is not easy to make, as the projects allow for a separate budget line focusing on institutional development as well as project management.

The lack of funding for staff represents a challenge, as people take on board additional workload to contribute to the delivery of the project with no additional salary. Another recurring topic highlighted by the projects focused on the benefits of gaining access to the materials (e.g. publications and journals) at the Norwegian universities, which for most of the LMIC partners are generally not available due to resource constraints. Scholarship amounts were in general deemed adequate, and according to the interviewed partners usually in line with the national standards, although across the portfolio of NORHED projects there are quite some differences.

An important element of cost-efficiency at programme level could be linked to those institutions that have multiple project participation. Having multiple projects at one institution could have a clear advantage of concentrating the institutional development-related budgets, and therefore the potential of fostering long lasting change. Based on the field visits, this is an aspect however that is rather under-developed, though selected good practice examples exist.

The discussions with the project partners highlighted a rather diverse use of project funding, tailored to the specific needs of the institutions, often with the ultimate objective to ensure the bare necessities to undertake project activities, e.g. materials for the research laboratories, vehicles to enable collecting

samples during fieldwork, installation of solar panels to ensure constant Wi-Fi availability, and computer laboratories to be able to provide distant education. Overall, the intention of using the funds in the best possible way aligned to the institutions' needs is very clear; however, it shows a very institution-focused approach, rather than considering cost efficiency for the project as a whole. The budget allocation across the project partners seems to be rather rigid as defined at the proposal stage, and changes in the project implementation or shifts in the activities are not necessarily reflected.

Consultation with the Norad project officers reinforced the above findings. Project officers highlighted specific elements, such as combination of travels, arranging virtual meetings instead of face-to-face, or a high number of students enrolled as the main characteristics of a cost-efficient project. However, there seems to be a lack of shared understanding about what it means to have cost-efficient projects. Many of the project officers share the belief that the strong involvement of the project partners at the project design phase ensures realistic budget planning. In addition, the annual reviews enable reshuffling among the project budget lines, if necessary. Still, reportedly some of the project partners do not seem to have sufficient funding available to achieve all the targets set. This is due to overspend on specific project activities (high expenditure on travel and scholarships, a larger infrastructure investment), or issues with exchange rates resulting in reduced overall budget availability.

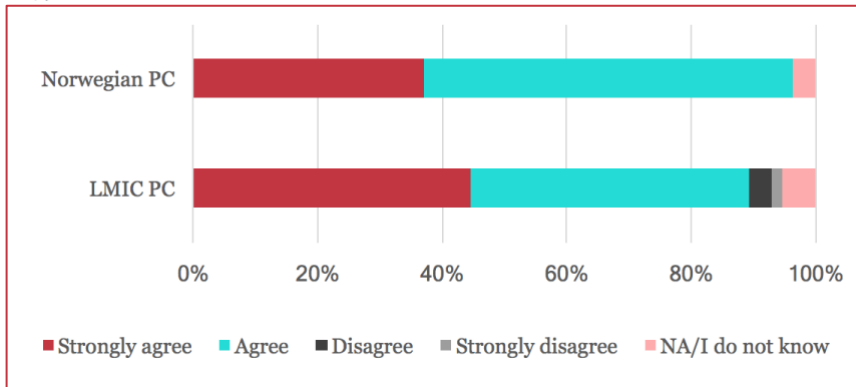
For the current projects, there were no standardised rates applied within countries, in terms of the scholarships or per diems, although there are institutional guidelines available at some NORHED project partner HEIs. Utilising this information as a sanity check of budgeting was, however, introduced for the 2016 call for proposals. However, country-specific cost levels are not documented or are easily accessible in a structured format (i.e. a database) for Norad project officers to consult. Compilation of such information could be a highly useful resource for the programme management.

5.3.2 To what extent is the NORHED partnership model, with an LMIC-led partnership and the requirement of a Norwegian partner, the most efficient way of strengthening institutional capacity in LMICs?

Having efficient project management, well-functioning collaboration and ensuring that the different partners' contribution is valuable and beneficial to all are cornerstones of successful project implementation. In the previous chapters, the different types of partnerships that exist in the NORHED projects were already discussed, therefore below the focus is on aspects of project management and division of labour among the project partners to assess the efficiency of the NORHED model in strengthening institutional capacity.

The LMIC partner HEIs have different levels of maturity and experience with international projects, which is reflected in their institutional capacity to manage the projects as well. To reap the benefits of the arrangement, it is essential to have the institutional capacity to manage the administrative aspects of the projects. This area represents a problem for many new agreement partners – e.g. not having a centralised grant office at many higher education institutions – especially as the administrative capacity building element of the project is somewhat detached from the other activities. Still, project partners, both Norwegian and LMIC partners have a very positive view about the efficiency of project management led by the LMIC partners. The survey results show an overwhelmingly positive picture as presented in Figure 18.

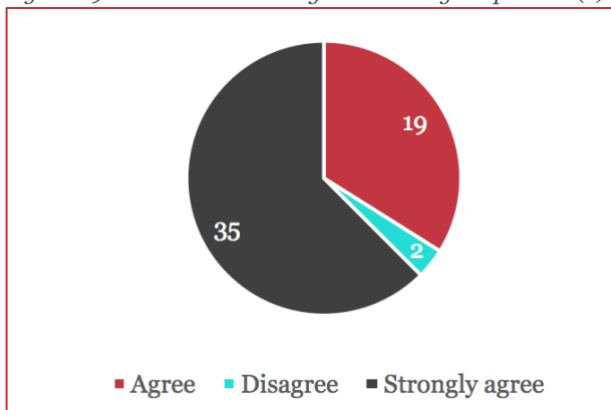
Figure 18 The project management by the lead LMIC partner is efficient (Norwegian PC, n=29 and LMIC PC, n=59)



Source: Technopolis based on the survey responses

The positive views about the efficient management of the projects do not mean that the contribution of the Norwegian partners is not needed or valued. On the contrary, the contribution to the project implementation by the Norwegian partners is regarded very valuable by all, but two, LMIC project coordinators as presented in Figure 19.

Figure 19 The contribution by the Norwegian partner(s) is very valuable (LMIC PC, n=56)



Source: Technopolis based on the survey responses

Considering two of the main project activities – education and research – Norwegian and LMIC project coordinators were asked whether more involvement of the Norwegian partners would be useful for the implementation of the project activities. The views expressed by the survey respondents were more mixed in this regard, especially between the Norwegian and LMIC partners. While LMIC project coordinators agreed or strongly agreed that further engagement of the Norwegian partners in both research and education would be useful (86% and 89% respectively), the views of the Norwegian project coordinators were more evenly split between strongly agree, agree and disagree, some of them choosing the category of strongly disagree.

Figure 20 More engagement by the Norwegian HEI partner(s) in the project activities

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
More engagement by the Norwegian HEI partner(s) in research activities would be useful					
LMIC PC	33%	53%	15%	0%	55

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Norwegian PC	29%	36%	29%	7%	28
Total	27	40	16	2	85
More engagement by the Norwegian HEI partner(s) in education would be useful					
LMIC PC	39%	50%	11%	0%	56
Norwegian PC	21%	36%	32%	7%	28
Total	29	39	15	2	85

Source: Technopolis based on the survey responses

As the responses of the project coordinators highlight, there is still a strong need for the Norwegian partners to be included in the projects. Since the current funding period is the first time when LMIC partners were tasked with the project management of such complex project, the need for further involvement of their Norwegian partners is unsurprising. There are many positive examples of the contribution of Norwegian partners that will have long lasting effects on institutional capacity building at the LMIC partners, as highlighted in the example below.

Northern-Southern co-supervision of PhD students

In Ethiopia, the students and staff consulted during field visits were very positive about the value of the Norwegian partners' academic knowledge and experience. In most instances, PhD students studying on NORHED-supported programmes are co-supervised by the Northern and Southern partners. Norwegian academics most commonly undertake the role of primary supervisor, while the southern academic undertakes the role of secondary supervisor. Students reported having a good relationship with their Norwegian supervisors, maintaining communication by email and Skype. Interviews also revealed another benefit of the co-supervision arrangement: Southern professors learn good practice in PhD supervision from their Norwegian counterparts. This is important to building supervisory capacity in the Southern university. One project visited by the study team has established an additional arrangement to increase supervisory capacity, due to a very low number of PhD-qualified faculty staff in the host department. In addition to the North-South co-supervision arrangement, another Southern university (in-country) provides additional supervisory capacity. There are efforts in some projects to attract more Northern academics (and members of the Ethiopian diaspora) outside of the project to supervise PhD students and act as external examiners.

Discussions during the workshops with Norwegian partners reinforced that PhD training was regarded as the 'common cause' for all partners. Southern partners need the capacity to train their PhD candidates, and this is good for undertaking research for the Norwegian partners as well. It was suggested that there are two things needed to support this mutual aim: fostering a pipeline of competent PhD candidates via a good MSc/MA programme, and focusing on the quality of PhD education, rather than simply the number of qualifiers. Several of the recipients believe that quality is not really captured in the programme log frame.

5.3.3 To what extent are Norad's grant and results-based management requirements efficient and contribute to programme goals? Does Norad's requirements have any unintended effects on the administrative and research management capacity of project partners?

Norad developed a results framework and applies a set of 14 standard indicators to monitor project progress, together with the more qualitative annual reporting and the financial reviews. The indicators were developed together with the project partners during a workshop and then finalised by Norad. Norad fosters a participatory approach, which indeed can be used at each stage of programme and project cycles, i.e. during planning, while monitoring progress, and in the evaluative processes. In participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation, the process of engagement is as important as outcomes, as it encourages and facilitates the active involvement of those with a stake in the programmes

and helps reduce their resistance. However, developing a set of indicators has additional rules as well that ensure they are actually fit for purpose.

Our review of the indicators concurs with the findings of the real-time evaluation series on NORHED, highlighting the data gaps and issues around interpretation of the indicators by the projects.

- **Baseline data availability:** the April 2014 NORHED evaluation series report also stresses the importance of collecting good baseline data – without this it is difficult to determine and attribute the effects of the NORHED programme.²⁸ One of the reports’ recommendations was to ensure that all projects “have adequate baseline data for inputs, outputs, and outcomes.”²⁹ The 2015 evaluation series report however, reveals that although many projects have provided baseline data, a notable number have not. It noted that a third of projects lacked complete baselines for outputs while two out of every five projects lacked complete baselines for outcomes.³⁰
- **Quality of indicators:** similar to the issues raised above, data coverage for the key performance indicators seems to be mixed. The 2015 evaluation series found that NORHED’s standard indicators were “substantively relevant”,³¹ with a range of measures introduced to ensure that there was a shared understanding of each indicator’s meaning. It was believed that this would improve the chances of producing comparable data. Nevertheless, other indicators do have quality issues. Firstly, the report raised concerns over the quality of data collected by surveys. For instance, it talked about respondent errors in calculating “rates” or “ratios”, projects being guilty of selective reporting, and qualitative reporting being overly generalised.³² Secondly, the report highlighted that NORHED’s standard indicators did not measure some variables that the programme was especially interested in, including:
 - The quality of research
 - Quality of educational programmes as a check on the quality of graduates
 - The sustainability of NORHED-funded capacity developments
 - System and institution-level conditions that enable or impede capacity building at the university level

While the targets and objectives set that are to be captured through the indicators and reporting are relevant and suitable for the programme in principle, the institutional development aspect is not so well covered. In addition, the indicators’ phrasing, implementation both in terms of reporting and the use of the information collected leaves much room for improvement. There are technical sheets at Norad for other programmes, that help interpret the indicators in a more precise manner, which is an approach that could be usefully adopted for NORHED as well, after rationalisation of the currently used standard indicators.

Indicators as a general principle should be SMART i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. Although the indicators were developed together with the partners and are based on consensus, they do not comply with the SMART criteria. Therefore, they cannot fulfil the desired objective of assessing the progress of the projects against the targets set, or of the programme. Furthermore, most of the indicators focus on outputs, and there is less emphasis put on outcomes and impacts, which leaves gaps in terms of reporting on project activities and achievements. Discussion with Norad project officers also highlighted that the targets that were set for the projects are often too ambitious, and were, in a few cases, over-estimated.

In case of the NORHED programme, the projects also use additional project specific indicators, as the development of the standard indicators was done once the projects were already approved and they

²⁸ Norad (2014) *Evaluation Series of NORHED: High Education and Research for Development - Theory of Change and Evaluation Methods*, p.xiii

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Norad (2015) *Evaluation Series of NORHED: Evaluability Study*, p. vii

³¹ Ibid, p. 20

³² Ibid. pp. 28-29.

identified their own project specific indicators already during the proposal phase. While the desire from the project partners' side to use their own indicators is understandable, this creates additional burden in terms of reporting, and the information collected and reported is often of little value, as the understanding of what an indicator should be seems rather low for many. This is fully understandable, when the programme is run by partners who are often less experienced in running international projects. At the same time, this calls for a stronger involvement of Norad project officers in providing guidance and advice, which has the prerequisite of them having not only capacity, but a very good understanding of the principles of effective and efficient monitoring and reporting.

An added difficulty is that the interpretation of the indicators as well as Norad's requirements regarding the narrative reporting represent – or at least represented at least in the first few years of the programme – a challenge for many of the LMIC project coordinators. To fulfil these obligations efficiently, there is a need to have institutional and administrative capacity already available at the partners at least to some extent. This is a slight paradox, as the programme set as one of its objectives to foster building institutional capacity. To improve the administrative capacity of the partners, more specifically the information provision and reporting methods on the progress of the projects, Norad project officers provide assistance with reporting, undertake discussions and annual meetings with the project coordinators and partners. The latter is particularly important for many less experienced project coordinators, as it helps ensure that Norad has the opportunity to intervene as needed, if the projects are not on track.

International outlook

DAAD have started applying results-based monitoring. In that sense, they are now starting to have evaluations for individual programmes: they do not, however, have an evaluation of the whole portfolio (i.e., of DAAD's work in development cooperation). They would like to have all of their programmes evaluated in order to see how to restructure these into one or two programmes. DAAD expects that the monitoring results will help understand what size is the most optimal and sustainable for a programme, and what should they do not only with the smaller programmes (to push universities to think of development cooperation), but also with the bigger ones that can suffer when they stop financing them.

All Swedish development cooperation is governed by the following principles:

- The Swedish parliament has adapted a Policy for Global Development (PGD). This describes how different policy areas should work together for a positive global development.
- The Government's Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance highlights the overall objective to create prerequisites for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression, with a clear perspective that people themselves are agents of change who can influence their own development.

Sweden's strategies for development assistance are focused on results, with the partner country's objectives and results framework as a starting point. As a signatory to the Paris Declaration on improving aid effectiveness, Sweden has committed itself to work for improved results-based management in Sweden's partner countries. The government monitors the results of development assistance each year. It includes SIDA's report – a special annex to the annual report – along with other forms of aid.

5.3.4 To what extent do the project partners have sufficient capacity to meet the reporting and other administrative requirements set by Norad?

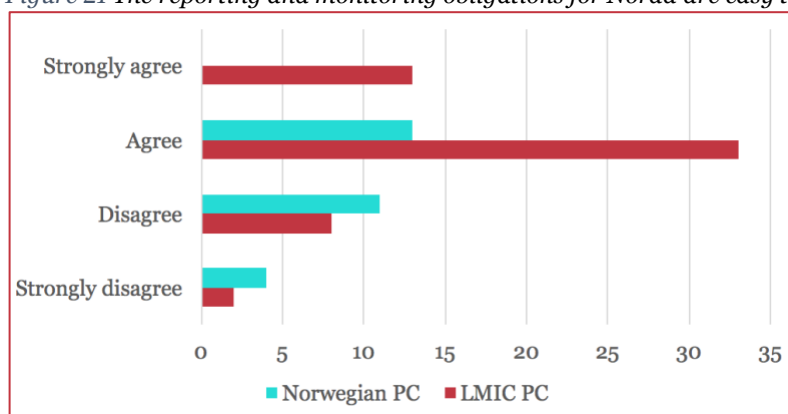
The projects visited as well as the LMIC project coordinators consulted through telephone interviews were asked to provide the key characteristics of an institution that is ready and has the sufficient capacity to lead a NORHED project i.e. fulfil the reporting and administrative requirements set by Norad. The responses highlighted a broad spectrum of desired attributes an HEI and a project coordinator should possess. These include:

- The type of HEI – it is not necessary to be a strong and old HEI, younger institutions can fulfil the role well as well, if there are two dedicated and motivated persons heading the project as real partners: one from the South and the other one from the North
- Successful implementation requires a champion at the HEI – a management level representative e.g. a visionary dean – who promotes and advocates the project in the broader institutional context and ensures high-level institutional buy-in through the engagement of the vice-chancellor for example. This is particularly important to secure in highly hierarchical institutions such as in Nepal, Ethiopia or Uganda

- The role of the project coordinator is crucial – it requires international exposure and experience, dedication, resilience, diplomacy as well as an aptitude for teamwork. Some of SIDA’s grant includes training on proposal writing and project management to equip individuals with the necessary skills and capabilities
- Having administrative support from the HEI, e.g. from a project or grant office, committee, etc. makes a significant difference in the efficiency of the project coordination e.g. NORHED specific secretariat available at the University of Makerere
- A clear division of labour among the implementing team e.g. a management committee reviewing strategic directions and questions, with a project assistant taking care of routine tasks, makes a large difference in the ease of project implementation

Project coordinators both Norwegian and LMIC partners were also asked in the surveys to express their views about Norad’s reporting and monitoring obligations in terms of their ease of compliance. Similarly, to the responses to the other questions, LMIC partners have a very positive opinion, and only a small proportion disagrees or disagrees strongly with the statement that it is easy to comply with the requirements.

Figure 21 The reporting and monitoring obligations for Norad are easy to comply with (n=85)



Source: Technopolis based on the survey responses

There are, however, some contradictions between the study team’s experience during the field visits and the results of the online survey. In general, the survey seems to provide an overall much more positive result than the experience gained in person, where the difficulties of project management were highlighted and seemingly a more realistic picture provided. To further explore the issues of institutional capacity as regards reporting and administrative requirements, both LMIC project coordinators and management were asked to identify, whether it represents an enabling factor of a barrier for them. While the majority of respondents highlighted that the institutional capacity is an enabling factor (58 respondents in total), 15 respondents answered that it represents a barrier for them i.e. indicating insufficient capacity. There were no differences between the views of agreement and project partners.

Figure 22 The institution's capacity to meet the reporting and administrative requirements set by funders

	Barrier	Enabling factor	NA/I do not know	Total
HEI management	3	11	2	16
LMIC PC	12	47	2	61

Source: Technopolis based on the survey responses

An analysis of all identified risk factors in the annual reports was also carried out to judge whether the reporting requirements set by Norad could be met. Overall, ten projects indicated that misuse of funds was an identified risk factor. Seven projects said that issues with reporting project progress was a risk

factor. Some of these issues pertained to:

- Confusion between project partners over a cohesive financial reporting system
- The absence of a project accountant responsible for administrative requirements
- External factors (i.e. surrounding conflict) affecting effective/timely reporting

Norad's "Follow the Money" review of the University of Malawi (UNIMA) that was carried out in April 2017 also sought to answer the question about sufficient institutional capacity that is needed to ensure efficient project implementation. The primary objectives of the Follow the Money review were to assess how the money funded to the University of Malawi was being used and whether it had been effectively spent. Two documents were created by Norad: a review of the "Strengthening Capacity for Democratic and Economic Governance in Malawi" project at UNIMA's Chancellor College, and a review of the "Capacity Building in Postgraduate Surgery Training and Research in Malawi" project based at the UNIMA College of Medicine. The scope of the analysis focused on three key areas: the governance structure at UNIMA, the regulations and procedures in place for NORHED projects and the movement of funds between Norad and each recipient. The reports both found that financial reporting had proved difficult due to capacity issues experienced at the University. There was underspending at both the College of Medicine and Chancellor College, a result of unrealistic expectations regarding project implementation. Despite this, the University as a whole was deemed to have sufficient capacity to fulfil reporting requirements whilst creating impact at the broader project level.

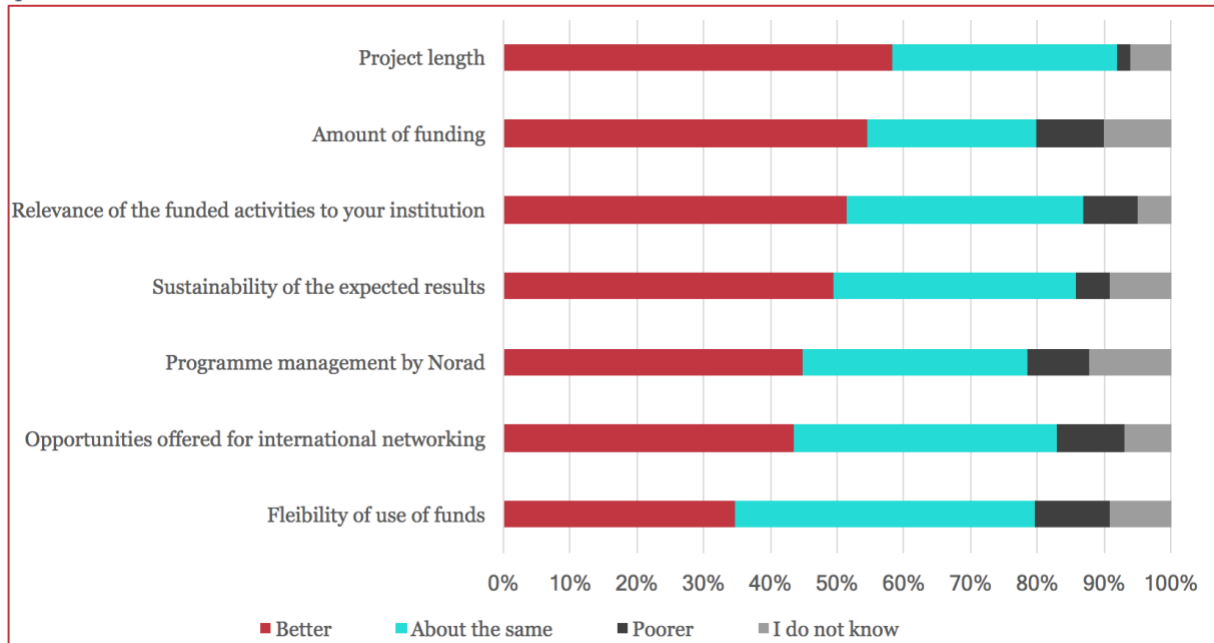
5.3.5 *To what extent is Norad's use of resources to manage the programme, including human and financial resources, efficient and in support of programme goals?*

Looking at the views of the stakeholders on the different aspects of Norad funding in comparison with other funding sources, there is a rather positive overall view predominantly due to the positive opinion of the majority of the LMIC partners. Project length and amount of funding are regarded the most favourably, with over 50% of the respondents indicating that NORHED is better than other funding sources. The flexibility of use of funds is regarded the least positively by the respondents. With regard to three selected aspects, a stark difference can be observed among the views of the Norwegian and the LMIC partners. Most of the Norwegian PCs found Norad funding either "about the same" or "poorer" compared with other funders as regards:

- Flexibility of use of funds: better – 10%, about the same – 59%, and poorer – 24%
- Programme management by Norad: better – 14%, about the same – 45%, poorer – 28%
- Relevance of the funded activities to your institution: better – 17%, about the same – 55%, poorer – 24%

As the chart shows, programme management by Norad is regarded "better" or "about the same" by three-quarters of the respondents. LMIC project coordinators were also asked about the usefulness of the advice they receive from Norad regarding how to manage the project, and all but one respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it is very useful.

Figure 23 Norad funding compared with other international donor funding (n=99 and 98 varies by answer option)



Source: Technopolis based on the survey responses

Consultations during the field visits and interviews with Norad project officers shed light on some aspects of the programme management that influence its efficiency and effectiveness and need further consideration. These are set out below.

Over the past couple of years, there has been a significant turnover among the NORHED staff, which influenced the programme management as well as the implementation of the individual projects. Understaffing resulted in very high workload and very frequent changes in project officers. Some of the project partners gave account of having four project officers since the launch of their project, which means a complete lack of continuity in terms of advice provision or consistency for them. Staff turnover also represents an issue for Norad, as it loses institutional memory and has to reinvest a lot of effort in training staff. While there is an information system available at Norad that stores all relevant information on the projects, it is difficult to learn the past of the projects from someone else's work, especially in a complex programme such as NORHED.

Another aspect of being a project officer at NORHED concerns the complexity of the task. In addition to being a good programme manager, knowledgeable ideally not just in international development but also in a thematic area of the programme as well as fully equipped to review finances, the project officers should also be able to support institutional capacity building through consultancy and advice. The job combines many different tasks, which require a broad range of expertise. Norad has in-house different departments that can provide support; however, Norad should consider whether its NORHED project officers are the best placed to carry out all these tasks, or whether some tasks would be more efficiently and even more professionally undertaken if outsourced internally or externally.

NORHED project officers go through the general training provided i.e. not NORHED specific and they gave accounts of a lot of informal support and meetings, that help them understand the projects faster. However, there seem to be hardly any internal guidelines available on the programme to ensure shared understanding of the rules and their exact application. Another issue is due to the lack of structured monitoring database and the format of the reporting. In the absence of online reporting and having a database of key information, it is very difficult to gain a quick overview of the projects' progress and almost impossible to do so at a programme level. The study team received the narrative and financial reports for all 45 projects and tried to extract information in a structured way across all projects to arrive

to a programme level overview. This turned out to be an almost unsurmountable task due to the differences in the reporting and the reliability of the information extracted. Similarly, the contact database received from Norad for the projects included a significant amount of out-of-date information, which illustrates that the system of programme level information compilation has some issues and needs further attention to improve it.

Norad has been improving the reporting template over time, however there is still room for improvement to ensure consistency across the project portfolio, especially considering that reporting should also enable an aggregated overview of the programme's performance as well, instead of focusing solely on the project level. In addition, there is a clear need to introduce online reporting instead of the current model.

An important element of NORHED project management is the field visits undertaken linked to the annual reporting. Field visits are regarded as necessary by all Norad project officers, however it is also acknowledged that they might not be needed for every project. Visits help them build relationship with the project partners and understand the status and implementation of the projects better. Some of the project officers reported however, that the meetings are more about the financial aspects and ensuring that the financial reporting is correct, instead of devoting attention to project management-related issues or the thematic area in question. The current balance seems to be askew, too much focused on the financial aspects of the projects.

Norad has a good relationship with many international donors and participates in the donor harmonisation conferences. However, there remain some questions of the extent to which the information gained is fed back and utilised in the NORHED programme. There are many good practice examples – e.g. the online reporting systems at DAAD or Nuffic – which could be useful to improve some of the procedures and process applied by Norad. More conscious attention to ensuring that some of the relevant procedures can be implemented to enhance programme management would be desirable. Engaging more strategically with other funders would also help to gain a better overview of the potential synergies across the different funding streams, which often target the same countries and even institutions. In addition, the funders generate a lot of evidence on topics of relevance to NORHED, which could be highly useful for future programme planning.

International outlook

Priority objectives of five agencies consulted as part of the study, are:

- Advance capacity building (research and teaching capacities), governance and performance of higher education institutions (Nuffic, SPHEIR, EDUFI)
- Expanding access to higher education and research – e.g. through scholarships (DAAD, EDUFI)
- Ensuring quality higher education for all (DAAD)
- Bring expertise to worldwide academic cooperation (DAAD)
- Strengthening the role and relevance of HE in development of society (EDUFI)

Activities such as education, research, institutional capacity building, job creation and business support are featured in all different agencies' programme. DAAD tends to focus recently on job creation. Nuffic takes the angle of the labour market and inclusivity. SPHEIR developed a graduate employability programme for Syrian refugees, which is very contextual.

5.3.6 To what extent is Norad's management of the programme in line with Norad's new responsibilities and recent restructuring of 2017?

Norad collaborates with government bodies, business organisations and charities to enhance development cooperation, and more specifically Norad implements the Ministry of Foreign Affairs strategies and provides policy advice in line with its mandate. Norad also receives instructions from the Ministry of Climate and Environment.

The new responsibilities Norad took over from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concern the grant management of a significant portfolio of programmes. In early 2017 Norad received the responsibility for the management of grants at the volume of NOK 5 billion in the thematic areas of health, education, climate, environment, renewable energy, food security and climate-friendly agriculture.

Although the programme portfolio is significant in size, the related responsibilities are much in line with the activities that was carried out by Norad personnel managing the previously running programme. Focusing more specifically on the Section for Research, Innovation and Higher Education, the restructuring does not seem to influence the tasks at hand. The management of the NORHED programme has been rather heavy on project and grant management already. Interviews with NORHED project officers confirmed that no major changes are expected due to the takeover of the programme portfolio.

5.4 Possible impact (including unintended effects)

Review questions

The probability that the NORHED programme will contribute to its intended results in the long term (impact)

The possible unintended effects of the programme (positive and negative), at the institutional, national and international level

Any negative effects on the cross-cutting themes for Norwegian development assistance: Human rights, gender equality, anti-corruption and climate/environmental impacts.

5.4.1 The probability that the NORHED programme will contribute to its intended results in the long term (impact)

When considering the impact of NORHED, the attribution of the results to the NORHED programme also has to be considered. There are a large number of project partners that are beneficiaries of other international donor funds aimed at institutional capacity building, improved education and research activities though staff exchanges for example or applied research funding. These activities have the potential to be mutually reinforcing if the institutions use them strategically, at the same time they need to be considered for attribution.

The NORHED programme, due to its design having institutional capacity building, education and research at its core, has great potential to achieve the intended impacts even after the funding has ceased. The curricula created and revised in many cases will be used beyond the project funding period, the HEI staff trained – ideally – will remain at the higher education institutions to provide more up-to-date and relevant knowledge, therefore educate graduates who have better relevance to the needs of the workforce. The research activities are designed in a way that they feed into the educational activities and further reinforce the knowledge base of the HEIs.

At the same time due to the same design, the institutional capacity building element of the programme is somewhat disjointed. Education and research activities are strongly intertwined in project implementation. The projects seem however less confident in the use and purpose of the institutional capacity building budget and activities. They often provide funding for the training of accountants, however, if the person leaves with the new training for a better paid private sector job, long-lasting impact cannot be guaranteed.

NORHED projects are producing a significant number of outputs, which they disseminate to varying degrees based on the topic of the project, the intended target audience, and the willingness and motivation of the project coordinator. Enhanced use and dissemination of the project results would be key to ensure enhanced impact generated by the programme.

5.4.2 The possible unintended effects of the programme (positive and negative), at the institutional, national and international level

There are positive unintended effects that can be observed as a result of the NORHED project at the level of the institutions. These are linked to the established partnership and collaborative activities in the programmes. There are examples of both South-South and South-North partnerships and activities that

reach beyond the expectations set by the NORHED programme. An example is showcased in the box below, highlighting the role of the University of Addis Ababa in training other regional universities' staff.

The role of first-generation universities in building capacity in other universities' staff

In Ethiopia, the older and larger 'first generation' universities such as Addis Ababa University have a government-mandated role to contribute to capacity building among smaller institutions. The vast majority of PhD students are staff members, either university faculty members such as lecturers, or, slightly less commonly, members of staff from other institutions around the country such as local government bureaux. During the field visits to first generation universities in Ethiopia, the study team found that up to half of students undertaking training via NORHED-supported PhD programmes were members of staff from 'second generation' universities. Following graduation, the PhD students will return to their home institutions as Assistant Professors, to fulfil a service agreement equivalent to at least two years of service for every one year in training. Consulted students told the study team that their qualification will allow them to teach the next tranches of Master and PhD students, and to develop new programmes. This means that the effect of NORHED funding reaches beyond the awarded institution to other parts of the country. A senior member of staff of one first generation university remarked on Norad's contribution to the development of capacity not only in the host university, but also indirectly in the regional universities.

Another example is illustrated by the willingness of Southern partners to step up and share the risks of the projects. There have been longstanding issues of the University of Juba's capacity to handle grants. Norad had to suspend grant disbursement, which would have resulted in stopping the activities. Project partners from Uganda and Ethiopia, however, played a key role and put in additional resources to ensure the continuity of project activities.

Some of the projects also help HEIs to become more interdisciplinary. The NORHED projects' focus is at the level of departments and faculties, therefore interdisciplinarity was not a requirement for the projects. Some of the topics addressed however called for an interdisciplinary approach, and ultimately foster increased interdisciplinarity at the LMIC partners. It should be considered for any future funding, whether interdisciplinarity should feature more prominently as a requirement for the projects.

5.4.3 Any negative effects on the cross-cutting themes for Norwegian development assistance: Human rights, gender equality, anti-corruption and climate/environmental impacts.

The study did not reveal any negative effects on the cross-cutting themes for Norwegian development assistance.

5.5 Sustainability

Review questions

To what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue after NORHED funding has ceased?

What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of programme sustainability? In particular, societal and institutional enabling conditions of higher education institutions in LMICs should here be considered, building on the first report of the NORHED Real Time Evaluation.

5.5.1 To what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue after NORHED funding has ceased?

In its results framework, the programme set as goals that it wishes to achieve an expanded and better qualified workforce, increased knowledge, evidence-based policies and decision-making and enhanced gender equality in the low and mid-income countries by 2030. In addition, sustainable environmental, social and economic development in LMIC was set as an objective by 2050. While the NORHED programme has the potential to contribute to the latter, its potential to result in sustainable results after the funding period ceases should be assessed mainly in terms of the first set of goals.

Overall, it seems that the attention on sustainability was very low in the design of the programme. Very few projects consider the future of their project activities, generally expecting that Norway will continue to provide funding that will enable training those who now obtained qualifications through the NORHED-funded projects, to turn Masters into PhDs, PhDs into postdocs, and to continue the research activities and work started. Revenue generation through institutional or government commitment is

rarely considered at this stage in the projects; although the projects are still ongoing, they are to be finished in the coming year or two (if a no cost extension was requested).

Despite the lack of emphasis on ensuring sustainability as yet, there are elements in the programme, that will deliver benefits beyond the current funding period even in the absence of follow-up funding. Consultations with the project partners and external stakeholders highlighted the following areas where the programme's results are likely to continue beyond the funding period:

- Knowledge transfer: The potential for sustainability of the programme results is indicated by the significant number of staff that play a central role in the NORHED projects. Many of the current project coordinators were educated, obtaining their PhD, as part of the previous NOMA and NUFU projects at the Norwegian partners. As they are key in the NORHED project delivery, on a personal level continuity and transfer of knowledge is secured through this arrangement in many projects. It should be noted, however, that this succession is much dependent on the individuals, and has the inherent risk of people leaving for other jobs
- Education and research: due to the educational activities undertaken in the NORHED projects, sustainability is ensured through the trained staff and students. There is an increasing number of people trained that are skilled in research methodology and have up-to-date knowledge that can be transferred to upcoming student cohorts. The increased number of PhDs in the institutions play a growing role in the provision of improved quality of teaching and curricula, which helps to educate better trained graduates for the world of work. Additional long-lasting benefits include, the increased amount of accumulated knowledge, which can also help open up new channels of funding (including national funding) to foster professional development and further training beyond higher education
- Infrastructure development: as part of the NORHED projects, many partners secured smaller infrastructure, for example libraries, computer laboratories, and other equipment that will not only last beyond the funding period, but will also enable them to do further research in the future and continue increasing the accumulated knowledge
- International funding: The gained exposure and experience with such an international project is a stepping stone and good reference for many project partners to seek additional future funding, which in return can further reinforce the capacity built through the NORHED project
- International collaboration: A highly important benefit is the established collaborations, both South-South and North-South. For many partners, the collaborations are already long-lasting and have strong foundations, and are therefore very likely to continue in various shapes or forms in the future. Many of the project partners expressed the desire to continue collaborating in future projects, if possible, with their current partners as they already know each other's strengths and weaknesses. Some partners are already formulating joint proposals

5.5.2 What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of programme sustainability? In particular, societal and institutional enabling conditions of higher education institutions in LMICs should here be considered, building on the first report of the NORHED Real Time Evaluation.

There are external factors and conditions, such as the socio-economic and political environment that will always play a highly influencing role in the extent to which programme results, such as those of the NORHED programme, are sustainable. At the same time, there are a number of key factors, that can be affected by the project partners and the programme, to positively influence the project's sustainability.

A crucial step a project can take to ensure the sustainability of the results on an institutional level is to secure management buy-in and similarly, on the national level, securing policy level buy-in. By addressing institutional and national-level priorities in the projects, the commitment from high-level management or national decision-making bodies can be more easily secured. Such considerations are key in securing not only the possibility of additional funding but gaining strategic recognition and laying the foundation for potential future activities.

6 Recommendations

This chapter presents the recommendations of the study, based on the findings detailed in the main body of the report. The Executive Summary provides an overview of both the findings and the key recommendations. The recommendations also take into account the principles put forward by WHO initiative ESSENCE as described in Chapter 1.3, which we believe are all areas that would benefit from further improvement for the future NORHED programme.

The ‘ideal’ NORHED project

A main objective of the two workshops organised with the Norwegian HEI partners was to seek their views with regards future programme design and to formulate the requirements and characteristics of the ‘ideal’ NORHED project based on past experiences. The table below summarises the views and highlight the breadth of the responses.

Figure 24 Characteristics of an ‘ideal’ NORHED project

	Characteristics of an ‘ideal’ NORHED projects
Themes and topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current programme themes are very broad and not prescriptive, they could be maintained as they are • Include formal references to the SDGs and/or 2030 goals, national priorities (both Norwegian and LMIC) • Cross-cutting themes should be emphasised (at both Southern and Northern partners), such as gender • Specific topics should be established at the proposal stage between the Southern-Northern partners to design needs-based projects
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PhD training and supervision should be at the core of the activities, including a shift from Masters to PhD training and postdocs • Research activities are key for the projects, including training aspects and to foster research driven education • Communication strategy, stakeholder engagement, dissemination outside academia (local, national policy makers and international bodies) and should be included already in the proposals to ensure impact paths are considered from early on • Curriculum development • Research and education infrastructure development • Institutional capacity building is important, but difficult for the Norwegian partners, might be better addressed among the Southern partners
Length of projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The four years of the PhD training is a key cornerstone in setting project lengths. Therefore, minimum of five years is needed. However, up to seven years would be ideal to ensure results and impacts can be achieved, procedures (admin, research, PhD training, education) institutionalised and research driven education implemented • Training many PhDs at the same time might cause difficulties, multiple waves could be considered if the project length is shorter • Additional short-term funding for specific activities could be included • Consider continuity of funding to avoid fragmentation
Size of partnership – number and type of partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having between 2 – 7 partners seems like the right partnership size, but requirements should be set flexibly to enable adjustments to the projects. Project partnerships should be based on business plans to help assess the feasibility and utility of the partnerships • Possibility to have multiple Norwegian partners or external experts involved could be considered or even encouraged • Enable to add-on additional partners during the implementation
Budgets split and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current budget split works well – 70%/30% • It is beneficial to keep the direct transfer from Norad to the Norwegian partners
Role of Norwegian and LMIC partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for increased role for the institutional coordinators to achieve enhanced visibility of these projects in the institutions

As the variety of the views suggest, there is no one-size-fits-all project for NORHED. Having flexible requirements, as in the current programming period, ensured that partnerships can be formed in alignment with the needs and objectives of the projects. The study team, therefore, recommends that the current project requirements are kept as regards partnerships and types of activities, themes. The above characteristics set out slight variations, changes in balance, however these can be implemented within the current flexible framework conditions.

NORHED programme management

Norad has access to the large amount of valuable resources through the different departments in the organisation as well as through the knowledge and expertise of the NORHED project officers. There was, however, a significant staff turnover in the NORHED programme management, which resulted in reduced institutional memory and a source of frustration among agreement partners over the past years.

There are informal and some formal activities (e.g. weekly meetings, more recently issuing guidelines) to ensure smooth takeovers of projects, to harmonise the procedures and understand the rules of the programme and how they should be applied to the projects. However, there is still a lot of room for improvement and to mitigate future similar risks.

There is strong evidence of NORHED project officers learning from experience in a highly supportive environment. However, more needs to be done to formalise a shared understanding of the key principles as well as the flexibility designed into the programme. This should be supported in a more systematic and structured manner, including the codification of already existing knowledge among the staff to provide easier and better access to resources by new personnel. A particular area that would benefit from harmonisation is the development of guidelines and standardised rates for the financial management of the projects and future proposals.

In addition, the set of responsibilities of the project officers should be reconsidered and reviewed (for example the administrative follow-up, financial checks). A reconsideration of the tasks would help ensure the most efficient use of the resources available in-house and decide if/when external support is advisable.

Institutional capacity building as a programme objective

Similarly, to the other activities in the projects, there is a need to support institutional capacity building. The Norwegian partner HEIs play a crucial role in supporting the LMIC partners undertaking the education and research-related activities. They are, however, not always the best placed and might not even wish to be involved in providing support for the dedicated institutional capacity building activities (some exceptions exist among the projects). In addition, Norad project officers may not necessarily be qualified to provide advice on such aspects either. Therefore, it is recommended to consider external partners and support channels to enhance the efficiency of these project activities and the dedicated institutional capacity building elements of the project.

Monitoring and reporting

There is a need to renew the reporting requirements and procedures for the programme. This entails building a monitoring database for the NORHED programme, to enable Norad project officers to have an overview of the progress of the projects and provide programme level aggregated information. This would also help demonstrate the efficiency of the funding. A prerequisite to having a monitoring database is the improvement of the monitoring and reporting procedures of the programme, with a particular emphasis put on the 14 standard indicators that are applied by the programme.

Although there have been improvements in the quality of reporting since the start of the funding period, there are still basic misunderstandings, misinterpretations and inconsistencies in the use and reporting on the indicators, which result in a waste of resources in collecting the information for the project partners and creates a situation where Norad cannot have a programme level overview.

In addition to reviewing the indicators, it is highly recommended to renew the current reporting format and introduce the possibility of template-based online reporting. While it may present a problem for some HEIs, offering the option of offline completion – as in the past – would resolve the issues, and it could make more efficient both the reporting overall for the project partners and the review process for Norad. Based on the high percentage of respondents among the LMIC project coordinators to the online survey that was launched as part of this study, such advancement might not be as problematic as it might seem first.

Another recommendation is linked to the content of the reporting. It is suggested to make a distinction in the content to ensure that both a core set of standardised information can be sought from all projects that enable aggregation at programme level and to add flexibility, project specific description and information should be also captured. This is valid for the use of indicators and the narrative documentation as well. The revision of the reporting and monitoring should be guided by the aim to have a more simplified and fit-for-purpose system available that is beneficial for both partners and the funder.

Financial management of the projects

Similarly, to the misunderstandings with regards the indicators applied, there are still some difficulties in the interpretation of the financial rules and the possibilities. This is partially due to the fact, that the different funders apply different rules, that confuse even the most experienced project managers, while NORHED works with a large number of relatively inexperienced project coordinators. In addition, Norad applies very strict financial rules, which in some cases were slightly adopted to introduce flexibility in the projects based on emerging needs and changing circumstances (e.g. Norad transferring directly the grant to project partners where a LMIC project coordinator cannot ensure international transfers).

However, changes need to be made in a consistent and transparent way and, where needed, Norad should be prepared to provide further assistance in the interpretation of the guidelines and clarification in terms of what can be funded from the projects. This would also improve project effectiveness: some of the ‘flexible funding elements’ were essential for project success, while others missed out on those altogether. In addition, divorcing the financial management of the projects from the overall project coordination should be considered for partners where experience shows that there are major difficulties in ensuring the smooth financial running of the projects due to barriers created by national rules and regulations.

Sustainability of the results

The current programme design has not placed enough emphasis on the sustainability aspects, which is clearly reflected in the implementation across the project portfolio. This is a crucial consideration for any future programme design as well as for the remaining time period of the currently ongoing projects. There are many ways to ensure enhanced sustainability of the result, including setting the requirements for dissemination and information sharing, engaging national policy makers in the project activities to get their buy-in, linking the possibility of follow up funding to impacts.

In addition, a two-stream approach could be considered for continuation of NORHED funding. The two streams could provide competitive funding for selected projects:

- (1) Currently ongoing ‘mature’ projects - to ensure they can maximise their impact based on the achievements they accumulated during the current and previous funding cycles and become sustainable afterwards without Norad funding
- (2) New partnerships or partnerships at an early stage of capacity building, that require further funding cycle(s) to arrive to a stage where impact delivery and sustainability can be achieved

The role of institutional contacts at the project partners

The programme works with institutional contact persons, however the local interpretation of the role varies highly among the project partners. Some formally satisfy Norad’s requirement of having an

institutional contact person often being the same person as the project coordinator, while in other cases the institutional contact function adds actual value to the projects delivered through being more of a coordinator. Norad should reconsider what is expected from an institutional contact person, as there are many benefits of nominating a person with responsibilities attached, who could be supported as part of the institutional capacity building element of the programme. Having such a reinforced institutional contact person role would be an important step towards enhanced institutional capacity building, especially for those institutions with multiple projects. There is an example where a dedicated secretary exists for supporting the NORHED projects, however that seems to be a step beyond the possibilities of most project partner HEIs. Having a nominated person who could facilitate knowledge sharing, represent the interest of the project(s) at senior management level in the institution, ensure that project management-related issues and administrative challenges are handled in a more structured way (avoiding duplication).

International collaboration among the NORHED projects

NORHED work with six sub-programmes and some of the projects are rather closely linked to each other based on the topics they address. There are spontaneous initiatives to have increased collaboration among such projects, but there are only a few such examples. Overall, there is rather limited knowledge about the other projects running under the umbrella of the NORHED programme, with the exception during the annual meeting in Norway. This is a missed opportunity that could help advance the topics further.

Appendix A Evaluation questions vs methodology applied

Themes	Methodology	Desk research, including document and literature review	Interview programme					Workshop with Norwegian HEIs	Surveys		Field visit	International comparison
	Evaluation questions		NORAD programme management	Norwegian external stakeholders	Key international stakeholders, funders, and agencies	(Follow-up) with selected HEI partners	Survey of all LMIC partners		Survey of all Norwegian HEI participants			
Relevance	5.1.1 To what extent are the objectives and design of the NORHED programme still valid in terms of meeting partner country needs and the priorities of Norwegian international development assistance?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	5.1.2 To what extent is the NORHED programme suited to the needs and priorities of higher education institutions in LMICs, and adapted to the enabling conditions of these institutions?	✓				✓				✓		
	5.1.3 To what extent is the NORHED programme complementary to other donor programmes supporting higher education and research in LMICs, and to what extent is it overlapping and competing with other donors?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	5.1.4 To what extent is the partnership model (Norwegian-LMIC institutional cooperation, with a preference for the LMIC institution being the Agreement partner) consistent with the overall programme goal and the intended impact? How do LMIC based and Norwegian higher education institutions respectively experience and benefit from this model?	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Effectiveness	5.1.5 To what extent is the NORHED programme in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the concept of "leave no-one behind"?	✓	✓	✓								
	5.2.1 To what extent is the project portfolio consistent with the overall programme objectives and the intended impact?	✓	✓									

Themes	Methodology	Desk research, including document and literature review	Interview programme					Surveys		Field visit	International comparison
	Evaluation questions		NORAD programme management	Norwegian external stakeholders	Key international stakeholders, funders, aid agencies	(Follow-up) with selected HEI partners	Workshop with Norwegian HEIs	Survey of all LMIC partners	Survey of all Norwegian HEI participants	Interviews, focus groups with staff, students	
5-2-2 To what extent is the NORHED programme, based on progress and preliminary results from the projects, likely to contribute to the intended programme objectives?		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		
5-2-3 What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of programme objectives, at the programme and project level?			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
5-2-4 What specific recommendations can be made for overcoming risks and weaknesses, and for capitalizing on opportunities to meet the overall objectives, at the programme and project level?		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		
5-3-1 To what extent is the NORHED programme and the 45 first NORHED projects cost efficient in terms of achieving the desired results?		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5-3-2 To what extent is the NORHED partnership model, with an LMIC-led partnership and the requirement of a Norwegian partner, the most efficient way of strengthening institutional capacity in LMICs?		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
5-3-3 To what extent are Norad's grant and results-based management requirements efficient and contribute to programme goals? Does Norad's requirements have any unintended effects on the administrative and research management capacity of project partners?		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		
5-3-4 To what extent do the project partners have sufficient capacity to meet the reporting and other administrative requirements set by Norad?		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		

Efficiency

Themes	Methodology	Desk research, including document and literature review	Interview programme					Surveys		Field visit	International comparison
	Evaluation questions		NORAD programme management	Norwegian external stakeholders	Key international stakeholders, funders, aid agencies	(Follow-up) with selected HEI partners	Workshop with Norwegian HEIs	Survey of all LMIC partners	Survey of all Norwegian HEI participants	Interviews, focus groups with staff, students	
5-3-5 To what extent is Norad's use of resources to manage the programme, including human and financial resources, efficient and in support of programme goals?		✓	✓	✓							✓
5-3-6 To what extent is Norad's management of the programme in line with Norad's new responsibilities and recent restructuring of 2017?		✓	✓	✓							
5-4-1 The probability that the NORHED programme will contribute to its intended results in the long term (Impact)		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
5-4-2 The possible unintended effects of the programme (positive and negative), at the institutional, national and international level			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5-4-3 Any negative effects on the cross-cutting themes for Norwegian development assistance: Human rights, gender equality, anti-corruption and climate/environmental impacts.			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5-5-1 To what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue after NORHED funding has ceased?			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5-5-2 What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of programme sustainability? In particular, societal and institutional enabling conditions of higher education institutions in LMICs should here be considered, building on the first report of the NORHED Real Time Evaluation.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Appendix B Appendix B List of NORHED projects and consultations undertaken

PTA	Project Title	Project partners	Survey respondent(s)	Survey respondent HEIs	Field visit undertaken	Follow-up telephone interview conducted	Norwegian HEI participated in a WS
COG-13/0002	GROW-NIT - Growing partnership for higher education and research in nutritional epidemiology in DR Congo	University of Kinshasa, University of Kwazulu-Natal, University of Bergen (UIB)	yes	University of Bergen			University of Bergen - represented by the Institutional coordinator
ETH-13/0014	Linguistic Capacity Building – Tools for the inclusive development of Ethiopia	Addis Ababa University (AAU), Hawassa University, University of Oslo (UiO), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)	yes	Addis Ababa University	Addis Ababa University		University of Oslo (UiO)
ETH-13/0015	Capacity Building for Climate Smart Natural Resource Management and Policy – (CLISNAR) -	Mekelle University, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Bunda College Campus, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	Mekelle University, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Norwegian University of Life Sciences			Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) - Represented by the institutional coordinator
ETH-13/0016	Research and capacity building in climate smart agriculture in the Horn of Africa	Hawassa University, Mekelle University, University of Kordofan, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	University of Kordofan and Elobeid Agricultural Research Station, Hawassa University	Hawassa University		Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)
ETH-13/0017	Controlling diseases in sweet potato and onset in South Sudan and Ethiopia to improve productivity and livelihoods under changing climatic conditions using modern technologies.	Hawassa University, Mekelle University, University of Juba, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	Hawassa University	Hawassa University		Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) - Represented by the institutional coordinator
ETH-13/0018	Steps toward sustainable forest management with the local communities in Tigray Northern Ethiopia	Mekelle University, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	Mekelle University			Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) - Represented by the institutional coordinator
ETH-13/0019	Hawassa University – PhD-programme in Mathematical and Statistical Sciences	Hawassa University, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), University of Oslo (UiO), Molde University College (HIMOLDE)	yes	Hawassa University, Norwegian University of Science and Technology	Hawassa University		University of Oslo - represented by

PTA	Project Title	Project partners	Survey respondent(s)	Survey respondent HEIs	Field visit undertaken	Follow-up telephone interview conducted	Norwegian HEI participated in a WS
ETH-13/0024	Strategic and collaborative capacity development in Ethiopia and Africa (SACC/CADE)	Jimma University, St. Paul Millennium Hospital Medical College, University of Oslo (UIO)	yes	University of Oslo			University of Oslo (UIO)
ETH-13/0025	South Ethiopia Network of Universities in Public Health (SENUPH) improving women's participation in post graduate education.	Hawassa University, Dilla University, Wolaita Sodo University, Arba Minch University, University of Bergen (UIB)	yes	Arba Minch University, Hawassa University, University of Bergen	Hawassa University		University of Bergen - represented by the Institutional coordinator
KEN-13/0021	HI-TRAIN: Health informatics training and research in East Africa for improved health care	Moi University, Makerere University, University of Bergen (UIB)	yes	Makerere University			Bergen - represented by the Institutional coordinator
LKA-13/0013	Water and Society – Institutional Capacity Building in Water management and Climate Change adaptation in selected countries in Asia (Acronym: WaSo-Asia)	University of Peradeniya, University of Jaffna, Bangladesh Uni of Engineering & Tech, Institute of Technology of Cambodia, Telemark University College (HTU), Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	Institute of Technology of Cambodia, University of Jaffna, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, University of Peradeniya	University of Peradeniya, F2F meeting with University of Jaffna		Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) - Represented by the institutional coordinator
MMR-13/0049	Health and sustainable development in Myanmar- competence building in public health and medical research and education	University of Public Health (UPH), University of Medicine 1, Mahidol University, Prince of Songkla University, University of Oslo (UIO)	yes	Prince of Songkla University, Mahidol University		Prince of Songkla University	University of Oslo - represented by the institutional coordinator
MWI-13/0021	Strengthening Capacity for Democratic and Economic Governance in Malawi	University of Malawi (UNIMA), University of Oslo (UIO)	yes	University of Malawi			University of Oslo (UIO)
MWI-13/0022	Improving Quality and Capacity of Mathematics Teacher Education in Malawi	University of Malawi (UNIMA), University of Stavanger (UIS)	yes	University of Stavanger, University of Malawi		University of Malawi	
MWI-13/0030	Capacity building in postgraduate surgical training and research in Malawi	University of Malawi (UNIMA), Queen Elisabeth Central Hospital, Kamuzu Central hospital, University of Bergen (UIB)	yes	University of Malawi, University of Bergen			University of Bergen - represented by the Institutional coordinator

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MWT-13/0092	Development of a novel nursing and midwifery graduate and postgraduate training programme in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe	University of Malawi (UNIMA), University of Zambia, University of Zimbabwe, University of Tromsø (UITT), University of Oslo (UiO)	yes	UiT The Arctic University of Norway		University of Malawi	University of Oslo - represented by the institutional coordinator
NIC-13/0010	Intercultural Communication Linkage Programme	University of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua (URACCAN), Pluriversidad "Amawtay Wasí", Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural (UAIIN), Oslo and Akershus University College (HIOA)	yes	Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural	Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural (UAIIN)		Oslo and Akershus University College (HiOA)
NPL-13/0020	Policy and Governance Studies in South: regional Master and PhD Programs	Tribhuvan University, North South University, University of Peradeniya, University of Bergen (UiB)	yes	North South University, Tribhuvan University, University of Bergen	University of Peradeniya, Tribhuvan University (and P2F meeting with North South University and University of Bergen in Nepal)		University of Bergen
NPL-13/0021	Strengthening Research, Education and Advocacy in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies	Tribhuvan University, University of Ruhuna, COMSATS, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT), Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Tribhuvan University, University of Ruhuna	Tribhuvan University, University of Ruhuna		Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) - Represented by the institutional coordinator
NPL-13/0022	Sustainable natural resource management for climate change adaptation in the Himalayan region: A collaborative project among Norway, Nepal, Pakistan and Bhutan	Kathmandu University, Tribhuvan University, Karakoram International University, Royal University of Bhutan, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	Kathmandu University, Tribhuvan University, Karakoram international University	Kathmandu University, Tribhuvan University	Karakoram International University	Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) - Represented by the institutional coordinator
NPL-13/0023	Enhancing access, quality and sustainability of teacher training/professional development of teachers using ICTs and distance delivery modes	Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Oslo and Akershus University College (HIOA)	yes	Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Oslo and	Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University		Oslo and Akershus University College - represented by

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PAL-13/0041	Urban Transformation in the Southern Levant	Birzeit University, University of Bergen (UiB)	yes	University of Bergen, Birzeit University Akershus University College (HIOA)		Birzeit University	University of Bergen the institutional coordinator
RSA-13/0010	Antimicrobial stewardship and conservancy in Africa	University of Malawi (UNIMA), University of Mozambique, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Tromsø (UIT)	yes	University of Malawi (UNIMA), University of Mozambique, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Tromsø (UIT)		University of KwaZulu-Natal	
SDN-13/0013	Borderland dynamics in East Africa	University of Khartoum, Addis Ababa University (AAU), Makerere University (MU), University of Bergen (UiB)	yes	University of Khartoum, Addis Ababa University (AAU), Makerere University (MU), University of Bergen (UiB)	Addis Ababa University, Makerere University	University of Khartoum	University of Bergen
SRV-13/0010	Incorporating Climate Change into Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries and Aquaculture Management in Sri Lanka and Vietnam	Nha Trang University, University of Ruhuna, University of Tromsø (UIT), University of Bergen (UiB)	yes	Nha Trang University, University of Ruhuna, University of Tromsø (UIT), University of Bergen (UiB)	University of Ruhuna	Nha Trang University	University of Bergen
SSD-13/0020	Regional Capacity Building for Sustainable Natural Resource Management and Agricultural Productivity under Climate Change	Makerere University, University of Juba, Addis Ababa University, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	University of Juba, Makerere University	Addis Ababa University, Makerere University		Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) - Represented by the institutional coordinator
SSD-13/0021	Ecology and Management of the SUDD Wetland	University of Juba, Makerere University, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	University of Juba, Makerere University	Makerere University and F2F meeting with University of Juba		Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) - Represented by the institutional coordinator

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SSD-13/0022	Institutional Cooperation for Capacity Building of Universities and Local Authorities for Democratic and Economic Governance and Peace building in South Sudan and Ethiopia	University of Juba, Hawassa University, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	Hawassa University, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, University of Juba	Hawassa University		Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) - Represented by the institutional coordinator
TAN-13/0026	Vulnerability, Resilience, Rights and Responsibilities: Capacity Building on Climate Change in Relation to Coastal Resources, Gender and Governance in Coastal Tanzania and Zanzibar.	University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), State University of Zanzibar, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	University of Dar es Salaam		University of Dar es Salaam	Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)
TAN-13/0027	Capacity Building for Training and Research in Aquatic and Environmental Health in Eastern and Southern Africa (TRAHESA)	Sokoine University of Agriculture Makerere University, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Nairobi, University of Zambia, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	University of Dar es Salaam		Sokoine University of Agriculture	Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)
TAN-13/0028	TRANSLED (Transformation, Language, Education and Development)	State University of Zanzibar, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Oslo (UIO)	yes	University of Oslo, University of Dar es Salaam			University of Oslo - represented by the institutional coordinator
TAN-13/0037	Reduction of the burden of injuries and occupational exposures through capacity building in low income countries	Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), University of Addis Ababa, University of Bergen (UIB)	no	College Of Journalism And Mass Communication (CJMC), Oslo and Akershus University College, Makerere University	Addis Ababa University		University of Bergen - represented by the Institutional coordinator
UGA-13/0015	Strengthening Media in Post-Conflict Societies Uganda, South Sudan, Nepal and Norway	Makerere University, College of Journalism and Mass Communication (CJMC), Universt of Juba, Oslo and Akershus University College (HIOA)	yes	University of Juba, Dar Es Salaam Christian University	Makerere University		Oslo and Akershus University College - represented by the institutional coordinator
UGA-13/0016	Building capacity for a changing media environment in Uganda	Uganda Christian University, University of KwaZulu-Natal, NIA University College	yes	NIA University College, Uganda Christian University			University of Bergen - represented by the Institutional coordinator
UGA-13/0018	WIMEA-ICT: Improving Weather Information Management in East Africa for effective service provision through the application of suitable ICTs (Information and	Makerere University, Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT), University of Juba, University of Bergen (UiB)	yes	University of Juba, Dar Es Salaam Institute of Technology, University of	Makerere University		University of Bergen - represented by the Institutional coordinator

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UGA-13/0019	Building capacity for REDD+ in East Africa for improved ecosystem health and for sustainable livelihoods in Eastern Africa	Makerere University, University of Dar es Salaam, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	Makerere University, Norwegian University of Life Sciences	Makerere University		Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) - Represented by the institutional coordinator
UGA-13/0020	ENABLE: Higher Education and Multimedia in Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation	Kyambogo University, University of Dar es Salaam, Kenya Institute of Special Education, University of Oslo (Uio)	yes	Kenya Institute of Special Education, University of Dar es Salaam, Kyambogo University			University of Oslo (Uio)
UGA-13/0021	Water and Society (Waso-Africa) – Institutional Capacity Building in Water Management and Climate Change Adaptation in the Nile Basin	Makerere University, University of Juba, Addis Ababa University, University of Nairobi, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), Telemark University College (HiT), University of Bergen (UiB)	yes	University of Juba	Makarere University, Addis Ababa University and P2F meeting with University of Bergen		University of Bergen - represented by the Institutional coordinator
UGA-13/0023	Building and Reflecting on Interdisciplinary PhD Studies for Higher Education Transformation	Makerere University, University of Bergen (UiB)	yes	University of Bergen, Makerere University			University of Bergen - represented by the Institutional coordinator
UGA-13/0024	Leapfrogging 1 st Generation Distance Education into 4 th and 5 th Generation Distance Education: A Strategy for Enhancing ICT Pedagogical Integration....	Makerere University, University of Agder (UiA)	yes	University of Agder, Makerere University	Makerere University		
UGA-13/0025	Master in Vocational Pedagogy	Kyambogo University, University of Western Cape, Oslo and Akershus University College (HIOA)	yes	Oslo and Akershus University College, Kyambogo University	Kyambogo University		Oslo and Akershus University College - represented by the institutional coordinator
UGA-13/0030	SURVIVAL PLUS: Increasing capacity for Mama-baby survival in post-conflict Uganda and South Sudan	Makerere University, Busitema University, Gulu University, University of Juba, University of Bergen (UiB)	yes	Busitema University, Makerere University	Makerere University		University of Bergen

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UGA-13/0031	Capacity building in Zoonotic diseases management using the integrated approach to ecosystems health (CAPAZOMAMINTFCO) at the human- livestock – wildlife interface in Eastern and Southern Africa	Makerere University, University of Bahr El-Ghazal, University of Zambia, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	University of Bahr El-Ghazal (UBG), The University of Zambia, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Makerere University	Makerere University		Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) - Represented by the institutional coordinator
ZAM-13/0009	Improving the governance and economics of protected areas, ecosystem services and poverty eradication through HEI capacity-building and transdisciplinary research	Copperbelt University, Southern African Wildlife College, Stellenbosch University, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	yes	Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Southern African Wildlife College			Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)
ZIB-13/0009	Masters and PhD programme for capacity building in law faculties: Engendering human rights and law in Southern and Eastern Africa	University of Zimbabwe, University of Malawi, University of Nairobi, University of Zambia, University of Oslo (Uio)	yes	University of Nairobi, The University of Zambia, University of Zimbabwe		University of Zimbabwe	University of Oslo (Uio)

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