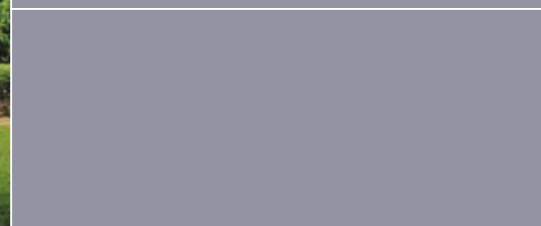
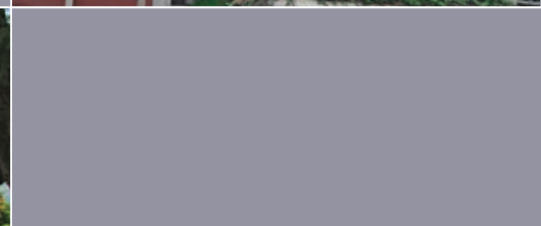
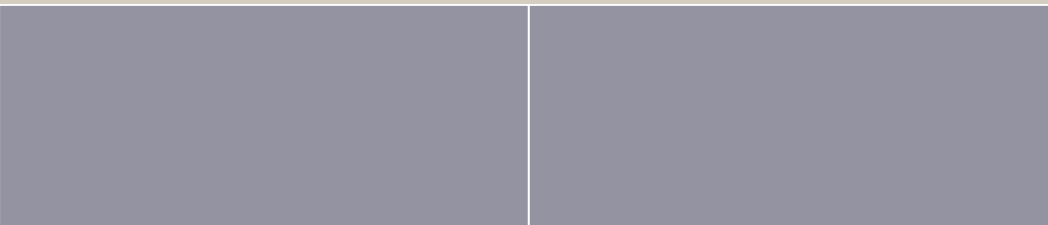




# Evaluation of the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) and of Norad's Programme for Master Studies (NOMA)

Evaluation Report 7/2009



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# **Evaluation of the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) and of Norad's Programme for Master Studies (NOMA)**

**November 2009**

COWI AS



## Preface

The evaluation of the two Norwegian sister programmes for learning and research in the South comes at a time when – in this report’s words – globalisation and importance of research-based knowledge make a renewed emphasis on higher education and research necessary. How intriguing is it not then to read that the implications of efforts to further the internationalisation of Norwegian universities are perceived to be a threat to the positive outcomes of the two programmes in the future. Norwegian reforms to make universities more internationally competitive already influence the two programmes tremendously and are likely to do so for years to come, according to the report. This is one background towards which this report could be read. On the other end, the role of institutions of higher learning in fostering knowledge, insight, innovative abilities and creative thinking as preconditions for poverty alleviation should be kept in mind.

The overall conclusion of the evaluation is a positive one. The NUFU and NOMA programmes have significantly contributed to capacity building in the South and, to some extent, also in Norway. Generally the programmes and their working modalities are highly appreciated by recipient countries and partners. In fact – even if the programmes are seen to be supply-driven and the relationships between Norwegian and partner country institutions are seen to be asymmetric – respondents in the South were in general satisfied with the programmes, including the administration, more so than their colleagues in Norway.

The evaluation team has had no problem in identifying one overriding issue which – again in their words – challenges the very foundation of the programmes: the organisational complexity of the Norwegian funding system. Although most recipients and partners value the collaboration, there is also a widespread frustration with the way it is structured, managed and administered. The well-known Norwegian flexibility seems to have escaped these programmes. Urgent action is recommended to rectify the situation.

One observation by the team strikes an accord with some previous evaluations of Norwegian development cooperation. The capacity building is more about individuals than about institutions. The programmes support primarily education of individual students and researchers, and only to a limited extent the wider research environment. As such, the programmes are characterised as somewhat old-fashioned, and steps to move towards arrangements of like-minded donors like Sweden and the Netherlands are recommended.

As one will understand, the evaluators have taken a critical look at the two programmes in a report that is disciplined and thorough. That – however – should not diminish the achievements of the two programmes in contributing significantly to developing capacity in research and higher education in partner countries.

Oslo, January 2010

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Eidhammer', written in a cursive style.

Asbjørn Eidhammer  
Director of Evaluation

## Acknowledgements

During the course of the evaluation the evaluation team has received much help from SIU, including flexibility regarding meetings, introduction and access to their databases as well as collecting, copying and sending many documents related to the NUFU and NOMA programmes.

The evaluation team also greatly appreciates the high level of commitment and cooperation from the many stakeholders who have contributed with enthusiastic - but also critical - responses to the E-survey and self-evaluations as well as kind, thorough and valuable information and time spent during interviews.

Cooperation and provision of logistical support have not only been instrumental to the evaluation, but also made the field work among Norwegian institutions and with stakeholders in the South a pleasant experience.

Responsibility for the contents and presentation of findings and recommendations rests with the Evaluation Team. The views and opinions expressed in the report do not necessarily correspond with those of Norad.























originate in the South, and in general, the South-South-North cooperation modality is an underexplored opportunity.

### **Management and administration, decision-making and transparency**

The organisational complexity at the higher level management of the programmes is not a primary concern to partners in the South. They express a general satisfaction with the way projects are managed, i.e. primarily by their Norwegian partners. The asymmetric collaboration modalities are tolerated as long as the funding is coming forward. Frequent delays in funding transfers, sometimes, but not always, within the universities in the South, are a continuous nuisance. Management (in Norway) is experienced as unnecessarily rigid when for example ICT problems are not accepted as plausible excuses for failing important deadlines.

Norwegian partners do not appreciate SIU's administrative and management systems nearly as much. Complaints concern access and dialogue; changes in reporting formats, without the necessary pilot testing; and decision making systems of the NUFU and NOMA Boards which are not experienced as fully transparent.

The NUFU and NOMA administrative systems are seen as unnecessarily complex. The Norwegian partners often express support for a merger between the programmes.

A general problem associated with both the NUFU and NOMA programmes is inadequate mechanisms to assess the work done, by reference to output, outcome or achievement indicators.

### **Synergy effects**

The strategic directions of the programmes aim for synergy between NUFU and NOMA and between these and other funding programmes and institutions in Norway, in the relevant countries in the South, and internationally. Synergy is looked for in the sense of shared efforts in capacity building, staff exchanges, curriculum or research topic alignments, etc. is rare. The NUFU and NOMA programmes tend, with notable exceptions, to exist in parallel. Complementary funding from the Quota Scheme is utilised. Norwegian Embassies could play a facilitating role, also between sector programme support, research and higher education, but contact between the programmes and the Embassies is ad hoc only and deals primarily with administrative matters.

### **Relevance for the South and for Norwegian institutions**

The relevance of the two programmes, not only to universities, but also to the larger societies, is generally considered adequate in view of the necessity to build knowledge economies to combat poverty. Relevance could, however, be strengthened by more thorough assessments of the contexts in which programmes are supposed to work, i.e. by assessing institutional needs as well as demands from the labour market. The establishment of closer links between universities and stakeholders in the surrounding society, constituting potential areas of employment for NUFU and NOMA graduates, would also add to relevance. In many cases strengthening multidisciplinary would improve relevance. Projects often claim to be multidisciplinary.

nary, but have often only added minor items or courses of broader societal relevance.

However, the most important factor for enhancing relevance would be a change of the collaboration modalities, emphasising demand driven forms of collaboration, rather than the prevalent supply-driven nature of cooperation.

### **Gender issues**

Gender equality is given high priority in both programmes but so far mainly in the sense of increasing female participation. The aim for gender balance has changed in favour of women, but integration of more women is constantly hampered for social and cultural as well as programmatic reasons. Some measures are being considered to ensure equal rights for female PhD students from the South such as access to maternity leave and child care.

There are few attempts at going further than 'female head counts' and to integrate gender perspectives in curricula and research, also when research and education programmes provide opportunities for gender mainstreaming (e.g. water, energy, conflict, environmental education etc).

Separate announcements for targeted women's projects are relevant provided they do not sideline the requirement for gender mainstreaming across projects and programmes. There may at times be a risk of bias against males' participation in areas traditionally dominated by women. There is an obvious need for including 'gender analysis capacity' into programme management.

### **Recommendations**

In the process of the evaluation two factors came to overshadow the analysis, conclusions and recommendations, i.e:

- The current political and institutional environment in Norway for internationalisation of research and education, with an epitome in the ongoing university reform
- The organisational complexity in which the NUFU and NOMA programmes operate.

The programmes were initiated at a historical juncture where the parameters related to these two factors were very different. The expectations to the international context in which the programmes should function have changed much. Without addressing these factors up front, the detailed programme recommendations might soon be undermined. Hence, the most important and overriding recommendation of this evaluation is the following:

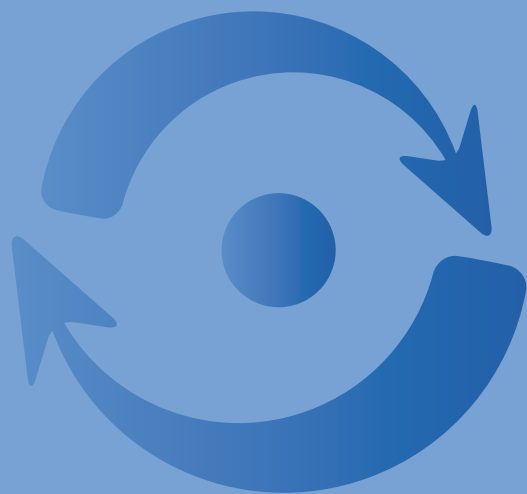
*It is recommended that urgent steps be taken to resolve organisational complexities and harmonise working modalities of institutions operating within the North-South dimension of capacity building in research and higher education and the fostering of knowledge economies. This may be done by identifying which objectives that ought to be pursued by each of the institutions, and how this can be achieved.*

A number of thematic and programme related recommendations have been derived and presented in the report. The overall messages in the recommendations may be summarised as follows:

- *Establish a common understanding and operationalisation of the key concepts and aims of the programmes: capacity building, synergies, bilateral and multilateral/ network projects – South-South-North cooperation, and gender mainstreaming – with indicators attached for use in strategies and M&E.*
- *Ensure support at highest political level for simplification of the organisational and administrative complexity, and possible integration of the NUFU and NOMA programmes. Harmonise with national and international modalities for working with North-South dimensions of research and higher education to optimise synergies at all levels.*
- *Strengthen context sensitive mechanisms for assessing and meeting demands for Masters and PhDs, for “basic” and “applied” research, and for building strong partnerships with better balanced voice and decision making between Southern and Norwegian Partners.*



# Main Report





# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Higher education, advanced knowledge and research play a pivotal part in development, both in the North and the South. Since 1991 the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) has been a key element in the Norwegian efforts to contribute to development in the South, by facilitating cooperation between Norwegian universities and research institutions and similar institutions in the South. Likewise, Norad's Programme for Master Studies, initiated in 2006 succeeding the Norwegian Fellowship Programme (NFP), aims at contributing to development in the public and private sector in eligible countries by establishing and developing Master programmes in the South in collaboration with Norwegian institutions.

While NOMA is thus still in its first programme period (2006-2010), NUFU is currently in its fourth period (2007-2011). The two programmes are administered by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU) on the basis of cooperation agreements with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). While both are administered by SIU, the programmes are organisationally kept separate, each with its own board.

In spring 2009 Norad initiated an evaluation of the NUFU and NOMA programmes. The results of that evaluation are reflected in this report. The report follows previous evaluations of the NUFU Programme and the NFP (1994, 2000 and 2005; SIU Review 2003 – See Annex 5: Key finding of previous evaluations).

The overall focus and purpose of this evaluation is:

- to analyse and assess NUFU and NOMA in relation to the current aims, objectives and strategic directions of the programmes and make relevant recommendations. The question is if the changes and redesign of the programmes have led to the expected improvements
- to document the quality of work done under the two programmes
- to provide a learning exercise for stakeholders with a view to better synergies in the future.

With a view to the main objectives of the NUFU and NOMA programmes (see section 1.2) the evaluation thus focuses on, and is structured along, the overall issues of: 1) capacity development in the South, 2) South-South collaboration, 3) management and administration, 4) synergy effects, 5) decision-making processes and transparency, 6) relevance to the South and 7) relevance to Norwegian institu-

tions. Furthermore, the evaluation pays additional attention to the current reforms of the higher education and research system in Norway with e.g. changes in funding modalities that may affect the participation of Norwegian researchers and institutions in the future programme activities.

The evaluation covers programme activities in all eligible countries for the third and fourth NUFU programme periods (2002-2011) and the current NOMA programme period. Using various data collection methods the evaluation has engaged stakeholders on all levels involved in the programme - and has included field trips for in-depth data collection in Norway, Ethiopia, Malawi and Nepal.

The **target groups** for this report are the various stakeholders engaged in the NUFU and NOMA programmes in Norway and in the South. The report is part of the learning process and stakeholders are provided with inputs to the ongoing process of adjusting and optimising the modalities of the programme activities to the extent deemed necessary.

## 1.2 The Programmes

The overall objective of the **NUFU Programme** is to contribute to capacity and competence for research and research-based education in developing countries relevant to national development and poverty reduction through cooperation between universities and research institutions in Norway and in the South (including South-South-North-collaboration) - primarily in the form of research collaboration and training of PhDs.

The NUFU programme has been in place since 1991 and is currently in its fourth 5-year programme period. Over the years the programme has received generally positive evaluations, although some criticism has been raised regarding e.g. a lack of transparency in decision-making and a weak level of institutionalisation of the supported projects (the projects being essentially for and of individual researchers). The programme has changed little since its inception with regard to its overall objectives and implementation modalities. While the accomplishments over the years have been impressive (e.g. with regard to university candidates produced), it seems necessary to scrutinize the programme modalities in the light of the development in the changing international situation since its inception.



### Box 1.1 NUFU projects, countries and budgets

A total of **136 projects** received funding during the third and fourth NUFU period; in the 2002-2006 period, 71 projects were implemented by 31 partner institutions in 18 countries together with 12 Norwegian institutions, and the period 2007-2011 consists of 65 projects implemented by 31 partner institutions together with 12 Norwegian institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Institutions in the South, **primarily in Norway's partner countries** in the Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Central America, are eligible for Support from NUFU.<sup>2</sup> The bulk of the NUFU projects involve partners in Africa with Tanzania and Ethiopia being the largest recipients. A total of 25 countries have received support through bilateral or network projects.

The **total project allocation** for 2002-2006 amounted to MNOK 329, whereas the figure for 2007-2012 is MNOK 344.

The upper limit for **project budgets** in the fourth programme period is MNOK 3.5 for bilateral cooperation projects and MNOK 6 for regional network projects. The project circle is five years after which a second five year period may be applied for. To ensure sustainability, supportive measures of maximum MNOK 1.5 can be applied for.

The overall objective of the **NOMA Programme** is to support the development of Master programmes in the South through collaboration with institutions in Norway within selected fields in accordance with national needs. The NOMA programme was established in 2006, succeeding the previous Norad Fellowship Programme, which had been in existence for more than 40 years. The focus in the relatively new NOMA programme on establishing Master's programmes with universities in the South meant a rather drastic shift in the sense that the programme activities to a large extent were moved to the institutions in the South.

Previously, with the Norad Fellowship Programme, Master programmes were integrated into the host education institution's degree structure and teaching was open to Norwegian and international students from North and South alike. For Norwegian host institutions, the shift towards degree programmes located in the South meant a significant loss of income as only students enrolled in degree programmes in Norway carry a cost compensation provided by the Ministry of Education and Research according to general Norwegian regulations and standards.

It should be noted that the Norwegian Quota Scheme providing individual scholarships for students from a broader spectrum of countries in the South than those eligible under the NOMA programme, is still an option for Norwegian universities to attract students carrying a full compensation to host universities (funded by the Ministry of Education and Research, rather than by Norad allocations over the aid budget from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The aim of NOMA is to achieve long-term sustainable capacity of institutions in the South to provide the national workforce with adequate qualifications, to stimulate

<sup>1</sup> Online: <http://siu.no/en/Programme-overview/The-NUFU-programme/Project-Portfolio>

<sup>2</sup> Norway's main partner countries are: Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Bangladesh and Nepal. Other partner countries are: Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, South Africa, Afghanistan, Indonesia, China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, East Timor, The Palestinian Areas, Guatemala and Nicaragua (as listed in *NUFU 2007-2011 Programme Document*).

South-South-North collaboration through the development of regional Master programmes, to enhance gender equality in all programme activities and to strengthen and develop the competences of Norwegian institutions to integrate global and development perspectives in their activities.

#### Box 1.2 NOMA projects, countries and budgets

A total of **36 projects** in 16 countries are being implemented as bilateral or multilateral projects by 26 partner institutions in the South together with 14 Norwegian institutions.

**Eligible countries** are: Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Bolivia. Other developing countries may also be included as decided by Norad.<sup>3</sup> Nepal is the country with the most NOMA projects (six).

In the years 2007 and 2008 the **total allocation** for NOMA projects was MNOK 187. In 2009 the amount available for an additional cohort was MNOK 44.625.

For **individual projects** start-up funds is maximum NOK 200,000 and the upper limit for project funds is MNOK 4.5 (MNOK 6 for multilateral programmes). Administrative costs should be maximum 7.5%. For 2009, the upper limit for each project was MNOK 2.25 (MNOK 3 for multilateral projects).

Social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences as well as medical sciences are the main discipline areas for both the NUFU and the NOMA programme. The countries eligible for support are largely the main recipients for Norwegian bilateral aid, and the thematic areas selected for support vary and change according to the general Norwegian aid priorities. Projects under both the NUFU and NOMA programmes are organised as collaborations between a Norwegian higher education institution and one or more institutions in the South.

### 1.3 Limitations

This evaluation is the result of the implementation of various data collection methods with the intent of building a thorough and comprehensive picture of the functioning of the NUFU and NOMA programmes. Inquiring into weaknesses identified in previous evaluations and acquiring qualitative assessments of lessons learned may easily lead to the weaknesses playing a prominent part in evaluations like this. However, identification of weaknesses is a foundation for the identification of opportunities and a formulation of recommendations for future improvements, which is also in focus in this report. Even though weaknesses and room for improvement have indeed been identified in the process, it is important to bear in mind that the overall picture arising is that of programmes with a large and positive effect in accordance with their stated objectives.

The evaluation relies on a large body of various quantitative and qualitative data. However, certain limitations regarding quantitative outcome and output-oriented data in particular, have posed challenges regarding evidence to pursue all evaluation questions and hypotheses. The study has applied good practice evaluation

<sup>3</sup> For the current programme period this may be: 1) Countries that can further Norwegian contribution to peace and conflict resolution and have relevance for rebuilding of society after conflict such as Afghanistan and Sudan, 2) countries whose competence and capacity within higher education and research enable them to assist and cooperate with eligible countries within the region (*Norad's Programme for Master Studies 2006-2010. Programme Document*).

methodology which does not claim to be quantitatively representative but provides indicative information of issues, trends and contributions. The history of NUFU and NOMA in the three case study countries and at different Norwegian universities is sufficiently wide to provide a variety of indicative lessons of NUFU and NOMA contributions. The evaluation findings are based on primary data targeted to the evaluation questions and collected through the e-survey in all partner countries and through self-evaluations and interviews in the three case study countries and in Norway. The primary data complements information elicited from SIU documents and databases, which are also frequently used. The report may appear as biased since 1) supportive evidence for the young NOMA programme is much less than for the long-standing NUFU programme, and 2) findings on the programmes 'in the field' necessarily derive more from the three case-study countries and views from Norwegian partners and management than from partners and stakeholders in other countries.

It was the intention to prepare a tracing strategy in order to trace and to talk with a larger number of former students and candidates in the two programmes in the case study countries. Prior to the country visits contact was taken to the university administrations with a request for contact information to former NUFU and NOMA students. The few responses received clearly indicated that tracer systems are embryonic if existing at all and insufficient for even starting to develop a tracing strategy in collaboration with local experts during the evaluation. However, the Evaluation Team did meet with a number of former PhD students of NUFU projects, primarily candidates who were now employed at their home institution or at other departments of their home university. Focus group interviews were also undertaken with NOMA students, both indigenous students and from other participating countries in South-South-North collaboration programmes, most of whom were employed besides their studies.

We had hoped to meet Norwegian students involved in programme activities in Ethiopia, Malawi and Nepal, but this did not materialise, partly because the number of Norwegian students in the NOMA projects is very limited, even though it is stated in the NOMA Programme Document that: "Norwegian students should be encouraged to enrol in course modules in the South as well as in Norway as a part of their degree programme."<sup>4</sup> That the projects might provide an opportunity as a field-study base for Norwegian students with other funding was not seen either, but was claimed to have happened in rare cases in Nepal.

Considering that effects and relevance of the programmes are high on the agenda it was a bit surprising that none of the institutes or universities – neither in the South nor in Norway – has established any form of tracer system or other more systematic Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. It is an obvious area where alumni organisations – and SIU - could play a role.

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4 *NOMA 2006-2010 Programme Document, p. 4.*

## 1.4 The Report

After having shortly presented the programmes and the evaluation in this chapter, the methodology, analytical framework, data collection methods, collected data, and challenges in the process of the evaluation are outlined in **chapter 2**.

The main body of the report, the findings in **chapter 3**, is thematically structured according to the themes laid out in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation. Apart from different aspects related to the programmes, there is also a section comparing other similar programmes from Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands with the Norwegian programmes in question.

**Chapter 4** contains conclusions and recommendations.

Short versions of the country reports from the case studies in Ethiopia, Malawi and Nepal are to be found in Annex 2. The full versions including annexes are available from Norad on request.

The evaluation has been carried out by COWI A/S, Denmark, and a team composed of:

Henrik Secher Marcussen, RUC, Team Leader      Binod Bhatta, Nepal, Consultant

Erik W. Thulstrup, RUC, Core Team                      Angela Faith Chimwaza, Malawi,  
Consultant

Shibru Tedla, Ethiopia, Core Team                      Mads Ted Drud-Jensen, COWI,  
Support Team

Britha Mikkelsen, COWI, Core Team                      Rolf Kromand, COWI, Support  
Team

## 2. Methodology and Analytical Framework

### 2.1 Approach

This chapter outlines the approach to the evaluation and the methods and tools used for data collection and analysis. It presents the evaluation framework, developed from the TOR, and how it was adjusted to accommodate recent changes in the Norwegian context of international development cooperation, internationalisation of higher education, and university reform. These framework conditions are vital since the evaluation covers both retrospective (ex-post) and forward looking (ex-ante) perspectives. It means that the NUFU and NOMA programmes have been thought out and designed to function under significantly different framework conditions than those which reign today and will influence the programmes for years ahead. This must necessarily be reflected in the recommendations of this evaluation.

The analysis and recommendations address research/higher education and administrative procedures for the NUFU and the NOMA programmes separately. However, since the Evaluation Team recommends a closer integration of the two programmes, discussions of relevance to both programmes are sometimes integrated, - organisation and administration in particular.

As a follow-on to previous positive but critical reviews, the evaluation has focused on the 1) **process** - what has been learned within the programmes?<sup>5</sup> What can be done to ameliorate shortcomings, e.g. enhancing ownership, participation and empowerment of the Southern partners? and on 2) **organisational structures** - institutional capacity building, mandates, various stakeholders' involvement, transparency, influence, division of work, etc. which need strengthening if the programmes are to function as genuine South-South and North-South partnerships.

The evaluation focuses on the central characteristics of the NUFU and the NOMA collaboration programmes, and emphasises the attributes that are intended to give effect to the stated objectives - the evaluation thus analyses **effectiveness** with regard to: 1) Capacity development in the South, 2) South-South collaboration, 3) Management and administration, 4) Synergy effects and 5) Decision-making processes and transparency.

The **relevance** of the supported research activity and the research-based higher education for the governments and, in particular, for academic institutions in the

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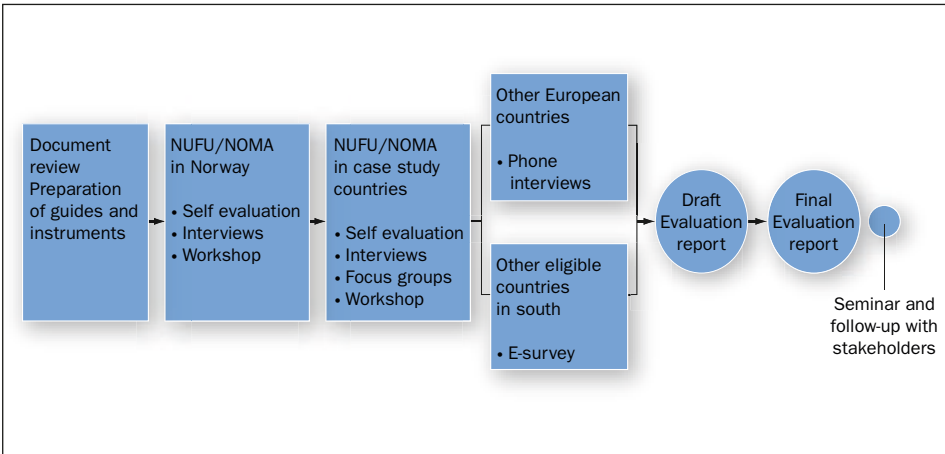
<sup>5</sup> For an overview of selected findings from previous evaluations, see Annex 5: Key Findings of previous evaluations.

South and in Norway is also a key issue of the evaluation. **Gender mainstreaming** adds a dimension which cuts across both effectiveness and relevance issues.

Hence, the **relevance** and **effectiveness** of the efforts undertaken in the programmes are in focus in this evaluation, in combination with **sustainability** - understood in terms of the long-term robustness of institutional arrangements in particular.

Data and information for the evaluation derive first and foremost from 1) SIU/NUFU and NOMA administration’s rich documentary collections and databases, from 2) the Team’s primary data collection in the three case study countries Ethiopia, Malawi and Nepal and from Norwegian stakeholders, as well as from self-evaluations using SWOT and an e-survey administered to all participating institutions in the South and from 3) Comparative models for support to research and higher education established in Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark. The evaluation has followed the workflow as it was set out in the Inception Report.

**Figure 2.1 Work Flow**



**2.2 Evaluation Framework**

The evaluation framework (see Annex 1) has been guiding the overall approach to the evaluation. The framework reflects the issues and evaluation questions of the TOR. Hypotheses and a selection of possible indicators were developed against the evaluation questions and helped to guide the Team’s common understanding of the assignment as well as the preparation of data collection and analysis instruments used in the evaluation (see section 2.3 and Annex 1). The findings of the evaluation are presented under the eight evaluation issues. Though not integrated in the evaluation matrix we want to emphasise that the introduction to the following chapter on Findings, section 3.1 on Building Knowledge Economies, can be seen as part of the evaluation framework.

**2.3 Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

The Evaluation Team has been using a variety of tools, instruments and guidelines. Several of these were shared with stakeholders, e.g. the e-survey questionnaire and

guidelines for undertaking a self-evaluation using SWOT. The tools were included in the Inception Report, May 2009 and are only selectively included here in Annex 1.

### **2.3.1 Document Review**

A substantial amount of documentation has been reviewed. SIU promptly supplied programme and project documentation, initial project reports, annual reports, institutional reports, and other project documents, in particular from the three case countries (see Annex 7). Policy documents, national and international debates, and comparative models have also been studied. Previous evaluations of the NUFU programme, the Norad Fellowship Programme and the SIU administration, have been significant for understanding the history and assessing changes.

### **2.3.2 Self-Evaluation using SWOT**

SWOT - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats - analysis is increasingly used as a tool in self-evaluations and learning processes. In this evaluation, self-evaluation using SWOT has been a very important source of information, providing valuable, qualitative insights into stakeholders' assessment of the NUFU and NOMA programmes.

All Norwegian universities (20), other key stakeholders and the universities in the three case study countries Ethiopia (4), Malawi (1) and Nepal (2) who have participated in the NUFU programme 2002-2006 and 2007-2011 and in the NOMA programme 2006 – to date, were requested to participate in the self-evaluation. Universities in other countries were not included, but they had a chance to participate in the e-survey. Requests for the self-survey participation were sent to institutional contacts, who organised the self-evaluation sessions differently. The majority kept the SWOT analysis for NUFU and NOMA separate. Some reports include joint self-evaluations plus self-evaluations by separate departments/institutions. If all separate reports are counted the number is 28, each involving from a few to 15 persons, and covering three quarters of the institutions invited. Several of the self-evaluations were undertaken in cooperation between the Norwegian institution and partner institutions in the South beyond the three case countries, e.g. partners in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Vietnam.

The self-evaluation respondents were university and institutional responsible persons, project coordinators and former students, SIU/NUFU and NOMA administration and Boards and the Ministry of Education and Research. The majority of the self-evaluations were from the Norwegian partners and stakeholders, some of whom have gone to much greater length than expected, providing comprehensive discussions of the evaluation issues and questions. The self-evaluation reports represent a vital set of qualitative information which has been vividly used to validate other sources of information and to raise follow-up questions.

In most cases the institutions themselves organised self-evaluation/SWOT sessions in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Evaluation Team. Separate NUFU and NOMA SWOT workshops were held at Oslo University and at Tribhuvan University, Nepal, facilitated by Evaluation Team members.

### 2.3.3 E-survey and SIU Database Utilization

An e-survey<sup>6</sup> was undertaken in order to reach NUFU and NOMA programme<sup>7</sup> participants from other than the three case countries and from all involved universities in Norway. The survey was targeted at project coordinators and institutional contacts and contained questions related to the issues in the evaluation framework.

Close to 400 e-mails were distributed to contact addresses provided by SIU - to project coordinators, institutional contact persons and institutionally responsible. The response rate was 20 pct – or 78 persons - only, even though reminders were sent out, mails were re-sent to alternative e-mail addresses which were in some cases provided by SIU. Explanations of non-responses are several: Many addresses were no longer in use; some respondents said, they had no professional engagement with the programmes; several questionnaires were stopped during filling-in or transmission, some due to electronic failures, others due to respondent's failure to complete what they experienced as an excessive exercise.

There is a slight overrepresentation of Norwegian respondents from whom 53 pct. of the responses derive. Respondents' affiliation to the different programmes/ periods under evaluation is fairly equal as seen in table 2.1. That the sum of responses is above 100 pct. is explained by the fact that some respondents have been involved in more than one project<sup>8</sup>.

**Table 2.1 Which programme have you personally been professionally engaged in?**

	Number	Share
NUFU in the period 2002 - 2006	26	33%
NOMA in the period 2006 - 2010	28	36%
NUFU in the period 2007 – 2012	43	55%

In spite of the relatively low response rate and the bias towards responses from Norwegian stakeholders the e-survey has provided interesting information, not least because the questionnaire contains many open-ended questions. Many respondents have given comprehensive, qualitative explanations, which have informed the evaluation and have been used in data triangulation of other sources.

Several sessions have been held with SIU in Bergen on the information stored in the SIU databases. These contain valuable information and are in principle accessible to partners in the South and in Norwegian universities. However, the databases - still - suffer from a number of drawbacks, e.g. lack of compatibility between different bases, which has reduced our reliance on these sources in the evaluation (See also Box 3.6). The databases are in the process of being updated in order to become more dynamic, detailed and user-friendly, the Evaluation Team was told.

6 Replies could be given through a link to the survey or in an attached word document.

7 It is attempted throughout the evaluation to be as correct as possible in using the terms programme and project. According to Norad and SIU *programme* usually refers to the total programme as defined in the programme documents for NUFU and NOMA, whereas each collaborative project is labelled a *project*. Within the NOMA programme this may be even more confusing, since the projects' content is to establish Master programmes. (Communication from SIU August 2009).

8 Even though responses were only obtained from a limited sample of the target population the figures are interpreted and presented in the report under a general condition of a 95% confidence level.



Nevertheless, the databases contain an extensive and valuable set of quantitative and qualitative data reported by the project managers and participating institutions on project processes, students, publications, etc.

#### **2.3.4 Interviews, Focus Groups and Workshops**

A mixture of individual and focus group interviews, using semi-structured interviews was conducted with key stakeholders in the three case countries and in Norway – including Norwegian Embassies (see list of people met, Annex 3).

The semi-structured interview form implies that we - as evaluators and based on the evaluation questions - have pre-selected the themes and have suggested a particular chronology. However, within this frame there has been plenty of scope for the interviewees to influence the content of the discussions - to elaborate, add new perspectives or issues in dialogue with the consultants. The interview guide (see Annex 1) thus has a fairly generic form and has been adapted to the given situation depending on who was actually being interviewed, e.g. ministry officials, research coordinators at a university or former students individually or in groups. The informants were consulted on the relevant evaluation questions and hypotheses as reflected in the Interview Guide. Elaborate minutes of all interviews were drafted and shared among the Evaluation Team as a vital source of information. Workshops were conducted at the end of each field visit, in order to debrief key stakeholders and validate preliminary findings. In Nepal the debriefing workshop had to be cancelled due to political unrest, but was succeeded by a follow-up from the Evaluation Team's Nepali participant.

Focus group interviews were conducted with selected, current NUFU and NOMA students. In Nepal it was possible to join students from Sri Lanka and Nepal in a common focus group. Former students of the NUFU programme, now employed in the home department, participated in focus group interviews and self-evaluations with researchers/ project managers. In addition interviews were held with university management representatives as well as with selected researchers not participating in the NUFU or NOMA programmes. To assess adequacy and relevance, interviews have been conducted with selected stakeholders outside the universities.

In Norway relevant stakeholders for interviews were selected researchers/project managers and administrators at six universities/university colleges, NUFU and NOMA board members, selected Norad, SIU, RCN, Ministry of Education and Research, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs representatives with experience from the programmes. A few external persons with knowledge of the programmes were included. The Team realises that additional relevant stakeholders could have been included both in Norway and in the case study countries.

## **2.4 Data Triangulation and Validation**

The many types of data and information produced in the evaluation have been used thoroughly in a triangulation process where one type of information has been compared with other types, for focusing questions and for validation. For example, information from reviews of former evaluations, project/progress reports, annual project and programme reports and other key documents, influenced the formula-

tion of the evaluation questions. These were reflected in all evaluation tools, and responses obtained from the e-survey and self-evaluations were checked against each other and followed up in personal and focus group interviews. This has been particularly important, since most of the evaluation questions could not be answered through the quantitative information available from SIU or from the Evaluation Team's own survey. Quantitative data available in SIU's databases provide some information about outputs in terms of candidates and publications, for example. But in general the databases do not report on quantitative indicators that would have helped to answer in more depth the outcomes of the programmes.

Another challenge to the quantitative data is the relatively low number of e-survey responses. Results and conclusions based upon the survey will therefore not stand alone, but in so far as it is possible be supplemented and/or supported by other sources of data. In this situation the multiple sources of qualitative data generated by our different evaluation instruments, both in the e-survey, in the self-evaluation, interviews and workshops have been extremely useful in the attempt to validate our preliminary findings. The character of the data means that the qualitative assessments made by the various stakeholders are not necessarily representative for all programme activities, but they represent positive/negative aspects that have been identified in the process, and subsequently analysed and assessed regarding their relevance via data triangulation. Robust findings, unless presented otherwise, are thus 1) confirmed by many stakeholders, 2) supported by other data and 3) in accordance with theory or appear plausible. - The Evaluation Team has throughout made all efforts to live up to DAC's Evaluation Quality Standards.

## 3. Findings

The findings from all parts of the evaluation are presented in this chapter, i.e. from document review, the three country case studies, stakeholder interviews in Norway, e-survey and self-evaluation and SWOT reports. The presentation follows the evaluation issues as presented in the Evaluation Framework Matrix, Annex 1, and the evaluation questions and hypotheses guide the presentation and analysis without being followed chronologically. The Evaluation Team's primary data, in particular, and information from SIU's databases are used to document the findings (in Figures, Boxes and Tables). In accordance with our definition the findings are 'robust' (section 2.4) unless presented otherwise.

Section 3.1, Building Knowledge Economies in the South and North, is a discussion of the rationale or 'theory' for programmes to support research and higher education in the South. It is included here as an extension to the Evaluation Framework. Findings for section 3.1 and section 3.11, Comparative models build on literature studies and phone interviews.

### 3.1 Building Knowledge Economies in the South and North

The increasing globalisation and importance of research-based knowledge make a renewed emphasis on higher education and research necessary. Only this way will it be possible to meet the challenges and to explore new opportunities connected with globalisation and technology development. This is a main strategic objective for countries in the North, as demonstrated by the Norwegian White Paper (St. meld.14) on internationalisation of education, as well as the paper on a new development agenda (St.meld.13) in which three main focus areas are addressed, Capital, Climate and Conflict.

While that of building knowledge economies in a Northern context is vital, so it is for countries in the South, and no less so. For countries in the South the challenge is much more fundamental, complex and far reaching, as numerous developmental issues have to be tackled more or less simultaneously, in particular the many consequential effects of an often widespread poverty, and the vicious circles maintaining such poverty.

The role of institutions of higher learning and research in fostering knowledge and learning, technological insight, innovative abilities and creative thinking as preconditions for poverty alleviation is an element only recently having received the necessary greater attention, not least as provoked by processes of globalisation, transnationalisation and global insecurity and crises in their variety of forms. The need for

such new emphasis has in particular been stressed by the World Bank, which due to the process of globalisation has been forced to revise earlier standpoints: "... there is a perception that the Bank has not been fully responsive to the growing demand by clients for tertiary education interventions and that, especially in the poorest countries, lending for the subsector has not matched the importance of tertiary education systems for economic and social development." <sup>9</sup>

The strong correlation between innovation performance, productivity, and economic growth has been demonstrated in a number of cases and for different groups of countries<sup>10</sup>.

Nowadays there is little doubt that research and tertiary education are main drivers of economic development, but for developing countries the challenges are enormous facing the threat that the existing knowledge gaps may widen.

Therefore, for these countries support to higher education and research is crucial, if the developing nations are not to lag further behind. It requires long-term investments of considerable proportions, if internationally comparable skills and knowledge economies are eventually to be created.

However, the global interconnectedness and related rapid transitions require a more holistic view towards education and research. According to experience, there is a need to move beyond the individual researcher, teacher or student as well as the individual department, embracing the broader educational and research environments. This is now the policy of the World Bank and some bilateral donors, such as Sida. For the latter, capacity building in research takes its point of departure in the contextual analysis of an existing national research capacity, and based on assessments of the institutional framework as well as prevailing national policies and strategies allocations and resources may be provided to individual universities or research organisations. However, such support is provided for research management on the one hand, and research environments on the other, rather than having the individual researcher or individual department as the focal or starting point<sup>11</sup>.

Building knowledge economies is a sine qua non if the developing nations are to move forward, creating greater socio-economic development. In order for knowledge-based development to work it must be supported by strong universities. However, the results of a university strengthening are not instant; the strategy must be supported consistently over a period of several years. To be continuously relevant, effective and viable it must be flexible, contextual and must adapt to change and new challenges.

The NUFU programme has been in existence for quite some years, while the NOMA programme is a rather new creation, although its use of Master's programmes in

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<sup>9</sup> World Bank (2002): *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, p. xviii.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank (2007): *Building Knowledge Economies. Advanced Strategies for Development*, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

<sup>11</sup> SIDA (2006): *Support to national research development*. Stockholm: SIDA-Sarec. Also, see chapter 3.11 *Comparative models* for a more detailed description and analysis of the approach and strategy of Swedish, Danish and Dutch programmes and activities comparative to NUFU and NOMA.

the South as its main means of capacity building is more of the traditional sort, and has been in existence for a rather long time as well.

In the present evaluation, the NUFU and NOMA programmes have been assessed according to the TOR in relation to effectiveness, relevance, administrative efficiency, synergies and sustainability. But the recent publication in Norway of new internationalisation strategies and development aid policies, as well as recent developments within collaborating universities and the context under which they work in the South, have led to a further question: Are the two programmes still adequate and sufficiently flexible responses to the actual needs and priorities – both in Norway and in the South? A preliminary response to this question is offered in 4.1, Conclusions and Recommendations.

### 3.2 Research and Higher Education Capacity Building in the South

Research and higher education capacity development have a number of different meanings and instruments to apply when implemented. ‘Capacity building’ and ‘institutional development’ are core objectives in both the NUFU and NOMA programmes (see box 3.1).

#### Box 3.1 Capacity development in the South

**NUFU - “Capacity building and institutional development.** All NUFU-supported projects should be directed towards building sustainable capacity and competence within research and research-based education at the partner institutions in the South. Educational activities should be included in all project proposals, i.e. education of Master’s and PhD candidates, and/or the development of educational programmes (at Master’s and/or PhD level) at the institutions in the South...”

**NOMA -** “To achieve, in a longer term perspective, sustainable capacity of institutions in the South to provide the national workforce with adequate qualifications within selected academic fields of study... The programme emphasises the need for a long-term strategy for capacity-building. ..The NOMA may also give support to activities that contribute to institutional development, included administrative and managerial capacity, at the partner institutions.”

Source: NUFU Programme Document 2007-2011 and NOMA Programme Document 2006-2010

The similarity with regard to sustainable and institutional capacity development goals in the two programmes is striking. However, neither of the programmes offers any precise definition and operational criteria of the wanted capacity building or the instruments to be used.

#### 3.2.1 Students and Candidates

The lack of a precise description of what is meant by capacity development hampers monitoring, feedback and, in particular, identification of appropriate achievement indicators. However, one simple and possibly also the most important initial indicator for success is known: the number of Master’s and PhD graduates from the South educated through the NUFU programmes<sup>12</sup>, see table 3.1.

12 The Annual Report 2008 for the NUFU Programme operates with the following ‘indicators’ or headings for Sustainable Capacity Building and Institutional Development: 1) Recruitment of PhD Candidates and Master’s Students, 2) Development of Courses and Programmes, 3) Training of technical and administrative staff, 4) Bridging the gender gap.

**Table 3.1 NUFU Master and PhD candidates by completion year or expected completion year**

Program	Completion year/ exp. Completion	Master	PhD	Total
NUFU 2002 - 2006	2006	303	90	393
	2007	130	39	169
<b>NUFU 2002 - 2006 Total</b>		<b>433</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>562</b>
NUFU 2007 - 2012	2008	23	8	31
	2009	75	5	80
	2010	42	41	83
	2011	1	140	141
	2012		6	6
<b>NUFU 2007 - 2012 Total</b>		<b>141</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>341</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>574</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>903</b>

Source: SIU NUFU database, August 2009 Note: Table 3.1 shows the completion year and expected year of completion of Master and PhD candidates from the two NUFU programmes. There is a stronger focus on educating PhD students rather than Master students. In the NUFU 2002-2006 programme approximately 1 out of 5 students was a PhD, while in the NUFU 2007-2012 the expected ratio will be closer to 3 out of 5. The expected NOMA candidates 2006-2010 are 569. For more figures on students / candidates, disaggregated by sex, including NUFU and NOMA students, see section 3.9 Gender Issues.

It is important to note that since the NOMA programme is relatively new, and still in its first programme period, output data for the NOMA programme is quite limited. Figures for students, applicants and admitted candidates are presented in Table 3.2:

**Table 3.2 NOMA students, applicants and admitted candidates**

	Female	Male	Total
Applicants 2007	259	558	817
<b>Students 2007, total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>188</b>
Applicants 2008	394	825	1219
<b>Students 2008, total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>570</b>
New students admitted, 2008	140	242	382

Source: NOMA Annual Report 2008.

In addition to the figures in Table 3.2, the NOMA Annual Report 2008 further states that by 2009, 169 NOMA students are expected to have submitted their master thesis, two third of them - if qualified - obtaining a NOMA master degree awarded by a non-Norwegian institution.

It is stated in very general terms in the project documents for the two programmes that indicators of success must be increased capacity and production of knowledge and competence, and the dissemination of relevant candidates with employable

qualifications. Candidates should have the potential of playing a significant role in the long-term economic, social, technological and cultural development as part of a qualified work force of the countries in the South (NOMA) and in the strengthening of research and HEI institutions as well as dissemination of research results (NUFU). Over and above these general success criteria, it is expected that project coordinators will identify quantitative and qualitative targets and indicators in their proposals against which the projects will be reported. At the programme level it is evident that there is a need for more comprehensive indicators for project outputs, achievements and outcomes beyond the annual summary of graduates produced and research papers published.

### **3.2.2 Reflections on Cost-efficiency**

To assess cost-efficiency of capacity building in support of Masters and Ph.D programmes poses a variety of challenges. First, it presupposes rather detailed data gathered over longer programme periods by the programme responsible institution, both in relation to direct and indirect costs as well as data on outputs and outcomes. Secondly, comparisons with similar programmes elsewhere, such as within a Nordic context, are challenged as funding conditions and indirect costing vary considerably.

Data for the NUFU and NOMA programmes collected by SIU for each project include a set of standard break-down of annual costs. The budget lines could in principle be used to calculate cost efficiency but not all expenses relate directly to 'student-costs'. The existing monitoring of the programmes does not report on indicators of cost-efficiency and the Evaluation Team has therefore included assumptions in connection with student-cost estimates.

The information available to the evaluation team from which a rough estimate can be made on the average cost of Masters and PhD candidates is mainly about degrees expected to be awarded within a given time period, and the corresponding funds available for each programme within a given programme period. However, this information does not establish how much of the project funding can be directly related to the education of students and how much has been spent on general capacity building, travels, etc. Nevertheless, based on the available but incomplete set of input and output information the Team has calculated an estimate of average costs for production of graduates, but with necessary reservations about the precise production of candidates and costs. The following specifications and reservations are made:

- The number of candidates used for calculation is based on an expected output of candidates over the whole programme period<sup>13</sup>.
- The expenses used for calculation is based on the overall grant for each project over the whole programme period, with a correction of the amount which can be expected to relate more or less directly to the production of candidates<sup>14</sup>. The correction is as follows:

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13 The output used for the calculation is 903 NUFU candidates and 569 NOMA candidates. For a breakdown of the numbers, please refer to section 3.2.1.

14 The estimated expenses are MNOK 206 in total for the NOMA programme and MNOK 377 for the two NUFU programmes.

- Where information has been available on detailed budgets for each project, certain budget lines are used as indicators of expenses relating mostly to student production.<sup>15</sup>
- Where detailed budgets were not available an estimation of the share of funding relating directly to candidate production has been used to adjust the overall budgets for each project<sup>16</sup>.

The estimated average cost for candidates is calculated as the estimated amount of funding relating to the production of students for each project, divided by the expected number of students from each project. The estimated average cost of candidates is shown in the table 3.2.2.

**Table 3.2.2 Average estimated cost for producing candidates under the NUFU programmes and the NOMA Programme**

Programme	Master and PhD Graduates <sup>17</sup> (NOK)	Master only (NOK)	PhD only (NOK)	Total average (NOK)
NUFU 2002 - 2006	258.474	564.392	1.270.541	362.873
NUFU 2007 - 2012	407.235	936.891 <sup>18</sup>	839.043	510.261
<b>NUFU total average</b>	<b>313.005</b>	<b>591.648</b>	<b>977.598</b>	<b>418.531</b>
NOMA	-	362.706	-	362.706

Source: SIU database and account extractions

In the case of NOMA the number of degrees expected to be awarded are 569, and the total costs were MNOK 206, corresponding to a Master degree cost of around NOK 362.706 per degree. This figure is a rough estimate and might be subject to greater uncertainty than the NUFU estimate due to the fact that the NOMA programme is in a build-up phase.

In the case of NUFU it is difficult to assess the costs as Masters and PhD degrees awarded in most cases have been fully funded by NUFU, while in other cases only partly. In some cases the studies have been entirely funded by other sources. However, the total number of degrees reported during the programme period 2002 – 2012 amounts to 903. With a total Norad funding of MNOK 377 this results in an average cost of NOK 418.531 for NUFU Master and PhD candidates, which, however, covers some variation between master and PhD average costs.

15 We have used the direct student related budget lines for NUFU, "Scholarships/fellowships", "Project administration", and half of the expenses related to "infrastructure" and half of the expenses relating to "institutional development". Student related budget lines used for NOMA projects are "Scholarships", "Teaching and supervision", "Project administration" and half of the expenses relating to "Institutional expenses".

16 This estimation is based on the average share of the total budgets represented in the detailed budgets, where these have been available for NUFU and NOMA projects respectively. The average used for directly student related expenses is 89% for NOMA projects and 76% for NUFU projects. These figures are used to estimate 'student related costs' in projects for which we have total cost figures only.

17 Some NUFU projects produce both Master and PhD candidates, which makes it impossible to attribute the amount of funding for each type of candidate. Therefore this particular category of projects has been established. The number of candidates from NUFU projects comprising both Masters and PhDs is 712 out of a total of 903 NUFU candidates.

18 The relatively high price for Master candidates under the NUFU 2007-2012 programme covers an expected output of only 6 candidates, meaning that the number should be considered with some reservation.



In both the NOMA and the NUFU case, the total costs per degree awarded should also include indirect costs such as contributions from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, from the universities/ institutes and from coordinators/ researchers, as well as indirect costs covered by universities in the South, and possible volunteer and un-paid work by the university staff. A consequence is that the real cost per Master or PhD candidate above may be underestimated. Such indirect costs are complicated to assess and would require time and resources well beyond what has been possible in the present evaluation<sup>19</sup>.

A recurrent statement received during interviews is that the compensation paid within the programmes or via contributions from the Ministry of Research and Education has drastically declined over time. This leaves an increasing amount to be covered by the Norwegian universities and, not least, by the researchers involved, who use a growing part of their research time, even their free time, on work with students from the South. This is hardly a sustainable situation, since the economic pressure on university staff is increasing these years. This pressure rewards production of international publications, while capacity building in the South does not count much.

### **Box 3.2 Regarding cost-efficiency and funding synergies**

The following quote from a self-evaluation report captures information from many other self-evaluation reports and interviews:

“Regarding cost-efficiency, the group considered that project results could in no way have been achieved more cost-efficient. In fact, most projects rely upon significant amounts of voluntary and unpaid work, even if the partner institutions also contribute substantial amounts outside the project budget.

A very time-consuming activity for project participants is the search for funding-synergies and the process of applying for additional funding from any available sources in order to make the projects sustainable over time in an insecure environment of short-term funding. This includes applications for additional student and PhD funding, for various sub-projects that can be implemented as separate entities, for publications and dissemination, for academic conferences etc. This is not cost-efficient”.

Source: Self-evaluation report from a Norwegian University, June 2009

To compare the uncertain estimates from both the NOMA and NUFU programmes with similar estimates from programmes in the Netherlands, Sweden or Denmark is as mentioned previously hazardous, as conditions vary greatly. Variations in costing structures and conditions of remuneration, and even between different years, make it nearly impossible to reach fair estimates. Such variations are seen in the case of Danida’s programme, where overheads generated for universities from the programme budget have over the past three years risen from 20%, via 35% to now 44%. This policy shift has been closely associated with the Danish university reform, with limitations on core funding and incentives to generate external funding instead. In the Dutch and Swedish cases, however, full cost recoveries for universities seem to be the adopted policy by the funding bodies, so comparisons should

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<sup>19</sup> The Team acknowledges that information on indirect costs for salaries etc. could have been obtained from MER but would have contributed with only part of the mixed picture of different funding sources.

be considered indicative at best. A recent estimate<sup>20</sup> shows that the cost of a Danida MSc is approximately equivalent to NOK 400.000. This amount includes fees estimated to approximately NOK 200.000 per candidate. NOMA candidates, who are the most comparable in this case, cost around 360.000 NOK. In-so-far it is not possible to establish to which degree the cost for a NOMA candidate includes fees, it can be assumed that with a high degree of fees included in the NOMA candidate cost, the price resembles or is a bit lower than the Danida equivalent. To this should be added that according to reporting from the self-evaluation, a considerable amount of un-paid work is undertaken, leaving little room for improving the cost efficiency of the projects (See for example Box 3.2).

With the precautions taken concerning data and structural differences between support modalities in different countries, a tentative finding is that the level of cost-efficiency for NUFU and NOMA MSc and PhDs is not too far off from other similar programmes.

### **3.2.3 Institutional Capacity Building**

Evidence from reports, interviews and self-evaluations shows that capacity building has primarily been focused on individual researchers and students from the South, and only marginally on the administrative and professional personnel; among these, mostly on technicians. Institution building does not seem to be a high priority, no matter how needed this may be. Provision of equipment and other forms of infrastructure has generally been rather limited in scope, although many of the institutions in the South suffer greatly from lack of, for example, laboratory equipment, access to relevant literature and IT-facilities. During visits to partners in the three case study countries it was demonstrated that especially the provision of modern equipment, which has taken place in some cases, is greatly appreciated.

It is clear that the focus on the individual researcher and the limited attention to logistics and research infrastructure of institutions in the South limit the contribution to institutional sustainability. A more holistic approach to capacity development with elements as described forthwith would be needed in order to strengthen institutional sustainability in general, not only within the more equipment-dependent NUFU projects. There were several examples of NOMA projects that were either dependent on infrastructure support from other sources or were quite limited because of such shortages<sup>21</sup>. In Nepal students from a current Master's study programme utilized equipment provided for an earlier NUFU project.

In addition to research and education infrastructure there is also a need to strengthen institutional capacity and build local ownership of facilities, curriculum development, student supervision etc. Such activities were not included to any great extent in the majority of partner institutions met by the evaluation team. The activities also include strengthening capacities within research and higher education management. The links between specific projects anchored in departments/ institutes and the partner university's priorities and research strategies (where they

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20 Quoted in Erik W. Thulstrup (2009): *North-South research cooperation: How can contribution from Swedish universities be sustained and improved?* Sida.

21 Clearly brain drain is a severe risk in these programmes; however, it has been demonstrated by the International Foundation for Science (IFS) that small infrastructure grants to young researchers greatly reduce the risk of brain drain.

exist) are rarely made explicit, nor seen in context of the wider national research and higher education environment. Among the most important activities would be support for tighter links between universities, industry and the labour market in general. Such activities are ad hoc and not included in the present programmes, in spite of the fact that they might provide much needed benefits in the form of more direct contributions to economic development and improved institutional sustainability.

Although programmes, their results and management, in a few cases may have been able, in part at least, to foster new research management and policy measures introduced at departmental levels, influencing decision-making at university level has been more limited, it has not been possible to verify impact in relation to the higher education sector as such. This may be related to several factors, but in particular the general lack of adapting a holistic approach to programmes, reaching beyond the individual and departmental level, but also due to such influence more likely being the result of direct interactions between university management and the higher education sector. In other words, in the evaluation few direct inroads to the higher education sector have been possible to identify, which is yet another argument for taking a broader and more comprehensive view to the assistance provided.

Cooperation with the Norwegian partners has been instrumental in achieving results, especially within the research training activities. Examples of joint responsibilities in other important fields include curriculum development and, to a limited extent, strengthening of administrative and technical staff capacity (see table 3.3) and, concerning NUFU, often badly needed improvements of dissemination (publication) habits.

An indicator of capacity building is embedded in figures on administrative and technical (e.g. IT) staff training, by sex, from the two NUFU periods. Table 3.3 gives crude evidence of the training provided for support staff. Such training has been particularly important in management of technical equipment and IT; a possible explanation – for the fact that the number of trained female staff is lower than that of males.

**Table 3.3 Administrative and technical training of staff NUFU 2002-2006 and 2007-2012**

Type of Training	2002-06 Female	2002-06 Male	2007-12 Female	2007-12 Male	Grand Total
Accountancy	3	10	3	8	24
Administration	11	4	11	5	31
Technical	11	27	9	14	61
Other	9	1	7	6	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>139</b>

Source: SIU NUFU database, August 2009

Capacity building based on research collaboration between Norwegian and Southern partners (outside graduate students), including production of common research papers in international, refereed journals, has been fairly limited<sup>22</sup> (see table 3.4). One may fear that the new university reform process in Norway may further reduce the incentives for such research cooperation (see chapter 3.9), although the reform actually strongly encourages publication of many papers. But often such papers are easier to produce in cooperation with colleagues in industrialized countries.

**Table 3.4 Published and peer reviewed articles in journals (2002-2006) and publications published\* (2007- mid 2009)**

Programme	Total	Average pr. year
NUFU 2002 - 2006	424	106
NUFU 2007 - 2012	135	68
Total	559	

\*Includes articles.

Source: SIU NUFU database, August 2009 Note: The table shows a comparison of published and peer reviewed articles from the two NUFU programme periods. So far the 2002-2006 NUFU programme resulted in 424 articles published and peer reviewed and NUFU 2007-2012 in 135 so far. The average number of publications for NUFU 2002-2006 is relatively higher than the later NUFU programme. This may be due to the fact that it takes time to collect data for the articles which therefore result in a higher publication rate towards the end of the programme period.

The time frame for support is also crucial when considering capacity building at institutional level. The possible time duration of NUFU projects (two times five years, plus in extraordinary cases an additional two years) may seem appropriate but is considered by many to be too short for proper capacity building. In the NOMA programme, the guaranteed time horizon (a few batches of students) is considered so short that it, in connection with incomplete funding for the activities, may be considered a highly risky endeavour.

### 3.2.4 Employment

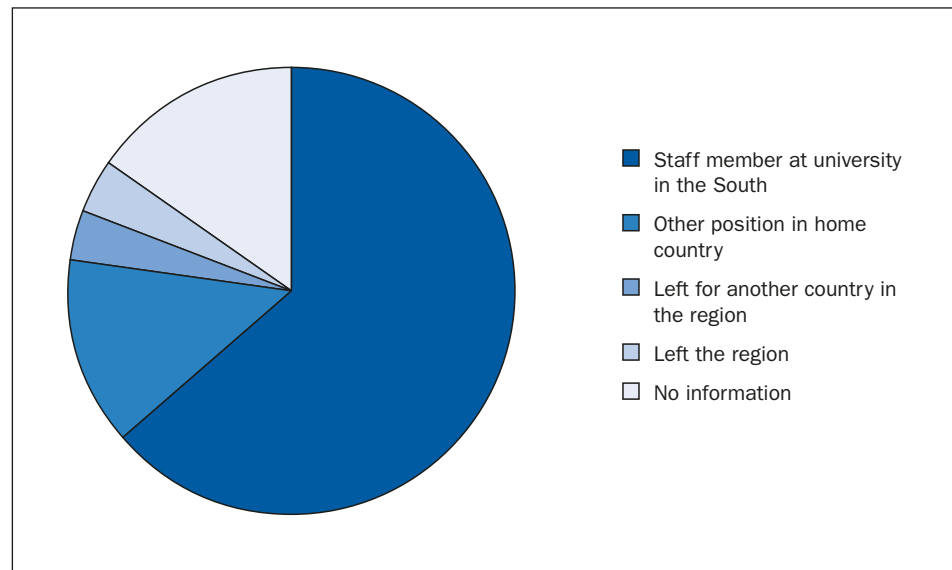
It has not been possible to establish an overview of where NUFU candidates are currently employed, and thus of the usefulness of the efforts, except for evidence that many graduates return to their home institution and thus contribute to institutional development. However, SIU has attempted to estimate where NUFU candidates find employment based on feed-back from partners, but the Evaluation Team was informed by SIU that the data reliability was uncertain (see figure 3.1). No Norwegian or partner institutions have established tracer mechanisms for keeping track of returning graduates, even though tracer systems would be important for assessing the relevance of research-based education and the marketability of the candidates as well as for establishing output. So far capacity building has focused on what is required to get the individual student through the system, academically and administratively, less on assessing such institutional capacity needed to produce employable candidates outside the universities. Since relevance to society is vital for both programmes this may be the time to establish and finance a tracer

22 If the average number of publications were one publication per Master student and three publications per PhD student (common international norms), the number of publications (NUFU 2002-2006) would have been more than 800, four times the actual number.

mechanism, broad enough to accommodate both the NUFU and the NOMA programme.

In a few cases, interviews were conducted with representatives of the private and public sector, or international organisations, who generally were very appreciative of the NUFU, but in particular the NOMA/NFP programme and the quality of candidates.

**Figure 3.1 Labour market position for NUFU 2002 - 2006 funded PhD candidates after completion**



Source: Estimate from the NUFU Final Report 2002-2006. Note: The figure shows where the PhDs from NUFU 2002 - 2006 have been employed after completing their degree. The largest share is employed as staff members at a university in the South - in line with programme objectives.

### 3.2.5 Special Aspects of the NUFU Programme

The NUFU programme is well established over many years. Thus it is generally well known with many internationally recognized achievements, especially in the form of PhD degrees and to a smaller extent through, for example, research results of importance for developing countries<sup>23</sup>. Unfortunately, no data on citation rates for the papers produced were available. It would be wrong to judge capacity - individual and institutional - only as peer reviewed published articles<sup>24</sup>. Other potentially important outputs are included in Table 3.5<sup>25</sup>.

23 Such good practice examples are, for example, the Tribhuvan University based Aerosol Concentrations project (with NTNU) and the Child Health and Nutrition programme (with UiB).

24 Quantitative indicators of *scientific quality* for the NUFU programme are: The number of articles published in refereed journals. The number of other publications produced within the programme. The number of other dissemination activities that have been organized, nationally and internationally.

25 Information on peer-reviewed publications is registered differently in data bases for the two NUFU periods; only 2002-2006 figures are included here. Total peer-reviewed publications for NUFU 2007-2012 by August 2009 are 196 of a total of 258 publications / outputs.

**Table 3.5 Total published dissemination of research for NUFU 2002-2006, reviewed and non-reviewed products**

Main category	Peer reviewed			Total
	Yes	No	Not stated	
Article	424	67	361	852
Book	1		151	152
Exhibition			1	1
Lecture		1		1
Media exposure			73	73
Part of book		2	203	205
Report/thesis			309	309
Workshop	1	4	124	129
Total	426	74	1222	1722

Source: SIU NUFU database, August 2009. Note: The table shows all published material from the NUFU 2002-2006 projects by category of publications. In most of the materials there is no information on whether it has been reviewed. Almost half of the material that is published has been articles and a little less than half of these have been peer reviewed.

Capacity building within the NUFU programme targeting PhD students has in some cases, notably in Ethiopia, made it possible for partner institutions in the South to approach the leading edge in their respective fields. In general, the NUFU programme has been highly constructive in providing the partner institutions with international exposure and access to international research networks. In many cases the capacity built through PhD programmes as well as the North-South partnerships created, are likely to be viable and long-lasting, at least as long as the possible disincentives created by the current Norwegian university reforms do not erode the achievements made.

Even if this happens, the improved international exposure of the Southern partners makes it possible, even likely, that in the future a more diverse range of international partnerships may be established, well beyond the present, often quite exclusive, partnerships with Norwegian researchers and institutions.

### **3.2.6 Special Aspects of the NOMA Programme**

Given the short existence of the NOMA programme, a thorough assessment of achievements, e.g. in terms of outputs and outcomes, is difficult to establish. However, a number of challenges to the programme have been identified, especially during interviews with project partners in the North and South<sup>26</sup>.

In the past, the predecessor of the NOMA programme was the Norad Fellowship Programme (Norwegian Fellowship Programme). At the time it was regarded as easy to use, flexible and with an easy administrative handling, and it was not surprising that it was popular among participating researchers. Today the NOMA programme is

<sup>26</sup> "The NOMA programme is experienced as more problematic than the NUFU programme, but also for the NUFU programme the number of applicants has gone down, and we do not know what will happen in the future" (Minutes of Norad-SIU Board meeting 09.12.08).

no longer considered a non-bureaucratic source of funding for training of developing country students. Fortunately, this has not led to a drastic decline in the number of applications recently received in the second application round. But for several reasons, in particular the strongly criticised compensation system, some university institute stakeholders in Norway informed the Evaluation Team that they were not likely to apply for NOMA funds again.

Today, most Norwegian partners consider NOMA an additional or complementary funding opportunity for research training, in addition to other funding opportunities, such as EU funding, grants from the Research Council of Norway, or especially the popular Quota Grants.

In order to make ends meet, Norwegian applicants are usually forced to shop around among a variety of sources for funding (see Box 3.2). Among these, NOMA is rarely the first and most important choice.

The compensation to the Norwegian institutions taking part in the NOMA programme is by most considered insufficient<sup>27</sup>. No compensation is provided for supervision and administration, as the Master's programmes are conducted in the South – with exceptions for very specialized, shorter courses provided in Norway. With the increasing financial pressure on Norwegian universities and staff it is becoming less acceptable to the university institutions that idealistic individuals amongst their staff do unpaid (or insufficiently paid) work. This may be considered the single most important threat to the sustainability of the NOMA programme. There is a serious risk that the aims of the NOMA programme are being undermined as a result of the less attractive support for capacity building within higher education in poor countries and for North-South partnerships and networks. Internal allocations in some departments and institutes have so far 'saved' NOMA programmes, both at the larger universities in Norway and at the engaged University Colleges, but this is not likely to be maintained.

Other challenges to the broad relevance of the present needs-based capacity development effort in the South are related to the changes taking place at universities in the South, in many cases coupled with new forms of both funding and operation. After more than 20 years of capacity building provided in a rather standardized and uniform format, new forms of capacity building are now considered relevant, not only by some universities in the South, but also by governments.

Addis Ababa University (AAU) provides a leading example of this; during interviews the university management indicated that there is no longer a great need for the NOMA type of Masters programme support. Today, the university considers itself fully capable of providing training at this level. Instead, NUFU-type projects at the PhD level are continuously much needed and are today the preferred form of collaboration.

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27 "Fair compensation" is considered to be as practiced under the Norad Fellowship Programme, or the compensation for education/examination/supervision 'hourly rates' negotiated for RCN projects. "An important measure would be to compensate Norwegian institutions for education and supervision of students from the South who do not graduate from Norwegian institutions" (Minutes of Norad-SIU Board meeting 09.12.08).

However, even with strong Master level graduate schools at AAU, NOMA programmes may still be needed in relation to the establishment of a range of fairly new local universities in Ethiopia or teaching universities trying to become research universities (for example the universities of Hawassa and, notably, Dilla and Mekelle). While these universities may obtain well-trained Master graduates from AAU, they also need to expand their international exposure and for this the NOMA programme may be useful.

In the other case countries the need for broad capacity building in some disciplines at masters level was also emphasized by some institutes who were interested in building Master level programmes funded by NOMA. In Malawi, for example, the need for a Master's programme in Social Work had led to an – (unfortunately) unsuccessful application for support to supplement a parallel NUFU application.

It is a major challenge to the NOMA programme to continuously adjust to changing needs and opportunities at universities in developing countries. This requires much greater flexibility, contextual knowledge and more thorough institutional assessments than are available at present (in Norway as well as in the South). Otherwise the NOMA programme may increasingly become irrelevant and hard to use.

A different challenge than that of compensation relates to both the Norwegian and Southern partners, i.e. the capacity to undertake institutional and national needs assessments for support to higher education. This is a challenge in itself, which is too often overlooked.

The current new trends within funding for universities in the South come especially in the form of basket funding to the central university management, which is then left with an extensive responsibility for channelling the resources to the strategically chosen units and activities. This is a considerable challenge to traditional (even orthodox) programmes such as NOMA, which have only few instruments in its toolbox for this kind of capacity building (for further discussion on 'basket funding/partial basket funding' see section 3.11 Comparative models).

### **3.3 South-South and South-South-North Cooperation**

*“Within research and higher education aimed for economic and social development, the interactive process between local and global knowledge has a higher value than building knowledge alone” (quote from a Norwegian University self-evaluation report).*

During the country visits to Malawi, Ethiopia and Nepal information was collected from both North-South ('bilateral') and South-South-North ('multilateral') projects and programmes. Partners from the South are frequently involved in NUFU and NOMA projects outside their home country together with partners in other South countries. Norwegian partners have assisted in bringing new Southern partners into both NUFU and NOMA projects and to facilitate embryonic regional networks.

In several cases, partners in the South reported that cooperation with other countries in the South had contributed significantly to fostering not only cooperation, but



also friendship; it had also helped create greater understanding of mutual problems at South universities and how they can be addressed. A good example of this is the Master programme in Conflict, Peace and Development involving Tribhuvan University, Nepal, students from Sri Lanka, and UMB, Norway.

Most students interviewed agreed that the South-South component is of great value. However, the values were primarily connected with the opportunity for travelling to new countries and meeting new fellow students and friends. It is less clear to what extent the added value referred to the academic quality of the particular programmes attended.

The selection of partners and partner countries does not always seem to reflect strategic options and considerations; in a number of cases they seem to have been selected rather arbitrarily (and of course limited by the list of eligible countries), in other cases they have been added rather late in the process.

In general, the effect of the South-South cooperation component is mainly to add to already existing activities, rather than to bring in new project aspects, directions or activities in the programmes. Rarely do initiatives for establishing additional South-South partnerships originate in the South, based on specific needs, prior experience, or clearly expressed wishes and priorities. As long as this is the case, equal partnerships may not be easy to establish within any of the links in the South-South-North cooperation. Box 3.3 illustrates, however, that critical thinking on collaboration and partnership is on the agenda amongst several partners:

### **Box 3.3 Principles of desirable partnership**

Different models of partnerships have been studied by a group of Nepali and Norwegian researchers involved in the programme on Child Health and Nutrition. The principles of desirable partnership models that would promote sustainable, relevant and usable research have been proposed. These may include

- Partners should decide on the objectives together
- Partnership should be built on mutual trust
- Partners should develop networks to share information
- There should be transparency in financial dealings
- There should be a mechanism for periodic evaluation and monitoring of collaboration
- Partners must disseminate the results of research, apply them and share in profits equitably
- Partnership should lead to increase in research capacity of partners and further build on the past achievement
- Strengthening the capacity for conducting socially relevant research should be a specific aim of the partnership
- The Northern partner should be prepared to relinquish control and to accept considerable autonomy on the part of Southern partner

After: Adhikari, Shrestha and Strand: NUFU programme at Institute of Medicine, Tribhuvan University, Nepal: Impact on institutional development, May 2009

Concerns were expressed at several Norwegian universities that the 'eligible project countries' (largely the main Norad cooperation countries) are not always optimal seen from a strategic point of view. Cooperation with universities in South Africa, for

example, which had been developed over decades, had to be cancelled. Politically 'eligible countries' do not always offer optimal research cooperation opportunities.

At present the South-South-North collaboration is rarely based on a solid strategy and on clearly identified added value goals for the partnerships. Both among the recipient and the providing institutions and individuals, these concepts remain vague, highly ideological and theoretical more than practical, realistic and effective.

There was a significant conviction amongst the majority of participants met, both in Norway and in the South, that one of the strongest benefits of the programmes is the establishment of links and cooperation between institutions of higher education and research in the North and the South. The e-survey and self-evaluations confirmed the point. This may seem contradictory when one looks at the approach and the results so far. Both in the NUFU and the NOMA programmes, South-South cooperation and South-South-North cooperation remain a partly unexplored opportunity and not a well-established and effective means of collaboration. But the programmes are rightly understood as potential vehicles for forging stronger links between research(ers) and institutions of higher learning.

Until now the NUFU programme has to a greater extent than the NOMA programme succeeded in providing positive and constructive examples of South-South cooperation, even South-South-North cooperation, although such successful examples are not particularly widespread. Reasons for successful South-South cooperation within NUFU projects do of course relate to the much longer history of the NUFU than the NOMA programme, but also to the greater feasibility of such collaboration at the research and PhD levels.

In the NOMA programme the regional partners tended to be even more marginally placed and seemed only rarely to provide qualitative new additions to current project activities. During interviews in the South only very few examples of constructive effects of South-South partnerships were described beyond the mere participation in established, international Master programmes.

In the discussions with project partners of NOMA projects, both in Norway and in the South, hardly any other forms of partnership were mentioned, such as staff exchange, project work combining education and research, learning by doing, and joint capacity development. When asked why so little of this kind had happened, the partners often mentioned the limited and restricted funding under the NOMA programme as a main constraining factor. South-South cooperation tends to be particularly costly (especially due to travel and living costs), and this is often not adequately reflected in budgets.

The overall observation is that the NUFU programme has played a vital role for decades in building research and higher education collaboration, in particular between the larger Norwegian universities and their partners in the South. Reality proves that partnerships take time to consolidate and become sustainable. The NOMA programme has been established with a similar objective of partnership creation in mind, in a decentralised model of stronger South responsibility. Great

enthusiasm has been expressed for engaging in South-South-North cooperation but early signs of frustration are building up:

#### **Box 3.4 International democracy studies at risk**

A cooperation project for Master students from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and University of Oslo is severely underfinanced and at risk of being closed. The cooperating partners in Indonesia and Sri Lanka have requested that one of four semesters takes place in Oslo for studies of the Scandinavian democracy model and exchange of comparative experience in the South. The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (MER) is only prepared to compensate for study-points generated in Norway in programmes with exchange agreements and scholarships - not for NOMA exchange activities. MER has informed the Democracy studies programme that as of March 2007, all expenses of NOMA programmes are to be covered by Norad. Norad has informed they do not have the funds. The course has survived partly on the input of two Norwegian lecturers' free time and reallocation of some research funds earmarked for the two lecturers' research, partly on a one-time allocation from the Norwegian Embassy in Jakarta. As from 2009/10 very few students from Sri Lanka and Indonesia will be able to attend the course module in Oslo. The benefit both to the countries in the South and to Norway will be adversely affected. The Norwegian partners point out that there is a dire need that MER and Norad agree on responsibilities and find a reasonable solution to continued South-South-North collaboration in NOMA programmes.

Source: Uniforum, June 2008, interviews and SWOT at UiO

The case quoted in Box 3.4 relates to the issue of compensation as well as to the challenge of clear communication on regulations and project management according to agreements between the parties involved.

In the current situation the good intentions of forging strong South-North (and South-South-North) partnerships through the NUFU and NOMA programmes are at risk of being undermined, not because of a lack of willingness to participate, but from the consequences of changing resource allocations to universities in Norway. Such changes are fostered by the Norwegian university reform and its orientation more towards output measured funding, rather than core funding. Increasingly, funding to universities will be based on output indicators, not only intake in terms of number of students and graduates produced, but also publications in refereed and certified journals, ability to generate external competitive funding from both private or public funds (such as research councils), etc. The implication of this for Norwegian partners and researchers is that their involvement in the future may only take place to the extent the individual department's bottom line is serviced, or if the individual researcher uses even more of his or her non-remunerated free time than what is already presently the case.

This issue runs as a thread through recent project reports, interviews, self-evaluations, SWOTs and e-surveys from all types of stakeholders. The critical and changed funding mechanism underlines the risk of losing vital bases for Norway to continue internationalisation efforts in research and higher education which maintain and consolidate strong links with institutions in the South, links that go beyond collaboration between rich, self-contained universities.

In order to identify and optimize such opportunities and to improve the effectiveness and to sharpen the strategic objectives, SIU in cooperation with the NUFU and NOMA Programme Boards must clarify the objectives and intentions of the South-South cooperation, its forms and instruments, and must define proper achievement indicators to guide the implementation.

### 3.4 Management and Administration

#### 3.4.1 Organisational Complexity

Rules and regulations for the management and administration of the NUFU and NOMA programmes are stipulated in agreements between Norad and SIU.<sup>28</sup> Separate NUFU and NOMA Boards are responsible for the two programmes - Norad and the National Union of students in Norway appoint a board member each for each of the Boards, and the rest of the members are appointed by SIU on the basis of consultation with, and recommendations from, UHR. Regulations for management and administration of the individual projects are laid down in Tripartite Contracts between SIU, the Norwegian University and the University in the South involved in the project. Relations between Norad and SIU are also detailed in a 'Communication Plan for the cooperation between Norad and SIU' (Revised March 2008).

#### Box 3.5 Responsibilities and mandates

Norad is responsible for the overall policy of NUFU and NOMA and the guidelines to be followed in managing the programme according to directions given by the MFA.<sup>29</sup>

"NUFU's Board will make the final decisions on which applications will be granted support. The Board will look into all aspects of the application and the assessments made [by the external evaluators applied by the Board], and will make decisions based on these elements and with the overall compositions of the NUFU project portfolio in mind."<sup>30</sup>

"The NOMA Programme Board will ensure qualitative aspects regarding the Programme and the project applications granted funding, assess all applications and distribute funds according to the stated aims of the NOMA, monitor on-going activities, have a consultative role as to further development of NOMA."<sup>31</sup>

The overall administration of the programmes is the responsibility of SIU.<sup>32</sup>

Over the years as programmes have been changed and new ones established a considerable organisational complexity has developed. This has prompted a lack of rationality in administrative routines and conditions. Some of these may be illustrated by "**following the money**" through the various steps in the system, **locating decision-making structures**, and assessing the functioning of **parallel or partly overlapping funding** bodies. Based on this it is possible to assess how **adequate, viable and sustainable** the system may be for achieving the intended outcomes.

The **funding** for the NOMA and NUFU programmes derives from Norad which again receives the necessary means from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is based on

28 Norad (2006) Samarbeidsavtale mellom Direktoratet for Utviklingssamarbeid (Norad) og Senterfor internasjonalisering av høyere utdanning (SIU) om Forskning og utdanningssamarbeid mellom institusjoner i Sør og institusjoner i Norge gjennom Nasjonalt program for utvikling, forskning og utdanning (NUFU) / Norads Program for Masterstudier (NOMA).

29 Annual Report 2008 - The NUFU Programme and NOMA Annual Report 2008.

30 NUFU 2007-2011 Programme Document.

31 NOMA 2006-2010 Programme Document.

32 Annual Report 2008 - The NUFU Programme and NOMA Annual Report 2008.

annual negotiations and the decisions about funding levels are then confirmed in a contractual agreement established between the two institutions. The funds received are forwarded by Norad to SIU before funding is distributed to the Norwegian university partners. They are responsible for the transfer of money, either directly to recipient coordinators and partners in the South, or (more often) to university international coordinators or to the financial administration of the university.<sup>33</sup> From there the money will (often after some time) become available for the originally intended target groups. Funds remain with accounts offices and are released only when actual expenses occur.

Apart from being very lengthy, slow and cumbersome and often delaying the research activities, the complex route covers a number of different **decision-making structures and administrative cultures** which tend to hamper efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Each player in the network has its own agenda: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs may have their programmatic and strategic objectives closer linked to broader knowledge creation objectives, related to the Norwegian policy of taking full advantage of the globalisation process. Norad, with its aid history, background and administrative culture may have a much tighter aid perspective on the funds transferred to NOMA and NUFU. SIU (an organisational unit under the Ministry of Education and Research) may wish to consult with its own Board, with mainly representatives from the Norwegian Council of Universities and the Ministry of Education and Research, before the NOMA and NUFU Boards become involved. While the Ministry of Education and Research is the main provider of the universities' budgets, it has no funds of its own intended for aid, development or capacity building in the South, nor any related expertise. Again there is a risk of a clash of cultures. The ability to make fair decisions about the activities may be hampered by irrational organisational funding or decision-making structures. Attempts at aligning the different – and often conflicting – agendas of the many players are rare, perhaps because it is not clear, who holds the responsibility to create a better alignment.

Furthermore, the organisational complexity of the funding structure is negatively affected by the very different conditions given to different activities. The NOMA and NUFU programmes work under similar criteria and conditions, which are not particularly favourable for the universities. In contrast, some **parallel or partly overlapping** programmes, such as the Quota Scheme (funded by the Ministry of Education and Research), the Research Council of Norway (funded over the annual National Budget, and grants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Norad directed towards aspects of North-South research collaboration) are working under other and, often, much more favourable conditions.

The Ministry of Education and Research is bound by the limitations of its university funding budgets; it has no funding available for aid-related issues or activities,

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33 As e.g. stipulated in the *NOMA Guidelines for Master Programmes* (2008) (p.9): "All project funds will be transferred from SIU to the Norwegian main partner institutions. Disbursement of funds to project activities in the South should be made by the Norwegian main partner institution according to annual budgets. The partner institution in the South shall report on disbursed project finances annually to the Norwegian main partner institution while the Norwegian main partner institution is responsible for reporting of the final project finances to SIU."

except for the fact that enrolment of developing country students at Norwegian universities may result in paid compensation (even this opportunity seems to disappear in the near future). The NOMA programme and its university partners, focusing on Master's programmes in the South, will not be paid sufficient compensation for this effort, except in a few cases where students from the South spend a semester in Norway. As NOMA project administrative costs "should not exceed all together 7.5 % of SUM scholarships/fellowships + SUM teaching and supervision + SUM institutional development"<sup>34</sup> this leaves in practice very limited funds for administrative and coordinating activities for the Norwegian coordinators since e.g. scholarships are to be granted according to local (South) university regulations.<sup>35</sup>

Contrary to this, the Quota Scheme may include a full compensation, as students under this scheme are enrolled exclusively in Norway, and count as output (points) for the department.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, in the case of the Research Council of Norway, who increasingly support projects similar to the NUFU (with research collaboration linked up with both Master's, but in particular PhD training), a system of remuneration and compensation for the time used is negotiated with participating universities.

These complexities and - as seen from the point of view of Norwegian university partners – the lack of transparency and the unjust conditions are not only inefficient. They may, if not resolved, threaten the continuation of the programmes and the sustainability of the supported activities in the South. It should therefore be of concern to Norad who is overall responsible for the policy of the NUFU and NOMA programmes that a resolve is found. Perhaps because Norad has delegated administration of the programmes to SIU and management is taken care of at the universities Norad has not taken a proactive role on a number of controversial issues which have repeatedly been mentioned by stakeholders. To mention just a few: 1) The rigidity concerning eligibility criteria for thematic and country selection which follow overall Norwegian policies for international development cooperation, 2) Disagreements on (unclear) compensation criteria for MER and MFA support to programmes for research and higher education involving students from and in the South, and 3) an M&E system which is not adequate for assessing outcomes, achievements and costs.

In conclusion, there is an urgent need for the organisational complexity to be reduced by initiating a dialogue, in particular between Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad on one hand, and the Ministry of Education and Research on the other, in order to clarify objectives, roles and modalities of collaboration. Following this initial dialogue, also other relevant organisations, such as the Research Council of Norway, the Quota Scheme, the new Oil Fund, SIU, and the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions, together with the respective NOMA and NUFU Boards should be brought into the dialogue, in order to create more clarity, transparency, and not least efficiency and impact of programmes supported.

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34 *NOMA Programme Guidelines (2006-2010)*, p. 21.

35 It should be noted that, contrary to what is stipulated in the *NOMA Programme Guidelines (2008)* (p. 21), several NOMA students met during country visits stated that their scholarship provided less than local regulations and e.g. did not in practice cover field work.

36 The Quota Scheme does not include research funds.

A particular concern – perhaps less urgent – would be to decide how best to involve the Norwegian Embassies abroad. At present, the Embassies express their interests in being better informed about programmes and activities, but also in playing a more proactive role in the different phases of the programmes, at least by being consulted on crucial areas, such as eligibility criteria, thematic areas of intervention, needs and institutional assessments and other context bound issues. Further involvement by the Embassies would require clearer instructions from the MFA.

### **3.4.2 Monitoring & Evaluation**

Today university programmes are increasingly monitored and evaluated on the basis of the performance of the graduates on the labour market. It would be tempting to use a similar criterion for research-based training under the NUFU and NOMA programmes. Unfortunately this is not possible, since graduates are not systematically traced under the two programmes. However, in the case of the NOMA programme, the first graduates have just appeared, and it would still be possible to implement a tracing system and include all students. Given the importance of relevance, SIU would be well situated, on behalf of the Programme Boards, to encourage and assist institutions – and perhaps their alumni organisations - to establish adequate M&E systems, which would include tracer systems as a means to trace graduates in employment.

It is striking that – at the other end of the scale of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, - systems to assess national and university needs for specific research and master’s training programmes in the South are administered ad hoc by Norwegian partners, and have not been systematically developed by the responsible Programme Boards. Some steps have been taken towards preparation of planning and monitoring instruments. In 2007, SIU commissioned a study<sup>37</sup> to enhance effect measurement of the NOMA programme. The study elaborates on the use of indicators. Reactions by stakeholders interviewed were that the recommendations are not sufficiently operational, but no further work on this issue has been carried out - at least not implemented. In the view of the Evaluation Team this should not be the end of preparing a needed and more uniform M&E tool. The Evaluation Team has observed that some elements from the Effect Measurement study have been incorporated in the Communication Plan<sup>38</sup> between Norad and SIU, i.e. the ideas adopted from the British Quality Assessment Agency doing assessments of higher education institutions and subject areas based on self-evaluation by the institution. The Evaluation Team encourages that the assessment system be further developed into a general M&E system with the appropriate flexibility incorporated, which any M&E system for multifaceted organizations requires.

The following sections present findings on management and administration based on views from the South and from stakeholders in Norway.

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37 Andersen, C and Tobiassen, A.E.: *Effect measurement – Norad’s programme for master studies (NOMA)*, SNF-Working paper, Nr. 13/2007

38 Norad and SIU (2008): *Communication plan for the cooperation between Norad and SIU – Research and research-based higher education in the development sector.*

### 3.4.3 Views from the South

Most partners in the South derive much of their administrative and management experience conducive to the project from the interaction with their Norwegian counterpart, and much less so from interaction with the NUFU and NOMA administrations (their Boards or SIU). SIU has an intensive visit schedule and tries to incorporate visits to all projects on a regular basis (approximately 2-year cycle, at least for the universities with the largest portfolios), but in reality visits sometimes take place in connection with crisis management. Topics covered at project visits, purpose of visits and how follow-up is managed vary according to the standardised TOR drafted for the visits. Partners in the South did not always see these visits as instrumental in moving projects forward, perhaps because SIU's preparations are primarily done in collaboration with the Norwegian partners<sup>39</sup>.

Direct communication between partners in the South at the higher managerial levels of the programmes is quite rare.

Many well functioning Norway-South partnerships seem to have been initiated by former PhD students together with their former, Norwegian supervisors, who have jointly decided to continue their collaboration under a NUFU or NOMA project. In other cases, NUFU or NOMA projects have been initiated by Norwegian individuals who have been involved for years in practical development work, either within the private sector or as consultants for development organisations. In several cases this has led to successful cooperation and subsequently to the formulation of joint applications. An example of this is the involvement of Norwegian researchers/consultants in water and hydropower development in Nepal.

The Southern partners have generally little knowledge about the project financing system and Norad. They do not know how Norad relates to its funding source, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nor the role of the Ministry of Education and Research and how they together affect administrative procedures and routines within the NUFU or NOMA programmes. It may be added that information in the South about the related Quota Scheme is also very limited, although the Quota Scheme is used to stretch funds.

The general opinion expressed by the partners in the South is that administration in practice is fairly smooth and is effectively handled by their Norwegian counterparts. - Thus, the 36 persons from the South who in the e-survey replied to the question: *How would you characterize the cooperation with Norwegian partner institution(s)?* gave a positive answer. And all except for one person answered that their relation with the Norwegian partner institution(s) had changed for the better or had not undergone any particular change.

However, even with the limited experience on direct interaction at the higher levels of either NUFU or NOMA, the partners in the South are aware of a rather complex organisational structure, with many links, stakeholders and a variety of, at times, conflicting rules and regulations. They are often satisfied that the Norwegian

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<sup>39</sup> A point has been raised to the Evaluation Team that to the degree SIU is concerned about contact with students from the South, visits to the Norwegian host institutions are encouraged.



counterpart deals with this and that they do not have to develop their own expertise at this level.

Concerning NUFU and NOMA programme administration, Southern partners who replied to the e-survey were generally more positive than Norwegian partners - 78 pct from the South assessing the programme administration as effective as against 27 pct of the Norwegian respondents.

In some cases serious problems are caused by an inefficient handling of the transfer of funds from Norway to the partner institution in the South. In some instances it has been reported that these transfers took many months causing delays in project initiation, and in some cases arriving so late in the last project period that the grants could not be fully used<sup>40</sup>. In principle the transfer is a simple procedure and it is hard to understand why these problems occur. It is imperative that the Norwegian partners to whom this has happened identify the causes and change their transfer procedures in the future.

Another common reason for late arriving funds is the inefficiency of financial management in the South<sup>41</sup>. The financial administrations at many universities in the South do not understand the need for fast action, which researchers tend to have, and this is often the main problem in connection with the transition from teaching to research universities which takes place these years all over the South.

Formal Steering Committees of NUFU and NOMA projects are established and regular project meetings are held, at which progress is 'monitored' and decisions on future directions taken jointly by the partners in the North and the South. But according to partners met, in quite a few cases such meetings are only held if the Norwegian partner/coordinator happens to be passing by on other missions, and the meetings are not documented. This often leaves the Southern partner with numerous, sometimes urgent, unresolved questions.

Inputs from the South to the Norwegian partner, for example for Annual Reports, are generally seen as relatively uncomplicated, although unreliable Internet connections and long-lasting power cuts at times may make it difficult to meet deadlines. At some universities, even at the established research university AAU, these problems are constant challenges, but are often not recognized by either the Norwegian partner or the NUFU and NOMA management.

In connection with a review of completed project reports for most of the projects, the Evaluation Team found that many of these were routinely and rudimentarily filled in, leaving plenty of open space that instead might have been constructively used for better organizational learning and feedback.

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40 A recent review requested by Norad: Gjennomgang av økonomirapportering og felles rutiner mellom Norad og Senter for internasjonalisering av høgre utdanning (SIU), May 2009, prepared by Jan L. Andersen, recommends that Norad should consider to allow that unspent salaries may be transferred to the remaining programme period and for coverage of other eligible expenses - and allow SIU to transfer possible savings from unspent expenses to other projects.

41 In countries with high inflation and high interest rates some cases are known of delays in the local system, intentionally caused by the local financial management. These problems are presumably related to the question of who can earn the interests.

### 3.4.4 Views from the North

The perceptions of the administrative procedures and the management of the NUFU and NOMA programmes are not as positive among Norwegian university managements and project partners. In the majority of cases, the administrative routines and, in particular, the reporting requirements are seen as cumbersome and unnecessarily problematic. Among the most common reasons given were the frequent changes in reporting formats. In some cases information about such changes in reporting formats has arrived very late, close to the deadline. In other cases the new reporting formats have been introduced on the web without being adequately tested in advance. Other aspects of deeper organisational concern add to the complaints over administrative procedures at the SIU-partner institutions level:

#### Box 3.6 Concerns about management at SIU – partner institution level

“Most of the communication between SIU and the institutions are through the online administrative tools for application and reporting....

The coordinators thus enter their applications and reports directly into the SIU database, and the institutions will have to visit the SIU database in order to obtain documents for their internal processes. This creates a parallel position of the institutions rather than an in line position. The SIU database has neither until lately in no way been designed to accommodate this key function for the institutions. Instead of being able to promote efficient and targeted work by our researchers in application and reporting processes, the SIU tools require that institutional input be carried out separately or as a side-activity. Even if institutional ownership is a key-word for the NUFU and NOMA projects, the administrative tools employed by SIU appear to have disregarded this issue. It also appears that the quality control of the tools has been low before launching, and that the development of the tools has been made without much attention to the needs and routines of external users at the projects and institutions”

Note: This quote from a Norwegian University self-evaluation is in line with information from other self-evaluations and sources.

Not surprisingly, since the main responsibility for reporting lies with the Norwegian partner, responses to the question in the e-survey: How difficult are the reporting schemes/ procedures of the management of NUFU and /or NOMA? were answered as easy or medium by 97 pct. of the respondents from the South as against 76 pct. of respondents from the North, and 24 pct. from the North assessed reporting as difficult.

Even more dramatic are situations where project applications have been turned down due to late arrival at SIU, but experienced as force majeure of inefficient electronic communication by the Norwegian and Southern partners<sup>42</sup>. Norwegian partners often express their views as “inflexible administration” of the programmes. Adding to the frustration of Norwegian coordinators and partners is the fact that their work in connection with the project management is not regarded as fairly compensated, but usually requires extensive use of either research or free time or special time allowances from departments or faculties (see Box 3.2).

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<sup>42</sup> Contact was taken to the Evaluation Team by disappointed applicants, who had been encouraged to apply for supplementary Women’s Research funds, but had their late incoming application turned down despite electronic transfer force majeure. Although this case is an exception rather than the rule, complaints over transparency in decisions on applications were reported to the Team by several persons interviewed.

A particular concern of the Norwegian partners is the frequently changing eligibility criteria for NUFU or NOMA grants; such shifts are often a result of shifts in Norwegian development aid priorities and discourses, rather than a reflection of the needs and interest of the researchers involved in the North and South. Such politically motivated changes in the conditions for funding as well as the often shifting administrative procedures and formats, coupled with a relatively high turnover of SIU staff, hamper continuity and administrative efficiency in the local project management. It also at times causes considerable frustration among partners donating plenty of uncompensated work time to the activities.

Although eligible themes are quite roomy, partners are in cases more confused than informed, as different themes in one or two instances are lumped together (for example Theme 2 in the NOMA programme, Environment, economic development and trade, or Theme 7, Good governance, democratic development, human rights and migration). From partners in the South, for instance at AAU, it has also regrettably been noted that themes situated within the Humanistic Faculty, such as (indigenous) language, culture and identity are not perceived as being of relevance or having a role to play in development.

With regard to reporting on funding, Norwegian institutions point to better opportunities for full-cost reporting, i.e. a reporting system which will capture spending undertaken by projects/institutes over and above reporting to the budget ceiling only. This would allow for transparency on actual spending which is not captured in the current template. The template gives an impression that Norad covers all costs which is not always the case, when institutes and departments put in funds of their own.

#### **3.4.5 Management: Special Concerns regarding NUFU**

The reporting requirements within the NUFU programme are generally seen as heavy, but sensible. However, the electronic handling of the reporting formats is repeatedly mentioned as difficult and cumbersome. This is particularly true in the South, where difficulties in accessing web pages, power cuts and restrictions on Internet access add to the problems.

The much longer experience within the NUFU programme, however, means that basic procedures are well established and the requirements with respect to reporting and administrative routines are usually better known. Therefore, they generally cause less critical reflection than in the case of the NOMA programme.

The NUFU programme clearly stipulates that it is the Norwegian partner who is the overall responsible party for the grant provided, both with regard to monitoring of progress, planning of activities, administration and management, reporting and handling of the funding. This built-in asymmetry in the programme - which may have been introduced in order to ensure that Norwegian administrative standards are met - may nevertheless be counterproductive in both the medium and longer term. At present this arrangement seems only tolerated by the Southern partners as a condition in connection with the funding that comes along with it. Furthermore, many active researchers in the South consider it an advantage that a significant

administrative burden is taken off their shoulders. However, it is clear that an obvious opportunity for building administrative competence among researchers in the South is wasted this way.

In spite of the acceptance of the rules, several Southern partners are concerned about the situation and feel that the established partnerships are too unsymmetrical and that this may be caused by a lack of trust. There is little doubt that a further delegation of responsibility to partners in the South may help foster an important feeling of local ownership. It should not be overlooked that a feeling of responsibility is among the strongest motivating factors for hard and efficient work.

The element of ownership and motivation is also relevant to stress at university coordination level: At AAU the university coordinator felt increasing frustration and resentment as caused by the Norwegian university coordinators/ researchers systematically bypassing and neglecting his office, not involving him in any way, and not informing him about programme developments; instead liaising only and directly with the individual South partner researcher. This unfortunate state of affairs had repeatedly been reported back to Norway to both SIU and the Norwegian coordinators/ researchers, but to no avail.

The asymmetric relationship between Norwegian and Southern partners has been a repeated concern in previous NUFU evaluations. Long-standing relationships have pros and cons - mainly pros in fostering sustainable partnerships. However, cultural sensitivity does not always correlate with long-term acquaintance but entails a risk of turning into patronisation. Several examples of this were given. Partner institutions in Norway - whether new or in longer-standing relationships - must continuously ask themselves how best to manage asymmetrical relationships and be aware of the risk of patronizing. Just like NUFU has managed gender sensitisation 'courses' it may be suggested that cultural sensitivity events were sometimes administered, possibly with SIU as an instrumental agent.

#### **3.4.6 Management: Special Concerns Regarding NOMA**

The administrative procedures and the management practices under the NOMA programme have received much more criticism than those under NUFU. This is likely to be a result of the less established nature of the NOMA programme, as well as its past as a Norad Fellowship Programme. This programme was by many considered much better than the current NOMA set-up. The former was generally seen as flexible, easy to handle administratively and with less bureaucratic restrictions - in addition to carrying with it a fair compensation (see 3.2.6). What may be forgotten is that the NOMA programme is much more focused on strengthening Master's education programmes in the South. Hence, attention to the management and administration of the NOMA programme should target the Southern partner proportionally. The distribution of responsibilities between the Southern and Norwegian partners should also be reflected in a proposed M&E system (see section 3.4.2).

Administratively the NOMA programme also suffers from a lack of key achievement indicators that go beyond the reporting of graduates produced, etc. It is remarkable

that indicators targeting the broader justification for the programme, e.g. outcomes from the cooperation with regard to capacity development, individually and institutionally, are not integrated into an M&E system.

The NOMA programme in particular is sensitive to changing eligibility criteria of themes and geography. On the one hand pre-set themes hamper sensitivity to interests and needs of partners in the South, and on the other hand changing criteria may affect sustainability. Since the NOMA programme is still young there is scope for averting more unfortunate effects in a longer term perspective.

At times the relations between Southern and Northern partners have been reported as problematic. In a few cases the partner in the South has complained to the Evaluation Team that the Norwegian partner exerts attitudes which they labelled as “imposing”, “paternalistic” or “imperialistic”. Such feelings are likely to lead to both administrative and coordination problems and hamper project progress. Fortunately the cases reported were very few and may be caused by personal disagreements rather than related to the modality of the NOMA programme.

However, project and/or university coordinators at the South universities have repeatedly reported on their difficult situations, causing some frustration. In the case of Tribhuvan University, such frustrations were closely associated with the political nature of the university leadership, with one representative each in management representing each of the three dominant Nepalese political parties, the Maoists, the Communists and the Congress Party, leaving very little room for any decisive power in coordinating or establishing synergy between externally funded programmes.

Disagreements at project level it seems are more often associated with projects that have not evolved out of a prior partnership, established personal relationships or from intimate context knowledge.

### **3.4.7 Programme Administration - the Boards and SIU**

Based on interviews conducted and discussions held with present and former NUFU and NOMA Board heads and members, university representatives and other stakeholders, the impression is that the Boards have conscientiously carried out their mandates to the best of their ability and, in cases, followed by intense discussions over mandates, collaboration modalities and outputs and reporting formats.

The NUFU Board has taken a number of initiatives, as stipulated in the Programme Document, in order to professionalise both the Board and the NUFU management and their decision making, particularly by introducing a system of external evaluations of applications, conducted by referees from outside Norway, both from Europe and from the South. Other initiatives taken by the Board have included the holding of dissemination conferences, where impacts of supported projects on policy, communities and institutions have been discussed. As NUFU has moved into a new programme period (2007 – 2011), the Board has both given voice to Norwegian partners (and to a more limited extent Southern partners) in providing advice as to the future direction of the programme, and has simultaneously negotiated a new

Tripartite Contract, again seeking to involve Norwegian stakeholders and expertise. However, contrary to the NOMA Board, there is no South representation in the NUFU Board.

Issues of particular concern and discussion in the Board have been eligibility criteria for funding, particularly the thematic areas and their often rapidly changing nature, responding to the overall changes in the general Norwegian development discourse, and gender equality.

For the NOMA Board, challenges have been different, as they only recently (in 2006) took over from the previous Norad Fellowship Programme. While the NUFU Board has been more involved with continuing the generally good record of a programme in existence for more than 40 years, seeking to foster even more administrative professionalism, the NOMA Board has been struggling with establishing a completely new institutional and administrative framework for the programme.

In 2008 the Norad Fellowships Programme finished its last cohort of Master students educated at Norwegian universities, leaving it to SIU and the NOMA Board to fully take over a programme, which now would be exclusively directed towards the establishment of Masters programmes in the South.

This change in approach and modality has not only been a challenging venture for the Norwegian higher education institutions, but also for the NOMA Board, and the NOMA administration.

While the roles and functions of the NUFU Board, as well as the SIU/NUFU administration are generally more appreciated and recognised by stakeholders, even if complaints over reporting formats and similar are often voiced, in the case of the NOMA Board and administration it is more difficult both to assess and to verify voices of discontent, due to the administrative set-up still being in the making. However, some stakeholders, particularly stakeholders in Norway with experience from the research communities, voiced concern over disagreements between the Boards and the HEIs regarding the assessments and selection of projects - and a lack of transparency in the process.

Moreover, the turnover of personnel at all levels is high, and in particular programme administrators tend to be young, recently graduated university candidates with limited experience as administrators and with the research and higher education development field. This was also voiced as a concern by some persons interviewed from the Norwegian research community. However, the specific issues criticised were mainly regarding the selection procedures and decisions as described above, and it is worth noting that these procedures are the responsibility of the Boards - not the SIU administration.

The **Norad – SIU relations** are a recurrent issue of discussion between the parties. The roles and responsibilities are not always clear-cut. Thus the Board Chair has raised a concern that the NOMA Board “felt under pressure between SIU and Norad. With regard to the question about who has the authority to decide on

fund-advertisements within a program, Norad answered that it was the responsibility of the Programme Board. Norad and SIU both admit that agreements have been passed too hastily and agree to a need for clearer specifications of the working relationship between the two organisations.<sup>43</sup>

### 3.5 Synergy Effects

The strategic direction of both NUFU and NOMA programme includes synergy, phrased in the same words but targeting slightly different partners:

#### Box 3.7 Strategic direction – synergy

**NUFU:** All NUFU partners have a responsibility to seek synergies with other programmes, in particular with other Norwegian partners and programmes, such as the Research Council of Norway, the Norad Fellowship Programme, the Quota Scheme, and Norwegian bilateral development cooperation in the respective country. Coordination and synergy should also be emphasized in relation to other international players in the field of higher education and research.

**NOMA:** All NOMA partners have a responsibility to seek synergy for example through project partnership with other relevant Norwegian-funded initiatives, such as the NUFU programme, the Quota Scheme and Norwegian bilateral activities in the respective country. Collaboration should also be sought with Norwegian embassies/other international donors/actors in the field of higher education.

Source: Project Documents for NUFU and NOMA

NUFU and NOMA programmes tend to exist in parallel, and only in a few cases has a NOMA programme sequentially followed a NUFU project. Several partner universities in the South, including University of Malawi, Mekelle University in Ethiopia and Tribhuvan University in Nepal have extended their collaboration with Norwegian partners from NUFU to NOMA programmes, but without a thematic relationship between these. An exception in Malawi was the thematic relation between ‘Democracy consolidation’ (NUFU) and ‘Master’s Programme in Political Science’ (NOMA). NUFU and NOMA activities are rarely designed to support each other and do not represent particularly good cases of synergy<sup>44</sup>. Master programmes established under NOMA in the same country and with similar themes and objectives, but with involvement of two different universities in the South, are seen not to be coordinated in spite of their overlap. This represents a lost opportunity for highly relevant and needed synergies to evolve<sup>45</sup>.

43 Minutes of Samrådsmøte Norad-SIU 12.06.08

44 The “*International democracy studies*” involving Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and University of Oslo was a NOMA programme designed to complement a related NUFU project, but the unfortunate financial compensation circumstances described in Box 3.3 above did not allow the synergies to be optimized.

45 Two Master’s programmes established with Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University respectively had a rather similar focus and objective as both were related to meeting the demands for qualified manpower within the hydropower sector, but they had very limited collaboration and interaction.

### Box 3.8 Synergies for funding

“Currently responsibility for developing funding-synergies is with the researchers/ coordinators. Considerable amounts of work are put into this. On the other side, most funding sources have no incentives for being co-ordinated among themselves.

SIU is very keen to request information on various synergies in their reports. Small efforts are, however, made towards facilitating such internally at SIU: systems of different project periods, different application deadlines, different Programme Boards, evaluating application upon different criteria, etc. are maintained within SIU. It is even reported that the presence of one project may disqualify another, thus preventing the development of synergies.

In general, demands are put upon the Norwegian university sector to source for external funding. RCN and EU are regarded as prime targets for such efforts which are backed by both rhetoric and incentives. Whether synergies may arise between these sources and NUFU and NOMA depend on how the researchers may dissect their ideas and plans into sub-activities with objectives suitable for the various funding programmes.... The compartmentalisation of funding sources makes funding synergies arise more randomly than by a wholesome approach”

Note: This quote from a Norwegian University self-evaluation is in line with information received from other sources

The fact that NOMA funding is restricted to establishing Master’s programmes based in the South, without a financed continuation into PhD programmes, illustrates that synergies between NUFU and NOMA have not been built in from the outset of new NOMA programmes. The limited funding in both the NUFU and NOMA programme for research infrastructure could perhaps have been eased, if NUFU and NOMA programmes were better integrated. This seems to be an opportunity foregone. In the coming years a large number of NOMA funded graduates will be produced. There is little doubt that Norwegian advisers in many cases will want to continue the cooperation with the best of these through PhD programmes. This may lead to increased interest in NUFU projects, most likely with frequent requests for research infrastructure support.

The Evaluation Team noted that many institutional representatives and coordinators in Norway, but also well informed stakeholders in the South, aired ideas of better synergy between the Norwegian supported research and education programmes. Especially during interviews with Norwegian partners, it was frequently mentioned that both greater synergy and higher administrative efficiency (greater flexibility, viability and leaner administrative routines, applicable to both programmes) could be obtained by merging the two programmes.

Greater administrative simplicity and efficiency could also be achieved by reducing the number of Boards involved. Having both a NUFU and a NOMA Board with a SIU Board on top has not been fostering greater harmony, synergy or effectiveness.

The Quota Scheme is seen as a valuable contribution to capacity building, for example at PhD level, and synergies between this and the NUFU programme are potentially greater than what is already practiced, although the different rules and regulations within the two programmes work against smoother synergies. The Quota Scheme is considered a very attractive opportunity, both for its flexibility, the fair



compensation it offers Norwegian universities (contrary to the NOMA programme, even though it does not provide research funds), but also for being administratively lean. However, like the NUFU programme, the Quota Scheme lacks actions that may help make young well-trained researchers become productive after the return to their own country - e.g. by providing funding for post.doc. research and by the provision of small funds for infrastructure, such as laboratory facilities or ICT equipment.

The complex organizational landscape in Norway would benefit from an overhaul that would make it possible to foster greater synergies. The different and often contrasting rules and regulations in existence within each institution are at present a hurdle in this respect. This is, for example, the case for the NUFU programme with its specific programme modalities, and the Research Council of Norway (RCN), which also supports programmes addressing capacity building in the South, including Master's programmes and scholarships for PhD students. While researchers at Norwegian universities complain at length (and rightly so, it seems) over insufficient funding in the NUFU programme, a grant from the RCN would provide them with a fair, nearly complete compensation for work on very similar kinds of research and capacity building. Not only does this imbalance seem unjustified; it may also at times prevent constructive synergies to unfold.

Numerous other donor funded projects often exist in the same institution and on similar themes as NUFU and NOMA projects, but examples of synergies with those are surprisingly few. Cooperation with other Nordic projects and programmes (e.g. with Sida-SAREC or Danida funding) is generally lacking, although the benefits of cooperation might be substantial. One example begs particular attention, i.e. the ongoing creation of a national graduate school with extensive Sida funding at AAU in Ethiopia. Any university-based project in Ethiopia will be affected by this major initiative, but so far there seems to be little interaction between this and NUFU projects in Ethiopia.

The overall finding is that synergy effects between NUFU and NOMA activities and between these and other programmes and bilateral development cooperation have been and still are, more ad hoc than strategically integrated. The explanations are several, e.g. different goals, histories, contents and administrative and financing procedures of the two programmes. Another explanation is focus on other priorities, i.e. first of all on fulfilling the objectives of the individual programmes.

Considering that support for research and higher education is thematically conditioned on Norwegian bilateral priorities it is remarkable that the cooperation with bilateral development programmes is very limited and not formalized in what the Evaluation Team has seen. Even less is the cooperation with related international programmes. Neither is collaboration with Norwegian Embassies established much beyond the occasional financial support for ad hoc activities provided by the Embassy on application and for administrative relations for visa provision etc.

Interviews with Embassy representatives in the three countries included in the evaluation indicate that there is scope for considerably more synergy and coopera-

tion of a strategic nature seen from the point of view of the Embassies, for example synergy with Norad's Master Programme for Energy and Petroleum (EnPe) and Norad's business sector initiatives NUMI/Norad. The position of the Embassies close to the partners in the South and their expressed interest in learning from the Norwegian supported research speak for a much more active role of the Embassies in a future support model.

### 3.6 Decision-Making Processes and Transparency

*"The cooperation shall be based in the principle of equality between the partners and should be characterised by transparency at all levels."<sup>46</sup>*

Decision-making is in many ways closely linked with the previous section 3.4 on Management and Administration. In a partnership perspective it is vital how the partners experience their opportunities to influence decisions making processes. Transparency of rules and regulations at different levels – programme policies, procedures for applications, criteria for distribution of responsibilities, for financial allocations, for dissemination and communication, etc. – influence stakeholders' satisfaction. Are systems sufficiently sensitive to give stakeholders an experience of having a 'voice'? Or are vital decisions taken top down?

The following sections present views from the stakeholders in the South and in Norway. A general indication from the e-survey gives comparative perspectives, i.e. to the question: *Have you had adequate influence in decision-making processes within NUFU and/or NOMA?* 72 pct. of the respondents from the South answered YES, while only 44 pct. of the respondents from the North answered YES.

Concerning the view on transparency the difference was even larger. To the question: *Is the transparency of the decision-making process in the NUFU and/or NOMA programmes satisfactory?* 91 pct. of the respondents from the South answered YES, while 56 pct. of the respondents from the North answered NO. This may not be surprising, since South and North are differently involved in decision-making processes. For example, there are only two representatives from the South in the NOMA Board (and none in the NUFU Board). To the degree these findings can be generalised, it is indicative that the Northern partners who carry the larger share of management and administration responsibility, and therefore typically are more involved in the processes and procedures at those levels, are most sceptical about transparency and opportunities for influencing decisions.

#### 3.6.1 Views from the South

The NUFU and NOMA agreements clearly stipulate that the overall responsibility for the projects rests with the Norwegian partner and institution.

Although this obviously constitutes a built-in unequal distribution of tasks and responsibilities, most Southern partners did not consider this asymmetry a major problem in practice, when directly asked about it. However, as a matter of principle, it gives rise to some dissatisfaction (in spite of the researchers' frequent relief that

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<sup>46</sup> NUFU (2007-2011) and NOMA (2006-2010) Programme Documents.

they do not have to deal with these issues). The way the South can influence decision-making processes in Norway has, however, formed the basis for discussions between Southern and Northern partners on a number of occasions; it has been emphasized in previous evaluations of the NUFU Programme; and the Team understands it was brought up at the recent (February 2009) NUFU Conference gathering in Malawi.

This apparent contradiction may reflect the fact that there is considerable satisfaction with the present system as long as everything goes smoothly. However, when things go wrong or disagreements appear between Southern and Northern partners, the lack of transparency (viewed from the South) in the decision-making processes as well as the overall asymmetries in the NUFU and NOMA programmes become serious and irritating problems.

During project visits in the South a number of such incidents of lack of transparency in the decision-making in Norway were reported. A few cases were mentioned, where applications for second round NUFU funding were turned down, apparently without reason. In some cases this happened despite favourable prior assessments of the project outcomes from the first grant period. In one case, the partners were even encouraged by SIU to apply for a second round, based on the quality of their outputs, but were nevertheless turned down.

During the country visits it was also revealed that budgetary allocations to the Northern and Southern partners are often unbalanced, only to some extent reflecting the differences in costs in the two regions. In a number of cases the inequality and the imbalance in budget allocations went well beyond such cost considerations. It may be added that it was reported to the Evaluation Team that some of the Norwegian partners had succeeded in negotiating more favourable conditions with SIU than others. This may be possible in some cases for the larger universities with more projects, administrative units and professionally employed staff, who have better insight into eligible funding areas than smaller institutions.

Such (perceived) inequalities tend to be considered unfair by partners in the South, unless they are clearly justified. The dissatisfaction is particularly high when the professional input from the Norwegian partner is considered limited and of questionable value by the partner in the South; this was observed in a few cases.

Although most partners in the South were reluctant to express sharp standpoints or requests for changes, they nevertheless often gave the impression that the asymmetries<sup>47</sup> in programmes were in need of revision. Some would like to see more decentralized administrative and decision-making structures, with a much greater influence given to the partners in the South.

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<sup>47</sup> Other asymmetries are experienced in projects and programmes where students from different countries participate, since conditions for remuneration/scholarships and per diems vary considerably. Thus students in the same NUFU project had different conditions when in South Africa and in Ethiopia, much more favourable in South Africa. And students who make their way to Norway may end up with remittances which compare favourably with salaries of university staff in their home countries.

### **3.6.2 Views from the North**

Partners in the North generally agree with the view from the South that the existing asymmetries within the NUFU and NOMA programmes are counterproductive and run against overall objectives of creating capacities in the South which are sustainable and carried forward by competent local ownership.

At a general level, it is also recognized by Northern partners that NUFU and NOMA programmes ought to be more demand driven and less supply driven (by Norwegian partners' fund opportunities). It is, at least in principle, recognized that programmes need to move from a focus on the individual researcher, towards an increasing focus on the institutional (departmental) level in the South. It is generally felt that a more holistic approach to capacity building is required, eventually even a form of basket funding, where university managements are targeted and given an opportunity to make decisions, decide on university priorities, and allocate funding accordingly. However, as this shift may easily result in other partners than Norwegian partners being selected for collaboration projects, Norwegian researchers do not directly recommend such changes within their project, and many warn against hasty changes in the current set-up.

Nevertheless, Norwegian researchers are quite critical in connection with a number of programme issues and current practices related to decision-making and transparency within SIU and the NUFU and NOMA programmes. In particular, the criticism concerns what is perceived as arbitrarily decided changes in eligibility criteria for programme participation in relation to themes and geographical areas. Also what was experienced as frequent changes in the required reporting formats were mentioned as nuisances by Norwegian partners, who also often feel that personal communication with SIU is difficult and limited to take place on the web.

It is the impression of the Evaluation Team that project reporting formats need to be reviewed to optimise information, something which could be done in connection with a more systematic approach to Monitoring and Evaluation.

### 3.7 Programme Relevance to the South

#### Box 3.9 Relevance of Programmes

**NUFU:** Historically, the NUFU programme has been based on independent research cooperation with scientific disciplines prioritised by the partner institutions, with an emphasis on the priorities made by the South institutions. In the fourth phase of the NUFU programme there is an increased requirement to document the relevance of the proposed projects.

In their application, the institutions and their researchers need to demonstrate that the proposed project is in accordance with institutional strategies and priorities in the partner institutions. Further, the relevance of the proposed project to national strategies for development and poverty reduction in the country/countries in the South needs to be clarified.

**NOMA:** Competence and capacity building in specific areas of strategic importance to eligible countries for support by NOMA are a vital part of Norwegian support to the development of higher education. Successful project proposals should demonstrate that the proposed activities address relevant educational needs of institutions and/or organisations at national level. Socio-cultural and socioeconomic relevance will be further strengthened through design of course curriculum, fieldwork and thesis work.

Objectives of the NOMA Programme:

- To support the development of Master programmes at HEI in the South through close collaboration with HEI in Norway in accordance with national needs
- To achieve, in a longer perspective, sustainable capacity of institutions in the South to provide the national work force with adequate qualifications within selected academic fields of study

Source: NUFU (2007-2011) and NOMA (2006-2010) Project Documents (our emphasis)

In brief, the relevance of the programmes concerns both national development and poverty reduction and relevance at the institutional level. Employability is an indicator of relevance.

It became clear from the e-survey and interviews during country visits that the relevance of the NUFU and NOMA programmes is generally considered as high. Thus 70 pct. of the respondents from the North and 100 pct. of the respondents from the South answered in the affirmative to the question: Are the objectives of the NUFU and /or NOMA clearly linked to the priorities and strategies of your institution?

Nearly all project participants and administrators interviewed in **Ethiopia** felt that both the NUFU and NOMA programmes were highly relevant to the country and that unemployment of graduates would not be a major risk. This was primarily based on the present and future demand for research-trained staff for the many new universities as well as for those more established universities that are increasing their emphasis on research. This in particular underlines the relevance of the NUFU projects.

The team took note of the fact that the general demand from the private sector for candidates with the qualifications acquired from the programme activities was not apparent, at least not outside fields like engineering, hydropower development and similar themes. This was explained by some to be a consequence of the private

sector, which (still) does not frequently employ academically trained staff rather than a consequence of the projects/themes. It should be noted that most of the NOMA students already are employed.

However, with the new role for Addis Ababa University as a national graduate school, the need for training within NOMA Master programmes would be more limited, since the university considers itself fully capable of developing and carrying out most of the programmes needed at this level. There would be a continued high demand for internationalizing the research and for PhD training, in other words the assistance that may be provided through the NUFU programme. In order to prevent a too uniform (AAU) research background of the staff for the new and upcoming universities in the provinces these would still benefit from staff training through NOMA Master's programmes.

In Ethiopia the numerous applied research projects carried out under the NUFU programme demonstrate a high, fairly direct relevance of the supported projects. However, at Addis Ababa University there was an increasing interest in a shift towards cooperation within basic research, rather than the present more or less applied research (which corresponds to high priorities in both Norwegian aid policies and in many other similar programmes). This new need for a strengthening of basic research at AAU is understandable in connection with the new role of AAU; today most applications are built on basic research and such competence is required in order to provide high quality research training also in the applied fields.

In Ethiopia, brain drain of research trained staff is a general and very serious problem. This is also the case for a couple of NUFU projects (such as engineering), but outside these it is generally of limited extent. Most PhD graduates return directly to their respective home departments from the foreign training, in many cases highly motivated for assisting in the further capacity building in their home institution.

In **Nepal** the relevance of the supported NOMA and NUFU projects was likewise considered high. This was also the message obtained in interviews with representatives from the private sector as well as with representatives from a major international research organization located in Kathmandu (ICIMOD).

Several Nepalese Master programmes had a particularly high relevance, for instance the courses on electrical engineering (hydropower development), or the Master programme on Conflict, Peace and Development. The relevance of these programmes could, however, have been even greater if the multidisciplinary ambitions in the programmes had received more serious attention. Since most activities in real life are overwhelmingly interdisciplinary, it is not enough to give such aspects a rudimentary treatment without fully incorporating them in the course modules. Likewise inclusion of a gender perspective will increase relevance (See section 3.10). A particular successful example in Nepal, testifying to relevance, is the NUFU project on child health and nutrition which in its last phase has established links with partners in the North beyond Norway, namely the Gates Foundation and John Hopkins University.

The relevance and utility of the projects supported in Nepal would be much improved if closer links were established with relevant aid programmes in the country, for instance within the areas of governance, conflict resolution and decentralization. Whenever possible, cooperation with local industry may also add great value to the projects.

At the moment employment prospects for research trained graduates were not seen as particularly promising in Nepal, primarily due to the current economic and political situation in the country. Relevance and sustainability of the projects supported in Nepal are also threatened by the present insufficient funding of local universities. This adds to the existing severe difficulties in interacting, networking and linking with the surrounding society.

In **Malawi**, the relevance of supported projects is also considered high, since training of staff at both the PhD and Master levels is needed in order to manage the educational and research aspects of tertiary education institutions. Similarly, the specific research activities being implemented at the tertiary institutions were considered relevant in the context of the development needs of Malawi, which go beyond the needs at universities. Research trained staff are also required in order to generate the knowledge and information needed to make the national policies more efficient, for example with respect to technology, environment, etc. A particular need was identified in the area of Social Work, where demands from both the national government and from NGOs in the country are strong.

It was mentioned by several of those interviewed in the South at different levels of the universities that in order to generate an even higher degree of relevance, there is a need to add post-doctoral funding opportunities to the NUFU concept. This would allow new PhDs to reflect more on the application of their fairly theoretical PhD training.

As indicated above, better opportunities are also needed for improving the research infrastructure in the home department of the young research-trained staff (e.g. with laboratory equipment, IT and other facilities). This will not only help ensure that new PhD graduates are kept on a research and education career track, and that they stay in their home country. It will also often allow them to interact more constructively with industry and the labour market in general in their countries.

### **3.8 Relevance to Norwegian Institutions**

During interviews with Norwegian institutions many examples of high relevance were given. This was in particular true for NUFU, where many years of joint research had resulted in joint publications, increasingly being published in internationally refereed journals (See section 3.2.5). For Norwegian institutions and researchers, who specialize in international development cooperation, a platform in the South is vital to give depth and relevance to interesting research problems. The example from Nepal with links established with Gates Foundation and John Hopkins University confirms this. Some also mentioned the access to brilliant research students through the NUFU programme. It was indicated by some that serious, research-heavy universities in Norway would benefit much more from participation in NUFU

activities, while NOMA projects would be of more interest in smaller universities and colleges.

For many individual Norwegian researchers the involvement in NOMA and particularly in NUFU programmes has been a personal investment reaching well beyond the frameworks and ramifications of the supported programmes. The amount of time invested, most often uncompensated, free time, is huge, but in many cases the rewards have also been substantial at both the research and personal levels.

The partnerships established, and the themes they cover, have helped increase activities within North-South cooperation on development issues in Norway. Many Norwegian researchers are not willing to give this up, in spite of severe threats resulting from the implementation of the University Reform. The knowledge base on development issues in the South that is being created this way must in several connections be considered of high value if Norway is both to provide international aid of relevance in increasingly complex development contexts, and in order to take full advantage of the opportunities of the globalization process. Similarly, the internationalization of the student body resulting from NUFU and NOMA projects is a valuable addition in Norway. Unfortunately the platform for internationalization of the Norwegian student body is at risk, in particular since very few Norwegian students are attached to the NOMA programmes in the South.

### **3.9 The Political and Institutional Environment in Norway**

#### **3.9.1 New Agendas for Internationalization of Higher Education and Research**

The current discussions in Norway of a new agenda for international development cooperation (St.meld.nr.13) as well as of the internationalization of education and research (St.meld.nr.14) - both sharing a concern as to how best to address in the North as well as in the South issues related to the challenges and opportunities of the process of globalization - have proven far more crucial for this evaluation of the NUFU and NOMA programmes than originally anticipated.

While the overall evaluation in a number of respects has turned out positively, such positive outcomes may increasingly be threatened by, in particular, the implementation of the university reform, which in an effort to further the internationalization of Norwegian universities and making them more internationally competitive has adopted a number of results and output based criteria for funding, reducing the relative importance of core funding.

The implications of such changes are still to be seen in full scale, but an almost unanimous response by interviewed coordinators, university managers and staff is that a major disincentive has been introduced which makes it much less likely that university involvement in NUFU or NOMA programmes may continue, at least not at the level seen in the past.

Already prior to the implementation of the university reform, the amount of unpaid or under-compensated work put into the two programmes has been substantial, and although coordinators/researchers in many cases have built their careers and



used much of their free time on enthusiastically involving themselves in the university internationalization process, the limit for such continued involvement seems to have been reached.

Adding to this is a continued policy on the part of the Ministry of Education and Research only to provide funding and thus compensation to Norwegian universities for students from the South when studying in Norway. The consequences are further exacerbated with the recent shift in programme focus, after the Norad Fellowship Programme turned into NOMA with an emphasis on the establishment of Master's Programmes in the South.

The disincentives introduced for the involvement of Norwegian universities and researchers in the NUFU as well as the NOMA programme via the above-mentioned policies is the single most important threatening factor for the sustainability of the programmes, indeed for their survival.

### **3.9.2 Complex Programmes – Different Conditions and Modalities**

The complex organizational landscape behind the NUFU and NOMA programmes (See section 3.4.1), compared to a number of similar or in certain respects comparable programmes, is another crucial element which – if left unresolved – may also hinder a cost effective and viable use of Norwegian resources intended for strengthening the internationalization process.

The different conditions in force for the operation and implementation of the various, but in cases overlapping programmes, may contribute to the NUFU and NOMA programmes not being sufficiently cost-effective or attractive. And although there is a historical explanation of the differences in programmes in support of the Norwegian internationalization process, it is hard to see the rationale today.

While such factors constitute fundamental challenges to the Norwegian institutional and political environment, very much affecting the future of both the NUFU and NOMA programme, other challenges are posed by developments in the South, e.g. new demands from universities.

### **3.9.3 New Demands from the South**

After in many cases more than 20 years of university capacity building, following a rather traditional even orthodox course of action with the support to meeting basic infrastructural needs as well as educational and research needs, some universities have progressed more rapidly than others, but the situation in the South is generally different and much more diverse than it once was.

Such changes have in the evaluation been illustrated not least during the visit to Addis Ababa University, where university management frankly and openly requested new forms of assistance and collaboration with the North, distancing itself from past forms of collaboration.

Much more flexibility and ability on the part of the North to adapt to the changing university context in the South was requested, illustrated by AAU not wanting more

Master's programmes established (as they considered themselves perfectly capable of handling this), and would favour support for research collaboration on a much more equal footing, emphasizing basic research, rather than the hitherto (by donors) favoured emphasis on field work and applied research, believed to be of direct relevance to the national Ethiopian development needs.

The direct linking of a Norwegian university department with a South university department (often grounded on individual, personal relations, rather than broader South university visions and strategies) tends to weaken the university management's own ability to strategise and prioritise, hampering a local decision-making process in support of own strategies to unfold.

Hence, reflecting actual needs as based on many years of more traditional capacity building, a new format for funding and collaboration is needed, where donors would be required to provide basket funding, rather than support single and individual, sporadic programmes or forms of collaboration.

Such a move towards basket funding has recently been taken by Sida-SAREC, and other donors were expected to follow suit, also because this form of funding and collaboration was seen as following along lines outlined in the Paris Declaration in 2005 and its follow up, the Accra Agenda of Action from 2008, in an effort to advance alignment, harmonization and local ownership, but also to reduce transaction costs and improve on cost efficiency.

#### **3.9.4 Recognizing Diverse Needs – Adjusting and Decentralizing Modalities for Cooperation**

For donors and collaborating institutions in the North alike such new developments pose enormous challenges, but should not be disregarded or neglected, as the voice for change from the South seems to be growing in strength<sup>48</sup>, although the implication may be that the last bastion of “tied aid” may be up for discussion/revision.

This voice for change in the South also includes critical reflections on thematic priorities selected by the Norwegian partners, following decisions taken at policy levels in the MFA and Norad. Reactions to the selected areas of priority which follow the changing political development discourse in Norway have also been voiced by the majority of Norwegian partners during interviews, self-evaluations and SWOT analyses, and is a recurrent issue in the NOMA and NUFU Boards. It seems that both partners in the South and in the North agree on the need to be more thematically sensitive towards views expressed in the South. In other words getting closer to the context, and letting needs expressed in the South have priority over the politically motivated directions from the North.

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48 See for example Dambisa Moyo (2009): *Dead Aid. Why Aid is not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa?* Penguin Books.

Getting closer to the context, adapting greater flexibility in recognizing a much greater diversity among universities in the South and preparing for the stronger voice from the South expecting basket funding to be promoted, a process of decentralization may be foreseen in which the role of Norwegian Embassies may be strengthened, to an extent replacing the currently strong linking and responsibility given to the Norwegian partner.

Expecting that Embassies should play a greater role within this field of collaboration should not entirely leave out the most often very positively valued role of the Norwegian researchers, but ought to give way to new modalities of collaboration, where asymmetries that currently constitute conditions for collaboration and partnership are reduced.

### 3.10 Gender Issues

In line with the overall policies for Norwegian development cooperation, gender equality is an explicit objective in the two programmes<sup>49</sup>. There is a “Focus on gender equality and women’s rights as a prerequisite to end poverty and secure sustainable economic growth”<sup>50</sup>. In this perspective it was to be expected that projects and programmes pay significant attention to gender equality and women’s participation. This is also the case in one sense: Across the projects and countries substantial efforts are undertaken to ensure that girls/women are being recruited as students and researchers. However, the most frequently heard comment is that the recruitment base includes relatively few women due to a variety of cultural and economic barriers, hence the number of female participants remain lower (see tables 3.6-3.8). This is more pronounced in the technical and natural science disciplines than in the social sciences and humanities (see table 3.7).

The Evaluation Team’s observation is that considerable attention is paid to recruiting more female researchers and students, and progress has been made. Less attention is directed to other parameters in gender mainstreaming in the sense of taking into account women’s and men’s different opportunities, rights and access to resources, to influence and voice in society, in all activities in the research and Master’s programmes. Hence the gender perspective remains very narrow as a headcount of (fe)male students and researchers. With a few exceptions of better practice, for example Constructions of Gender in the Formal and Informal Sector in Ethiopia, Urbanisation and Gender in Ethiopia, and Child Welfare and Gender in Comparative Social Work, Malawi there is limited appreciation of the opportunities for gender mainstreaming in research projects and curriculum, even when themes and topics invite a gender perspective<sup>51</sup>.

The ‘gender issue’ seems to fare a similar fate with multidisciplinary perspectives: On the one hand there is a growing awareness amongst institution-responsible management and project coordinators that multidisciplinary and gender sensitive

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49 It is never stated in the NUFU and NOMA documentation, that *gender equality is the goal and gender mainstreaming is the strategy* - in line with international conventions such as the Beijing Platform for Action agreed at the Fourth Conference on Women, Beijing 1995. Hence the distinction between goal and strategy is also often mixed.

50 See Dybdahl, Ragnhild /Norad 2009): *Education and research: Norwegian current priorities - Norad’s role and priorities*, 2009.

51 There is scope for gender mainstreaming in many themes and topics, e.g. water and natural resources management, power and energy, roads and transport, land use, food production, urban development, environmental education, development management, special needs education, local knowledge, child health, health and information systems, governance, conflict, peace building and development, democracy consolidation, and several others.

approaches are pursued globally in research and higher education. On the other hand, to change practice from narrow technical disciplines to holistic multidisciplinary approaches is faced with many challenges due to established academic traditions, institution/discipline inertia and in some cases political disagreements in universities. Indeed, there is a risk that “gender issues will receive reduced attention due to requirements for making priorities in many - including smaller - fields” both in the South and in the North, as it is expressed in SWOT analysis from Norwegian partners.

### **3.10.1 NUFU Perspectives**

#### **Gender Balance**

The Strategic Plan which guided the NUFU Programme during the first phases set out a very specific target for gender balance of 40 pct. women from the South of the total number of researchers. Besides, the Strategic Plan included a very general objective on the integration of women and gender perspectives in the collaborative projects. Evidence from databases, from interviews, self-evaluation, e-survey and reports indicates that the objective has not been firmly pursued in the implementation of the programme’s first three phases from 1991-2006<sup>52</sup>. This has been frequently pointed out by stakeholders inside and outside the programme.

Most NUFU-supported projects report in the e-survey that they have employed particular measures for recruitment of female students to PhD and Master’s studies. Figures reported in table 3.6 show that the target regarding gender balance of 40 pct. has been met during the two periods and almost the same proportion. The figures hide a difference between Master’s and PhD students as there is a significant gender gap at the PhD level, i.e. 45 pct. females at Master’s level, 24 pct. at PhD level among the total number of completed degrees by South students involved in NUFU-funded projects.<sup>53</sup>

**Table 3.6 Distribution of candidates, completed and expected completed - incl. PhD and Masters - by gender and programme period**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
NUFU 2002-2006	241	43	321	57	562	100
NUFU 2007-2012	144	42	197	58	341	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>385</b>		<b>518</b>		<b>903</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: SIU NUFU database, August 2009

<sup>52</sup> Phases 1-3 1991-2006, Phase 4 2007-2011.

<sup>53</sup> SIU: *NUFU Final Report 2002-2006*, p. 19.

**Table 3.7 Completed/exp. completed PhD and Master Candidates by gender, discipline and programme**

Main Discipline	NUFU 2002 - 2006		NUFU 2007 - 2012	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Health Sciences	36 (15%)	22 (7%)	37 (26%)	39 (20%)
Humanities	28 (12%)	37 (12%)	30 (21%)	33 (17%)
Social Sciences	85 (35%)	100 (31%)	27 (19%)	37 (19%)
Agriculture/Veterinary	4 (1,7%)	12 (4%)	16 (11%)	27 (14%)
Natural sciences	73 (30%)	116 (36%)	32 (22%)	50 (25%)
Technical/Engineering	7 (3 %)	26 (8%)	2 (1%)	11 (5 %)
Combinations	8 (3 %)	8 (2%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)
Total	241 (100%)	321 (100%)	144 (100%)	197 (100%)

Source: SIU NUFU database, August 2009 Note: Considerable shifts have taken place between the two NUFU phases – women in health sciences have increased to 26 pct. The largest of all; women in social sciences have gone down, and women in natural sciences have decreased but are still 22 pct.

### **Renewed Focus on Gender Mainstreaming?**

The Programme Document for the fourth phase of the NUFU programme (2007-2011) maintains that the fourth phase will have a renewed focus on gender mainstreaming<sup>54</sup>. Further, NUFU will stimulate participants to increase the number of female researchers taking part in the programme, in order to pursue a gender balance and recruit more women, in particular Master's students and PhD candidates. Women recruited for Master's programmes should be encouraged to continue on to PhD level, it is stated. But provisions are not given for this possibility automatically.

A special measure is taken to improve the gender balance and the conditions for female PhD students:

“Financial rewards will be granted to projects that reach the stated objective of recruiting at least 40 pct. women to PhD education. These grants may include additional financial support to the women involved for measures that can facilitate their participation in and completion of PhD education programmes” (Programme document, p. 9).

This is a welcome measure amongst those participating institutions who are interested in pursuing gender perspectives in research projects and in gender-related research. Worries were still expressed by many stakeholders that female students from the South will not be granted equal conditions with Norwegian students in connection with pregnancy. Only about half of the projects met the minimum goal of 40 pct. female PhD candidates or presented plans for mainstreaming gender into the projects, as stipulated in the 2007 application round. Indeed, a pertaining

<sup>54</sup> Programme Document, NUFU 2007-2011, p 4, SIU 2006

weakness is pointed out in SWOTs by several Norwegian partners: “Lack of practical tools for securing equal rights for women (maternity leave, child care, etc.)”.

### **One-time Ear-marked Funds for Women’s Rights Research**

To pursue the objectives of gender equality and of women-related research, a one-time special allocation under NUFU of 25 million NOK was agreed between SIU and Norad in 2008. The announcement “...earmarks funds to NUFU projects with a focus on women’s rights and gender equality that contribute to research, knowledge generation, institutional cooperation and capacity building provided by national institutions and networks in collaboration with Norwegian universities and institutions of higher learning”<sup>55</sup>. The funds shall be utilised from 2008-2012.

There is some concern about this one-time, separate allocation amongst parties interviewed in Norway concerned with mainstreaming gender equality in development cooperation. They point to the risk of sidetracking the opportunity of gender mainstreaming across the research and education projects as against “women’s projects”. The uneasiness links to a concern over how “gender” is tackled in the NUFU programme as illustrated in a quote from the self-evaluation by a Norwegian partner institution, Box 3.10:

#### **Box 3.10 Gender on the NUFU agenda**

“Gender has been on the NUFU-agenda for a long time and the NUFU Gender Workshop in 1999 made a number of clear recommendations to the different actors in the NUFU programme.

To our experience, few of them have been followed up in practice. In addition, project proposals with a focus on gender networking have been downgraded ... as the focus was on gender-networking between research projects instead of being strictly on gender research. NUFU has as one incentive for gender mainstreaming established a reward to projects having enrolled more than 40 Pct. female PhD students. Outside this, the issue is to be taken care of in research themes and in project design. Current knowledge indicates that a wider range of tools are needed to achieve progress towards gender mainstreaming, and one must realise that mainstreaming requires resources. Research on women’s rights is important, so is it also to women to qualify for top positions”.

In other words, gender mainstreaming in NUFU requires that tools<sup>56</sup> and “plans and recommendations for projects, networks and increased efforts on gender issues are available” (Statement on opportunities in a SWOT analysis), ‘outside’ the head-count and targeted women’s rights initiatives.

Responses from participants in NUFU’s recent workshop on “The challenge of mainstreaming gender issues” (April 2009)<sup>57</sup> suggest that such - quite infrequent - initiatives as the particular gender mainstreaming workshop need a hands-on approach to be applicable and operational for NUFU projects.

55 Norad (2008): *Contract between Norad and the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU) regarding allocation for “Women’s rights and gender equality in an international perspective”.*

56 There is a multitude of more or less sophisticated tools available for mainstreaming gender equality in development cooperation. Reference is made to Danida’s *Gender Equality Toolbox*, 2008. It is simple and brief with sector specific guidelines.

57 NUFU: *The challenge of mainstreaming gender issues*, 16 April 2009

### **3.10.2 NOMA Perspectives**

Many of the observations on mainstreaming gender equality made above on the NUFU programme also pertain to the NOMA master programme, in particular the rather narrow focus on headcounts.

The NOMA programme aims at contributing to gender equality in education and empowerment of women. "To enhance gender equality in all programme activities"<sup>58</sup> is one of the five objectives for the NOMA programme. The mechanisms NOMA will apply in order to reach a 50 pct. female student participation are recruitment strategies, gender perspectives, "mainstreaming" and gender relevant Master programmes<sup>59</sup>. None of the approaches are elaborated in any detail.

There has been a slight but steady increase in the female recruitment during the lifetime of the NOMA programme from 2006. In 2008 37 pct. of new NOMA students recruited were women, while the share of females in the overall programme was 32 pct.<sup>60</sup>

The guidelines for the NOMA applications were revised in 2008 in order to ease the uptake of females: The requirement of having previous work experience or being employed in order to be recruited as a NOMA student were cancelled for female applicants, since few female applicants were able to meet the earlier requirement of being employed.

The gender balance is related to the themes and disciplines of the Master programmes. Challenges to recruit 50 pct. female students are particularly strong in natural sciences and technology like in the NUFU programme.

The variation in gender balance is large between the participating countries in the South. Table 3.8 summarises figures for the participating institutions in the partner countries. The average is 39 pct. female students. However small the figures are, there are more female than male participants in South Africa, Sudan and Zambia.

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58 Programme Document. *Norad's Programme for Master Studies 2006-2010*. 26 April 2006. Revised 30 March 2007 - p 4

59 *ibid* p 6

60 SIU (2009): *NOMA Annual Report 2008 and Tilstandsrapport 2008*.

**Table 3.8 Distribution of completed/ expected completed Master candidates, female/male, by country, 2006**

Country	Female	Male	Total	ptc. Females students
Angola	0	9	9	0
Bangladesh	25	56	82	31
Egypt	0	0	0	
Ethiopia	1	3	4	25
Indonesia	7	15	22	32
Malawi	8	37	45	18
Mozambique	2	2	4	50
Nepal	23	64	87	26
Palestinian territory, occupied	0	0	0	
South Africa	11	6	17	65
Sri Lanka	21	49	70	30
Sudan	18	10	28	64
Tanzania	36	65	99	36
Uganda	23	29	52	44
Vietnam	18	22	40	45
Zambia	7	3	10	70
Total	200	370	569	35

There are small discrepancies between the figures for female students, male students and total numbers of students for Bangladesh and Tanzania. These discrepancies appear in the database, and it has not been possible to ascertain what are the exact figures for the two countries.

Source: SIU NOMA database, August 2009

While the focus in general is on recruiting underrepresented females into the programmes, it is observed that the reverse balance tends to dominate in fields that are traditionally dominated by women, such as health and education-related topics.

Overall there are about 40 pct. (a total of 113) female academic staff employees at the partner institutions in the South involved in the NOMA programmes. The gender distribution among technical/administrative staff is 48 pct. female employees. "The proportion of female and male academic and administrative co-ordinators" - an indicator of capacity building success in the NOMA programme, - was generally considered by university management and project coordinators as a question of staff availability and time.

Given the nature of the NOMA programme the interaction between Southern and Norwegian students and supervisors is limited. It is a minority of students who get to study in Norway. Hence, there are also limited possibilities for the Southern students to experience the difference in gender roles in their home country and in



Norway. Gender issues in curriculum for instance tend to become more distant in the NOMA programme.

### **Conclusion on Gender Equality**

- Gender equality is given high priority in both NUFU and NOMA, and improvements in the gender balance are observed in the recruitment of relatively more females. But with a few exceptions, there have been limited efforts to integrate gender perspectives in curriculum and research. The vast majority of research and education projects provide opportunities for mainstreaming gender equality (taking women's and men's different opportunities, rights, resources, participation, influence and voice into account) over and above pursuing a gender balance. A concerted effort at building 'gender analysis capacity' and providing simple tools for gender mainstreaming in research and education activities is required.
- Separate announcements targeting women's projects such as the "Women's rights and gender equality in an international perspective" are relevant, provided they do not sideline the requirement of gender mainstreaming across projects and programmes. Tools for gender mainstreaming should incorporate tools for women-targeted activities.
- The lower level of female participants both in NUFU and NOMA projects often reflects the gender composition of secondary school graduates and undergraduate university students. This is often explained by cultural, religious and economic barriers encountered by women in general and especially within fields traditionally dominated by men. The reverse applies for men within fields traditionally dominated by women, such as health and education where men are under-represented. Attention must be paid to equal opportunities for women and men in line with the gender parity goals for the two programmes.
- The goal of 40-50 pct. enrolment of female PhD students from the South is hampered by rules and regulations different from those pertaining to Norwegian PhD students. Measures to ensure equal rights for female PhD students from the South, such as access to maternity leave and child care, are warranted.

## **3.11 Comparative Models**

### **3.11.1 Selected Programmes in other Countries which overlap with the NUFU and NOMA Programmes**

In the following a brief description of other but similar research cooperation programmes is given. They are based in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands and are all fairly old and well established. Their activities have been extensively evaluated over the years, and they are likely to have accumulated several lessons learnt that may be useful for almost any aspect of the Norwegian programmes. However, their objectives, strategies and approaches, as well as their organizational anchoring have changed rather often over the past decade.

In Annex 6: Comparative models, programmes from the three countries are outlined and a couple of projects are presented as examples of support to higher education and research in the South comparative to NUFU and NOMA.

The different programmes share a number of aspects, but also differ with regard to their objectives, their strategies and approach, their management and administration, and their achievements and results.

### **3.11.2 Objectives**

The different programmes share with each other the objectives of supporting capacity building in developing countries within higher education and research. However, such objectives are in some cases achieved within a single programme, in others kept separate in two organisations.

**Capacity building at the Master's level.** While the NUFU programme is supporting research collaboration North-South and education mainly at the PhD level, the NOMA programme is specifically addressing the development of Master programmes in the South.

The NOMA programme was established in 2005, succeeding the previous Norad Fellowship Programme, providing funding for the education in Norway of students from the South. The focus in the relatively new NOMA programme on establishing Master's programmes with universities in the South meant a rather drastic shift from previously, particularly in delinking the programmes from the former Norwegian partner universities.

The shift of the NOMA programme towards the South has compared to similar programmes in the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark been initiated more consistently. In the case of the Netherlands, providing funding for Masters students is organizationally handled separately by Nuffic, but contrary to the Norwegian case continuously with enrolment of students from the South at Dutch universities (in addition to the support to Master programmes established in the South). In the Netherlands and under Nuffic, the two programmes, the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes and the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity Development in Higher Education (NICHE), launched in 2009, are the main organizational structures dealing with Masters education, taking over from the Netherlands Programme for the Institutional Strengthening of Post Secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT), which is currently being phased out. In the case of Sweden, similar Master's programmes exist with Swedish universities, while in Denmark, a few Masters programmes (handled by the Danida Fellowship Centre) are still in existence with Danish universities, and a number of individual students are continuously provided with scholarships for studying in Denmark. Otherwise the trend is to transfer support for education at this level towards the South, primarily as being part of broader capacity building efforts, also including collaborative research and PhD training, but not maintained as a separate Master programme activity.

**Capacity building in research and at PhD levels.** In Norway, the NUFU programme is the main provider of support to capacity building within this field, but in all cases closely linked to Norwegian university partners. Although the NOMA and NUFU programmes are organizationally situated under the SIU (the Centre for International University Cooperation), they are organizationally kept separate under each their Board, and with only limited synergies existing between them, in Norway as well as in the South.

In the case of the Netherlands, capacity building within research is handled by organizations outside Nuffic, such as the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), while in Sweden Sida-SAREC is providing funding for research, although increasingly being an integrated, rather than separate, part of the Swedish general aid programmes and aid modalities. In Denmark, the Consultative Committee on Development Research (FFU) replaced the former Council for Development Research in 2006. With this change, the concept of the ENRECA programme (Enhancement of Research Capacity in Developing Countries) is gradually being phased out in recognition that after more than 20 years of capacity building following along more traditional lines, a new and more responsive approach to the needs in the South is needed. The implication is that the various elements of capacity building is now more fully integrated, while the support for Master's programmes and education is being substituted by an increasing support for PhD level education.

### **3.11.3 Strategies and Approach**

More fundamental differences exist between the four countries' capacity building modalities when it comes to focus, strategy and choice of approach.

In the case of Norway, the NUFU and NOMA programmes are tightly adhering to politically determined eligibility criteria for support, both with regard to country and thematic area, communicated to the organizations from their funding source, Norad.

Sida-SAREC is in the process of concentrating the research cooperation to a smaller number of countries, while in Denmark research grants are mainly provided to projects dealing with developmental-related issues in its 14 programme countries. In the Netherlands, the newly established NICHE programme is focusing its support on 22 countries, mainly within Sub-Saharan Africa, and on themes and priority areas selected by the Dutch Embassies in the respective NICHE countries, in order to ensure that activities funded are in line with development policies and priorities of recipient countries. Grants under this programme may go to both Southern and Dutch NICHE project implementing organizations (including research centres) in order to strengthen capacity through post-secondary education and training.

The other newly established Dutch programme is also mainly focusing on Sub-Saharan Africa and may provide support for short courses, Master degree programmes as well as PhD courses conducted at Dutch institutions. The programme is targeting education and training of mid-career staff in 61 countries in support of capacity building within both public, private and non-governmental organizations.

For the research component, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided in 2005 to include research in all of its thematic policies thus encouraging its links with the (Dutch) scientific community. WOTRO is the science division within the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) supporting scientific research dealing with development issues. The WOTRO Strategy Plan 2007-2010 (with an indicative budget of MEUR 150 incl. external funding for 2007-2011) entails a problem-oriented (rather than geographically oriented) approach, and focuses on societal use and impact of research as well as cooperative and interdisciplinary approaches. The activities include open calls for research projects without restriction (with a focus on development issues and including North-South collaboration and involvement of stakeholders outside the traditional scientific communities) as well as calls for projects within overall thematic research areas inspired by international policy agendas (poverty and hunger, global health, sustainable environment, and globalisation). The strategy also includes a minor action line in support of organisational, networking and knowledge sharing activities.

With the resulting larger spending in each of the selected countries by Sida-SAREC, support is provided to more central activities. This is done by focusing on one major university in each country, which is assisted within a large number of capacity building efforts and within a comprehensive strategic plan, from university management and leadership, via faculties to the individual departments and researchers, even in cases reaching to the national level as well. The strategic approach is that by supporting one key university in the country in question, capacities are built to an extent where the university itself may act as a catalytic factor and in a facilitating role for capacity building with newer or smaller universities with limited capacities.

The same kind of considerations and strategic approaches can be found in the case of the Netherlands, where the focus in the South is on the establishment of effective national research and higher education policies rather than cooperation through individual projects or support to individual departments/researchers (apart from what is offered through the support provided by the Netherlands Fellowship Programme and NICHE programmes for education and training, primarily in the Netherlands itself).

In the case of Denmark, capacity building support is provided to more integrated projects, where a combination of capacity building through joint research North-South, PhD education and, in a few cases, education at Master's level, in addition to modest contributions to infrastructure or logistics support constitute the package. However, projects still have a focus on individual projects and individual departments/researchers.

In Norway, this is even more the case, at least in the NUFU programme. Here a strong, even conditional, linking between Norwegian partners and Southern partners are mostly held at the personal, individual level, and seldom reach beyond that, including wider departmental, faculty or university management needs.

### **3.11.4 Management and Administration**

The close linking between Northern and Southern partners as in the case of Norway, with corresponding administrative and monitoring responsibilities, is a feature most of the other programmes have tended to move away from. A shift made due to the inherent asymmetries and experienced lack of local ownership, commitment and sustainability of previous activities.

Both the Swedish and Dutch-supported programmes have taken quite another approach on this issue, both by tackling the capacity-building efforts more holistically, moving beyond the individual researcher, but also by decentralising most responsibilities, administratively as well as substantively, to the partners in the South.

In the case of Denmark an effort to move along similar pathways has recently been initiated by the introduction on a pilot basis of two entirely demand-driven programmes in research collaboration running for three years. Two countries, Vietnam and Tanzania, have been selected for this piloting, where a certain amount has been reserved for each country each year during the period for identifying own research needs, and after an external peer review process, a few selected research projects have been opened up for bids from Danish research institutions. The Southern partners have been given full autonomy to select and decide on project priorities and collaborative institutions/partners, as well as handling their own budgets administratively.

### **3.11.5 Achievements and Results**

The general assumption corroborated by a number of evaluations is that in order to foster real and lasting capacity building, to ensure local ownership and commitment, and to make sustainability of activities supported more likely, more integrated, holistic and well strategized approaches are needed. And, not least, the strong linking, even conditional, to Northern partners may have their virtues, but also pose serious problems as the inherent asymmetries do not seem to facilitate the achievements and outcomes wanted.

In both the Dutch and the Swedish case the experience generated over the years, after many years of capacity building by employing more traditional means, is that the move towards greater responsibilities transferred to the Southern partners has shown more than just satisfactory results. Maintaining asymmetric relations North-South is counterproductive and a thing of the past, and the achievements and results reported have by far convinced the funding sources that this is the correct and most cost-efficient way to go. In addition, such strategies and approaches also fall much more in line with the intentions and requirements of the Paris Declaration and its follow up, the Accra Agenda for Action.

To sum up, and viewed on a continuum scale, the four countries position themselves quite differently when it comes to their focus, objectives and strategies employed. But the most important factor separating the four is the importance given to more demand-driven approaches to capacity building and knowledge generation. Such approaches are more developed within the Dutch and the

Swedish programmes, while the Norwegian programmes, in particular the NUFU programme, continuously is linked to Norwegian partners and partner institutions, to Norwegian set priorities and to administrative and programme responsibilities entirely resting with Norwegian partners. The case of Denmark seems due to its recent demand-driven pilot programme to be somewhere in-between.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations will commence with the presentation of the general conclusions and subsequent recommendation overshadowing this evaluation. Subsequently, thematic conclusions followed by recommendations will be presented according to the evaluation issues.

### 4.1 Overall Conclusions and Recommendation

An overall conclusion of this evaluation is that the NOMA and the NUFU programmes have significantly contributed to capacity building, both in the South and, to some extent, also in Norway. Generally, the programmes and their working modalities are highly appreciated by recipient countries and partners, and although a number of recommendations for improvement were made during interviews or were deducted in the data gathering process, the general assessment is that the two programmes have proven very valuable and that funds in general have been well spent.

However, during the evaluation an overriding issue has appeared again and again, which challenges the very foundation of the two programmes and, in particular, the way they are organisationally, administratively and politically situated in Norway.

The organisational complexity of the Norwegian funding system for support to higher education and research constantly creates confusion, raises questions about cost-effectiveness and, in particular, does not fully ensure that results and achievements meet with intentions, expectations and ambitions. This is partly caused by a number of overlaps, rules and regulations pertaining to the same areas of intervention, but shift according to funding source or administrative and political mandates. Although most recipients and partners value the collaboration and the capacities built by means of the programmes, there is also a widespread frustration with the way in which the collaboration is structured, managed and administered.

Adding to this frustration is the fact that both the NOMA and the NUFU programme seem somewhat old-fashioned, for instance compared with similar programmes in the Netherlands and Sweden. The NOMA and NUFU programmes apply quite traditional capacity building measures. In particular they support primarily education of individual researchers/students and only to a limited extent the wider research environment or research management at both the departmental, faculty and central university level (Sida even at times deals with the national level). Increasingly this kind of support is seen as necessary in order to meet the actual needs, requirements and collaborative modalities.

In order to deal with these limitations and to promote a cost-efficient implementation, it is necessary to consider problems located within the Norwegian organisational and funding structure as well as the basic constitutive elements of the programmes (See Section 3.4.1).

In order to solve the organisational complexity issues, which at times make it difficult to achieve what is intended, a great number of stakeholders should be involved, especially at the highest possible political level. However, before this may be effectuated, some clarifications are needed by the involved organisations and institutions, particularly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad and the Ministry of Education and Research. These deal with the various, and in some cases, conflicting objectives associated with the NOMA and NUFU programmes; these problems must be solved first in order to improve administrative efficiency and create clearer decision-making structures.

The Evaluation Team has identified the following three objectives of the NOMA and NUFU programmes that may be conflicting or at least are less in harmony than what is considered optimal:

- The objective of providing support to universities and research institutions in the South with the intention of strengthening capacities, enabling national development priorities to be reached and, in due course, countries to fully profit from the opportunities of the globalisation process, rather than being victims of it.
- The objective of supporting knowledge creation in Norway, enabling Norway and Norwegian foreign policy to benefit as much as possible from the opportunities of the globalisation process while strengthening the knowledge-based economy. Seen in this perspective measures to increase Norwegian knowledge production with regard to international strategic issues seems an objective in itself.
- The objective of providing support to Norwegian institutions and researchers within the framework of Norwegian aid priorities, with the aim of ensuring that Norwegian aid continues to be implemented professionally and effectively by utilising the expertise within the Norwegian academic resource base.

This leads the Evaluation Team to its most important and overriding recommendation:

It is strongly recommended that urgent steps be taken to reduce the organisational complexities and to harmonise working modalities of institutions working within the North-South dimension of international capacity building, fostering of knowledge economies, etc. This should be done by identifying priority objectives and institutions, as well as the necessary means.

## **4.2 Thematic Conclusion**

### **4.2.1 Capacity Building**

The Evaluation Team has met an impressive number of dynamic, devoted and qualified coordinators, researchers and other staff members, both in the South and in the North. These have greatly contributed to making the NUFU and NOMA programmes visible, relevant and attractive features of the collaborating universities' educational and research portfolios.



The contributions by both the NOMA and NUFU programmes to capacity building have been significant, they are widely recognised and valued, and the good collaboration between Norwegian institutions and partners in the South has been instrumental in the achievements reached.

The NOMA programme is in general highly appreciated, which became clear during the field visits to Nepal and Malawi. However, at AAU in Ethiopia there is a greater need for NUFU support than for NOMA. This illustrates the diverse nature of universities, some of which now have received traditional forms of capacity building support during more than 20 years, and now needs more flexible and contextually sensitive approaches to capacity building.

The NUFU programme is well known for its accomplishments within PhD education and research collaboration. However, until now the support has overwhelmingly targeted the individual researcher. Thus there is a strong need also for NUFU to reconsider its constitutional elements, as there is an increasing demand for more holistic approaches to capacity building. By not only targeting the individual researcher, but also the department, the faculty, even the university management and beyond, a higher impact is likely to be obtained.

#### **4.2.2 South-South Cooperation and South-North Cooperation**

The South-South cooperation currently seems to be primarily an add-on to already existing activities, rather than bringing in new directions or activities to the programmes. Although the South-South-North collaboration is lauded by most, the value added in its present form of implementation is limited.

The selection of partners/partner countries is often somewhat arbitrary and does not seem to reflect more strategic considerations linked to programme objectives, wanted achievements or means to obtain these. In this light the South-South-North cooperation modality is currently an underexplored opportunity.

The established North-South partnerships are generally seen as fruitful and well-functioning, but they seldom originate from the South. In almost all cases seen during this evaluation, partnership constellations are brought forward by initiatives taken from the North, reflecting the Norwegian partners' prior contacts or knowledge of particular opportunities. Strategy, relevance or value-added considerations do not seem to play an important role in the selection of partners.

#### **4.2.3 Management and Administration**

With some notable exceptions the Southern partners generally express satisfaction with the way the projects are administered by their Norwegian partners. The partners in the South largely derive their administrative and management experience from relating to the Norwegian partner, not from the NUFU or NOMA administrations. However, the asymmetric collaboration, where the Norwegian partner is given full project/programme responsibility, poses problems and is tolerated only as long as the funding flows continuously.

Reporting formats have improved over the years, but they still pose a number of challenges, especially for partners in the South, particularly because of problems related to Internet access and power cuts, which at times make it impossible to meet reporting deadlines.

A particular problem for the South is frequent delays in money transfers from Norway, which in some cases are reported to last months. In some cases the funds arrive so late in the project period that grants cannot be fully used and are returned.

The administrative and management system at SIU is not similarly appreciated by Norwegian partners.– They find that reporting formats are often changed without prior necessary testing; relations and dialogue are often considered difficult; and the decision-making systems of the NUFU and NOMA Boards are not viewed as transparent. The Norwegian partners consider the NUFU and NOMA administrative system unnecessarily complex, and a merger between the two programmes is regularly proposed.

A general problem associated with both the NUFU and NOMA programmes is that it is very difficult to assess the impact of the work done, since output, outcome and achievement indicators often are insufficient or missing. Perhaps because Norad has delegated administrative responsibilities to SIU, Norad has not played a proactive role in finding a resolve to controversial issues such as eligibility criteria for themes and country choice, compensation criteria regarding MER and MFA support and an adequate monitoring system.

#### **4.2.4 Synergy Effects**

With few exceptions, the NUFU and NOMA programmes do not represent good synergy, not even when the programmes exist in parallel within similar themes or, for example, a NOMA programme follows a NUFU programme. Synergies between the two programmes and other Norwegian funded bilateral aid programmes are also few.

Contacts to Norwegian Embassies are not stipulated as a part of the programme implementation, but may take place on a more informal basis. This reduces the potential use and benefits from the Embassies' knowledge as well as the potential synergies with other Norwegian funded programmes. Similarly, synergies between the programmes and the surrounding society are largely unexplored.

#### **4.2.5 Decision-making Processes and Transparency**

The NUFU and NOMA agreements clearly stipulate that the overall responsibility rests with the Norwegian partner/partner institution. This includes the responsibility for monitoring progress, addressing problems, managing the finances, as well as the financial reporting. Although this obviously constitutes an unequal distribution of tasks and responsibilities, in most cases it is not regarded as a big problem by the Southern partners. This may primarily be due to a satisfaction that they avoid cumbersome administrative procedures, rather than an acceptance of the asymmetry of the collaboration.

The asymmetry may thus be accepted, as long as things work smoothly. But when difficulties or disagreements arise, the inequality becomes a prime issue of concern. In such cases – for instance where applications are turned down - lack of transparency in decision-making becomes a main frustration, also because reasons for rejection are not given. Adding to this is the fact that only the NOMA Board has a few members from the South.

Another reason for dissatisfaction is that budget allocations to Northern and Southern partners respectively are often not balanced, even beyond what may be caused by different cost structures in the various locations. In such cases, the Southern partners may express dissatisfaction over the asymmetries, which they feel may indicate a lack of trust and support for local ownership.

Considering the many reservations towards the current modalities of support, they should be reconsidered in order to base the collaboration more on needs and demands from the South, and to give more responsibility to partners in the South.

#### **4.2.6 Relevance to the South and to Norwegian Institutions**

Generally, the relevance of the two programmes is viewed as high - an assessment backed by stakeholders both in the South and in Norway. Relevance could, however, be strengthened by conducting more thorough assessments of the context in which the programmes are supposed to be implemented, including assessing institutional needs as well as demands from the labour market. While the main responsibility for this may rest with the Norwegian partner, the universities and programme administrations may consider engaging researchers/experts in needs assessment and in monitoring and overseeing context alignment. A particular effort should be made by the SIU administration to review how best to conduct more thorough and profound prior assessments of needs, contexts and demands.

In this connection a systematic effort to trace the graduates from the programmes should have high priority. The performance of graduates is by far the most important indicator of success and it is surprising that such studies have so far been avoided. The wide availability of e-mail has made such tracing much simpler than a decade ago.

The establishment of closer links between universities and stakeholders in the surrounding society would also add to the relevance of the activities carried out, as it constitutes important, potential areas of employment for NUFU and NOMA graduates.

In spite of claims of multi-disciplinarity, projects often only add items of broader societal relevance as marginal aspects, rather than integrating them into existing courses or research projects. Therefore opportunities for increasing the relevance are not fully utilised.

The most important action to consider for increasing relevance would be to emphasize demand-driven forms of collaboration instead of the prevalent supply-driven nature of cooperation. This does not necessarily contradict the finding (section 3.7)

that the majority of respondents consider the programmes to be relevant and linked to the priorities of their institutions as required. A demand driven approach will ensure that programme decisions are based on national strategies for development and poverty reduction rather than on opportunity driven choices. This may also provide stronger ownership and a broader base for capacity building, and is in line with trends in other, comparable capacity building programmes, such as those discussed in section 3.11.

#### **4.2.7 Gender Issues**

Gender equality is given high priority in both NUFU and NOMA, and positive changes in the gender balance are observed in the recruitment of relatively more females. However, particularly in the NUFU projects, the representation of women in PhD programmes is significantly below the programme target. Very few practical measures, such as access to maternity leave and child care, have been taken to ensure equal opportunities.

At the same time, improvements in the gender balance is mostly achieved by expanding “the number of female heads”, rather than by ‘gender mainstreaming’, even if most projects offer great opportunities for this (water, agriculture, energy, conflict, environment, education, etc.). With a few exceptions, there have been only limited efforts to integrate gender perspectives in curriculum and research.

Separate announcements targeting gender relevant projects, such as “Women’s rights and gender equality in an international perspective”, are welcome and relevant, provided they do not sideline the requirement for gender mainstreaming across projects and programmes.

### **4.3 Recommendations Related to the Evaluation Themes**

The recommendations in the following rest on the premise that cooperation in research and higher education is a fundamental part of Norway’s internationalisation policy and shall continue. They are structured along the evaluation themes and follow the evaluation’s overriding recommendation:

*It is recommended that urgent steps be taken to reduce the organisational complexities and to harmonise working modalities of institutions working within the North-South dimension of international capacity building in research and higher education and fostering of knowledge economies. This should be done by identifying priority objectives and institutions, as well as the necessary means.*

Issues for early or longer term action are indicated. Some issues can be acted on immediately but in many cases due consideration has to be taken to the proposed re-organisation of the support modality and hence a longer term implementation. Consequently an iterative and interactive process is proposed for follow up. The institutions mentioned for follow-up and implementation of recommendations refer to those which are the most relevant in today’s set-up and which should be involved in the follow-up. In a revised model the responsibilities may be redefined. In principle MFA/Norad, who are responsible for policies of the programmes, should take the lead on most steps towards the proposed revision of the modality, since the

NUFU and NOMA programmes 'belong' to their agenda for international cooperation. However, since Norad has allocated the day-to-day administration of the programmes to the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU), SIU becomes the central actor in matters which concern administrative adjustments and follow up. It is vital to build on SIU's and the university institutions' long-standing experience. Don't throw the baby out with the bath water. Some of the other institutions mentioned as key actors for follow up on specific recommendations, UHR and the NUFU and NOMA Boards, for example, may 'delegate' responsibility to selected universities or call on specialists, e.g. for training, preparation of concept papers and studies.

#### **4.3.1 Capacity Development in the South**

It is recommended that early action is taken on the following issues:

1. In both the NUFU and NOMA programme the concept of capacity building remains loosely defined. To enable a clearer strategic focus in projects, capacity development shall be defined and operationalised and indicators of objectives, results and outcome be specified; the ongoing work on development of appropriate achievement indicators should continue without delay; (SIU, NUFU and NOMA Boards. – Based on concept papers, consult universities in South and North);
2. In connection with clarification of the capacity development concept and the elaboration of indicators and capacity development/ programme strategies, training should be provided for relevant staff at the Norwegian Universities as well as in the South. Tailor-made short courses, beyond the selective training already provided, shall be developed and given at regular intervals for newcomers to the programmes; (UHR, NUFU and NOMA Boards, Capacity Development Training Specialist(s) at universities);
3. For both programmes, efforts in upgrading and detailing the databases should be strengthened, in order better to gain insight in outputs, outcomes, and impact of the capacity building; (SIU – consult experienced institutional and project coordinator database-users in South and North);
4. Establishing an effective M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) system is urgently needed in order to improve the organisational learning and feedback from recipients. To facilitate monitoring the reporting formats used by partners/ project coordinators should more clearly reflect outcome and achievement indicators (See for ex. section 3.2.2 and 3.4.2) (SIU, NUFU and NOMA Boards – consult experienced institutional and project coordinator database-users in South and North);
5. Tracer mechanisms should be developed to undertake regular tracer studies of the graduates, in order to get a continuous feedback on the relevance and utility of programmes. At regular intervals tracer studies for utilisation beyond Norwegian supported programmes should be extended to provide insight into labour market needs and new opportunities in the changing markets; to ensure regular tracer studies, alumni organisations, where they exist, should be involved or their initiation be encouraged. (SIU, UHR, in cooperation with university administrations in the South and North);

Longer term action is to be taken on:

6. Reaching the objectives of capacity building is usually a long term effort. The limitations on the duration of projects should be reviewed, taking a more realistic approach to what is needed in order to secure sustainability of the capacity, yet tally with university norms amongst different partners; (UHR, NUFU and NOMA Boards, partner university administrations).
7. The adequacy of the revised modality shall be continuously monitored – a fuller review is foreseen after one to two years.

### **Recommendations of particular relevance to the NUFU programme**

Early action should be taken on the NUFU specific recommendations but with the understanding that actions need to tally with a revised overall modality and hence be implemented in a longer term perspective.

8. The NUFU programme has been in existence for more than 40 years, and has contributed substantially to capacity building in the South. Yet it may be in need of an overhaul, taking into consideration the combined experience in addressing more clearly and strategically local ownership, commitment and sustainability. It is recommended that a less supply driven, and more demand driven way of addressing research capacity building in the South is established within a broader framework of decentralisation; within such a framework, the role and involvement of the Norwegian Embassies should be given high priority; (MFA/Norad, Norwegian Embassies; NUFU Board, SIU);
9. It should be considered to introduce a more demand driven financial modality in the form of basket funding to selected universities, in line with other donors and the principles of the Paris Declaration as well as the Accra Agenda for Action; (MFA/Norad/Embassies, MER; NUFU Board, selected university administrations in the South; selected other donors);
10. To the extent a more demand driven modality of collaboration is introduced a gradual de-linking of the present programme conditionality could be introduced for instance by opening up for a bidding process, in which Norwegian partner universities would have preferential access. Such a new turn in collaboration modality might help reduce present asymmetries of collaboration; (MFA/Norad; MER; UHR, NUFU Board; SIU)
11. It is recommended that a more holistic approach to capacity building be taken, moving beyond the individual researcher, or individual department, and instead targeting a broader and more inclusive approach. The implication of this would be capacity building within both university management and research environments at selected universities. Thereby possibilities for influencing the higher education sector in general would also improve. Such changes in approach to capacity building might foster greater local ownership, commitment and sustainability, and would be greatly facilitated by adoption of basket funding modalities in selected, relevant cases; (MFA/Norad; SIU; NUFU Board; UHR; MER; consult selected university management in the South and North);
12. To strengthen capacity building in areas such as priority setting, strategising, peer review mechanisms, quality assessment of research projects and outputs, it is recommended to select as role models other, more demand driven programmes; (UHR; SIU; consult experienced university administrations, institutional and project coordinators in North and South);

13. In order to gain experience with such new strategies and to improve efficiency and impact, NUFU should start with a limited number of countries and focus areas should be considered. Country selection criteria to consider are 1) aid cooperation modalities, 2) mutual motivation for new cooperation modalities in research and education and 3) older and younger partnerships; (NUFU Board, SIU, MFA/Norad/Norwegian Embassies; University administrations in the South).

#### **Recommendations of particular relevance to the NOMA programme**

Early action should be taken on the NOMA specific recommendations but with the understanding that actions need to tally with a revised overall modality and hence be implemented in a longer term perspective.

14. The NOMA programme should develop a clearer strategy for how to cooperate with a variety of universities with different needs for Master's programmes; (NOMA Board, SIU, MFA/Norad);
15. On the background of an increasingly diverse university structure and capability in the South, and in order to strengthen effects of capacity building measures, the NOMA programme should become more flexible, adaptive and contextually sensitive in the choice of programmes, collaboration modality and implementation; as some universities in the South have developed their capacities to conduct Master's programmes on their own, the NOMA programme must improve the abilities to address and assess institutional and societal contextual issues, before decisions are made to support Master's programmes in specific countries. (NOMA Board; UHR; selected university administrations in the South; Embassies).

#### **4.3.2 South-South Collaboration in the NUFU and NOMA programmes**

It is recommended that early action is taken on the following issues:

16. The South-South collaboration modality and ambition hold great potential, but must be strengthened. It is recommended that a mapping and assessment of the South-South and South-South-North collaborations in the NUFU and NOMA programmes be undertaken after which objectives and means be detailed in a strategy that outlines how value added might be obtained; (SIU; NUFU and NOMA Boards; MFA/Norad/Embassies; consult with university administrations in the South);
17. It is recommended that the South-South and South-South-North cooperation modality in both programmes be expanded beyond the participation of students in courses abroad to include staff exchanges, project work combining education and research, joint capacity development, and the formulation of joint research; (SIU; UHR; NUFU and NOMA Boards; university administrations in the South);
18. Since the selection of partners and partner countries often does not reflect strategic options and considerations, it is recommended that this aspect be critically reviewed. It should be mandatory to learn from the experience gained in previous NUFU projects, as illustrated in Box 3.3 on Desirable Partnerships, which give particular weight to greater South partner involvement in all phases of the preparation and implementation process; (MFA/Norad; SIU; UHR; consult university administrations in the South and North);

Longer term action is to be taken on:

19. It is costly to bring together partners - students and researchers – in project work. Since limited funding is a constraining factor in multilateral and network projects a review of the financial implications of these ambitions should be undertaken for learning in a revised cooperation modality; (SIU; MFA/Norad; MER).

#### **4.3.3 Management and Administration**

It is recommended that early action is taken on the following issues:

20. Although the administrative procedures of both NUFU and NOMA are considered effective, at least by partners in the South, the built-in asymmetry in responsibilities between North and South should be addressed, as it threatens the viability and sustainability of the programmes; (SIU; NUFU and NOMA Boards; MFA/Norad/Embassies; consult with university administrations in the South);
21. Eligibility criteria for funding often change as Norwegian development aid priorities and discourses evolve. It is recommended that eligibility criteria become more context sensitive and mechanisms to identify needs and demands in the South for capacity building are adjusted and given a higher weight in decisions on eligibility criteria; (MFA/Norad; SIU; NUFU and NOMA Boards; consult with university administrations in the North and South);
22. The difficulties in moving from a Master's education project within NOMA to a PhD research project under NUFU has frequently been mentioned as an indicator of insufficient synergy between the two programmes. At least the generating of greater synergy between the two programmes should be explored, even if a merger may not be effectuated in the short term. Among urgent issues are the institutional and personal compensations, options for MSc studies to continue into PhD training, and gender sensitive access conditions; (SIU; NUFU and NOMA Boards, UHR, MFA/Norad; MER);
23. In particular seen from the South, the transfer of funds from Norway is sometimes ineffective and often unduly delayed. The causes of such delays should immediately be looked into and addressed; (SIU; UHR; consult with university administrations in the North and South);
24. It is recommended that full-cost reporting is introduced, i.e. a reporting system which will capture all spending undertaken by projects/institutions also beyond the budget ceiling of the NOMA/NUFU project; (SIU; UHR; NUFU and NOMA Boards; MFA/Norad; MER);
25. To improve on monitoring and evaluation, and to extract lessons learned more effectively, within the NUFU and NOMA programmes, it is recommended (see 4.2.1) that M&E systems be established, achievement indicators refined, reporting formats reviewed, and databases restructured; (See also recommendation 4); (SIU, NUFU and NOMA Boards – consult experienced institutional and project coordinator database-users in South and North);

Longer term action is to be taken on:

26. It is strongly recommended that the high organisational complexity of the NUFU and NOMA programmes is addressed, clarifying their objectives, the division of labour between NUFU and NOMA and other similar Norwegian institutions and



funding modalities, in order to improve on cost-effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. It is recommended that a modality for merging the two programmes, and possibly with related programmes, is worked out, with the intention of establishing a leaner organisational structure with only one Board and with simplified administrative routines. Assess other countries' modalities in more detail; it is urgent that a fair compensation is given to Norwegian researchers and departments involved in NUFU and NOMA programmes. Otherwise the Norwegian role in the globalisation of Higher Education may be curtailed; Of similar urgency is the issue of the differences in rules and regulations compared with other similar Norwegian programmes; (SIU; MFA/Norad (Embassies); MER; UHR; Boards; consult with other countries' modalities and with university administrations in the South and North);

27. Simultaneously it is recommended to expand the instruments used by the two programmes in capacity building for a more holistic approach to capacity building. Also additional measures may be considered, such as the funding of post doctoral research, and provision of small grants to PhD graduates when taking up jobs at their home universities. The latter will improve the likelihood that an academic career will be pursued but also reduce the risk of "brain drain". (SIU; MFA/Norad (Embassies); MER; UHR; Boards; consult with university administrations in the South and North).

#### **4.3.4 Synergy Effects**

28. Synergies between the NUFU and NOMA programmes in the South are few, even when the two programmes are active in same country and to a high degree share themes. But synergies between NUFU, NOMA and other capacity building programmes, Norwegian aid programmes or other aid programmes are also surprisingly few. It is recommended that synergies between the NUFU and NOMA programmes and other Norwegian aid programmes be strengthened, in particular, by involving Norwegian Embassies more; (SIU; NUFU and NOMA Boards; MFA/Norad; Embassies);
29. Synergies and programme outcomes might also be enhanced by a closer linking of Southern universities with institutions and organisations in the surrounding society. The NUFU and NOMA programmes should be instrumental in ensuring that proper steps are taken and mechanisms established by the university partners. (See also recommendation 5); (SIU, UHR, in cooperation with university administrations in the South and North).

#### **4.3.5 Decision-making Processes and Transparency**

Early action should be taken on the recommendations but with the understanding that actions need to tally with a revised overall modality and hence be implemented in a longer term perspective.

30. The transparency and influence by the South on decision making in Norway should be improved by having more (than the present two) South representatives on the NOMA Board, and by, for the first time, including South representatives on the NUFU Board; (SIU; NUFU and NOMA Boards; MFA/Norad; consult with university partners in the South);
31. Adding to perceptions in the South of asymmetry in the collaboration are unequal budgetary allocations between North and South, beyond national

differences in cost structures. Such differences must always be justified and explained; researchers in the North also often express a wish of greater transparency in decision making structures within NOMA and NUFU, and for a review of asymmetric relations of roles and responsibilities; these suggestions should be followed; (SIU; NUFU and NOMA Boards; UHR; MFA/Norad; consult with university partners in the South);

32. Transparency in decision making should be improved through better administrative routines, especially when applications are turned down. Information on the reasons for decisions might be very educational for the unsuccessful applicants; (SIU; NUFU and NOMA Boards).

#### **4.3.6 Relevance**

33. To improve the relevance of the programmes it is recommended that a more systematic approach to institutional and development needs assessments be taken, where the diverse nature and situations of universities in the South be better embraced. The increasingly diverse nature of universities in the South should also be reflected in the programme strategies. For example, at more advanced universities, field based and applied natural science research may not be in quite as high demand as more basic research (as was the case at AAU in Ethiopia). This must be accepted, also when such priorities run counter to Northern perceptions of national development needs; (See also recommendation 20); (SIU; NUFU and NOMA Boards; consult with university administrations in the North and South; Embassies);
34. Relevance must be documented when new projects are proposed, for example in relation to university priorities, strategies and adopted development plans. Assessments of national and institutional research priorities and strategies should be conducted prior to the selection of projects and drafting of project proposals, in close consultation with university management and prospective partners, representatives of the labour market and the Norwegian Embassy; (SIU; NUFU and NOMA Boards; consult with university administrations in the North and South; Embassies);
35. Particular efforts should be made to establish links with stakeholders in the private sector in order to meet the demands for labour with higher education in various sectors of the economy; (See also recommendation 5); (SIU, UHR, in cooperation with university administrations in the South and North).
36. Generally a much more demand driven approach is recommended, as practised by other organisations within capacity building in the South, such as the Netherlands and Sweden. (See also recommendation 25); (SIU; MFA/Norad (Embassies); MER; UHR; Boards; consult with other countries' modalities and with university administrations in the South and North);

#### **4.3.7 Gender Issues**

It is recommended that early action is taken on the following issues:

37. Attention must be paid to equal opportunities for women and men in line with the gender parity goals for the two programmes; a concerted effort should be made to build 'gender analysis capacity'; and simple tools for gender mainstreaming should be provided in research and education projects; tools for gender mainstreaming should incorporate tools for women-targeted activities;

draw on hands-on experience from specific NUFU and NOMA programmes.  
(NUFU and NOMA Boards; UHR; representatives of selected gender sensitive projects from South and North);

Measures to ensure equal rights for female NUFU PhD students from the South, such as access to maternity leave and child care, should always be taken. Consult Norwegian legal advisers; (SIU; MFA/Norad; MER).







## EVALUATION REPORTS

- 1.97 Evaluation of Norwegian Assistance to Prevent and Control HIV/AIDS  
2.97 «Kultursjokk og Korrektiv» – Evaluering av UD/NORADs Studiereiser for Lærere  
3.97 Evaluation of Decentralisation and Development  
4.97 Evaluation of Norwegian Assistance to Peace, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation in Mozambique  
5.97 Aid to Basic Education in Africa – Opportunities and Constraints  
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