NORHED proposal evaluation procedures

NORHED applications will be evaluated by Independent Review Committees established for each sub-programme, relevant Norwegian embassies and Norad technical departments according to the following steps and criteria.

If at any stage in the evaluation process any component of the application (the applicant, a partner or the project) is identified as not fulfilling the eligibility criteria specified in the NORHED guidelines for applications, the application may be rejected on that sole basis.

1. Formal criteria

The applications are first assessed for eligibility according to formal criteria established in the call for proposal documentation by Norad's Section for Higher Education, Research and Innovation. If one or more of the formal requirements have not been met, the application is rejected based on non-fulfillment of the NORHED programme's formal criteria.

2. IRCs

The applications that have passed the first administrative check are sent to Independent Review Committees (IRCs) made up of external experts, with one IRC established per sub-programme.

The IRCs will review each application according to the relevance, quality and design of the project, based on the documents related to the Call for proposals (programme document, guidelines, sub-programme descriptions). The IRCs shall make recommendations for each project according to three categories: Category 1: proposal recommended for approval without changes (and no or only minor clarifications). Category 2: Proposal recommended for approval provided that clarifications or adjustments are met within a limited timeframe. Category 3: Proposal not recommended for funding.

NORHED evaluation procedures IRC

The IRCs will review each application according to the relevance, quality and design of the project, based on the documents related to the Call for proposals available on the Norad website.

1. **Partnership** *(Section 1 of application form)*

- Partnership design including clarity of roles and responsibilities in terms of institutional capacity development objective, as well as relevance and competency of persons involved *(Section 1 of application form and separate CVs)*

2. **Project thematic relevance** *(Section 2 of application form)*

- Project relevance to NORHED's overall objectives of capacity development for higher education and research in developing countries (*refer to p.1-6 of document "A Presentation of NORHED"*)

- Project relevance to the NORHED sub-programme(s) to which project is addressed (*refer to sub-programme descriptions on p. 18-26 in document "A Presentation of NORHED"*)

- Project relevance to needs of institution(s), country and region where higher education institution capacity is to be developed *(section 2 of application form*).

3. Project geographic relevance *(section 2 of application form)*

- Geographic relevance in terms of Norway's priority countries for bilateral cooperation *(refer to p. 9 of document "A Presentation of NORHED")*

- Geographic relevance in terms of building capacity in NORHED sub-programme priority region. Note that Upper Middle Income Country-based projects will not score on this even if they are situated in a relevant region *(refer to p. 9-10 of document "A Presentation of NORHED" and the DAC list of ODA recipients).*

4. Project educational components *(section 2 of application form)*

- Relevance of educational components of project to NORHED sub-programme *(refer to p. 18-26 of document "A Presentation of NORHED")*

- Quality of educational components of project in terms of strengthening capacity of LMIC(s) academic institution(s) to produce more and better candidates (*refer to p.4-6 of document "A Presentation of NORHED*")

5. Project research components *(section 2 of application form)*

- Relevance of research components of project to NORHED sub-programme (*refer to p. 18-26 of document "A Presentation of NORHED")*

- Quality of research components of project in terms of strengthening the academic institution's capacity to conduct scientifically rigorous, nationally/regionally relevant research *(refer to p.4-6 of document "A Presentation of NORHED")*

6. Project gender focus *(section 2 of application form)*

- Quality of gender perspectives in project, with gender dimensions reflected in both educational and research components of project
  (refer p. 7-8 of document "A Presentation of NORHED")

7. Results framework *(Section 3 of application form)*

- Relevance of result framework development impact (*application form section 3.1*) and project outcome (*application form section 3.2*) to the project description set out in section 2 of application form

(For guidance, please refer to p. 4-7 of document "A Presentation of NORHED")

- Relevance and logical flow between project goals (*application form section 3.1*), outcomes (*application form section 3.2),* outputs (*application form section 3.3*) and activities (*application form section 3.4*), as well as relevance and measurability of indicators for outcomes (*application form section 3.*2) and outputs (*application form section 3.3. For guidance, please refer to p. 4-7 of document "A Presentation of NORHED")*

- Relevance and inclusiveness of assumptions and risks linked to outcomes (*application form section 3.2*), outputs (*application form section 3.3*) and activities (*application form section 3.4*), including relevant and realistic mitigation strategies

- Relevance and quality of baseline description (*application form section 3.5*) in relation to project outcomes

8. Assessment of sustainability, cross cutting issues, risk factors and mitigation measures
(Section 4 of application form)

- Relevance and quality of LMIC partner's institutional capacity analysis, including assessment of financial management, corruption and other potential risk factors, and relevant mitigation strategies (*application form sections 4.2 and 4.3, see also separate Partner Assessment attachment*. *For guidance, please refer to p. 7-9 of document "A Presentation of NORHED")*

- Relevance and quality of gender equality assessment in terms of project implementation and expected results (*application form section 4.4. For guidance, please refer to p. 7-8 of document "A presentation of NORHED"*)

- Relevance and quality of conflict sensitivity assessment (*application form section 4.5*), human rights assessment (*application form section 4.6*), environmental/climate impact assessment (*application form section 4.7*) and other risk factors (*application form section 4.8*) including relevant mitigation strategies *(for guidance, refer to p. 8-9 of document "A presentation of NORHED")*.

- Relevance and quality of project financial sustainability strategy (*application form section 4.9*)

9. Financial plan, budget, implementation plan and additional information
(Sections 5 and 6 of application form, budget attachment and implementation plan attachment)

- Relevance, realism and cost effectiveness of financial plan and budget (*application form section 5 and separate budget attachment)*

- Relevance and quality of project implementation plan and procedures and routines to be followed in order to monitor partnership (*project implementation plan attachment and application form section 6.1 and 6.2*)

3. Consultation with relevant Embassies

Based on the IRC recommendations, a selection of projects recommended for funding will be sent to the relevant embassies. The embassies will be asked to comment on the proposals regarding the following elements:

- Assessment of project's relevance to national needs and priorities,
- Assessment of project's relevance to Norwegian priorities and initiatives at country level,
- Assessment of the Embassy's knowledge and experiences with the institution applying, including risk of corruption,
- Possible risk factors associated with the proposed project: political context, conflict/post-conflict situations, economic conditions, sensitive issues etc.

4. Norad – internal consultation and decision

The final decision on project funding will remain with Norad, and will take into account:

- Consultations with relevant thematic departments in Norad
- Weighing of Norad's thematic coverage for overall NORHED portfolio balance
- Weighing of Norad's geographic priorities for overall NORHED portfolio balance
- The limitations of the budget available under this call for proposals.