

**Programme Document
2010-03-01**

**Programme in Higher Education, Research and Development (HERD) in the
Western Balkans 2010 – 2013**

1 Aim and Objectives

1.1 Aim

The overall aim of the Programme in Higher Education, Research and Development (HERD) is to contribute to economic growth and social development through co-operation in higher education and research in the Western Balkans.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of HERD are:

Objective 1 (Institutional Development)

“To contribute to educating a national work force that has adequate innovative qualifications in the maritime, agricultural and energy sectors by building, in the longer term perspective, sustainable capacity of higher education institutions in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo”

Objective 2 (Applied Research and Development)

“To stimulate innovation, product and process development in the maritime, agricultural and energy sectors through support to applied research and development in the Western Balkans”

Objective 3 (Development Studies)

“To provide insight into development challenges by supporting regional social science research in the Western Balkans”

2 Programme Components

2.1 Sector Programmes

HERD consists of four Sector Programmes:

- Programme 1: Maritime Sector
- Programme 2: Agricultural Sector
- Programme 3: Energy Sector
- Programme 4: Development Studies

3 Co-operation, commitment and responsibility

3.1 Basic principles of co-operation

The collaboration shall be based on the principles of equality between the partners and characterised by transparency at all levels.

3.2 Institutional and organisational commitment and responsibility

HERD is built on a decentralised model for initiation, implementation, monitoring and reporting. The leadership of the partner institutions shall be committed to the projects. Project proposals shall document that partner institutions in the Western Balkans have been actively involved in the planning and preparation of activities and budgets. The selected areas of co-operation should be anchored in strategic plans at institutional and national levels¹ in the partner country.

4 Strategic direction of HERD

4.1 Relevance

Competence and capacity building in specific areas of strategic importance to Norway's partner countries in the Western Balkans are a vital part of Norwegian support to development of higher education and research.

Objective 1 (Institutional Development – Sector Programme 1 – 3))

Successful project proposals should demonstrate that the proposed activities address relevant institutional needs of accredited Universities and University Colleges within the maritime, agricultural or energy sectors.

Objective 2 (Applied Research and Development – Sector Programme 1 – 3)

Successful project proposals should demonstrate that the proposed activities target relevant development challenges faced by the maritime, agricultural or energy sectors.

Objective 3 (Development Studies – Sector Programme 4)

Successful project proposals should demonstrate that the proposed activities address relevant development challenges at national or regional level. Priority will be given to challenges crucial for sustainable economic development and for institutional and democratic reform important for furthering the countries Euro Atlantic integration processes.

HERD may support preparatory studies in the development phase of a project aiming to stimulate innovation, product and process development in the maritime, agricultural, and ICT and energy sectors. Preparatory studies would aim to identify barriers and opportunities with regards to business development and provide recommendations to areas which projects could more explicitly address.

4.2 Long term commitment and partnership

The programme emphasises the need for a long term strategy for capacity building of nationally accredited Universities and Colleges. A gradual development of HERD supported activities anchored at partner institution in the Western Balkans is a core element of this strategy. Priority should therefore be given to supporting projects that mutually reinforce each other and contribute

¹ Or relevant Cantonal or Entity level in Bosnia & Herzegovina

to the strategic goal of institutional development. Fragmentation of the project portfolio should be avoided.

4.3 Academic quality

Academic quality of the project proposals will be an important criterion for support under HERD. When implementing HERD, participating partners shall seek to increase quality through exploitation of the comparative advantages and skills of Norwegian universities, university colleges and research institutions.

Project proposals should include procedures for dissemination of results.

4.4 Synergies

All HERD partners have a responsibility to seek synergy for example through project partnerships with other relevant Norwegian funded initiatives. Collaboration should be sought with Norwegian embassies, EU programmes and instruments and other international donors/actors in the field of higher education and research.

4.5 Gender

The HERD programme aims at contributing to gender equality in higher education and research, and empowerment of women. HERD partners should pursue gender equality in all programme related activities. This aim is expected to be realised through active recruitment strategies and gender perspectives, both in the administration and implementation of project partnerships.

4.6 Ethnicity

The HERD programme aims at contributing to enhance minority participation in higher education and research. HERD partners should pursue minority inclusion in all programme related activities. This aim is expected to be realised through active recruitment strategies, both in the administration and implementation of project partnerships.

4.7 Sustainability

All proposed projects need to present strategies for ensuring sustainability in a longer term perspective. The academic and administrative responsibilities for the projects shall gradually be the sole responsibility of partners in the Western Balkans. The transition process will take place over the project period.

4.8 Regional co-operation

Partners applying for projects that stimulate regional co-operation in the Western Balkans will be given priority.

4.9 Joint ventures / Investment

Partners applying for projects in partnership with Norwegian and / or international companies that include private matched funding will be given priority.

4.10 Environmental benefit

Partners applying for projects that target improved environmental impact will be given priority.

4.11 Recruiting younger academics / researchers / administrative staff

Projects involving younger academics /researchers / administrative staff in the planning and implementation of the activities will be given priority.

5 Eligibility

5.1 Eligible partner countries

The following countries are eligible for support by HERD:

Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo will be given priority, while Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia are also qualified for support.

5.2 Eligible institutions

Eligible institutions under HERD are accredited Universities and University Colleges in the Western Balkan and Norway. Research institutes in the Western Balkans and Norway may be eligible for support under Sector Programme 4 “Development Studies”.

The main contract partners in the Western Balkans are expected to actively collaborate with relevant public and private organisations in their respective countries.

5.3 Eligible academic fields

Based on current Norwegian development priorities and identified needs of the various co-operating countries, the following are eligible academic fields for the HERD in the programme period 2010 – 2013:

- Programme 1: Maritime Sector
- Programme 2: Agriculture Sector
- Programme 3: Energy Sector
- Programme 4: Development Studies

6 Project content and budgetary framework

6.1 Project plan and its components

All applications for HERD support should develop a project plan. If an activity initially starts in Norway, indications of strategies/actions for a gradual move to the Western Balkans should be provided. The content of a HERD project may consist of the following components²:

- institutional development³
- curriculum development
- study modules
- study visits

² This list does not claim to be exhaustive

³ These could include elements that may not immediately be necessary for attaining the thematic objective of the co-operation within a specified sector, such as administrative capacity building, equipment, procurement of professional literature, ICT system development, student / teacher mobility, etc.

- student/entrepreneur scholarships
- staff exchange
- seminars/workshops
- equipment
- development of teaching methodology
- staff development at the higher education partner institution in the Western Balkans
- Scholarships for PhD study may be granted if deemed necessary for the sustainability of the partner institution.
- joint study/research

The applications should include a risk analysis where both internal and external risks are included.

6.2 Budgetary framework

The annual HERD Programme fund is tentatively NOK 30 million. Funds may not necessarily be equally distributed between the sector programmes. For the years 2011-2013, the annual Programme fund is dependent on the Parliament's appropriation.

The administrative cost for projects should not exceed 7, 5 %. The administrative cost for programmes should not exceed 5 % of the total project activities.

Student scholarships for students from the Western Balkans will be harmonised with scholarship in the Quota scheme for studies in Norway, but will be adjusted to national costs of living when staying in the Western Balkans.

Further details concerning financial regulations will be found in the ***Programme Guidelines (to be developed by Sector Manager)***. These guidelines will be further developed and finalised before the first main HERD sector programme announcement and, if needed, eventually adjusted in connection with future announcements.

7 Application and selection procedures

7.1 Preparation of joint project proposals

Eligible institutions should prepare and submit joint applications to Sector Manager under the signature of the Vice-Chancellor/Rector of the partner institutions, in which objectives, activities, work plan and budget requirements are clearly stated.

7.2 Application categories

Applications to HERD will be organised according to the five defined programme sectors.

A partner institution may apply for projects from the different programme sectors. There is no limitation to the number of projects a Partner institution may apply for. However, if more than one project is applied for, the applicant will have to rank the proposals (see below).

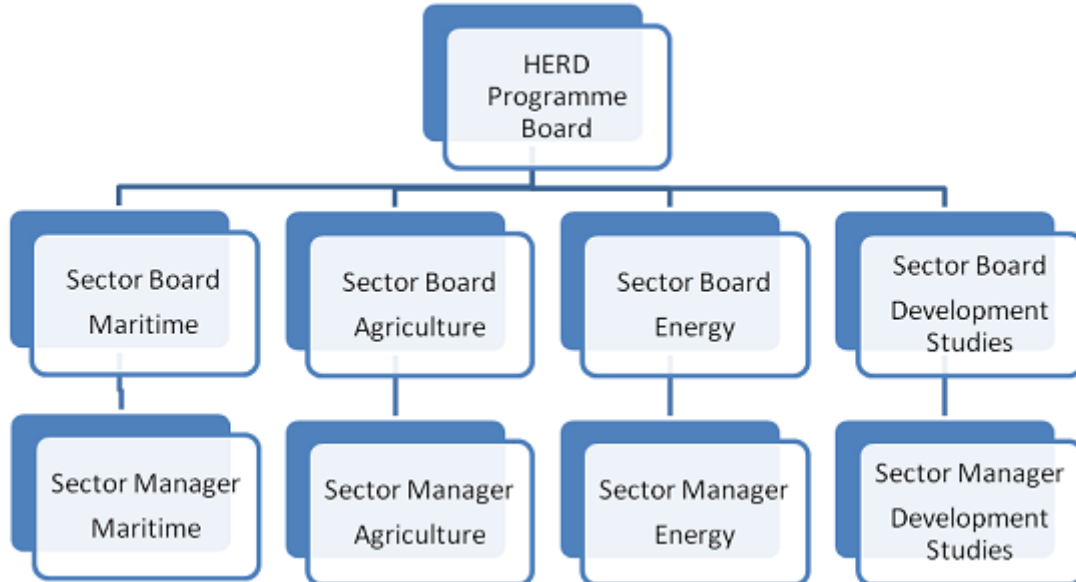
7.3 Institutional assessment and ranking

All eligible institutions – in the Western Balkans and in Norway – from which proposals for funding are submitted to Sector Manager, will assess the submitted proposals according to:

- Relevance in relation to strategies and priorities in their respective institutions
- Relevance related to defined needs in the work force as well as in national strategies⁴ and priorities in the Western Balkans
- Relevance to the countries' ability to meet the demands set in their association process to EU and NATO
- Project quality and feasibility in an institutional context
- Expected output in relation to the priorities of the institutions

⁴ May be cantonal or entity priorities in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

7.4 The Governance of HERD



The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is responsible for the overall policy of HERD. MFA governs and monitors HERD through the Annual Meetings of the HERD Programme Board (*details will be found in the Agreement between MFA and Sector Manager*). The total budget, annual plans, annual budgets and reports for the HERD activities will be presented in the Annual Meeting and final decisions will be made by MFA. The HERD Programme Board will consist of representatives of MFA and Norad, chairs of the Sector Boards (to be described below) and the administrative managers of Sector Programmes. The HERD Programme Board will identify and facilitate possible synergies between the Sector Programmes.

The Sector Boards will ensure the qualitative aspects regarding the Programme and the project applications granted funding, conduct assessment of proposals by peer review, assess all applications and distribute funds according to the stated aims of HERD and as agreed with MFA, monitor on-going activities and have a consultative role as to the further development of the HERD Programme. The Sector Boards will conduct a minimum of one monitoring trip to the region annually.

The Sector Boards are independent of the Sector Managers (to be described below). Members to the Sector Boards are nominated by the MFA. Each Sector Board will have a maximum of five board members: two from relevant higher education institutions, two from the relevant business community and one representative from MFA or Norad. For Sector Board for programme for Development Studies existing structures may be used.

A Sector Manager will be chosen based on a limited invitation to relevant Norwegian public higher education institutions or other relevant institutions. Each Sector Programme will be managed by the Sector Manager. Each Sector Manger is performing the role as secretariat for its Sector Board. To ensure the Sector Board's integrity and independence, the secretariat will have no decision making power in the Sector Board. Due to the independence of the Sector Boards, the

Sector Managers may also compete for projects in its field. In addition to facilitating the work of the Sector Boards, the secretariats will be responsible for co-ordinating the Sector Boards' monitoring trips to the region. One of the Sector Managers will be tasked to organise a joint conference with all partner institutions under the HERD Programme every two years.

8 Indicators of success

The success of the HERD programme will be characterised by the contribution to economic growth and social development as outlined in the objectives of the programme. This can be measured both qualitatively and quantitatively and will be reflected in the increased capacity and knowledge production at the respective institutions. The baseline values of the indicators should be identified prior to the start of the project activities against which progress can be assessed or comparisons be made. The projects should be reported on both quantitative and qualitative indicators, in which the following elements should be included:

Objective 1 (Institutional Development)

- The number of sustainable structures established at institutions in the Western Balkans of direct relevance for the workforce.
- The number of candidates educated through HERD and employed in institutions in the Western Balkans.

Objective 2 (Applied research and development)

- The number of concrete results of research and development of direct relevance for the workforce.

Objective 3 (Development Studies)

- The number of studies on concrete, contemporary development challenges in the Western Balkans published.

Regarding qualitative indicators as well as additional quantitative indicators of relevance, the partner institutions will have to develop these as an integrated element of the individual project as well as the ability to monitor the institutional development. The indicators should, to the extent possible, be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

9 Reporting Procedures

Collaborating institutions taking part in the HERD are jointly responsible for implementation and monitoring of activities and projects. Annual project progress reports are to be submitted electronically to Sector Manager. These reports will be used for further strengthening the HERD portfolio. All reports will be publicly available at *Sector Manager's Web-site*.

When HERD and its projects are presented in publications/media and/or in seminars/conferences it should be informed that MFA is the responsible Ministry and the financier of the programme and its projects/activities. Sector Managers report on program progress to the HERD Programme Board and annually to the MFA.