



Norwegian University  
of Life Sciences



# International Action Plan for 2020 - 2023



## NMBU's International Action Plan for 2020 - 2023

NMBU's vision is *Knowledge for Life*. In the University's Strategy for 2019 – 2023, this vision is put into context within the major, complex challenges facing the world, and within the UN Agenda 2030.

Given NMBU's academic profile, the University is uniquely positioned to contribute with new knowledge to enable reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Extensive international collaboration is a prerequisite to succeed, not least given the current pandemic challenges. The goal of NMBU's International Action Plan for 2020 - 2023 is to strengthen the University's participation in – and contribution to – international knowledge development.

During the period of this Action Plan, the Covid-19 situation will impact the education sector. It will affect collaboration projects, staff and students' mobility and, most likely, also the diversity of staff and students on campus. Throughout the duration of the Action Plan, there will be a focus on continuing to develop digital collaboration with a particular focus on seeing possibilities rather than barriers. The Action Plan will be assessed after two years (2022) regarding the implications after Covid-19.

Throughout the course of the Action Plan, NMBU will – to the degree possible in the Covid-19 pandemic situation – continue to strengthen international collaboration, researchers' mobility and student exchange within specified educational and research areas by entering into strategic collaboration with international and national renowned actors within the University's academic disciplines.

NMBU's candidates will have the knowledge, competencies and skills required to meet major global societal challenges.

### **Facts (May 2020)**

- Approx. 12% of students come from abroad and approx. 8% of staff have a foreign nationality.
- 12% of bachelor's degree- and 56% of master's degree students have a foreign nationality.
- 50% of PhD candidates have a foreign nationality.
- 18% of students take an exchange semester abroad.
- NMBU has approx. 170 international research collaboration agreements, both institutional and project related.
- 59.9% of co-authored publications are with foreign authors.
- NMBU is among the top four Norwegian universities in the Horizon 2020 programme regarding scientific work years.

*Source: DBH, Crisim (2019)*

The Action Plan has four prioritized areas:

- 1. Strategic international research- and innovation collaboration**
- 2. Strategic international education cooperation and increased internationalisation of education**
- 3. Participation in European education-, research- and innovation collaboration**
- 4. International mobility**

The NMBU faculties are encouraged to set their own concrete goals and actions regarding international collaboration within the context of the University's International Action Plan and its four prioritized areas.

## **1. Strategic international research- and innovation collaboration**

The Norwegian government's *Long-term plan for research and higher education (2015 – 2024)* underlines that international collaboration is a prerequisite for carrying out world-leading research. Research is an international activity. One of the goals in the NMBU Strategy for 2019-2023 is to “*conduct research at a high international level and have research groups that are among the world's leading research groups*”. Strategic collaboration is central to strengthening recruitment and competitive skills and securing relevant research funding.

According to the government's *Long-term plan for research and higher education (2015 – 2024)* and the *Priority research needs of the Ministry of Climate and Environment (2016 - 2021)*, the major global climate- and environmental challenges must be solved through international collaboration.

Consequently, research must be anchored in institutionally based and long-term international collaboration. It must be strengthened through collaboration with professional environments in countries of importance both within and outside the EU.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals cannot be reached without international collaboration, including collaboration with low-income countries.

### **Goals:**

- NMBU will contribute to new knowledge to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and address major societal challenges through international collaboration and the development of strategic partnerships with selected institutions.
- NMBU will carry out research at a high international level and have world leading research groups
- NMBU's scientific staff should be active participants in the global academic community and participate in various international arenas. Digital international collaboration enabled through new technology should be further developed.
- NMBU will collaborate with both Norwegian universities and with Nordic institutions to contribute its knowledge to support research needs in the polar regions.

- NMBU will strengthen institutional collaboration with selected institutions in the Global South, based on reciprocity, interdisciplinarity and sustainability.

#### **Actions:**

- NMBU will identify measures to stimulate global collaboration with leading international networks that contribute to reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- NMBU will expand leading international networks within its academic fields and further develop collaboration with them.
- NMBU's academic environment will identify leading institutions within its research areas in the Nordic countries, in the USA and in Europe.
- NMBU will participate in relevant global programmes funded by Norway, Nordic funding sources and the EU.
- NMBU will use existing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) more actively regarding researcher collaboration and student exchange. Collaboration between faculties should be considered when establishing new MoUs.
- NMBU will stimulate the further development and use of digital technology in international research, education and innovation in its contribution to a sustainable global society.
- NMBU will review its security routines regarding collaboration with risk-countries and assess the need for increased competence (at leadership-, administration- and researcher level).
- NMBU will focus on climate change in the Arctic regions, particularly on Svalbard, in collaboration with universities in Norway and in the Nordic countries, and as a member of the University of the Arctic.
- NMBU will develop collaboration with relevant institutions in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) that are prioritized by, among others, Norwegian development cooperation policy and the Research Council of Norway, particularly with respect to sustainability.

## **2. Strategic international education cooperation and increased internationalisation of NMBU's education programmes**

The production of knowledge requires international collaboration. Through engagement in global issues and through student and researcher mobility, the quality and relevance of NMBU's study programmes will be further strengthened. A globally oriented campus and learning environment contribute to individual reflection and development. This provides insight into global challenges, and in doing so, contributes to increased participation in the international workforce and the collective knowledge community.

#### **Goals:**

By the end of the action plan period,

- NMBU's academic programmes will have a clear international profile and NMBU will have increased collaboration with relevant foreign partners.
- NMBU will educate candidates who are competent and reflected, and who have developed an international perspective which is required for addressing major global societal challenges.
- NMBU's academic programmes will have clearly developed learning goals which reflect global challenges.
- NMBU students will have international experience through either student exchange, contact with foreign students and teachers, or education in a global context.

#### **Actions:**

- The NMBU faculties will further develop their profiles reflecting the global challenges and the UN Sustainable Development Goals in their programme descriptions.
- More faculties will work towards international accreditation of their academic programmes.
- The faculties will facilitate an increased number of internationally recognised researchers in teaching.
- The Department of Academic Affairs will further develop good routines to increase collaboration and improve education programme development, particularly within the Erasmus+ framework.
- PhD candidates will have the opportunity to be part of an international research environment at the faculty (research group, supervisor) and will participate actively in conferences.

### **3. Participation in European education-, research- and innovation collaboration**

Participation in the EU framework programmes is of high importance to Norwegian international research collaboration. Through participation in European research- and innovation collaboration, NMBU can contribute to solving challenges facing society and can strengthen the quality and relevance of research, innovation and education. Moreover, collaboration will contribute to strengthening both researcher networks and career development for researchers and students.

The goals and actions support the NMBU strategic action plan for EU-collaboration.

Participation in the EU's Erasmus+ education programme will contribute to increasing the quality and relevance of NMBU's education.

#### **Goals:**

- NMBU should remain among the top four Norwegian universities in the Horizon 2020 programme as measured by value per scientific work year.
- NMBU will increase its portfolio of Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) and European Research Council (ERC) projects.

- NMBU has doubled the number of activities within Erasmus+.
- NMBU will actively participate in the work carried out by organizations, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), that are relevant for NMBU's academic focus areas.

#### **Actions:**

- The NMBU faculties will follow up their own action plans for Horizon Europe.
- NMBU's incentive and support schemes for participation in Horizon 2020 will continue, and be further developed, for Horizon Europe.
- NMBU's Talent Programme will contribute to developing talented researchers who are competitive within ERC and MSCA, and in the international arena in general.
- NMBU's faculties will assess how Erasmus+ and MSCA for European collaboration in education, including doctoral- and post-doctoral education, can be used to improve the quality of education at NMBU.
- The Research Support Office will proactively inform researchers at NMBU about application opportunities within the framework programmes and will contribute to quality assurance of these applications.
- The Research Support Office will offer courses and training to increase the application competency of potential applicants, and they will increase project implementation competence of project coordinators and administrative personnel.
- The Department of Academic Affairs will develop good websites and have competence and routines to disseminate information about programmes within Erasmus+, including Knowledge alliances, INTPART, EURASIA, strategic partnerships, Embedded Mobility and others, and contribute to applications.
- NMBU supports the participation of researchers in risk assessment, projects, expert panels and other activities, including NGO's and organizations that are relevant for NMBU's activities, such as the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA).

## **4. International mobility**

Mobility can contribute to increased quality and competence in education, research, innovation and multicultural understanding.

The development of world class research and education environments requires that the university's academic staff, technical/administrative staff and students have relevant experience from collaboration with leading international environments.

International mobility will take the environment into account. Travel which can be completed through an environmentally friendly alternative, such as by train instead of air travel, will be encouraged.

#### **Goals:**

- NMBU is an attractive university to highly qualified foreign researchers and students.
- NMBU students have a relevant study abroad opportunity as part of their education.

- NMBU will ensure that PhD candidates work on research projects with international partners, and that the period for stays abroad is planned and completed as part of these projects.
- All mobility agreements have a base in research and/or education collaboration, as well as exchange of administrative staff.

### **Actions:**

Academic staff, PhD- and specialist candidates and post-doctoral fellows:

- NMBU will continue to set aside funds for stays abroad for permanent academic staff for use during sabbatical leave, and for PhD candidates and post-doctoral fellows.
- NMBU will develop a recruitment policy to attract top researchers, highly qualified PhD candidates and post-doctoral fellows from abroad.
- NMBU will establish a point of contact (EURAXESS) and clear procedures for the reception and inclusion of international guest researchers in its research environments. The faculties must have their own routines for the inclusion of guest researchers.
- PhD candidates should connect with an international research network during their study period.
- NMBU encourages research groups to apply for external funding for researcher mobility (the Norwegian Research Council, national foundations, Nordic sources, EU, EURAXESS, etc.)

Students (bachelor and master):

- NMBU will have a targeted international student recruitment strategy in line with national priorities.
- NMBU will prioritise mobility through the Erasmus framework.
- NMBU will develop good routines for the integration of international students in collaboration with SiÅs and student organizations, through buddy week activities, and with other relevant stakeholders.
- NMBU will develop good routines to develop the full potential of the academic and cultural diversity in the classroom.