

REVIEW OF FIRST YEAR 2016-2017

Agreement on Project at Innovation Norway Tokyo
regarding "Strengthening Norwegian University of
Science and Technology's (NTNU) and the University
of Bergen's (UiB) education and research
cooperation with Japan

Division for Research Administration

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1 INTRODUCTION.

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and the University of Bergen (UiB) would like to develop further cooperation with education- and research institutions in Japan and asked Innovation Norway Tokyo (IN) for assistance in order to realize these ambitions. Hence, an agreement was signed December 11, 2015.

The duration of the project is two years (2 years) equal to the duration of the local contract of employment with a project manager. The project manager, Mr. Hiroshi Matsumoto, was under contract from April 2016.

This review covers the first year of the contract, including the academic year August 2016- June 2017, altogether 14 months.

2 GOALS, PRIORITIES AND DELIVERABLES.

Jointly NTNU and UiB set some clear overall goals, shared by both institutions:

- Strengthen the ongoing cooperation within research and higher education
- Develop new cooperation within research and higher education
- Develop competence and create insight on how to work in Japan with respect to decisions concerning future presence in Japan.

The main deliverables should be the concrete collaboration being developed and organized between NTNU and UiB in Norway, and research groups, departments and researchers at Japanese partner institutions. The success of the joint effort will be measured by established parameters such as:

- Joint publications
- Established research and innovation projects and funding
- Researcher mobility
- Ph.D. collaboration
- Student exchange, internships and educational cooperation

UiB sought to develop long-term partnerships with institutions for research and higher education abroad. The resource in Tokyo is accessible for UiB as a whole. In the beginning of the project, priority was given to contacts, initiatives and agreements already established or in process towards conclusion. Marine Sciences/Climate Research/Polar research/Energy and Japanese language were all among the initial key subject areas, with an intention to strengthen contacts and cooperation with researchers, research environments and institutions in a wide range of academic disciplines, including medicine and health sciences, social sciences and law.

3 PROJECT ORGANISATION

The agreement provides for a Steering Committee and a Project Working group. As the activities have developed, the Steering committee had two meetings, whereas the Project working groups has had a more informal communication. Director of the Division for Research Management, *Heidi A. Espedal*, has been UiB's member of the Steering Committee and Senior Advisor *Bjørn Einar Aas* member of the project committee.

UiB and NTNU have organized their respective international liaison activities differently, reflecting the differences in organization of leadership, central management and services at the two institutions. In real terms though, UiB and NTNU have each operated its separate institutional and internal working group(s). The communication between NTNU and Bergen in general is constructive and positive, time has not allowed for joint initiatives and even joint projects to emerge fully, even though discussions have taken place i.a. related to both institution's interest in collaboration with Kyoto University. In the second year of the project, inter-institutional collaboration between the Norwegian institutions should be given renewed attention.

At UiB, the Division of Research administration has been responsible for the institutional coordination, and organized a structured and frequent contact with the Tokyo Office. Dr. Matsumoto has proved instrumental in planning and coordinating visits from Japan to Bergen and vice versa. Innovation Norway has made other resources available for the cooperation, in particular dr. *Svein Grandum*.

The project organization has overall proved beneficial, with its transparency of planning and structured communication.

4 ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1 Marin Sciences/Climate Research

Two projects funded by NRC's INTPART program are coordinated at UiB. Both projects have partners at the Atmosphere and Ocean Research Institute (AORI) at the University of Tokyo. The projects are

- "Partnership between Norway and Japan for excellent Education and Research in Weather and Climate Dynamics (NORPAN). Geophysics Department. Project leader : Profess Thomas Spengler
- Norway-Japan Partnership for Excellent Education and Research in Aquaculture (Excel AQUA). The Department of Biology. Project leader : Professor Ivar Rønnestad

Both project promotes PhD mobility and close collaboration between researchers in Japan and Norway.

4.2 Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC)

A joint seminar between JAMSTEC and UIB was planned for late 2015 at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, but is yet to be organized. However, there are extensive contact between researchers at various departments at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences in Bergen and JAMSTEC. A group of JAMSTEC researchers participated in the seminar sponsored Japan-Norway Symposium Bergen 2017 entitled "Past, Present, and Future of the Arctic and Antarctic" together with Japanese colleagues from the The National Institute of Polar Research(NIPR) and the University of Hokkaido. The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) sponsored the workshop.

New opportunities for further collaboration and a joint seminar should be actively pursued.

4.3 Polar Research

The National Institute of Polar Research, Japan, and the Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research signed A Memorandum of Understanding in October 2016.

4.4 Energy

Continuous contact with and follow-up of NORCOWE, the Norwegian Centre for Offshore Wind Energy (NORCOWE) a cross-disciplinary competence and resource centre. Main contacts: Professor Finn Gunnar Nielsen, Associate Professor Kristin Gulbrandsen Frøysa

4.5 Welfare studies

Since 2014, a book on Nordic Welfare states has been under translation to Japanese. Professor Stein Kuhnle at the department of Comparative Politics have been supported by the Embassy and Innovation Norway which both are organizing an event at the launch of the book, now scheduled to October 2017.

4.6 Medicine

A delegation from the Faculty of Medicine headed by the then Dean Nina Langeland visited Japan in January 2017. Meticulous preparation resulted in visits to institutions in Tokyo, Kyoto and Sendai. From the visit, it was clear that Japan represents unique opportunities for quality in strategic and international partnerships in research and higher education, and the visit succeeded in identifying joint matches between research fields as diverse as stem-cell research, cancer, public health and care for the elderly.

The first follow up was organized in Bergen in May 2017, when The Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, UiB, signed an agreement of cooperation with the Institute of Development, Aging and Cancer (IDAC), Tohoku University, to promote and improve academic exchange between the two institutions. In June 2017, a delegation from Kyoto

University Graduate School visited Bergen. Their focus was stem –cell research, and steps were taken to broaden and organize a closer collaboration in this field.

Various applications were submitted to national and institutional funding resources, i.a. Strategic Program for International Research and Education (SPIRE) in order to have means to be able to explore possibilities of further cooperation with Tokyo Metropolitan Geriatric Hospital and Institute of Gerontology and other partners.

Further information: <http://www.uib.no/en/med/105296/breaking-new-ground-japan>
<http://www.uib.no/en/node/104879>

5 COLLABORATION IN EDUCATION.

UiB maintains a successful exchange program with several Japanese institutions mainly organized through the Bachelor program in Japanese language. There is a balance in incoming and outgoing students, with between 20 and 30 students each way every year.

To strengthen the ongoing cooperation within research and higher education is a priority embedded in the agreement between UiB, NTNU and Innovation Norway. However, UiB made a temporary exchange in this priority, as it was made clear from our Japanese partners that the existing agreement, all in all 14 agreements, did not regulate exchange on graduate level (Master and PhD) and could not be extended to comprise these levels. Moreover, the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, suspended exchanges (spring 2017) with Japan due to shortage of capacity. Graduate exchanges need to be negotiated separately. Following initiatives in projects and discussions with the Innovation Norway representatives in Tokyo, it was agreed that collaboration within research should be given priority. This priority was again emphasized following a meeting with the International Office at the University of Tokyo which made it clear that there were few and restricted opportunities for undergraduate exchange at the institutional level. Undergraduate students exchange will in most cases depend on the interest and capacity at the departmental level. Both INPART projects promote PhD mobility.

5.1 Language

Central to the language collaboration is the UiB's program in Japanese language at the Faculty of Humanities. Following a visit by the then Vice Rector for international affairs to Waseda University, an agreement in principle was reached to have Waseda University in Tokyo send a PhD student specializing in teaching Japanese to foreigners, to undertake tasks as a language instructor in a full spring semester in Bergen. However, funding to support travel and accommodations is yet to be secured.

5.2 New fields of collaboration

Welfare research and Gender studies have been identified as new fields of interest, both in Japan and in Bergen.

6 INPUT FROM INNOVATION NORWAY TOKYO

The division of Research Management at UiB provided support and guidance to Dr. Hiroshi Matsumoto in the initial phase of the project, when identifying potential collaborating departments and researchers, discussing priorities, and an introduction to the ways of management and communicate within UiB etc. Such support, also on a personal level, has proved crucial for Dr. Matsumoto's ability to operate effectively within UiB. Dr. Matsumoto seems now to understand much more of "how UiB works" and how to operate.

Dr. Matsumoto's has spent his time on:

- Get to know UiB's links to existing and potential Japanese partners, their interests and ambitions, in order to develop valuable and long-term institutional partnerships with UiB. At times, the Japanese preference for the long-term perspective may not have been fully understood at UiB.
- Convey to UiB researchers the strategic and operational variations among Japanese institutions: Each institute have their own way. Kyoto University and Tohoku University are used to a strategic/top down approach, while the University of Tokyo needs a bottom-up approach before becoming involved strategically, to mention an few examples.

UiB spent some time setting the priorities for the collaboration with Japan. Some researchers at UiB have showed some reluctance/lack of interest in starting something new with Japan. On the other hand, young and ambitious researchers have approached the Tokyo resource in order to promote their ideas/interests among prospective and existing Japanese partners.

Natural sciences had already developed close links to various research departments in Japan. This may explain why they showed less interest in using the UiB resource in Tokyo, compared to other disciplines such as Medicine, Humanities and Social Sciences. One exception is the Geophysics department's dedication to cooperation with Japan and the way the department has introduced the Tokyo resource to joint activities.

The research-based institutional relations developed and strengthened during the project should be a very good foundation for student exchange on graduate level.

The Embassy connection, holding a presence at the Tokyo Office located within the Embassy premises, has among the Japanese contacts been seen as valuable in developing a relation to UiB. This gives researchers an efficient and visible platform from which to

promote their own collaboration interests both in Japan as well as internally in Bergen. The Norwegian Ambassador to Japan has continuously supported and endorsed the presence of UiB/NTNU within Team Norway at the Embassy, increasing the visibility and relevance in Japan.

The presence of UiB/NTNU within Team Norway has also received additional attention within the Norwegian research system from political level in the Ministries (ex. Vice Minister Haugstad), to the Research Council of Norway, The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in education (SIU) and Innovation Norway . The ambition and willingness to commit resources and build momentum is seen as an inspiration in developing bilateral collaboration with a Panorama country like Japan. The experience from the project would most probably be of high interest to both the national and the local level.

7 SUMMARY

The links with Japan are an overall success with a great potential for continued growth. The UiB presence in Tokyo Office located within the Embassy premises has been valuable and instrumental in developing new relations to Japanese partners and visibility both in Japan and at home. The project and collaboration between UiB/ NTU and Innovation Norway may be an inspiration in developing bilateral collaboration in other countries.

The project organization has proved beneficial, particularly in terms of transparency of planning and structured communication. UiB and NTNU have organized their respective international liaison activities differently, reflecting the differences in organization of leadership, central management and services at the two institutions

The priorities embedded in the agreement have been instrumental for the collaboration and the activities in the first year of the project. Input and assistance is a result of combined efforts at Bergen and UiB's Tokyo Office. The following tangible outcomes should be highlighted:

- Two projects funded by NRC's INTPART programs in Agreements with Weather and Climate Dynamics and Aquaculture
- Agreement between the National Institute of Polar Research, and the Bjerknes Center for Climate Research
- Japan-Norway Symposium Bergen 2017 entitled "Past, Present, and Future of the Arctic and Antarctic"
- Agreement between The Faculty of Medicine and The Institute of Development, Aging and Cancer (IDAC), Tohoku University
- Faculty of Medicine delegation visited Japan in January 2017, identifying joint interest in research fields as diverse as stem-cell research, cancer, public health and care for the elderly, which all are actively pursued.

Among remaining challenges, attention should be given to the following:

- Support priorities embedded in the project agreement
- Continued attention to collaboration in climate, fisheries, energy, marine sciences and polar research
- Support continued development of recent links and project in the fields of stem-cell research and health
- Seek financial support for a Japanese PhD student specializing in teaching Japanese to foreigners, to undertake tasks as a language instructor in Bergen (agreement with Waseda University)
- Develop of joint initiatives and projects between UiB and NTNU
- Actively pursue new opportunities for extended collaboration with JAMSTEC
- Develop a scheme to send more graduate students as part of the research collaboration activities, including the INTPART funded by the NRC (Spengler and Rønnestad).

8 ATTACHMENTS

- 8.1 Report of the contract work for University of Bergen from April 2016 to August 2017
- 8.2 1st Steering Group Meeting (SGM) for review of the contract work during the first half year period from April to September 2016
- 8.3 2nd Steering Group Meeting (SGM) for review of the contract work during the second half year period from October 2016 to March 2017
- 8.4 Report domestic Trips in Japan HM 2016-2017
- 8.5 Activities carried out in Japan HM April to June 2017
- 8.6 Activities carried out in Japan M August -September 2017 UiB
- 8.7 Activities carried out HM 6-9 20June 2017 UiB