

Announcement:
**2nd Call for applications: Programme for Higher Education, Research and
Development in the Western Balkans (HERD.)**
HERD/ Agriculture, programme period 2011 – 2014.

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has developed a new Programme in Higher Education, Research and Development in the Western Balkans (HERD.) The overall aim of HERD is to contribute to economic growth and social development through co-operation in higher education and research in the Western Balkans.

The scope, objectives and strategic directions of HERD are outlined in the [HERD Programme Document](#) dated 01.03.2010. MFA has extended the Programme period to 2014. HERD's Programme 2 is for the Agricultural Sector. The objectives of HERD/ Agriculture are

1. Institutional Development, to contribute to educating a national work force that has adequate innovative qualifications in the agricultural sector by building, in the longer term perspective, sustainable capacity of higher education institutions in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo.
2. Applied Research and Development, to stimulate innovation, product and process development in the agricultural sector through support to applied research and development in the Western Balkans.

The second call under HERD/ Agriculture will prioritise aquaculture and pastureland/ grazing, knowledge transfer from academic institutions towards farmers and farmers' organisations, economy and markets (value chains; "from farm to fork"), entrepreneurship and user aspects.

Activities that lead to improved conditions for agriculture and agri-business are important. A regional approach, in line with the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA,) should be applied when appropriate.

Quality control of products should apply international standards and Norway may assist with professional advice and formal education in this field. Intra-regional trade with agricultural products should be encouraged.

Creation of employment in agriculture related industry and the service sector in urban and semi-urban and when possible also in rural areas, is part of the total picture. Agricultural and agri-business support should take this into consideration and be open to support activities outside the strict sense of agriculture.

Norway may offer formal education of experts to work in the agricultural extension services.

Projects should, when appropriate, be aligned with the EU support and EU requirements, either by contributing to the EU efforts, or by complementing the EU on issues not covered by the Union.

Eligible partner countries under HERD are: Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo, which will be given priority, while Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia also are qualified for support.

MFA shall, subject to Parliamentary appropriation, make available to the HERD/Agriculture a financial allocation not exceeding NOK 32,000,000 (Norwegian kroner thirty two million) for the programme period 2010 - 2014. NOK 12,000,000 (Norwegian kroner twelve million) has been allocated during the first call for applications.

Project Applications shall be prepared in partnerships between institutions in Western Balkans and in Norway. Applications shall have a lead partner institution in Norway.

Eligible institutions under HERD are accredited Universities and University Colleges in the Western Balkan and Norway. Research institutes in the Western Balkans and Norway with a formal cooperation with an accredited university may be eligible for support.

Applications must address the Programme Document's overall objectives, and the strategic directions outlined in the Document's section 4. Applicants must set specific goals relating to each of the elements under the strategic directions. The application deadline is 2 May 2011 at 15:00 hrs. Projects that receive funding from HERD/Agriculture should be completed by 31.12.2014. See HERD/ Agriculture [Application Form](#) and [Guidelines for Applicants](#).

Allocation of funding will be decided by the HERD/ Agriculture Sector Board. The Board Secretariat's Sector Manager is Dr. Thor S. Larsen, UMB/ Noragric, Box 5003, N-1432 Aas. Phone: +47 64965313 / 90929282, telefax: +47 64965201, e-mail: thor.s.larsen@umb.no.