

Evaluation

Finland's Support to Higher Education Institutions

North-South-South and HEI ICI Programmes



Evaluation report 2014:3

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Jamil Salmi
Hena Mukherjee
Juho Uusihakala
Kiira Kärkkäinen

Evaluation report 2014:3

MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

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PREFACE

Supporting human development is one of the key elements of Finland's Development Policy. Quality education for all promotes employment of young people and adults as well as high-quality research, innovation and skills combined with entrepreneurship leading to inclusive economic development. Raising the quality of higher education is one of the important development targets in education sector and can be supported by networking with Finnish institutions and know-how.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland supports the capacity of higher education institutions (HEIs) through two main programmes: North-South-South Programme (NSS) and Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI). In addition, research and innovation is supported mainly through development research grants through Finnish Academy, but new aid modalities are under development.

In this evaluation the two capacity building programmes were evaluated together for the first time. Evaluating programmes together gave a comprehensive assessment of the results and shortcomings of the Finnish support to higher education institutions as well as relevance, synergies and complementarities of two programmes in the changing development landscape. The current programme cycle of both of these programmes will be ending at the end of 2014.

The evaluation was very timely and provides a good opportunity for the Ministry to develop Finland's support to higher education institutions to play their essential role in national science, technology and innovation systems and thus to contribute to development and poverty reduction. The evaluation brought forward lessons that need to be reflected, for example merging the two programmes into one, and including research funding in the programme. On the base of the evaluation it is now time for the Ministry to think thoroughly to make strategic decisions on how the support to higher education, research and innovation can be enhanced.

Helsinki, 19.6.2013

Jyrki Pulkkinen
Director
Development Evaluation

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
ARENE	Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences
BOOST	Building Open Opportunities for Students and Teachers
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
CIMO	Centre for International Mobility
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDS	Developing Development Studies
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
EVA-11	Evaluation Unit of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HEI ICI	Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument
HEI ICI SG	Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument Steering Group
HMU	Hanoi Medical University
ICI	Institutional Cooperation Instrument
ICT	Information and communication technology
KEO-10	Unit for General Development Policy and Planning
LDC	Least Developed Country
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEDUNAM	Support for the capacity development for the establishment of the School of Medicine at the University of Namibia
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NSS	North-South-South Programme
NUFFIC	Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher ed- ucation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PhD	Doctorate degree
QTTC	Quang Tri Teacher Training College
SAMOK	Union of Students in Finnish Universities
SC	Steering Committee
Sida	Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation
SYL	National Union of University Students in Finland
TOR	Terms of Reference
UniPID	Finnish University Partnership for International Development

Evaluointi Suomen tuesta korkea-asteen oppilaitoksille North-South-South- ja HEI ICI -ohjelmat

Jamil Salmi, Hena Mukherjee, Juho Unsihakala ja Kiira Kärkkäinen

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Korkea-asteen oppilaitosten vaihto-ohjelma North-South-South (NSS) ja korkea-asteen oppilaitosten kapasiteetin vahvistamisen tukiohjelma (Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument, HEI ICI) ovat Suomen keskeisimmät korkeakoulutusta tukevat kehitysyhteistyön instrumentit, vaikka ne edustavat hyvin pientä osaa kaikesta Suomen kehitysavusta. NSS on edistänyt liikkuvuutta ja verkostoitumista kumppanimaiden ja Suomen korkeakoulujen välillä vuodesta 2004 lähtien. HEI ICI on tukenut korkeakoulujen yhteistyötä hallinnon, opetuksen ja oppimisen saroilla vuodesta 2009 lähtien.

Evaluoinnin mukaan NSS on toiminut enemmän kansainvälistymismahdollisuutena suomalaisille korkeakouluille kuin aitona kehitysyhteistyöinstrumenttina, joka palvelisi kumppanikorkeakoulujen kapasiteetin vahvistamista. HEI ICI vaikuttaa NSS-ohjelmaa tuloksellisemmalta institutionaalisen kapasiteetin vahvistamisen työkalulta. HEI ICIA kuitenkin heikentää hankkeiden lyhyt kesto ja se, että tutkimuksen vahvistamiseen tähtäävät toiminnot on poissuljettu ohjelman piiristä. Molempien ohjelmien hallinnoinnista vastaa Kansainvälisen liikkuvuuden ja yhteistyön keskus (CIMO), joka on palvellut suhteellisen hyvin sekä ulkoasiainministeriötä (UM) että ohjelmaan osallistuvia korkeakouluja. Se ei kuitenkaan ole onnistunut kehittämään riittävää tiedonhallintajärjestelmää ohjelmien seuranta varten. UM:n CIMOLle asettamat hallinnolliset vaatimukset HEI ICIn suhteen ovat tehneet ohjelmasta ja sen toimintatavoista vähemmän joustavat verrattuna NSS-ohjelmaan.

Evaluointi suosittelee, että HEI ICI ja NSS joko yhdistettäisiin parempien yhteisvaikutuksien ja tuloksien saavuttamiseksi tai mieluiten suunniteltaisiin uudistettu HEI ICI, jossa painotettaisiin kokonaisvaltaisempaa ja pitkäaikaisempaa institutionaalisen kapasiteetin vahvistamista valikoiduissa kumppanimaissa ja korkeakouluissa. Ohjelmasuunnitelmaan tulee sisällyttää viitekehys tulosten ja vaikutusten arviointia varten.

Avainsanat: Suomen kehitysyhteistyö, korkeakoulutus, kapasiteetin vahvistaminen, evaluointi

Utvärdering av Finlands bistånd för högskolor Nord-syd-syd och HEI ICI -programmen

Jamil Salmi, Hena Mukherjee, Juho Usihakala och Kiira Kärkkäinen

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REFERAT

Nord-syd-syd-programmet (NSS) och institutionella samarbetsinstrumentet för högskolor (HEI ICI) har varit Finlands främsta samarbetsinstrument inom högre utbildning, som dock utgör en mycket liten del av Finlands bistånd. NSS har främjat mobilitet och nätverk mellan partnerländerna och finländska högskolor (HEI) sedan 2004. HEI ICI har främjat samarbete inom främst förvaltning, undervisning och lärande sedan 2009.

Som fristående program har NSS snarare utgjort en småskalig plattform för finländska HEI:s internationalisering än ett egentligt instrument för utvecklingssamarbete. HEI ICI har förutsättningar att bli effektivare som institutionellt verktyg, men begränsas märkbart av en kort projekttid och uteslutning av insatser för utveckling av forskningskapacitet. Centret för internationell mobilitet (CIMO) har tjänat Utrikesministeriet (UM) och deltagande högskolor relativt väl som administratör av båda programmen, men har inte byggt in en adekvat informationsdatabas. På grund av UM:s olika administrativa krav på CIMO i skötseln av HEI ICI har dess förfaranden varit mindre flexibla än NSS.

Utvärderingsgruppen rekommenderar att NSS och HEI ICI slås samman för att uppnå större synergier eller ännu hellre att man planerar ett utvidgat HEI ICI-program för övergripande och långsiktig kapacitetsutveckling i prioriterade partnerländer och i HEI med en utvärderingsram för bedömning av resultat och effekter.

Nyckelord: Finlands utvecklingsbistånd, högre utbildning, kapacitetsutveckling, utvärdering

Evaluation on Finland's Support to Higher Education Institutions North-South-South and HEI ICI Programmes

Jamil Salmi, Hena Mukherjee, Juho Unsibakala and Kiira Kärkkäinen

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ABSTRACT

The North-South-South Programme (NSS) and the Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI) have been Finland's principal cooperation instruments in higher education, representing a very small share of Finnish aid overall. NSS has promoted mobility and networking between partner countries and Finnish higher education institutions (HEIs) since 2004. HEI ICI has supported collaboration mainly on governance, teaching and learning issues since 2009.

As a self-standing programme, NSS has operated more as a small-scale internationalisation platform for Finnish HEIs than a genuine development cooperation instrument. HEI ICI promises to be a more effective institutional strengthening tool, but it is significantly limited by the short project duration and the exclusion of research capacity building activities. As administrative agency of both programmes, the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) has served the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) and the participating higher education institutions relatively well, but it has not built an adequate information management database. Due to the different administrative arrangements imposed by the MFA on CIMO for managing HEI ICI, its procedures have proven less responsive than those of NSS.

The evaluation team recommends either merging NSS and HEI ICI to achieve greater synergies, or preferably design an enhanced HEI ICI programme allowing for comprehensive and long-term institutional capacity building in priority partner countries and HEIs – with an evaluation framework to assess results and impact.

Keywords: Finnish development aid; higher education; capacity building; evaluation

YHTEENVETO

Suomen ulkoasiainministeriö tilasi tämän evaluoinnin jatkona vuosien 2006 ja 2009 North-South-South (NSS) korkea-asteen oppilaitosten vaihto-ohjelman evaluoinneille ja vuoden 2012 korkea-asteen oppilaitosten kapasiteetin vahvistamisen tukiohjelman (Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument, HEI ICI) väliarvioinnille. Nämä kaksi ohjelmaa, joita Kansainvälisen liikkuvuuden ja yhteistyön keskus (CIMO) hallinnoi, muodostavat Suomen keskeisimmät korkeakoulutusta tukevat kehitysyhteistyön instrumentit. NSS on edistänyt liikkuvuutta ja verkostoitumista kumppanimaiden ja Suomen korkeakoulujen välillä vuodesta 2004 lähtien. Vuosina 2004–2014 ohjelman budjetti on ollut yhteensä 15.8 miljoonaa euroa. HEI ICI on puolestaan tukenut korkeakoulujen yhteistyötä etenkin hallinnon, opetuksen ja opimisen alueilla yhteensä 15.4 miljoonalla eurolla vuosina 2009–2014.

Evaluoinnin tarkoituksena oli analysoida NSS- and HEI ICI -ohjelmia avun tuloksellisuuden näkökulmasta DAC-kriteereiden (tarkoituksenmukaisuus, tuloksellisuus, vaikuttavuus, kestävyys ja tehokkuus) ja täydentävyyden perusteella sekä kartoittaa mahdollisia synergioita ohjelmien välillä. Evaluointiin kuului kaksi vaihetta: asiakirja- ja kirjallisuusanalyysi sekä haastatteluita Suomessa, Keniassa, Etelä-Afrikassa ja Vietnamsissa. Osoitusanalyysia varten valittiin ottaen huomioon hankkeiden edustavuus, saavutettavuus ja kesto. Syvällisempään tarkasteluun valittiin 21 NSS-hanketta – 50 prosenttia koko NSS-ohjelmasta – sekä seitsemän HEI ICI -hanketta, jotka yhdessä kattavat 17 kumppanimaata.

TULOKSET JA JOHTOPÄÄTÖKSET

Sekä NSS- että HEI ICI -ohjelmat ovat tukeneet toimintoja, jotka ovat erittäin tarkoituksenmukaisia. Kuitenkin erityisesti NSS-ohjelman tapauksessa tuen rajallinen määrä – sekä absoluuttisesti että suhteellisesti mitattuna – rajoittaa ohjelmien mahdollisuuksia vaikuttaa kumppanikorkeakoulujen muutosprosesseihin. Evaluointi paljastaa, että NSS- ja HEI ICI -ohjelmien toimivuudessa on vaihtelua. Yleisesti ottaen HEI ICI -hankkeet saavat aikaan parempia tuloksia. NSS-hankkeiden saavutukset näkyvät lähinnä niiden yksilöiden tasolla, jotka ovat osallistuneet akateemisiin vaihtoihin ja intensiivikursseihin. Institutionaalista näkökulmasta katsoen ohjelman hyödyt kumppanikorkeakouluille ovat jääneet pieniksi. Nykyisessä muodossaan itsenäisenä ohjelmana NSS on toiminut ennemmin kansainvälistymismahdollisuutena suomalaisille korkeakouluille kuin varsinaisena kehitysyhteistyöinstrumenttina, joka olisi suunnattu vahvistamaan kumppanikorkeakoulujen kapasiteettia.

Tehokkaasti toteutettuna HEI ICI -hankkeet ovat myötävaikuttaneet erittäin positiivisesti kumppanikorkeakoulujen henkilöstön kapasiteetin kasvattamiseen, opinto-suunnitelmien ja pedagogisten käytäntöjen uudistamiseen, uusien ohjelmien perustamiseen sekä yhteyksien luomiseen ympäröivän yhteiskunnan ja yritysten kanssa. HEI

ICI -ohjelman suunnitelmassa on kuitenkin kaksi keskeistä puutetta, jotka heikentävät ohjelman tarkoituksenmukaisuutta. Ensimmäiseksi, koska ohjelman kautta ei voida tukea tutkimusyhteistyötä, evätään kumppanikorkeakouluilta mahdollisuus vahvistaa kapasiteettiaan alueella, joka on ensiarvoisen tärkeä näiden akateemiselle kehitykselle. Toiseksi, toisin kuin useimpien muiden pohjoismaisten rahoittajien ohjelmat, suomalainen HEI ICI -ohjelma ei sisällä stipendejä, mikä taas estää HEI ICI -hankkeilta mahdollisuuden vahvistaa korkeakoulujen henkilöresursseja. Tutkimuksen ja tutkimus-opintojen tukeminen kumppanikorkeakouluissa ei ole hyväksyttyä myöskään NSS -ohjelmassa.

Evaluoinnin mukaan CIMO on hoitanut hallinnollista tehtäväänsä suhteellisen hyvin palvelleen sekä ulkoasiainministeriötä että ohjelmaan osallistuvia korkeakouluja. CIMO ei kuitenkaan ole onnistunut kehittämään riittävää tiedonhallintajärjestelmää ohjelmien seurantaan varten. Ulkoasiainministeriön CIMOLle asettamat hallinnolliset vaatimukset HEI ICI -ohjelman suhteen ovat tehneet ohjelmasta ja sen toimintatavoista vähemmän joustavat verrattuna NSS-ohjelmaan.

SUOSITUKSET

Evaluoinnissa todetaan, että Suomella ei ole varaa hajauttaa rajallisia kehitysyhteistyöresursseja liikaa ja samalla vaarantaa mahdollisten kehitysvaikutusten saavuttamista. Tästä syystä siinä suositellaan lisäämään Suomen kehitysyhteistyön tuloksellisuutta ja vaikuttavuutta keskittämällä yhteistyön toteutusta ja resursseja. Tämä on mahdollista kehittämällä nykyisiä NSS- ja HEI ICI -ohjelmia monipuolisempi ja sopivampi instrumentti sekä valitsemalla kumppanimaat ja korkeakoulut tarkemmin.

Evaluointitiimi ehdottaa kahta keskeistä muutosta, jotka liittyvät ohjelmarakenteeseen ja interventioiden laatuun:

- Ulkoasiainministeriön tulee harkita NSS- ja HEI ICI -ohjelmien yhdistämistä tai mieluiten suunnitella uusi, edistyneempi HEI ICI -ohjelma parempien synergiaetujen saavuttamiseksi. Tämän toteuttamiseksi erillisistä kapasiteetin vahvistamiseen tähtäävistä interventioista (kuten akateemiset vaihdot, opiskelijavaihdot, intensiivikurssit ja opinto-ohjelmien modernisointi) on luovuttava. Hankkeiden kokoa tulee kasvattaa huomattavasti, jotta kapasiteetin vahvistamiseen tähtäävät toiminnot ovat riittävän laajoja.
- Lisäksi uuden ohjelman pitää mahdollistaa kokonaisvaltainen ja pitkäaikainen institutionaalisen kapasiteetin vahvistaminen kumppanimaissa kansainvälisten hyvien käytäntöjen mukaisesti. Tähän on sisällytettävä rahoitusta tutkimusyhteistyölle sekä maisterin ja tohtorin tutkintojen koulutusta kumppanikorkeakouluissa. Tarvittavat resurssit tutkimusyhteistyölle on mahdollista saada joko kasvattamalla ulkoasiainministeriön budjettia korkeakoulu-yhteistyölle tai suuntaamalla uudelleen Suomen Akatemialle varattuja resursseja. Näin voidaan suunnitella suurempia ja kokonaisvaltaisempia hankkeita, jotka tukisivat kapasiteetin kehittämistä kumppanimaissa nykyistä paremmin.

Tuloksellisuuden ja vaikuttavuuden parantamiseksi evaluointitiimi ehdottaa seuraavia muutoksia uuden ohjelman suunnitteluun ja valmisteluun:

- kumppanimaiden määrän pienentäminen;
- keskittyminen kumppanikorkeakouluihin, joissa kapasiteetin kehittämisen tarve on suurin;
- yhteensopivuus Suomen ja kumppanimaiden välisten maastrategioiden kanssa;
- kehitysyhteistyövarojen yhdistäminen muiden Pohjoismaiden kanssa;
- hanketoimintojen integrointi kumppanikorkeakoulujen omiin kehityssuunnitelmiin;
- mahdollistavan toimintaympäristön huomioiminen kumppanimaan korkeakoulujärjestelmässä;
- taloudellisten resurssien lisääminen; ja
- asianmukaisen evaluointikehyksen sisällyttäminen jokaiseen projektiin.

CIMOn tulisi jatkaa uuden ohjelman hallinnollisena tahona. Tehokkuuden parantamiseksi CIMOn hallinnollisiin tehtäviin ja seurantaan liittyvien velvollisuuksien ohjeistusta on parannettava, jolloin tarve kääntyä ulkoasianministeriön puoleen vähenee. Hankkeiden toteutuksen tehostamiseksi ja synergioiden hyödyntämiseksi Suomen kumppanimaiden suurlähetystöjen pitäisi ottaa proaktiivisempi rooli hankkeiden koordinoinnissa. CIMOn edustajat voisivat osallistua koordinoititapaamisiin suurlähetystöissä ja tehdä kenttävierailuja hankkeisiin saadakseen paremman kuvan hankkeiden toteutuksen edistymisestä.

SAMMANFATTNING

Utrikesministeriet (UM) har beställt denna utvärdering för uppföljning av oberoende utvärderingar av nord-syd-syd-programmet (NSS) 2006 och 2009 samt halvtidsutvärderingen av institutionella samarbetsinstrumentet för högskolor (HEI ICI) 2013. Båda programmen administreras av CIMO och de har varit Finlands främsta utvecklingspolitiska instrument inriktade på högre utbildning. NSS har främjat mobilitet och nätverk mellan partnerländer och finländska högskolor sedan 2004. Dess budget för perioden 2004–2014 är 15,8 miljoner euro. HEI ICI har främjat samarbete inom högre utbildning sedan 2009, främst avseende förvaltning, undervisning och lärande. Dess budget för perioden 2009–2014 är 15,4 miljoner euro.

Syftet med denna utvärdering är att analysera NSS och HEI ICI utifrån DAC-kriterierna för biståndseffektivitet – relevans, effektivitet, effekt, hållbarhet och ändamålsenlighet – samt komplementaritet; och att finna möjliga synergier mellan programmen. Utvärderingen genomfördes i två faser, som inleddes med en granskning baserad på dokumentation följt av intervjuer med intressenter i Finland, Sydafrika och Vietnam. Med beaktande av företrädade projekt, tillgänglighet och varaktighet genomförde utvärderingsgruppen en fördjupad studie av ett urval av projekt: 21 inom NSS, 50 % av dess totala volym och 7 inom HEI ICI som omfattade totalt 17 partnerländer.

OBSERVATIONER OCH SLUTSATSER

Båda programmen har främjat mycket relevanta insatser, men stödets begränsade storlek i absoluta och relativa termer har reducerat programmens långsiktiga effekter på HEI-partner framförallt inom NSS.

Utvärderingen visar att NSS och HEI ICI haft blandade projektresultat, men att HEI ICI-projekt överlag tenderar att uppnå något bättre resultat. Trots NSS-projektens positiva resultat vid involvering av ett antal personer i akademiskt utbyte och intensivkurser har fördelarna för HEI-partner varit få ur institutionellt perspektiv. Som fristående program har NSS snarare utgjort en småskalig plattform för finländska HEI:s internationalisering än ett egentligt instrument för utvecklingssamarbete som utvecklar kapaciteten hos HEI-partner.

När HEI ICI-projekt genomförts effektivt har de på ett mycket positivt sätt bidragit till utveckling av fakultetsmedlemmarnas kapacitet, modernisering av kursplaner och pedagogisk praxis, etablering av nya program hos HEI-partner och starkare länkar till näringslivet och samhället. Ur relevansperspektiv finns det dock två stora brister i utformningen av HEI ICI-programmet. 1) Genom uteslutning av allt stöd till forskningssamarbete förlorar partneruniversiteten möjligheten att utveckla kapacitet på ett grundläggande område inom deras akademiska liv och utvecklingsbana.

2) Uteslutning av stipendier som giltiga projektutgifter förhindrat HEI ICI-projekt att stärka personalresurserna hos partneruniversiteten, till skillnad från programmen för de flesta av de övriga nordiska givarna. Forskning och stöd till examensstudier hos HEI-partner har även uteslutits i NSS-programmet.

CIMO som administratör har tjänat deltagande HEIs och UM relativt väl men har inte byggt in en adekvat informationsdatabas för monitoring av programmen. På grund av UM:s olika administrativa krav på CIMO i skötseln av HEI ICI-programmet har det varit betydligt mindre flexibelt än NSS för deltagande HEI.

REKOMMENDATIONER

Finland har inte råd att sprida ut de begränsade resurserna för utvecklingssamarbete för tunt eftersom risken är att utvecklingseffekten blir mycket liten. Därför rekommenderar utvärderingsgruppen att samlingsinsatserna och resurserna koncentreras för att öka det finländska biståndets effektivitet och effekt. Detta kan åstadkommas genom ett mera övergripande och ändamålsenligt instrument än NSS och HEI ICI samt ett noggrannare urval av partnerländer och institutioner.

Utvärderingsgruppen föreslår två stora förändringar i programstrukturen och de stödberättigade insatskategorierna:

- 1) UM bör överväga en sammanslagning av NSS och HEI ICI eller ännu hellre planera en utvidgning av HEI ICI-programmet för att uppnå bättre synergier. Detta innebär att man inte längre skiljer på de olika kompletterande insatserna för kapacitetsutveckling – akademiskt utbyte, studentutbyte, intensivkurser, tekniskt stöd för modernisering och utveckling av kursplaner samt vetenskaplig och biblioteksutrustning. Resurserna som tilldelas varje enskilt projekt bör vara betydligt större än i de nuvarande projekten för att säkerställa en kritisk massa för de planerade åtgärderna inom kapacitetsutveckling.
- 2) Det nya programmet bör möjliggöra övergripande och långsiktig institutionell kapacitetsutveckling i partnerländerna enligt god internationell praxis. Detta inkluderar i synnerhet finansiering av gemensam forskning och master- eller doktorandutbildning hos HEI-partner. Resurserna för gemensam forskning kan komma från en ökad UM-budget för samarbete inom högre utbildning eller omfördelning av en del av de resurser som nu tilldelats Finlands Akademi. Detta skulle möjliggöra större och mera heltäckande projekt, som ger ett bättre stöd för kapacitetsutveckling i partnerländerna.

För att öka det utvidgade HEI ICI-programmets effektivitet och effekt som instrument för kapacitetsutveckling bör UM göra ett antal förändringar i planeringen och beredningen av programmet:

- minska antalet prioriterade länder,
- fokusera på HEI-partner med störst behov av kapacitetsutveckling,
- samordna med Finlands strategiska program för prioriterade länder,
- föra samman biståndsresurser med andra nordiska länder,
- integrera projektinsatser i den institutionella utvecklingsplanen för HEI-partner,
- beakta förutsättningar relaterade till partnerländernas ekosystem för högre utbildning,
- öka finansieringen och
- inkludera en ändamålsenlig utvärderingsram i varje projekt.

CIMO bör fortsätta att svara för ledning och administration i det nya programmet och få detaljerade anvisningar om dess skyldigheter i fråga om administration och uppföljning så att effektiviteten kan öka genom att hänvisningarna till UM minimeras. För att underlätta effektivt genomförande av projekten och bidra till synergier bör Finlands ambassader i partnerländerna spela en mera proaktiv samordningsroll. Företrädare för CIMO skulle kunna delta vid ambassadernas samordningsmöten och t.o.m. besöka projekt på fältet för att få en bättre uppfattning om de aktuella framstegen.

SUMMARY

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) commissioned this evaluation as a follow-up to the 2006 and 2009 independent evaluations of the North-South-South programme (NSS) and the 2012 mid-term review of the Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI). The two programmes – both managed by the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) – have been Finland's main development policy instruments targeted towards higher education. NSS has promoted mobility and networking between partner countries and Finnish higher education institutions (HEIs) since 2004 with a budget of 15.8 million EUR for the 2004-2014 period. HEI ICI has supported higher education collaboration mainly on governance, teaching and learning issues since 2009 with the budget of 15.4 million EUR for the 2009-2014 period.

The purpose of this evaluation was to analyse the NSS and HEI ICI programmes through the lenses of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria for aid effectiveness – relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency – and of complementarity, as well as searching for possible synergies between the two programmes. The evaluation was carried out in two phases, starting with a desk study and then continuing with stakeholder interviews in Finland, Kenya, South Africa and Vietnam. Taking into consideration project representation, accessibility and duration, the evaluation team conducted an in-depth study of a sample of 21 NSS – representing 50 % of the overall NSS cooperation volume – and 7 HEI ICI projects covering 17 partner countries in total.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Both NSS and HEI ICI programmes have supported highly relevant activities, although small amounts of support – both in absolute and relative terms – limits the overall impact of the programmes in transforming the partner HEIs, especially in the case of NSS.

The evaluation reveals that NSS and HEI ICI projects have had a mixed performance, HEI ICI projects tending to accomplish better results overall. Notwithstanding the positive results of NSS projects at the level of the few individuals directly involved in the academic exchanges and intensive courses, few benefits have accrued to the partner HEIs from an institutional viewpoint. As a self-standing programme, NSS has operated more as a small-scale internationalisation platform for Finnish HEIs than a genuine development cooperation instrument to build capacity in partner HEIs.

When effectively implemented, HEI ICI projects have contributed in a very positive way to upgrading the capacity of faculty members, modernising curricula and pedagogical practices, establishing new programmes in partner HEIs, and strengthening

linkages with industry and the community. From a relevance viewpoint, the HEI ICI programme has two major design flaws, however. First, by excluding any support for collaborative research activities, it denies partner universities the opportunity to build their capacity in an area that is a fundamental part of their academic life and development path. Second, the exclusion of scholarships as eligible expenditures prevents HEI ICI projects from helping strengthen the human resource capacity of partner universities, unlike the programmes of most other Nordic donors. Research and support for degree studies of faculty in partner HEIs have been excluded also from the NSS programme.

While CIMO has served the MFA and the participating HEIs relatively well as administrative agency, it has not built an adequate information management database for monitoring. Furthermore, the administrative arrangements imposed by the MFA on CIMO for managing the HEI ICI programme make it significantly less flexible than NSS for the participating HEIs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Finland cannot afford to spread its limited resources for development cooperation too thinly at the risk of having a very small development impact. Therefore, the evaluation team recommends increasing the effectiveness and impact of Finnish development aid by concentrating cooperation efforts and resources. This can be achieved through a more comprehensive and appropriate instrument than the existing NSS and HEI ICI, and through increased selectivity in the choice of partner countries and institutions.

The evaluation team proposes two major changes in terms of programme configuration and categories of eligible interventions:

- First, the MFA should consider merging the NSS and HEI ICI programmes – or preferably designing an enhanced HEI ICI programme – to achieve better synergies. This means eliminating the separation of the various complementary interventions for capacity development – academic exchanges, student exchanges, intensive courses, technical assistance for curriculum modernisation and development and scientific and library equipment. The amount of resources allocated to each project should be also significantly larger than the present projects, in order to ensure critical mass in the capacity building activities envisaged.
- Second, the new programme should allow for comprehensive and long-term institutional capacity building in partner countries, following international good practices. This would involve, in particular, funding of joint research and master's or doctorate degree training of academics in partner HEIs. The resources for joint research could come either from an increased MFA budget for higher education cooperation or from reallocating some of the resources presently al-

located to the Academy of Finland. This would enable larger and more comprehensive projects that would better support capacity development in partner countries.

To improve the effectiveness and impact of the enhanced HEI ICI programme as a capacity building instrument, the MFA should introduce a number of changes in programme design and preparation:

- Reduced number of priority countries;
- Concentration on partner HEIs most in need of capacity development;
- Alignment with the Finnish strategic programme in priority countries;
- Pooling of development aid resources with other Nordic countries;
- Integration of project activities into the institutional development plan of partner HEIs;
- Consideration of enabling conditions linked to the higher education ecosystem in partner countries;
- Increase in financial resources; and
- Incorporation of an appropriate evaluation framework in each project.

CIMO should continue as the management and administrative arm of the new programme with detailed guidelines on its administrative and monitoring responsibilities so that reference to MFA is minimised for increased efficiency. To facilitate effective project implementation and encourage synergies, Finnish embassies in partner countries should play a more proactive coordination role. CIMO representatives could take part in the coordination meetings by the Finnish embassies, and even conduct field visits of projects to get a better sense of actual implementation progress.

Summary of key findings, conclusions and recommendations

Main Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
At the global and national level, Finnish support to HEIs in partner countries has been minimal, and the benefits of NSS and HEI ICI programmes, - which are the main policy instruments for Finnish higher education development cooperation – have had limited capacity development results at the institutional level.	Education, especially higher education, is not prioritised in terms of actual budgeted resources in the Finnish development cooperation and NSS and HEI ICI instruments are not the best possible for partner HEIs capacity development.	1. Within the limits of the current budget austerity, the MFA should increase its development aid resources for higher education and consider merging the NSS and HEI ICI programmes – or preferably designing an enhanced HEI ICI programme – to achieve better capacity development results at partner HEIs.
NSS and HEI ICI have not prioritised Finnish long-term partner countries, the LDCs, or the crosscutting objectives. They support small sized projects and affect a small number of people. Also the mobility and training activities were not generally integrated in any institutional transformation strategy.	Development policy guidance has not worked well for strategically steering the programmes. Resources have been spread thinly overall, resulting in less capacity development than planned.	2. The MFA should define and implement a clear prioritisation strategy. This would mean concentrating support for higher education on a smaller number of countries and on a smaller number of institutions that have substantial capacity building needs and potential, taking into account Finnish crosscutting objectives. In some cases, this could mean giving priority to younger HEIs, preferably outside capital cities.
Both NSS and HEI ICI programmes are very much appreciated by the Southern partner HEIs, but they do not address key elements of capacity building, namely collaborative research and scholarships for degree studies for academic staff.	NSS and HEI ICI are not the best possible or ideal capacity building instruments for the Southern HEIs. The short duration of the projects and the absence of funding for research and scholarships have seriously limited	3. To improve capacity building, a new programme should allow for collaborative research and scholarships for degree training of academic staff of the Southern partner HEIs (Masters and PhD). It should also finance projects over the long term.

	the capacity building potential of NSS and HEI ICI.	
There are no proper indicators to measure capacity development and improved learning outcomes in the NSS and the HEI ICI programmes. With little cumulative information, evaluators are unable to assess and compare individual projects over time.	Systemic data on human development or learning outcomes were not available to measure the impact of individual NSS and HEI ICI projects. The programme databases were of little use in formulating a comprehensive overview of the programmes.	4. An appropriate database is required to obtain an easily accessible overview of the programmes. All approved individual projects should have an adequate monitoring and evaluation framework to track implementation progress and assess medium- and long-term results. MFA and CIMO should provide a monitoring template for HEIs and resources for training Finnish and Southern HEIs to carry out monitoring effectively.
When effectively implemented, HEI ICI projects have contributed in a very positive way to upgrading the capacity of faculty members, modernising curricula and pedagogical practices, establishing new programmes and courses in partner universities, and strengthening linkages with industry and the community.	HEI ICI projects are better aligned with the capacity development of partner HEIs, are better resourced, and have a more rigorous approach to project preparation than NSS, with a greater focus on results and monitoring and a significant contribution from partner HEIs.	5. To achieve a greater impact, Finnish higher education support programme should build on the positive features of the HEI ICI programme.
Implementation bottlenecks were found in several projects because of a lack of alignment between project activities and conditions in the institution involved or country conditions	When key enabling conditions were not met, either at the system level or at the institutional level, capacity development could not take place in an effective manner.	6. The Finnish higher education support programme should include a scan of enabling conditions in the higher education ecosystem of partner countries to ensure appropriate project preparation.

In the MFA, the management of NSS and HEI ICI rests largely with one person who has other duties as well.	NSS and HEI ICI programme management is not well resourced in the MFA. There is insufficient cooperation with the Finnish Embassies.	7. The MFA should ensure sufficient staff resources to manage the programme and find ways of improving cooperation and information sharing with the Finnish Embassies. In the selected priority countries, HEI cooperation should be included in the Embassy strategy.
Overall, the Finnish HEIs expressed satisfaction and appreciation of CIMO's services and support. CIMO and MFA have addressed the management problems experienced during 2011-2012 and are seeking synergies in programme administration.	CIMO has served the Finnish HEIs well and the identified challenges have been addressed.	8. CIMO should continue as the administrative and management arm of the new programme. CIMO's administrative responsibilities need to be clearly defined to minimise the need to refer to MFA on giving advice to the HEIs.
It is unlikely that student and teacher exchanges and intensive courses under NSS would continue in Southern HEIs without continuous external funding. The HEI ICI trajectory seems to indicate the likelihood that many of the project interventions might be sustainable over time.	Sustainability considerations are not adequately included in the NSS projects while HEI ICI projects seem to be well embedded in the Southern HEIs development strategies.	9. The new higher education instrument should include careful planning for the sustainability of the projects, taking into consideration appropriate resourcing from partner HEIs.
The Finnish Embassies are generally not aware of the specific NSS and HEI ICI projects implemented in their country of influence. With few notable exceptions, the projects are not systematically aligned with the Finnish country strategies or development programme.	There is no systemic, programmatic approach to ensure complementarities and synergies among various projects implemented in NSS and HEI ICI. Nor is there a systematic dialogue between Ministries of Education, Finnish Embassies, and	10. Projects should be fully aligned with the Finnish development strategy in the eligible partner countries. The Finnish embassies should convene regular meetings of all participating HEIs, to provide a platform for exchange of information, experiences and good practices, and for

	HEIs to ensure alignment between projects and country strategies.	the identification of possible implementation bottlenecks. CIMO representatives should participate in these meetings.
The Finnish aid programme for higher education does not adequately leverage the presence of other Nordic donors in partner countries.	Even though the four Nordic countries meet regularly to share experiences, there is no formal coordination of aid policies to pool donor resources at the partner country level.	11. MFA should set up and coordinate a working group, which would include representation from CIMO, the Academy of Finland, MOEC and selected HEIs to formulate and take forward principles of collaboration including pooling of financial, human and physical resources with Nordic counterparts in higher education development cooperation.
Some Ministries responsible for higher education in partner countries are not aware of the NSS and HEI ICI projects implemented in their countries.	There is no mechanism to ensure that NSS and HEI ICI projects fit well in the partner country's national higher education development strategy.	12. The Finnish Embassies and project managers should have regular coordination meetings with the Ministries responsible for higher education.
It is not always clear why certain projects are selected over others. In addition, the Finnish HEIs do not feel that they receive sufficient feedback from CIMO on why projects are accepted or rejected.	Despite an increasingly detailed project selection process, the final selection is not fully transparent. MFA and CIMO have no mechanism to systematically inform the Finnish HEIs who applied for funding about the results of the selection process.	13. CIMO should publish the scores of all competing projects against each selection criterion.

<p>The Steering Committees comprise an adequate number of important stakeholders. The meetings are well prepared. However, the documentation presented does not facilitate a discussion of project quality to enable Steering Committee members to influence project selection.</p>	<p>The Steering Committees cannot fulfil their main function of ensuring quality of the programmes, and their participation in project selection is limited.</p>	<p>14. The Steering Committees should be presented with a wider choice of projects from which to select. The new programme should include targets and indicators against which the quality of the projects could be monitored.</p>
<p>CIMO does not have a proper supervision mechanism to identify implementation difficulties.</p>	<p>A more effective reporting and monitoring system is needed to ensure proper identification of actual project progress and issues.</p>	<p>15. The new programme should include appropriate supervision mechanisms to identify implementation issues as they arise and provide a channel for addressing them early enough.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Importance of higher education for development

For several decades, traditional human capital analysis challenged the need for public support of higher education on the grounds that graduates capture important private benefits — notably higher salaries and lower unemployment —, which should not be subsidised by taxpayers. Indeed, there is widespread evidence that people with a higher education degree have better employment prospects and receive higher salaries than individuals with less education. Data from OECD countries indicate that “... tertiary-educated individuals are employed at a higher rate than people with upper secondary or post-secondary non-higher education (OECD, 2012a, p.122).

In recent years, however, a body of research has demonstrated the need to go beyond rate-of-return analysis to measure the value of investment in higher education as an important pillar of sustainable development. By focusing primarily on the private returns of government spending, rate-of-return analysis fails to capture broad social benefits accruing to society, which are important to recognise and measure. These include research externalities, entrepreneurship, job creation, good economic and political governance, and the positive effects of a highly educated cadre of workers on a nation’s health and social fabric (Bloom *et al.*, 2005; BIS, 2013). Analysing data from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in combination with economic growth trends, Schleicher (2006) showed the positive returns of education for society as a whole.

According to the World Bank (1999), higher education institutions support knowledge-driven economic growth strategies and poverty reduction by (a) training a qualified and adaptable labour force, including high-level scientists, professionals, technicians, teachers in basic and secondary education, medical professionals, and future government and business leaders; (b) generating new knowledge; and (c) providing the capacity to access existing stores of global knowledge and adapting this knowledge to local use. Higher education institutions are unique in their ability to integrate and create synergy among these three dimensions.

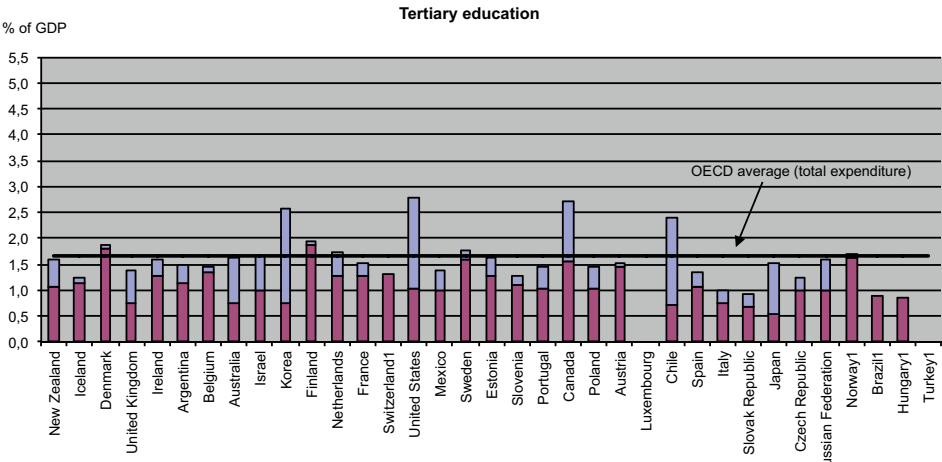
Finland’s own experience is one of the most inspiring examples of countries that have benefited from the positive development role played by their higher education institutions, as the country transformed itself into a leading knowledge economy in the 1990s. In the words of the former Minister of Science and Technology, Henna Virkkunen,

Investment in knowledge and competence is the sustainable core of Finland’s national success strategy. International comparisons and evaluations have shown that a high-quality education and research system affords us significant strength and a competitive edge. The higher education institutions have contributed posi-

tively to the renewal of society and the development of the economy and productivity. The significance of higher education institutions is emphasised in a global operating environment. Production of new knowledge and competence as well as their versatile utilisation will remain the basis of our success also in the future (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 6).

This positive view of the role of the higher education as a public good is consistent with the generous system of public funding of higher education that characterises Finland and the other Nordic countries. This is in contrast with many parts of the world, including developing countries, where governments do not fund higher education as abundantly and often require substantial levels of cost sharing, reflecting a mixed view of the relative importance of the public and private benefits of higher education. Figure 1, which shows the level of public and private higher education expenditures in most OECD countries, illustrates the difference between the Nordic countries and most other OECD economies.

Figure 1 Expenditures on tertiary education institutions as a percentage of GDP (2010).



Note: grey represents public expenditures, blue private expenditures

Source: OECD, Education at a Glance (2013).

Higher education contributes a wide range of private and social benefits, as summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Potential benefits of higher education.

Benefits	Private	Public
Economic	Higher salaries	Greater productivity
	Better employment prospects	National and regional development
	Higher savings	Reduced reliance on government financial support
	Improved working conditions	Increased potential for transformation from low-skill manufacturing to knowledge-based economy
	Personal and professional mobility	
Social	Improved quality of life for self and children	Nation building and development of leadership
	Better decision-making	Democratic participation; increased consensus; perception that society is based on fairness and opportunity for all citizens
	Improved personal status	Social mobility
	Increased educational opportunities	Greater social cohesion and reduced crime rates
	Healthier lifestyle and higher life expectancy	Improved health
		Improved basic and secondary education

Source: World Bank (2002), p. 86.

1.2 Development cooperation and capacity building efforts of Finland

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) has supported higher education capacity building efforts in developing countries in the past decade through two complementary interventions: the North-South-South Programme (NSS) and the Higher Education Institutions' Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI).¹ These two programmes reflect the principles embedded in the main documents defining the

¹ The Academy of Finland supports development research among Finnish universities. While some of the development research projects include significant partnerships with HEIs in developing countries, they are not designed with the explicit purpose of building research capacities in partner countries. The 2009 evaluation of the development research programme is available at <http://formin.finland.fi>.

Finnish Development Policy in 2004, 2007 and 2012, in particular the importance of human capacity building for sustainable development, the creation of a green economy, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

NSS has promoted mobility and networking between Finnish higher education institutions (HEIs) and partner countries since 2004. Specific activities have included student and teacher mobility, knowledge dissemination through joint intensive courses in partner countries, and various networking activities for sustainable partnerships. All available financing is channelled through HEI networks containing at least one Finnish university and one developing country institution. The total budget for the 2004-2014 period was 15.8 million EUR (Box 1).

Box 1 The NSS Programme.

NSS promotes networks between HEIs in Finland and partner institutions in developing countries to foster capacity building through reciprocal student and teacher exchanges, intensive courses and networking activities.

Since the inception of the programme in 2004, there have been 11 calls for applications with a total funding of 15.8 million EUR. The programme has supported about 80 networks, many of them having received several rounds of funding.

Between 2004-2013, the NSS has funded 1 500 student exchanges of approximately four months each and almost 1 000 university teacher exchanges of two to three weeks. NSS projects are typically small, with an annual budget of around 50 000 EUR spread among an average of six partners per network.

Source: Elaborated by the authors

HEI ICI has promoted collaboration between Finnish HEIs and HEIs in partner countries since 2009 through 1 to 3 year collaborative projects aimed at improving quality and relevance, governance, leadership and management, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching and learning. The total amount of resources available for HEI ICI projects for the 2009-2014 period was 15.4 million EUR, with a focus on Africa (Box 2).

Box 2 The HEI ICI programme.

HEI-ICI is designed to help transform partner HEIs into developmentally responsive institutions by enhancing their administrative, field-specific and pedagogical capacities. The maximum MFA funding for each project was 500 000 EUR. The Finnish HEIs were required to self-finance a minimum of 20% of total project expenditures (only 15 % in 2011-12).

A total of 38 projects have been funded through two calls for applications. In the first round (2011-2012), a total of 5.6 million EUR was allocated for 15 projects. In the second round (2013-2015), 23 projects have received a total allocation of 9.8 million EUR; 10 of them had received funding also in the previous round.

Education and teacher training, medical sciences and social sciences are the most common fields of cooperation, followed by agriculture, forestry, and engineering and technology. HEI-ICI cooperation has been active in 21 partner countries, the most popular ones being Tanzania, Kenya, Namibia and Zambia.

Source: Elaborated by the authors

The two programmes have been managed by the same organisation, the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), an independent public agency operating under the authority of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

1.3 Objectives of the evaluation of NSS and HEI ICI

As both programmes are in the last year of their present implementation period, MFA launched a comprehensive assessment of how well these programmes were designed and have operated, and whether they should be continued in their present form. In that perspective, the purpose of this evaluation is to identify issues, draw lessons and make recommendations on Finland's support to higher education institutions through the NSS and HEI ICI cooperation instruments.

Specifically, the joint evaluation of NSS and HEI ICI aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the key results of the two programmes at the institutional level and what is their development impact in partner countries? Can a typology of results and impact be formulated?
- To what extent do the two programmes support the development objectives of partner countries, the MDGs and the cooperation objectives stated in the 2012 Finnish Development Policy?
- Are the overall approaches of the two programmes fit for the intended purpose and relevant to the needs of partner countries? Are the governance and management structures effective and efficient?

- How do the two programmes complement and benefit the overall Finnish development cooperation at the country level? What are the synergies between the two programmes and with the other actors and programmes at the country level?
- What are the main lessons learned and the relevant good practices?

1.4 Evaluation framework and methodology

In accordance with the Terms of Reference (TORs) prepared by the MFA, the evaluation looked at the NSS and HEI ICI programmes through the lenses of the DAC criteria for assessing aid effectiveness: relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency, as well as complementarity (Annex 1). In addition, the evaluation searched for possible synergies between the two programmes, and analysed how the projects financed under the two programmes were aligned with the crosscutting objectives of Finnish development policy. Annex 3 presents the detailed evaluation matrix which was used to guide this assessment of the NSS and HEI ICI programmes.

This evaluation was carried out in two phases, starting with a desk study and then continuing with interviews and field visits in Finland, Vietnam, Kenya and South Africa. During the desk study, the team analysed three main sources of information: (i) documents on development aid in general, cooperation in support of higher education development, and relevant higher education aid programmes of multilateral and bilateral agencies; (ii) official policy documents of Finland in the areas of development cooperation, higher education development, and internationalisation of higher education; and (iii) NSS and HEI ICI programme documents, project files, and implementation reports.

To achieve a thorough understanding of the projects, the team drew a sample of projects responding to the following three criteria:

- the total volume must make them representative of the total NSS cooperation in the country;
- they must be accessible within a limited number of days; and
- the projects should have continued for at least two years.

All the projects meeting these criteria were studied in depth, representing 21 NSS and 7 HEI ICI projects covering 17 partner countries in total (15 in Africa and two in Asia, namely Nepal and Vietnam). The selection of networks and HEIs to be visited in the three countries and in Finland was based on the same criteria. The sampled NSS projects represent 50 % of the overall NSS cooperation volume, whether measured as number of exchange teachers, exchange students, intensive courses, or reported costs. As far as the HEI-ICI programme is concerned, the evaluation concentrated on projects funded in 2011-2012 as the 2013 ones had only recently started. Of the 15 projects that were approved in the first round of applications, the team visited all

four projects implemented in the three sample countries. In addition, interviews were held with five out of the 23 projects that received funding in 2013. Annexes 4 and 5 give the list of all projects and countries in the sample, while Annex 6 presents the list of the projects visited by the evaluation team during the field visits.

During the second phase of the evaluation, the team investigated the stakeholder perspective through field visits in Finland and in three partner countries. In Finland, it interviewed representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation (TEKES), Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID), the Academy of Finland, the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (ARENE), the National Union of University Students in Finland (SYL), and the Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (SAMOK).

The team also visited 15 universities involved in 13 NSS and 7 HEI ICI projects, and had a focus group meeting with all HEI ICI coordinators. In Vietnam, the team visited 12 HEIs in four cities (Hanoi, Haiphong, Hue and Danang) and one in the provincial district of Dong Ha, accounting for 85% of NSS cooperation and 100% of HEI ICI projects in the country. In Kenya, the visits included 5 universities in four cities (Nairobi, Kisumu, Baraton, Eldoret), representing over 80 % of NSS cooperation and 100% of HEI ICI projects in the country. The Kenya visit was slightly hampered by a national strike of university personnel in public universities. Finally, in South Africa, the team visited 8 universities in three cities (Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town), amounting to over 65 % of NSS projects and 50% of HEI ICI cooperation in the country. In most partner universities, the team had focus group meetings with academics and students involved in the programmes. Annex 2 provides the detailed list of meetings and individuals interviewed.

To carry out a balanced evaluation, the team relied on both quantitative and qualitative assessments, deriving its findings and conclusions from the combination of three analytical methods: triangulation, participatory consultations and interviews, and international comparisons. The evaluation relied on data, methodology and investigator triangulation throughout the study process. This cross-verification allowed the team to confirm the findings of the evaluation through several data sources and methods, including the views of relevant external stakeholders related in a meaningful way to the programmes but not directly involved in the projects themselves. The evaluation was conducted in a participatory manner through semi-structured individual and group interviews, which constituted the backbone of the joint assessment of the NSS and HEI ICI programmes. In that manner, the team sought to understand the perspectives of all key stakeholders. The supporting quantitative analysis covered data on student and teacher mobility figures, number of intensive courses run and course participants to help gauge project outreach and impact.

More specifically, using information gathered from the interviews as well as available documentation from CIMO project databases, evaluation team members individually

assessed each project against a 5-point rating scale for each of the 6 evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, impact, complementarity, sustainability and efficiency). Individual project ratings against each criterion were then discussed among team members with the aim of clarifying the bases on which they were arrived at, leading to a more objective team consensus on the relative merits of projects and the extent to which they met the evaluation criteria. The team did not take into account only retrospective performance in quantitative terms, but also achievements on the ground. These included completion of training modules for sharing, institutionalising curriculum change processes, and regular monitoring activities in partner HEIs. These were taken as demonstrations of strong potential for going forward and meeting overall project development objectives. The outcome of the ratings exercise provided the team with a holistic picture of criteria-based project performance, providing opportunities for comparison and identifying explanations for performance.

The team took also an internationally comparative perspective to assess the NSS and HEI ICI programmes not only against Finnish and partner country development policy objectives but also in the wider context of higher education development policy and cooperation in general. The comparative approach involved benchmarking the NSS and HEI ICI programmes against similar development co-operation instruments supported by other bilateral donors, especially among the Nordic countries.

As a note of caution, it is important to remember that most HEI ICI projects have had a short implementation period since the launch of the programme in 2011. After one or two years of implementation, the evaluation team could draw only tentative conclusions, especially regarding the capacity development results and the impact of the projects beyond the partner HEIs involved.

Finally, in hindsight, this evaluation could have benefited from field visits in at least one of the least developed economies among the partner nations of Finland, considering the dire capacity building needs in these countries. Conducting interviews in partner HEIs in some of the poorest countries, such as Nepal, Ethiopia or Mozambique, could have brought out additional relevant lessons to feed into the shaping of the future Finnish development cooperation in support of higher education capacity building.

2 OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION CAPACITY BUILDING

International experience with donor support for higher education indicate that the most effective programmes are embedded in favourable higher education ecosystems with appropriate governance arrangements, focus on long-term institutional capacity building, and rely on partnerships that are mutually beneficial.

2.1 Main actors and modalities of support

To give a sense of the relative importance of development aid for higher education, Table 2 shows the evolution of the share of higher education in overall Official Development Assistance (ODA) expenditures for education. Over the 2003–2012 period, ODA for higher education went down from 3.7% to 2.6%, a sharper decline than for education as a whole (from 8.2% to 7.7%).

Table 2 ODA disbursements 2003–2012 (Million USD in current prices).

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total ODA	68 324	78 624	111 301	154 131	113 674	132 678	136 578	148 047	155 976	151 539
Education	5 599	6 648	7 585	8 681	10 506	10 727	11 961	12 353	12 463	11 616
Higher education	2 529	2 744	3 219	3 579	3 888	3 837	4 013	4 202	4 062	3 950
As % of total	3,7	3,5	2,9	2,3	3,4	2,9	2,9	2,8	2,6	2,6
As % of education	45,2	41,3	42,4	41,2	37,0	35,8	33,6	34,0	32,6	34,0

Note. Total ODA from all donors to all recipients concerning education and higher education sectors.

Source: OECD (<http://stats.oecd.org/>)

Table 3 gives an overview of the range and focus of capacity building interventions by donor agencies. It identifies four main areas of intervention from the viewpoint of the objectives pursued: (i) enhanced quality and relevance, (ii) increased equity in access and success, (iii) increased and improved research capacity, and (iv) strengthened management capacity.

Table 3 Capacity building of higher education institutions: modalities of interventions and expected results.

Purpose of Interventions	Intervention Modalities	Expected Results	Examples of Donors ²
Improved Quality and Relevance of Education Programmes (Bachelors and Masters)			
Establishment of new master's programmes	Technical assistance, academic exchanges, equipment purchase	More qualified professionals in priority areas	Finland, Norway, Sweden, World Bank
Curriculum design & reform	Technical assistance, training workshops, academic exchanges	More relevant learning	ADB, AfDB, Canada, Finland, Norway, Sweden, World Bank
Introduction of active and interactive teaching and learning methods	Technical assistance, training workshops, academic exchanges	More effective learning	Canada, Finland, Norway, Sweden
Enhancement of the capacity of existing academics	Technical assistance, mentoring, training workshops, academic exchanges, scholarships for master's in donor countries	More effective teaching	Carnegie Foundation, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States
Modernisation of scientific labs	Technical assistance, training workshops, academic exchanges, equipment purchase	More applied learning	ADB, AfDB Norway, World Bank
Library development	Technical assistance, training workshops, equipment purchase	Better access to relevant information	ADB, AfDB, Finland, World Bank
Strengthening of internal quality assurance systems	Technical assistance, mentoring, training workshops	More effective and relevant teaching and learning	ADB, Germany, World Bank
Development of university-industry linkages	Technical assistance, training workshops	More relevant curriculum and education experience	Finland, Norway, World Bank

² This list is essentially illustrative and is not meant to be exhaustive.

Increased Equity and Inclusiveness (Undergraduate Level)			
Removal of financial barriers to access and success	Scholarships	Increased number of students from vulnerable groups	World Bank
Outreach programmes	Technical assistance, mentorship, training workshops	Increased access for students from vulnerable groups	Ford Foundation
Retention programmes	Technical assistance, mentorship, training workshops	Increased completion for students from vulnerable groups	Ford Foundation
Improved Research Capacity and Increased Research Output			
PhD Studies and Post Doc Programmes in Donor Country	Scholarships / fellowships	Increased number of qualified researchers	Germany, Norway, Sweden, World Bank
Joint Research Projects	Mentorship, planning grants, research grants	Increased research production at international level and South-South collaboration	Canada, Germany, Norway, Sweden
Development of research labs	Technical assistance and equipment purchase	Increased research production and South-South collaboration	Norway
Development of Centres of Excellence	Technical assistance and equipment purchase	Increased research production at international level	AfDB, Germany, World Bank
Improved Management and Institutional Capacity			
Strengthening of leadership competencies	Technical assistance, mentoring and capacity building workshops	More effective institutional leadership	Atlantic Philanthropies

Institution and systems strengthening	Technical assistance	More flexible and supportive environment for teaching, learning and research	Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, World Bank
Systems for knowledge management, information and dissemination of results	Technical assistance and IT equipment purchase	More flexible and supportive research environment	Norway

Source: Elaborated by the authors

2.2 International experience

The literature review and the authors' own experience suggest a number of relevant international practices, which could usefully be taken into consideration by Finnish policy-makers as they look to continue and possibly amplify their country's development assistance for building the capacity of higher education systems and institutions in the developing world. These lessons cover the following complementary aspects:

- supportive higher education ecosystem;
- political economy considerations;
- need for an institutional approach to capacity building;
- appropriate institutional governance;
- mutually beneficial partnerships;
- organisational complexity of donor funding;
- length of partnerships; and
- tension between the internationalisation and the development agendas.

Supportive higher education ecosystem

Higher education institutions do not operate in a vacuum. They function within a wider system that facilitates or hinders their performance. The main dimensions of this system include the macro environment (economic and political), government stewardship at the national level, the governance and regulatory framework, the quality assurance system, available financial resources and incentives, the articulation and integration mechanisms between high schools and higher education, as well as among the various types of higher education institutions, the location characteristics of higher education institutions, and the digital and telecommunications infrastructure (Altbach and Salmi, 2011). Donor aid should therefore take into consideration the need to change the policy environment to remove obstacles that might negatively affect the implementation of development programmes and projects.

Political economy considerations

The key to successful implementation of any higher education development strategy is the partner government's ability to address the political sensitivity of proposed reforms in an effective way. This involves three basic considerations. The first one is to carry out a social assessment to review the needs and preoccupations of all major stakeholders. With the results of the social assessment in hand, it is easier to identify potential champions who can be relied on to play a leading part in the implementation of the reform and anticipate reactions in the camp of potential "losers". The second and perhaps more crucial step is the consensus-building phase. Translating reform programmes into reality depends to a large extent on the ability of decision-makers to utilise the social assessment to build consensus among the diverse constituents of the higher education community, allowing for a high degree of tolerance for controversies and disagreements. The third key ingredient for facilitating acceptance of reforms that challenge the *status quo* is the availability of additional resources that can be channelled towards the HEIs (Salmi, 2010).

Institutional approaches

Many university partnerships start on an *ad-hoc* basis as individual initiatives involving a professor in a university of the North and a former student from the South. They operate in isolation from the rest of the university. Coordination with similar programmes financed by other donors in the same institution is limited. As a result, the positive impact remains circumscribed to those faculty members and students who are directly involved, usually in a single academic department.

Few donors have explicit policies about institutional capacity building. A comparative evaluation of donor practices indicated that the UK Department for International Development (DfID), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation (Sida) and the World Bank were the most advanced donors in that respect, making deliberate efforts to define clear objectives with respect to the expected enhanced capabilities of faculty members and quality of academic programmes in partner institutions (Bandstein, 2005).

Successful partnerships are usually embedded into an institutional-wide transformation strategy driven by the leadership of the partner university and fully owned by the entire academic community. This has been a characteristic of research capacity building projects supported by Sweden and the Netherlands (Norad, 2009).

Appropriate institutional governance

In many cases, the failure of capacity building projects to bear their intended fruits is due to inadequate governance and management in the concerned higher education institutions. The donor-supported activities tend to be more effective when they take

place in HEIs led by inspiring leaders committed to the positive transformation of their institution. The absence of good institutional governance has been identified as a major constraint in several studies (Cloete *et al*, 2002).

To overcome this obstacle, the criteria for selecting partner higher education institutions should include a careful review of the leadership and governance characteristics of the candidates, in order to ensure a proper institutional environment for the smooth implementation of partnership activities.

Mutually beneficial partnerships

The history of university partnerships is full of reports criticising the paternalistic nature of development aid programmes that are not well-tailored to the needs of developing countries institutions or do not promote partnerships on equal terms (CHET, 2002). The probability of success of partnership programmes and projects can be significantly increased if the development objectives and activities are defined with, rather than for, the beneficiary institutions, and if implementation responsibilities are shared between the partner institutions in the donor and recipient countries.

Organisational complexity of donor funding

Higher education institutions in developing countries signal sometimes that the donor countries who offer to partner with them are characterised by complex structures and procedures for the allocation, transfer and management of development aid, which results in overly complicated processes and bureaucratic practices. This complexity also makes it difficult to promote collaboration and synergies among the various programmes funded by donor countries (Norad, 2009). To increase aid effectiveness, donors should attempt to simplify their structures and procedures.

Length of partnerships

Institutional change and capacity building are long-term processes, which can take ten years or more. Donor agencies programmes and projects do not always recognise that it takes a long time to bring about sustainable change in higher education institutions, and their programmes or projects rarely exceed five or six years. To achieve meaningful results, donor agencies need to align the duration of their interventions with the capacity building needs of partner countries and institutions (Markensten and Lindström, 2013). In that respect, multi-phase programmes tend to be more suited than stand-alone projects, which usually have a shorter lifespan.

Tension between the internationalisation and the development agendas

Increased focus on internationalisation has been a fairly recent development in higher education. In Europe, for example, it has become an important element only after the Bologna process gained momentum. Recent work on world-class universities has

also highlighted the essential role played by international dimensions in explaining the success of emerging research universities (Salmi, 2009; Altbach and Salmi, 2011). In some cases, however, the new internationalisation agenda has distracted their attention away from the traditionally altruistic motivation that underpinned partnership programmes between universities in the North and in the South. To overcome this risk, donor agencies ought to ensure full alignment between their development aid policies and the internationalisation agenda that their government is pursuing, to avoid giving contradictory signals.

3 THE FINNISH POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.1 Past and present development cooperation and foreign policy

Finland has been an active development partner for several decades, taking its global responsibilities seriously. It has fully endorsed the MDGs and has committed to development policies that promote sustainable development and a more equitable distribution of the benefits of globalisation. The strengths of Finland's development cooperation include its stable long-term priorities, its openness to dialogue, and its good cooperation and division of labour with other donors. Finland is a strong advocate of human rights, the environment, policy coherence for development, and aid effectiveness (OECD, 2012b). Finland has continuously scored high on the Development Commitment Index developed by the Washington-based Centre for Global Development and published since 2003³. In 2013, it tied with the Netherlands in fifth position, after Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Luxembourg. However, at 0.52% of its national income, it is still well below the ODA target of 0.7%.

To increase the leverage of its aid budget, Finland has aimed to focus its development assistance on a relatively small number of countries considered as long-term partners. These include Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia in Africa, Nepal and Vietnam in Asia, and Nicaragua in Latin America until 2012.

However, a performance audit and evaluation of complementarity in Finland's development cooperation and the 2012 DAC Peer Review have drawn attention to systemic shortcomings in terms of ensuring adequate complementarity between bilateral and multilateral co-operation, as well as among different instruments. The complementarity evaluation (Bäck and Bartholomew, 2014) suggests that the high degree of centralised decision-making and the important advisory role of the Quality Assurance Group within the MFA have not translated into strong coordination, coherence and complementarity in all forms of bilateral and multilateral development co-operation of Finland.

³ <http://international.cgdev.org/initiative/commitment-development-index/inside>

3.2 Development cooperation for education

Education was a strong priority in Finland's development policy, especially in the early 2000s, with full support for the Education for All agenda spelled out in the MFA's 2004 development policy.

Finland is committed to promoting the Education for All process and supports education sector programmes in development cooperation, emphasising the development of basic education and exploiting the expertise of representatives of Finnish institutions. Finland also encourages the involvement of institutes of higher education and research in mutual cooperation with organisations in developing countries. (MFA, 2004a, p 22)

After 2004, the Government of Finland stimulated active collaboration among the MFA, the Ministry of Education and the National Bureau of Education. CIMO was called upon to develop mobility and exchange programmes to promote cooperation between Finnish experts and developing countries partners. However, when seen from the viewpoint of the volume of aid resources allocated, education has not really been a priority in Finland's development policy since 2004, and aid for higher education has remained a small element of that allocation. The total amount of aid allocated to education, especially higher education, is not very significant, as illustrated by Table 4.

Table 4 ODA disbursements to higher education in 2006-2012 (Million USD in current prices and as % of total ODA in selected countries).

	Disbursements	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Finland	Million USD	5,47	5,05	7,00	4,67	3,65	9,01	5,51
	% of total ODA	1,1	0,9	1,0	0,6	0,4	1,0	0,7
Sweden	Million USD	3,59	4,55	6,29	7,03	1,90	6,09	7,94
	% of total ODA	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,2
Norway	Million USD	31,21	48,38	46,04	46,11	48,24	39,06	38,69
	% of total ODA	1,4	1,7	1,5	1,5	1,4	1,1	1,1
Canada	Million USD	7,48	7,43	6,68	50,92	115,03	40,76	24,10
	% of total ODA	0,4	0,3	0,2	1,6	2,9	1,0	0,6
Netherlands	Million USD	98,45	113,48	132,26	153,56	161,43	132,00	106,65
	% of total ODA	2,1	2,4	2,4	3,1	3,3	2,9	2,7

Source: OECD, Query Wizard for International Development Statistics (<http://stats.oecd.org/>)

The 2007 development policy programme document did not have a specific section on education, but it made a strong statement on the essential role of education in support of sustainable development. The most recent changes in Finland's development policy were defined in 2012 (MFA, 2012a). Finland now follows a human rights-based development policy that encompasses all dimensions of international cooperation and views extreme poverty as the most acute human rights issue today.

The Development Policy highlights that “raising the quality of...higher education and research is an important target that can be supported by networking with Finnish know-how”. (MFA 2012a, pp. 40-41). Higher education is also seen as important for inclusive green economy that promotes employment (p. 35) and indirectly for advancing sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection through the utilisation of know-how of research in universities, polytechnics, government research institutes, enterprises and practitioners in development cooperation (p. 39).

Finland wants to promote the three fundamental objectives of gender equality, reduction of inequality, and climate sustainability in a crosscutting manner. Gender equality is not only a human rights issue but also an important component of inclusive policies to ensure equality of opportunities for economic and social development. The fight against inequality is seen as one of the effective manners to promote development and increase opportunities for all. Finally, Finland seeks to help mitigate the catastrophic effects of climate change and decrease the vulnerability of people and communities to natural disasters.

In 2012, the MFA started preparing country strategies for development cooperation with its main partner countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Nepal and Vietnam. Cooperation between HEIs was identified as an increasingly important modality for cooperation, especially in Vietnam, where the country strategy paves the way towards new comprehensive partnerships, away from traditional project-based cooperation. The HEIs are considered to complement Finnish bilateral cooperation especially within the Finnish strategy’s specific objectives of *Increased openness and access to information, knowledge and innovation for all*, and *Enhanced green economy that creates entrepreneurial activity and decent jobs*. (MFA, 2013b).

In Kenya, the Finnish strategic objectives are linked to governance, green growth in agricultural sector, and improved use and management of forest and water resources. Cooperation with HEIs and especially research institutes are explicitly mentioned under cooperation in agriculture and forest sectors. (MFA, 2013a)

As the Republic of South Africa is not a main development partner for Finland, there is no country strategy for development cooperation as such. However, the development of an open and equal knowledge-based information society has been a cornerstone of Finnish-South African cooperation for years, and has been supported by regional programmes (MFA 2012 and MFA 2013c).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the current Minister for International Development has made several public statements expressing the view that Finland should invest more in support of higher education and vocational training cooperation.

3.3 Past and present policy on internationalisation of higher education

The rise of internationalisation in European higher education and beyond has not left Finnish HEIs indifferent. In the past decade, most Finnish universities and polytechnics have been participating actively in student and academic mobility programmes, notably the Erasmus and Nordplus programmes; many HEIs have increased the teaching of foreign languages and have become more open to the recruitment of foreign academics. But Finland appears to be still behind, compared to other OECD countries, which could become a handicap in the ability of the country's HEIs to compete on the global scene (MOEC 2009). The share of foreign students enrolled in Finland is below the OECD average as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 International students as a percentage of all tertiary enrolment in selected OECD countries.

Australia	New Zealand	Austria	Sweden	Denmark	OECD	Netherlands	Finland	Norway
20 %	16%	15%	8%	8%	7%	5%	5%	2%

Source: OECD, Education at a Glance (2013).

In 2009, the Ministry of Education published its first Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education, outlining an ambitious programme to build up the capacity of Finnish HEIs to take part vigorously in the internationalisation movement. The government proposed the following five objectives:

- Transforming the Finnish higher education system into a genuinely international higher education community
- Increasing the quality and attractiveness of the Finnish higher education institutions
- Promoting the export of expertise
- Supporting a multicultural community
- Promoting global responsibility.

The global responsibility dimension is an important and positive element of this internationalisation strategy, as it potentially helps to resolve the tension between the internationalisation and development agendas identified in the previous chapter.

In June 2013, the Team Finland Task Force asked the MOEC to devise an action plan to promote education exports. The report proposes to increase the number of foreign students in Finnish HEIs to 60,000, eliminate the self-created statutory obstacles for education exports, to introduce tuition fees for non-EU students with a matching scholarship scheme, especially for students coming from developing countries, and to strengthen cooperation between various Finnish actors and stakeholders.

4 EVALUATION OF THE NSS AND HEI ICI PROGRAMMES

Both NSS and HEI ICI programmes have supported highly relevant activities. But the small amounts of support limit the overall impact of the programmes in transforming the partner HEIs, especially in the case of NSS. In addition, the programmes are not concentrated on Finland's development priority countries.

4.1 Overview of the NSS Programme

4.1.1 *Background*

The current NSS programme is a successor the North-South Higher Education Network Programme, which was piloted in 2004-2006 as one of the few higher education activities in Finland targeted for developing countries, and administered by CIMO from the start. In the early 2000s, the MFA set up a working group to find ways of building up Finnish expertise for work in development cooperation. At the same time, another working group prepared an international strategy for higher education in Finland. As part of the process, CIMO conducted a survey of Finnish HEIs' links with developing countries. The survey results and the working groups' conclusions pointed to the need for Finnish HEIs to participate more actively in development co-operation – leading to a CIMO proposal for North-South Programme (Stenbäck and Billany, 2009). The programme was expanded to North-South-South in 2007, and it has gone through four funding phases under three different development policy programmes: 2004-2006, 2007-2009, 2009-2012, and 2013-2015. NSS has been evaluated twice – in 2006 and in 2009 – with generally positive findings regarding the objectives of the programme.

4.1.2 *Objectives, activities and priorities*

The pilot North-South programme aimed at developing higher education co-operation through networking between Finnish and developing country HEIs to support the Finnish development co-operation goals and stimulate internationalisation (MFA, 2004b). The 2006 evaluation of the pilot programme (Mikkola and Snellman, 2006a), steered towards planning of the next programme phase, found the network programme to be in high demand as demonstrated by the initial inflow of network applications (Annex 7). More specifically, the evaluation highlighted the need for the new programme to succeed the pilot immediately, include student and teacher exchange and administrative components, have open and inclusive project selection, expand partner country HEI eligibility, revisit financial arrangements and length as well as to have sound management and administration.

Building on the 2006 evaluation and renamed to emphasise South-South co-operation, the NSS was launched in 2007 with a focus on individual capacity building and

a minor reference to institutional capacity. The Programme Document was revised and a new objective was formulated, reflecting the importance of higher education in the development of a society: “to enhance human capacity to ensure that people in all participating countries may better contribute to the cultural, socio-economic and political development of their communities” (Mikkola and Snellman, 2006b, p. 24). This broad overall objective was narrowed down at the programmatic level to the purpose of “providing an operational framework for building [individuals] capacity through interaction and mobility between Finnish and co-operating country” HEIs (p. 24). NSS is implemented through networks with at least one Finnish and one Southern HEI, but there is no stipulated upper limit for the number of partners in a network.

The 2006 Programme Document still forms the basis for the NSS, although the NSS was evaluated again in 2009 several changes regarding the programme orientation have been made at the operational level of project planning and reporting, as suggested by an evaluation conducted in 2009 (Annex 8). The 2009 evaluation focused on assessing development results of the programme between 2004 and 2009 (Stenbäck and Billany, 2009). Some of the improvement points that could be drawn from the evaluation included the lack of demonstrated impact, limited financial resources for generating impact, network sustainability over time and insufficient knowledge management. The evaluation, for example, concretely recommended the use of a logical framework for more results oriented planning and suggested that CIMO could provide training on this aspect. While the evaluation made a number of detailed recommendations concerning relevance and orientation, planning, funding and management of the NSS programme overall, it indicated no need to re-write the actual Programme Document. Although the Programme Document has remained the same since 2006, the renewed policy directions have been provided in the “Guidelines for Applicants” that are published at the time of call for applications and reflect the Finnish development policy priorities of the time.

While the initial pilot phase focused on student and teacher mobility (MFA, 2004b), the following three areas of activities have remained the core of the NSS programme since 2007 (Annex 9):

- Enhancing human capacity through student and teacher exchanges representing 75 % of the programme funding and a minimum of 60 % of each network activities. Teacher exchanges can vary from 1 week to 6 months and longer visits are encouraged, while student exchanges can vary from 3 to 12 months.
- Knowledge generation and dissemination through intensive courses representing 20 % of programme funding and a maximum of 30 % of each network funding allocation. One intensive course – always taking place in the Southern partner institutions – can be organised each semester and the duration can vary from 1 to 10 weeks.
- Creating sustainable partnerships through networking representing 5 % of the programme funding. This refers essentially to administrative visits as well as network meetings to evaluate cooperation and to disseminate the results.

Overall, the main focus of the NSS programme has been on mobility – especially student mobility. During the pilot phase the programme focused solely on mobility with the target to host 220 students and 65 teachers in Finland and to send 140 Finnish students and 45 teachers to partner HEIs in Southern countries. In subsequent programme periods, the target has been 150 student exchanges and 100 teacher exchanges annually divided equally between Finnish and partner countries. With respect to intensive courses, NSS was expected to fund annually at least 15 courses. There are no other programme level targets.

NSS excludes direct support for research as well as support for studies leading to a higher education degree and, importantly, it does not pay the salaries of the participating teaching staff or compensate for the administrative work put into the NSS projects in Finnish or Southern HEIs.

In terms of geographic coverage, NSS included first only Sub-Saharan Africa, Egypt and Peru (2004-2006). Nicaragua, Nepal and Vietnam were added in 2007-2009 and all ODA countries in 2010-2012 with priority given to Finland's primary partner countries and to partner regions in 2010-2012, and finally the current coverage of all ODA countries with priority given to Finland's primary partner countries and the Least Developed Countries. For all practical purposes, the programme ended up effectively covering almost the entire developing world.

The focus on results and the alignment of activities with development priorities has increased in the formal NSS project selection criteria over time (Annex 10). In the pilot phase, the project selection criteria were quite loosely defined, with special attention paid to regional balance among Finnish partners. In 2007-2009, the criteria included also plans for South-South cooperation and balanced participation and innovative approach that do not make quantitative assessment easy. Also gender equality was introduced as a criterion. In 2010-2012, the selection criteria included relevance, viability, Finnish value-added, crosscutting themes, especially gender equality, and complementarity. In the most recent call for applications, the selection criteria are defined in more detail, with a specific weight given to each criterion. The selection highlighted especially relevance and complementarity (30%) as well as management, cost-effectiveness (20%) and network expertise (20%). Although to somewhat lesser extent, Southern ownership (15%) as well as impact and sustainability (15%) were to be taken into consideration.

Despite the increasingly detailed evaluation criteria, the evaluation team has found that selection was not fully transparent and that it was sometimes difficult to know from the documentation why a certain network was selected over another one, or projects that did not seem to meet the criteria would be selected or continued. The interviews revealed that the Finnish HEIs did not feel that they receive sufficient feedback from CIMO on why projects had been accepted or rejected. There seemed to be lack of clarity as to why exactly a project would be selected or denied funding.

4.1.3 Management and administration

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for designing, coordinating and monitoring all development assistance funding and, hence, ultimately responsible for the utilisation of all development funds. The Unit for General Development Policy and Planning (KEO-10) is the responsible department within MFA. However, since the beginning of the programme, the MFA has outsourced all administrative functions to CIMO through consecutive Assignment Agreements between Public Authorities.

CIMO's duties and responsibilities – defined in the Programme Document (2006) as well as in the Assignment Agreements and Job Descriptions attached to the Agreements – have, to a large extent, remained the same since the beginning of the programme. These have covered for example organisation of and participation in the project selection process, various administrative and reporting – both financial and narrative – functions, information dissemination as well as support for projects and mobile students (Annex 11). CIMO can decide on projects to be funded on the basis of Steering Committee (SC) recommendation and needs to seek approval from the MFA in case of going against the recommendation.

CIMO invoices the MFA twice a year on the basis of actually accrued expenditure. The programme management budget is 200 000 EUR per year and the number of full time staff has increased from one to two over the years.

The main role of the NSS Steering Committee (also called Advisory Group) is to monitor the quality of the programme and support CIMO in its implementation. The Steering Committee:

- approves the annual plan and budget;
- decides on application selection procedures and criteria for project selection and funding;
- discusses funding proposal prepared by CIMO;
- approves project funding and reporting arrangements; and
- monitors programme implementation and discusses the annual report.

During the past three years, the Steering Committee has convened twice a year, in February to discuss new project applications and give recommendations for funding, and in the autumn to discuss the following year's budget and priorities for project selection. The Steering Committee members are: CIMO (Director as Chair of the Committee and three programme officers), the MFA (Director and Programme Officer from Unit for General Development Policy and Planning), the Ministry of Education and Culture, SYL and the Universities of Applied Sciences Students Union (UAS), the Universities Rectors Council (Universities Finland UNIFI), and ARENE.

In NSS SC meetings, the agenda items are generally well prepared by CIMO. Potentially contentious issues are usually discussed with the MFA before the NSS SC meet-

ing. This arrangement leaves little room for discussion and effectively limits the possibility of the NSS SC to challenge the proposals presented by CIMO. Also, the specific project scores given under each selection criteria are not presented to the SC.

It is also not certain how effectively the NSS SC can exercise its main function of monitoring the quality of the programme. Firstly, the quality of the programme has not been defined in exact terms. Secondly, the available documentation makes programme level monitoring very difficult. The progress reports have improved significantly over the years, but are still based on written reports submitted by the projects, and are limited to the reporting of numbers of exchanges and intensive courses. Any other results that require a more qualitative approach are difficult or impossible for CIMO to verify.

4.1.4 Implementation

Since the beginning in 2004, there have been 11 calls for applications in NSS. The programme has funded 258 networks for a total of almost 15.8 million EUR. The reported expenditures in the programme during the last funding period (2011-2013) totalled 9.5 million EUR, which is almost 95 % of the approved funding. The overall NSS expenditure is modest, making it a small-scale exchange cooperation programme, as shown in Table 6. The average annual funding per network is less than 50 000 EUR, and the overall expenditure level is marginal compared to, for example, MFA's support to non-governmental organisation (NGO) cooperation that amounted to 669 million EUR over the past nine years.

Although it seems at first glance that NSS funding has reached over 250 higher education networks overall, the actual number of supported networks is in reality significantly smaller because several of them received long-term support. A closer analysis of the applications and funded projects shows that the actual number of supported networks is around 80, which means that many networks have received funding over several years. In fact, the 15 biggest networks represent approximately 50 % of the total expenditure as well as of the proportion of teacher and student exchanges⁴. Some of these networks – such as Health Africa – have received funding since the beginning of the programme, and all of them have been funded for at least seven years. NSS was also affected by the 2007 development policy programme that expanded the priority countries and regions to cover practically the entire developing world and encouraged various Finnish actors to reach out to all eligible countries. This is reflected in the number of projects, partner countries and especially in the number of partner institutions funded between 2009 and 2013. In the two funding rounds of 2009 and

⁴ Health Africa, Training Producers in Ecological Broadcasting, Malawi-Zambia Health Care Project, Well-net Avenue, East Africa Technomathematics, The Role of Music in Strengthening Cultural Identity, Omusati Project, FINPE Amazonia Andina, Journalism Network, Research Based Knowledge for Integrated Sustainable Development, Journalism for Civic Involvement, Democracy and Development (JOCID) Network, Community and Environment, Sustainable Development and Human Rights, Sustainable Forestry and Forest Industries, and Finnish-African Network for Higher Education in Music.

Table 6 Overview of NSS applications, funding and expenditure 2004-2014.

Year of funding	Applications received (Number)	Total funding applied (EUR)	Funded networks (Number)	Total granted funding (EUR)	Average funding per network (EUR)	Reported costs (EUR)
2004	70	1 622 202	21	604 578	28 789	540 133
2005	38	m	22	717 512	32 614	682 362
2006	23	1 555 093	23	799 028	34 740	728 156
2007	68	2 993 144	24	1 080 515	45 021	882 607
2008	50	4 725 079	29	1 676 746	57 819	1 548 878
2009	37	5 727 167	30	2 673 495	89 117	2 418 359
2011	47	7 584 035	29	2 571 480	88 204	2 706 881
Total closed networks	292	24 195 720	192	10 109 978	52 656	9 507 377
2012	26	3 084 251	16	1 318 185	82 387	
2013	36	6 866 017	17	2 149 930	126 466	
2014	34	4 155 834	23	2 246 800	97 687	
TOTAL	388	38 301 822	258	15 824 893	61 337	

Note: m = Missing data; 2006 application round was open only for existing networks, 12 preparatory visits of 45 000 EUR excluded; since 2009 funding for two years.

Source: CIMO summary information containing NSS statistics 2004-2013.

2011, approximately 2.5 million EUR was shared between 30 projects with over 190 partners in more than 20 countries, as shown in Table 7. The average annual allocation per partner was only about 6 500 EUR – enough for just one exchange

Table 7 Overview of NSS funding decisions in selected five calls for proposals.

	2004-2005	2007-2008	2009-2011	2011-2013	2014-2015
Total allocated (EUR)	604 578	1 080 515	2 637 495	2 571 480	2 246 800
Projects	21	24	30	29	23
Countries	14	20	22	25	20
Sum of partner countries in all projects	35	62	82	87	52
of which Finland's priority countries	15/43%	28/45%	37/45%	38/44%	23/44%
LDCs	17/49%	30/48%	39/48%	37/43%	17/33%
Partners	83	150	193	195	109

Note: One project may have partners in several countries.

Source: CIMO

Despite the policy decision to give priority to Finland's main partner countries, their share of the funded projects has remained below 50 % in all programme periods. The

same applies to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) that have been prioritised in the last programme period. In the 2014 project selection, HEIs in 17 LDC were selected for funding while 25 projects were funded in non-priority countries or non-LDC countries.

The most popular partner countries in NSS have remained the same throughout the programme, namely South Africa, followed by Tanzania, Namibia, Kenya and Zambia. Finland's long term partner countries in Asia – Nepal and Vietnam – do not seem to be prioritised partners for Finnish HEIs, who tend to prefer Ghana, Uganda, Malawi and Botswana over the Asian countries.

Due to the multidisciplinary approach in many projects, it is not possible to establish the thematic coverage of NSS programme with precision.

As to the specific activities covered, the NSS programme has supported first and foremost student and teacher mobility in line with its explicit targets. The bulk of the NSS expenditure, 7.5 million EUR, has been spent on teacher exchanges (2.6 million EUR) and student exchanges (5 million EUR), compared to 1.3 million EUR on intensive courses and approximately 500 000 EUR on administration and networking. Teacher and student exchanges amount to 80 % of the total expenditure. Intensive courses were introduced in 2007 after the first programme evaluation and, since then, they have received less than 15 % of the expenditure. The share of intensive courses has continuously fallen slightly short of the earlier target of 15 % and current target of 20 %. Expenditure on administration and networking for sustainable partnerships is approximately 6 % of reported expenditure, as indicated in Table 8.

Table 8 Overview of NSS expenditures.

Year of funding	Exchanges		Intensive courses		Administration and networking		Total EUR
	EUR	% of total	EUR	% of total	EUR	% of total	
2004	450 183	97	0	n.a.	15 041	3	465 225
2005	672 540	99	0	n.a.	4 000	1	676 540
2006	706 948	99	0	n.a.	6 945	1	713 893
2007	675 025	77	110 391	13	97 190	11	882 607
2008	1 050 695	68	377 683	24	120 500	8	1 548 878
2009	1 858 411	77	383 880	16	160 342	7	2 402 632
2011	2 163 635	79	408 567	15	151 912	6	2 724 114
TOTAL	7 577 437	81	1 280 520	14	555 931	6	9 413 888

Source: CIMO

Student exchanges amount to over half of the total programme expenditure. In the first ten years of NSS, the total number of exchange students reached 1 500. Approximately 45 % were Finnish students visiting partner HEIs in the South and 55 %

students from the South visiting Finland. About two-thirds of the exchange students have been women, especially those from Finland – possibly due to big health sector cooperation projects. The annual number of exchange students has doubled since the beginning of the programme, but the average cost of each exchange has increased only marginally. The average cost of a single exchange has been about 3 300 EUR for about four months on average.

Over 1 000 teachers have participated in NSS exchanges since 2004 with about 56% of teacher exchanges coming to Finland. Annually, the number of exchange teachers is getting close to 150, which is twice as many as in the early years of NSS. The visits to Finland, in particular, increased during 2009-2013. The average cost of an exchange visit has remained at approximately 2 600 EUR per exchange, but the average length of the exchange visit has come down from three weeks to two weeks despite longer visits having been recommended. Over the programme period, 44 % of the exchange teachers were female, 50 % of Finnish teachers and 39 % of teachers from Southern HEIs. The share of female teachers has increased only slightly since the beginning of the programme, mainly due to the increase in female teachers coming to Finland from partner HEIs.

Following the recommendations of the 2006 evaluation, intensive courses as well as preparatory administrative and network meetings were included in NSS. Since 2007, approximately 1.2 million EUR have been spent on organising a total of 92 intensive courses attended by 2 200 students and over 800 teachers. There has been a slight increase in the average cost of a workshop, but the average cost per participant has actually decreased and it is currently at 400 EUR. The administrative and meeting costs have been very small.

Funding constraints dogged implementation activities, which fell short of ambitious project objectives drawn from development imperatives of Finnish Development Policy and other international declarations such as the Millennium Development Goals. There appears to be a major disconnect between national and programme development goals and available funding for activities. A few partner HEIs were able to supplement project funds to support South-South mobility (for which funds are scarce) and also to cover 'gap' years where funding was not available. While this caused hardships for planning and implementation, the identification of institutional funds points to strong ownership indicating positive signs for sustainability. It must be said, however, that despite limited resources, it was heartening to observe the array of relevant activities, which committed individuals managed to implement. Most lamented programme rules which precluded funding for joint research activities to which the programme lent itself well. Above all, Finnish (except for a few) and partner coordinators had no budgets for assistance with logistical arrangements and tended to be overwhelmed by the tasks. Family Health and Well Being, an NSS project in Vietnam, illustrates such commitment as well as efficient implementation of logistics, although the potential contribution to learning through South-South interactions regarding community health centres was precluded by an absence of resources (Box 3).

Box 3 NSS Family Health and Well Being (2011-2013).

Initiated through personal contact, the project aims to develop healthcare education by emphasising the teaching of community healthcare and its significance for the health, wellbeing and increasing equality in health of the population of Vietnam and Nepal. The education/training of nurses is a focal point. Hämeenlinna University of Applied Sciences and Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences lead this project, which has three partners: Hanoi Medical University (HMU) as the lead partner HEI, Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy and Vinh University. Of HMU's many international partners – France, Australia, Sweden, Netherlands, the United States, Thailand and China - Finland is the most recent.

Student mobility was well organised with nine nursing students, three from each of the partner HEIs, visiting Finland for three months with reciprocal visits from 6 Finnish students for 3 months each. The Finnish nurses attended an advanced nursing programme which is in English, visited health centres, and saw patients. Faculty mobility appeared equally efficiently organised: six primary care physicians involved in teaching, 2 from each of the 3 partner HEIs in Vietnam, visited Finland for 2 weeks each at different times. They studied the health network structure in Finland and visited community health centres. The successfully conducted two-week intensive course, in English, was hosted by HMU (9-18 October 2012) on the theme 'Supporting Family Health and Wellbeing'. Six Finnish academicians gave lectures and worked with students during the intensive course. Apart from lectures, field trips were mounted to visit communities. Student participants included 10 students from Finland, 50 from Vietnam and 4 from Nepal.

Positive results were reported: new curriculum topics, improvement in English language proficiency, becoming more open-minded in attitude and expressive in interaction, much-required changes in pedagogy, and dissemination of new pedagogical approaches to faculty in a short training course. Obstacles to successful follow up include: the lack of proficiency in English, funding constraints limiting curriculum renewal and development of a curriculum with accreditation in Finland, Vietnam and Nepal, and funding support for nursing students who are central to community health initiatives. In terms of South-South exchange, the HMU coordinator, who visited Nepal for a Network meeting, saw value in the country's community health facilities, pointing out that despite the low income level, they had potential as a model for Vietnam. Unfortunately, the rules governing South-South interaction constrained the network from exploring the Nepal model more thoroughly.

This project provides an example of a receptive, well-qualified lead Academic Coordinator in a well-performing partner HEI who seems to have made this NSS project work because of commitment, understanding of both context and content, and with sufficient knowledge and authority to play an effective catalytic role to bring about change.

Source: Elaborated by the authors

4.2 Overview of the HEI ICI Programme

4.2.1 Background

The HEI ICI programme is a spin-off from the Institutional Cooperation Instrument (ICI) that focuses on institutional capacity building through co-operation between Finnish and partner country Ministries, agencies and other public institutions – through colleague-to-colleague cooperation. Although initially included, the Finnish universities were no longer eligible for the ICI after their legal status changed from governmental institution to independent corporations in 2009. Finnish universities are now independent corporations under public law, or foundations under private law. Universities' operations are based on the principles of freedom of education and research, and university autonomy. Universities of Applied Sciences are either municipal or private institutions that are authorised by the Finnish government. The specific HEI ICI programme was launched in 2009 to continue similar higher education co-operation.

4.2.2 Objectives, activities and priorities

When launched in 2009, the goal of HEI ICI was “to promote the capacity building of developing country HEIs in the areas of administration, methodology and pedagogy” (MFA, 2009b, p. 2). Administered by UniPID during the preparatory phase, the HEI ICI administration was moved to CIMO after a successful tender and the first full call for proposals was launched in 2010. The HEI ICI was then reviewed in 2011, with a view to make recommendations for the improvement of the programme concerning the scope of projects, the financial requirements, the application process, the selection instruments and the proposal evaluation criteria (Venäläinen, 2012). The programme was found to be “a relevant instrument to promote human capacity in developing countries” and “promote the internationalisation of the Finnish HEIs” (p. 4). The review suggested opening the HEI ICI to countries beyond the Finnish development policy with a more simplified selection process and results-based monitoring to track the impact, pointing also to a need of “an in-depth efficiency analysis and audit of the full-cost model”. The review was based on stakeholder interviews, documentary analysis, a web survey, an e-mail questionnaire and group discussions. It is important to note here that promoting human capacity development does not preclude internationalisation.

Whereas the NSS focuses on individual capacity development, the current HEI ICI programme centres on institutional capacity in terms of pedagogy and administration. In line with the initial goals, the 2012 Programme Document (MFA, 2012b) states that the HEI ICI aims “to support the development of sustainable institutional capacity in HEIs so that higher education and research can contribute to the development of society, build competencies consistent with national development goals, and contribute to the goals of inclusive sustainable development and reduction of poverty. The purpose of the Programme is to strengthen developing country HEIs

as developmentally responsive institutions by enhancing administrative, field-specific, methodological and pedagogical capacity. This purpose will be achieved through institutional cooperation between the HEIs in Finland and partner developing countries in selected result areas” (MFA, 2012b, p. 7-8). Institutional capacity development in HEI ICI is achieved through institutional cooperation between Finnish and partner HEIs, fulfilling internationalisation goals of Finnish HEIs.

In contrast to the NSS programme, the HEI ICI activities aim to improve higher education quality and relevance, HEI management, leadership and governance capacities, information management in teaching and learning as well as the role and relevance of the HEIs in development. The range of activities can include curriculum and material development as well as governance, management quality assurance and learning environment improvements, including e-learning and library services, for example. Also promoting HEIs linkages with industry can be covered by HEI ICI projects (Annex 12). Overall, the activities have been required to be “clearly based on needs identified by the developing country partner HEI(s), with evidence of strong ownership and cooperation, and that the cooperation is results-oriented with well-defined, measurable objectives” (MFA, 2012b, p. 10; MFA, 2009b, p. 2). As to length, the duration of a HEI ICI project varies from one to three years. The budget of a single HEI ICI project must be from 100 000 to 500 000 EUR with 20% of self-financing, a slight upward change from initial requirement of 50 000 to 500 000 EUR (MFA, 2012b; MFA, 2009b).

However, as in the case of NSS programme, HEI ICI activities exclude direct support for research as well as support for studies resulting to a higher education degree. Despite of covering a wide range of different capacity building activities, it has always excluded, however, academic or applied research as well as higher education exchanges and degree studies (MFA, 2012b; MFA, 2009b).

In terms of eligibility, the geographical and thematic scope of the HEI ICI programmes has been wide. HEI ICI can cover all ODA developing countries with an emphasis on least-developed countries and building synergies with long-term partner countries of Finland – Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, Tanzania, Vietnam and Zambia. In addition, no themes or disciplines are *a priori* excluded from HEI ICI (MFA, 2012b; MFA, 2009b).

4.2.3 Management and administration

During the preparatory phase of HEI-ICI (2009), the programme management and administration were vested with UniPID. With a change in legislation and, as a consequence, the status of universities in 2009, the management services had to be tendered out, and CIMO was the only organisation that bid for the services. The programme administrative and management arrangements are stipulated in the 2012 Programme Document. Assignment agreements between MFA and CIMO and Job Descriptions are attached to the agreements.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and specifically KEO-10 has the main responsibility for monitoring and planning at the programme level, and for financing the programme. The Unit is supported by the regional departments and the Finnish embassies, especially in the process of assessing the project proposals.

The programme has a Steering Group (HEI ICI SG) that enjoys the overall responsibility for orienting, making recommendations and for providing expertise for the implementation and development of the programme. The HEI ICI SG also has an important role in securing and strengthening the quality and relevance of the programme. HEI ICI SG members include one representative of Universities, one representative of Universities of Applied Sciences, four representatives of the MFA (two from the Unit for General Development Policy and Planning and two from the regional departments for the Americas and Asia, and Africa and the Middle East), one representative from the Ministry of Education and Culture, and two representatives from CIMO as the Administrative Coordination Unit of the programme. As of 2012, the Director of CIMO has chaired the Steering Group.

CIMO is responsible for the administration of the HEI ICI programme. It prepares and organises the guidance for the applicants, organises calls for proposals, assists in project selection and organises the evaluation of proposals, monitors project implementation and reporting, provides technical and advisory services to the projects in planning, implementation and reporting. CIMO also organises and provides appropriate communication channels for the programme. CIMO reports directly to MFA once a year.

The formal selection framework for HEI ICI projects has emphasised a feasible needs-based approach with Southern ownership on capacity development, in addition to alignment with Finnish development cooperation and policy (Annex 13). The initial screening of project eligibility and check of compliance with minimum criteria is done by CIMO officials. The eligible proposals have then been assessed and scored against an evaluation grid by CIMO officials, external evaluators and the MFA advisors. In MFA, KEO-10 is responsible for compiling comments from advisors, regional departments and embassies in relevant countries. An evaluation grid is used in the assessments. After having received all comments, CIMO prepares a funding proposal to be discussed and perused at the Steering Group.

After recommendations of the HEI ICI Steering Committee, the Minister for International Development makes the final funding decision for granting State Aid to the coordinating Finnish HEI. Project agreements are signed between the MFA and the coordinating HEI in Finland.

Though the selection process is very thorough and involves several experts, it is not fully transparent for the project applicants. The MFA can, if it so wishes, push through a technically weaker proposal on the grounds of political suitability and strategic importance. This is of course a legitimate practice in as far as the MFA is the

funding agency, and has the final responsibility for taking the decisions, but these decisions should be based on transparent application of the agreed evaluation criteria. Alternatively, the evaluation criteria should be changed in a way that ensures that the politically or strategically important projects score enough points.

HEI ICI project planning and reporting design focuses more on internal project intervention logic and results against objectives of the partner HEIs themselves – as opposed to broad development goals (Annex 14). The HEI ICI applications of 2012 were required to include a Project Document, a Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and a concrete project work plan. The Project Documents were steered towards description of measurable results, expected impact and overall rationale of the project intervention. The relevance of the intervention for the partner HEI needs and capacity building, together with the Finnish HEI added value in this respect, were also highlighted. In addition to concrete planning reflecting also the division of responsibilities within the partnership, the 2012 Project Documents were recommended to include sustainability and risk assessments. The results orientation was repeated in the HEI ICI reporting documents for 2013, steering towards a better focus on achievement and results in its design. The projects were guided to provide not only an overview of the project implementation and activities, but also highlight specific achievements the projects had themselves identified as key result-areas towards their overall objective. Unlike the 2012 applications, the pilot HEI ICI applications of 2009 were not required to produce the LFA. The main difference in the 2012 Project Document guidelines with respect to the initial 2009 guidelines was the removal of explicit emphasis on capacity building in terms of mutual trust and functional relationship as well as reference to crosscutting issues in the project activities (MFA, 2012; MFA, 2009b).

4.2.4 Implementation

Since its launch in 2009, the HEI ICI programme has financed nearly 50 partnership projects targeting institutional capacity development in partner HEIs. The total amount of resources allocated to this programme between 2009 and 2014 amounts to 15 million EUR. The average annual budget per project for 2013-2015 is about 2 465 500 EUR. There are currently 54 network partners with each partner receiving an average annual allocation of 60 000 EUR.

Although the number of funded HEI ICI projects is small and implementation experience is limited, they seem to compare well against the NSS projects. The focus of HEI ICI projects planning is sharper in terms of project area, activities, number of partner and partner locations. Other changes from NSS notable in the HEI ICI projects reviewed are the higher profiles of (a) resource development such as ICT facilities / laboratories and (b) project management activities. In the former, critical and baseline conditions for enabling project implementation and performance have been taken into account and signal the strong potential for achieving project goals. In the second, realistic resource allocations seem to be made for monitoring, data collection

and reporting, activities which increase the possibility of long-term and sustainable improvements in HEI performance in the post-project period.

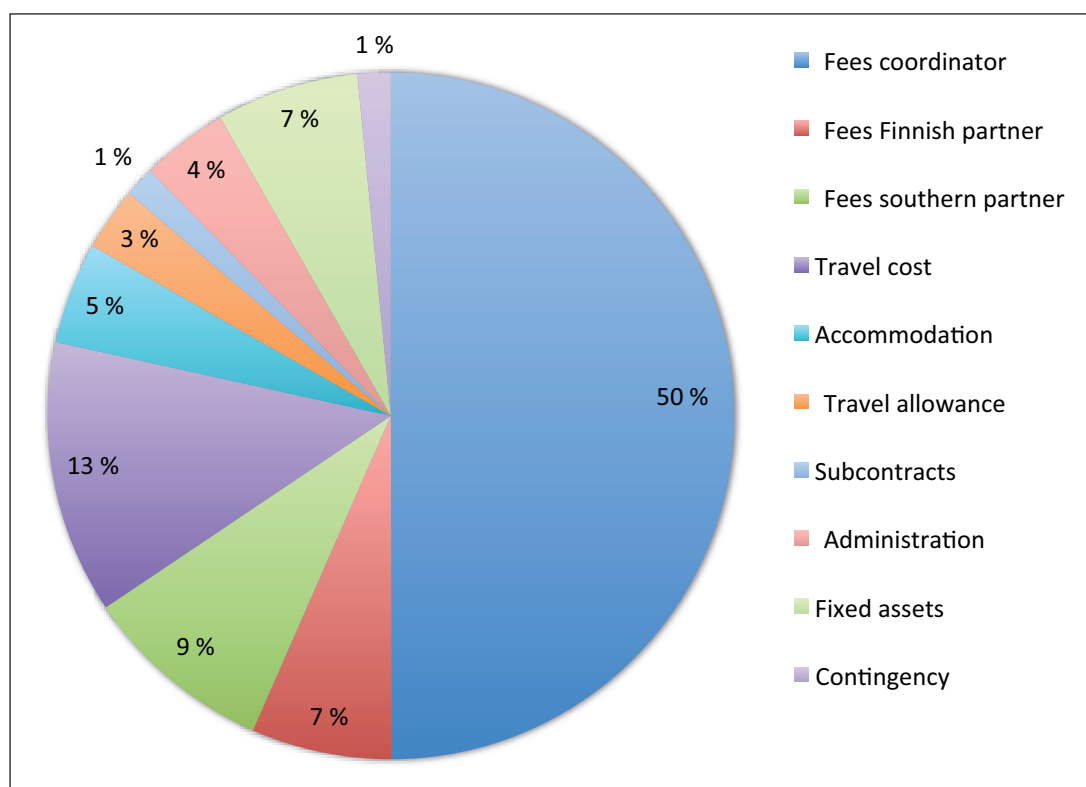
HEI ICI project expenditures are divided between so called a) capacity development costs (salaries for Finnish and partner HEI experts, travel costs, subcontracted services, and overhead costs for the coordinating HEI), b) administrative costs of Finnish and partner HEIs, c) fixed assets, and d) contingency. The capacity development costs should amount to a minimum of 70 % of the total costs. In budgeting and reporting the costs, the Finnish HEIs are required to use the so-called full cost model, where projects are fully integrated into HEIs' budget and they must report on all costs incurred in a project irrespective of the funding source. In other words, MFA funding and self-financing are budgeted and reported together, not separately. In addition, the full cost model incorporates direct costs (e.g. rents) and indirect employee costs to calculate the full economic value of the salaries of Finnish experts. As a result, the salaries of the Finnish experts are usually by far the largest cost item in the HEI ICI budgets.

The number of funded projects was 23 in 2013, up from the 15 projects selected for the 2011-2012 period; nine were selected for both programmes cycles. In addition, 20 projects received financing from the 2009 HEI ICI preparatory phase, one of them being selected also for the subsequent financing at the 2011 application round. The HEI-ICI has only been fully implemented and reported by projects that received funding in 2011-2012 and form therefore basis for the analysis of this evaluation.

HEI ICI spending has been clearly targeted towards capacity development. Capacity development costs amounted to nearly 90% of the total costs in 2011-2012, exceeding easily the 70% threshold as set by the Programme Document (MFA, 2012b). A closer look at the capacity development costs reveals that assignment fees (expert salary x institutional coefficient) covered 75% of the capacity development and 65% of the total programme costs. The biggest expenditure category was fees for the coordinating Finnish HEIs, 3.1 million EUR, which is half of the total programme expenditure, as shown in figure 2. Expenditure under travel cost, accommodation and travel allowances was approximately 1.3 million EUR or 21% of total expenditure. Administration costs were only about 250 000 EUR. The average daily fee charged by Finnish coordinators was roughly 450 EUR, 610 EUR for Finnish partners and 80 EUR for Southern partners.

In terms of financing, the HEI ICI programme has been better resourced than NSS – the average annual financing allocated to HEI ICI has amounted to 2.5 million EUR compared to 1.5 million EUR for the NSS. The total resources allocated to HEI ICI amount to 15 million EUR between 2009 and 2014, more than doubling to 10.5 million EUR for the 2012-2014 period, compared to the initial 4.5 million EUR in the 2009-2011 period.

Figure 2 HEI ICI expenditure per cost category (2011-2012).



Note. In HEI ICI, budgets and expenditure are divided between a) capacity development cost (minimum 70 % of total expenditure), b) administrative costs (to cover expenses at partner HEIs), c) fixed assets, and d) contingency. Capacity development costs are further divided into 1) assignment fees (expert salary x institutional full cost multiplier), 2) travel costs, 3) accommodation costs, 4) travel allowances for Finnish experts, and 5) subcontracts (MFA, 2012).

Source: HEI-ICI financial completion reports 2011-2012.

However, the average annual budget per project has dropped from 376 000 EUR in 2011-2012 to 246 000 EUR in 2013-2015. At the same time the number of partners in networks has increased from 38 to 54, which means that the average annual allocation per partner has dropped from about 100 000 to 60 000 EUR, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Average annual funding per project HEI ICI.

Year of funding	Applications received (eligible)	Total funding applied (EUR)	Funded networks (Number)	Total granted funding (EUR)	Average funding per network (EUR)
2011	28	16 000 000	15	5 647 000	376 467 (for 18 months)
2013	52	21 242 861	23	9 765 000	245 522 (for 3 years)
TOTAL	83	37 242 861	38	15 412 000	

Source: CIMO

As Table 10 shows, a total of 15 projects were selected for funding in 2011 for the first round of HEI-ICI implementation, and 23 in 2013.

Table 10 Characteristics of the first two rounds of HEI ICI projects.

	2011-2012	2013-2015
Total allocated (EUR)	5 647 000	9 765 000
Projects	15	23
Countries	15	19
Sum of partner countries in all projects	21	36
of which Finland's priority countries	7/33.3%	20/55.6 %
LDCs	9/42.9%	17/47.2%
Partners	38	54

Note: One project may have partners in several countries

Source: CIMO

As to absorptive capacity, the HEI ICI projects of 2011-2012 were able to spend 95 % of their approved budgets. The total expenditure amounted to 6.28 million EUR, of which MFA funding was 5.23 million EUR and self-financing by the Finnish HEIs 1.05 million EUR equalled to 16.7 %. MFA funding varies between 150 000 and 450 000 EUR and self-financing between 40 000 and 80 000 EUR. Only one project (Support to pre-primary and lower primary teacher training, Namibia) spent less than 80 % of the approved budget. Six projects exceeded the approved budget and compensated the financing gap with increased own funding.

Many projects appeared to have difficulties in fulfilling – or reporting on – the requirement to provide 15 % of the budget as their own funding, of which at least 30 % must come from non-public sources. Five projects – Developing Development Studies (DDS), Support for the capacity development for the establishment of the School of Medicine at the University of Namibia (MEDUNAM), Sustainable Energy Educa-

tion Development (SEED), Support Tool for Sustainable Environment Management in Tropical Rural Communities (STEM) and the University of Namibia (UNAM) library – did not provide detailed expenditure reporting on own funding, only on the MFA funded part.

Due to the use of full cost model, much of the HEI ICI budgets have shown a growing share of expenditures by the Finnish HEIs. In addition, there are costs that have directly benefited the Southern partner but that are budgeted and reported through the coordinating Finnish HEI for the ease of financial management. While on average the coordinating HEIs share was 62 % (260 000 EUR), there have been big variances on how the project expenditure is shared between the partners. In four projects – Landscape Management Planning and Training for the Environment in South Sudan (LAMPTESS), Building Institutional Capacity for Training Leadership and Management of Ugandan Universities (LMUU), Teacher education in Namibia and Entrepreneurship training in Cairo – the respective coordinators were responsible for over 85% of the total expenditure. In three projects – Bethlehem, DDS and Institutional Collaboration Instrument for Informatics Development for Health in Africa (INDEHELA) – the coordinators share is only half or less of the total expenditure.

In terms of time allocation, ownership of Southern HEIs seems to be well applied in HEI ICI as shown in table 11. During the 18 months implementation period in 2011-2012, almost 15 000 working days have been put into HEI ICI projects, of which the Southern partners reported to have worked over 7 000. Again, there are big differences in how HEI ICI partners divide expert working days within individual projects. On average, the Finnish coordinators invested 458 days, Finnish partners 676 days and Southern HEIs 652 days per project. If allocation of expert working days is considered to be a sign of ownership, HEI ICI data provides clear evidence to that end. Only in three projects the southern partners did not report having spent any days on the project.

Table 11 Distribution of HEI ICI expenditures in 2011-2012.

	Expenditure		Working days		
	EUR	Finnish Co-ordinator's share %	Finnish Co-ordinator	Finnish partners	Southern HEIs
Bethlehem	211 620	43	117	40	975
DDS	416 248	43	234	121	186
Educational leadership	324 475	77	288	70	419
Entrepreneurship Cairo	372 634	92	769	n.a.	m
Centre for the Promotion of Literacy in sub-Saharan Africa (CAPOLSA)	430 464	66	288	n.a.	714
Forest education, Kenya	377 467	75	627	n.a.	270
HEPHS	564 733	54	464	300	487
INDEHELA	524 603	50	428	63	1316
MEDUNAM	472 520	m	449	n.a	138
SEED	521 298	56	433	51	622
STEM	533 579	72	702		1759
Teacher education Namibia	187 444	96	202	n.a.	m
UNAM Library	347 117	55	671	n.a.	m
LMUU	462 273	87	669	32	287
LAMPTSS	529 836	86	529	n.a	m
TOTAL	6 276 311	62	6 870	676	7 173
PROGRAMME AVERAGE	418 421	62	458	676	652

Note: n.a. = Not applicable, m = Missing data

Source: HEI-ICI financial completion reports 2011-2012

4.3 Results of the NSS and HEI ICI Programmes

This section presents the evaluation of the NSS and HEI ICI programmes against the five DAC criteria and the complementarity principle outlined in the evaluation team's TORs, namely relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, complementarity and efficiency.

4.3.1 Relevance

The key findings regarding the relevance of NSS and HEI ICI projects are as follows:

- Despite the officially acknowledged importance of higher education, it is not a real priority in the Finnish development cooperation and policy.
- The MFA policy priorities have not been effectively reflected in the projects. In addition, the programmes have not prioritised the Finnish long-term partner countries or the least developed countries.
- For the Finnish HEIs, the programmes are very useful in fulfilling the requirement for global responsibility.
- For Southern HEIs, the programmes are relevant and much appreciated, but still do not address the two key priorities for capacity development; joint research and scholarships for degree studies for the staff.

The NSS and HEI-ICI programmes are broadly in line with the Finnish government's development policy programmes (2004, 2007, 2012). The programme guidelines and guidance for NSS applicants have been adapted over the years to accommodate evolving priorities, *e.g.* Finnish added value (2010), crosscutting objectives (2013). The establishment of ICI (and HEI-ICI) was specifically mentioned in the 2007 policy programme.

However, in terms of partner country range and choice, the selection process of NSS and HEI ICI projects does not seem to be fully consistent with official priorities. Only half of the NSS projects are with Finland's long-term partner countries. Equally only half of the projects support HEIs in the Least Developed Countries.

The role of HEIs in promoting green economy and the inclusion of crosscutting objectives do not feature prominently in the programmes' selection criteria or in the projects themselves. However, quite a few projects do address the crosscutting objectives or promote green economy and job creation.

Regarding the gender equality goals that the programmes should meet — in full alignment with the education and gender MDG goals — in NSS it seems that the amount and share of female teachers from the South has increased but there is no clear trend and the annual fluctuations are considerable. In student exchanges, female students are in majority. The number and share of female students from the southern HEIs show a slight increase, but there are large annual variations, and there appears to be no clear trend. This indicates the lack of any clear strategy for ensuring the participation of a certain proportion of female participants in the student and academic exchanges.

Education has been a priority for Finnish development policy, and the importance of higher education and research has been recognised, though not necessarily extensively elaborated in the policy documents. The programme documents for NSS and HEI-ICI are more specific about the role and importance of higher education in de-

veloping societies and they appear to be well informed on international trends and literature. However, the importance of higher education does not show in budgetary allocations. Despite the launch of HEI-ICI, the annual Finnish ODA disbursements to higher education are at 5 million EUR, which represents less than one % of total Finnish ODA disbursements and approximately 5% of what is allocated to NGO cooperation. Especially in NSS, the allocations for individual projects and individual partners are very small. Finland's contribution to higher education cooperation is much smaller than that of the other Nordic countries and the Netherlands, as illustrated by Table 12.

Table 12 Total annual aid for higher education from the Nordic countries and the Netherlands (average million EUR over duration of programmes).

Denmark	Finland	The Netherlands	Norway	Sweden
44.2	8.7	89.2	34.1	133.8

Source: CIMO, DANIDA, NORAD, NUFFIC, Sida

Both NSS and HEI ICI are relevant and much-liked programmes in the Southern HEIs but they do not address the key priorities for institutional capacity building, namely collaborative research and scholarships for degree studies for staff members.

For the Finnish HEIs, NSS and HEI ICI are the primary means to fulfil the requirement of global responsibility as required in the MOEC strategy for internationalisation of Finnish HEIs. Some Finnish HEIs have integrated the two programmes into their overall strategy, showing great appreciation for these programmes, which are seen as a channel to expand cooperation beyond the safe and well-known traditional partners in Europe.

All student participants in NSS exchanges saw their experiences in Finland as 'life-changing', expressing strong appreciation for a more open and flexible approach to classroom teaching and learning, without the traditional configuration of the teacher as the central figure of authority. Students and teachers alike responded positively to modern pedagogical approaches such as small group structures, project work, an environment which supported student questions and opinions, and varied forms of on-going assessments and feedback including oral as well as pencil-and-paper testing. Except in isolated cases, orientation, accommodation and exposure to Finnish culture were highly appreciated. In Vietnam, lack of proficiency in English was an obstacle in following courses. In most cases, agreements were reached regarding accreditation of course work prior to travel. Student exchange numbers were generally very small, ranging from one to three for 3-4 months each in both directions. Those HEIs that had other linkages with Finland had larger numbers visiting Finland annually than through the NSS projects. In a few cases, Finnish students travelling to the South had open programmes with no specific course of study planned.

Many Finnish coordinators regretted that, in recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to find Finnish students interested in spending one semester abroad in some projects, due to tighter budgets and performance agreements that prioritise timely graduation. Also some teachers are less willing to send their students abroad.

As in the case of students, teacher mobility numbers were very small. Although visits to Finland were for one or two weeks, teachers were satisfied with the exposure to the different pedagogical style, reporting that the visit resulted in changes in their classroom teaching on return. Teachers were excited about the teaching and learning resources in Finnish HEIs, particularly the use of technology in education. Faculty interviewed found the usefulness of their Finnish counterparts' visits limited due to the brevity of their stays. The complex and challenging environment warranted more time for Finnish colleagues involved in teaching to factor in the differences. Additionally, the timing of academic cycle in Finland is different from that of partner countries and this was a constraining factor where teachers were concerned. In general, travel plans hinged upon the Finnish academic year rather than the partner's. The impact of teaching was usually limited to one unit or department, hardly affecting a whole faculty or university making it difficult to have widespread institutional reform. Unfortunate examples of academic tourism, in both directions, were reported where agreed programmes of teaching and/or consultation had not been planned.

The Intensive Courses provided the chief substantive knowledge intervention in the NSS programme and could be a major contribution to the value of the NSS programme by reaching large numbers and spurring South-South interactions but the generally short duration of three to four days and limited funds are constraining factors. Additionally, the scope for NSS projects to make an impact is narrow so that training and reform elements have scarce opportunity to develop.

Courses running for a longer period and with built-in project work or practice elements (such as visits to community health centres) were well received. Courses became somewhat dysfunctional when undergraduate and postgraduate participated together, giving rise to issues with pitching the course at the right level. Themes and programmes are usually initiated by the lead Finnish HEI. Organisation of the courses was reported as labour-intensive, logistically demanding and time consuming, with some academics feeling insufficiently compensated. Partner HEI teams (not many) would have wished for better and more timely communications between HEIs including the disbursement of funds, and assistance with the visa application process. Funds do not allow for follow-up South-South interactions although this is one of the programme goals. However, one example was identified in South Africa where Finnish and Southern coordinators stretched programme rules to implement a highly successful programme, which promoted meaningful North-South-South interactive teaching and learning activities among Finland, Ghana and South Africa (Box 4).

Box 4 NSS Training Producers for Ecological Broadcasting.

Six tertiary level film and media schools in three countries have established a high level of professional and academic competence in culturally diverse documentary film making on development issues (four films each project year) and film education. With Arcada University of Applied Sciences as the lead Finnish HEI, partners are the University of the Witwatersrand, the South Africa School of Motion Picture and Live Performance and University of Johannesburg in South Africa; the National Film and Television Institute in Accra, Ghana; and the Swedish School of Social Science at University of Helsinki. The last added journalism to the creative mix. To date, the films have also gained exposure and won prizes at international film festivals such as NextReel (Singapore), DOK Leipzig (Germany) and Tampere International Film Festival (Finland).

The over-arching aim of the Network is to build bridges of understanding and provide opportunities for multi-cultural teamwork among groups of students in Africa and Europe by means of documentary filmmaking. A one-term integral course has been running yearly since 2006. The evaluation team observed a vibrant multi-cultural group of students from South Africa, Ghana and Finland presenting two documentaries written and produced by themselves under the dynamic tutelage of participating faculty members. Network partners had decided to stretch the NSS rules by using intensive course and mobility funds, supplemented by their own institutional funds, to bring students together to practice all aspects of film-making leading to outputs during their time together in Africa and Finland.

Apart from contributing to the project objectives by addressing the communicative dimension of globalisation, the technological North-South divide in broadcasting and especially the greater competitiveness of the Western media industry, the partner HEIs have succeeded in forming a strong and relevant South-South network of next-generation film makers.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In summary, partner HEIs find the programme relevant and appreciate the activities undertaken under the projects, but the funding is relatively small, and important activities such as research and degree training for academics are not eligible in either programme. Neither the NSS nor the HEI ICI programmes are important priorities in the Finnish development cooperation policy.

4.3.2 Effectiveness

In determining the *effectiveness* of the programmes, the key issues of interest were the capacity development results at programme and project level as well as the overall results orientation of the programmes. The main findings are as follows:

- NSS suffers from unrealistic setting of objectives against available resources and possible activities. The overall level and intensity of activity is not sufficient for institution level, let alone national level capacity increment. The set mobility targets have been achieved.
- HEI ICI promises to be a more effective and better-resourced programme for capacity development but with only a couple of years of implementation, it is still early to identify clear results.
- The unnecessary limitation of eligible activities in both programmes hampers optimal capacity development.
- The monitoring and evaluation framework and provisions are inadequate at both programme and project levels.

Most NSS project documents had poorly formulated objectives, which lacked measurable targets and, coupled with a lack of baseline data, efforts to measure project or programme effectiveness were difficult. Final qualitative reports of NSS projects tended to focus on completion of descriptive activities, which provided beneficiary numbers for the major interventions – student and teacher mobility and intensive courses. Scarce information was available, except on gender extracted from disaggregated mobility figures, on themes critical to the programme – capacity building through improving the quality and relevance of education programmes and the outcomes of reducing inequality through equity promotion actions. Overall beneficiary numbers are too small to contribute significantly to overall human capacity development either at institutional or country levels. No hard data had been provided on claims to having improved educational quality, such as improved educational outcomes, nor on reduction of inequality (except for gender participation) for which no supporting resource allocations are discernible.

Available figures based on the analysis of NSS programme information show that programme level targets in relation to teacher and student exchange and intensive courses were met and hence it is possible to state that effectiveness targets were met at their most limited and basic level. Equally it is difficult to assess if the core element to the NSS programme, the network approach, has been effective as an instrument meeting MFA human capital development goals in partner countries without an analysis of counterfactual scenarios. That some NSS networks have received funding for 5 to 7 years could have been termed as a feature of their effectiveness if there had been supporting data providing reasons for their continuance.

In 2011-2012 implementation round there were no programme level targets in HEI-ICI, and it has been difficult to identify programme level results. Most projects are mid-way in implementation making an assessment of project effectiveness premature. However, some early indications supporting future evaluation may be noted. Compared with NSS projects, HEI ICI projects have a more rigorous approach to project preparation with a focus on results and monitoring. At least one project team interviewed had completed a baseline study and had designated personnel who would monitor results annually and update the database. Furthermore, project training char-

acteristics target larger numbers, typically comprising a whole department or in one case the whole institution which, denoting capacity development of a critical mass, signals support for institutional capacity development. HEI ICI could be advised to review their objectives, targets and monitoring scheme to facilitate assessment of effectiveness at project completion.

A major value of the partnership approach is its outreach, particularly to individuals and institutions in less populated areas, with poor connectivity and generally poor communications channels. It provides a starting point for ideas to be planted and some space for them to germinate, supported by handholding by peers. For example, a healthy element in some of the HEI ICI projects – as in the case of projects carried out in Vietnam – are the in-country lateral partnerships between HEIs, with better performing institutions working closely with the weaker. Project documents identify the ‘learning role’ of the weaker institution helping to devolve responsibility in meaningful ways from the lead and distant HEI to a local HEI functioning well within the same environment. Another fine example was found in Kenya, where strategic and complementing utilisation of various funding channels has yielded results at faculty level with potential to be mainstreamed to the whole university.

However, a challenge for the partnership approach is that the value of partnerships is hard to quantify. It is also difficult to justify major funding unless there is evidence to indicate and confirm that MFA is making the best use of its resources for overall human capital development in the institutions and countries concerned.

With respect to capacity building, the narrow range of eligible activities under NSS and HEI ICI – especially under the former – represents a significant limitation. As Table 13 shows, the Finnish instruments focus mainly on improving the quality and relevance of educational programmes in partner HEIs, but do not support directly key dimensions such as equity and inclusiveness or research capacity building. Of course NSS and HEI ICI are predicated upon strict equity criteria in the selection of project beneficiaries, but the programmes do not finance equity promotion actions *per se*.

Table 13 Capacity building dimensions of NSS and HEI ICI programmes.

Purpose of Interventions	Intervention Modalities	NSS	HEI ICI
<i>Improved Quality and Relevance of Education Programmes (Bachelors and Masters)</i>			
Establishment of new master's programmes	Technical assistance, academic exchanges, equipment purchase	NO	YES
Curriculum design & reform	Technical assistance, training workshops, academic exchanges	Indirectly	YES

Introduction of active and interactive teaching and learning methods (incl. e-learning)	Technical assistance, training workshops, academic exchanges	YES	YES
Enhancement of the capacity of existing academics	Technical assistance, mentoring, training workshops, academic exchanges, scholarships for master's in donor countries	YES	YES
Modernisation of scientific labs	Technical assistance, training workshops, academic exchanges, equipment purchase	NO	Limited
Library development	Technical assistance, training workshops, equipment purchase	NO	Limited
Strengthening of internal quality assurance systems	Technical assistance, mentoring, training workshops	NO	YES
Development of university-industry linkages	Technical assistance, training workshops	NO	YES
<i>Increased Equity and Inclusiveness (Undergraduate Level)</i>			
Removal of financial barriers to access and success	Scholarships	NO	NO
Outreach programmes	Technical assistance, mentorship, training workshops	NO	Limited
Retention programmes	Technical assistance, mentorship, training workshops	NO	NO
Improved Research Capacity and Increased Research Output			
PhD Studies and Post Doc Programmes in Donor Country	Scholarships / fellowships	Limited possibilities providing 12-month exchange in Finland	NO
Joint Research Projects	Mentorship, planning grants, research grants	NO	NO
Development of research labs	Technical assistance and equipment purchase	NO	NO
Development of Centres of Excellence	Technical assistance and equipment purchase	NO	NO

<i>Improved Management and Institutional Capacity</i>			
Strengthening of leadership competencies	Technical assistance, mentoring and capacity building workshops	NO	Limited
Institution and systems strengthening	Technical assistance	NO	YES
Systems for knowledge management, information and dissemination of results	Technical assistance and IT equipment purchase	NO	Limited

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

To illustrate how limited Finland's NSS and HEI ICI programmes are compared to those of like-minded donors, Annex 15 highlights the main characteristics of the recent and on-going higher education cooperation programmes of all four Nordic countries, together with those of the Netherlands. This comparison provides two useful insights from the viewpoint of the capacity development potential of each programme. First, in terms of the main objectives pursued by the donor programmes, Finland's approach appears to be more restrictive than the programmes of other Nordic countries and the Netherlands, who tend to focus the bulk of their efforts on the development of research capacities in partner higher education institutions, including the provision of scholarships for postgraduate degrees. Even though the MFA finances research projects through the Academy of Finland, the 2009 evaluation of support to development research found that "there is no institutional arrangement to promote research cooperation and capacity building along the lines found in other Nordic countries" (MFA, 2009a, p. 17). It is left to the individual Finnish university benefiting from a grant to provide (or not) some of the funding for capacity building purposes in partner universities.

Second, Finland, Norway and Sweden stand out as putting emphasis on the development of South-South linkages, compared to Denmark and the Netherlands. This is a very positive feature of the NSS programme worth emphasising.

In summary, NSS makes an imperfect contribution to capacity building. HEI ICI interventions are more effective, but they are limited by the fact that funding for research and for scholarships is not available.

4.3.3 Impact

- The available resources and scope of activities are too limited for any meaningful or planned impact at the national or even institutional level.
- At the individual level, the impact of the programmes has been tremendous.

In the past 10 years, global ODA for higher education has increased from 2.5 to 4 billion USD. However, at the same time its share of the total ODA has gone down from around 3.5% to 2.6% and the share of ODA to education from 45 % to 34 %. Given the total value of ODA to higher education, the Finnish contribution of approximately 7.5 million USD in 2012 (0.2 % of all ODA to higher education) is quite insignificant.

Total annual aid disbursements (2011) in Vietnam were 4.2 billion USD, in Kenya 2.8 billion USD, and 1.5 billion USD in South Africa. Finnish total aid is less than one % of the total disbursements (Development Initiatives, 2013). Disbursements to higher education are considerably less in all countries, 107 million USD in Vietnam, USD 13 million in Kenya and 16 million USD in South Africa (OECD query wizard). Most of the aid to higher education is scholarships of imputed student costs from Germany and France.

The findings of previous evaluations on the mismatch between activities at individual level and desired impact at institutional (or national or MDG or Finnish development policy) level persist at least in the NSS programme. HEI ICI projects may have greater impact at the institutional level, especially in smaller HEIs in the South, but due to the limited implementation period, these impacts are not yet visible.

CIMO programme administrators have requested projects to increasingly explain and report their interventions explicitly in terms of the MDGs and the Finnish development policy objectives such as poverty reduction. This has created a wide gap – observed already by the 2009 NSS evaluation – between project achievement objectives set at the macro-level and the actual micro-level interventions. While much more realistic and approachable for the projects, little consideration in planning and reporting has been given to the actual NSS programme objective of building human capacity (Annex 16). At individual level, the visits have made a great impact on students though this impact may not be easily measured. At the operational level, then, consideration should be given to greater focus on the project planning and reporting framework regarding how the individual projects support their specific objectives and how they align with the overall programme objectives. The links with the wider development policy aims would be eventually drawn from the achievement of programme objectives.

It may be the case that project self-reports cannot always capture solid achievements of individual students or teachers. While individual project reports and interviews provide some useful information, a more systematic method such as tracer studies of individual career or scholarship paths might yield more accurate data as a basis for decisions. A third party evaluation approach at the project level might also reap dividends. Findings of a third-party impact evaluation could provide a basis for continued/additional funding or otherwise, assisting MFA and CIMO to identify conditions in which projects might best meet their programme objectives. For the moment, only few projects have carried out such evaluations on their own initiative.

HEI-ICI projects have only been implemented for a short while and international experience suggests that a minimum of 10 years is required for any impact to materialise. There are, however, some promising signs of institutional impact, and also the quite impressive number of expert days invested by both Finnish and partner HEIs is conducive for future impact. Inclusion of preferred capacity development modalities, collaborative research and scholarships for post degree studies, would increase likelihood of impact.

4.3.4 Sustainability

Sustainability was assessed in terms of the likelihood of project interventions continuing after project completion. Findings indicate:

- Finnish and partner HEIs have difficulties in finding resources to continue NSS interventions after completion.
- HEI ICI activities and processes that have been institutionalised have a better likelihood of being sustained.
- Strong ownership is a critical aspect of project sustainability.

Where NSS interventions are concerned, it would not be possible for student and teacher mobility to continue. Apart from the absence of funding to provide travel budgets for participation, intensive courses have relied heavily on the academic and administrative coordination inputs of the lead Finnish HEI. It is unlikely that these courses would continue in most Southern HEIs. An outlier among the sample projects evaluated was ‘Training Producers for Ecological Broadcasting’, described in Box 4, which has built up sufficient momentum to continue in the post-project period but the North-South and South-South elements would be almost impossible to sustain.

HEI ICI projects are in progress and planned outputs and results are not available as yet. Based on their current performance and the extent to which project activities are being absorbed into institutional practices, the trajectory seems to indicate the likelihood that many of the project interventions might be sustained over time. The HEI ICI approach to institutional capacity building includes the training of a critical mass of technical, administrative and management personnel, a focus on monitoring and results, and building an enabling teaching and learning environment. The involvement and regular oversight of an inter-departmental and multi-disciplinary management team can ensure a high probability of continuance of project interventions.

These institutional features point to processes which strongly support ownership and internalisation at the institutional level, and which can indicate sustainability when appropriate resources are available. What may prove to be a stumbling block for some specific interventions such as curriculum and examinations reform is the gap between reforms and existing country policy. A project in Vietnam ‘Building Open Opportunities for Students and Teachers (BOOST)’ illustrates some of the features discussed here (Box 5).

Box 5 HEI ICI Building Open Opportunities for Students and Teachers (BOOST).

Quang Tri Teacher Training College (QTTTC or ‘the College’) is located in Dong Ha district in Quang Tri province about 70 kilometres north of Hue, Vietnam. It is the only HEI in this rural area. Its offerings include teacher education and general programmes. The second round of funding, in partnership with Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences (JAMK, lead HEI) and Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK), has benefited from an evaluation conducted at the end of the first round resulting in sharpening the focus of activities. The overall objective of BOOST is to ensure that QTTTC delivers quality study programmes, particularly in e-learning modality and project-based learning, reflecting labour market needs while enhancing regional integration. The College has been a pro-active partner, taking the stand that the project should focus on practical activities that contribute directly to its strategic development objectives.

Implementation appears to be on track and is managed by a competent inter-disciplinary team with clearly delineated implementation and monitoring responsibilities, headed by the College President, signalling strong ownership, which augurs well for sustainability. The functional local partners contribute immensely to implementation: the strongly-performing Hue University College of Education provides on-going mentoring, timely pedagogical training, and oversight in curriculum development and action research; and the University of Technical Education in Ho Chi Minh City supports one of the central activities – the preparation and piloting of e-learning courses.

The College management team has instituted small group interactions and mentoring between faculty members to facilitate institution-wide changes, moving away from the large training workshop approach; and overseen the completion of a baseline study for components 1 and 2 producing data which enables monitoring of project results. Mindful of remaining relevant to the local community, a survey of local area employment and service needs has been undertaken prior to establishing a new programme. Selected College personnel have benefited from training programmes in Finland, which are closely integrated with programme design and goals.

Two issues which need attention are: better utilisation of resources such as computers and infrastructural facilities acquired under the project; and that curriculum and pedagogical changes do not work adversely within the context of traditional national examinations.

Source: Elaborated by the authors

4.3.5 Complementarity

The evaluation team found evidence of high levels of *complementarity* in the following cases:

- NSS projects have built on completed projects as well as across network HEIs.
- NSS and HEI ICI interventions were successfully combined.
- Synergies grew between departments implementing HEI ICI activities in the same HEI.
- HEI ICI partner activities and funding benefited network HEIs.
- Synergies emerged from coordination of HEI ICI activities with Finnish-funded development projects and partner government projects.

With multiple rounds of funding, some NSS projects have done well to build upon achievements reached in previous rounds and others have combined NSS interventions successfully with HEI ICI interventions to gain effective synergies. Some NSS partners in the South have used the opportunities offered through intensive course activities to identify external examiners and moderators for their institutional programmes as seen in ‘The Role of Music in Strengthening Cultural Identity’ and ‘Sustainable Development and Human Rights’ projects. Synergies across NSS network HEIs have been seen most palpably in well-organised intensive courses and accompanying practical sessions such as the two-week course hosted by Hanoi Medical University under the aegis of the ‘Family Health and Well Being’ project (see Box 3). Lecturers included six Finnish academicians who worked alongside Vietnamese and Nepali partners reaching a total of 64 students from the three network countries.

HEI ICI networks can achieve strong synergies at project level by building up working relationships with partner HEIs in activities, which are funded by other development agencies. ‘Improving the Quality of Higher Education in Public Health Sciences (HEPHS)’ in University of Eastern Africa, Baraton is a case in point where the network includes Egypt’s Ain Shams University which has funds from EU research grants for Master in Public Health theses, internships and practical training. Strong complementarity across departments within the same HEI was observed at the University of Eldoret, where project implementation activities involve students and faculty from the Department of Forestry and the School of Computing with students learning from each other and integrating content. The University of Eldoret has also worked in complementarity with another Finnish-funded project, government agencies as well as national and international private sector agencies to advance its project goals, gaining practical skills and access to updated equipment and technology. The evaluation team noted that, compared with most NSS projects, HEI ICI projects tended to recognise and make good use of complementary human and financial resources supported by inherent project design elements.

Unfortunately, what seems to have marked almost all projects – NSS rather than HEI ICI, which were much fewer and more recent – is the lack of awareness of other Finnish-funded projects in the country and even on the same campus. Sharing of ex-

perience among project teams might have given them important leverage with their own senior management regarding internal processes as well as policy reform. Provision of information and opportunities to facilitate interactions among such projects might have resulted in functional synergies. Discussions in the field on this finding appear to point to the general practice of dealing with each project as an individual entity rather than as a part of a much wider canvas. Project teams expressed interest in sharing implementation experience with other Finnish-funded projects on their own campus and other HEIs.

4.3.6 Efficiency

The key *efficiency* findings were:

- Improvements in communication and collaboration are needed between KEO-10 and the Finnish Embassies.
- Efforts have been made to achieve synergies in the administration of the two programmes.
- CIMO's knowledge management practices were below expectation.
- Absence of hard data made it difficult to measure achievements or progress objectively.
- Capable leaders in partner HEIs made strategic use of NSS project and institutional financial and human resources to achieve project goals but these were not in the majority.
- Generally weak NSS project level management capabilities and the absence of monitoring frameworks made it difficult to correct programmes if they were off track.
- Good design elements guided by strong project management teams and institutional level quality assurance measures were important features in achieving project efficiencies in HEI ICI projects.

In MFA, the management of the programmes is with KEO-10 whose main duties are overall planning and monitoring of Finland's development policy and cooperation, budgeting, financial administration, and coordination of bilateral, European Union (EU) and OECD development policy. In addition to these macro-level development policy functions, the Unit is responsible for *inter alia* managing development research, and HEI-ICI and NSS programmes. In practice the management of HEI ICI and NSS rests largely with one person, who has other programmes to manage as well. Given that the human resources are thinly stretched in other departments and units of the MFA, as well as in the Embassies, it is unlikely that the programme administration would be better placed in another department and unit. There is, however, room for improvement in the communication and collaboration with the Finnish embassies, especially in the main partner countries.

CIMO has managed NSS since its inception in 2004 and HEI ICI since 2010. The number of staff managing the programmes has increased to five colleagues who collaborate well with each other. Overall, the Finnish HEIs, who are the end clients of

CIMO's administrative services, expressed satisfaction and appreciation of CIMO's services and found responsible CIMO staff members easy to approach and request for assistance. An exception to this would be the first implementation round of HEI-ICI, where the administrative guidelines were not prepared in time, resulting sometimes in conflicting messages and guidance. An additional challenge with respect to the administration of the HEI ICI programme is that the final decision making authority rests with the MFA but the point of contact for HEIs is CIMO. In cases of uncertainty, CIMO needs to refer to MFA for its final decision, a process that has sometimes taken a very long time. The administration has however improved in the current round of implementation and the current efforts for seeking synergies in programme administration are likely to improve efficiency further.

From an efficiency perspective, knowledge management is one area where CIMO's contribution was not really up to expectations. CIMO's databases on the NSS and HEI ICI programmes had many voids and deficiencies. For example, identifying and tracking projects in the database over multiple funding rounds became an initial issue as project titles changed over time. Better sequencing of projects in the database could be improved by placing multi-phase projects in juxtaposition for convenient access. Consistent titles with numeric descriptors showing sequence would have made the process more efficient.

The lack of cumulative reporting has also been a challenge for the NSS programme, as many networks received financing from several programme cycles. A short-term perspective to reporting fosters an activity focus, as actual results and impact generally take time to become visible. Ascertaining the number of beneficiaries by activity in the NSS reports was sometimes tricky. Often the summary of the programme information – which is probably intended to be cumulative – was not consistent with the number of student and teacher mobility beneficiaries listed in the individual programme reports or the Final Qualitative Report. Nor was it possible to confirm total beneficiaries of network interventions without overlap as sometimes students and teachers participating in the intensive courses could also be those participating in the mobility activities. Project teams would benefit greatly from a more rigorous approach to recording and analysing basic project statistics, indicating a need for allocation of resources to perform the tasks required.

While the NSS database and the yearly summaries provide useful information on the number of teachers, students, intensive courses with participants, as well as preparatory, administrative and network visits, there are some omissions and gaps in the data, especially regarding finances. As to HEI ICI knowledge management, the database is of little use as it comprises all project proposals without distinguishing between approved and rejected proposals, and there are hardly any reports.

Given the absence of hard data in many areas, the assessment of efficiency rests on a fairly subjective approach. In NSS project interventions, the Overview of NSS expenditures (Table 8) shows that between 2004 and 2011, 80.5% of total funding went

to student (66%) and teacher (44%) exchanges, 13.6% to intensive courses and 5.9% to administrative and networking costs. There is little evidence that performance or outcomes had improved and, if they had, to what extent this could be attributed to exchange visits. Project reports noted efforts made to cut costs and achieve greater funding efficiency by combining administrative and networking visits with intensive courses. This was achieved in many projects, borne out by expenditure figures. One project (Training Producers for Ecological Broadcasting) used partner HEI knowledge, technical skills and experience strategically to achieve programme outputs, sometimes supplemented by their own institutional funds. Reluctance or inability (signifying weak management and monitoring capacity at more than one level) to make corrections to projects that were not being well implemented implies that project and programme outputs/objectives might not be met. NSS projects tended to achieve efficiencies where strong academic leaders had the vision to utilise project interventions meaningfully within the framework of their institutional or departmental development strategies but such examples were in the minority.

For all HEI ICI projects, it was found that capacity development costs amounted to 90%, exceeding the 70% threshold of the Programme Document (MFA, 2012b). 75% of this amount (equivalent to 65% of total programme costs) was for expert fees. The largest proportion was for Finnish coordinators with Southern coordinators at a much lower level. Southern HEIs, however, could leverage local/national experts strategically to increase efficiencies by working with selected well-performing HEIs. Good design elements guided by strong project management teams and coupled with institutional level quality assurance measures were found to be important features in achieving project efficiencies in ICT-based outputs. The University of Eldoret project team was aware that their institutional management system's inability to accelerate the process of introducing the innovative curriculum prepared under the project could reduce the level of project efficiency they aim to achieve. Box 6 provides salient information and the context of project implementation. The trajectory based on current activities and achievements seems to indicate that, in comparison with NSS projects, a larger proportion of HEI ICI projects, such as the Kenyan project illustrated in Box 6, would achieve high levels of efficiency relative to resource inputs.

Box 6 HEI ICI Strengthening ICT-Supported Community-Engaged Forestry Education in Kenya (2013 – 2015).

Dynamic interaction has become visible among students and lecturers, a result of the innovative pedagogical approaches integral to a project currently being implemented by the University of Eldoret in partnership with University of Eastern Finland. To combat low undergraduate enrolments in forestry education, a major project objective is to make forestry education attractive to young people.

Apart from the novel participation of students from different departments - Department of Forestry and the School of Computing - students learn from each other and integrate content on the move. With new techniques and equipment hitherto out of reach, students work with faculty members integrating theory with direct, hands-on practical assignments. Traditional hierarchical barriers between student and teacher are coming down with student questions and opinions characterising project-related teaching-learning sessions.

Project results to date include an innovative age-appropriate mobile game for primary and secondary school children; a game for students and community on decision-making; a new Bachelor's Degree curriculum which unfortunately is awaiting the time-consuming institutional process of approvals; and an on-line Bio-energy course for local and Finnish students, implementation of which suffered from internet connectivity issues. Such implementation issues send a signal to those preparing project interventions to ensure that institutional regulations and infrastructural support are assessed thoroughly during project design. The Eldoret team regretted the lack of mobility funds under the HEI ICI framework, much needed for participating staff and students.

At the same time, project managers have enriched project design by recognising potentials for synergies in local and global partnerships and networks. These include the African Network for Agriculture and the International Partnership for Forestry Education. Good complementarity is noted in the project team's participation in the Finnish-funded Miti Minga Maisha Bora (MMMB 2009-2014) initiative, which provides financial and technical support to Kenya's forestry sector reform. Additionally, private sector linkages have set the University of Eldoret's Department of Forestry and Wood Science at the forefront of the sector in Kenya. One such link is with Arbonaut Ltd., a Finnish global company developing cutting-edge work on geographic information system (GIS) for forest inventory and natural resource management.

Source: Elaborated by the authors

5 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Partner HEIs highly value the activities undertaken under the projects, but the funding is relatively small, of short duration, and important capacity building activities such as research and degree training for academics are not eligible in either programme. Neither the NSS nor the HEI ICI programmes are important priorities in the Finnish development cooperation policy.

5.1 Overall conclusion

This evaluation shows clearly that both NSS and HEI ICI programmes support highly relevant activities that are much appreciated by the partner higher education institutions. The NSS mobility opportunities have transformed the life of participating students by empowering them, opening new intellectual and cultural horizons for them, and bringing their leadership skills out. They have also helped hundreds of academics in their professional development, in both subject content and pedagogical practices. The South–South partnership dimension is an innovative feature that few donors have integrated in their higher education programmes and projects. Similarly, HEI ICI projects have financed many useful capacity development activities among partner HEIs, which are likely to contribute to better qualified graduates through better qualified academics, improved educational programmes, more relevant courses and closer linkages to industry and the local environment. In many cases, the projects have enabled a two-way cooperation process that benefited both Finnish and partner HEIs.

However, when put in national and global perspectives, Finnish development cooperation in support of higher education is very small in total volume, which is limiting its overall impact. In 2013, the NSS and HEI ICI budgets were 2.6 and 3.3 million EUR respectively, spread thinly across 25 countries. In most countries, the programmes represent an almost insignificant share of development assistance. For example, in the three countries visited by the evaluation team – Vietnam, Kenya and South Africa – NSS and HEI ICI projects together amounted to less than 1% of annual aid disbursements. Considering that Finland has built its own development on education and continues to value education highly, the small role of education in Finnish development cooperation is surprising and, to a certain extent, disappointing.

The small size of the programmes also limits the opportunities for effective transformation of the partner HEIs, especially in the case of NSS. With an average annual budget of 6 500 EUR at the level of the participating partner HEIs, NSS projects can support only a handful of students and academics in each case. As a self-standing programme, NSS has operated more as a small-scale internationalisation platform for Finnish HEIs than a genuine development cooperation instrument to build capacity in partner HEIs. HEI ICI projects are larger, with an average funding amount of 376 000 EUR per network for 18 months in the first cycle (2011) and 246 000 EUR

for 3 years in the second cycle (2013) and promise to be more effective institutional strengthening tools, but are significantly limited by three design features: (i) the relatively short project duration, (ii) the exclusion of research capacity building activities, and (iii) the ineligibility of scholarships for the training of young academics.

The evaluation reveals that NSS and HEI ICI projects have had a mixed performance, regardless of their size, degree of policy alignment and relevance. HEI ICI projects seem to accomplish better results overall.

As far as complementarity is concerned, the evaluation has shown that NSS and HEI ICI projects are usually designed independently from the Finnish development strategy in partner countries. In fact, there is no clear mechanism, during the design phase, to integrate new NSS and HEI ICI projects into country strategies. As a result, these projects are not necessarily aligned with the Finnish government's priorities in partner countries and are rarely coordinated with other Finnish projects in these countries.

From an efficiency viewpoint, an unexpected finding in that respect is that responsibility for monitoring actual implementation has not been clearly defined. In contrast to the clear criteria and procedures defined and applied for project design and selection, it has been implicitly assumed that the participating Finnish HEIs could be depended upon to ensure effective implementation of the planned activities. In many cases, this was not an issue, but the evaluation team did visit a number of projects, which could have benefited greatly from closer supervision. Yet, nowhere do the programme documents indicate in a precise way who has the ultimate responsibility for monitoring project implementation, whether it is up to the MFA, the local Finnish embassies, or CIMO.

CIMO has served the MFA and the participating HEIs relatively well as administrative agency, and most participating HEIs recognise this with great appreciation. Unfortunately, because of limited budgetary resources to manage the programmes and high staff turnover, CIMO has not built an adequate information management database to monitor the NSS and HEI ICI programmes. Furthermore, due to the different administrative arrangements imposed by the MFA on CIMO for managing the HEI ICI programme compared to NSS, the 2011 launch of the HEI ICI programme proved challenging for the participating HEIs, and the new procedures have turned out to be significantly less flexible than those of NSS.

Finally, MFA should have requested CIMO to incorporate a better framework for the assessment of results and impact into the design and implementation of both programmes, considering the official emphasis on evidence-based interventions.

5.2 Capacity building results

Notwithstanding the positive results of NSS projects at the level of the individuals—staff and students—directly involved in the academic exchanges and intensive courses, the evaluation found that, by and large, few benefits accrued to the partner HEIs from an institutional viewpoint, which undermines the overall effectiveness of the programme. The lack of capacity development, in most cases, resulted from the small size of the projects and the small number of people affected, and from the fact that the mobility and training activities were not generally integrated in any institutional transformation strategy, especially in the larger universities. The literature on effective practices for improving teaching and learning in HEIs clearly indicates that a few isolated workshops — such as the annual intensive courses organised under the NSS programme — are not the most appropriate way of building faculty capacity (Qualters, 1995 and 2009). What is needed is to have capacity development activities that are part of a systematic training programme at the institutional level.

In addition, because of the small budget available, most NSS projects did not take proper advantage of the programme rules to maximise the capacity building effects. For example, even though the duration of academic exchanges could be up to 6 months for faculty members, in most cases the duration was only a week to ten days. Student exchanges lasted usually one trimester, even though in theory they could be up to one year. And instead of having one intensive course every semester, all projects seem to have one only once a year. A major contributing factor for the short duration of teacher exchanges is that the teacher or staff salaries are not compensated by the NSS programme, which results in the HEIs covering the possible costs of hiring additional teachers themselves. The lack of compensation of administrative expenses in NSS has also contributed to fewer intensive courses because of their labour intensive organisation.

The logic of NSS project design is also a contributing factor as the initiative has usually come from the Finnish HEIs, who took the lead in choosing network partners and topics for the intensive courses. This finding is consistent with the results of a recent global survey on internationalisation practices, undertaken by the International Association of Universities, which established that the greatest risk of mobility programmes is that they would benefit the wealthiest institutions and students most (Lee, 2014).

NSS projects have worked best in smaller, younger HEIs, often located outside the capital city. Partner HEIs have also taken advantage of NSS activities in a more effective manner when they could complement a HEI ICI project in a similar or related field. The University of Eastern Africa (Baraton) in Kenya, for instance, combined activities from an HEI ICI project and an NSS project to further its capacity development goals in an effective manner.

As documented in Chapter 4, the design of HEI ICI projects is better aligned with the capacity development needs of partner HEIs. When effectively implemented, HEI ICI projects have contributed in a very positive way to upgrading the capacity of faculty members, modernising curricula and pedagogical practices, establishing new programmes and courses in partner HEIs, and strengthening linkages with industry and the community.

From a relevance viewpoint point, the HEI ICI programme has three major design flaws, however. First it does not recognise that most universities are engaged in both teaching and research, activities that feed into each other and contribute to the quality of performance in a complementary way. By excluding any support for collaborative research activities, it denies partner HEIs the opportunity to build their capacity in an area that is a fundamental part of their academic life and development path.

Second, even if research is excluded, building the capacity of departments and faculties in partner HEIs involves preparing qualified academics for teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Any university is as good as its academics. By not considering scholarships as eligible expenditures, HEI ICI projects are unable to help strengthen the human resource capacity of partner HEIs, unlike the programmes of most other Nordic donors, which include opportunities for further studies through master's degrees or doctorate degrees (PhDs).

Third, the average project duration is not sufficient to support the long-term investments that are needed for any effective capacity building activity in higher education. As indicated by the international experience reviewed in Chapter 2, capacity building projects require a much longer time horizon to be effective.

5.3 Development impact

Measuring the development impact of NSS and HEI ICI projects has proved very difficult if not impossible. This challenge can be attributed to three fundamental reasons: the time dimension, the absence of a solid results framework, and the difficulty to attribute results to Finnish interventions.

First of all, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the duration of individual NSS and HEI ICI projects is too short to make it possible to observe any significant change in terms of economic and social development in partner countries. The most favourable cases would be the few examples where partner HEIs have benefited from several cycles of funding. But even in those cases, the other two limitations discussed in the following paragraphs would apply.

The second factor influencing the measurement of the programmes' development impact is the absence of a solid results framework. To begin with, the programme documents do not articulate a clear theory of change linking the causal sequence

from inputs and activities to results, outputs and development objectives. Furthermore, NSS projects essentially monitor activities and number of participants in mobility and intensive courses, but do not undertake systematic tracking of the labour market results of the graduates who participated in NSS activities. HEI ICI projects tend to have a more comprehensive set of indicators, but they don't assess students learning outcomes, which would be the most appropriate measure of the success of the various capacity development actions in partner HEIs. Even though some HEIs do try to collect data about the labour market results of their graduates, the evaluation team found little evidence of regular monitoring of results and use of labour market information to make adjustments to improve project implementation and outcomes.

The third and perhaps most vexing issue is that of attribution. The first obstacle is at the level of partner HEIs themselves. Most of them have several partnerships with a variety of foreign donors, which makes it impossible to identify the specific contribution of the Finnish projects *per se* compared to the results of projects from other donors or the HEI's own investments aiming at improved quality and relevance. And then, when looking at the contribution of graduates in the labour market and the economy, direct attribution is very difficult in the absence of a well-articulated impact evaluation framework integrated into the initial design of the programme. Without identifying appropriate indicators during the project design phases, establishing a baseline data set before project launch, and monitoring alternative interventions (including no intervention) to provide valid counterfactual evidence, no credible attribution can be achieved. Thus, at the end of the day, the relevance test may remain the best available proxy of development impact. And in this respect, most NSS and HEI ICI projects receive high marks.

The challenge of attribution is a serious problem not only for Finnish development aid, but most likely for all donor assistance programmes that do not plan for a rigorous impact evaluation at the programme design stage. For example, a recent study commissioned by the Norwegian aid agency, Norad, concludes that evaluation reports generally fail to demonstrate that any results could be attributed to Norwegian aid (Norad, 2014).

5.4 Crosscutting objectives

The same way as observed in the ICI evaluation (Bäck, Visti and Moussa, 2014), the crosscutting objectives of gender equality, reduction of inequalities and climate sustainability do not feature prominently in NSS or in HEI-ICI projects, which affects their relevance adversely. Some projects do address the crosscutting objectives, but they are generally not genuinely incorporated into the project design and activities in a crosscutting manner.

The crosscutting objectives are not strongly advocated in the programmes' selection criteria either. Adherence to Finland's development policy programme (including the

crosscutting objectives) is only one among the eight relevance criteria for HEI-ICI (total maximum points for relevance is 20/100). In NSS, the total points for background, relevance and complementarity are 30 and crosscutting objectives are one among five criteria.

Generally, the project teams were aware of the crosscutting objectives and knew about Finland's development policy programme priorities, but they did not often explicitly incorporate them in the project design to achieve a better fit with the Finnish policy objectives.

5.5 Synergies and complementarities

Based on the desk study and the field visits in Vietnam, Kenya and South Africa, the evaluation team found very few instances of synergies and complementarities among Finnish programmes and projects that support higher education capacity building. First, NSS and HEI ICI are designed and operate as two independent programmes, even though NSS and HEI ICI are financed by the MFA and administered by the same entity. The few cases of partner HEIs having both HEI ICI and NSS projects were the results of proactive efforts on behalf of enterprising Finnish universities but did not happen by deliberate planning at the level of the MFA, CIMO or the Finnish embassies in partner countries. At the other extreme, the team came across a small number of HEIs in partner countries — as well as in Finland —, which had two or more NSS and/or HEI ICI projects whose implementation teams were not aware of each other.

Second, the lack of alignment of NSS and HEI ICI projects with Finnish development priorities and specific strategies in partner countries does not allow the Finnish embassies to organise a critical mass of projects serving the same purpose, helping the same sub-sector, or concentrating complementary actions in the same geographical zone.

Third, the fact that NSS and HEI ICI projects are implemented in partner countries without any coordination by the Finnish embassies means many missed opportunities for collaborative work and synergies across projects in the same country. In many cases, the embassies are not aware of all projects under implementation and of the range of interventions in the higher education sector. Similarly, the various project teams do not know about the work of other projects, even when they are engaged in similar activities or active in similar fields.

The absence of regular dialogue in some partner countries between the Finnish Embassy and the Ministry of Higher Education may lead to lack of information or even awareness of on-going Finnish support for higher education. This reduces opportunities for adequate coordination at the national and regional levels. There is also the consideration of staff turnover in both the Finnish Embassy and/or the Ministry

of Higher Education side, which could jeopardise continuous understanding of assistance programmes. Equally important would be the level of priority accorded to Finnish development assistance by partner countries.

Finally, it is clear that one of the major causes of the lack of coordination to achieve more synergies seems to be that MFA and embassies staff are stretched across many tasks and have no extra time to deal specifically with NSS and HEI ICI projects.

5.6 Role and contribution of CIMO

The evaluation has found that CIMO has served the MFA and the Finnish HEIs relatively well. It has operated as an efficient administrator overall. HEIs report that CIMO has been approachable and responsive to their questions for guidance and clarification. CIMO has successfully learned from initial mishaps with the HEI ICI programme and made the necessary adjustments.

However, the evaluation has identified a number of issues that need to be addressed, some of which are linked to the rules imposed by the MFA, others fall directly under CIMO's responsibility. In the first case, CIMO remains constrained in those areas where decisions have to be referred to the MFA, which usually takes time and places CIMO in a difficult position vis-à-vis the Finnish HEIs. As a result, from the HEIs' point of view, the perception is that the HEI ICI programme has not been managed in a fully objective and transparent manner. The scores of the NSS projects against the various selection criteria are not made public, and in the case of HEI ICI projects, the list of projects to be funded on the basis of the best scores received in the technical evaluation maybe overruled by the MFA. The Finnish HEIs also observe that CIMO does not provide them with clear and timely feedback on their applications. Finally, it appears that CIMO did not get clear instructions from the MFA on what kind of monitoring should take place and how it should be carried out.

With respect to those areas for improvement that are directly under CIMO's own responsibility, the evaluation identified the weak database management as a serious limitation. This is an obstacle for maintaining institutional memory and conducting regular monitoring of NSS and HEI ICI implementation, especially considering the frequent turnover of staff assigned to the management of the higher education partnership programmes. This is all the more surprising, as CIMO tends to rely almost exclusively on written documentation in its communication with the Finnish HEIs and in receiving feedback on project implementation, and does not carry out field visits to monitor project implementation. In their present form, the reports on project implementation submitted by HEIs are not sufficiently informative or credible for presenting actual results and achievements. During the field visits, the evaluation team could see substantial differences in the actual situation compared to reported progress, which CIMO is in no position to detect without physically visiting the Southern project partners. In summary, the current monitoring practices provide little information

on the actually achieved results compared to invested inputs and outputs, and do not provide enough information on the challenges and problems in the implementation.

These problems are reflected also in the work of the steering groups of the two programmes. The role of the steering groups is to ensure overall quality of the programmes and support CIMO in their implementation. As the Finnish legislation does not allow CIMO or MFA to outsource their decision-making power to external bodies such as steering groups, the role of the NSS and HEI ICI steering groups is only an advisory one without real decision-making power. In their task of quality assurance, the steering group members must rely on the information provided by CIMO, which is not sufficient for effective quality assurance. While in HEI-ICI the steering group members have access to the full project proposals, in NSS they are only presented with a list of projects to be approved for funding with a very short justification. In terms of monitoring programme implementation through the summary progress reports, the information provided is not sufficient. Another limitation to the role and functioning of the steering groups is the practice of CIMO and MFA to agree on potentially contentious issues before the meetings. While this practice allows smooth implementation of the programmes, it also reduces the role of the steering groups in guiding and overseeing the programmes.

5.7 Implementation lessons

The field visits revealed the importance of the context in which NSS and HEI ICI projects operate and its impact on their effectiveness and results. When key enabling conditions were not met, either at the system level or at the institutional level, capacity development could not take place in an effective manner. At the system level, for instance, strict control of the national curriculum and examinations by the Ministry of Education may undermine efforts at curriculum modernisation in individual higher education institutions, as happened in Vietnam. Similarly, projects to upgrade the quality of teacher training colleges may be hampered by the existence of a national university entrance examination with a traditional bias in favour of high prestige careers such as medicine or engineering. This would make it challenging to attract top scorers into pedagogical studies. Finally, in some cases, partner countries have a different academic calendar from the Finnish one, which complicates the programming, feasibility and timing of academic exchanges.

At the institutional level, the effectiveness of NSS and HEI ICI projects has been linked closely to the degree of alignment with the overall strategic plan of the higher education institution involved. The projects have worked best when the planned activities were consistent with on-going institutional efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. But in several cases, lack of institutional support weakened the impact of the projects supported by Finnish aid beyond the departments directly concerned.

Some projects were also challenged by the lack of enabling conditions at the institutional level. For example, the success of projects aimed at developing the capacity of academics to use e-learning depended on the availability of broadband — adequate technical capacity and reasonable price — and the possibility of accessing the Internet without government censorship. In some partner public HEIs, lengthy and complicated internal procedures for the approval of a new curriculum undermined efforts to modernise existing curricula or establish new programmes.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Finland cannot afford to spread its limited resources for development cooperation too thinly. The evaluation team recommends increasing the effectiveness and impact of Finnish development aid by concentrating cooperation efforts and resources. This can be achieved through a more comprehensive and appropriate instrument than the existing NSS and HEI ICI, and through increased selectivity in the choice of partner countries and institutions.

6.1 General principle

Finland is a small country with limited resources for development cooperation. It cannot afford to spread these limited resources too thin across too many partner countries, HEIs and projects, at the risk of having a very small development impact. Therefore, the guiding principle undergirding the evaluation team's recommendations is to increase the effectiveness and impact of Finnish development aid by concentrating cooperation efforts and resources in a strategic manner, with the purpose of strengthening the capacity development effect of Finnish aid. This can be achieved through a more comprehensive and appropriate instrument than the existing NSS and HEI ICI, and through increased selectivity in the choice of partner countries and higher education institutions (Recommendation 1; Recommendation 2).

6.2 Intervention modalities

Finnish HEIs perceive the NSS and HEI ICI programmes as the main expressions of the Finnish government's global responsibility. Equally, both programmes are perceived as important internationalisation instruments for the HEIs. Decisions on specific intervention activities depend on which of these views are seen as the primary objective of the two programmes. The MFA needs to have a clear definition of the main objectives of its higher education cooperation programme(s), deciding whether the main purpose is to support the internationalisation of Finnish HEIs or to assist in the capacity development of partner HEIs. In the latter case, the MFA would need

to redesign the cooperation instrument(s) to emphasise the types of intervention that promote capacity building as a matter of priority. This would not prevent Finnish HEIs implementing capacity building projects in partner countries from enhancing their internationalisation experiences and learning at the same time.

The evaluation team proposes two major changes in terms of programme configuration and categories of eligible interventions. First, moving ahead, the MFA should consider merging the NSS and HEI ICI programmes – or preferably designing an enhanced HEI ICI programme – to achieve the synergies that have not been possible with the present configuration and characteristics of each programme. This would eliminate the artificial and unproductive separation of the various types of intervention (academic exchange, student exchange, intensive courses, technical assistance for curriculum modernisation and development, scientific and library equipment) that all contribute to capacity development in a complementary manner. The amount of resources allocated to each project should be significantly larger than the present HEI ICI projects, in order to ensure critical mass in the capacity building activities envisaged. This would allow the Finnish development cooperation projects to play an important catalyst role (Recommendation 1; Recommendation 2, Recommendation 5).

Second, the new programme should allow for comprehensive and long-term institutional capacity building in partner countries, following good practices in the higher education development cooperation programmes of like-minded donors. This would involve, in particular, making joint research a legitimate capacity development activity that can be funded under the programme and including financial support for training academics in partner HEIs who seek to pursue a master's degree or a PhD in the context of their department or faculty's institutional strengthening plan. With respect to the funding of research capacity building for both basic and applied research, the MFA may want to reallocate a reasonable share of the resources that are presently allocated to the Academy of Finland to the future HEI ICI project. Basic, applied and action research would be eligible for financing with the category of research linked to the nature of the project and the purpose of the research activity. Universities interested mainly in fundamental, theoretical and experimental research would be eligible for support in basic research. The Universities of Applied Sciences focusing on the resolution of specific, targeted problems linked to the resolution of local problems would receive funding for applied research. All HEIs would also be eligible to include support for action research in their project proposals, covering activities aimed at solving actual problems or developing guidelines for good practices in the local environment of partner HEIs⁵ (Recommendation 3).

Following the example of countries like Norway or Sweden, the new Finnish higher education programme should include capacity building projects that last at least five years and preferably longer. Designing long-term programmes with several consecu-

⁵ The evaluation team could observe several examples of such relevant projects during the field visits, for example in the case of the NSS project on Ecological Broadcasting illustrated in Box 4.

tive cycles would adequately serve this purpose, provided appropriate monitoring and evaluation instruments are in place to assess progress and the suitability of continuous financing as projects get implemented (Recommendation 3).

6.3 Programme design and preparation

To improve the effectiveness and impact of the enhanced HEI ICI programme, the MFA should introduce a number of changes in programme design and preparation:

- Concentration on a reduced number of priority countries and HEIs;
- Concentration on universities most in need of capacity development;
- Alignment with the Finnish strategic programme in priority countries;
- Integration of project activities into the institutional development plan of partner HEIs;
- Consideration of enabling conditions linked to the tertiary education ecosystem in partner countries;
- Increase in financial resources to achieve objectives and planned results of project interventions; and
- Incorporation of an appropriate evaluation framework in each project.

In the first place, the MFA should define and implement a genuine prioritisation policy in terms of eligible partner countries. The number of partner countries should ideally not be larger than 10. It would be desirable to include, as a matter of priority, the lowest-income countries among Finland's preferred development partners. This would allow Finland to leverage its resources more effectively than it has been able to do in the past. The MFA should define and implement a clear prioritisation strategy. This would mean concentrating support for higher education on a smaller number of countries and on a smaller number of institutions that have substantial capacity building needs. Opportunities for pursuing internationalisation goals would clearly continue for Finnish HEIs engaged in development cooperation activities (Recommendation 2).

Second, based on the findings of the evaluation, it appears that Finnish higher education development cooperation can be more effective if it focuses on younger universities outside the capital city of partner countries, which are more in need of capacity development than long established flagship universities (Box 7). Targeting support to younger HEIs is particularly relevant in the least developed countries, especially considering the rapidly growing demand for expansion of higher education provision in most countries with large young age cohorts in a context of limited public funding. Finnish Embassies, possibly after consultation with the respective Ministries in charge of Higher Education, would assist MFA and CIMO in assessing the suitability of identified partner HEIs (Recommendation 2; Recommendation 12).

Box 7 Focusing on higher education institutions in the periphery

Younger HEIs in rural, less urbanised settings have benefited greatly from capacity development activities in both NSS and HEI ICI programmes. The projects provided opportunities for keeping abreast with changes in content, institutional structures and pedagogy which HEIs possessing poor connectivity ordinarily have difficulty in accessing from outside central urban areas. The impact of ICT interventions stands out, particularly in HEI ICI projects which support facilities and hardware relevant to project aims. Project interventions have improved performance by upgrading curricula and instituting new academic degree programmes, including those at the Master's level; introducing new technology to modernise pedagogy and increase outreach as seen in e-learning and other open learning modalities; and training a critical mass of senior and junior academic staff as well as management personnel to sustain institutional changes.

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Two types of partnership arrangements could be envisaged in that context. One model would be to take a strong HEI in the partner country as lead university to provide the interface between the Finnish HEI and the lower-capacity partner HEIs in the less developed regions of the country. Another model would see the lead institution in Finland interacting directly with the weak, remote HEIs as main partners, and organising for the latter to receive technical assistance from a strong national or regional HEI. The evaluation team saw successful examples of this second approach in Vietnam.

Third, the programme could facilitate significant synergies by making sure that the new HEI ICI projects are fully aligned with the Finnish development strategy in eligible partner countries. A good example in that respect is the Dutch NICHE programme, whose concentration, areas and themes are determined between the governments of partner countries and Dutch embassies. It is only after this first strategic alignment phase at country level that contact is established with appropriate Dutch higher education institutions to identify potential partners and form networks.

Furthermore, the preparation of projects should also include the identification of Finnish development cooperation projects in the partner country in the same sector, with the purpose of creating synergies during implementation. An illustration was given in Box 6 (Chapter 4), where the University of Eldoret's Department of Forestry and Wood Science has achieved good outcomes, working in complementarity with the Finnish-funded development cooperation project Miti Mingi Maisha Bora in Kenya. To capitalise on such synergies as well as to ensure on-going support for priority areas identified by the Ministries in charge of Higher Education, it would be the responsibility of the Finnish Embassies, advised by MFA and CIMO, to establish a mechanism for sharing information on development projects with national Ministries of Education (Recommendation 10).

Fourth, as part of project design and preparation, the Finnish and potential partner HEIs should work together to analyse the degree of alignment between the proposed project and the institutional development plan of the partner HEIs. It would also be always important to secure full support from the leadership of these partner HEIs and maintain a chain of communication between the project and institutional management. In one of the field visits, the evaluation team had the good fortune to interview an excellent HEI ICI team, which had produced ground breaking, innovative technical outputs, with the potential of adding significant value to the country's health sector as a whole. However institutional management, not understanding or recognising the importance of project activities and outputs, has not facilitated implementation by providing the additional human resources or staff time which would have taken the project outcomes to the next level (Recommendation 9).

Fifth, based on the findings of the evaluation, it is recommended to include, in the project preparation phase, an environmental scan of enabling conditions in the tertiary education ecosystem in partner countries to be carried out by the project preparation team. Issues which could facilitate or impede implementation, as observed by the evaluation team during visits to HEIs, included levels of connectivity available, access to HEI financial resources for topping up project funds if required, institutional policy framework for processing innovations and reforms, and sometimes dysfunctional country policies dealing with reforms in curriculum and assessment. The purpose of an environmental scan would be to identify potential obstacles at the system level, which could prevent the project from achieving its planned results. On that basis, the project design would include policy and technical measures to be undertaken by the partner authorities in order to enable effective project implementation. It would be equally important for such a scan to identify existing structures and practices in HEIs, which lend themselves to integration with new project activities (Recommendation 6).

This recommendation is consistent with recent work on the search for excellence in research universities in developing countries, which underlines the importance of taking into account key forces at play at the system level, as these forces can have a facilitating or constraining effect, depending on the circumstances (Salmi, 2011). The tertiary education ecosystem includes the following key elements: (i) overall political and economic macro environment, (ii) national higher education vision and strategy, (iii) governance and regulatory framework influencing the degree of autonomy of HEIs, (iv) quality assurance framework, (v) financial resources and incentives, (vi) articulation between high schools and tertiary education and among the various types of tertiary education institutions, (vii) economic, social, and cultural characteristics of the geographical location of higher education institutions, which determine their ability to attract scholars and students, and (viii) digital and telecommunications infrastructure.

Sixth, while NSS and HEI ICI are broadly in line with Finnish development policy programmes in higher education, funding for the programmes have been meagre.

Project teams endeavouring to meet, for example, crosscutting objectives such as reduction of inequality have no funds to implement activities focusing on the disadvantaged. Further, encouraging South-South interaction is a key aim of the NSS programme but findings from the field revealed that funding constraints did not make this a realistic project objective. This led the evaluation team to conclude that higher education is not a priority for Finnish development cooperation, despite its acknowledged importance. The team recommends that within the limits of the current budget austerity, the MFA should increase funding to support higher education (Recommendation 1).

Finally, the MFA and CIMO should make sure that all selected projects include an appropriate evaluation framework to monitor implementation progress and assess medium- and long-term results. This would involve several steps, including the articulation of a clear theory of change at the outset, the definition of key performance indicators, the collection of baseline data, regular monitoring of project implementation, and careful preparation of an impact evaluation to measure results after project completion. The impact evaluation should not be designed at the end of the project cycle but rather during project preparation and agreement with all parties involved should be sought at the outset. Training needs to be provided to Finnish HEI teams in designing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation scheme, a skill that should be shared with the respective partner HEIs. Ideally, it would be most instructive for Finnish teams and their partner and associate HEIs to receive such training together so that they can work with the same conceptual framework and develop the required skills at the same time, thus facilitating communication and understanding during project implementation (Recommendation 4).

In addition, the MFA could consider mechanisms that would allow seeking complementarity and synergies with other Finnish development cooperation projects in the same countries when new projects are selected for funding.

6.4 Coordination with the other Nordic donors

While politically challenging, the best way of ensuring that Finnish development aid for higher education capacity building could have a more significant impact would be to seek to organise all Nordic programmes in a coordinated and complementary way in the partner countries that are at the intersection of the development cooperation priorities of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. This would allow to pool existing financial and human resources for greater impact, not only for project funding in support of higher education development, but also for reducing administrative expenses, as the four countries could rely on one lead embassy in any partner country to coordinate and monitor project preparation and implementation. This idea was also suggested in a recent evaluation of Norway's main programmes in support of higher education in developing countries.

Unfortunately the research capacity building programmes in different countries, even neighbouring countries, like the Scandinavian, do not cooperate much with each other. This often represents wasted opportunities for sharing of strategies, experiences, contacts, even hardware, etc. It may be possible and very efficient, for example, to share the costs of a research competent person in countries where more than one donor country are active.

The Scandinavian programmes are in many ways similar, in some respects almost identical, and they often cover the same developing countries. The benefits of coordinating activities and at times pooling resources would often be huge, but this is almost never done. Fortunately, the lack of a general cooperative agreement does not prevent individual projects from cooperating and this is often highly beneficial. However, even such project cooperation would benefit greatly from cooperation at the higher (programme) level (Norad, 2009, Annexes, p. 112.).

Pooling financial and human resources with Scandinavian countries would give well-performing Finnish-aided development projects an opportunity to scale up successful capacity development interventions.⁶ A critical mass of highly skilled human resources would have the potential to bring about change from within partner countries and institutions with good potential for sustaining it over the long term. The evaluation team recommends MFA to set up a working group, which would include representation from CIMO, the Academy of Finland, MOEC and selected HEIs to formulate and take forward the principle of collaboration with Nordic counterparts in higher education development cooperation, including by pooling financial, human and physical resources (Recommendation 11).

To alleviate any concern regarding the visibility of Finnish development aid in such a coordinated approach, the agreed principle of collaboration should reflect country attribution where relevant. To ensure that collaboration principles are adequately implemented, responsibility for higher education development cooperation at the partner country level should be included in the Terms of Reference of identified Finnish Embassy staff, together with the necessary resource allocations.

6.5 Management and administration

The current composition of the Steering Groups is deemed appropriate, but the problem is that their members cannot fulfil their mandate of quality assurance well, due to the lack of adequate information on programme implementation. A wider range of projects should be presented at Steering Committee meetings for reaching funding recommendations. MFA's programme documentation needs to include tar-

⁶ Examples of successful collaboration already exist. For instance, the HEI ICI ENhANCE project is currently engaged in collaborative activities with the Technology Transfer Alliance of Sweden.

gets and indicators against which programme quality can be monitored (Recommendation 14).

Management responsibilities in MFA for NSS and HEI ICI rest largely with one person who has other duties as well. For HEI ICI the responsibility is shared somewhat with contact persons in MFA's regional departments, and Finnish Embassies are consulted during project preparation. Programme management overall is not well resourced in MFA. It is unlikely however that it would be better placed in any other Unit in the resource-constrained MFA. The evaluation team's recommendation calls for improving cooperation and information sharing between MFA and Embassies. One of the strategies could be to have the MFA programme manager participating in annual review of projects in coordinating meetings convened by the Embassies, a recommendation made by the team under the section on Implementation in this chapter (Recommendation 7).

MFA programme documentation provides robust project evaluation processes for screening and reviewing of project proposals. The selection process and criteria, however, do not ensure transparency, with Finnish HEIs gaining insufficient feedback from CIMO on reasons for rejection. To improve programme management transparency, it is recommended that scores of each project are in the public domain either online or using print media (Recommendation 13).

Considering CIMO's performance so far, the evaluation team recommends that CIMO should continue as the management and administrative arm of the new programme, taking care to prepare guidelines thoroughly prior to launching a new programme. The guidelines should define in detail CIMO's administrative responsibilities so that reference to MFA is minimised thus reducing time to respond to queries from HEIs and increasing efficiency (Recommendation 8).

6.6 Implementation

In Finland, members of the Steering Group of the enhanced HEI ICI programme should be invited to observe coordinators meetings. This opportunity to hear what the Finnish coordinators discuss and are concerned about would allow them to get to know the projects better and help them in their decision making and guidance role as Steering Group members.

To facilitate effective project implementation and encourage the search for synergies, Finnish embassies in partner countries should play a more proactive coordination and monitoring role. At the very least, they should convene a yearly or bi-yearly meeting of all participating HEIs, to provide a platform for exchange of information, experiences and good practices, and for the identification of possible implementation bottlenecks. These meetings would also offer an opportunity for partner HEIs to become aware of relevant activities in other local institutions and perhaps forge, on that

basis, linkages to take advantage of potential complementarities (Recommendation 10; Recommendation 12).

CIMO representatives could usefully take part in the coordination meetings organised by the local Finnish embassies, and even conduct field visits of on-going projects while being in partner countries, to get a better sense of actual implementation progress and potential issues. Open discussions on site could provide useful feedback for not only reaching possible solutions to implementation problems but also provide important considerations for the next round of funding. Face-to-face encounters in field visits would help CIMO programme officers detect problematic issues, which do not surface or are not highlighted in written progress reports (Recommendation 10). Guidelines and instructions for monitoring project implementation as well as end-of-project evaluation are not as rigorous as those for screening and reviewing project proposals. MFA and CIMO should work together to strengthen them.

At the programme level, NSS and HEI ICI projects have operated without any one entity being clearly responsible for monitoring implementation progress and taking suitable corrective steps. To remedy this shortcoming, the evaluation team recommends the definition of appropriate supervision and monitoring mechanisms to identify implementation issues as they arise and provide a channel for addressing them early enough during the life of the project. The starting point might be updating of the existing database, to create within CIMO an evidence-based monitoring scheme which tracks programme and project level implementation progress, assessing medium and long-term results. To keep the process objective, it might be preferable to rely on independent monitoring teams working on behalf of the MFA and the Finnish embassies in partner countries. At the very least, the MFA and / or CIMO should establish a system of online reports and dedicated discussion platforms to allow issues to be raised and corrective measures to be taken. The MFA would need to earmark human and financial resources to facilitate these tasks to be carried out either by CIMO or a third party (Recommendation 4).

At the institutional level, the partner project management team needs to set up a group who is tasked with implementing monitoring and evaluation activities including monitoring at periodic intervals and maintaining reports for the use of their own HEI management and administration, as well as their Finnish counterparts. During visits to HEIs, the evaluation team received copies of reports written by Finnish counterpart HEIs and very few had been developed and written by recipient HEIs. The evaluation team recommends that, consistent with the results-based approach to management, the monitoring and evaluation scheme includes instructions to the partner HEI management team for collecting implementation data such as agreed key project indicators periodically, analysing these and reporting on them at regular intervals. Lead and partner HEIs could then have focused discussions on issues and possible solutions. These tasks will assist lead and partner HEIs in better understanding implementation issues and seeking timely management and administrative support in resolving them (Recommendation 15).

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THE EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team comprised four members:

- *Team Leader.* Dr. Jamil Salmi has nearly 30 years of experience in development policy and cooperation, over 20 years of it specifically related to the reform of higher education systems and institutions in developing countries. Dr. Salmi's extensive, internationally comparative analytical and policy work has focused on higher education reform and capacity development, including issues of internationalisation, mobility programs, networks and partnerships. He is the author of a large number of publications on higher education and development, including the World Bank's first ever higher education policy paper in 1994 and the Bank's 2002 strategy on the role of higher education in knowledge societies. Dr. Salmi has extensive field-work experience in developing countries, having worked in more than 80 countries all over the world.
- *Senior Evaluator.* Mr. Juho Uusihakala has over 15 years of experience in Finnish development policy, co-operation and practices covering a wide range of issues, including education. Acquired through his work at the Finnish National Board of Education, he has a good knowledge of Finnish education system, including inception of higher education mobility programmes. Mr. Uusihakala has extensive experience in evaluating – especially Finnish – development co-operation programmes and has participated in many large evaluations, reviews and appraisals. While he has a total of six years of senior-level field working experience from Nepal and Tanzania, he has also worked in Kenya and South Africa as part of his shorter-term assignments.
- *Senior Evaluator.* Dr. Hena Mukherjee has worked for over 25 years on development policy and co-operation, particularly regarding education and including higher education. She has significant analytical and practical experience in capacity development of higher education institutions as well as on higher education mobility programmes and partnerships, including their evaluation. Overall, her extensive evaluation experience includes numerous larger evaluations and reviews, many of them precisely on higher education. She is experienced in integrating crosscutting objectives in development work and – for example, during her time at the World Bank – working in partnership with several development agencies. In addition to nearly 30 years of field experience in her native Malaysia, Dr. Mukherjee has worked in a large number of developing countries, including Kenya and Vietnam.
- *Junior Evaluator.* Ms. Kiira Kärkkäinen has extensive international experience in education policy including higher education as well as in development policy and co-operation. Her work at the OECD included internationally comparative, quantitative and qualitative analysis and evaluation on education covering a wide range of developing, emerging and industrialised countries. She is, for example, a co-editor of a major OECD report on future of higher education and globalisation, including issues of international mobility and capacity-building in higher education. Ms. Kärkkäinen has also experience in working on development policy, co-operation and partnerships, especially in relation to Africa.

ANNEX 1 – TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EVALUATION

1 Background

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland supports higher education institutions (HEIs) as part of its development cooperation financing. This support is guided by an understanding that higher education institutions have an important role in supporting human development. In addition, higher education institutions are increasingly considered to play an active role in furthering green economy through knowledge society development, innovation processes and human resource development.

This evaluation focuses on the two principle programmes of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland to support higher education institutions: North-South-South Programme (NSS) and Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI). This is the first time that the two programmes are evaluated together in the same evaluation. This is due to the fact that the current programme cycle of both programmes is ending at the end of 2014. This, in turn, provides an opportunity for the Ministry to consider potential options for the future of the two programmes.

Including NSS and HEI ICI programmes in the same evaluation will allow a comprehensive assessment of the results and shortcomings of the Finnish support to higher education institutions. In addition, it will allow an assessment of the two programmes' synergies and complementarities as well as their relevance in the changing development landscape. While the evaluation will assess both programmes separately, it will result in one synthesis report. The main purpose of the report will be to benefit the further development of the two programmes.

2 Context to the evaluation

2.1 Finnish Development Policy Programme

Supporting human development is one of the key elements of the Finnish Development Policy Programme of 2012. The Policy Programme states that education - together with good health and safe working conditions - increases people's possibilities to know their rights and manage their own lives, to gain employment as well as to improve their wellbeing and livelihoods.

In addition to the overall building of human capacities, Finland's Development Policy Programme considers support to the development of higher education, science, technology and innovation systems as central ways to advance knowledge society and inclusive green economy. Higher education also plays an important role in utilising new information technology, supporting a favourable operating environment for ac-

countable businesses and decent jobs, or creating public–private partnerships for development investments.

The Policy Programme notes that partner countries need support for the development of their education systems to provide education for the growing number of young people. Furthermore, raising the quality of technical and vocational education as well as higher education and research is an important development target and can be supported by networking with Finnish know-how and institutions.

The 2012 Development Policy Programme continues the strong emphasis on education stated in the Development Policy Programme of 2004, which encouraged higher education institutions and research institutions to cooperate with their counterparts in partner countries. The Development Policy Programme 2007, in turn, considered education - including higher education - as a corner stone of sustainable development.

2.2 Support to Higher Education Institutions and research

North-South-South programme and the Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument are the current programmes through which the Ministry is supporting higher education institutions. NSS programme supports mainly mobility and networking while HEI ICI focuses on capacity development of the partner country institutions. Programmes are managed by the CIMO, which is an independent agency under the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. While the two programmes are separate, synergies between them and their administration has been built during the recent years. The two programmes are included in the Internationalisation Strategy of Higher Institutions in Finland 2009-2015 as a means of universities' global responsibility.

In addition to these two programmes, the Ministry is providing support to development research from development cooperation financing. Majority of this financing is channelled through the Academy of Finland while some is channelled through development policy research commissioned directly by the Ministry. In addition, the Ministry is supporting international research institutes like Nordic Africa Institute and United Nations University WIDER among others. Development research is also supported as a part of country programmes and regional programmes.

In parallel with the financing to higher education institutions and development research, the Ministry is currently reflecting with other stakeholders on the new ways and financing models to support business and partnerships in and with developing countries, including research and innovation. Task force for this purpose has been established for year 2013.

2.3 Previous evaluations

North-South-South Programme was evaluated in 2006 and 2009. The main thrust of the 2006 evaluation findings was that the programme should continue since it was seen as an important mechanism for the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to conduct closer cooperation with HEIs in partner countries. The evaluation also recommended the programme to be expanded to cover all Finland's long-term partner countries. The 2009 evaluation, in turn, found the programme relevant and a good instrument complementing other collaboration activities. In addition, the instrument was found to serve well partnership building of those higher education institutions that are entering into international cooperation. The recommendations of the two evaluations have been taken into account when developing further the programme document as well as the guidance and procedures of the programme.

HEI ICI Programme has not yet been evaluated. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs conducted a Mid-Term Review of the Programme which was completed in 2012. The objective of the review was to assess the structure and the functioning of the programme. The review made several recommendations, which were taken into account in the programme document (2012-14), including the formulation of results areas and drive for more results-based monitoring.

Finland's support to development research was evaluated in 2009. This was conducted as a desk review of materials and included the key components of Finland's support to development research. One of the key recommendations of the evaluation was to the need for accommodating development research funding and collaboration between Finland and the South by rationalising and restructuring existing arrangements.

3 Scope

The scope of the evaluation includes the two programmes: North-South-South Programme and Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument. The scope covers both programme and project level activities. The temporal scope contains the entire life spans of the two programmes. For the NSS the temporal scope is 2004-2013 and for HEI ICI 2009-2013. Support to the development research is not in the scope of this evaluation. The evaluation includes desk study, interviews in Finland and fieldwork in Vietnam, Kenya and South Africa.

3.1 North-South-South Programme

The North-South-South Programme (NSS) was piloted during 2004-2006 as CIMO North-South Higher Education Network Programme. After the pilot, the North-South-South Programme was launched. The overall objective of the programme is to enhance human capacity to ensure that people in all participating countries may

better contribute to the development of their communities. In order to contribute to that goal the Programme aims to build capacities through interaction and mobility between Finnish and partner country higher education institutions.

The financing of the programme is channelled through networks formed by the HEIs. All the activities take place in these networks. Each network has to have at least two participants: one coordinating HEI in Finland and one in a developing country. There is no upper limit for the number of network members. The activities of projects financed through North-South-South are grouped into three components: component 1 focuses on mobility through teacher and student exchanges, component 2 contains generating and disseminating knowledge through joint teaching in intensive courses and component 3, in turn, focuses on partnership creation, building and management.

While all ODA countries are eligible for funding, cooperation with least developed countries is prioritised. The applicants have to be a Finnish university or university of applied sciences. Networks financed by the NSS Programme include mainly African higher education institutions, although networks have been established across the world. The networks represent different fields of science and during the last years some of the most popular sectors have been natural sciences as well as social work and health care.

The financing volume of the NSS was in 2004-06: 2.5 million EUR; in 2007-09: 4.5 million EUR; and in 2010-12: 6 million EUR. The financing of the current programme cycle (2013-14) is 4.35 million EUR. Ministry for Foreign Affairs decides on its overall financial contribution to the programme and the financing decisions on the networks' applications are done by the managing organisation CIMO after they are discussed in the programme's Advisory Group.

More information on the North-South-South programme is available at:
<http://www.cimo.fi/programmes/north-south-south>

3.2 HEI ICI Instrument

Based on the 2007 development policy the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has financed institutional capacity development between public sector organisations through the Institutional Cooperation Instrument (ICI). However, due to changes in the Finnish legislature in 2009 the Finnish universities were no longer considered as governmental institutions and, thus, not able to participate in the Institutional Cooperation between governmental institutions. Due to the change in the legislation the Ministry for Foreign Affairs initiated Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI) in 2009.

The overall objective of the HEI ICI is to support the development of sustainable institutional capacity in HEISs so that they can contribute actively to the development

of their respective societies. The purpose is to strengthen partner country HEIs as developmentally responsive institutions by enhancing administrative, field-specific, methodological and pedagogical capacity. This purpose is achieved through institutional cooperation.

In 2009 the Ministry supported the preparation phase of the HEI ICI Programme. The first full application round was opened in 2010 after some delays in the start of the programme. Second round of applications took place in 2012. The total financing of the programme in 2009-11 was 4.5 million EUR. The financing of the current cycle (2012-14) is 10.5 million EUR.

Like in NSS, all ODA countries are eligible for HEI ICI funding. However, cooperation with least developed countries is prioritised. The applicants have to be a Finnish university or university of applied sciences. HEI ICI projects have been implemented mainly in African countries, even though projects are implemented across the world. The projects represent different fields of science and fall under the following result areas: i) improved quality and relevance of higher education, ii) enhanced management, leadership and governance capacities, iii) improved information management in teaching and learning, and iv) strengthened role and relevance of the HEIs in development.

The preparation phase of the HEI ICI was administered by the Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UNIPID). The administration of the second phase was outsourced to CIMO. While CIMO is in charge of the administrative management of the programme, the financing decision on each project is done in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

More information on the HEI ICI programme is available at:
http://www.cimo.fi/programmes/hei_ici

4 Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to bring forward issues, lessons learned and recommendations on Finland's support to higher education institutions through North-South-South Programme and Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument. The purpose is to support and benefit the further development of the two Programmes. One of the future options is a possible merger of the two programmes. In addition, the evaluation is expected to learn from and contribute to the wider discussion on Finland's support to higher education institutions in strengthening human development and inclusive green economy through development cooperation.

Evaluation serves as a tool for accountability and its purpose is to inform also the general public, parliamentarians, academia and the wider community of development

professionals on the use and achievements of the development cooperation financed by public funds.

5 Objective of the evaluation

The objective is to provide a comprehensive overall independent view on the achievements, strengths and weaknesses of NSS and HEI ICI Programmes. Evaluation will bring forth lessons learned and give recommendations on how programmes should be developed further to support higher education institutions' active role in development.

The specific objective of the evaluation is to seek answers to the following main evaluation questions:

- What are the key results of the two programmes at the institutional level and what is their impact at the level of partner countries? Can a typology of results and impact be identified?
- How do the two programmes support the development objectives of partner countries and the objectives on the role of higher education institutions stated in the 2012 Finnish Development Policy?
- Are the overall approaches of the two programmes fit for the purpose and relevant? Are the governance and management structures and practices efficient? What are the lessons learned and best practices?
- How do the two programmes complement and benefit Finnish development cooperation at the country level? What are the synergies between the two programmes and with other actors/programmes at the country level? What are the lessons learned and best practices?

6 Issues by evaluation criteria

The following **issues by evaluation criteria** will guide the evaluation. Priority issues for each criterion are indicated below. It is expected that the evaluation team will develop more detailed evaluation questions based on the priorities set below and expand the set of questions where it deems this necessary.

Relevance

- Analyses the extent of which NSS and HEI ICI programmes and projects financed through them are relevant to the development objectives of the partner countries, including the Millennium Development Goals.
- Analyses the extent of which the programme approaches and objectives of NSS and HEI ICI programmes are consistent with and contribute to the objectives of the Finland's Development Policy Programme.
- Assesses the extent of which the projects financed by NSS and HEI ICI programmes are consistent to the objectives of partner country institutions.

Effectiveness

- Identifies achieved results and considers how the two programmes have contributed to the capacity development at the partner country level. Analyses the strengths and limitations of the programmes in light of the achieved results.
- Assesses the overall results orientation of the programmes from planning to implementation and tracking of results.
- Assesses transparency and accountability as part of the effectiveness of the two programmes and financed projects/networks.
- Assesses how crosscutting objectives have been incorporated into the programmes and how these have affected the achieved results and the inclusiveness of the programmes.

Impact

- Refers to the assessment of wider achievements of the two programmes in strengthening higher institutions' role in human development including reduction of inequalities and poverty. Considers also universities' role in inclusive green economy.
- Assesses the perceptions on the impact among the participating universities and other stakeholders.

Sustainability

- Considers ownership among partner institutions to support sustainability, including the integration of the programme activities within partner institutions tasks and functions.
- Assesses two programmes' administrative and funding arrangements in the light of sustainability.

Complementarity

- Assesses complementarity and synergies between the two programmes.
- Assesses the complementarity of the two programmes with other actors/programmes at the country level and assesses potential Finnish value added.
- Considers complementarity of the two programmes to Finnish development cooperation at the country level, particularly from the perspective of potential synergies.

Efficiency

- Assesses the programme management by CIMO including monitoring, reporting and support services.
- Considers how the tasks related to the management of the two programmes are organised within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
- Assesses the governance structures of the two programmes and their functioning.
- Assesses the administration, management capacities and procedures of the participating institutions at the project/network level.

7 General approach and methodology

The evaluation looks at the North-South-South and HEI ICI programmes as a whole. It will collect information from programme and project/network levels when seeking answers to the evaluation questions.

The team is expected to use methods suitable to institutional contexts and take advantage of local sources of information to the maximum extent possible. Evaluation team is expected to propose a detailed methodology in the evaluation matrix which will be presented in the inception report. The methods used will be mixed multiple methods which enable triangulation in the drawing of results. Validation of results must be done through multiple sources. No single statements should be taken as a general outcome.

The evaluation will involve stakeholders in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (including Finnish Embassies), CIMO, higher education institutions as well as other relevant institutions and stakeholder groups in Finland and partner countries. Principles of participatory evaluation are applied.

The field visits will be conducted to Vietnam, Kenya and South Africa covering both NSS and HEI ICI programmes. Particular attention is paid to the adequate length of the field visits to enable sufficient collection of data, including participatory methods. Adequate amount of time should also be allocated for the interviews conducted with the stakeholders in Finland.

Interview groups are to be identified by the evaluation team in advance. Evaluation Unit of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (EVA-11) will inform those concerned in Finland. In the case study countries the evaluation team is introduced to the main governmental and administrative authorities by the Finnish Embassy. The actual logistics and arrangement of interviews is the task of the evaluation team. EVA-11 will provide also team with an introductory letter with the help of which the team can approach different stakeholders for interviews and document retrieval.

During the process particular attention is paid to a strong inter-team coordination and information sharing within the team. The evaluators shall respect the rights and desire of the interviewees and stakeholders to provide information in confidence. Direct quotes from interviewees and stakeholders are not used in the reports.

The evaluation team is expected to raise issues which it deems important to the evaluation but are not mentioned in these terms of reference. Similarly, the team is expected to take up issues included in the terms of reference which it does not deem feasible.

8 Evaluation process, timelines and deliverables

The evaluation consists of the following phases and will produce the respective deliverables. The process will move forward according to the phases described below and new phase is initiated when all the deliverables of the previous phase are approved by EVA-11.

I. Start-up meeting

Deliverable: Start-up note and start-up meeting

The purpose of the start-up meeting is to discuss the entire evaluation process including practical issues related to the access to data, field visits, reporting and administrative matters. The start-up meeting is expected to be organised during the month of November 2013.

In the start-up note the evaluation team presents how it intends to approach the entire evaluation task. The start-up note will also look more in detail to the issues related to the evaluation task as described in these terms of reference. The start-up note is presented four (4) weeks after the signing of the contract.

II. Inception

Deliverable: Inception report

This phase includes the preparation of the inception report and participation in the inception meeting in Helsinki.

Production of the work plan and the evaluation matrix of the main evaluation questions presented in these terms of reference constitute the inception report. Evaluation questions are presented through more specific research questions, respective indicators and judgement criteria. Sources of verification are also indicated.

The methodology will be explained, including the methods and tools of analyses. The inception report will show the fine-tuning of the tasks between the team members, present a list of stakeholder groups to be included into the interviews as well as an outline of the interview questions to be used for the interviews in Finland. The inception report will also suggest an outline of the final reports. The structure of reports will follow the established overall structure of the evaluation reports of the Ministry.

Inception should be kept concise and should not exceed 20-25 pages, annexes included. The inception report will be submitted in January 2014.

III. Desk study

Deliverable: Desk study report

Desk study phase consists of analysis of the written material. Desk study report will provide a concise analysis of the policies, guidelines, and other documents related to the evaluation subject. It will also present a plan for the field visits including the identification of local interviewee groups and sources of information (studies, pub-

lications etc) and an outline of the interview questions according to the interviewee groups in each of the field visit countries.

Draft desk study report will be submitted to EVA-11 prior to the interviews in Finland and is subject to approval by EVA-11 prior to the field visit. The report should be kept concise and clear. It is advisable that the report is developed according to the structure of the final report. The report should be submitted latest five (5) weeks after the inception meeting.

Interviews in Finland will be conducted based on the analysis of the written material. This will enable informed discussions with the interviewees.

IV. Field visits

Deliverable: Back from the field oral report supported by power point.

Field visits are conducted in Vietnam, Kenya and South Africa.

The field visit will allow an in-depth studying of those NSS networks and HEI ICI projects at the country level. The purpose of the field visits is to reflect and validate the results of the desk study phase and assess the situation on the ground in the light of the results of the analysis of the written material. The purpose of the field visit is to make further assessments and fill any gaps in the information. The field visit will contain the collection of local sources of information as a key element of the evaluation.

The preliminary results of field visits will be presented, supported by a power point, to EVA-11 after the return from the field. Results are presented in a form of a webinar. The team is also expected to provide an oral presentation on the preliminary results at the end of the each field visit to the local stakeholders and staff of the respective Finnish Embassy.

After the field visit further interviews and document study in Finland may still be needed to complement the information collected during the desk study phase and the field visits.

Field visits are expected to be conducted in March 2014.

V. Final reporting

Deliverable: Final report (including semi-final draft report, final draft report and final report) and public presentation supported by power point.

The final reporting is presented in one concise evaluation report.

The timetable of the delivery of semi-final draft report, final draft report and final report is as follows:

The semi-final draft report is available four (4) weeks after the end of the field visits. The semi-final draft report will be commented by EVA-11. It is possible that semi-final draft report will be also shared with some key informants.

Final draft report will be available within three (3) weeks after the comments to the semi-final draft report.

Final draft report will be subjected to a round of comments by the parties concerned. It should be noted that the comments are meant only to correct any misunderstandings or factual mistakes instead of rewriting the report. The final draft report is presented in the format of final report with abstracts, summaries, references, abbreviations and annexes included.

Report will be finalised based on the comments received and will be ready within three weeks after receipts of the comments. The final report is expected no later than in June 2014.

A special effort should be made by the evaluation team to produce concise the informative report. Detailed instructions on writing the report are given in 8.1. Presentation of the findings of the evaluation will be held in Helsinki no later than June 2014.

In addition to the presentations in Finland, a presentation of the findings of the evaluation will be organised through a webinar. Special attention is going to be made to include representatives from the partner countries in the webinar.

8.1 Writing of the reports

The evaluation team will ensure that the evaluation report is concise and informative and can be easily understood also by those who are not specialists in development cooperation.

Final report must follow the Instructions to Evaluation Report Authors which will be provided to the evaluation team in the beginning of the assignment. The team should agree on common formats (type of bullet points, format of tables etc) and to ensure that all team members are following the overall instructions to the authors. The final report shall be subjected to a language check and a thorough check of details before reports are submitted to EVA-11. The editorial and linguistic quality of the final report must be ready-to-print. The Ministry will be responsible for the translation of the abstract and the summary into Finnish and Swedish.

In addition to the assessments of the quality assurance experts, evaluation report will be subjected to a peer review of international experts. The views of the peer reviewers shall be available on the basis of anonymity to the evaluation team.

In overall, the evaluation teams should observe in its work the OECD/DAC and EU aid evaluation quality standards of the evaluation process and reports. A matrix combining the OECD/DAC and EU quality standards for evaluations is made available to the team in the beginning of the assignment.

Should it happen that the final evaluation report does not comply with the requirements spelled herein, the instructions to authors and the quality standards of the OECD/DAC and EU, there will be penalties to the service provide as specified in the contract.

Finally, each deliverable is subjected to EVA-11's approval. The evaluation team is able to move to the next phase only after receiving a written statement of acceptance by EVA-11.

9 Expertise required

In overall, successful conduct of the evaluation requires a deep understanding of development policies and cooperation and the role of higher education institutions in development and development cooperation. The task requires working experience on development cooperation programmes supporting higher education institutions, particularly related to mobility and capacity development of higher education institutions in developing countries. It is also necessary that the evaluation team has knowledge on the Finnish higher education institution system. Finally, the successful conduct of the evaluation requires experience on large evaluations, including evaluations on higher education institutions and their support programmes.

The evaluation team will include a mix of senior male and female experts. The team also includes experts from both developed and developing countries. Central role of the experts from developing countries in the team is encouraged.

All experts shall have a minimum of M.Sc./M.A. university education and be fluent in English (level C2). One of the senior experts shall be a native speaker of Finnish language. She/he will be in charge of the analysis of the material available only in Finnish language. Knowledge of local administrative languages of the case study countries among the experts will be an asset.

One of the senior experts of the team will be identified as the Team Leader. The evaluation team will work under the leadership of the Team Leader who carries the final responsibility of the deliverables as well as of completing the evaluation.

Detailed team requirements are included in the Invitation to Tender to which this TOR is annexed.

9.1 Document retrieval and other assistance to the evaluation team

It is necessary that the evaluation team consists of one junior expert native speaker of Finnish language to support the team in document retrieval as well as in logistical arrangements.

Part of the documentation is made available to the team through the database and archives of CIMO. Some documentation is also collected and made available to the team by the Ministry. However, document retrieval is still needed and should be initiated in the beginning of the evaluation process. Document retrieval should be done by the junior member of the team under a supervision of a senior team member. EVA-11 will provide support in the document retrieval to the extent possible. However, it is the responsibility of the evaluation team to ensure that all documentation necessary to a successful conduct of the evaluation has been collected.

In addition to the document retrieval, the junior expert will serve in the document retrieval, practical organisation, logistics, and similar tasks in Finland. In addition to the senior evaluation expert of native speaker of Finnish language, the junior expert may be required to review and summarise some documentation that exists only in Finnish language. His/her residential location should enable him/her to be available on a short notice.

There is no opportunity to claim per diems, rental or residential expenses, or other travel than local public transport fees to the junior expert from the evaluation budget.

9.2 Quality assurance

Two quality assurance experts will be required. These two experts need to be highly experienced, their expertise and experience corresponding the level and qualifications of team leader position. The quality assurance experts are familiar with the international frameworks of the OECD/DAC and the EU regarding the aid evaluation quality standards and of the evaluation reports.

The quality assurance experts will review all the deliverables and offer advice at each juncture of the evaluation process that includes submission of a deliverables. The reports of the quality assurance experts will also be submitted to EVA-11. At the end of the evaluation process the quality assurance experts will fill in the EU's quality grid for evaluation reports.

10 Budget

The total budget of the evaluation is 300 000 EUR (VAT excluded).

11 Mandate

The evaluation team is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this evaluation with pertinent persons and organisations. However, it is not authorised to make any commitments on behalf of the Government of Finland. The evaluation team does not represent the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in any capacity.

The evaluation team has no immaterial rights to any of the material collected in the course of the evaluation or to any draft or final reports produced as a result of this assignment.

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Development evaluation

P.O. Box 451
00023 GOVERNMENT

Operator: (+358) 295 350 000

<http://formin.finland.fi>

Email: eva-11@formin.fi



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND