



NOVA UNIVERSITY NETWORK

STRATEGY

2018–2021

This Strategy is intended to be an electronic document. Therefore, under "main activities", "implementation" and "administrational framework", the text in bold is part of the Strategy. The text in bullet points are details that will be visible only in the electronic Strategy when one clicks the main activity that is in bold print.

Background

The NOVA University Network (NOVA UN) was established in 1995. It is a platform for cooperation on teaching and research between Nordic Universities within Forestry, Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences. Current NOVA UN members: Aarhus University: Science and Technology; the University of Helsinki: Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry and Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, the University of Eastern Finland: School of Forest Sciences; the Agricultural University of Iceland; the Norwegian University of Life Sciences; and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

The NOVA UN member institutions contribute to developments in the sustainable use of natural resources, food production, health and welfare protection of human beings and animals, and towards enhancing the capacity for the use of land, water, plants and animals in accordance with sustainable principles. The main task of NOVA UN is to initiate, administer and promote cooperation between the member institutes on postgraduate education.

Mission

The mission of NOVA UN is to engage in Nordic cooperation in higher education to advance our understanding of sustainable use and management of natural resources in a Nordic and global context. NOVA UN promotes the sharing and implementation of good practices in the Nordic countries. NOVA UN provides a platform for networking between Nordic postgraduate students and senior researchers. NOVA UN facilitates high-quality education for postgraduate students and other scientists, in fields where the critical mass in one country alone would be too small to offer courses, or in fields with a specific Nordic dimension, defined by, for example, geographical, climatic or cultural commonalities. NOVA UN can set thematic priorities that are announced in connection with the call for applications.

Vision

The vision of NOVA UN is to maintain and utilise the already extensive and well-functioning Nordic cooperation with a view to becoming more competitive in the international arena in the areas addressed by NOVA UN.

Values

As a platform for cooperation between Nordic Universities within Forestry, Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences, NOVA UN operates on the basis of the core value of nurturing and strengthening the Nordic dimension. Activities facilitated within NOVA UN are research based and based on joint Nordic collaboration. There is a clear added value of organising activities within NOVA UN. NOVA UN strongly encourages that NOVA activities are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Main activities

Courses for PhD students: NOVA UN concentrates on PhD education by facilitating specialised, international and interdisciplinary courses/activities of high quality. Competence-enhancing courses for PhD students and other scientists are also supported. NOVA UN will increase the number of these courses, as well as the number of NOVA students attending the courses compared to the previous strategy period.

- The majority of the activity budget¹ is allocated to fund PhD courses and competence-enhancing courses. PhD courses have first priority.

¹ Activity budget= PhD courses, master's courses, other projects including planning of courses, NOVA guarantee, NOVA Student Board, strategy seminar.

- NOVA UN prioritises course series to assure more predictability for students and teachers. Digitalisation will facilitate course series. Repetition of courses will enhance the quality of courses.
- NOVA UN has increased focus on fostering networks for the creation of new and existing PhD courses.
- NOVA UN aims to take further advantage of developments within digitalisation of education to enhance the quality of the education offered and to increase the number of NOVA courses and NOVA students attending the courses.
- NOVA UN will expand the funding scheme to include competence-enhancing courses for PhD students and other NOVA scientists in subjects that are not sufficiently covered within the Network and that focus on the latest developments within the field, or that facilitate methodology transfer from one subject to another. This also includes digitalisation of courses/education. This will bring new competence into the Network and ensure that the scientific staff at the NOVA institutions are in the academic forefront.
- Veterinary students enrolled in residency programmes in the international and national specialisation programmes are treated on a par with veterinary PhD students, and specialisation courses are treated on a par with PhD courses.

Master's education and other projects: NOVA UN supports master's level education and other projects in specific areas where Nordic cooperation can add particular value.

- A smaller portion of the total activity budget is allocated to master's level courses and other projects.
- NOVA UN aims to take further advantage of the development within digitalisation of education.
- Other projects include the planning of courses, support for writing applications to other funding bodies and other pedagogical projects.

Mobility: NOVA UN works to increase student and teacher mobility between the member institutions to enhance the quality of the education offered and to include more students and teachers in the Nordic/Nordic-Baltic research community.

- NOVA UN continues to support internationalisation and student mobility at all levels.
- The NOVA-BOVA Nordplus Network continues to facilitate mobility for bachelor's and master's level students, or the equivalent, and for teaching staff, which is mainly organised through the Nordplus and Erasmus+ programmes. NOVA UN continues to support mobility among bachelor's and master's level students, or the equivalent, and teaching staff when Nordplus or Erasmus+ funding is not sufficient.

Networking: NOVA UN continues as a platform for networking for students, teachers and researchers, and thus ensures Nordic competitiveness in research and education within and outside the Network. In addition, NOVA UN continues to cooperate with other international groups and experts to ensure high-quality education and extended networking possibilities.

- NOVA UN continues to facilitate networking by financing courses and awarding planning grants for the creation of courses.
- Bringing together students, teachers and scientists in NOVA courses helps to strengthen the quality of the education offered in NOVA UN and at the member institutions. The interaction when planning and participating in NOVA courses creates opportunities for developing scientific cooperation within and outside NOVA UN. This ensures Nordic competitiveness, for instance in relation to EU grant schemes.
- With a view to enhancing the utilisation of NOVA UN as a vehicle for increased research activity and cooperation, at both the Nordic and the global level, the organisation of researcher meetings, workshops or seminars in connection with courses is encouraged. Course organisers can invite

international experts to teach courses and facilitate NOVA courses in cooperation with other international groups.

- NOVA UN and the BOVA University Network have been cooperating closely for more than 20 years to develop research education around the Baltic Sea. NOVA UN continues to give priority to collaboration with the BOVA University Network. Making financial savings by organising courses in the Baltic countries will be encouraged in future, as well.

Implementation

Quality assurance: NOVA UN works actively to sustain and increase the quality of its activities.

- High quality is achieved by bringing together area-specific experts who collaborate on developing courses and other activities.
- The member institution organising a NOVA course must guarantee a quality assurance process.
- NOVA UN collects feedback from participants and organisers of courses and other activities and uses this to further develop the Network.
- A strategy seminar is held once a year. Participants are the board members, local coordinators, the Nordplus coordinator and the NOVA Student Board. Other experts and participants can be invited depending on the topic for the seminar.

The purpose of the seminar is to examine how well the goals have been attained, to prepare an activity plan for two years at a time when relevant, as well as to ensure that all the NOVA functions are focused to achieve the mission, vision and the goals defined in the strategy.

Efficient organisation: NOVA UN continues to enhance efficiency in the Network.

- While assuring the quality of the activities in NOVA UN, the Network continues to work towards a more efficient organisation where all the partners participate actively.
- NOVA UN continues to apply the simplified application procedure adopted in the last strategy period, where the home institution plays the major role in quality assurance. Moreover, the Network continues to simplify the rules, the application and the reporting of NOVA courses and other projects to reduce administration for everyone involved.

Strengthened awareness: The NOVA Board members assure that NOVA UN is well anchored in their respective institutions and is promoted as an added value for the institution. In cooperation with the Secretariat, they also assure that NOVA activities are well profiled both in their own institution and externally to increase the activity level in the Network.

- The board members continue to enhance the anchoring of NOVA UN in the member institutions to assure that the benefits of NOVA UN, funding schemes and courses are well known among academic staff and students.
- All actors in the Network are responsible for marketing the Network, the NOVA Open Call and NOVA courses to increase the number of course applications, approved courses and NOVA students attending the courses.
- In particular, it is important to ensure that approved courses attract enough students to warrant offering the courses.

Administrative framework

Organisation: NOVA UN's organisational structure is stated in the Network's Statutes.

Funding: NOVA UN's activities are funded by fees collected from member institutions and by financial support from cooperating Nordic organisations.

- Any current and potential future surplus in NOVA UN's budget will be allocated, on the basis of careful planning, to partly finance the activities during this strategy period (2018–2021).
- NOVA UN will continue searching for new external funding.