

**EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS
FUND FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS**

INITIATIVE PROPOSAL

Title of the initiative: Development of higher education in cultural management in cooperation between Estonia and Norway	
Implementing entity (beneficiary state entity): University of Tartu, Viljandi Culture Academy 74001073	
Partner(s) (minimum one donor state entity): University of South-Eastern Norway	
Bilateral priority area identified by the JCBF beyond the programmes: € promotion of core European values, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equalized rule of law and the respect for human rights for all people, regardless of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity;	
Allocation (total sum): 66 500 EUR <i>(A more detailed project budget description in the activity plan)</i>	

Short description of the initiative:

(background, aim, participants, activity plan, budget outline, communication and dissemination)

Background

In the course of normal academic contacts, and in particular during a period of teaching at the University of Tartu (UT) by a professor from the University of South-Eastern Norway, it has become clear that the Cultural Studies programmes at both institutions face similar challenges and have many common areas of academic interest.

In particular we wish to develop contacts in the following three areas:

1. Both Viljandi Culture Academy (VCA) and Institutt for kultur, religion, idrett og samfunnsfag (IKRS) at USN in Bø have similar challenges in recruitment of students to BA programmes in Cultural Management. Both have a shared need for increased reflection about their mission, their challenges,

and their opportunities in an environment of diminishing funding and a rapidly changing cultural sector. These aspects are directly linked to the ongoing change of culture management concept that is shifting from entertainment models to value creating focus, often in synergy with design thinking approach that aims to know and prioritise the needs and essence of visitors.

2. Both institutions have courses with students who will benefit from exposure to the other's programme and environment. In the case of Bø the course is at MA-level, in Viljandi at BA-level. Since the time available to plan and realise the activities envisioned under this exchange are limited, we propose a visit in each direction by students of each institution, of which more below. The utility of such visit was discussed at a preparatory meeting in Tartu on 8 May 2024, and it was agreed by both sides that they were urgently necessary.
3. There is clearly scope for longer term co-operation between the two institutions beyond the contacts that already exist in the field of popular and traditional culture. Whilst research co-operation is by its nature longer term, it is vital that we initiate a broad discussion amongst interested members of staff at both institutions, and a research-symposium in Spring 2025 before the project deadline of 30 April forms the third element in our proposal.

Aim:

The aim of the planned exchange is to strengthen the curricula in cultural studies and culture management in both institutions, to broaden knowledge of cultural management systems in the other country, and to establish durable partnerships that can be built on in the future both in terms of future student exchanges, joint symposia, and research collaboration. The planned visits by students in each direction are a vital first step towards building an broadening partnerships. Given that the students in both Bø and Viljandi will after graduation be dispersed in the cultural sector in Norway, Estonia, and possibly elsewhere, we can reasonably expect a wide diffusion across the cultural sector of the knowledge gained on the exchange.

The aim of the visits proposed is both to give students on the MA programme in Cultural Studies and on the Culture Management curriculum in Viljandi an opportunity both to visit each others' institutions and other relevant institutions in Estonia and Norway that will both produce and strengthen contacts between Estonia and Norway. In both cases we intend to visit external partners, and thereby to add value to this exchange and to the broader societies hosting it. It is also an aim to ensure maximum relevance to the study-programmes in question, so that the external institutions visited are directly useful to academic work pursued in the following university term. In the case of the students from USN, they will be following a compulsory introductory course in History and Theories of Cultural Studies in the Autumn term, and will have an option in Gender and Culture in an International Perspective and Cultural Heritage Management in the Spring term. This is reflected in the choice of institutions that we propose to visit. In the case of the students from Viljandi, they will particularly be directed towards both local and regional heritage institutions such as the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in Rjukan/Notodden, and national institutions in Oslo such as the Norwegian Cultural Council, The Norwegian Language Council, the Office of Contemporary Art Norway, Music Norway, Norwegian Crafts, the Norwegian Film Institute, the Norwegian Centre for Dance and Theatre, DOGA, and NORLA.

Participants:

The implementing entity is **Viljandi Culture Academy**, one of the four colleges of the University of Tartu. The raison d'être of the Academy is to sustain and develop the values of Estonian traditional culture. At the same time, the Academy is open to new impulses of modern society and intercultural communication, and through that continuous interaction the ancient traditions gain new meaning and value. In undergraduate applied higher education programmes, it is possible to study in such fields as performing arts (theatre, dance, theatre technical arts), Estonian native crafts (textile, metal, construction, regenerative craft), music (jazz, traditional, pedagogy, sound engineering), culture management and community education. The academy also currently offers four master's programmes. As a promoter of creative entrepreneurship, the Academy enables its students to start implementing creative projects already during their studies. Numerous concerts, exhibitions, dance performances, fashion shows, cultural events and festivals emerge from interdisciplinary cooperation. Additionally, the Academy's students contribute to the organisation of several cultural events in the city, such as the Hanseatic Days, the Viljandi Folk Music Festival and the Guitar Festival to name a few.

The Norwegian partner institution is Institutt for kultur, religion, idrett og samfunnsfag at USN. USN was formed five years ago after the merger of Høgskolen i Telemark and Høgskolen Vestfold Buskerud, and has eight campi spread across the south-east of Norway. The two campi in Telemark are particularly relevant to this exchange. Bø has the BA and MA programmes already mentioned, whilst Rauland has programmes in popular and traditional culture already familiar to colleagues from Viljandi. In addition Notodden has a plastic arts programme which has had contact with Viljandi. It is anticipated that the exchange proposed will strengthen and deepen ties between Viljandi and UT, and the various relevant campi of USN.

In addition to the project partners, we wish to create and strengthen links with a number of external institutions. In the Estonian case these are the Department of Languages at the University of Tartu, the South Estonian cultural environment in Setumaa, and the Swedish-Estonian cultural centre Aiboland in Haapsalu, as

well as the Estonian organisation for gender, sexual and reproductive rights Eesti LGBT. From the viewpoint of the cultural management curriculum, it is certainly interesting to meet these organisations and see how the cultural content is supported and mediated in the main fields of music, performing arts, crafts, festival formats, and visual arts. The project involves cooperation with various Estonian cultural institutions, including the partners from Viljandimaa region, for example Estonian Traditional Music Centre, Estonian Folk Culture Centre, Estonian National Museum and also other partners from Estonian culture sector (also based on the mutual interests and development ideas).

In the Norwegian case as well as the institutions already mentioned under aims, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in Rjukan/Notodden and the Rauland campus of USN will be important ports of call.

The core team of the project:

Jorma Sarv (born 1981) is the head of programme of Culture Management curriculum at the Viljandi Culture Academy (University of Tartu). As a strategic planning expert, he has been responsible for reforming the curriculum to include modern ways of analysing tasks and aims of culture management. As a result of additional courses and methodological solutions, the curriculum is today the combination of project management and process design competences that has specific approach to creativity and culture. His current research interests include the role of culture and arts in the society, co-creation, audience building and creative environments. His role in the project is to coordinate the contributions by Viljandi Culture Academy in terms of cooperation and development in the field of culture management.

Ave Matsin (born 1973) is the head of the program of Estonian Native Crafts and a lecturer in heritage textiles at Viljandi Culture Academy. Her main expertise lies in the field of heritage crafts and cultural heritage. In addition to her studies at the Estonian Academy of Arts (1995-2002), she also studied at Heimly Folk High School in Norway (1991-1992). Since 2001, she has been associated with the University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy. Her primary research interests encompass heritage and its connections to sustainability and creative entrepreneurship. Beyond her academic work, she is engaged in several societal activities. Since 2020, she has coordinated activities related to UNESCO's Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art in Viljandi. She is also an active member of various organizations, including the Estonian Folk Art and Craft Union (as member of board), the Estonian Intangible Heritage Council, and the Estonian Folklore Council. Due to her previous studies in Norway, she possesses very good Norwegian language skills and has experience with different Norwegian cooperation projects, facilitating cultural exchange between the two countries. In this project, she deals with themes arising at the intersection of heritage and culture management.

Stephen J. Walton (born 1958) is Professor of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies at IKRS/USN in Bø, where he has worked since 2015. Previously he was Professor of New Norwegian Written Culture at Volda University College from 1997 to 2017, and has held other professorial appointments in Norway and England. Whilst in Volda Walton organised a Nordplus-Nabo network in Written Culture with participants from Norway, Finland, the Faroe Islands, and the three Baltic countries. He teaches courses in History and Theory in Cultural Studies, Gender and Culture in an International Perspective, and Migration and Culture at MA level in Bø. For 37 years he taught foreign students at the International Summer School at the University of Oslo. His current research interests lie in the anthropology and history of sexuality and gender, and his most recent publication is a 414-page book about the sexual and gender system in the Istmo de Tehuantepec in Mexico, where he has conducted field-work over a period of ten years.

Øyvind Rangøy (born 1979) is the founder and managing director of RIK. Being both a Norwegian and Estonian poet and author, he graduated from Tartu University with a BA of Estonian and Finno-Ugric Linguistics in 2007 and Volda University College with a MA of New-Norwegian Written Culture in 2012. Since 2007, he is a Norwegian state authorised translator from Estonian into Norwegian, with 20 years of experience in translation and editing. As a member of both the Estonian and Norwegian writers' unions, he has been a long-time facilitator of bilateral cooperation. In addition to teaching Norwegian language and literature at the University of Tartu, he also is a member of the board of EKL and the International Committee of DnF. In the project, he will host and coordinate the activities in Norway, and also organise and participate in the transcription, translation and editing of texts.

In addition to the core team, the project will receive input from advisory partners and use external colleagues to assist in the practical arrangements for the visits. A number of colleagues will be involved in the symposium planned for April.

Communication and dissemination The principal goals for dissemination of this project will be the broader

academic community in the two institutions principally involved. We also envision holding at least one internal seminar in each of the two principal participating institutions to which a wider group of students will be invited. The aim of these lectures will be to disseminate information about the system of cultural management in each country, and to highlight shared challenges and opportunities. In this way a larger group of students will benefit from the exchange.

It is also intended to publish the generally socially useful results of the project in the regional and national press; Walton also works as a journalist on the daily newspaper Klassekampen.

The activities of the project will also be reflected in the relevant social and digital media channels to present the core messages and first results of the common initiatives.

Activity plan and budget outline

	Activity	Time	Location	Cost	Participants
1	Visit by 8 students Walton, one other colleague from USN	Week 40 2024	Estonia	25000	Project core crew, student participants, external participants
2	Visit by 6-8 students and Matsin, Sarv	Week 14	Norway	30000	Project crew, student participants, external participants
3	Symposium to evaluate project, identify research-possibilities	Week 17	Estonia	7000	Project crew, 4 other colleagues
4	General administration	April 2024–April 2025	Norway and Estonia	4500	Project core crew, local administration

Planned results

1. Increased consciousness on both sides of the possibilities and challenges involved in Cultural Management education at BA level, including higher awareness about the cooperation and various career profiles (supported by 1-2 case-study exercises that focus the international tasks and career of culture managers)
2. Increased awareness amongst both MA students and colleagues of the cultural situation and the cultural possibilities in Estonia and Norway, and increased understanding of the challenges both countries face in their current and past geopolitical situation
3. Concrete proposals for co-operation over syllabus, teaching, and research collaboration at BA and MA levels

OUTPUT	INDICATOR	TARGET
Student visits to Estonia	Number of students involved	8
	Number of Nw colleagues involved	2
Student visits to Norway	Number of students involved	6-8
	Number of Ee colleagues involved	2
Visits to partner institutions in Estonia and Norway	Number of partners	Ca 10
	Estonia	Ca 5
	Norway	C
Symposium for colleagues to discuss research- and other future collaboration	Number of participants	6
	From Estonia	3
	From Norway	3
Physical publications (articles in press)	Number of publications	2

Planned results¹

¹ Please refer to the [Results Guideline](#)