AGREEMENT

between

THE ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

and

THE NORWEGIAN CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

and

THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF NORWAY

concerning

COOPERATION WITH RUSSIA IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

2007-2010

OBJECTIVES OF THE AGREEMENT

1.
The overall objective of this agreement is to enhance the cooperation between Norwegian and Russian institutions in the fields of higher education and research in areas that have academic and thematic relevance to the High North. The priorities of the cooperation programme are to a large extent based on the Norwegian Government's High North Strategy. The Government's intention is that Norway shall occupy a leading position internationally with respect to the development of knowledge on, in and to the benefit of the High North.

The specific objectives of the agreement are to finance cooperation in the fields of higher education and research between universities, university colleges and research institutions in Russia and corresponding institutions in Norway. The cooperation programme is intended to provide for mutually beneficial interaction between the fields of higher education and research, and establish lasting partnerships/cooperation between the two countries. The cooperation on education and research is also intended to have effects extending beyond the academic institutions involved, to include participation by businesses, the public authorities and organisations.

Priority will be given to cooperation with Northwest-Russia, but the programme is not limited to this geographical area.

The programme gives priority to cooperation on themes that are linked to the Government's High North Strategy, in the following main areas:

a) Petroleum and energy, with an emphasis on the promotion of health, safety and environment (HSE) in exploration, production and transportation in offshore petroleum operations.
b) Sustainable management and commercial utilisation of the maritime resources in the Barents Sea and protection of the marine environment in the Arctic Ocean, including mapping and monitoring of the marine environment.
c) Development of a broad business sector, including ICT, tourism, the marine sector and environmental technology.
d) Subjects in the humanities and social sciences that are concerned with enhancing knowledge of socio-economic and political conditions and living conditions specific to the High North, including public health. A gender perspective and the strengthening of civil society will be important in this context.
e) Measures for enhancing cooperation and contact between Norway and Russia, for example language teaching.

Issues related to the indigenous population constitute an important dimension of the cooperation programme.

Both Norway and Russia participate in the Bologna process for creating a European Higher Education Area. The goals of the Bologna process will form the main framework for the cooperation on higher education under this programme. Cooperation on education at the MA and PhD levels will be given priority, but relevant projects at a lower level will also be considered.

2.
Cooperation projects funded under this agreement will be based on the principle of equality between the two parties.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES

3.
The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council have overall responsibility for the implementation of the agreement and shall ensure the distribution of assignments and the implementation of the measures set out in the agreement through agreements with Norwegian institutions.

4.
The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council shall ensure that the programme is coordinated with other research and educational programmes under their auspices that involve Russia or the High North. The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council shall delegate responsibility for selecting projects and coordinating the programme to a programme committee, cf. section 9.

5.
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall keep the Programme Committee informed of activities that may affect the programme. The Ministry shall also keep the Programme Committee informed of other cooperation activities that may affect education and research cooperation with Russia.

THE FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK OF THE AGREEMENT

6.
Subject to the budget resolutions of the Norwegian Storting with regard to the overall framework for project cooperation with Russia, it is the intention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to make an annual grant available for the programme in the period covered by the agreement in the amount of NOK 12 million. The Programme Committee shall be informed of the grant for the year in question at the beginning of the budget year in a letter of commitment forwarded through the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council.

Administrative expenses for the implementation of the agreement shall be covered by the annual grant and shall be approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT

7.
The strategy for activities under this agreement, and their implementation, shall comply with existing guidelines for cooperation with Russia, and shall be decided in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Matters of principle or matters relating to foreign policy shall be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before a final decision is made.

During the budget period the Ministry of Foreign Affairs may raise matters of principle, matters relating to foreign policy or other matters of particular importance that need to be resolved outside the time frames set out in this agreement.

Furthermore, the parties attach decisive importance to close cooperation and regular contact in order to ensure that the implementation of programme activities has the necessary flexibility and that the overall objective of the agreement is fulfilled.

The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council are jointly responsible for the practical implementation of this agreement, cf. Appendix 1.

8.
Responsibility for implementing the individual projects lies with the Norwegian institution that has received approval and been granted funding for the project.

9.
The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council shall appoint a programme committee to administer the cooperation programme. The Programme Committee shall be responsible for coordinating the programme and shall have the authority to decide which project proposals are to receive funding within the framework of the grant. The Programme Committee shall be accountable to and shall report to the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council. The Committee shall have eight members, three permanent and one alternate member to be appointed by the Research Council, and three permanent and one alternate member to be appointed by the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education.

The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education shall appoint members who represent the university and university college sector, and the Research Council shall appoint members from the institute sector.

The positions of chair and vice-chair shall rotate annually. Every other calendar year the Programme Committee shall be headed by a chair appointed by the Research Council and a vice-chair appointed by the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education. During the intervening years the Programme Committee shall be headed by a chair appointed by the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and a vice-chair appointed by the Research Council. The chair and vice-chair shall be chosen from among the members of the Committee. In the event of a tie the chair’s vote shall break the tie.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research shall be represented on the Programme Committee by observers. This will ensure that the Committee is kept informed of relevant processes and activities. The observers have the right to speak at meetings of the Committee.

10.
The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council shall serve jointly as the secretariat for the Programme Committee, cf. Annex 1.

11.

The Programme Committee shall draw up an annual report and annual accounts, which shall be submitted to the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council and subsequently sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before 1 June the following year.

The parties to the agreement shall meet before the end of each year to discuss the overall budgets for the coming year. The budgets shall contain a cost estimate and time frame for each new activity. The Programme Committee shall be in possession of a letter of commitment from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the coming financial year before determining the allocations for the year in question.

Before the Programme Committee awards the grants for the following year, the programme plans shall be presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at a separate meeting, where policy issues and other matters central to the cooperation may also be raised. In cases where an activity overlaps with other relevant cooperation activities with Russia, the meeting will discuss the possible distribution of the funding. The Ministry of Education and Research shall attend the meeting and is responsible for notifying and discussing the Ministry's views on the education and research policy aspects of the programme package. Notice of the meeting, the agenda and the necessary documentation shall be sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research no later than 14 days prior to the meeting

12.
The implementation of the agreed programme is described in further detail in Appendix 1 to this agreement.

PROJECT COSTS AND TRANSFER OF FUNDS

13.
The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council shall keep the accounts for the programme in accordance with the project portfolio for which these institutions have administrative responsibility. After having sent the letter of commitment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for transferring funds for on-going projects to the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council respectively at the beginning of the year. The administration budget shall be equally divided between the two institutions.

14.
The Norwegian institutions in charge of the individual projects are responsible for their academic and administrative implementation in accordance with the agreement they have concluded with the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education or the Research Council. The cost estimates and rates of the various projects are set out in contracts and guidelines.

ENTRY INTO FORCE, AMENDMENTS, TERMINATION

15.

The agreement enters into force as from the date of its signature and, provided the Storting continues to grant funds for project cooperation with Russia, shall remain in force until 31 December 2010.

16.
Each of the parties may take the initiative to amend the content of the agreement or its appendix. If the parties agree on such an amendment, this shall be confirmed by the parties' signing an addendum to the agreement.

17.
The agreement may be terminated by either of the parties at any time during the agreement period on one year's written notice.

This agreement is made in three original copies in the Norwegian language, which shall be the authentic text, and shall be furnished to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education, and the Research Council. The Ministry of Education and Research shall receive a copy of the agreement.

Done at Oslo on 2007

For the Royal Norwegian
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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For the Norwegian Centre
for International Cooperation in
Higher Education

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For the Research Council of
Norway

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Appendix 1

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT

THE NORWEGIAN CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION, THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF NORWAY AND THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council of Norway serve jointly as the secretariat for the Programme Committee and cooperate on joint activities under the programme. Calls for proposals will be announced for cooperation with Russia in the fields of research and higher education. Applications for cooperation projects in higher education up to and including PhD level should be submitted to the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education, while those for research cooperation should be submitted the Research Council. Projects that involve both research and education will be given priority, and such applications should be submitted to the institution with greater involvement in the project.

The Research Council and the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education will process the applications in their respective areas, submit them to the Programme Committee, and follow up their respective projects. The Programme Committee will make a comprehensive assessment and select projects on the basis of their relevance to the objectives of the programme.

In the case of grants for long-term projects awarded at the start of the programme, the funds should not be linked to specific goals for longer than the first year. Grants for subsequent years will depend on whether the project is progressing according to plan. If this is not the case, the funds may be allocated to other activities.

The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council will in cooperation with the institutions produce up-to-date overviews of ongoing activities in Russia and keep the institutions and projects informed of new allocations. The Programme Committee will ensure that synergy is achieved wherever possible.

The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council will make the relevant Norwegian research and higher education institutions aware of the programme and its time frames and procedures. The Programme Committee will ensure the necessary participation on the part of Norwegian institutions and, in cooperation with institutions/organisations/enterprises in Norway and Russia, assure the academic quality of the projects.

APPLICANTS, APPLICATIONS, APPLICATION DEADLINES, CONTRACTS AND REPORTING

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will inform the Programme Committee of other relevant projects for which funds have been granted.

Applications under this agreement will be considered on the basis of their relevance to the main objectives of the cooperation with Russia in the priority areas.

Emphasis will also be placed on whether or not the application indicates that partial funding for the project concerned has been obtained from other sources.

Eligible applicants are Norwegian institutions of higher education and research in cooperation with similar institutions in Russia. The contract for the project is signed by the institution concerned and the Research Council or the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education, as appropriate. The cooperating institutions submit joint reports to the Programme Committee.

Applications must be submitted in English on the approved application form. In order to ensure that the Russian institution is sufficiently involved, applications must be signed by both the Norwegian and the Russian institution.

A cooperation agreement with the Russian institution must be appended to the application.

The programme has fixed deadlines that will be announced to the relevant research and higher education institutions.

Reporting

The project owner reports to the institution with which the owner has a contract. Reports must be submitted on official report forms by the deadlines set by Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council. The transfer of funds from one calendar year to another will only be approved if a proposal for a revised budget is submitted and approved by the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education or the Research Council. The annual report/final report must contain the auditor’s report, a report on the results, a progress report and the revised budget, if any, for the current year. The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and the Research Council may approve budget revisions within the framework of the project grant.

Projects that fail to comply with the reporting deadlines cannot count on further funding.

The project accounts must be audited by the accounts section at the individual institution as part of the institution’s accounts. The auditor’s report must be certified by the finance section of the institution.