

# Assessment Report for the Nordic research programme at Sámi University College (former Nordic Sámi Institute)



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the Nordic research programme at Sámi University College  
(former Nordic Sámi Institute)**

NordForsk, 2015  
Stensberggata 25  
N-0170 Oslo  
[www.nordforsk.org](http://www.nordforsk.org)  
Org.nr. 971 274 255

Cover Illustration: Sámi University College. Photo: Dag W. Grundseth/Scanpix  
Print: 20x by CopyCat



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# Preface

The present report is one of the deliveries within a strategic analysis of Nordic university cooperation, which NordForsk is undertaking in 2015. The strategic analysis is performed in close dialogue with Nordic universities and funding agencies and aims to define relevance criteria, indicating Nordic added value, as well as funding mechanisms to be used when supporting Nordic university cooperation in research.

As a separate part of this strategic analysis, NordForsk has in the spring of 2015 organised an assessment of the scientific quality and relevance of five Nordic co-operation bodies. These are the Nordic Institute for Theoretical Physics (NORDITA), hosted by the Royal Institute of Technology KTH and Stockholm University; the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), hosted by the University of Copenhagen; the Nordic Volcanological Centre (NORDVULK), hosted by the University of Iceland; the Nordic Institute for Maritime Law (NifS), hosted by the University of Oslo; and the Nordic research programme of the Sámi University College in Kautokeino (the former Nordic Sami Institute).

The inclusion of this assessment in the strategic analysis is due to the decision of the Nordic Council of Ministers to reallocate the Nordic funds of these co-operation bodies into the competitive research funding system of NordForsk. This decision is based on the overview of Nordic research cooperation and the report “Vilja till Forskning?” (2011), which recommended structural development measures within several major areas of Nordic research and research infrastructure cooperation.

I wish to thank the distinguished international Panel of Experts for performing the scientific assessment and for contributing with their valuable expertise and time, and to Gaia Consulting for facilitating the assessment.

Finally, I wish to thank the Special Advisory Group of NordForsk, which oversees the strategic analysis of Nordic university cooperation, for their ongoing work and valuable advice to NordForsk.



*Gunnel Gustafsson*  
Director of NordForsk



# *1 About the Nordic research programme at the Sámi University College*

The target of this assessment is the heritage of the former Nordic Sámi Institute (NSI) i.e., the Nordic research activities at the Sámi University College in Kautokeino.

The former Nordic Sámi Institute (NSI) was established in 1973 under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers with the aim to enhance Sámi research in language, legal history and social sciences.

As a result of the nationalization of Nordic institutions in the 2000's, NSI was co-organized with and in 2009 fully integrated into the Sámi University College, thereby ceasing to exist as an independent institution. The Sámi University College has continued to receive funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers earmarked for Sámi research activities.

The vision of Sámi University College is to offer competence to Sámi society at large, to be the foremost higher education and research institute in Sápmi across national borders and the indigenous world, as well as to support the progression of the Sámi community towards equality with the majority society. The Sámi University College aims at achieving research results of high quality, which are needed in and required by Sámi society. Another strategic goal is to affirm the Sámi language as a language for science, teaching and administration. Sámi University College is a multilingual institution with North Sámi as its principal language. Other Sámi languages and many majority languages are also used amongst staff and students on a daily basis. In its most recent curricular innovations, instruction in English has also been added. The core activities of the Sámi University College comprise besides education and research also two publication series, one a peer reviewed journal in Sámi languages.

The Sámi University College conducts research in different academic fields, such as linguistics and literature, law, social sciences, philosophy, history, indigenous journalism, teacher education, reindeer husbandry, duodji (Sámi applied arts and crafts) and traditional knowledge.

The total academic staff at Sámi University College in November 2014 was 70 employees in permanent positions, 26 employees in temporary positions, 8 employees as substitutes, 8 employees in fixed-term positions and 5 employees in adjunct professor positions. The faculty members are recruited from all over the Sámi homeland – Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

In addition to the Rector, the Director and the three Deans, the Nordic research programme at the Sámi University College affects and partly funds twelve Professors, ten Associate Professors, fourteen Assistant Professors, three other researchers, five Doctoral research fellows, and ten other staff members.

The Sámi University College is formally a Norwegian Higher Education Institution, and as such does not have a Nordic Board. The budget for Nordic research activities received from the Nordic Council of Ministers (25%) and the Ministries for Education in Norway, Sweden and Finland (75%) through the programme “Sámi research for the Sámi society II,” amounted in 2014 to approx. NOK 7.6 million.





## 2 Assessment of the Panel of Experts

### 2.1. Introductory remarks by the Panel of Experts

The framework of this assessment is based on an assignment and terms of reference as provided by NordForsk (described in annexes 1 and 3): Accordingly, the “Peer reviewers are expected to use their expertise to assess the scientific quality and relevance of the Nordic co-operation body within its own field of research, in a Nordic and international context. The main question is to find out how added value has been created through the co-operation and what the role and status of the Nordic co-operation bodies are in the Nordic region/internationally.”

The assessment focused on the Nordic research programme of the Sámi University College (hereafter the SUC), which after the full merger with NSI in 2009 has carried on the tradition from NSI, supported with Nordic funding. The higher education institution the SUC and its role in the higher education system in Norway, was not subject to assessment, although teaching and the research are closely intertwined at the SUC. The assessment focused on the past five years of development (2010-2014).

The assessment was mainly based on and limited to:

- The material made available to the reviewers, mainly a self-assessment of the past five years (2010-2014) prepared by Sámi University College
- Interviews conducted with and additional information provided by key staff at the Sámi University College during a one-day meeting held in Kautokeino on 21 May 2015 (list of participants included)

On the basis of these materials, the Panel of Experts have summarized below their jointly held views on the assessment questions:

- a) What is the significance of the Nordic co-operation body in terms of scientific results in its field in the Nordic region and internationally?*
- b) How is added value created through the Nordic and international co-operation?*

The evaluation team was formed of prominent scholars in the areas of Finno-Ugric linguistics, Sámi studies, Scandinavian studies, postcolonial studies and Native American studies, all of whom were aware of the work of the SUC and its predecessor institutions but none of whom had had any direct prior involvement in the SUC’s research activities. The opportunity to review the SUC’s self-assessment materials and research track record and to come to Kautokeino to interview the leaders, teachers, staff and students of the SUC provided a rich and informative intellectual experience for which the team members are very grateful. Particularly crucial in forming the team’s impressions of the SUC were the discussions and examples furnished during the day of interviews. Without these, the evaluation would not have reflected fully the rich array of research endeavours and experiences of the SUC.



## *2.2. The significance and added value of the SUC in terms of scientific results in its field in the Nordic region and internationally*

### **Research focus / research profile**

The SUC profiles itself as an “all-Sámi” university college with focus on education and research within a broad array of subjects, including duodji, Sámi languages and literature, legal studies, and teacher education, along with a Bachelor’s education in reindeer husbandry.

Particularly in the early decades of the organization, the seminal work of formulating Sámi research, Sámi scholarly language, and a Sámi administration were key elements in enacting Sámi self-determination as an intellectual and social goal.

More recently, in the period of time under examination in this evaluation (2010-2014), the SUC’s emphasis has extended, rightly and productively, toward wider questions of decolonization, language development and global indigenous perspectives.

An important new initiative is the Master’s in indigenous journalism, which is taught in English and which draws students from around the world. Characteristic of the SUC’s commitment to Sámi capacity building is the fact that Sámi students in this programme produce their work in Sámi. The pending PhD in Sámi literature represents a timely and well warranted addition to the curriculum that complements the SUC’s strengths in language and pedagogy. In the area of the arts, the addition of a design emphasis to the duodji programme builds on the ground-breaking theoretisation of duodji as an academic subject at the SUC. It promises to impact and engage with the developments in artistic research elsewhere in the Nordic region, and to further integrate Sámi elements into the wider Nordic arts endeavour.

### **Research infrastructure**

The SUC has built up a strong institution with impressive assets, including:

- **The building Diehtosiida**, which provides marvellous physical space for the advancement of the SUC’s work in its own right, in connection with other key Sámi institutions, and in relation to a broader public.
- **The two publication series *Dieđut* and *Sámi dieđalaš áigečála***, representing valuable research outlets and tools for the advancement of Sámi research, pedagogy and language.
- **The library** of the SUC, which encompasses a substantive collection and material in Sámi and indigenous studies and includes works in all the Sámi languages as well the other national languages of the Nordic region, and general linguistics.
- **Networks:** The SUC faculty have been instrumental in forming and maintaining international research networks e.g., the thematic network of the University of the Arctic “Arctic Sustainable Art and Design,” the periodic Sámi language symposia, the DINO network for diversity in Nordic literature; the network on Sámi children’s language acquisition, and others.

- **An annual statistical report** is produced, which provides essential material for quantitative social science research.
- **Intellectual infrastructure:** The SUC is a meeting place for research fellows, PhD students and adjunct professors from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, and beyond.

These institutional commitments, built up over the years, are essential to the diverse and far-reaching research conducted at the SUC and within its network of institutional partners within the Nordic region and beyond. Maintaining and further developing these resources is crucial for the ongoing research productivity of the SUC and depends fundamentally on a sustained and predictable funding stream.

### ***Research achievements and relevance in a Nordic and international setting***

The self-assessment report in providing over-all tabulations of research output did not fully reflect the depth and quality of the achievements of the SUC during the past five years. Interviews during the site visit proved essential for this assessment.

Research is path-dependent, but the SUC faculty has also had, as one researcher termed it, “to make the path while walking it.” More impressive – and significant – than the formal output measured (according to Norwegian higher education conventions) is what they have managed to build as an indigenous institution over the past three or four decades.

An essential research focus of the SUC has been the study of questions directly related to Sámi society, pursued from an insider Sámi perspective. Among key achievements are the multifaceted explorations of Sámi legal thought and philosophy, language education, elementary school pedagogy, duodji, and other Sámi specific topics. Illustrative of the innovative and creative research conducted in this area is for example Ylva Jannok Nutti’s examinations, which explore native Sámi categorisations of space and measure and integrate them into concrete pedagogical programmes for the teaching of mathematics in Sámi schools. Another example of great relevance is the substantive examination of Sámi literature, consisting of courses, a research network, symposia and an impending doctoral programme, contributing to the establishment (together with key partner institutions across the Nordic countries) of Sámi literature as a subject in its own right but also facilitating the integration of Sámi literature into broader examinations of Nordic arts and letters.

Many of these studies, while focusing specifically on Sámi culture and institutions, have proved influential in a wider field of indigenous studies. The SUC has also produced works of a comparative nature with direct relevance for other indigenous groups around the world. Examples of these are Kaisa Rautio-Helander’s postcolonial examination of onomastics and Torunn Pettersen’s ground-breaking work on Sámi statistics.

A strong tradition at the SUC is research on legal history and land rights, which has had a decisive influence on legal theory and practice in the Nordic region. This work demonstrates the transformative potential of knowledge generation as enacted by the SUC in a context of postcolonial Nordic societies.

An exciting and strategic achievement is the peer reviewed research journal *Sámi dieđalaš áigečála*, jointly produced by the SUC and the Arctic University of Norway (UiT). This means not just a few outlets for research in Sámi, or translations, but innovative and novel research disseminated in those languages. Quite possibly the only research journal in a minority indigenous language in the world, the journal not only communicates scientific knowledge of



scholars in Sámi language, but also contributes integrally to the advancement of Sámi languages as vehicles of scientific communication. Through an open access portal, the journal attracts an impressive readership, not just from within Sápmi but across the world.

### ***Merits of key staff***

The Panel of Experts was impressed by the range of expertise demonstrated by the faculty and staff (permanent and visiting) of the SUC. Not only do the SUC researchers conduct state of the art research on a variety of topics, but they also engage closely in the time consuming and complex tasks of student mentoring, programme administration, community outreach and service to the fields.

The engagement in student supervision and institutional service, here as elsewhere in the academic world, diminishes or slows the direct research output of a number of the SUC staff. The SUC staff identified this issue as a weakness. However, they also emphasized that capacity building and community involvement is not only their duty but a significant element of their practice-based research, and as such a source of strength.

### ***Nordic profile / dimension***

The Nordic countries have all signed the UN declaration on the rights of the indigenous peoples (DRIP), which obligates (cf. articles 11, 13, 14, 31) these countries to enable indigenous peoples within the borders of these nations to preserve, maintain and develop their own culture in their own manner. Article 36 states:

- “1. Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with their own members as well as other peoples across borders.
2. States, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, shall take effective measures to facilitate the exercise and ensure the implementation of this right.”

The Council of Sámi Parliaments of Finland, Norway and Sweden have called for the designation of the SUC as a Nordic Sámi University. By supporting the SUC, the Nordic countries live up to their obligations, guaranteeing the stability and augmentation of this institution.

Sámi studies in other Nordic universities are subjected to the vagaries of local university budget considerations, retirements of key personnel, research prioritization and other factors. In this context the SUC serves as a crucial foundation and catalyst for the broader research enterprise of Sámi studies.

The fact that the SUC consistently draws students and faculty from across the Nordic region is both a testament to and a realization of Nordic goals. Curricular innovations, such as requiring teacher training practicum experiences in more than one Nordic country, further reflect and shape the SUC's Nordic character.

## ***Future perspectives and recommendations***

SUC staff described a phased development of research at the SUC over time, with a necessary first stage focusing closely on research aimed primarily at a Sámi audience and a second stage complementing this work with further comparative and internationally-oriented research. During the assessment period, the SUC has embarked upon this second stage with substantive achievements. Recognising the absolute necessity for research and research infrastructure aimed specifically at Sámi communities, the Panel of Experts concurs that the SUC is well prepared for this second stage: to serve as a role model also for other indigenous people and research organizations around the world

The Panel of Experts enjoins the SUC to continue but also to augment its leadership in Sámi studies and in indigenous studies, by continuing and increasing their cooperation with partners in indigenous studies around the world and by increasing cooperation on Sámi language and Sámi studies with other institutions in the Nordic region.

The SUC is encouraged to communicate more widely the significant achievements of the research and the institution itself. Research articles that summarize the rich array of pedagogical and theoretical insights gained from the initial years of operation of the SUC can contribute vitally to the field of indigenous studies and infrastructure development in places that have not as yet so fully implemented the call and ideals of the DRIP.

## ***Conclusions: The Added Value of the SUC***

As a profoundly Sámi-oriented, interdisciplinary research centre — rigorously pan-Nordic by design and by practice — the SUC contributes fundamentally to:

- The decolonization of Sámi culture and society,
- Capacity-building for a complex Sámi future,
- Reversal of centuries of assimilative processes and policies,
- Development of Sámi languages, literatures, artistic and social institutions.

In building the SUC from the ground up over the course of decades and responding to ongoing shifts in social, cultural, economic, and environmental situations, the faculty, staff, and students of the SUC have engaged not only in an innovative process of curricular development and pedagogy, but in a deeply significant enactment of social action research in the area of indigenous studies. They have created a highly effective **research hub for Sámi studies research** that conducts cutting edge indigenous studies research of its own and that sustains and advances a **pan-Nordic network** of researchers and institutions committed to Sámi studies and to indigenous studies. On an international plane, the SUC has acted as an important partner with indigenous studies researchers and institutions across the world, providing an innovative model for how indigenous elementary and higher education can be advanced and bringing the Sámi case into productive engagement with situations and examinations of other indigenous communities. The SUC implements at its core the key right to social and cultural self-determination guaranteed in the ILO-169 and enshrined as an international aspiration in the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP). Such is fully to be expected for an institution located in the country that was the first in the world to ratify ILO-169 and in a Nordic region that has boldly embraced the goals of the DRIP. In doing so, the **Nordic region provides world leadership** in the area of

indigenous rights and research, not only as practical elements of Nordic societies, but also as an inspiring process of applied research, one that has created an **intergenerational laboratory** for Sámi cultural innovation, societal self-determination, and artistic and economic advancement that has potential to serve as a model and an ideal for international indigenous studies and societies.







# Annex 1

# *Annex 1: Background and Framework of the Evaluation*

## *Background to the Assignment*

In December 2013, the Nordic Council of Ministers' Committee for Senior Officials on Education and Research decided on changes in their funding allocations, meaning that NordForsk will from 2017 onwards govern the research funds that were previously earmarked for the following five *Nordic co-operation bodies*:

- Nordic Institute for Theoretical Physics (NORDITA), owned by KTH/Stockholm University
- Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), owned by the University of Copenhagen
- Former Nordic Sámi Institute (NSI), owned by the Sámi University College in Kautokeino
- Nordic Volcanological Centre (NORDVULK), owned by the University of Iceland
- Nordic Institute for Maritime Law (NifS), owned by the University of Oslo

In connection to this decision, NordForsk was tasked to perform an assessment of the scientific quality and relevance of these five Nordic co-operation bodies.

## *Framework of the Assessment*

### **Aims**

The aim of the assessment was to assess the scientific quality and relevance of the Nordic co-operation body within its own field of research, in a Nordic and international context.

The main assessment questions defined were:

- *What is the significance of the Nordic co-operation body in terms of scientific results in its field in the Nordic region and internationally?*
- *How is added value created through the Nordic and international co-operation?*

The results of this assessment will be used to assess the quality and relevance of the five Nordic co-operation bodies within Nordic university co-operation today, while decisions on possible future funding will be made through a separate process.

### ***Assessment Process***

The assessment was overseen by a Special Advisory Group appointed by the Board of NordForsk and consisting of the following members: Chancellor emerita **Krista Varantola**, Finland (Chair), Dr. **Agneta Bladh**, Sweden (Vice Chair), Vice-Chancellor emeritus, prof. **Jens Oddershede**, Denmark, Pro-Rector **Kenneth Ruud**, Norway, and Director General **Hallgrímur Jónasson**, Iceland.

The assessment included a self-assessment performed by the Nordic co-operation body as well as peer review performed by an international external Panel of Experts.

The Panel of Experts for the Nordic research programme at the Sámi University College (former NSI) included the following external and independent experts:

**Thomas DuBois, Professor at Dept. of Scandinavian Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison**

**Gunlög Fur, Research director, Professor in History, Linnaeus University, Sweden**

**Lars-Gunnar Larsson, Professor emeritus in Finno-Ugric languages (incl. Sámi), Uppsala University**

### ***Self-assessment***

The self-assessment of the Nordic co-operation body was issued in December 2014 and submitted by the end of February, 2015. The self-assessment consisted of

*A Fact Sheet*, containing facts from the past five years (2010-2014) on main research related activities (e.g., staff, publications, main research projects, researcher training, visiting researchers, infrastructure etc.)

*A Self-assessment report*, with reflections about the research activities of the co-operation body; its Nordic added value; its stakeholder relations; Nordic university co-operation in general; and future perspectives of the Nordic co-operation body.

The self-assessment of the Sámi University College is enclosed in annex 2.

### ***Peer review***

The peer review of the Nordic co-operation body was performed by the external Panel of Experts named above, and according to detailed guidelines of NordForsk concerning the aim of the peer review, the role of the reviewers, the review process, and confidentiality and impartiality issues. The guidelines for reviewers are enclosed in annex 3.

The peer review was based on the following written material made available to the reviewers in the beginning of March 2015:



- The fact sheet compiled by the Nordic co-operation body
- The self-assessment of the Nordic co-operation body
- Web page, central strategy documents, and annual reports (2010-2014) of the Nordic co-operation body

Other recent evaluations of the Nordic co-operation body and/or its host institution, as well as recent evaluations of relevant scientific disciplines in the Nordic countries were consulted in the assessment as secondary material.

The peer review culminated in an assessment meeting, including site visit, interviews and group discussions.

The report of the Panel of Experts was finalized after the assessment meeting and is enclosed in chapter 2.

### ***Assessment meeting***

The assessment meeting was organized on 21 May 2015 at the Sámi University College in Kautokeino, Norway.

During the meeting, the international Panel of Experts and the Nordic Special Advisory Group met representatives of the Nordic co-operation body and its host universities. Time was allocated for interviews and group discussions in order to clarify any issues of importance for the final assessment of the scientific quality and relevance of the Nordic co-operation body.

The agenda and participants of the meeting are found in annex 4.

### ***Role of the Special Advisory Group***

The Special Advisory Group appointed by the Board of NordForsk carried the responsibility of overseeing the review process and the review meeting. The Special Advisory Group will summarize its recommendations to NordForsk concerning Nordic university co-operation, in a separate report to be finalized early 2016.





# Annex 2

## SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE NORDIC CO-OPERATION BODY:

Sámi University College

REPORTING PERIOD: 1.1.2010 – 31.12.2014

PLACE AND DATE: Guovdageaidnu, Norway 5.3.2015

NAME AND TITLE OF RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR OF THE CO-OPERATION BODY:

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Máren Palismaa".

Máren Palismaa



# 1. RESEARCH AND RESEARCH RELATED ACTIVITIES

*How would you define your academic field and your position and impact in terms of Nordic, European and global contexts?*

## THE POSITION OF SÁMI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Research and research-based development activities are of pivotal importance for the Sámi community at large, as stated in the so called Butenschøn Report, organised by the Norwegian Ministry of Education (the Butenschøn committee) on Sámi research and higher education:

“There is broad consensus that higher education and research are fundamental inputs for social development. As indigenous minority in Norway the Sami community face special challenges, and knowledge development must be adapted to these challenges.” (*Langs lange spor - om samisk forskning og høyere utdanning*, 2012, p 3, translated by SUC from Norwegian)

These challenges can be regarded as common challenges for the Sámi homeland (see further as *Sápmi*) in a wider sense covering the Nordic area and including North-West Russia. Simultaneously these challenges add to the frame of research responsibilities formed by the mandate of Sámi University College (SUC), and forms corner-stones for long and short term research priorities and activities.

One of the major responsibilities of SUC is to support, develop and use the Sámi languages as a scientific language. Besides reflecting the traditional disciplines developed in other academic settings, the SUC is mandated to develop Sámi research in a wider sense (for different definitions of “Sámi research”, see the report of the Butenschøn committee, pp 27-28). This means that SUC conducts research in different academic fields, such as linguistics and literature, law, social sciences, philosophy, history, Indigenous journalism, teacher education, reindeer husbandry, duodji (Sámi applied arts and crafts) and traditional knowledge. At SUC it is also common to combine knowledge from different disciplines.

NIFU Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education have used the following definition of Sámi research:

- definition based on theme: research on Sámi situations and/or research for Sámi aims, is counted as Sámi research
- definition based on institution: all research done by Sámi institutions is counted as Sámi research (*Langs lange spor - om samisk forskning og høyere utdanning*, p 29, translated by SUC from Norwegian)

The intention declaration between the Sámi Parliaments and the NCM of September 2004 regarding the NSI transfer to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research states the importance of continuing research as the main goal to strengthen and further develop sámi language, culture and way of life. This was the background for the NCR and SUC contract of 21.12.2004 concerning the transfer of NSI. These intentions have been further developed through the later process and integrated into the present organization and research priorities.

SUC is an all-Sámi university college with a three-folded vision, chosen to the *Strategic plan 2012-2016*:

- SUC is a leading higher education and research institution in the Sámi area and the indigenous world.
- SUC cooperates with the Sámi community, particularly with young people, to preserve and promote the Sámi language, traditions, occupations, skills and knowledge.
- SUC supports Sámi society's progress towards equality with the majority society. (See Sámi University College's Strategic Plan, p 2)

The position of SUC in the Sámi context is clearly stated by Sámi organisations, such as the last Sámi Conference, in Murmansk 2013:

"The Saami Conference calls upon Finland, Norway, the Russian Federation and Sweden through their Arctic policies to strengthen and support the knowledge production for traditional knowledge and research in Sápmi. The Saami Conference underscores the need to expand already existing institutions of higher education in such a manner that a Saami or indigenous university can be established." (20th Saami Conference: *The Kuellnegk neark Declaration*, 16th paragraph)

The Norwegian government has already in 2002 stated in the White paper about Sámi higher education and research, that SUC together with NSI should be developed into a Sámi university (St.meld. nr. 34 (2001-2002) Kvalitetsreformen Om høyere samisk utdanning og forskning).

SUC intends to continue as an independent institution in the renewed higher education structure in Norway and this is confirmed by the Minister of Education in a letter of 08.10.14, (english translation). (ref. 14/2719-):

*"The college has advocated that it does not want to be merged with other institutions, and promoted weighty arguments for this position. The Ministry will therefore do not add up to merge Sami University College with other institutions. However Sámi University College may be strengthened through closer cooperation with a major institution on the administrative area."* (SUC translation from Norwegian.)

Sámi University College is with no doubt the widest academic environment for Sámi research and Sámi language based research in different fields. The faculty members are recruited from all over the Sámi homeland – Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The researchers at SUC have completed their own studies at major universities in Nordic countries like Oslo, Tromsø, Oulu, Helsinki and Uppsala, where all the research related to Sámi has for a long time been part of the national science of these three countries. On the contrary to the strong academic history of the academics, their new working environment, former NSI and SUC, has during the past forty years quickly become a leading academic environment for Sámi research, where on top of general academic contacts also useful connections to the everyday life of the Sámi communities and their traditional and renewable livelihoods and challenges are abundant. The academic environment has strong eligibility and long experiences of developing Sámi language in teaching and research.

The position of SUC in the European context is also special, as Sámi people is the only recognized Indigenous people in European Union. SUC is working in fields similar to the fields of the universities of the Majority society, and also similar with the minority education



institutions like Sabhal Mor Ostaig (The Gaelic College in Scotland), where the Gaelic language has a similar status as the Sámi language at SUC, but SUC has still an unique position as an Indigenous University College in Europe. Common research themes as minority language development and bilingual education has been the focus of the cooperation.

In a global context, SUC is a “leading star” comparing to many other indigenous institutions, where majority languages still are used in tuition and research more than indigenous languages. Through networks like WINHEC (World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium), Verdde and UArctic, SUC has had the opportunity to host scholars and students from other indigenous communities, as well as send SUC scholars and students to other indigenous institutions. Researchers at SUC also have used these networks for research project development.

SUC also functions as a role model for other indigenous communities, as it is a hub for all Sámi academics, collecting and bringing together knowledge from different perspectives.

## **THE IMPACT OF SÁMI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

The Nordic Co-operation Body, the former Nordic Sámi Institute (NSI) had three main academic fields: linguistics, social science and Sámi law history. SUC has followed up and further developed these fields, as a heritage of NSI.

### *Language research*

The contribution of NSI and SUC have been crucial for Sámi language development. A main challenge of Sámi research is the lack of scientific terminology in Sámi. The faculty staff have developed terminology in Sámi in their fields. Sámi language research at NSI and SUC has developed basic language tools for several Sámi languages, for ex. orthography and grammar for North Sámi (1979) and later on South Sámi Grammar and Dictionary by professor Ole Henrik Magga and others. During the first decades of NSI bi- and multilingual, sociolinguistic and linguistic research was carried out by other.

Language research activities at SUC have raised, carried out and vitalised Sámi language into an academic discipline and heightened the status of Sámi language in Sámi and Nordic societies. This have resulted into an alphabetizing of the North Sámi, several hundreds of students have studied Sámi language at SUC during the last decades (in connection to different programmes) and are at the moment professionals in Sámi language in different Sámi institutions and communities in all Nordic countries. Both language research and education recruits young people to language studies at SUC and further on to PhD programmes in Sámi language and literature.

At the moment SUC offers programmes in Sámi language and literature from beginning courses to Master level and will start the PhD programme in Sámi language and literature when the Norwegian authorities have accepted the final application (2015).

### *Research in Social sciences*

In the decades of 1980 and 1990 the research in social sciences at NSI was considered as basic research. It was concentrated on Sámi social topics such as history, society, reindeer husbandry and duodji (Sámi applied art and craft).

Alf Isak Keskitalo, the researcher of NSI, was the first academic scholar who pointed out that traditional livelihood as Sámi duodji could be theorized and academised. As a result SUC later established a full professor position. PhD Gunvor Guttorm was appointed to this position.

While research in social sciences was conducted by NSI at that time and SUC was established in 1989, one of the new fields was teacher education as basic programmes (kindergarten, primary school) in SUC. Already in 1978 the Nordic Sámi education authorities declared the need to establish a common sámi teacher education program at Alta teachers College in Norway, in this case the NSI was the secretariat of the study. Later on the Sámi teacher education programmes were harmonized in all Nordic countries. The development on education field has been positive and today SUC is applying for a Master programme in Sámi pedagogy. Also the other subjects as duodji, Reindeer husbandry and journalism have been expanded into programme subjects; duodji and Indigenous journalism have reached Master's degree programmes and Reindeer husbandry are developing a Master programme.

### *Research on Sámi law history*

The Sámi law research (in Norwegian *samerett*) from the SUC, with the heritage of NSI, has had a major impact on the development of the legal status of the Sami people in the Nordic countries. Produced research on land rights, history of land rights, reindeer herding rights, customary law and language rights. For example in 1980 legal historical research of Korpjaakko-Labba changed the view on Sámi land rights significantly, and has ever since been referred to in public investigations in the Nordic countries, amongst others the works leading up to the Finnmark act in 2005. Nowadays the Sami law is taught in the studies of Reindeer husbandry bachelor program.

### *What are your main activities in your academic field?*

The main activities of SUC are:

- Research based teaching
- Basic and applied research
- Doctoral research fellows
- Dissemination and outreach
- Editorial work on Sámi dieđalaš áigečála (Sámi Research Journal, published in Sámi)
- Publishing of books and collections of articles in the Dieđut Research Series
- WINHEC Research Journal editorial work
- Other publications in national and international journals



- Conferences, seminars, workshops and other academic arrangements
- Co-operation and networks

The Nordic Sámi Institute was established in 1973, and the research projects that were developed can be divided into three main research disciplines under the main umbrella of “Sámi research”, i.e. linguistics, societal studies and law.

The Sámi University College (SUC) was established in 1989 to work primarily with Sámi teacher education program. From then on other programs have been given, such as bachelor and master programs in Duodji, Reindeer Husbandry, Indigenous Journalism, Sámi Linguistics and Literature. Teaching in these programs is based on cultural sensitive and indigenous research results as well as other western research, and the university college teachers have been able to develop research projects in RTD time (Research and Technical Development), but since the incorporation of the former Nordic Sámi Institute in 2005, the research of SUC has been more obvious and the publication results per academic has some years been the highest among university colleges in Norway. In the Status report on higher education of the Ministry for Education and Research year 2013, SUC was mentioned in this respect:

“Other institutions that stand out in this respect from its fellow institutions is the Sámi University College among the state university colleges and Norges idrettshøgskole among the specialized universities. The former has published at the level of the new universities of Agder and Stavanger and the latter at the level of the University of Oslo, that is most publishing among the older universities” (Ministry of Education and Research: *Status report on Higher education 2013, Tilstandsrapport for høyere utdanning 2013*, p 124, SUC translation)

The synergies of the amalgamation of NSI into SUC can be read in the list of publication points per year:

- 2005: 8,0
- 2006: 16,2
- 2007: 33,9
- 2008: 14,2
- 2009: 30,0
- 2010: 26,5
- 2011: 34,3
- 2012: 31,4
- 2013: 6,9
- 2014: Not available yet

The funding of the Nordic Council of Ministers to NSI is used for research time (researcher's wages), supervision (wages to Adjunct Professors), recruitment of new researchers (feasibility studies), academic leading, conferences, publications, annum, administrative leading, research administration. These are further developed in the Fact Sheet SUC delivered on March 2nd 2015 to NordForsk, and are more thoroughly explained in the annual reports sent to NCM. The research projects funded by researchers' RTD time is for example described in the annual report for 2014 in the following way:



"The funding of NCM reaches all academics at SUC, through supervision of Adjunct Professors, Research Administration services, Annum funding and Research support ("Dutkandoarjja"). Further on NCM covers the full research time for five professors and one docent at the university college, which constitutes 45 per cent of their working hours. In 2014 this time have been used in research projects with the following themes: 1) "Areal challenges, mineral extraction and reindeer husbandry" and "Quick changes: challenges and possibilities for a sustainable reindeer husbandry (Rievdan)", 2) "Modern Sámi societies, teaching research" and "Traditional Sámi understanding of environment, and morals ", 3) Lule Sámi linguistic research, 4) Sámi language politics in Sápmi and the Arctic, 5) Sámi literature and indigenous literature, including the development of a research project seeking EU funding, the Sámi Theatre Dálvadis, and 6) "Iešvuodát ja iešdovddut" which is a development project in duodji. These research projects responds to the priorities of "Sámi research for the Sámi society II" under "further development of the Sámi language as a science language", "development of research skills in Sámi traditional livelihoods", "Research on the modern Sámi society including teaching research" and "linguistic research on the different Sámi languages ". (SUC translation from Swedish to English)

*What do you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses in your own field?*

### **Strengths:**

- Research and education in many academic fields
- Multidisciplinarity
- Language diversity: many minority Sámi languages in addition to North Sámi; many majority languages (Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Russian, German, English)
- Indigenous perspective and international indigenous networks, both formal (as WINHEC) and informal in different fields of research and education
- Active research and educational networks nationally in Norway, internationally in the Nordic countries, Europe, Canada, Russia (among others)
- Active and dynamic language environment both in the institution, institutional activities and in the whole surrounding environment, locally in the place of Kautokeino, as well as in Sápmi
- Strong ties with Sámi communities in Nordic countries and Russia, inter-acting and mutual partnering with communities with a broad range of stakeholders
- Strong cooperation and synergies with Gáldu (Resource Center for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), International Centre of Reindeer Husbandry and the Sámi Archive at *Diehtosiida*, Kautokeino
- Research and education co-operation with Sami Film Institute and Sámi Beaivváš Theatre
- Taking indigenous representations as part of research activities, publications, exhibitions, and teaching
- Good professional infrastructure and the use of internet technologies in all activities.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Numerally a challenge to meet national requirements in Norway regarding numbers of students and also candidates for accreditation of new PhD programs
- Difficulty to meet all huge expectations from the Sami societies across national borders

- Limited budget resources to respond to the needs for education and research program development and implementation
- Strong links with Sámi communities bring high expectations to SUC, which are impossible to fill all in a limited time
- Marginalized campus environment compared with larger university campuses.

## 2. NORDIC ADDED VALUE

*Please describe your Nordic profile? What makes you a Nordic institution instead of a national institution? What are the main benefits of being a Nordic institution in your field?*

Sámi University College is, by its foundation, ever more in operation, since the amalgamation with the NSI, a Nordic institution in many senses. NSI was established in 1973 as a Nordic institution by its mandate and statutes. SUC already from its inauguration in 1989 opened its programs for Sámi students from Norway, Sweden and Finland, also recruiting faculty members across the Nordic borders. As the Sámi people and communities share language, culture and livelihood across borders, this fact gives the foundation for the Nordic added value of the institution.

This Nordic profile has been continuously developed in the recent years. Today, geographically located in a strong Sámi language area close to the neighbour Sámi areas in Finland and Sweden, SUC is an institution where the faculty members, administrative staff and students are recruited from all over Sápmi: Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia. The Sámi language, most commonly North Sámi is used in research, teaching, administration and in the daily social life. North Sámi is a majority Sámi language in Norway, Sweden and Finland. SUC contributes also to organize and fund developmental activities in Lule (*julevsámi*) and South Sámi languages, languages that cross nation-state borders of Norway and Sweden. This is a positive and added value that benefits the Nordic cooperation. Furthermore, a synergy effect of a mixed language group and capacity is also that the different Nordic majority languages as well as Russian can be used when necessary, by faculty, students and administrative staff. This adds effect to the Nordic value and is as well of strong cultural value. The Board of Sámi University College has members from nordic countries. This is a requirement the Board put starting from 2007, after co-organizing with NSI. The main recruitment of students and the academic and administrative staff, and establishment of research topics and programs mirrors the Nordic profile. On this background, we consider our profile to carry a strong Nordic profile, that makes Sámi University College - as a continuation of the former NSI - very different from any national institution. On the other hand, this gives intake to benefit from cooperation across borders when developing education and research initiatives, and to establish exchange opportunities. In such way the Nordic profile more easily opens doors for different kinds of cooperation, as well as it brings research capacity vitality into the daily work.



*How would you describe your contribution to Nordic added value? (Please provide concrete examples and information about developments.)*

SUC has been a pathfinder when opening new research and education fields, for example in the Sámi history research, study of law and customary rights, Sámi school and pedagogy, identity research, Sámi language research, sociolinguistics, and Sámi *duodji*, arts and crafts. Additionally, many of these activities are based on Nordic cooperation. Sámi history covers a common ground for the Sámi who are a trans-border people. When introducing new programs in journalism at bachelor and master levels, the development is based on exchanging capacities and building of an all-Sámi capacity. Likewise, a development of a Nordic master in Sámi language, and the developed PhD program in Sámi language and literature with connected research, are contributions to the common Sámi language consolidation and further development. The research done in bilingual education and sociolinguistics contributes to the Nordic value, as it covers language issues throughout the whole Sámi area. Further, the establishment of the duodji bachelor and master programs has opened a new common all-Sámi education and research field that is aimed in capacity-building in arts, design and creative industry. The education research also covers interesting and valuable research for Sámi education to the benefit in all Nordic countries. These examples can be added with examples from other fields like Sámi customary rights and human rights; reindeer husbandry with related thematics; identity formation and language development etc. There are many kinds of publications from doctoral dissertations, reports, to articles and text-books etc. that cover the above mentioned development activities (publications can be found in the fact description documents).

*How has your role and status as a Nordic institution evolved over the years? What have been the main turning points and critical factors affecting your development?*

The main turning point has been the integration of NSI and SUC in 2005-2007. During the last ten years, 2004-2014, the number of Nordic financed Sámi academics has increased, from being a limited group of full-time researchers at NSI, to becoming 54 academics that get Annum and other facilities and 14 academics with a considerable part of their wages (though not full-time) from the NCM funding. This is a result of the vision to make NSI an inseparable part of SUC and make SUC a Nordic institution - as it already is "by nature" while focusing on the Sámi people and their societies. The NCM funding has also not been used for house rental since 2009 when the former NSI workers finally moved into Diehtosiida, where office rents have been paid with funding from the Norwegian Ministry for Teaching and Research, making possible to support more research projects.

The scope of research is nowadays broader than before the integration of NSI into Sámi University College. Critical factors to our development are the division and priorities of the NCM resources. The Board of Sámi University College contains members from Nordic countries since 2007.

### 3. STAKEHOLDERS

*Please describe your degree of integration and way of co-operating with the host university.*

The former NSI is totally integrated into the Sami University College. This is certainly true in relation to both the academic staff, that was taken over from NSI to SUC, and to the administrative staff working at the Research Administration Unit. The academic staff, i.e. the researchers of the former NSI are integrated into three departments at SUC: department of linguistics, the department of social sciences and the department of duodji and education. Dedicated research time is 45 % for professors. Assistant and associate professors have to apply for research time on an annual base. The wage coverage from the Nordic Council of Ministers makes a significant contribution to the research time, and gives SUC better possibilities for research.

The administrative positions of the former NSI are still observable and to a large degree stable from year to year. Three positions in the Research Administration Unit and one position in the Economic Unit are all still fully financed from the NCM funds.

*What are the pros and cons of your way of working with the host university? (e.g., degree of integration, the strategic interest of the host university to continue with the cooperation etc.)*

Integration of the NSI into Sámi University College has strengthened University College's research profile and has resulted in increase of research publication and in better support of research-based Sámi education. Already in 1987, before the establishment of SUC, The Norwegian Official Report 1987:34 (NOU 1987:34 *Samisk kultur og utdanning/ Sámi Culture and Education*) indicated the need and possibilities to establish Sámi University College and to develop it into the Nordic Sámi Specialised University. This NOU considered already at that time that Nordic Sami Institute will play an important role in this process:

*"Also for the development of a Nordic Sami scientific institution, the Nordic Sami Institute naturally play a key role. The Committee believes that the ideal objective should be a Nordic university." (SUC translation)*

Thus, the integration of NSI and SUC was seen as strength for Sámi education and research almost 30 years ago. Synergy of two institutions with common research fields and interests does have had a positive impact on research and education. The integration was approved by the Sámi political bodies (Sámi Parliaments of Finland, Norway and Sweden) as part of Sámi cultural political development, aimed to create a stronger Sami academic environment in a Sami speaking area. The integration has resulted in a stronger and bigger Sámi research environment, which is the biggest one in the Nordic countries and in the world, specialising in Sámi related topics in different research fields and using Sámi language as the main language of communication. Strengthened multidisciplinary in research must be mentioned as a positive result of integration.



At the present, Sámi University College with its research environment has become an attractive institution for new recruitment of PhD students in Sami research.

The former NSI developed strong research circles in the Sámi legal history and customary rights, especially relevant to the Swedish and Finnish parts of Sápmi. At the moment of integration into SUC around 2007, studies of law were not part of the University College's portfolio. This might be considered as one cons of the integration in the initial stage of the process. Nevertheless, SUC has taken good care of the key researchers in the study of law, previously working in or connected to the NSI, and has incorporated legal history and studies of Sámi customary rights into the existing and new educational programs, such as reindeer husbandry, Sámi means of livelihood, Sámi history etc. Research in Sámi legal history has continued at SUC, resulting in one doctoral degree (defended at the University of Uppsala), and a couple of new PhD projects related to reindeer husbandry in Sweden and to coastal Sámi rights in Norway.

*Who are your other a) academic and b) societal main stakeholders? Please address the following questions:*

- 1) why do you see them as the main stakeholders?*
- 2) what is their role in the co-operation?*
- 3) how do you co-operate with them?*

The main academic stakeholders are the other Nordic universities doing Sámi related research, such as University of Tromsø, University of Oulu, University of Lapland, University of Umeå, as these universities have study programs and research units focusing on Sámi and indigenous issues that are of interest for the researchers and students of SUC. Their role in the co-operation is to give and take in education projects and exchange programs (for students as well as lecturers), common PhD programs courses, conference co-operations, network based co-operation. SUC co-operate with them by formal agreements as well as informal subject based co-operation. SUC also co-operate in course planning (in subjects such as language topics, social sciences, pedagogy, reindeer husbandry and arts and crafts).

The main societal stakeholders are the Sami societies and Sami communities at large and through the Sami parliaments and different kinds of NGO's. People and communities at large have high interest and can be used to build legitimacy given they gain positive experience, the same with NGO's like Saami Council (Nordic Saami Council before 1992), as well as national and regional Sámi associations and language centers, cultural centers and other local centres of competence, programs and the like. It becomes important to continue regularly manage these stakeholders through dissemination of research findings, involvement and partnering in priority discussions, contact meetings, visits for exchanging information and discuss priority issues. The Sami Parliaments and their joint parliamentary council are critical stakeholders both by interest, but also in terms of power as they contributes with formal legitimacy and funding. As such the management in this field must



continue be more formal as to build and maintain legitimacy to gain political support, funding support and positive reputation. On this social and political Sami arena it is important to present research initiatives, discuss and plan involvement and disseminations of research findings.

## 4. NORDIC UNIVERSITY CO-OPERATION

*Please list your main university partners in the Nordic countries? What type of co-operation do you have with them?*

FINLAND: Giellagas Institute at the University of Oulu; University of Lapland; University of Tampere; University of Helsinki; University of Jyväskylä

SWEDEN: University of Umeå, University of Uppsala; Luleå University of Technology; University of Stockholm

NORWAY: University of Bergen; University of Oslo; Arctic University of Norway UIT; University of Nordland; The Nord-Trøndelag University College

ICELAND: Iceland Academy of Art.

DENMARK: University of Greenland, Nuuk

Sámi research has always had an international character in a cross-border context. This is obvious among the academic staff of both the former NSI and the present SUC: about half part of Sámi University College's academic staff come outside Norway, and an extensive and active research professional networks throughout the Nordic countries, Europe, Russia and in other countries have been an important prerequisite for a successful research work. It is worth mentioning that in addition to research, also educational programs and teaching have being carried out by SUC with the help of an extraordinary wide international collaboration, which include Nordic and many other European countries (Germany, Austria, UK, Scotland, Russia) and Canada and the USA. One of the most well established collaborations in the field of Sámi linguistics and literature is between Sámi University College and The Giellagas Institute, University of Oulu, Finland. This institute is a close and settled collaboration partner not only in research but also in every level of teaching of the Sámi language and literature at SUC. This collaboration includes exchange of academic staff with Giellagas in a very flexible way: researchers and teachers of both institutions teach every year in both places, thus contributing to a good synergy, efficient use of common academic resources, and good quality of education. That binds academic staff and students together regardless of the country, and it makes possible that researchers, teachers and students in all levels get new impulses across national and institutional borders. There are similar connections also between Sámi University College and the universities of Tromsø, Helsinki and Uppsala.

High quality international collaboration is characteristic to all research fields and disciplines at SUC. One extremely important challenge and motivation for Sámi researchers is to publish their research results in the Sámi language. The Sámi researchers have developed research terminologies for many different branches of research, such as linguistics, study of literature, anthropology, philosophy, history, technology (especially language technology), biology, traditional knowledge, history of religions, onomastics, sociolinguistics, just to mention some. Development of new research terminologies and ways of expression melts together the high level of research and higher education. Many times newly published research articles become immediately curriculum literature for higher education, because academic textbooks suitable for education in Sámi barely exist. In this field, Sámi University College together with University of Tromsø has in over 20 years had a common project to edit and publish the only one in the world research journal in the Sámi language, *Sámi dieđalaš áigečála* (SDÁ). This is an academic periodical that publishes articles, book reviews etc. on a wide range of topics, originally written in any of the Sámi languages. All articles have English summaries. Established in 1994, *Sámi dieđalaš áigečála* is published by the Sámi University College and the Centre for Sami Studies at the University of Tromsø. In the Norwegian register of scientific journals and publishers, *Sámi dieđalaš áigečála* is ranged as a second level publication, which is the more prestigious level in this register (<http://dbh.nsd.uib.no>). Articles published in the SDÁ represent a broad scale of research fields. The authors come from different Nordic countries and “abroad” (outside the Nordic countries). Sámi University College’s contribution to this journal has been the editor-in-chief and two members of the editorial board, while UiT has had other members of the editorial board and the editorial secretary.

Sámi University College’s language and literature development works in research and teaching – and many times especially research based teaching and teaching in research – are on daily basis in cooperation with leading researchers and teachers of Norway and the other Nordic countries, and in addition to the research about the Sámi research, there is in the research environment tens of other international research and development contacts and more or less well established collaboration projects in ordinary linguistics, linguistic and sociological research fields and literature research regarding other North Europe minority languages and the indigenous communities of the whole world. On top of the position Sámi University College’s professor II (Kamil Özerk and Satu Gröndahl) have, it is noticeable that also the Sámi University College professors (Hirvonen, Oskal, Ylikoski) have similar affiliations to UiT Arctic University, and also many more of the academic staff at Sámi University College work in different research, teaching and instruction roles on other universities and colleges. Ordinary participation on different national and international scientific symposiums and conferences is also part of the ordinary work for the academic staff of the Sámi University College; Sámi University College’s central role as a founder of the Sámi language and literature symposium is mentioned in the report of Butenschøn committee:

"Actions that can be implemented within the existing financial constraints: A permanent conference series is established for Sámi language as a collaborative initiatives between universities, university colleges and other centers of expertise. A template for this type of conferences can be the "Sámegiela ja sámii girjjálašvuođa symposia" (Symposium on Sámi language and literature) organized by Sami University College." (*Langs lange spor*, p 18)



*What has worked well and what has not worked so well in Nordic university co-operation in your field (strengths and weaknesses)? Please provide concrete examples.*

An informal Nordic Sámi research network was established some 15 years ago, including Universities of Oulu, Umeå and Tromsø, and Sámi University College. This network has resulted in many bigger research conferences, organized in rotation by the above mentioned institutions, either alone or two or three institutions together. One of the biggest conferences of this kind was organised in Umeå in 2005, another one was in Enare in 2013, and the next one is planned to be conducted in 2016, in Umeå. The network is operating on the level of leadership of the university departments responsible for Sámi research, and the leadership of Sámi University College. These conferences are very attractive for all researchers - Sámi, Nordic and international - who are involved in Sámi research. Conferences create arenas and meeting places, where the newest research findings and approaches can be presented and discussed, and priority is given to research topics, approaches and theories which are considered to be relevant for Sámi societies across national borders. Thematic scope of these conferences reflects academic freedom in indigenous and Sámi research, which is not determined or limited by any political and administrative system. This partnership has not been formalised by any formal agreements. Nevertheless, this is a good example of an informal but highly productive Nordic Sámi research collaboration.

Cooperation on *Sámi dieđalaš áigečála* (SDÁ), Sámi research journal with single blind referee, is an example of a constant, loyal and productive collaboration, not only Nordic, but also international one. The SDÁ cooperation was initiated in 1992 by the former Nordic Sami Institute, University of Tromsø and Sámi University College, and resulted in publication of the first SDÁ in 1994. Collaborative editorial work has continued until the present day, but now it is based on the University of Tromsø, Centre for Sami Studies, and Sámi University College. The SDÁ accepts research articles, which are originally written in one of the Sámi languages. Until now, there have been published articles in North, Lule and South Sámi. Through over 20 years of the editorial work, editorial board has included many researchers with the Nordic background and education from many different institutions in all Nordic countries. By the course of its history, the SDÁ's editorial boards have developed an extensive list of experts to be contacted for the referee purposes. The list includes experts from Finland, Norway, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Canada, USA (among others). Through this 20 years long editorial work, the SDÁ has become an attractive and professional research journal which has in practice developed Sámi as a language of research and research dissemination. Taking into consideration that Sámi writing culture is very young (less than 40 years with the present official orthography) and that academic writing in Sámi is even younger, one can see that work with the Sámi academic with tradition is still in progress. It might be considered as weakness, looking from the point of view of the established mainstream academy, which has many hundred years history and its established and large academic institutions. General academic standards and research ethics are without doubt applied to the young Sámi research journal, but one can not demand the same level of development of academic writing and research discussions as one is accustomed to in the mainstream academy. This means that SDÁ has been used to publish different academic opinions even though if the referee might have disagreed with the point of view or the argumentation of the writer. SDÁ has promoted academic freedom, and



has been a platform to bring points of view which might differ from the established academic opinions, both in the mainstream academy and in the indigenous research in general.

It is worth mentioning that Sámi University College has a national responsibility in Norway to promote and develop Sámi as a language of research. Continuation of editorial work on SDÁ has been one of the means of language development and building of Sámi academy.

The research series *Dieđut* is a multi-disciplinary research series established by the Nordic Sami Institute in 1974. The former NSI and nowadays SUC has published their research findings in this research series: both collections of articles and monographs in the social sciences, linguistics, law and other research fields. *Dieđut* also carries book and article reviews. *Dieđut* have been published in Sami, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, English and Russian languages. Sámi University College has since 2012 had a strategic objective to develop this research series into a higher level of academic publications by the establishment of a referee system. This objective has been shown to be difficult to reach, primarily because of the limited resources, but this strategic goal is included in the Strategic Plan of the institution which lasts until 2016. Sámi University College is working on this issue, and is considering possibilities to develop *Dieđut* into an international Sámi research series, jointly edited by different Sámi institutions. The argumentation in favor of this solution has been an increasing interest by researchers from many Nordic and other (international) institutions to publish their manuscripts and research findings in the *Dieđut* series. The main purpose of this research series has been to serve as a dissemination channel for researchers, projects and networks connected to or run by Sámi University College. This might be considered as a limitation. Opening up *Dieđut* for the wider research circles requires the establishment of a permanent editorial board. This issue is under consideration, and the Nordic cooperation is to be considered.

Sámi University College's academic staff is attractive in an academic sense for bigger universities, research institutes, research networks etc. for participation in many multidisciplinary projects primarily because of unique competence in many research fields. Also command of several Sámi languages in writing and orally among our academic staff has been very much appreciated by the mainstream institutions of higher education and research in the Nordic and European countries, and in the Americas, as well as among our partner institutions in the international indigenous research networks. Competence and expertise of our academic staff in the Nordic, international and indigenous context has to be considered as strength. Nevertheless, competition between institutions both nationally and internationally, might weaken collaboration. Larger institutions tend to allocate resources for fundraising to their new research projects, inviting member of our academic staff to the projects, which are primarily developed by these larger institutions themselves. Limitation in such processes is that Sámi University College's academic staff might not have much influence in the development of research ideas and projects as a whole. As an indigenous institutions of higher education and research, Sámi University College value self-determination in research and equal participation in the development of research projects.

Nordic and national Norwegian regulations might be challenging for our Nordic profile. According to funding regulations for the Norwegian higher education and research, institutions get credits (and increasing budget) for every PhD student who get his/her doctoral degree at the Norwegian university. Our PhD-students are financed by SUC, about

75 percent of our PhD students defend their doctoral dissertations at the Finnish or Swedish university. SUC does not get any credits for this Nordic profile.

As to the research infrastructure, Diehtosiida (where Sámi University College is situated) gives excellent environment for research activities. Diehtosiida is one of the best facilities and infrastructures in Finnmark, Northern Norway, as well in the northernmost parts of Finland and Sweden, to serve as a conference venue, as a place for creative workshops, field work and other research activities in unique and authentic Sámi language environment. This is to be considered as the strength of Sámi University College.

*Do you have any suggestions of how to develop Nordic university co-operation in your field?*

Nordic university collaboration is crucial for Sámi research, but involvement of specialised indigenous institutions of higher education and research is an absolute prerequisite of a successful development of Sámi research internationally. Continuation of the informal Nordic Sámi research network, Nordic Sámi symposia, joint Master programs, collaborative PhD courses and research training, collaboration in editorial work - these are some of the means to further develop Nordic and international collaboration.

As suggested by the Butenschøn committee the establishment of a Nordic Sámi research network is needed and desirable:

"Measures that go beyond existing financial framework - priority list: [...] A network for Sámi Research is established (cf. the Indigenous Network, Urfolksnettverket, see 4.3.3). Such a network must be secured satisfactory financing, continuity and have a binding character for the cooperating parties. Once the network is established nationally, it should actively seek cooperation with research groups / institutions in the other Nordic countries." (*Langs lange spor*, p 19)

## 5. FUTURE PLANS

*What kind of plans do you have for your activities and funding sources from 2017 onwards? What are your main strategic priorities?*

The current Strategic plan is for the period from 2012 until 2016, and a new Strategic plan for the period 2017-2021 will be developed and approved by the Board of SUC next year. The contract with NCM is valid until 2016, with given research topics and priorities. It is



crucial for the future of Sámi research that SUC can continue its research activities with the funding support from NCM.

In the nearest future, Sámi University College will further strengthen its Sámi and indigenous research profile. The long-term strategic priorities in the next 10 years can be roughly presented as follows:

- To shape and establish a Sámi Center of Excellence in indigenous knowledge, in close collaboration with the relevant Nordic and international institutions. The concept of the Center shall be based on a holistic Sámi approach to language, traditions, means of livelihood, cultural expressions, society, tradition knowledge, including topics that are relevant to Sámi societies across national borders, to Sámi children, youth and the elderly etc.
- Multidisciplinary research that is focused on specific geographic areas defined on the basis of Sámi understanding of belonging and frontiers, including traditional Sámi perception of cross-border linguistic territories, customary rights according to traditional Sámi areas and means of livelihood, family and societal relationships etc.
- Doctoral program in Sámi language and literature
- Joint Nordic Master program in Sámi language, literature, culture and history.
- Language use in Sápmi: starting from language acquisition to terminology work and language care, active language use and language training at all levels, from the beginning to the advanced level.
- Development of Sámi as a language of research and the academic work.
- Further development and application of indigenous methodologies into Sámi research.
- To strengthen indigenous university collaboration in the frames of the WINU (World Indigenous Nation Virtual University Network, initiated by WINHEC) through the establishment of the WINU Academic Office, run by Sámi University College, and focusing on cooperation both in research and education, especially on new PhD programs and research training.

The NCM support for Sámi research has over 40 years long history of successful all-Sámi research and an enormous societal impact. The heritage of NSI cannot be abandoned but shall rather become the cornerstone for the research of a future Sámi indigenous university.

*How do you assess your ability to attract competitive funding (strengths and weaknesses?)*

The funding from NCM supports and preserves an independent Nordic Sámi institution, based on Sámi values and language. If the funding would be announced into an open competition, we see challenges, as we have experienced challenges in other open competitions, such as the Sámi program of the Norwegian Research Council, where the SUC projects mostly are neglected, even when they are evaluated with high scores.

**Strengths:**

NSI, as the only Sámi academic institution in the 1970's, was established to cover the knowledge needs of the Sámi and Sámi speaking society in the Nordic countries. NSI was fully financed by NCM, and did accumulate external funding. Through co-organizing with NSI, SUC have been able to carry out this Nordic Sámi research tradition, for the best of the Sámi society. No one other research institution has the same mandate. SUC is located in the Sámi speaking area where Sámi is a majority language, although considered as a highly threatened language in the world scale.

**Weaknesses:**

Sámi University College sees its role as a servant of the Sámi society and especially the Sámi speaking society. Knowledge needs of the majority societies have also to be taken into consideration. National and Nordic research funding might not be able to reflect the basic value of our indigenous institution, as to serve the Sámi society in the first place.

*What type of funding instrument(s) (fixed-term, competitive) would be best suited for your purposes?*

The best suited funding instrument would be to have a long-term and predictable funding from NCM to Sámi research at SUC. The Board of Sámi University College has stated in its decision 53/14 that it is an unquestionable need for a special political process concerning the future of the heritage of the Nordic Sami Institute, as mentioned in the decision to matter 76/13 of Ämbetsmannakommittén för Utbildning och forskning (ÄK-U) in December 13th 2013:

“Give Nordforsk the task in the 2014/2015 to make a strategic research policy analysis and valuation of which subjects/fields/areas should be prioritized in Nordic research collaboration in the future, including the activities of the Nordic co-operation bodies. Such an analysis may result in that the Nordic Sámi Institute (NSI) may need special political treatment within the MR-U / EK-U.” (abstracts from Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U) 13.12.2013)

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**Links to documents referred to in the text**

- [http://www.galdu.org/govat/doc/1305\\_kuellnegk\\_nearik\\_declaration\\_final.pdf](http://www.galdu.org/govat/doc/1305_kuellnegk_nearik_declaration_final.pdf),
- <https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dokumenter/stmeld-nr-34-2002-/id196279/?q=Samisk+universitet&docId=STM200120020034000DDDEPIS&ch=1>
- [https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kd/vedlegg/forskning/rapporter/langs\\_lange\\_spor\\_.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kd/vedlegg/forskning/rapporter/langs_lange_spor_.pdf)
- <http://www.norden.org/sv/nordiska-ministerraadet/ministerraad/nordiska-ministerraadet-foer-utbildning-och-forskning-mr-u/nordiska-aembetsmannakommitten-foer-utbildning-och-forskning-aek-u/moeten/moete-i-aembetsmannakommitten-foer-utbildning-och-forskning-den-11-december-2013>

## FACT SHEET OF THE NORDIC CO-OPERATION BODY:

Sámi University College, Sámi allaskuvla, Samisk høgskole (see further: SUC)

REPORTING PERIOD: 1.1.2010 – 31.12.2014

PLACE AND DATE: Guovdageaidnu, Norway 28.2.2015

NAME AND TITLE OF RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR OF THE CO-OPERATION BODY:

University College Director Máren Palismaa

## 1. PERSONNEL OF THE NORDIC CO-OPERATION BODY

*List the name and position of current key staff members of the Nordic co-operation body (including permanent and fixed term research staff, administrative staff etc.) Add rows to the table, if needed. Please provide brief cv's (max 3 pages) for key staff members.*

Name of key staff	Position
Ante Aikio	Professor
Sigmund Grønmo	Professor
Gunvor Guttorm*	Professor
Vuokko Hirvonen*	Professor
Ole Henrik Magga*	Professor
Nils Oskal*	Professor
Jon Todal*	Professor
Kamil Z Øzerk	Professor
Asta Balto*	Professor
Nils Ivar S Dannemark	Professor
Satu Mirjami Grøndahl*	Professor
Seija Risten Somby	Dean
Mai Britt Utsi*	Dean
Lars Johan Strömgren	Dean
Kaisa Rautio Helander*	Associate Professor
Riitta Johanna Johansen Ijäs	Associate Professor
Johan Klemet Kalstad*	Associate Professor
Pigga Päivi Kristiina Keskitalo	Associate Professor
Lia C Maria Markelin	Associate Professor
Ylva Jannok Nutti	Associate Professor
Nils Johan Päiviö*	Associate Professor
Torkel Rasmussen	Associate Professor