



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

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## GOVERNING DOCUMENT

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Replaces/repeals the following documents: –

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Appendix to: Vice-Chancellor's decision of 27 January 2014

## Policy for drawing up partnership agreements with foreign universities and institutions

## Introduction

As part of its activities, SLU establishes various kinds of collaboration with foreign/external parties. These collaborations span a broad field – everything from collaborations at individual level between researchers and teachers at SLU and colleagues at one or several foreign universities, to partnership agreements at university level between SLU and other universities.

Depending on the kind of collaboration in question, it may be necessary to draw up a written partnership agreement. In some cases, such as with regard to teaching collaborations that will result in a joint degree, there are clear legal requirements in terms of what needs to be regulated in a written agreement (see the *Guidelines for joint degrees at SLU*). In other cases, there are specific agreement templates that must be used, for example for the EU framework programme. In most cases, however, it is up to the partners to draw up the partnership agreement themselves, taking into account any requirements/preferences from their respective home university/institution.

The purpose of this document is to establish procedures for the type of partnership agreements to be concluded, when and by whom, and how the partnership agreements are to be formulated and administered.

## Reasons for international collaboration

The purpose of entering into international collaborations with other universities or institutions should be to:

- Enhance the international dimension, achieve mutual exchange of experiences and perspectives, and to raise the quality and utility of activities – in accordance with SLU's current strategy;
- Contribute to the development of capacity in low-income countries – in accordance with SLU's specific strategy for global development.

## Criteria for evaluating potential partners

Anyone who is planning or considering drawing up a partnership agreement with an international partner should evaluate their potential partner on the basis of a number of criteria:

- *Strategy and policy* – should be well aligned with that of SLU and your own faculty/department.
- *Reputation and quality* – SLU's profile is promoted through its partners, so it is important that the collaboration strengthens rather than weakens SLU's brand.
- *Deepening/formalising contacts with priority universities in accordance with SLU's current strategies* – deepening/broadening existing collaborations.

- *Demand* from students, teachers and/or researchers at SLU.
- *Administrative processes and national regulations* – can affect how well the collaboration functions.
- *For educational collaborations: accreditation of the university in its home country* – important to have reliable information about quality.
- *Administrative capacity* – that both partners have administrative support available.
- *Mutual benefit* – what each university will get out of a potential collaboration.
- *Ethical guidelines* – consideration of the extent to which the partner's core values are consistent with those of SLU.
- *Regulation of liability issues* – if this is unclear or risky, collaboration should not be entered into.

## Different kinds of partnership agreement

There are many different names for partnership agreements. The following three should be used in written agreements concluded within the framework of SLU's organisation.

*Letter of Intent (LoI)*. A document describing a statement of intent to begin collaboration between two or more parties.

*Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)*. A declaration of intent that, without specifying any financially or legally binding conditions, outlines the framework for a planned collaboration and a formulated consensus on future liability, undertakings, activities, etc.

*Agreement*. A legally binding agreement that also regulates the terms of a collaboration between two or more parties.

*Partnership agreement* will continue to be used in this document as the collective term for these three types of written agreements.

## Who concludes a partnership agreement?

Partnership agreements that cover the activities of:

1. several of the university's faculties are concluded centrally;
2. individual faculties or departments are concluded at faculty or department level.

The level at which the partnership agreement is to be concluded, and how binding it is, determines which of the various officials at SLU must sign it. As a rule, the Vice-Chancellor only signs in accordance with point 1 above, or when the collaboration is strategically important for SLU and/or involves some form of commitment for the university as a whole (see also the *Vice-Chancellor's delegation of authority*). In some cases, however, a strong request/demand may be made by the partner or those around it

for the Vice-Chancellor to sign a partnership agreement on behalf of SLU, even in relation to individual research collaborations. In such cases, an LoI/MoU approving the development of collaboration can be used.

Note that it is always SLU that enters into partnership agreements, even if the work on an agreement is initiated by an individual researcher, or the agreement itself has taken place at individual level, such as with colleagues at other institutions. It is therefore never the individual researcher who signs a partnership agreement on behalf of SLU, but the person who is entitled to represent the department, faculty or university, that is:

- The heads of department sign on behalf of the departments.
- The deans sign on behalf of the faculties.
- The Vice-Chancellor signs on behalf of the university.

Irrespective of the category (1 or 2 above) and of who has signed, **all partnership agreements must be registered and archived (with the exception of any confidential partnership agreements). A copy of the partnership agreement must be sent to [samarbetsavtal@slu.se](mailto:samarbetsavtal@slu.se)** for registration in SLU's partnership agreement database.

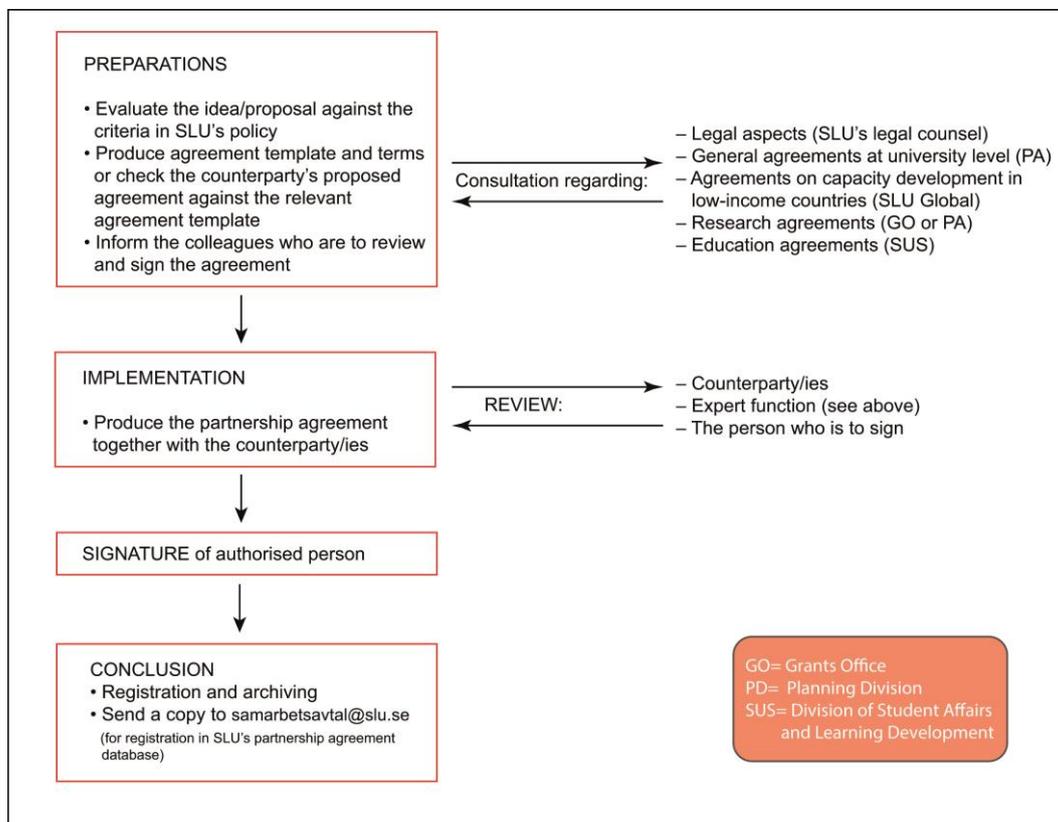
## Collaborations with regulated agreements

In a number of collaboration areas, the written partnership agreements are regulated by Swedish law. In others, specific agreement templates must be used. All partnership agreements must be examined by SLU's legal counsel at the earliest possible opportunity. The organisational units to be involved, in addition to the legal counsel, in agreement work relating to international collaboration can be seen in the table below.

Collaboration area	Responsibility (organisational unit)
Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First-cycle/second-cycle</li> <li>• Third-cycle</li> <li>• Student exchanges</li> <li>• Joint/double degree</li> </ul>	Division of Student Affairs and Learning Development (SUS)
EU cooperation and mobility programme for education (Erasmus+)	Division of Student Affairs and Learning Development (SUS)
EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020)	Grants Office (GO)
Other research collaboration involving more than one faculty	Planning Division (PD)
Capacity development in low-income countries	SLU Global
General partnership agreements at university level	Planning Division (PD)

## Workflow

The figure below shows the procedure for developing/working on international partnership agreements within the framework of activities at SLU.



## Other instructions

Agreement templates and other documents developed by SLU's legal counsel to support agreement work can be found on the staff web (<https://internt.slu.se/sv/stod-och-service/avtal-och-juridik/avtalshantering/>).

For further information about agreement work for educational collaboration involving a joint degree, see the *Guidelines for joint degrees at SLU*.

([https://internt.slu.se/Documents/internwebben/internationellt/Int\\_utbyten\\_kontakter\\_dokument/Riktlinjer\\_gemensam\\_examen\\_REB\\_beslut\\_bilaga.pdf](https://internt.slu.se/Documents/internwebben/internationellt/Int_utbyten_kontakter_dokument/Riktlinjer_gemensam_examen_REB_beslut_bilaga.pdf)).