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INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSALS ON RESEARCH COLLABORATION TO THE BARENTS INSTITUTE, KIRKENES, NORWAY



Master Student Essays

A proposal on a Master of Arts or Science project aiming for inclusion in the research programme of the Barents Institute (BAI), should state a project title and describe a viable and original research plan. The BAI is not a research funding council, it is an active research institute; the topic of your proposal should fall within the research field of interest to the institute, see our web pages for general information on this. We prefer that you write in English and may offer assistance with professional proof-reading. The final essay should contain a short overview of previous research on the subject and needs references, by footnotes or endnotes, made according to an internationally accepted system. It should end with a list of the sources and literature used in the essay. Further advice on this as well as on your choice of topic can be given on request.

The MA project must be approved at a department of an acknowledged university in Scandinavia, Russia or elsewhere. The final exam of the thesis is the responsibility of this university. A copy of a document issued by the university confirming the acceptance of the project, specifying host department and a supervisor, should be part of the proposal sent to the BAI.

In case your project is accepted by the BAI it will decide what it will offer you to facilitate your research, such assistance will be done for free and may consist of: advice on literature, sources, informants and expertise; cross-border contacts, temporary office in Kirkenes; allowance for travels and accommodation needed for your research in the Barents Region, opportunity for you to present your research when in progress for scrutiny at a seminar of the BAI. If accepted for support we would like you to offer the final essay for on-line publications at our web-site.

We suggest that you organise your proposal under the headlines marked in bold below. If you need further guidance consider the points listed under each of these headlines and comment on them in your proposal. This is just a check-list, you need not discuss all aspects, and you are free to add others that are relevant to the subject you have in mind. Welcome to apply to: post@barentsinstitute.org

Barents Institute

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Abstract (max 1/2 page)

Table of Content (if the proposal is more than five pages)

Introduction: Short background, the problem, hypotheses, the originality of your research, the uses and interests of the intended/possible/ results, the ways in which these may surpass common knowledge on the subject.

State of Research: Undertake a bibliographic search on your subject and try to give an overview of the relevant international and regional/special language/ literature on it. State of the art in the methodological approach you consider to apply. The knowledge gap you would like to fill.

Methods:

Your choice of research approach, theoretical background, quantitative and/or qualitative methods. Research strategy. Research design. Could your research benefit from discussing it in a wider research network of the Barents Region? Could a cross-border comparative perspective in the Barents Region or the circumpolar Arctic contribute to the project?

Operationalisations: Define your most important concepts in case they are not self-evident. How will your questions be possible to address, and ultimately to answer, within the time available for the project? How well will your measurements, experiments, interviews, interpretations, and when relevant: statistical, logical or cultural analysis, reflect the phenomenon(s) you intend to describe? Sources of error? Possible other explanations to an outcome than (variations in) the factors under scrutiny?

Empiric observations and materials:

Inventory of possible research materials: archives, public and private records and statistics: physical or digital, data bases (possibilities of access, applications for permits, copyright); published materials: library resources, information retrieval and analysis in bibliographic databases, museum collections.

Interviews: design of questionnaires, conceive of informants, representativity of your informants to answer your questions with regards to social categories such as gender, minorities, inclusion of indigenous people and local residents. How to find informants, their willingness, availability and personal motivation to participate, ethics in approach and involvement of informants in your research, proper handling of the resulting information, feed-back to informants and out-reach to the public, bias from interests and lack of interests of informants to participate, possible systematic tendency in those declining to participate. Distortion by ideological and cultural bias and attitudinal and perceptual expectations of the interviewer and researcher.

Field work: travels, logistics and safety, need of visa, permits to visit private or public areas of interest to the research, restricted access due to military, border or environmental regulations, professional codes and laws on the protection of nature and cultural monuments to be observed, methods of documentation: GIS, photography, notes, recordings.

Your research timeline and plan of work:

Including the date on which you plan to start your research and that of completion of the essay.

References:

List of the literature used in the proposal and of direct importance to your subject.