

# NorfAsia Research School

## ***Societal Dynamics, Cooperation and Conflict in Asia – A Graduate School in Asian Studies for the Social Sciences and the Humanities***

**Purpose** - *NorfAsia* is a planned Nordic graduate school in Asian Studies. The school shall strengthen the education and training of doctoral candidates within the social sciences and the humanities. *NorfAsia* will provide advanced training in understanding and analysing contemporary Asia with special reference to political, social, economic and cultural dynamics and contexts. Through its initiatives and co-ordination, *NorfAsia* will contribute to developing a human resource base for future Nordic Asia research which is also relevant to public institutions, the business sector and the broader society.

**Background** - Research, education and training environments for Asian Studies in the Nordic countries are generally small and scattered. As far as research training is concerned, they need collaboration in order to provide enough synergy with the main disciplines as well as critical mass of activities and doctoral candidates with shared interests.

**Strategy** - *NorfAsia* will focus on societal dynamics, conflict and human security in contemporary Asia. It will give priority to history, politics and culture and will work at different levels in Asia, i.e. village, sub- region, nation, and wider regions. It will also promote a comparative approach. In view of the importance of the resource base for the emergence of conflicts, this dimension will also be included. *NorfAsia* will pursue an interdisciplinary approach and, geographically, it will deal with modern East Asia, South East Asia, and South Asia. Central Asia is important in this context for its interactions with the other regions. *NorfAsia* will take a value-adding approach to enhance existing research education in the relevant disciplines, while also providing complementary supervision and training in specific Asian Studies disciplines. The school will be robustly networked in the Nordic region, including the Adjacent Areas, as well as internationally. It will be a virtual institution where students will be inscribed with their own institutions that have the authority to examine and award degrees.

**Partners, organisation and management** - the large majority of Nordic Asia research environments in the humanities and the social sciences will be partners in *NorfAsia*. The partners will elect a Board and invite the existing Nordic research schools in Asian studies in Sweden and Finland to join the Board. The faculty of *NorfAsia* will comprise of leading Nordic and international scholars. Professor Björn Hettne, Department of Peace and Development Research, University of Gothenburg, will be the Director of *NorfAsia*. The administration will be based at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen.

**Beneficiaries** - It is expected that about 40 PhD students will be inscribed at any time during the first five-year phase. Departments in relevant universities in the Nordic countries will thus get access to research education otherwise only obtainable at very few universities outside the Nordic Region. Finally, the academic and business communities will benefit from access to a strong human resource base for developing Asia related research.

**Time frame** – The application will be delivered to NORFA on 20 June. *NorfAsia* will start up on 1 January 2004. The first phase will last until 2008.

*Gothenburg and Copenhagen, 30 April 2003*