

# Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

Erasmus+: Higher Education – Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Brussels,  
EACEA/A3/KH/ (2015) 564530

Prof. Francisco José Mora Mas  
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España

**Subject:** Erasmus+: Key Action 1 – Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMDs)  
Call for proposals 2015 (EAC/A04/2014)

**Title:** PlantHealth - European Master degree in PLANT HEALTH IN SUSTAINABLE  
CROPPING SYSTEMS

**Ref.:** 564530-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA1-JMD-MOB  
(Please quote this number in all correspondence)

Dear Francisco José Mora Mas,

You have submitted an application to the Erasmus+ programme, 2015 call for proposals for the Action specified above. The call for proposals closed on 04 March 2015. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) received 76 applications for this call.

A panel of external experts assisted the Evaluation Committee in the assessment of your application against the award criteria specified in the call for proposals. The selection decision is based on the quality of the proposal, its relative position in comparison with the other proposals submitted and the budget available. Applications were assessed on a scale from 0 to 100 points and were ranked according to merit.

As a result, the funding threshold has been set at 79/100 points.

I am pleased to inform you that your application received **79/100 points** and has therefore been selected for EU co-funding. The maximum amount of budget to be awarded to your project is **2.760.000 Euro** which corresponds to **43 Heading 1 EMJMD scholarships (4 Programme Country + 39 Partner Country)** and to **11 Heading 4 EMJMD scholarships**.

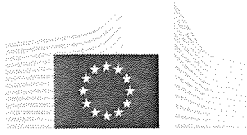
For your information, out of the 76 applications, 15 have been selected for funding, and 4 have been placed on a reserve list.

The list of all selected projects will be published on the following website of the Executive Agency when all applicants have been notified about the selection results:  
[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/selection-results\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/selection-results_en)

Attached to this letter you will find an evaluation report based on the opinion of the external experts. Please take into account that most of the evaluation reports were written by non-native speakers. The Executive Agency will not elaborate further on these assessments.

It is very important that you provide us with the link to your EMJMD project website as soon as this is available, so that this link can also be published on the Agency's website. If you have amendments to make to the project description after publication, please let us know via the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees functional mailbox:

[EACEA-EPLUS-JMD@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EACEA-EPLUS-JMD@ec.europa.eu).



We would also like to inform you about the organisation of the 2015 EMJMDs Coordinators' meeting for newly-selected projects which will take place in Brussels during two consecutive days in the first half of November. A full programme of the event and practical information will follow in due time. Please note that for organisational reasons we cannot allow the participation of more than two representatives of your project. Your travel and accommodation costs should be covered from the project management lump-sum included in your project budget, subject to the signature of the Grant Agreement.

This letter does not represent a financial or legal commitment of the Executive Agency. The offer of an award is confirmed only when the legal representative of the Executive Agency signs the Grant Agreement associated with this application.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely,

Klaus HAUPT  
Head of Unit

Annexes:

- Evaluation report – Comments and recommendations from the academic experts who assessed your proposal
- Information for applicants about PIC validation process (if relevant)

Cc: (by email) Prof. Josep Armengol  
jarmengo@eaf.upv.es

Evaluation Report

Proposal number:	564530-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA1-JMD-MOB
Proposal title:	PlantHealth - European Master degree in PLANT HEALTH IN SUSTAINABLE CROPPING SYSTEMS
Coordinator:	Josep Armengol
Applicant organisation:	UNIVERSITAT POLITECNICA DE VALENCIA

**Award Criteria**

**A.1 Relevance of the project**

The main structural feature of this EMJMD is the number of associated partners listed as participating organisations (37 institutions), cooperating with 6 partners organisations from 4 Members States (Spain, France, Germany and Italy). While the partners' organisations are all from academia, the associated partners are very diverse and include public and private organisations, research institutions and industries. The geographical coverage is assured by the composition of the associated partners. The scope of the programme is scientifically and technologically relevant, with potential impact at national, European and international levels. The 6 lead HEIs have specific expertise in crop protection, agronomy, plant biology and entomology, which provides for significant opportunities for synergies and complementarities. The specific expertise of the lead applicants, combined with their specialisms, at this stage does indeed indicate a high degree of jointness and integration. A good description of the high level structure of the course, its use of specialist researchers and links with industry has also been provided. Further specific information on the design of the course beyond the initial orientation week and involvement of second and third year students during this week would have provided further confidence on the integration of the programme. While the expertise and role of each institution in the partnership is given, the rationale for joining these partners' organisations to offer training in sustainable cropping systems is not sufficiently explained. French institutions are over-represented and will be those that together will deliver a joint master degree. The other partners are involved in courses and internships and the executive committee for management of the contents. The type of degree to be awarded is not sufficiently explained. The mutual recognition of the degrees awarded and the diploma supplements expected to be issued require further clarification within the legal frame of the partners' organisations. Measures for implementation of the course (e.g. management procedures, recruitment strategy, joint application, selection and admission of students) are well outlined. Additional outreach activities (e.g. website, handbook) are positive elements of the programme. The EMJMD programme will provide to students a sound knowledge of all plant health aspects during first year. During the second year study, the students will have the specialization on the topic of interest by selecting the university.

The EMJMD proposal is timely and relevant to an important problem for today's Europe – to train a new generation of European and Third Countries specialists with competencies in contemporary and future plant health management related to global food safety and security issues and to be able to work in diverse sectors of plant health management. As such, the proposal is relevant to achieve the objectives of the action, as it will contribute to the education of young professionals, in parallel with students training in a thematic field of high environmental and socio-economic impact. Each of the partners' institutions has specific expertise in the fields of plant health, food security and agricultural biology; indeed they run their own Masters Degrees programmes in similar and related fields without support from the Erasmus Mundus programme. It is the intention of the partners to collaborate in creating an EMJMD programme that is exceptional within Europe. The applicants have set out a series of specific objectives that they intend to enact in order to deliver the aims of the course. These objectives for the first year (M1 phase) are clear, it is stated that all teaching during this year will be delivered in English and that competency in one other European language will be fostered. Of slight concern, in terms of practical delivery of the course, is how students attending the French institutions in the 2nd year (M2 phase) will be able to cope with the change of language in instructions should their competency in this language have not reached the required standard during year 1.

The needs analysis, with regard to offering the proposed training within the frame of a master course, is not sufficiently described. Nevertheless, measures are in place to provide additional competences and transferable skills, including language courses, best practices, as well as soft skills development (e.g. oral presentations, scientific writing, bibliography search, documentation management). A relevant aspect of the proposal is the potential to offer training in plant management, which includes plant health management of field, horticultural, fruit and forest tree crops in different climate zones. The mobility scheme will offer internationalisation, bringing benefits to students, institutions and staff. Infrastructures and facilities are apparently in place to assure the adequate integration of the students during their internships. The proposed mobility plan is adequate, setting out how students and staff from the EMJMD make use of the partner organisations and links with national and international associated partners at a high level. Further specific information on how the partner organisations will interact with the lead Universities where students are enrolled in years 1 and 2 would have strengthened the proposal. Overall, the applicants have demonstrated sufficiently well that the PlantHealth EMJMD is relevant with regard to the objectives of the Action.

The capacity of the proposal to increase attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area is well demonstrated. The applicants have set out a good case explaining the need for this programme from a socio-political as well as an educational perspective. The competency of the six lead partner organisations is accepted, and the case made by the applicants of the necessity of this action in both at European and world-wide context is convincing. It is implied that through the cooperation of these leading organisations that excellent staff and students will be attracted to the programme, but further information on the specific tools that the consortium will use to deliver this aim is missing from this section of the application. The state of the art is very well presented giving examples of the current situation in the field. However, updated references to justify the way to move beyond what has been achieved so far are missing. Nevertheless, relevance is given to the proposed programme as a way to contribute to the advancement of technologies in plant health management. Associated partners may also contribute to increase attractiveness and international awareness to the programme.

The proposal provides a comprehensive analysis of the courses in similar and related fields and duly justifies its added value to the European university excellence. This new programme differs from existing programmes by offering wider education of students in fundamental knowledge and practical skills; the originality and innovative aspects of the academic programme are however not sufficiently highlighted in the proposal. There are comparable interdisciplinary programmes at other organisations in Europe being offered at present. It is noted that the extent of specific cooperation between entomology and crop protection departments from specialist departments at notable institutions, for example, is not commonplace. But nevertheless the applicants, in the completion of Table 1, have not identified any comparable courses running at other organisations in Europe. The MSc in Crop Improvement run by the University of Nottingham and the MSc in Plant Science and Biotechnology at the University of Leeds for example, both have scopes in Plant Health and Crop Protection. It is accepted that there are some significant differences in agricultural practices between organisations in the partner countries and elsewhere in Europe, but further, more detailed, analysis is needed by the applicants to ensure that the PlantHealth is sufficiently distinct from current postgraduate degree programmes. The proposal is nevertheless competitive and will take advantage of the composition of the associated partners. A major concern is the capacity of the consortium to manage a network with such dimension, in parallel with the expected closer interactions with other higher education institutions from partners' countries. An internship network between consortium and non-academic public and private sectors is foreseen; however, more details on joint cooperation, especially with institutions from Partner Countries, are needed.

The academic programme is very well presented, well balanced and timely. The topics are in line with the objectives of the master programme, which demonstrates multi/interdisciplinary of the academic course. The academic focal points of the PlantHealth proposal are threefold: (1) to develop and equip students with sound research training, (2) to instruct students in the key principles of the interdisciplinary fields that comprise modern day plant health management systems and (3) to enable students with the ability to practically deliver and apply the outcome of their learning and research. The relevance of these academic focal points is good and the specific schedule of academic courses that will be taught to EMJMD students strengthens this application against this criterion. The relevance of these courses in the context of the field of crop and plant protection is good. The integration of internships into the programme will add value to the course and likely increase student employability.

The applicants hope that students completing this degree programme will thereafter opt to continue to study at one of the partner organisations. It is also noted by the consortium that there are many employment opportunities outside of academia that will be available to graduating students, and that links with the associated partners will help expose students to these opportunities. Information has been provided by some of the partner institutions on the employability of graduates from their own degree programmes, which gives weight to the applicants' claims. The EMJMD programme structure and schedule clearly indicate that, after the finishing programme, the graduates will be able to master new developments and advance technologies in plant health management. They will be able to diagnose and identify plant health problems, analyse the causes of these problems and evaluate their environmental, economic and social consequences, conceive technically adapted, economically viable, socially acceptable, health and environment benign solutions, meeting the requirements of sustainable cropping systems as well as apply research methods, instruments and tools appropriately, use their knowledge and skills in a wide range of agricultural contexts, transfer the scientific advances to a wide range of projects and actors, at the international level and communicate fluently in at least 2 European languages. The learning outcomes are of very good quality and the students will benefit from inputs of international companies and universities. The participation of such guest lectures is to be financed by the programme. The proposal will provide to the best students the opportunity to apply for a PhD fellowship offered by associated partners from industry or research funding agencies. Additional plans for career development and employability should have been further discussed in the proposal.

The proposal is strong in the interaction with non-educational actors. The proposal clearly demonstrates close interaction between the EMJMD programme and non-educational actors will result that graduates will gain specific agricultural engineering skills requested by the labour market not found in other training programmes worldwide, while achieving cross-curricular capacities that will enable them to work in a globalised, multi-cultural, challenging world. Letters of commitment have been endorsed. The proposal will receive contribution from research institutions, industry and other international authorities acting in policy and regulation. In addition to the research institutes, the applicants have involved experts from government organisations in France and Germany who will lecture during the degree programmes and offer studentships where possible. Private organisations of some note have also been included as associated partners of the consortium, and it is reasonable to concur with the applicants that the involvement of these organisations will enhance student employability prospects. Further information on how the applicants intend to ensure the commitment of these organisations to the programme has been provided and organisations that are willing to make financial support available to some students have been identified. The intersectoral aspects of the proposal are significant. The potential for sustainability is also well demonstrated given the capacity of the consortium to establish links outside the network.

### **B.1 Quality of the project design and implementation**

This proposal is an extension of the local Master course 'Crop Protection', which will provide the expansion of scientific research and learning to other areas in this field, such as perennial field and horticultural crops, fruit and forest trees, in temperate, Mediterranean and tropical climates and serve as a unique programme offering attractive choices to excellent students from all over the world. The proposal describes the pathway to acquire knowledge in plant health over a two-year period. The first year will focus on the knowledge in all plant health aspects, and in the second year the students will have the chance to specialise in a specific topic. The consortium have highlighted that the content of this programme is unique in comparison to other master level degrees in Europe. In addition, they have identified how the structure of the teaching curriculum, the mobility of the students and the topics followed through the different semesters of study will assist in delivering this excellence. The excellence of the academic content relies on the potential of the EMJMD to produce graduate students that are able to adapt to economic and social situations in a variety of different countries. The teaching and the learning aspects of the course include problem-, project- and design-based learning. The originality aspects are in the teaching approach because traditional lectures will be accompanied with teaching activities based on case studies, which will contribute to the development of both theoretical and practical skills. The quality of the training is high but the innovative character of the proposal is not sufficiently highlighted. Although the applicants have addressed the core aspect of this criterion, further consideration of the specific academic courses to be studied and their excellence from a specific content perspective would have strengthen this aspect of the proposal. The consortium is impressive and is expected to bring a good amount of expertise in the field.

Elements of jointness of the partners in the design of the curriculum are well demonstrated. The partners have experience in teaching and research in agricultural sciences and in crop protection and demonstrate commitment to deliver a joint master degree, already accredited. The first year will be spent in Valencia and in Goettingen (the offered common education in both partners is not sufficiently clear; in section B1.3 it is mentioned that it will be alternating between both institutions every year). After that, each institution will offer a more specialised curriculum related to its expertise in specific scientific topics. Each institution will offer its expertise, and the level of participation is high. The applicants have asserted that since 2011 the teaching and administrative staffs from the HEIs that comprise this consortium have been meeting regularly in the different countries to prepare the proposal. Further information on these meetings (e.g. agendas, details of staff in attendance) could have been provided by the applicants. The applicants have provided a good account of the respective skills and expertise of the various partner institutions involved in this EMJMD. The synergies between the lead partners are set out and a robust case for the complementarity of this collaboration has been made by the applicants, highlighting in particular how ecosystem and agrosystem differences will provide students with a holistic understanding of crop protection and management. The level of participation between the partner organisations has been explained explicitly and details of the institutional commitment of each of the parties to this programme have been provided. In addition, the applicants have also highlighted the importance in the delivery of a joint degree, and have committed to do so before the end of the first funding period, which is encouraging.

The course is well described. The applicants have provided the course structure and have highlighted the main teaching modules between the M1 and the M2 study periods. The proposal provides a Gantt chart where the mobility tracks are well outlined. The proposed approach to student mobility is clearly highlighted between these two periods and the delivery of the master's thesis. Students will first attend a common orientation week that will take place alternatively in Spain and Germany. Thereafter, the students will either attend commonly run programmes taught in English, in Spain or Germany for the duration of the M1 period. For students at both partner HEIs additional language classes will be offered and the M1 period of study will conclude with an internship that will last between 2 and 4 weeks. The M2 course of study will take place in Germany, France, Italy or Spain and students having completed the M1 course of study will be offered three areas of specialisation. It is a shortcoming of this proposal that further consideration of language skills during the M1 course of study is not detailed here, as in order to opt for the specialism on tropical horticulture and temperate vegetable crops student's must have competency in French. A draft strategy for the effective involvement of visiting scholars or guest lecturers has been provided by the applicants, and sufficient information has been included to give confidence in the proposed approach. Although details of the course contents of each mobility track have been provided in Appendix 3 of the application, a description of the integration of this course within the partners' degree catalogues is missing from this part the application. Similarly, although addressed in part elsewhere in this application, no definition of the current recognition or accreditation status of this EMJMD has been provided in this part of the application. Four guest lecturers from relevant international companies and universities will be participating in the programme. While the participation of professionals from other sectors in the programme is relevant, the names are not included in the proposal. The EMJMD is well integrated within the degree catalogues of the partners and recognition is also in place. Accreditation systems in partner countries are described in detail and successful graduates will obtain a double Master degree. The consortium aims to bring the award of a joint degree before the end of the first funding period; however, how this will be achieved is insufficiently clear.

The information related to the master course will be available on the website and all the administrative issues related to the course will be provided by the administrative services in each university. Aspects related to course and modules description, examination procedures, learning outcomes, specialisation, mobility schemes, partners' information, grant support, participation costs, will be available in 5 languages of the partners' universities. Aspects related to accommodation, visa, and insurance are also mentioned. Insurance provision should be clarified with respect to granted and non-granted students. These elements will figure in the consortium agreement, which has been endorsed in the application. It is mentioned that the agreement also includes the students' rights and obligations, however these are not discussed in the award criteria. The consortium has clearly set out how the course rules and student's rights will be communicated and they also highlight that a Student Standard Agreement has been developed and adopted by the applicants. The measures for an effective integration and networking of the students within the consortium are well detailed and are effective. A secretariat will be provided to act as interlocutor to help the students and the guest lecturers.

In addition, the students will also receive an e-form guide and a handbook at the host institution. The orientation week will allow the students to meet each other and the coordinators, and receive the information about the host. No further events are planned to welcome the students arriving from different geographical areas. Academic tutors will be appointed for each year of the course. The process for appointing the tutor is not described. Other facilities include cultural integration, where the students will have the opportunity to attend exhibitions, tours, cultural excursions, as well as to make use of sports facilities and cultural activities provided in the university. Networking within the partner institutions is well planned and will allow the students to become familiar with consortium's community. The consortium will support the creation of alumni association, which will bring together previous EM experiences. Non-academia actors are however insufficiently involved into this process.

## **B.2 Quality of the project team and the cooperation arrangements**

The expertise of each partner is very well described, demonstrating that all relevant topics of the programme will be covered. The partners also demonstrate experience in teaching and in collaborating with partner institutions and professional associations. Although information relating to the complimentary skills of these organisations is also given, further detail of the synergies that exist between the lead partners could have been developed in more detail here. That said, the applicants have provided a description of how existing academic and professional cooperation arrangements have been enhanced to meet the objectives of this EMJMD and the consortium have addressed this criterion satisfactorily. The academic partnership encompasses universities working in crop protection from several countries outside Europe. It is said that the associated academic partners will participate in specific courses, e-learning modules production, host students for internships and recommend candidates for EM scholarships. However, further information is needed to clarify which partners will be hosting the students, who will be participating in the courses and which courses will receive their contribution. Partners from industry and non-educational partners also figure in the list of associated partners and their contribution is expected to increase the job opportunities of the students and introduce them also to the business sector. They will also contribute to the provision of experimental facilities. More details about the cooperation agreements between the industrial sector and the consortium are needed. The roles and the tasks of each partner and their members are well presented in the proposal. The working mechanisms will offer an effective supervision to the students. The management structure of the EMJMD programme is very well described and responsibilities of main management bodies are presented in detail. The coordinator will be responsible for the overall management of the consortium, supported by an assistant coordinator and by international and financial offices. The governing bodies also include an administrative unit, helpdesk, secretariat, and students' committee. The responsibilities are well distributed and are well balanced. The students will also participate in the coordination and implementation of the course. A Gantt chart is provided but further description is needed to understand the links between the different bodies, and a quality check body could be foreseen.

The overall budget of the course is presented and described in detail. The management will be done by the coordinator, in collaboration with an assistant coordinator and an experienced international relations correspondent. The applicants have provided a reasonable account of how student participation costs have been calculated, specifying separately costs for partner country and programme country students. They cite that these costs have been calculated by considering the following requirements: insurance, registration, tuition fees, provision of language courses, an e-learning module, student and course management, travel, registration and other academic and administrative fees. The student participation costs are at the maximum allowed under the EMJMD funding programme. The participation costs for partners' countries and for programme countries are also very well detailed. Complementary funding of the programme is proposed to be through the provision of additional unclaimed staff and faculty hours and through payment of travel costs. Further details on the financial arrangements are provided in Appendix 7 to the application.

A draft Consortium Agreement has been provided in Appendix 7 of the application pack, which references the student application, selection and admission requirements, albeit only briefly. The draft consortium agreement details all the aspects related to the student application, selection and admission procedure, as well as the student examination and performance. A grading table is provided to understand the selection process in a more transparent way. The teaching and training activities and the quality assurance mechanisms are not sufficiently discussed in this section. A diploma supplement will be awarded to EU and third-country students by all the institutions of the consortium.

### **B.3 Impact and dissemination**

All partners express a strong commitment to this programme because of its benefits for the participating institutions. The joint development and implementation of the courses will result in exchange of teaching staff, teaching techniques and thus increase the quality and diversity of teaching, pedagogy innovations of the partner institutions, as well as in programme attractiveness to the students.

A reasonably convincing mid-term and long-term development strategy has been proposed by the consortium partners. In general terms, it is hoped that by building up the reputation of the PlantHealth EMJMD programme through the activities of the graduates, this degree programme will attract support in the form of studentships and other funding from private and public organisations. This proposed approach has merit because of the existing links of the respective partner organisations. In addition, these partners already receive significant support from many private and public organisations and many of these organisations have also provided an indication of support for this application as detailed in Appendix 7 of the application. Some consideration of potential future self-funded students and ways to mobilise other funding sources for the provision of scholarships has been provided, but further information would have strengthened this proposal. It is said that most students enrolled in the existing Master courses of the consortium receive their own scholarship (government scholarships, Ministries, international associations, Eurasia) or self-pay for their studies and living expenses. Given the size of the consortium, it would be expected to have a more effective sustainability strategy for the master programme. The degree of commitment of each partners in the sustainability of the programme (beneficiaries and associated) is not sufficiently highlighted.

The benefits to the institutions enrolled in the programme encompass the potential to attract the best students from different regions of the world, to work closely with the business sector, and with new research lines. The applicants have set out that they intend to generate impact at an institutional level through this JMD in several ways. In the first instance, the consortium claims that the profile of the respective institutions involved in this JMD will benefit from the international profile of this master's degree. It has been asserted by the applicants that this international profile will provide a durable outcome that will lead to further research opportunities and closer links with industry. The case made by the applicants for generating impact, when considering the innovative aspects of this proposal, is reasonably convincing. In general terms, the internationalisation strategies of the consortium, or indeed the individual partners, has not been explicitly detailed and this application is weakened without this information. Some consideration of the synergies that will develop from international collaboration are made, but these need further explanation to be competitive with other applications received as part of this Call. The benefits to the professors and professionals include the potential to strengthen the relationships between the members. Benefits to students and to other relevant stakeholders should have been further discussed.

The strategy to promote the course is outlined and includes the use of private networks (via scientific staff of the partner institutions), homepages, education fairs and brochures. More information on the materials, documents and media produced by the course would have also been beneficial in evaluating this proposal against the criterion. Scientific and professional associations will also be involved in the dissemination of the course. The targeted groups are identified and a website referencing will be conducted, within student-, academic-, scientific- and professional networks. It is expected that the students will have a key role in the promotion of the course in their own country. While plans are in place to increase awareness of the course, the potential to attract excellent students worldwide should have been further developed.

The internal evaluation process includes the evaluation of the use of good practices and a quality assurance staff will be appointed in each university. For each partner this body is identified. In addition, students will be asked to provide feedback using anonymous questionnaires filled online in the programme website. Questionnaires are provided in annexes. Student representatives will be elected each year to interact between the student body and the academic coordinator. A Gantt chart is provided to translate the pathway of the students' evaluation of the course. Each university will organize a meeting with all modules coordinators and the academic coordinator to discuss the results of the internal evaluation. The external evaluation procedure includes the associated partners in the planning of the improvement measures following the results of the internal evaluation. Each member of the scientific committee will receive the evaluation report from each university, in order to provide solutions suggested by the consortium. Additional mechanisms for external evaluation could have been provided, in particular, the participation of national agencies and of external experts in the process.

Job opportunities are expected from the participation of private companies and professional associations in conferences and courses.



In addition, it is also foreseen that professional associations will have links to local and national companies that may contribute to employability of the students. Graduates with competencies in contemporary and future plant health management related to global food safety and security issues and the ability to work in diverse sectors of plant health management will have excellent employment possibilities. A new master's degree fills a necessary gap in current labour market, not only in Europe but worldwide. The consortium includes a series of associated partners and other organisations that could be considered as future employers of graduates from the PlantHealth EMJMD and the links with these organisations in the delivery of the course are highlighted. Specifically, the consortium have highlighted that potential employers have been involved in the course design and will be involved in the future through lecturing to students, contributing to conferences and in fieldwork. Although it is convincing that students will have their employability enhanced through interaction with these potential future employers as they participate in the EMJMD, the applicants should have further developed this aspect.

**Relevance of the project - Region 6-Asia**

The methods that the consortium intends to use to attract highly talented students from this target region are focussed on the collaboration with Kasetsart University in Thailand and Nanying University in China. The applicants propose to use these universities as the main disseminators of information about this programme and it has been proposed that these Asian HEIs will cooperate with the consortium to recruit candidates. The added value of this collaboration has been explained and the case made by the applicants is convincing.

**Relevance of the project - Region 8-Brazil, Mexico**

The applicants have provided a good argument for the cooperation of the consortium with the Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco in Brazil and have set out a convincing argument as to why students from Latin American countries should wish to enrol on this programme. The added value is fairly well explained and the complementarity of the proposed collaboration is convincing. That said the applicants have not sufficiently addressed the criterion question related to recruitment and further information on the methods used to attract highly talented individuals from this region are required to improve the applicants' score.

**Relevance of the project - Region 3-South Mediterranean Countries**

The applicants have provided a solid background to the collaboration with Ecole Nationale Supérieure Agronomique d'Alger in Algeria, Institutions de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur Agricole de Tunis and Sousse Chott-Mériem in Tunisia and Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II de Rabat in Morocco. The added value of this cooperation has been clearly explained and the case is convincing. The information available in the proposal to assess the methods used to attract highly talented individuals is however insufficient and further information would have strengthened this aspect.

**Overall comments**

This proposal is overall well presented, however certain improvements are still needed in particular with respect to the description of the legal frame of the joint master degree diploma and supplement. In addition, the mutual recognition of the degrees should be clearly described. Strong elements of the proposal are the scientific and technological quality of the academic programme, the large representation of the industry (despite concerns raised about management of the consortium) and the offered learning outcomes, competences and skills.

The EMJMD proposal is relevant with regard to learning mobility for individuals from Europe, the Partner countries and beyond, promoting specialisation in the field of plant health management, related to global food safety and food security issues. The consortium is composed of partners with high reputation in the field of plant health management and will provide students with sound knowledge of all plant health aspects. Some concerns regarding the level of integration of the existing Master degree programmes at the lead partner organisations remains. There is concern also with regard to the ability of non-French speaking students to have achieved an acceptable level of French to enable them to study in France during the second year of the EMJMD. Similarly, there is also likely to be some overlap between the degree programme offered and other degree programmes already running within Europe. That said, the argument presented by the applicants for the need for this degree programme and benefits that will result from the collaboration of these European Universities is convincing.

Similarly, the collaboration of these HEIs along with the various associated partners presents the possibility of an attractive programme. The European expertise and experience in the field of crop protection, plant health and reduction in pesticide usage is a domain which will offer many new positions in the coming years, especially in Third World countries. Rationale is given to justify the need to offer such training to the targeted regions. The added value is clearly explained, offering the potential to experience new agricultural systems. For all the targeted regions, examples are given to substantiate the cooperation of the partners with local HEIs and other institutions. The EMJMD programme consortium partners have close collaboration with universities and non-academic institutions located in different contingents, because of that the academic programme of the Master Plant Health will attract students from this regions by offering new skills for management of crop protection being attractive for all students coming from Asia, Latin America, and the ENI-South region countries such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. The master provides a specialized education on crop protection of Mediterranean crops that will make it very attractive for students coming from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, but also from other neighbouring countries in the region such as Egypt, Libya, and Lebanon. The excellence of the programme and existing collaboration between the consortium partners and universities located in different countries of Asia, East Africa and Latin America clearly demonstrates the possibility to attract the students form this countries. However, effective measures to target the best students from these regions are insufficiently discussed in the proposal.

Overall, this proposal is good with respect to the project design and implementation. The quality of the project team is high and the cooperation arrangements are well presented. The main strengths are the quality of the jointly developed curriculum and the level of the institutional commitment to the programme, as well as the course structure, joint degree and cooperation agreements. The main weaknesses are the capacity to sustain funding beyond the grant and the degree of commitment of each partner to secure additional funding and the potential to create job opportunities.

## Information for applicants about PIC validation process

Your organisation has used the EACEA Portal when submitting an application for funding. During this process your organisation received a temporary **Participant Identification Code (PIC)**.

Your organisation's data and your PIC need to be validated before the Agency can grant you EU-funding. In case your organisation holds a validated PIC, the PIC validation process described below is not relevant for your organisation.

Please note that this validation will be carried out by a central validation team of the **Research Executive Agency (REA)** and that **this team may contact you** (or has already contacted you) to ask for documents or to clarify some aspects of your organisation's data. Please do not ignore the message you receive from the Research Executive Agency (REA) validation team, because any delay in the validation process will further delay the issuing of your grant agreement. **This applies to the applicants but also to the partners involved in a project as co-beneficiaries.**

Once the validation process has started you will receive (or have already received) an automatic message from the validation team at REA. Please note that this is a standard message sent to all organisations having applied for different EU programmes; therefore, not all requested documentation is necessary to all programmes. If you have applied for an EACEA grant, the documents to be uploaded for the validation are the following:

- *The completed, dated and signed Legal Entity Form (the form corresponding to your public or private status)*
- *For "Public Entities": a copy of the resolution, law, decree, decision or any other official document establishing your organisation as a "public body". In addition, a copy of a document, proving your VAT registration or if not applicable, a legal document attesting your organisation's VAT exemption. The VAT document should have been issued recently and in any case, no more than 6 months ago;*
- *For "Private Entities": an extract of registration (or its equivalent: Company Register, Official Journal) clearly indicating the name of your organisation, the address of the head office, its registration number and a copy of an official document proving your VAT registration. These official documents should have been issued recently and in any case, no more than 6 months ago;*
- *For "Non-profit organisations", a copy of the statutes, resolution, law, decree, decision or any other official document establishing your organisation as a non-profit organisation is necessary. "Non-profit organisation" means a legal entity which by its legal form is a non-profit making and/or which has a legal or statutory obligation not to distribute profits to its shareholders or individual members. Profits have to be reinvested in the same activity of the entity or in research activities.*

If you have already uploaded the documents during the application process, your file should be complete and the validation is on-going. However, you may receive a reminder if some documents are missing.

Please note that you do not have to reply to any questions which are specific for the Research programme (for example, Small and Medium Enterprise questionnaire, FP7 or H2020 participation)

We advise you to pay particular attention to the request to fill in the documentation that will enable to nominate a Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR). Once nominated, the LEAR will be the only person authorized to change the organisation data in the portal. However, the LEAR is not necessarily the same person who will sign the Grant agreement.

We would also like to draw your attention to the fact that the messages from the REA validation team are "no-reply messages"; please do not ignore them. If you have any questions, please contact your correspondent at EACEA. Make sure that all your partners / co-beneficiaries are aware of this and are responding to the requests of the validation team.