



Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

Erasmus+: Higher Education – Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees

Brussels, ~~13~~ 07, 2016
EACEA/A3/KH/ (2016) 574434

Prof. Frédérique VIDAL
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Subject: Erasmus+: Key Action 1 – Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMDs)
Call for proposals 2016 (EAC/A04/2015)

Title: EuroAqua+

Ref.: 574434-EPP-1-2016-1-FR-EPPKA1-JMD-MOB
(Please quote this number in all correspondence)

Dear Prof. Frédérique VIDAL,

You have submitted an application to the Erasmus+ programme, 2016 call for proposals for the Action specified above. The call for proposals closed on 18 February 2016. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) received **89** eligible applications for this call.

I am writing to inform you about the selection decision taken by the Head of Department of the Executive Agency, acting in her capacity as authorising officer, based on the recommendations of an Evaluation Committee assisted by external experts, who had assessed 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, given the available budget, the funding threshold has been set at **78/100 points**.

I am pleased to inform you that your application has been selected for EU co-funding. It received **84/100 points**. For your information, out of the 89 eligible applications, **27** have been selected for funding, and **3** have been placed in 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

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.

The maximum amount of funding to be awarded to your project is **2.705.000 EUR**.

Please note that taking into account the total number of scholarship requests received and the budget available, the number of scholarships you have applied for has been revised and corresponds to **45 Heading 1 EMJMD scholarships (10 Programme Country + 35 Partner Country)** and **10 Heading 4 EMJMD scholarships**.

The process of awarding a grant can only be finalised once the Executive Agency has received and validated the **Bank Account File (BAF)** as requested in Annex 2. The BAF must be submitted within a period of 10 working days from the date of receipt of this letter and be sent to the functional mailbox: EACEA-EPLUS-EMJMD@ec.europa.eu

In addition, your organisation's data and your **Participant Identification Code (PIC)** need to be validated before the Executive Agency can grant you EU-funding (see Annex 3). In case your organisation holds a validated PIC, the PIC validation process is not relevant for your organisation.

Furthermore, 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 Executive Agency's website. If you have amendments to make to the project description after publication, please let us know via the above-mentioned EMJMD functional mailbox.

The Executive Agency organises a kick-off meeting for newly selected projects every year. We would like to inform you about the organisation of the 2016 EMJMDs Coordinators' meeting, which will take place in Brussels during two consecutive days around mid-November. Your travel and accommodation costs should be covered from the project management lump-sum, subject to the signature of the Grant Agreement. Please note that for organisational reasons we cannot allow the participation of more than two representatives of your project. A full programme of the event and practical information will follow in due time.

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:

- Annex 1: Evaluation report – Comments from the external experts who assessed your proposal
- Annex 2: Bank Account file: Financial Identification Form (FIF)
- Annex 3: Information for applicants about PIC validation process (if relevant)

Cc: (by email) **Prof. Philippe GOURBESVILLE**
philippe.gourbesville@unice.fr

Proposal number:	574434-EPP-1-2016-1-FR-EPPKA1-JMD-MOB574434-EPP-1-2016-1-FR-EPPKA1-JMD-MOB
Proposal title:	EuroAqua+
Applicant organisation:	UNIVERSITE DE NICE SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS
Contact person:	Philippe GOURBESVILLE

Award Criteria	Score:	84/100
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A.1 Relevance of the project

The proposal is for an inter- and multi-disciplinary programme, which brings together academic partners with complementary expertise. The objectives of the proposal as well as the general context of the field, at the EU and international level, are clearly presented.

The programme curriculum and its delivery, as well as the EMJMD management from admissions to quality assurance, have been jointly elaborated by the core partners, all of which have already signed the Memorandum of Agreement. Selection and management activities are coherent with objectives of the proposal. The associated partners are also involved in the curriculum delivery mainly via internships. The consortium developed this EMJMD, adopting an integrated approach, with the combination of the experience and cooperation in modules contents. However the compatibility of the curriculum in Year 2 offered by the non-awarding partners and by associated partners has not been clearly explained. For example, the research project/professional practice module offered by non-awarding HEIs is worth 15 ECTS points, whereas the whole Semester 4 has a value of 30 ECTS points, which are credited to students who have completed this module in the degree awarding HEIs.

The proposed joint degree is a continuation of previous joint Master, established in 2006 and the national qualifications recognised and accredited in five European countries, which has been already approved or would be approved for the duration of the proposed programme.

A detailed description of the joint degree award has been given in the Annexes. Students are offered the opportunity to follow the national track or the international one, which includes student mobility in at least two other EU countries. A joint degree would be awarded to student following the international track. A Memorandum of Agreement established among the five degree awarding HEIs commits the partnership to the delivery of an integrated academic curriculum and jointly agreed management and quality standards. A new consortium partner, which awards its degree, has not approved the joint EMJMD degree yet but is expected to do so by the start of the new programme. However the details regarding the preparation for this approval have not been clearly presented.

The proposed EMJMD has a clearly described niche and its graduates would be in demand in the labour market in Europe and worldwide. The consortium has indeed strong links with stakeholders from the private and public sector in Europe and internationally. The curriculum has been soundly conceived on the basis of the feedback of more than 65 representatives involved in the water and IT sector. The contribution of the Alumni Association has been important for defining the job profiles and competences in the field.

The need for innovation in the area of the proposal is aligned with the European programme Horizon2020. The added value of the project includes its holistic approach to education.

The presented needs analysis has focused on the trends in the proposed field and specialisations required, but it has not clearly described the European and international educational competitors in detail. The proposed EMJMD has a programme with innovative and diverse pedagogical elements.

Two main innovations are foreseen in the curriculum: the introduction of problem oriented project based learning (POPBL) and the integration of ICT topics to provide the right competences to students. Interestingly enough, the introduction of POPBL would promote, beyond basic disciplinary learning, teamwork as well as social and communication skills. Joint activities are organised during semester 1 and 3, some of which are web-based. Finally, the course structure would allow participants

to follow an engineering track or a research track, depending on their professional project. The proposed EMJMD is set to meet the challenges of water management, and it is focused on emerging concepts of hydroinformatics and management of intelligent water. The curriculum reflects the recent advances and trends in the proposed field in comparison with the previously run programme. The novel aspects of the proposed programme have been adequately described. The learning outcomes are thoroughly described and linked to particular course components. On the whole the curriculum would increase EHEA attractiveness and foster excellence and innovation in the water field.

The consortium has a large number of associated partners representing different sectors and geographic areas. Through the associated partners the EMJMD is likely to attract applicants from third countries. Students would benefit from being exposed to such an international and multicultural environment. Coherence in the student career plan would be assured by providing to each student a tutor who is in charge of advising and supporting the student during the full duration of the programme. Staff participating in the programme would also benefit from the stimulating scientific environment provided by partners from the public and private sector to develop scientifically, and to have the opportunity to develop research and educational collaborations.

International scholars would participate in the curriculum delivery. The long list of partners offering academic and professional training to students in Year 2 greatly enhances the student mobility.

The letters of support from associated partners have not been included in the application package due to their large number, however a few letters have been provided to support the evidence of their participation. The unified language of communication in the consortium and writing the master thesis is an asset as it reduces the major risks for this kind of project, which are the communication, coordination and the decision-making.

B.1 Quality of the project design and implementation

The consortium partners offer the programme with high research profile, in which teaching aspects are reinforced by ongoing research collaboration between the academic teams who include some of the world leading experts in the proposed academic field.

Participation of the international companies with advanced professional knowledge in the field offering relevant placements also strengthens the academic excellence of the programme giving it a more applied focus. The latest research findings achieved by the academic teams would be incorporated in the programme to keep it abreast of other similar education programmes. Innovation is therefore reached not only in terms of the curriculum content but also using a common innovative pedagogical approach. Internal and external evaluation procedures are well integrated in the consortium Memorandum of Agreement, which precisely describes the quality assurance standards that would be implemented by the consortium.

The problem oriented approach chosen as the main pedagogical tool for the programme undoubtedly helps to develop transferable skills particularly desirable for future employees. The interesting concept of collaborative engineering would be used in many parts of the taught courses.

A thorough plan of actions for providing Quality Assurance both externally and internally has been presented, and this also describes the methodology to be used for QA showing that all participating HEIs would be involved in Quality Assurance processes. Largely for this purpose a special QA Handbook would be issued, and the mechanism for using the QA feedback to improve the programme has been suggested. The potential modifications and improvements of the programme as recommended by the QA have been mentioned, but the proposal does not detail how these changes would be implemented according to the internal regulations of each institution and national regulations.

The structure of the study programme is well described, and its major positive feature is that it provides a multidisciplinary education to all students, with curriculum integrating a large variety of modules delivered in various environments worldwide, representing the diversity of situations faced in international professional environments. The mobility is organised to maximise student's successful integration in their new environment by planning an introduction week at the beginning of each semester in each partner institution hosting master students. The mobility scheme would be tailored to student's professional project. Although the mobility scheme offers to students an opportunity to spend first three semesters in three different HEIs, in fact it is possible to move between just two organisations. However, the EMJMD team would encourage student mobility to a larger number of hosts and makes some arrangements towards this aim. Additional attention is given to third country students to assist them with socio-cultural integration in Europe. The arrangements for the students of two ongoing cohorts to meet and interact with each other have been incorporated in the programme.

Visiting scholars would be integrated into the EMJMD team, and young scientists from third countries would be particularly encouraged to participate in the programme delivery, as it gives an opportunity for the consortium to enhance their research and educational networks. The scholars / guest lecturers' profiles have not yet been defined but the existing academic links of the consortium partners would be largely used for identifying visiting scholars.

The partners have a well-established infrastructure and services to offer all the necessary support to the newcomers. Issues such as special needs of students with disabilities and with families have been taken into account. In respect of equality issues, the consortium respects the principle of balanced gender participation. The student insurance scheme has been worked out and presented in detail.

The proposal clearly outlines the course rules, students' rights and obligations that are integrated in the Memorandum of Agreement for the joint degree, the Consortium agreement, the student's agreement and course Handbook. The student template agreement is still in the process of development.

The EU rules for ECTS and diploma supplement delivery are well integrated. The consortium has fully harmonised the scoring system and it is fully compatible with the ECTS system. The examination & resit, codes of discipline, complaints procedures, appeals and internship are accurately addressed from both the academic and administrative point of view. All this information is also made available on the course web site dedicated to students involved in the program. The coordinating institution handles the financial management, and is in charge of the direct monthly payment of scholarship following the financial regulations of the country of the co-ordinating institution.

The curriculum offers only one elective module in Semesters 2 and 3, which leaves a very narrow opportunity for students to create their own educational path.

There is some inconsistency in the information regarding the content of Semester 4. The compulsory module 4.1 in Semester 4 is worth 6 ECTS whereas the whole Semester 4 activities are worth 30 ECTS points, and it is not clear how the 4.1 module and the internship/project are related. In the Annex describing the programme structure, the same module is worth 15 ECTS and 3 months of time, whereas the whole Semester 4 lasts 6 months, and in Part B the internship is said to last 18 to 24 weeks. The proposal gives a detailed description of diverse activities planned for EMJMD students in order to ensure their effective professional integration with academic and industrial partner organisations. The associated partners are actively engaged with the professional orientation of students, in particular to get the students interested in spending Semester 4 with them for the Master project. The invited scholars would participate in the educational programme, which adds value to the programme particularly in its professional aspects.

The socio-cultural aspects of student integration have been briefly addressed but the specific strategy for integration of the EMJMD students within their socio-cultural environment has not been clearly explained.

A very extensive list of associated partners shows a significant proportion of non-educational organisations actively involved in the programme, both in its academic and management aspects. They are largely behind the comprehensive needs analysis presented in Part A.

The associated partners are committed to support the EMJMD by participating in the teaching activities (lectures, field visits, seminars, workshop), by hosting students for their internship and by offering financial support to be used as additional grants for students. The companies provide facilities, logistics and financial support to the programme thus confirming its timeliness and importance. They are also instrumental in promoting the EMJMD Europe- and worldwide.

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

The consortium HEI teams bring to the programme their complementary professional expertise which is reflected in offering four specialisation tracks. The specialisations are skilfully combined in the programme allowing, on the one hand, for students to acquire common ground required for effective studies and, on the other hand, providing them with a generic choice for specialisation.

The partners capitalise on their multiple existing collaborations, which enrich the programme and also allow them to further strengthen their research links via the jointly developed EMJMD. The partners have already worked together, some for more than 10 years, and their enhanced cooperation agreements support the new EMJMD. The industrial partners have been involved with the programme development in every phase, which greatly helped to shape the academic curriculum towards the needs of the water sector in Europe and to a lesser extent worldwide. The consortium team has applied some effort to engage the African HEIs with the proposed EMJMD.

Each institution is committed to participate in EMJMD implementation. In addition to their academic commitment, both the full and associated partners make a substantial financial contribution to the

programme, which would be partly used to support self-funded students.

The coordinating institution is certainly the main HEI involved in project implementation, in particular by insuring the administrative coordination of the consortium and the payment of scholarship for all the participants. Each partner is responsible for the management of the specialisation track and for the implementation of the needed improvements in order to maintain an up-to-date course.

A detailed description of the roles, academic and administrative tasks of the main partners is given. Some of these tasks overlap whereas others, mainly those of the co-ordinator, are specific to its role in the programme. Roles and tasks of associated partners are also briefly summarised.

The programme governance and management are described in sufficient detail, and importantly, students and alumni also participate in the work of the relevant committees. IP rights, conflict resolution and other procedures and components of the programme delivery have been addressed in the Consortium Agreement presented in the Annexes.

The joint admission and selection criteria have been described in detail. They have clearly defined thresholds for the qualifications required for formal admission of applicants as candidates. The consortium applies a fully integrated approach for the selection of participants (granted and non-granted). All the criteria and principles for student admission and follow up have been clearly described in the proposal and are integrated in the Memorandum of Agreement established by the consortium partners. The selection of the successful candidates is mainly reliant on the assessment of the submitted package of documents, and interviews are only planned for candidates who have non-standard qualifications. The procedures for assessing student performance have been adequately explained.

The experience and knowledge of the consortium is clear and there is a consistency between various steps of execution of the proposal.

The financial aspects of the programme funding by the European Union and distribution of funds between the partners have been outlined. The costs of participation are summarised and their allocation in each degree-awarding institution is balanced. There is a good initiative that the awarding HEIs are committed to partly subsidise the master course in order to cover its full costs, and the participation costs are used to support specific services provided to the participants such as invited scholars/experts, professional participation, grants, language courses, housing services, tutorship, field visits, development of online resources, etc.

It has not been made clear how the costs associated with Semester 4 studies would be shared between the main partners and associated partners if the student chooses the latter for the Master project and training. Similarly it is not clear how the funding of summer schools and other activities which are not directly incorporated in the taught programme, would be arranged. The financial commitment of partners has been described in generic terms without the costs breakdown being clearly shown.

B.3 Impact and dissemination

The predecessor for this programme achieved a remarkable rise in the number of self-funded students, which allows the applicants to express confidence in being able to run a sustainable course in about five years. The analysis of the statistics of the previous programme, however shows that the non-European students are not among the self-funded cohort, and the requested funding is mostly needed to support applicants from low income countries.

Additional sources of funding that could be made available to third country students have been identified and the consortium is committed to assist this category of applicants in securing additional funding. Currently discussions are ongoing with some major funding bodies in those countries to ensure their support. The partners have already pledged their commitment to providing substantial financial support to the programme. Beyond, the EMJMD consortium is confident that the employability is the determining factor for sustainability, and some important measures to ensure the integration of graduates in the labour market have been taken, such as conventions and attracting interest from the industrial partners, but this is neither sufficient nor guaranteed.

The partners would benefit from being involved in the programme by sharing the best and innovative pedagogical practice and experience. Bearing the EMJMD label would certainly allow the partners to preserve and strengthen their international recognition towards relevant stakeholders not only at the educational level but more importantly at the research level.

The joint running of the EMJMD would facilitate creation of a Knowledge Alliance with sufficient critical mass of expertise to be competitive in such leading funding programmes as Horizon 2020.

The programme itself has a number of elements forming its competitive advantage over other similar programmes in Europe. Integration of non-European players is positive and the impact can be

reciprocal. However the roles of the stakeholders in this process have not been described in detail. The strategy of the programme internationalisation beyond Europe has not been clearly described. A convincing description of the measures taken by the consortium to enhance student employability and train them in acquiring relevant transferable skills with substantial involvement of actors representing different societal sectors has been given. A specific link with professionals is supported by the “Club of Friends” which includes partners from companies. These partners are also very useful for the change / renewal / adaptation of the educational program and to improve the skills of students and improve the employability of future graduates. Enhancement of student employability is one of the major strengths of the programme and the consortium.

A wide range of methods and types of promotion are described in the proposal, from flyers, poster, web site to promotional videos for YouTube/Dailymotion and other social media.

The consortium partners plan to participate in a number of international professional events worldwide to increase their presence at the international stage. The target groups of EMJMD are clear, and the outreach strategy is well conceived and consistent with the objectives of attracting students and targeting promoters. The programme aims to attract outstanding students around the world, but the method is not well detailed. The consortium is committed to making the educational materials developed for the programme freely available via internet. A large part of the teaching material is available on an eLearning environment (Google Classroom) allowing participants to acquire competences that are, afterwards, mobilised in the collaborative activities. Specifically, they would share the data and tools dedicated to resilience assessment as it is a very important component of the programme which bears significance for many potential lend-users.

The partnership is committed to promote all material in order to raise awareness on water challenges and the added value of smart water approach.

C. Relevance of the project in the targeted region(s)

The consortium would attract students from targeted regions mainly through its extensive links with local HEIs and other professional bodies. In particular an External window Erasmus Mundus action took place with the Asian region involving not only master but also PhD students. The current joint projects with some of the organisations from target regions would provide a route to these areas. It is expected that educating professionals in the proposed field would meet a high demand in such specialists in their home countries and through the EMJMD graduates would create favourable conditions for establishing business links with local industries in the target regions. The added value of this cooperation in the EMJMD is well explained, and show how the consortium can help to increase regional expertise and produce professionals who have the ability to face the challenges of water in targeted regions. At the same time, the participation of students of regional HEIs in joint Master would help expand the paradigm promoted by the consortium and to increase their international visibility.

Overall comments

The proposal offers a well-designed programme based on the previous successfully run EMJMD updated with advances in science and technology in the proposed field. The four out of five core full partners have already been fully engaged with EMJMD and achieved the recognition of the joint degree by their respective national accreditation bodies. The Memorandum of Agreement links the five core partners not only in a joint delivery of the curriculum but also in joint management and quality standards. Innovation is also achieved both at the curriculum level, by introducing relevant ICT topics in the specific field of smart water management, and at the pedagogical level by using the “problem oriented project based learning” (POPBL). The master curriculum as proposed by the consortium would certainly promote attractiveness of the EHEA and would benefit to students who would be prepared to either find an employment as engineer or continue a research work in academia. The consortium is very relevant and contains European and non-European universities and non-academics partners, which is beneficial for the project regarding the interconnection of theory and practice. The proposed programme addresses contemporary needs of the society in the proposed field, and the consortium is composed of leading European academic teams and a number of associated partners representing different sectors of the society including private companies. Both full partners and associated partners have declared substantial financial commitment to the programme with the aim of achieving its sustainability in foreseeable future. The programme would benefit all participating actors through sharing the best practice and creating the critical mass of expertise making the consortium a major competitor in Europe and worldwide.