**University consortium joint degree on Climate Change and Food Security**

**Fuel for thoughts from the UC meeting on August 13, 2016, UPM**

**Background**

Building on the experience of Erasmus there is now an Erasmus +program, an EU special funding program for increasing quality of education through mobility of students ; 90% of the funding between EU universities; 10% for internationalization beyond Europe (3rd countries); started last year, should be 1 call every year (this year in Oct 2015 to be closed Feb 2016).

Objectives of Erasmus + capacity building

* Elaboration of innovative courses
* Modernization of management and governance
* Increase relationships between education and the (real) professional world

Joint activities can include exchange of training materials; exchange of modules and staff; joint research (through students); experiment of new modes of teaching or any innovation to improve quality of education and internationalization of studies; and exchange of students (between Europe and SEA).

Conditions of partnership. At least 1 third world country (no max); 2 HEI per country in 3rd countries; Min 3 Universities from 3 different countries in EU; Call for proposals in October, submission of projects in Feb 2016; Funding 0.5 to 1M Euro per project; 3 years duration

After gaining knowledge about the Erasmus + program, can the consortium collaborate with European consortium to propose projects?

Possible projects with UC (ideas of Didier):

* Increase number of summer courses and formalize procedures and integration?
* Joint graduate course (MSc then extend to PhD) and articulate to similar joint course in Europe?

Connect with Agrinatura on same topics

1st level – what we can do between us (the UC); the innovative project we would like to develop

2nd level – Based on this , the exchanges we would like to develop with Europe;

3rd level – funding

**Concept proposal**

We can take the model of IMRD (www.imrd.ugent.be); look at our umbrella programs (i.e. food and nutrition security or climate change) and connect with Europe.

We will be building a new program – not building new courses but rather looking at the current trainings and courses that can be the basis for a coherent curriculum at the consortium level, and build a bridge with Europe.

UC universities already have experience in Dual degrees (by Research); may be we can move to Dual degree by Training.

Following the climate-smart agriculture definition, we can combine the food security and climate change umbrella programs and use these as starting points of the project (36 credit units minimum; equivalent to 120 ECTS);

Start with MS level - more logical, more room for innovation

Based on these principles, the proposed system could be

The curriculum of the UC dual MSc degree on agriculture in climate change would include:

* Host university (1 sem)
* Another UC University (1 sem)
* Attending the joint summer course if relevant
* One year of research jointly supervised
* The two degrees at the end, whereas leading to a single joint degree in a few years time

For *some students* registered in this dual degree programme, the possibility would be offered to go to follow one additional semester in Europe. Under certain conditions (to be clarified during the project) that would allow the mutual recognition of the courses, these UC students would also get the degree of the European University.

The thesis would be also one year of research, leading to an overall master of 5 semesters, while the graduates would get three MScs or a joint diploma with the three seals of the 3 universities in which he will have studied.

Students would have to be admitted by all the 3 universities (including Europe) but based on a joint selection at the consortium level; must have a proposed research project; Advisers in participating university but thesis will be evaluated by an advisory council (jury) represented by all participating Universities who will grade the thesis.

In the beginning the program can award 3 diplomas but eventually, we get 1 joint degree later after we have fine-tune the system (Joint degree). UC will give a diploma supplement stating that the degrees were part of the UC/EU program.

**Challenges and opportunities for consideration:**

Sustainability (after 3 years, assuming the Erasmus+ will be funding); SEARCA can allocate scholarships

Higher price - More demanding, more competitive, only those who reach a certain level will be sent to Europe;

To achieve such a system, we need:

* To precise the learning objectives of the master course;
* To identify the possible curricula by associating courses of pairs of universities that make sense with regard to the learning objectives of the MSc;
* To define criteria for selection of the students and the rules of the joint selection system;
* To set up a common evaluation system and transfer of credits that can be used as a mediator between all participating universities that will award credits (including the EU one) to transfer the credits from the partners into their own system;
* To define the rules of the co-supervision of the research and of the joint jurys and single defence

There is also the question raised that we need to higher education institution per country participating in Asia. We already have two in Indonesia but we would need to identify additional universities in Thailand, Philippines and Malaysia

Suggestion is that these 3 additional partners are not graduating universities in the joint degree, but only associated to it to provide some specific courses or fields of research…

It will also have to be checked whether SEARCA, as an inter-governmental organisation is eligible for the Erasmus + call. Would it be impossible for SEARCA to be full member, it could be associate partners , while the means for the scholarships would transit through one of the Asian partners and be delegated then to SEARCA that will stimm manage the mobility component.

**Master Agriculture, Climate change, Transitions (ACT), and the 2 umbrella programs as additional working document for consideration**

Master *Agriculture, Climate change, Transitions* (ACT),

* 5 EU universities join hands : Boku Vienna, Copenhagen, Catania, Pablo de Olivade / Seville, Montpellier SupAgro
List not closed
* 2 non graduating full partners : GACSA (FAO supported network), UC Davis
* 20 Associated partners all over the world
* 120 ECTS, 2 years, incl. one semester MSc thesis
* Mobility compulsory
* Joint degree awarded (when possible); Joint Orientation week + Joint summer course
* Five specialisations envisaged for the third semester (the one which could be open to the mobility from the UC) : (i) Modelisation of climate change and impact on agriculture (offered a t Boku), (ii) Intensification of agricultural systems in a context of CC (offered at Catania), (iii) Innovation in agriculture and management of change (offered at Montpellier), (iv) risk management and (v)agricultural policies for CC adaptation and mitigation

This can be considered for the proposal: our curriculum could integrate some of these themes or develop additional ones.