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**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS MANAGEMENT
AT
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
FOR
AGRICULTURAL AND RELATED SCIENCES**

**Contributions at IROICA Workshops
2000**

Supported by the European Commission in the framework
of the SOCRATES Thematic Network Project AFANet

IROICA – the European Network of International Relations Officers at Higher Education Institutions for Agricultural and Related Sciences

PREFACE

This publication has been prepared within the framework of the EU SOCRATES Thematic Network for Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and the Environment (AFANet). AFANet aims to stimulate the development of a European dimension to education and co-operation in universities and colleges in Europe offering degree programmes in agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and the environment.

AFANet, which was launched in 1996 (then called the SOCRATES Thematic Network for Agricultural and Related Sciences, and comprising two sub-networks DEMETER and AQUA-TNET) is a joint initiative of ICA¹, SILVA², NATURA³ and AQUA-TT⁴ and is addressing a number of key issues, both structural and discipline-based, by:

- analysing, with a European wide perspective, current issues in agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and the environment with the objective of influencing curriculum innovation in AFANet partner institutions,
- supporting the shared development of curricula with the objective of developing a European dimension to curricula in AFANet partner institutions,
- promoting the application of ICT to support the delivery of teaching and learning,
- strengthening the infrastructure for internationalisation of teaching and learning within the partner institutions through structural initiatives for the enhancement of the capacity of language training units and of international relations' offices, and
- identifying and disseminating good practice in collaboration between institutions of higher education in the shared delivery of courses and degree programmes.

¹ **ICA – Interuniversity Conference for Agriculture and Related Sciences** - is a non profit-making European organisation registered under Belgian law which currently comprises over 70 European institutions of Higher Education in the field of Agriculture and Related Sciences (Forestry, Horticulture, Food Sciences...). Created in 1996 on the basis of the former Interfaculty Committee Agraria (1988), its objectives are to reinforce collaboration and European integration and dimension within higher education.

² **The SILVA Network** is a Standing Committee of ICA. It presently comprises 32 institutions (faculties, departments, etc) in forestry education. SILVA network activities focus on the dissemination and exchange of information about developments in education, educational methods and training programmes.

³ **NATURA – Network of European Agricultural (Tropically and Subtropically oriented) Universities and Scientific complexes related to agricultural development** - is an international association created in 1998 which currently comprises 33 European Higher Educational Institutions with experience of teaching and research in developing countries. Its objective is to contribute to the transfer of knowledge and the creation of new technologies that are essential to economic, social and cultural development and to the protection of the environment

⁴ **AQUA-TT Ltd.** is the European Network for Training, Education and Technology Transfer for Aquaculture and its related sciences. Founded in 1992 as a non profit-making charitable organisation Aqua TT currently administers a network of over 600 co-operating University and Industry members and has the following main aim: “To support the strategic goals of the aquaculture industry by facilitating collaborative university/ industry action in education, training, technology transfer, research and development.”

For a network such as AFANet, which aims to be inclusive in its involvement of staff in our partner institutions, effective and alternative routes for communication with all staff are essential in an effort to ensure inclusive participation. Effective communication can be established through professional networks, such as the SILVA network and the education committees of professional bodies. However, the network also wants a direct entry to each institution, but with over 200 institutions involved it is a near impossible task to identify the correct port of entry for each institution.

Fortunately all institutions have international relations officers who play an essential role in promoting, organising and managing international activities within an institution. AFANet has come to rely on them to disseminate information about the Network's activities.

However, the effectiveness of this route depends on the degree of commitment of each institution to the development of international relations, and as might be expected this varies widely between institutions in terms of structure and funding. Some institutions have a centralised office whilst others have delegated the responsibility to a network of academic staff. International relation officers often feel isolated within their institutions and welcome the opportunity of discussing their working practices with their peers.

IROICA, the European Network of International Relations Officers at HEI for Agricultural and Related Sciences has been set up in the framework of AFANet to strengthen co-operation and exchange of experience between international relation officers in order to facilitate the development of a European dimension education. It was founded in 1997 as a professional body and is now a standing committee of ICA.

After a few years it can be stated very clearly that AFANet has developed, through the international relations offices, a committed and effective channel for communication between the Network's activities and the staff within the network's partner institutions.

In 2000, IROICA meetings particularly addressed staff development needs of international relations officers, since this was seen as a particularly important element fostering the efficiency of the institutions' international relations management.

This publication compiles some of the most relevant contributions from IROICA events in 2000. A selection of highly diverse presentations covers a broad range of topics such as university internationalisation strategies, political networking in South-Eastern Europe, restructuring of International Offices in Central-Eastern Europe or the transcontinental approach of networking between Europe and NZ. Since IROs may be confronted with any of these issues at any time, it was felt that such a collection of different themes, being all linked by the overall "international umbrella" should be made available at a broader level to IROs all over Europe.

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October 2000

INTRODUCTION

International Relations Officers (IROs) have become important players in the current internationalisation process taking place at most European institutions of higher education.

In general, the International Office – if it works adequately - should be the natural centre for all international activities of the University: not only the main strategic resource for the Rector but above all the co-ordinating unit for all international programmes in which the university is involved. The staff of the International Office should be able to provide a pool of information about all international engagements, relations and activities of the University. (Manual of Good Practice for International Relations Officers)

IROICA, the European Network of International Relations Officers at Higher Education Institutions in Agricultural and Related Sciences, was established in 1997 as an instrument to co-ordinate and facilitate international relations among European HEIs in the relevant fields.

Its main goals are to **further and support the work of the international relations officers** of the various member institutions of the network by:

- Promoting international co-operative activities of their institutions
- Promoting and supporting international activities for undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate students and for academic and administrative staff of their institutions
- Providing a pool of information about important developments in the field of international higher education
- Providing professional development for staff members in the field of academic international relations management
- Promoting quality and high standing in its individual activities, which shall be guided by a spirit of openness, human rights and democracy.

The International Office (IO) of a higher education institution usually employs highly motivated staff members who have chosen this career because they are particularly interested in international contacts and they very often have a background in a related field. On the one hand, IO staff members are often seen as responsible for practically everything that has an international connotation within the institution, but, on the other hand they are rarely in a position to take decisions, let alone to be involved in conceptual, strategic planning activities. This is partly due to the organisational structure and the position of the international office in the institutional hierarchy, but partly also due to their lack of adequate training.

Professional development is a vital component on the path towards a consolidation of the IRO's profession. For this reason IROICA has started to organise professional development workshops that are designed to cater for some of the most urgent needs of IO staff members, both at a beginner's and at a more advanced level. A clear definition of the job profile of an IRO is part of this exercise just as much as an overall recommendation on suggested educational prerequisites for such a job. At the same, time IROs should also be made familiar with latest developments and trends in the field of international higher education as well as with various facets of international cooperation, both in the educational field and beyond.

The aim of this publication is to give an overview of some of the topics that were dealt with during IROICA workshops in 2000, and it is hoped that this compilation will help IO staff members to better

understand what international relations management encompasses and what their job possibly has in stall for them.

It is of course also hoped that university leaders will obtain a clearer picture of what their "internationalists" really have to deal with and how to make better and more adequate use of their services.

IROICA plans to publish contributions on international relations management at HEIs at regular intervals and we herewith invite colleagues working in this particular field, as well as experts in the field of internationalisation of higher education in general, to provide us with contributions that can be shared with the large community of IROs all over Europe.

IROICA wants to express its gratitude to all those who contributed to this first publication of *iroica.doc*.

Irene Mueller
President of IROICA

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The International Dimension of the University

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When the institution of the university, as we know it nowadays, was founded 800 years ago, it was a profoundly international institution. The importance of a university did not depend on its location, the decisive criterium was which professor was teaching there. There was no need to provide any proof of nationality in order to be accepted. The development of the nation-state concept also led to the concept of national universities, thus forcing us to distinguish between native citizens and foreigners. I believe that the European process of integration has launched a movement which may return to the universities some of the values that they lost mainly during the 19th century: open access for everybody.

On the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the University of Bologna in 1988 many European university leaders signed the *MAGNA CHARTA UNIVERSITATIUM*. In its preamble we read

The undersigned Rectors of European Universities, gathered in Bologna for the ninth centenary of the oldest University in Europe, four years before the definitive abolition of boundaries between the countries of the European Community; looking forward to far-reaching co-operation between all European nations and believing that peoples and States should become more than ever aware of the part that universities will be called upon to play in a changing and increasingly international society,

Consider

- 1) *that at the approaching end of this millenium the future of mankind depends largely on cultural, scientific and technical development; and that this is built up in centres of culture, knowledge and research as represented by true universities;*
- 2) *that the universities' task of spreading knowledge among the younger generations implies that in today's world, they must also serve society as a whole; and that the cultural, social and economic future of society requires, in particular, a considerable investment in continuing education;*
- 3) *that universities must give future generations education and training that will teach them, and through them others, to respect the great harmonies of their natural environment and of life itself.*

The undersigned Rectors of European universities proclaim to all States and to the conscience of all nations the fundamental principles which must, now and always, support the vocation of universities.

In the text the need for increased internationalisation is expressed in the following way:

...A university is the trustee of the European humanist tradition; its constant care is to attain universal knowledge, to fulfil its vocation it transcends geographical and political frontiers and affirms the vital need for different cultures to know and influence each other.

....Universities – particularly in Europe – regard the mutual exchange of information and documentation, and frequent joint projects for the advancement of learning, as essential to the steady progress of knowledge.

¹Rector of the Universität für Bodenkultur Wien

Therefore, as in the earliest years of their history, they encourage mobility among teachers and students; furthermore, they consider a general policy of equivalent status, titles, examinations (without prejudice to national diplomas) and award of scholarships essential to the fulfilment of their mission in the conditions prevailing today.

In the past, traditional international relations at a university usually existed between individual researchers or at the level of research groups. Inter-governmental agreements have facilitated the creation of university-wide cooperation linkages, mainly concentrating on organised student exchange. With the birth of supra-national communities, which mostly started as economic communities before adopting additional dimensions, new levels of synergy have been created. This includes multi-lateral mobility programmes and networks in the fields of education and research. I certainly do not have to explain to you which instruments exist nowadays, enabling students, young scientists or research groups to become actively involved in the internationalisation process. As a matter of fact, the International Offices were set up just to support this development. One should not forget that in the meantime a process has started which interrelates the above-mentioned supra-national communities in ever tighter networks, whereas they enter at the same time a process of enlargement – as we can witness at present with the new candidate countries approaching the EU; Europe, Asia, Australia and North America are entering into new contractual relations with each other, Africa and South America are starting to follow this process too.

All this has far-reaching consequences for every country and every single institution. One of the immediate consequences is the fact that institutions are more internationally exposed than ever. This fact refers both to its quality, its structures in education, research and services and also to its positioning with regard to similar institutions. By this I mean that every university should also take its geopolitical position into consideration. For example, an Austrian university, especially one situated in Vienna, should be aware of its position at the present borderline of the European Union as well as of its neighbourhood to academic institutions of EU-enlargement candidate countries. Observing the political developments in these neighbouring regions has to be part of this awareness. An example: the above-mentioned MAGNA CHARTA was signed on September 18th, 1988. I quoted the preamble which mentions the abolition of inner-European borders – of course this referred to the borders within the European Community. What dynamism took place in this one year 1988-1989, the so-called ANNUS MIRABILIS, none of the authors of this declaration could have foreseen! 3 years later a war broke out in South-Eastern Europe. This came as a shock to most governments, diplomats and academic institutions alike, nobody had really expected it. We still are unable to adapt to particular situations. The university legislation in Serbia is a very good example of that.

All this forces us, not to limit ourselves to the various new programmes of cooperation and mobility, but to develop an institutional foreign policy, with subject-related and geo-political priorities. These priorities have to take into account in a very subtle way that every partner has specific needs and idiosyncracies. All this requires a high amount of professionalism in those administrative units which exist – or should exist - at the universities and are in charge of handling the international relations as well as develop them further.

What are the concrete developments that we are facing in the near future?

- 1) First of all, we have to find out which subject-specific changes are to be expected within particular scientific sectors. In the field of agricultural and related sciences the traditional social and economic background is bound to undergo a complete restructuring process. Although primary production will remain an important

economic factor, it will lose its dominating role. The relation between primary product and consumer will become closer, the process in between will gain in importance. Even the primary product will not remain the same: this affects both agriculture and forestry. The need to secure primary production will be more and more strongly accompanied by eco-systemic aspects and by the demand for sustainable technologies and processes. Production, processing and marketing systems will be accompanied by regulatory considerations, for example, aspects of domestic supply and social carrying capacity.

- 2) The future EU-enlargement towards Eastern-Central Europe represents a special challenge of which most Western European countries are completely unaware. Let's take Austria as an example: we have borders with Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic – all accession candidates. On both sides of the borders the accession process will have effects on the rural areas and its inhabitants: on products and its markets, on traffic routes and on regional politics. It will be, to a large extent, the task of academic institutions to study the effects of this development, which will then find its reflection in the curricula. International Offices will largely function as central hubs making sure that all this will really be taken into account.
- 3) The so-called Sorbonne Declaration and the Bologna Declaration of the following year are two documents which have been interpreted and analysed in many ways. If we look at them a little bit more closely, we realise that both contain many parts which are highly non-committal. Nevertheless, there is one postulate which is made quite clear: the stipulation for a harmonisation of the higher education systems. This means that our curricula should be structured both contents- and systemswise in such a way that mobility and academic recognition can be standardized and facilitated without a high bureaucratic workload. Of course, these two documents refer to the situation in Europe. As the actual process of transcontinental networking increases more and more, we have to see this development in a wider context: Globalisation is the key term. I have pointed out at various occasions what I am going to repeat here again: we are not aiming at homogenisation but at harmonisation with a high respect for the preservation of cultural diversity.

My presentation aims at a description of the basic and general aspects of present days' development. Some of you may think that I have left out the level that you are actively involved in during your daily work. I think, however, that one has to have a very clear idea about the basic and principal questions before one starts the day-to-day operative work. One has to know the goals in order to be in a position to take the steps to reach them.

A provisional summary could be as follows: the internationalisation of universities is one of the essential components of the universities' development during the coming years. Therefore, all reform measures in the organisational and financial fields must take this perspective into account. Between 1996 and 2000 the German Federal Government invested a sum of DM 420 million for the following courses of action:

- Internationalisation of higher education and research
- Mobility of students and academic staff
- Infrastructure of the universities
- Marketing of the location Germany as an attractive place to study or to do research
- Scientific cooperation with international partners.

The following actions can be subsumed under this programme:

- Development of new, compatible study structures

- Creation of new study programmes specially designed to meet the needs of international students
- Improvement of the legal conditions for foreigners at universities; alleviation of rules governing residence and working conditions for foreigners
- Strengthening of scientific cooperation with international institutions
- Improved information about Germany as a place to study
- International recognition of German academic degrees
- Higher attraction for young international scientists
- Internationalisation as a criterium of good performance

Of course I am not of the opinion that International Offices and their staff members can bring about and manage all these developments. I believe, though, that they have to be in a position to assess present and future developments. Only if they are aware of such trends and tendencies will they manage to see their work in a proper perspective and will organise their tasks appropriately. This is of utmost importance especially in view of the fact that their academic partners – Vice-Rectors for International Affairs or Rectors themselves – are in temporary positions only and quite a few of them even fulfil these administrative duties on a part-time basis beside their normal academic job. An element of continuity and of professionalism is absolutely vital for them because otherwise they will just lose time trying to come to grips with the demands and perspectives of international relations management.

For this reason, I believe that regular international contacts between International Offices have very positive effect which go far beyond the mere administrative level. International Offices are responsible for a university sector which develops far more dynamically than even many of the highest university officials tend to realise.

Defining the roles and positions of different players in university international relations – a Case Study of the Czech University of Agriculture Prague

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Introduction

During the last decade, all Central and Eastern European universities have drastically changed and are still changing, the character of their educational and research activities in favour of **innovation** and **internationalisation**.

The EU Programmes for Higher Education provide financial assistance enabling participating universities to establish new contacts linking them into multi-lateral networks with objective criteria for evaluating **qualitative** improvements in major university activities (education, research, counselling, extension, etc.) Such a **quality assessment** should indicate whether the university is taking a progressive path. The principles of the main process are shown in the following scheme

(Fig. 1) :

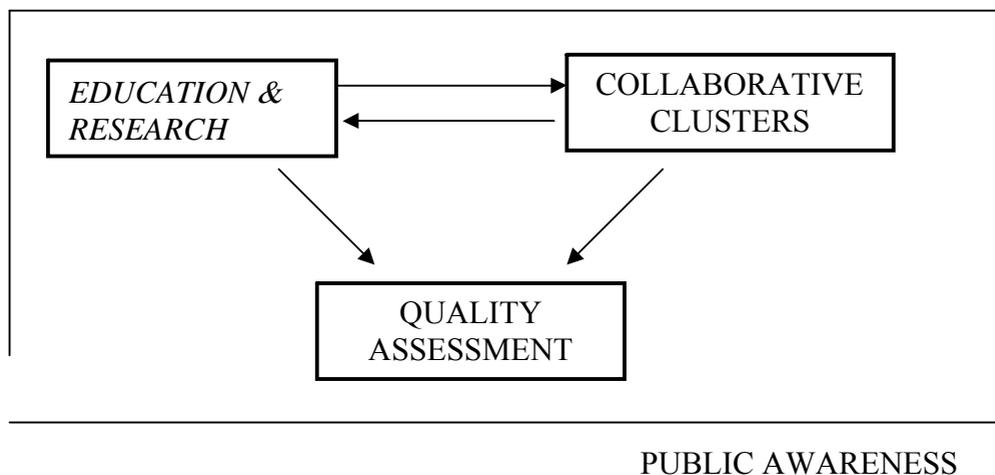


Fig. 1: Interaction of key elements of educational effort

Education and research go together with the intention to innovate and collaborate in clusters (networks). Common goals of co-operation are to minimize duplication of effort, to promote cost effective operations, and to generate income from a variety of sources. Continuous monitoring of the quality of education and research is a prerequisite for progress in the form of new courses, new grant-aided projects, etc. In an efficient and effective process of innovating and internationalising the institution, a University's International Relations Office (IO) should play a key role. No other central university office can change, redefine and re-

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orientate university activities, workload and targets as IROs have already done. This has also been true of the IO at the Czech University of Agriculture (CUA) Prague.

Introduction to the CUA Prague

The CUA Prague was established in 1906 as the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry of the Prague Polytechnic. Since 1952 it has been an independent University. At present, there are more than 6,000 students and about 1,000 staff (incl. 400 teaching staff) in four faculties:

- Agronomy (17 Departments)
- Forestry (11 Departments)
- Economics & Management (11 Departments)
- Technical (10 Departments)

Institute of Tropical & Subtropical Agriculture
DEPARTMENT OF PEDAGOGY

Since 1999/2000 **two-tier study programmes** (BSc, MSc) have started to be established, and this process is still proceeding gradually in parallel with the existing **one-tier engineering programmes** (leading to the degree *Ing.*) Since 2000/2001 a common study assessment system compatible with ECTS has been in use. In research, the CUA is also gradually moving on from the Czech granting policy system to participation in EU research programmes (5th FRAMEWORK, INCO-COPERNICUS, and others).

As has already been emphasized, the CUA's International Office should accelerate the process of internationalisation [5], [6]. International activities have changed from a simple programme of providing services for University VIPs only, as it was before 1990, to an extensive list of activities uniting all teachers and students wishing to work on an “international scale”. Small faculty-level IOs headed by vice-deans have been established at all faculties and are directly linked to the central University IO. Their relations, activities and workload are shown in Fig.2.

Impact of external/internal conditions on University strategy

European agricultural universities face two key issues that signal a need for fundamental changes. They are as follows:

- A. Restructuring the existing one-level fully-fledged agriculture and forestry programmes leading to a Dipl. Eng. degree into two-level BSc and MSc programmes**
- B. Transforming and harmonising traditional agri- and wood-production programmes to rural development programmes**

Concerning issue A, the EU countries in the Sorbonne and Bologna Protocols declared that they will offer two-level study programmes, a Bachelor's programme and a Master's programme. The Czech Ministry of Education is a signatory to this declaration. Adapting existing „Engineering“ study programmes to a BSc and MSc system is not a cosmetic matter: it involves redesigning the system fully and designing BSc programmes that are complete in themselves. Agri-universities can hardly afford a long delay in restructuring their programmes in this way[3].

Issue B also involves a substantial transformation of agricultural policy, in a broader sense, to a rural policy, and this should be reflected in university educational programmes [1], [2]. The essence of this policy change is to reduce the prices of agricultural commodities to international price levels, and to switch the whole basis of EU support toward:

- Maintaining stability in the agri-sector
- Supporting public environmental services
- Encouraging more balanced economic development in rural areas

These key elements call for activities that are based to a greater extent on environmental considerations and rural development, which should be reflected in a broader spectrum of education (rural infrastructure, communications, transport, recreation, rural and social economy, etc.)

The dual role of the International Office

Massive changes in higher education and research have to be not just passively perceived by IOs, but rather to be initiated by them, because a lot of innovation comes through international contacts. This trend requires a well trained staff at IOs and also a good and friendly atmosphere working inside the office and between the office and all parts of the university. IO personnel should assist departments, and even individual teaching staff members, in developing the valuable international contacts which are necessary for running EU or overseas programmes. These tasks for IO staff are well listed in the literature [4]. A very good analysis of these continuously growing requirements for IO people is given elsewhere [3]. The authors have summarised a series of these tasks into two basic groups:

- **IO university service operation**
- **IO advising university management**

and asked the following question:

Should the IO **operate as a service office** or should it rather be involved in **counselling the university management**? The answer is that both activities are necessarily needed and they are irreplaceable [3]. The two groups of tasks can be briefly listed:

A. IO Service operation which mainly:

- Administers programmes for mobility of students and staff
- Provides services for visitors and foreign students
- Deals with communication in foreign languages
- Prepares information for the university (web-sites, brochures, scholarships, research funding offers, etc.)

B. IO advising the university management in its integration into international activities:

- Harmonisation of study programmes (two-tier programmes: BSc, MSc + ECTS)
- Seeking to add value through education, not only to promote excellence
- Doing marketing in study programmes (part-time study, on-the-job training, summer-schools, life-long learning, distance learning ...)
- Internationalisation of study and research:

- SOCRATES/ERASMUS (earlier TEMPUS)
- CEEPUS (+ bilateral programmes, e.g. AKTION)
- FIFTH FRAMEWORK, INCO-COPERNICUS, etc.
- Promotion of staff development (needed for life-long learning)
- Harmonisation of accountancy systems (donor and recipient)
- Internal/external evaluation of the university
- Legal considerations (visas, insurance)
- Internationalisation of the whole university – a systematic approach

The Czech universities are already facing the problems that occur when international activities develop without an adequate infrastructure. It is now time to move on from case-by-case solutions of problems to a **systematic approach** that will support the university's expanding international activities [3].

Restructuring the International Office at CUA Prague

From the above text, it is evident that the IO at CUA Prague has received many new tasks in recent years, and its role has become very wide-ranging. This requires the recruitment of skilled people to work effectively in a restructured office. For this reason in 1998, the International Office of CUA created a network with partner (mostly agricultural) universities at home and abroad:

- Mendel Agricultural and Forestry University Brno (MAFU)
- South-Bohemia University, Faculty of Agriculture, C.B. (SNU-FA)
- Czech Technical University Prague (CTU)
- University of Agricultural Sciences Vienna, Austria (BOKU)
- University of Agriculture Uppsala, Sweden (SLU)
- Wageningen University and Research Centre

and conceived a project proposal, which was accepted in 1998 as JEP TEMPUS 13201-98 (from 12/1998 to 03/2001) titled "NEW UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES". The aim of the project was to formulate the needs for restructuring the Czech University of Agriculture's International Office, with a view to dealing with the changing character of international (and home) activities. These needs have been listed as follows:

- IO as a clearing house for university international cooperation
- Incorporating and sharing education and research cooperation with the respective offices
- Better liaison with the faculty IOs
- Enhancement of the counselling system
- Improvement of the information system
- Improvement of feed-back cooperation with the university management
- Raising the skills of international officers

These needs have been met and still are being met by the following activities:

- Three workshops with partners and with three independent consultants
- Three training stays at (EU) partner universities

- Three language training courses (a total of 5 weeks of intensive full-time English courses)
- Internal/external evaluation of the CUA-International Office
- Creating a New Information System at CUA (brochures, web-site, etc.)

We are still working on refining the CUA “Strategic Development Plan”, and in 2001 we expect to disseminate the JEP outcomes to interested parties. The following documents that have already been produced in the course of the JEP are fully at the disposal of the partners:

- Reports on training stays abroad, and reports on the workshops
- Quality Assessment Reports (self-evaluation, external evaluation)
- Two ECTS Brochures
- Web-site information
- Feasibility Study on International Activities at CUA Prague (Dr. Gilbrich et al – will be completed in 01/2001)
- Strategic Development Plan (will be completed in 03/2001)

The key material is the “Feasibility Study” containing the most important IO tasks, including functions, activities (terms of references) and staffing. This is enclosed in a very brief form in Table 1.

Tasks of a University International Relations Office

Functions	Terms of References (Activities)	Staffing
1. Logistics.	<i>Arrange staff travel abroad and foreign visitor reception. Services for foreign students.</i>	<i>Head/Chief administrator. Travel assistants.</i>
2. Foreign relations: networking, EU Programmes.	<i>Link with international information sources and acquire information. Prepare and support University representation internationally. Handle foreign financial aid programmes, particularly EU programmes.</i>	<i>Administrator. Translator. Contact person with University legal and contract staff. Contact person with University finance.</i>
3. Advice on structures, Information management.	<i>Advice on structural questions. International input to curricula/syllabuses. Quality assessment with external auditors. Monitor credit and degree systems. (Evaluate student applications where necessary).</i>	<i>Full time academic officer, assistant, clerks. Part time assistance from Faculties.</i>
4. Organise events with international participants.	<i>Organise or assist scientific events with an international character. Assist Faculties/Departments to follow up (Reports, innovations in programmes, University "image" abroad). MSc Courses in foreign languages.</i>	<i>Full time organiser/manager, to liaise with responsible Faculty.</i>
5. Continuing education and training.	<i>Stimulate "Centres of Excellence" to engage in international professional education (continuing education) and training. Organise optimum utilisation of University facilities.</i>	<i>Conjunctive use of staff (at times of staff availability) to balance demand and resources.</i>
6. Multi-disciplinary functions.	<i>Advice on multi-disciplinary innovations. Organising multi-disciplinary programmes. Advice on general aspects of study programmes.</i>	<i>Flexible, educational entrepreneur, senior academic manager: legal, financial, marketing, international relations, communication, organisation, education and logistics interests.</i>

Conclusions

In the last ten years the CUA has made great progress in internationalisation. Its first steps were swift and revolutionary in comparison with the stagnant times before. However, the speed of change has subsequently slowed. The reasons are understandable. Any serious qualitative changes at the Czech universities should be made rationally and deliberately. This does not mean an excessively slow approach, but recognises the value of careful, systematic, step by step measures. Re-orientation to two-tier study programmes is not an easy problem. The International Office can undoubtedly play a very important role in this process. A university should learn from the past. It is instructive to make a balance of positives and negatives (strengths and weaknesses). For the CUA, the balance of achievements in internationalisation looks as follows:

Strengths:

- Participation in EU programmes (both educational and research)
- Participation in Czech research projects
- Student and staff mobilities
- Use of computational technology
- Role of English/German languages
- Computer-based education and research

Shortcomings:

- Financing policy (state funds: investment, salaries)
- Staff development (Young staff leaving universities)
- BSc as a completed programme of studies (Bologna Declaration)
- Loss of university links with East Europe (even loss of Russian language)
- Services for the community (intellectual and moral leadership)
- Little responsibility for the welfare of students (Part-time job students, Career advisory services, Student counselling...)
- Limited consultation with industry (agri-sector, food industry, forestry, land & water management etc.)
- Still a weak role of IO in university management and strategy

Concluding from the list of strengths and shortcomings, the tasks for the CUA International Office in cooperation with the faculties can be formulated as follows:

- To provide effective support for the process of introducing a two-tier education system (BSc, MSc)
- To bring about better participation of students and staff in EU programmes
- To extend the number of MSc courses taught in foreign languages, giving priority to inter-faculty study, interdisciplinary programmes
- To mix home students with those from abroad in MSc courses (within Erasmus)
- To run an “Introductory week” for incoming students on mobilities
- To facilitate the running non-Erasmus international courses (Specialised Courses in Hydrology, Summer Courses (US students, etc.)
- To use achievements from the TEMPUS project effectively, with the aim of increasing
 - foreign language skills
 - administrative skills
 - willingness to assist both home and foreign students
 - enthusiasm to overcome bureaucratic obstructions

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New University Management of International Activities

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In early 1999 the author of the present paper has been requested by Prague Agricultural University to contribute ideas towards the establishment of an International Relations Office (IO) and in the process of negotiations a Feasibility Study (FS) resulted. If the University has commissioned an FS, it must be assumed that the University at least has an intention to create an International Office, thereby leaving open size, terms of reference (TOR), staffing, budget and position within the University organigram.

The present paper firstly will highlight a few milestones in the historical development of universities as far as international aspects are concerned. It will then discuss present trends but also obstacles, and finally it will pose the question whether the FS is feasible. This discussion will be general without making individual reference to the peculiarities and the situation prevailing at Prague, at the present time. Hence, the purpose is to deliver arguments against criticism concerning an IO and to provide positive arguments in the light of practice ready for defence.

It can be assumed that all participants in this workshop are convinced of the necessity for universities turning an International Relations Office (IO). This conviction is not necessarily common, even among university insiders and it may be strange to decision makers and funding agencies outside the university. Last year, a German university submitted a project to the Ministry for Higher Education. The project can be considered well thought out and it even included a component for conjunctive use for continuing education activities. The Ministry for Higher Education did not look into the substance matter but only questioned whether the project was cost-neutral. The word 'cost-neutral' constituted a diplomatic formulation whether the project would result in additional staff to be recruited. It was even argued that the project was only a skilful measure to avoid staff reduction, which the Ministry had been charged to implement, at the request of the Ministry of Finances. The example shows that the establishment of an IO cannot be considered granted even if supported by the higher university management.

If an IO shall be successfully launched it needs good justifications. Assumed a university intends to create an IO, the following steps normally must be foreseen:

- a. Intention: the university will include the International Office in its Development Strategy Plan (DSP)
- b. Feasibility Study (FS): The FS will outline the possibility and indicate broad Terms of Reference (TOR).
- c. First decision: The Rectorate and the University Council will define the general framework based on the FS.
- d. Detailed Plan containing of (a) TOR, (b) staffing plan (c) budget
- e. Execution

In order to understand better the mentality of a university, a look back into the historical development seems worthwhile. The origin of universities goes back to the High Middle Ages, when Latin and theological schools evolved towards institutions of higher learning. The title 'university' suggests that these schools under medieval conditions taught the knowledge

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available at that time: the entirety of this knowledge was universal. Today no university would venture to offer all possible disciplines, on the contrary, they specialise. The limitations are often visible in the name, such as 'Agricultural University'. The medieval idea of universal teaching programmes has been completely abandoned and probably is dead forever, unless one considers the new electronic media as an Internet-University with a full, complete programme. However, in contrast to the virtual electronic university, the traditional university will remain restricted in programme. But, in order to compete with the electronic one, it needs strong links with the outer world, it needs international relations. In the context of the present discussion the question emerges whether an IO can help. A look into history will show that, in the past, the universities managed without an IO. Hence, history does not deliver arguments in favour of an IO and new arguments in the light and spirit of the present time need to be found. However, before formulating such arguments the brief historical analysis will demonstrate the past ways of communication, the success and errors, and it will outline how the historical international communication has mutated.

One meaning of the term 'university' has already been discussed. However, in the Middle-Ages the term 'universal' had a second meaning which after a heavy decline in the recent past, now fully again enjoys highest relevance. While the medieval world is characterised by the formation of the nations and the forerunners of present states, the same epoch saw a Europe-wide network of universities, which were co-operating and communicating across the political borders. Scholars and professors gained in value when changing the universities, and when learning or teaching where the academic, political or economic conditions were better. There was no language problem since the academic world communicated entirely in Latin. In modern language, one could call the medieval system an 'interactive communication network in the core of Europe'. The similarity to the present time cannot be neglected. There is another similarity. The 'universe' of the universities broke into pieces when the Reformation resulted in political and spiritual camps. The development since has accentuated the separation. In the recent past the international aspects of universities, the replacement of Latin by national languages accelerated the separation. During these years the international aspects of university life almost died when dictatorships and political blocks overstressed the freedom of teaching and research. After the Second World War the western world rapidly re-introduced international aspects into the universities. The main parameters in this process were the high standards of US universities. With a certain time lag the universities in Eastern Europe are making up. Interestingly enough, the last dictatorships and authoritarian regimes oppose to this openness. The electronic revolution has been mentioned, and it is not surprising that the last few states with a closed system consider the Internet as enemy No. 1.

With respect to Europe, the statement seems permitted that practically all states favour the globalisation of teaching and research. The European Union (EU) fully supports this trend. While in the Middle Ages international contacts exclusively were the matter of individual teachers, the present structure of nations, states and bureaucratisation of daily life calls for instruments which in the past were not necessary but which the present structural life is demanding. The EU fully recognises this fact and, therefore, a statement in favour of an instrument for foreign relations can be made:

- The present structural, bureaucratised life does not enable an individual person (=professor) to fully participate in international activities. The individual needs the support of a competent body, such as an International Office.

The present trend of globalisation has a double face. On the one hand, the electronic media are fully liberalised. Whether this will persist is at least doubtful. Juridical hurdles are being developed to introduce nationally controlled prohibited areas. The seemingly fully liberal

field of electronic communication is opposed by an increasingly complicated execution in daily life. Only in Europe, more than hundred legislative bodies - from the European Commission over national governments, federal states, provincial authorities down to townships are producing new laws daily, administrative rules etc., largely without an attempt of streamlining or even abandoning redundant rules. The same people who complain about an increasing administration are producing more work for the administration. If, and this is extremely popular, politicians speak about the reduction of administration it is up to them to create the pre-conditions for such a reduction. All in all, the trend stands for complication and for bureaucratising daily life. Even scientific bodies are not excluded. The Intergovernmental Council for UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme started as a forum for scientific discussion. It now discusses procedures. In this administrative jungle the individual person, say a university professor, is completely lost unless helped and guided by qualified experts. An IRO can grant this help and the above statement is re-inforced:

- In performing international activities, the university professor needs administrative and juridical guidance. Only a central university office, an International Office, can provide the know-how and advise the individual.

If politicians are claiming for a reduction of public services, this constitutes a populist slogan. In reality, the increasing complexity of international communication calls for additional services. New and increasing duties cannot be performed by the existing university infrastructure, but the creation of a new, additional section is indispensable:

- New tasks, increasingly complex duties require the creation of a new, additional service.

Innovations cannot be expected to be free of charge. If a university wishes to cope with the general, worldwide development, it has to foresee additional funds for an additional service. The argument that such service in the past was not necessary is false, because the past has passed. No car owner will argue against the catalyst although the catalyst does not run the car. But without it the car will not be approved. Hence, the car owner bears the extra costs in order to continue driving.

- The new situation is not cost neutral. Additional funds in the university budget need to be allocated. No good services without good money.

As will be shown later, the costs grow with the terms of reference. However, no gain without investment. Certainly, staff costs, not only in universities, need continuing supervision and redundant services must be eliminated. Foreign relations are not redundant, but innovative. They, and only they, can determine whether a university is competitive at international scale. At a time of globalisation, the national viewpoint of competitiveness can be ignored. In the European market, but also globally, the East-European labour market in the future will be fully exposed to the international standards. To know them, to import new trends, new level requirements exceed the capability of an individual and even of the Rectorate. An International Office constitutes the only effective and efficient means to advise the university of external standards, and of the requirements for an appropriate level of teaching and research.

- Only an IO can collect, evaluate and interpret information on foreign standards and only an IO can advise the university on the measures to be taken to ascertain an internationally competitive level.

If somebody has doubts about the necessity for international competitiveness, the present trends in the EU should be studied. The EU pursues the aim of an absolutely liberal labour market. If a country fails in producing adequate graduates, foreigners will flood it, and the nationals will have no chance at all, neither in their own country nor abroad:

- Only keeping or exceeding international levels can save the national graduates. The high standards are an indispensable investment for the future generation, for the future of the country. The IO has a pivotal role in advising the university to structure its programme for orientation for the national future.

For the establishment of an International Office university-specific conditions must be respected. To know about the historic development helps to understand that the universities are not the children of today's globalisation. Universities do have a long history and many of their staff has conserved relicts of historical feelings. This should not be understood as discrimination. On the contrary, even newly founded universities do not operate in the style of international commercial companies. An appreciation of the spirit of universities will avoid to believe that the university, even with modern management, will adopt the rules of behaviour and action such as they are being applied by the so-called 'multis'. A university, although part of the international communication network, although competing in offering training opportunities, cannot blindly adopt the methods of work such as developed in the monetary, trade and production area. The international connections are necessary, but they follow their own rules in universities. Any attempt to introduce methods from the commercial world without adaptation to university-specific conditions must fail. University teaching is not identical with car production. Even if privatised, such as occasionally discussed, a university will maintain its own atmosphere. The above considerations are necessary to understand that the establishment of an International Office cannot be dissolved from the way of planning university life and university structure.

In the ideal case, one would start with a small office such as described in the Feasibility Study. As experience and competence grow, one would gradually increase the Office by adding additional functions and tasks. This evolutionary approach has only advantages as it permits the Office to harmonically grow, to adapt itself to the actual requirements and to slowly become a complementary part of the university administration. Each step would follow actual needs, so that the university would obtain fully satisfying services. This approach clearly follows the pattern of the private sector. As nice and as reasonable as it may sound, it is unfortunately not feasible as long as universities are subject to the rules of the public sector, rules set by the government for its own services. The danger and problem is of administrative and budgetary nature. Each additional post, each budget increase would necessitate long, almost annual recurrent negotiations, bargaining about each small component. At present, universities do not enjoy full governmental support, despite frequent lip confessions; the bulk of money flows towards other purposes. Annual negotiation for the Office therefore increases the risk to produce frustration, but not success. As a matter of consequence, a too timid approach will not pay out. The UDSP - and this is recommended - should make a generous, positive, future-oriented approach; it should dare a powerful solution in order to attract the best foreign information and establish the best external relation to make the universities competitive and raise the level to comply with the country's manpower requirements. Splendid isolation is over, only open ears and eyes pave the way into the future.

Stagnation on a long run is mortal; life is identical with development. Development can be a slow process of automatic adaptation to changing conditions. It also can be dictated from the political top, a typical process following a (rapid) political transformation. However, it can also originate from the institution itself following an analysis of requirements. Whatever the origin, the university will develop a Strategy Development Plan (SDP).

The SDP settles the internal structure of the university. It also settles the study system (introduction of a two-stage system). This aspect is of interest in so far as the know-how can

be obtained only from abroad and possibly should be channelled through the IO. This must be reflected in the Terms of Reference of the IO (TOR) and in the university structure of the flow of information and in the decision-making procedure. As far as the TOR of the IO is concerned they will be discussed later.

Of direct importance for the SDP is the positioning of the International Office within the university organigram. If confined to serving more or less only as a ticket-purchase office it can be run by an administrator. However, the more tasks are charged to the unit the number of administrative, pedagogical and scientific employees will grow. The diversity of required skills will augment.

Experience has shown that it is impracticable to attach such a unit to a single institute or chair but that it is preferably better hosted in the vicinity of the Dean or even the Rector. Attempts have been successful to run the unit as a special group but integral part of the university thus allowing all sorts of cross-relations as visualised in Fig 1.

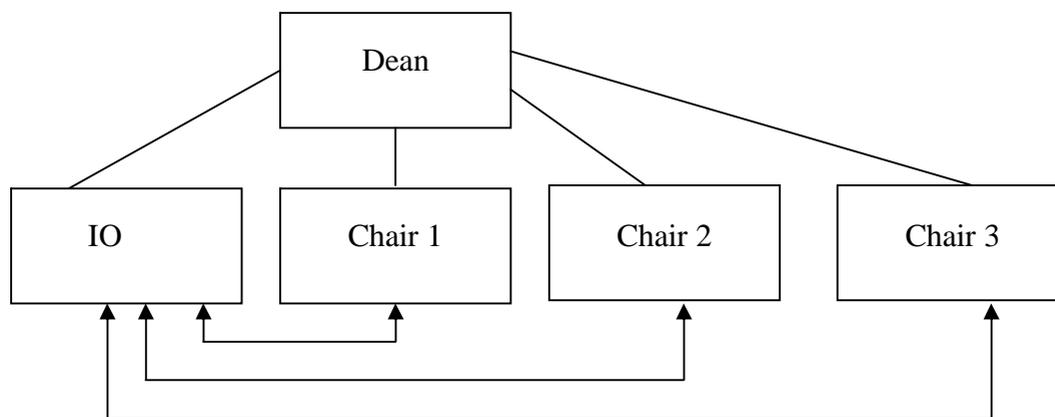


Fig 1. "IO" is equally ranked as chair

The advantage is that the International Office is part of the Faculty with equal rights and duties as compared with the other chairs and institutes. The disadvantage is certainly that in this way the IO is subject to the same administrative and budgetary limitations and that it cannot develop the flexibility it definitely needs for the fulfilment of its tasks, which change in nature from one day to the other. Particularly the budgetary inflexibility may much hamper daily work where quick decisions and quick, often unconventional actions are required.

Many universities therefore have chosen another way, admittedly much contested by traditionalists and not necessarily supported by the regular chairs and institutes. This other way consists in creating a (largely) autonomous body of or within the university with a budget of its own and where additionally the Rectorate, the participating chairs and institutes may contribute financially according to the tasks fulfilled by the IO for them. They also would form part of the governing council of the IO. Such an autonomous (or at least semi-autonomous) body would enjoy much financial flexibility and even could dispose of an income of its own through CET (continuing education and training) activities for which it would charge a fee. The set-up is depicted in Fig 2.

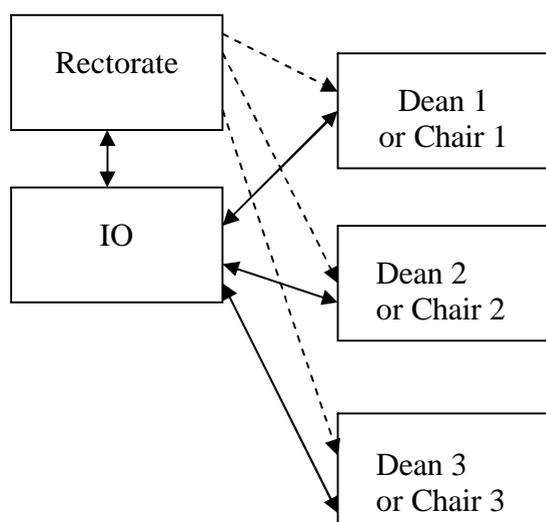


Fig 2. The IO is subordinated to the Rectorate. Chairs and institutes may provide funds; they are members of the governing council of the IO and thus control its functioning and expenses.

Doubtlessly, the first solution is relatively easy to achieve: however, it yields a weak unit which hardly can go beyond doing the nasty paperwork for the chairs. The second solution will result in a powerful and effective section which in order to survive needs much skill and diplomacy.

Some advantages and disadvantages shall be compared:

- The vicinity to the Rectorate means at the same time a long distance to the chairs and professors. The IO risks to become a very bureaucratic machinery.
- If manipulated by the Rectorate it will be made responsible for unpopular decisions and loose credit
- If not sufficiently supported by the Rectorate it may become the grain between the millstones Rectorate and Ministry
- As a central office it can well co-ordinate housewide and care for equal development within all departments and chairs. If too remote from the chairs some chairs may feel tempted to ignore the IO and go their own way.
- Professors are proud of their individual connection with the outer world. The IO cannot and must not try to replace these personal contacts
- The IO is an office of administrative nature. It must not interfere in scientific or pedagogical questions. Should it try so, the respective professors will violently oppose.
- Where the university or part of it is a member in an international association (particularly NGO but also IGO) the IO must render all logistic help but leave the representation to the designated professor, dean etc. The border line between logistics and actual representation probably is a grey area rather than clearly defined and will depend on the good personnel relations between IO and the representative.
- The IO will be responsible for all preparatory work. It rarely will enjoy recognition for it: splendour and honour are likely to be harvested by other persons
- The utilisation of the IO by the university staff will be proportional to the competence of the IO staff. Particularly if it works too slowly the professors or chairs or institute will develop a by-pass or even go their own way. The IO should be aware that it constitutes the most commercial-like unit of the university, subject to and of competition, of use or non-use. The degree of popularity and acceptance fully and entirely depends on its efficiency.

Under socialist conditions the flow of information - if any at all - and the way of forming decisions was as clear as simple, at least in theory. Foreign relations were in the hands of a few, selected persons, under rigid control from the top. The present time is much the opposite. While the number of IGOs at least can be counted that of NGOs and multi-lateral projects and programmes is countless. Membership and contacts are totally decentralised and fully in the hands of individuals at chair level. The International Office would be well advised not to interfere, it cannot replace the personal contacts. However, it should develop the reputation to be the right address if problems occur, particularly these of juridical nature. In this way, the IO can establish its firm position within the university but it should not commit the mistake of expecting thanks. Things are slightly different where the university is a member in an intergovernmental programme or where the University represents the Government in an IGO. Here the IO should have a clear mandate and the minimum appears that it sees all outgoing correspondence. In IGO affairs the IO should be the indispensable link between the chair or dean in charge and the Rectorate. Where the Rector is involved the IO automatically must become his advisor.

Probably difficult to achieve but all agreements of university bodies with outside organisations or programmes should be channelled through the IO. This includes all sorts of networks (ETNET), bi- or multi-lateral projects where the IO should consent and where it should check whether all legal and financial implications are acceptable to the university. Admittedly, this is a most delicate affair since most professors will consider international contacts and connections as their private area and detest the co-operation of the IO. However, cases are not rare where individuals make obligations in networks or for projects which had bitter consequences for the university. Individual professors should be convinced that the IO is not made to control them, to limit their activities or to build up obstacles but that the task of the IO is to protect them.

Some people may appreciate the IO as a specialised office, as an extended secretariat, useful for the purchase of tickets, hotel booking, shuttle services for guests, catering for translations. Such an office may be regarded as a crystallisation cell. University managers must be convinced that these services although highly useful and appreciated do not help the university to enter into today's internationalisation of the academic world. The services described above even need not to be part of the university; any private company probably would act cheaper and more efficient than a university department. If it is part of the university, specific criteria must be formed in order to justify a special organisational unit of and in the university.

It already has been pointed out that among all university services the IO has the most private-sector character. The FS for the Prague University has dealt at length with this problem and therefore recommended a semi-autonomous status with a budget of its own. In order to supply funds, conjunctive use activities in the area of continuing education have been proposed. When discussing the TOR this topic shall be briefly resumed. The financial aspect has been incorporated here since the IO's are innovations, they need new and highly qualified staff. To recruit staff of this category within the usual university payment scheme seems an illusion. The salaries have to be adapted to those common in the private sector. But, it is apparent that the financing agencies will fight for the cheapest solution. One should take into account that a more effective performance of a university is difficult to assess financially but the higher costs for a new unit easily can be counted in numeric terms. However, one should be aware of an important difference between the private and the public sector. In the private sector with share-holder value thinking, only the positive financial balance will be accepted. No commercial company would dare to consider ethic or other similar values. The public sector

is quite different. Ecologists are masters of attributing numeric values to immaterial effects. A new traffic way will not be assessed in terms of gained hours, less petrol consumption but in terms of harm to the environment and this in figures! To maintain a park or a pond will yield positive results because of the impact on people's health.

These few examples may help to formulate requests for an international university office in a creative way. While the figures for the actual staff costs can be calculated with high precision one should not hesitate to also value the positive effects of an international office for the functioning of the university as such and as a whole but also for specific activities. In formulating an optimal composition of the office one should balance - and this can even be done in tabular form

- staff needed
- functions to be performed
- benefits directly drawn for an institute; a chair; the faculty; the university as a whole;
- indirect benefits in terms of better competition, in contributing to the country's development plan, in providing better trained staff for the private and public sector.

Unless the benefits are exposed in a convincing manner it will be difficult, if not problematic to justify the costs incurred.

An international office will not be established on the green meadow. The university will have a small unit for international affairs.

The art is to convince the university management of the utility of a larger unit beyond a simple ticket office. The Feasibility Study contains a catalogue of possible activities which could be entrusted to such an Office and they have been developed with increasing complexity of tasks increasing academic relevance. There is no absolute upper end of what the Office could perform. The Prague FS lists the following items as TOR:

Roughly, the functions of a International Office start with that of a ticket provider and they could end up with those of a "Centre of Excellence" for interdisciplinary and complex academic tasks. This climax in responsibility and performance could be structured into:

1. Logistics
2. Foreign relations; networking
3. Advisory services on structural matter
4. Organisation of scientific events with foreign participation
5. Continuing education and training
6. Multi-disciplinary functions

For details the reader is referred to the Prague FS.

Repeatedly, an extended utilisation of an International Office has been mentioned under the term "conjunctive use". Again, reference is made to the respective chapter in the FS and stress has been laid on the fact that the qualified staff of the IO could well provide for catering the logistics (and only the logistics) for international and national training courses as continuing education activities (CET). This combination is well known in a number of countries as Centres of Excellence (CoE).

If combined, CET in national Centres of Excellence and postgraduate CET for foreigners are an ideal case for a conjunctive use of a special unit. The advantage of conjunctive use is the excellent opportunity to plan an equal workload throughout the year. Since CET is not limited

to the normal university lecturing period a full load can be scheduled for the twelve months of the year. The advantages are clear:

- most economic staff employment
- almost permanent usage of the facilities (rooms etc.)
- high-level teaching programmes which exceed the normal, regular ones
- incentive for everybody to participate actively
- opportunity for CET of the university staff itself
- high reputation of the university
- possibility of inviting guest professors and thus for broadening the university programme
- possibility to organise high-level scientific events
- fast reaction to freshly emerging urgent training needs within the country
- testing of new teaching subjects of methodologies for later inclusion in the regular programme of the university
- readiness to remedy ad-hoc shortages

If the additional functions described here are added to the International Office the TOR would be enlarged by:

- organisation of continuing education activities for outsiders and for university staff
- advice on and co-operation in study reforms where multi-disciplinarity is required
- catering for multi-disciplinary teaching programmes
- advice to the university on general aspects of study programmes
- utilisation of the university facilities for extraordinary events for possibly full-time exploitation of rooms etc.

Whether simple International Office or Centre of Excellence the university will have to make its choice of topics it wishes to include in the TOR, and it is more than unlikely that a university from the very outset will opt for the biggest solution. In determining its choice the university will focus on the following parameters:

- present international activities
- development target for future, additional activities
- improved performance as an adaptation measure to at least European dimensions
- position of the Office within the university organigram
(chair, faculty, rectorate)
- type and character of the work to be performed
- conjunctive use
- employment of new staff or re-deployment of existing staff
- intentions of the competent ministry concerning the work of the university
- budget increase to be granted (and frame for revenues of its own in case of conjunctive use)
- consent of the professorship

An international office risks to be considered as a special body of the university and easily could be pushed into an outsider position. This would be its end. It appears that an international office is an extremely vulnerable creation, it needs the consent of the professorship, it needs their collaborative attitude, it lives from the conviction within the university that it is really needed, if not indispensable. All these attitudes cannot be created by administrative rules or by "ordre du moufti" but only by highest dedication and qualification of the staff. Reference again is made to the Feasibility Study where the staff quality

requirements are described. The Office only can become successful if it co-operates with the professorship, any feeling of duplication, of take-away fears must be avoided. The Office staff must be aware of the danger that the individual professor can live without the Office but not the Office without the professors. The privilege of a specialised office is a high award but also a permanent challenge. The more tasks the Office accepts the higher are the expectations from the side of the university but the greater also is the risk of failures.

This contribution started with the question whether the FS is feasible. Yes, it is feasible. In fact, like all innovations an International Office will be in the centre of the focus, it has to persuade those who doubt, it has to convince those who oppose and it has to satisfy those who promote it. Skill, fact, performance, endurance and simply "good work" will help to win.

Implementation of Strategies for Internationalization at the University of Joensuu

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University of Joensuu

The University of Joensuu is a multidisciplinary public university in Eastern Finland. Today, it is known as the easternmost university in the European Union. Its areas of strength include multidisciplinary teacher education and life course studies, research and teaching pertaining to forests, other renewable natural resources, and the environment, proficiency in the development and application of high technology, as well as research on the social and cultural development of fringe areas and border regions. At the moment, the student enrollment stands at about 6,000. Since its foundation in 1969, the university has been committed to internationalization, cooperating with numerous institutions of higher education all over the world.

A new era was introduced by the launch of several European programmes of cooperation in the late 1980's and early 1990's. It was no longer enough to manage cooperation with foreign universities without a strategy for internationalization. It was the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme of the European Union which expedited the formulation of the University of Joensuu's first European Policy Statement. Like other European universities, in the spring of 1996, the University of Joensuu drafted a three-page strategy for its European cooperation, to be included in our first application for a SOCRATES Institutional Contract. Soon thereafter, it became evident that the university also needed to define a global strategy in view of cooperation with both European and non-European universities. Today, international relations of the University of Joensuu are conducted on the basis of these two policy statements.

How successful has the implementation of these strategies for internationalization been at the University of Joensuu up-to-date?

I Achievements

1. Institutionalization of international cooperation.

The committee responsible for drafting the internationalization strategies, chaired by the Rector of the university, secured very broad representation from different departments of the university, as well as from central administration. The approval of the two strategies by the University Senate meant that internationalisation was, for the first time, articulated officially as a central objective of the University of Joensuu. From the point of view of the staff of the International Relations Office (IO), it was important that the university, for the first time, declared its commitment to professional management of international cooperation and defined the role of the IO in the planning, development and management of international relations.

2. Acquisition of external funding

On the basis of its European policy statement, the university has made a determined and successful effort to secure external funding for a wide range of activities from various international sources, especially from the educational, research and development programmes

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of the European Commission. Today, approximately 10 per cent of the funding of the university originates from the European Union sources. And such funding is gradually increasing.

3. Enhanced European dimension in both teaching and research

As presupposed in the two strategies, the University of Joensuu's already well established cooperation with other European universities and research institutions has been further strengthened in recent years. This has been achieved through active participation in the Fourth and Fifth Framework Programmes of the European Union and through active networking within the vast ERASMUS programme, as well as a number of university consortia, e.g. the European Consortium of Innovative Universities, the ECIU, and the Silva Network of European universities specializing in Forestry.

4. Closer cooperation with Northwestern Russia and the Baltic Area

Being the easternmost university of the European Union, the University of Joensuu occupies a key position in the development of cooperation between the European Union and universities of Northwestern Russia and the Baltic countries. Due to the availability of financial support from various EU programmes, such as TACIS and INTERREG, as well as INTAS, interaction with the above countries is today at a completely different level than a decade ago.

5. A global reach

On the basis of its global strategy, the University of Joensuu has made special efforts to develop cooperation with universities in Southeast and East Asia, North America and southern Africa. As a result of these efforts, the University of Joensuu now coordinates the new ASEFOREP exchange programme in Forestry between EU and Asian countries and acts as the European Coordinator of a Forestry project in the EU-Canada programme. Bilateral agreements have been concluded with universities in Japan, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Namibia and South Africa.

6. Growth of international student mobility

One of the most successful aspects of internationalization at the University of Joensuu has been the dramatic increase in international student mobility. A decade ago, there were only about 30 international students at the university; today, they number about 300. Correspondingly, the university now annually sends about 300 students to study abroad.

7. Introduction and institutionalization of international study programmes taught in English

A decade ago, all study programmes of the University of Joensuu were taught in Finnish. In its strategies for internationalization, the university was committed to establishing a number of international study programmes enabling international students with no command of the Finnish language to study in Finland. At the moment, the university offers five extensive study programmes taught in English in fields such as Environmental Science and Forestry, Karelian, Russian and Baltic Area Studies, Social Sciences, Human Geography and Educational Sciences.

8. Professionalisation of the IO staff

In its strategies for internationalization, the University of Joensuu declares its commitment to professional management of international cooperation. The University of Joensuu has taken this commitment seriously. During the 1990s, the university has encouraged its IO staff to develop their professional skills through active participation in national and international training programmes, workshops and conferences. The contributions of organisations, such as the Association of International Educators (NAFSA), the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), the International Student Exchange Programme (ISEP), the European Association for International Education (EAIE), the Finnish Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), as well as IROICA, to promote the professionalization of international relations staff have been of great importance.

9. Staff exchange programmes

Perhaps one of the most unique achievements of our internationalisation within the Finnish context has been an exchange programme for administrators of the University of Joensuu and the University of Montana in the United States. As a result of this programme, more than ten administrators in key positions have had an opportunity to interact with their counterparts at the partner institution and to gain first hand knowledge of the value of internationalization.

II The tasks ahead - what still needs to be accomplished

The University of Joensuu, in addition to focusing on the present situation, also continues to search for solutions to challenges relating to internationalization. Among the most important challenges faced by the University of Joensuu are perhaps the following:

- * Removing obstacles to full implementation of the European Credit Transfer System at all faculties of the university;
- * Further improving the quality of student exchanges, e.g. by developing teaching exchanges with partner universities exchanging students with our university;
- * Improving the study environment for physically challenged international students;
- * Developing exchange programmes combining studies and internships abroad;
- * Developing joint degree programmes with foreign universities;
- * Initiating the accreditation of the university's study programmes in partner countries;
- * Further developing a professional approach to international public relations and the marketing of the university's programmes abroad;
- * Attracting the support of regional and local organisations for the university's internationalization programmes and promoting the internationalization of the region;
- * Developing international alumni activities;
- * Developing ways of recognizing staff members supporting internationalisation;
- * Developing a crisis management plan applicable to international exchange activities;

- * Developing methods of evaluating internationalization;
- * Fine-tuning of the status of the International Relations Office within the university administration;
- * Securing adequate funding and resources for the maintenance of a professional International Office;
- * Reaching and securing sustainability in international relations management.

NOVA University- an Example of Networking Among Universities

Mårten Carlsson¹
NOVA University

NOVA University - The Nordic Forestry Veterinary and Agricultural University - is a network of universities established to increase the co-operation between the agricultural and veterinary universities in the Nordic countries. Its background, purpose, organisation, financing and some of its activities are described in section 1. A short comment has been added if an activity also illustrates organisational problems of general interest.

The work in NOVA has provided experiences from networking in organisations of the NOVA-type. This type of experience is of value for the continuous development of NOVA. However, also groups outside NOVA, confronted with networking among universities have expressed interest in such information. In section 2 of this presentation, some observations of organisational and managerial nature are presented.

Section 1

NOVA University

Background

There is a long tradition of co-operation among agricultural universities, researchers and teachers in the Nordic countries. An outstanding example is the Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists (NJF) established more than 80 years ago. Another example is the annual Rectors meeting held regularly for more than 25 years, at which rectors of the Nordic agricultural and veterinary universities have met to exchange information and discuss questions of mutual interest.

In the early 90s, the rectors identified the need for a more formalised form of co-operation. A study was undertaken by the rectors' group and a process of information dissemination and decisions at the individual Veterinary and Agricultural Universities resulted in a formal agreement to establish NOVA University. The agreement was signed in May 1995.

Purpose and aims

The general purpose of NOVA is to raise the quality and increase the range of education and research through various co-operation projects.

The aims of NOVA are:

- * free mobility of undergraduate students and teachers among the Nordic Veterinary and Agricultural Universities,

¹ Rector of NOVA University

- * joint postgraduate courses and an open Nordic postgraduate school,
- * co-ordinated research programmes building on the strengths of the individual institutions,
- * joint profile and co-operation to advance international co-operation with Baltic countries, developing countries, EU members and others, and
- * division of responsibility on subjects not broad enough for each country to develop or to maintain its own expertise within the subject.

Members, organisation and financing

Members of NOVA are:

- * The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Denmark
- * University of Helsinki, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry
- * University of Helsinki, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
- * The Agricultural University of Norway
- * Norwegian School of Veterinary Science
- * The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
- * Hvanneyri Agricultural University, Iceland

NOVA is governed by a board consisting of the rectors - in Finland the deans of faculties - of the 7 universities/faculties involved. Recently a student representative also became a full member of the board.

For "permanent" areas, like postgraduate education, undergraduate education, co-operation with the Baltic countries and development co-operation, steering committees with representatives from the member universities are established. For new areas/fields of interest, special working groups are created.

The organisation of NOVA is decentralised. The secretariat, with a rector (part-time), a secretary general and a secretary, is the only central part. Important decentralised parts of the organisation are, according to the original plan, the NOVA-contact persons at each member university and the secretaries of the steering committees.

In recent years different attempts have been made to involve the students (graduate and undergraduate) in the development of NOVA. At a meeting with student representatives from different NOVA member universities in spring 1999, they expressed their support of NOVA. From autumn 1999, the students established the NOVA Studentforum, NSF. NSF now has a student representative on the board and in relevant steering committees.

The universities taking part in NOVA pay the basic costs of the co-operation, the main ones being the costs of postgraduate courses and the secretariat. Such costs are shared according to a percentage distribution decided and used by the Nordic Council of Ministers. NOVA has also obtained financial support from the Nordic Council of Ministers, mainly for its co-operation with Baltic universities. Recently NORAD has financed a project in the NOVA-DC field (Development Co-operation).

NOVA activities

NOVA Postgraduate School

Joint Nordic PhD courses have been organised for students at today's NOVA member universities for the past 25 years. Participants are PhD students from the NOVA-member universities. Highly recognised international researchers are often invited as teachers in addition to the Nordic teachers and course organisers. Until the mid 1990's, the courses were financed by external money (Nordic Council of Ministers, NCM). According to the principles of NCM such activities are only financed for a limited numbers of years. Therefore the NOVA member universities themselves now finance the courses. In the period from 1996 to 1998, 36 courses were delivered.

Comments: The advantage of organising joint Nordic PhD courses is obvious for universities, teachers and students. Today's discussion deals with development of NOVA PhD schools in relevant disciplines.

Undergraduate Education

Undergraduate education is, compared to NOVA Postgraduate School, a new type of activity between the NOVA member universities initiated within the framework of NOVA and which had to be started from scratch. To our knowledge there were no “blueprints” to follow from other areas/disciplines.

Many factors explain the need for co-operation in undergraduate education. Some of them are:

- * Need to raise quality of competence to match the best universities world-wide.
- * Reduced number of students in traditional agricultural curricula
- * Demand for increased cost-effectiveness on short term basis
- * Partly limited resources for development of competence on new areas

Against this background the need and interest for common study-programmes, part of programmes and even single courses have increased. Within NOVA, this means a higher attention to, and utilisation of, competence across the borders of the Nordic countries.

Areas of interest for co-operation are identified, either in a “top-down” or in a “bottom-up” process. At present priority is given to co-operation mainly at the master’s level, for instance in areas characterised by a fairly low number of students or in cases where one of the member universities offers a specialised course, which is also of interest to students from the other universities. Until now such courses have been organised in e.g. Agroecology (which has actually lead to the establishment of a new MSc programme), Landscape Architecture and Planning, including GIS and CAD, Tropical Forestry, Crop Production Technology.

The NOVA Steering committee for Master and Bachelor Education has developed guidelines for establishing courses and other forms of co-operation, which will be of great help in the coming development of new courses and teaching methods. In addition, special studies about the situation in the areas/disciplines of agricultural engineering and animal husbandry, which

at the moment are carried out within NOVA, will hopefully be a good basis for the future development of NOVA undergraduate education.

The NOVA Steering committee for Master and Bachelor Education is also responsible for the development and implementation of IT within the educational activities in NOVA

Some of the activities within NOVA, which have/will have an impact on the development of undergraduate education are presented in more detail below. As can be seen from the presentation some of them also deal with research co-operation and PhD education.

Danish-Swedish Horticultural Education

Today degree programmes in Horticulture are given at four NOVA member universities. The Swedish and Danish campuses are located on either side of Øresund. The new bridge between Malmoe and Copenhagen, which opened in July 2000, has reduced the travel time between the universities to one hour. Given this fact, it seemed rather natural to analyse the possibilities of a joint Danish-Swedish education programme in Horticulture (DSH). After some years of intensive analysis and planning by the involved universities, the decision to start such a scheme has been taken. A formal agreement to start DSH was signed in May 2000. First student intake is scheduled for the autumn of 2001. Interest in seeing this new programme in a Nordic perspective has been expressed in both Norway and Finland.

Comments: The advantages of establishing a joint Danish-Swedish education are obvious, and were also discussed before the creation of NOVA. The process, however, has revealed many problems, which need to be solved in order to overcome differences, for example in the governmental regulations and procedures in two neighbour countries. The process has also focused on the importance of involving teachers and students from both countries in the planning and decision processes.

Agroecology/Ecological Agriculture

This is a fairly new field at many of the member universities. A group of enthusiastic teachers had already started to communicate/co-operate before NOVA was created, and NOVA turned out to be a useful platform for further development. The idea to establish a 2-year Master of Science programme in Agroecology has led to intensive work carried out by a "NOVA visiting professor" in close co-operation with a NOVA working group. The first students started their studies at the Agricultural University of Norway in Aug 2000.

Comments: This activity is a good example of a "bottom-up" initiative. One issue, which turned out to be problematic, was the decision-making processes at the NOVA member universities to formally accept the NOVA Agroecology master programme.

Co-operation within veterinary medicine

Four NOVA member universities (Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo and Uppsala) give full veterinary programmes. Some years ago, a special working group - NOVA Vet - was created in order to deal with co-ordination possibilities in veterinary education. One of the results from this work is a system of mutual acceptance of each other's students for doing their "dissertation" (a minor scientific thesis work in the last part of the curriculum) in any of the other NOVA vet universities.

Comments: The homogeneity of the problems dealt with in the NOVA Vet working group has led to an increased efficiency in its work. Also in other cases attempts have been made to hand over the work within NOVA to such specialised groups, not always with the expected result.

NOVA Arctic

The aim of the project has been to develop a possible Master's programme in land resource management and agriculture in Northern regions, evaluate the basis for research based education in this field and for research programmes and research networks within arctic agriculture and land use.

It is concluded that a sufficient amount of relevant research is going on to create a scientific platform for the establishment of a research based university education in arctic agriculture and land use. Layout and arrangement for a NOVA-based "Master of science in land resource management and agriculture in Northern regions (LANOR)" will be presented to the NOVA-board in August 2000.

Based on the needs, knowledge and scientific activity in the Nordic countries, included Greenland and Faeroe Islands, the intention is to establish a Master's programme, given in English, which then can be offered to students recruited from the whole circumpolar region. The programme will furnish students with a multidisciplinary comprehension of actual problems faced in Northern utilisation of natural resources and in agriculture.

Comments: Most of the Nordic Countries have a long North-South extension. National research and higher education is also organised from North to South. NOVA Arctic is a good example of an organisation "from East to West", thereby strongly increasing the relevance of its activities. Many other examples of increased relevance, when organising research and education "from East to West" can be found within NOVA, e.g. co-operation in forestry education in the southern part of the Nordic countries.

International co-operation

NOVA University has activities within the fields of co-operation with the Baltic countries, developing countries and the EU. Besides different activities within this field, it is also of interest to notice that there is an increased political interest for such Inter-Nordic co-operation.

Co-operation with the Baltic Countries

Most developed is the co-operation with the agricultural universities in the Baltic countries. These universities created BOVA - the Baltic Forestry, Veterinary and Agricultural University - as a sister organisation to NOVA in 1997.

The main activity in this co-operation has, until now, been the organisation of courses at one of the BOVA-member universities, with participants from all the BOVA member universities, and with teachers from one or more of the NOVA member universities. In the period 1996-1999, 36 courses were organised with a total of about 700 participants. The Nordic Council of Ministers and different national Nordic sources have contributed to the financing.

Comments. The co-operation between NOVA and BOVA has in many cases been a success story. In 1998 an evaluation was undertaken on the initiative of NOVA. The evaluation both

underlined the success of the program and put forward suggestions to improve the activity. These have now been implemented.

Developing Countries

NOVA has over the last couple of years co-operated with the veterinary faculties in Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the planning of a Regional MSc degree in Tropical Animal Health and Food Safety for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region. Teachers from the veterinary faculties in Oslo, Copenhagen, Helsinki and Uppsala, together with colleagues from SADC met in Pretoria last year and designed the module in "Food Safety". Five faculty members from the SADC faculties participated last winter in a 3 months course in research methodology at the School of Veterinary Science in Oslo. In collaboration with their Norwegian teachers they designed a similar course, which will be a compulsory part for all MSc students in Africa. So far NORAD has allocated substantial funding to the project.

Comments. This is another example of a project which each of the participating NOVA member universities is too small to work on its own. It is also interesting to notice that the project has led to the creation of a "network" among the faculties of veterinary medicine in Southern Africa, which in the long run might turn out to have positive effects in itself, also within other fields of veterinary medicine. NOVA is now discussing with other Nordic donors how the financing of such Nordic projects can be handled as efficient as possible.

NOVA information gateway

The librarians at the NOVA member universities have, with NOVA as a platform, developed an interesting level of co-operation. (For information see <http://novagate.nova-university.org>). This co-operation also has contacts with libraries within the BOVA University.

Section 2

Organisational observations from the NOVA work

In section 1, NOVA today has been presented. Comments were also given about some aspects regarding issues related to implementation and organisation.

This section will take a closer look at some organisational questions. Seven observations from our work in NOVA are presented as a starting point for discussion. Most of them have been discussed by the NOVA board and other NOVA-groups.

Observation 1. Throughout the development of NOVA, the board has had a positive attitude.

The "first generation" of board members all participated in the study, which created the basis of NOVA University. They all felt strong involvement in NOVA and believed in the scheme very much. In addition, board members, who have become members of the NOVA board during the recent years, express their firm belief in NOVA as an important platform in solving some of the problems, which their own university has or are expected to have in the future.

Many NOVA initiatives which are of great interest from a board or a top-down perspective have been discussed by the board.

In general, the NOVA board is satisfied with the development and the speed of development of NOVA. It often underlines that NOVA-initiatives need time to be implemented.

Observation 2. There is a need for both top-down and bottom-up initiatives

Today the main challenge seen from the perspective of the NOVA board members is how to stimulate the teachers and students to see the advantages of different NOVA initiatives. More information about NOVA at the member university can probably be of importance in this respect, as can systematic analysis of how NOVA activities can be positive solutions at the individual university. The role of success stories has often been stressed by the NOVA board as an instrument to increase the interest for NOVA-solutions.

Observation 3. The needs have to be felt and supported simultaneously

Any NOVA initiative needs the involvement and interest from at least two NOVA member universities. It is a great advantage if the “idea” is identified at the same time. Co-ordinated information about NOVA as such and about common interests can be of value in this connection. It is also of importance that enough personal resources at the member universities (e.g. contact persons) are available to support the development.

Until now, the NOVA activities have been of different kinds and intensity at different member universities. Some have had a low level of activity, caused by problems of not having enough time for NOVA matters among all other activities of a more acute type, and they have also admitted to not being active enough in the NOVA work. At some member universities the positions as contact persons and secretaries in steering committees have been vacant for long periods. Other member universities have shown high levels of activity including e.g. that each department systematically has to include NOVA solutions in the annual plans, which they have to discuss with the university management.

Observation 4. Sharing competence – to give and to receive

In today’s international competition, you need to be at the cutting edge in order to be able to do research and to deliver education of highest quality. For economic reasons, this is not possible within all sub-disciplines at all the NOVA member universities. Division of responsibilities (competence) will therefore be of special interest.

This means that you will have to find colleges which have the competence and are willing to take the responsibility, for such sub-disciplines in which your own university is weak, and that colleagues from another university are prepared to leave to you the responsibility of sub disciplines in which your university is strong. In order to get the responsibility for one (sub-) discipline, you have to give up another.

This is, of course, a very complicated process, especially when handled by a multi-level federal organisation such as NOVA. In NOVA we already have some experience of how problems of this type might slow down and even hinder solutions which are of high relevance from a NOVA perspective from being implemented. The management of such questions need more consideration in the future.

Observation 5. Information and communication

One of the weak points in NOVA today is the lack of knowledge about NOVA, especially among different interest groups (teachers, students) at the NOVA member universities. The need for easy access to information has been on the agenda for a long time. However, this has not been implemented. The urgent need to develop an information strategy has been clearly identified by the NOVA Studentforum, and will be given high priority in the future.

Observation 6. Implementation....

.... of Multi- (Bi-) Lateral programmes

Implementation is often a complex process, involving both the traditional implementation problems known in any real university, and the special aspects related to having two or more universities with different goals, structures, and cultures. Complexity also increases when different countries and their national laws are involved. The problems are of different significance for different activities.

The process behind the development of DSH – Danish-Swedish Horticultural Education – described in section 1, is an interesting case to illustrate different problems in this respect.

A first feasibility study was done in 1997 by a Norwegian professor with good knowledge of the situation in horticultural research and education in Denmark and Sweden. On the basis of this study, KVL and SLU decided to ask a committee of teachers and students from both universities to present in more detail how such a study program could be organised. With this study as a basis document, the two universities appointed an interim board (1999), which was asked to implement the suggestions. The first students will start in autumn 2001.

The work carried out in this process has clearly shown the differences between Sweden and Denmark regarding laws and regulations of direct importance for DSH. Some examples where differences exist are “Who approves the study programs?”, “Do BSc and Master Programs exist?”, “The use of censors in examinations, marks given, possibilities to complain if the student are not satisfied” just to mention a few. Other differences, which have been discussed intensively, also in other NOVA situations are the way in which the studies are organised – over longer periods or in “blocks”-, as well as the way the university (departments) get paid for the education they give.

It is obvious that if the implementation of the DSH idea had started by listing all differences and problems, the interest and enthusiasm for the idea might have decreased. Instead the two member universities presented their plans to their ministers who promised to help with the implementation in case national laws and regulations would be a great problem.

The DSH is also the first large project within the Øresund region concerning university co-operation. Representatives from the Øresund University have expressed their thanks to KVL, SLU and NOVA for undertaking this pioneering work, which also will be of great help in other similar projects.

It should finally be noticed that until now only two countries (universities) have been involved in DSH. When other countries are also involved in such a project more problems of a similar kind might occur.

Observation 7. Implementation

.... in a multi-institutional organisation.

Two aspects have to be mentioned here:

* NOVA started out as a decentralised organisation. This means that parts of the NOVA administration are people at the member universities, who combine the NOVA-work with other duties at their own university.

During the years many problems have occurred in this respect. Sometimes a member university has not appointed people as e.g. contact person to NOVA and/or secretary in a NOVA steering committee. Sometime a person has been appointed but has not been given time and resources to be able to do a good job.

Advantages of a more centralised administration is currently a subject for discussion by the NOVA board.

* NOVA is a network of independent universities. The member universities have not in any case given up their “sovereignty” to NOVA.

Therefore it is of great importance that a clear distinction is made between

- decisions, which the board can make without involving the member universities, and
- decisions, which the member universities have to be involved in.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

The observations presented above are not new. They have been observed and discussed by the NOVA board and secretariat over the years. In addition, they will probably be of importance in the future as a background for the continuous development of management and organisation in NOVA. Many recent signals from groups of teachers and students show however that there is an increasing interest in NOVA solutions.

Within NOVA, the NOVA board members show their interest very strongly. Some of them even stress that there is no alternative to NOVA solutions for many of the problems, which the member universities are confronted with today. The increased use of IT in education will also make different NOVA solutions easier to implement in the future.

It has also become clear that NOVA solutions take time to implement. One can perhaps speak of a “ripening process”, including both the building up of confidence between universities and between teachers at these universities, and of mutual understanding of the importance of finding solutions to problems outside one’s own university.

The fact that the NOVA model also has attracted attention in institutions/organisations outside NOVA is a positive indicator and a stimulus to develop and implement “the model”. With this background it will therefore be of interest to further study, develop, and implement models of the NOVA type.

Why NOVA?

The following summary has often been used as a fact sheet in order to present some of the ideas behind NOVA. It also helps to eliminate some frequent misunderstandings.

- * The main purpose of NOVA is not internationalisation. Focus is on regional co-operation with the ambition to raise quality by sharing competence.
- * NOVA is not a funding body intended to finance the mobility of teachers and students. Mobility programmes are financed by other Nordic “organisations” such as NORDPLUS and NorFa. However, to some extent, participation in these mobility programmes is co-ordinated and administered in a NOVA context.

WHY NOVA?

1. NOVA member universities have, in the last period, been confronted with
 - * increased demand on scientific quality in an increased number of disciplines
 - * increased need for research environments covering many, both traditional and new disciplines, as a basis for solving urgent problems in sectors and societies
 - * less financial resources for research and education
 - * decreasing numbers of students in some courses and study programmes
2. In some cases, the answer to these challenges has been closer co-operation with other national universities.
3. In most cases this has not been possible, because the NOVA member university in a country is the only university with the scientific competence in question.
4. Therefore international co-operation, also with universities outside the Nordic Countries, has been a logical development to meet the need for quality in research, teaching and extension.
5. Because of the similarities in e.g. soils, climate and culture within the Nordic Countries, and a long tradition of co-operation, increased Nordic co-operation has been a natural path for development in this work. Through this co-operation it will be easier to keep high scientific quality in the Nordic countries in disciplines of special relevance for the area.

Networking as a Problem-Solving Approach in South-Eastern Europe

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First, a short appraisal of the present situation in South-Eastern Europe:

Since the early 90s, 25 new countries have developed in this part of the world. There had been cooperation schemes in place before the Iron Curtain came down, most countries were part of the Soviet block, 2 others were members of NATO (Greece, Turkey).

After the situation changed in the early 90s, these new democracies wanted new cooperation schemes, however, they had a clear preference for distant partners and were not keen on cooperating with neighbouring countries.

In fact, the questions of gaining a new identity and trying to come to grips with one's former identity caused a lot of problems which were also reflected in the need to reshape every single national language. While the Croats eliminated Serbian words from their language, the Bosnians took up the habit of using old Turkish words etc.

The question of cooperation and networking was something the people in South-Eastern Europe could not handle without prejudices. While being fixed on the old cooperation map, they did not realise that new cross-border networking was something they should have in mind.

When the SECI-initiative was launched soon after the Dayton Agreement, its main goal was to help the peoples to find their own way without too much guidance and interference.

However, the starting conditions were and still are not that easy:

the following unsolved problems are complicating the situation:

- Bosnia presents itself as an unsolved question
- the Kosovo war has not lead to any type of appeasement in the region (e.g. 2 universities used to exist in Pristina, an official Serbian and a secret Albanian one)
- Montenegro:, the President who is openly critical of the regime in Belgrade is supported by the international community, but officially the country is part of Yugoslavia
- the sanctions imposed on Yugoslavia make the citizens suffer because they are excluded from the basic communication lines with the international community
- there have always been enormous tensions between Greece and Turkey; only the recent earthquakes changed the attitudes somewhat

All these predicaments tend to make initiatives towards efficient networking in South-Eastern Europe rather difficult.

How to start?

Within the SECI initiative, various approaches were chosen:

- the border situation: in order to improve the situation at the borders between the SE-European countries and the EU, suggestions were made to offer training courses for customs officials and to pay them better wages in order to avoid corruption.

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- Related to the border issue is the transport question: a pro-committee of highway users was set up (SECI-PRO) which should facilitate the formalities of trans-border transport, following closely the administrative pattern of the EU countries.
- the energy question: all traditional infra-structure(esp.gas pipelines) has to be renewed;
the leading organization Gazprom still pulls the strings and even maintains a mafia-like network in all decision-making bodies.
 - environment: a high degree of potential problems resulting from old industries, inappropriate waste-water treatment, excessive use of fertilizers; the Danube Basin is particularly prone to environmental damage which occurs regularly. The major obstacle to efficient networking lies in the fact that each country tends to blame the neighbouring country up-river for all the damage done to the Danube.
 - investment and the development of enterprises: a particularly difficult issue since nobody is really interested in investing in South-Eastern Europe; at the moment, a Turkish businessman is involved in an investment plan providing support via business support offices in Venice, Istanbul, Thessaloniki;
in fact, there is no efficient court system in place, therefore business deals are preferably handled from outside the country
a quote of Lech Walesa:"It is easy to make fish soup out of an aquarium but extremely difficult to make an aquarium out of fish soup!"
 - crime-criminality issue: although people, especially Westerners, tend to think of these countries as centres of criminality, reality shows a different picture: there is criminality in South-Eastern Europe, but to a large extent, this is in the hands of Westerners: both in the fields of drug traffic and traffic in women, you can trace the organization back to criminals in some Western country.
A cross-border crime fighting centre is now about to be set up in collaboration with Interpol to really fight these terrible abuses on a broad international level.
A global network of criminals exists and it should be made sure that this network is also fought globally and not only by national police forces.

The overall and common perspective for all South-Eastern European countries is the accession to the European Union. Of course it all looked relatively easy in the early 90s when the Western countries were totally in favour of having the Eastern part of Europe integrated as soon as possible. Meanwhile, some Western countries tend to become more hesitant and seem to plead for an accession in subsequent tracks. This does not make the situation for the people in these countries really easier.

What has to be made quite clear is the fact that it is certainly not enough to send politicians and have them formulate nice promises, but what this part of the world needs most is help with the problems of everyday life. As an example one could cite the fact that they do not have enough policemen; so one should help them in this field.

South-Eastern Europe is a part of the world which has to learn to live within Europe again, and this has to be started from scratch. Cross-border networking can be a decisive component but it will function only after a considerable learning process. We are all invited to help the peoples in these countries, because they have to be involved, even if we are not certain that we will get immediate thanks and payment for what we do.

The CIHEAM Cooperation in the Mediterranean and its Networking Approach

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Introduction

The term *networking* has gained a high-ranking position in the vocabulary of the institutions involved in co-operative relationships. Nevertheless, it assumes different meanings and definitions depending on the domains where it is applied and on the ways the *network partners* conceive its functionality. Often, its interpretation is not clear at all. However, *networking* is one of the most significant approaches of co-operation.

The *co-operation* of the CIHEAM Institution with the Mediterranean Countries has lasted for almost forty years and has gone through a continuous evolution of policies, strategies, philosophical approaches, interventions and activities. In such evolutionary development, *networking* has been a major subject of reflection and it has been refined to a point that it has assumed special configuration and peculiarities.

Since *networking* represents the topic of this conference, along with the associated theme of international co-operation in the Mediterranean, in this paper the authors would like to share the experience cumulated by the CIHEAM, which we feel is of relevance, in terms of both *Cooperation* and its *Networking approach*.

The CIHEAM Institution

- *The Background*

The co-operation with the Mediterranean Countries has been a European concern for a long time. It was in 1958, under the auspices of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation Development) to which the Council of Europe was joined, that a project to create an organization for higher, post-graduate education was conceived. The idea was to train managers concerned with agricultural development and with a view to redressing the imbalance between Southern and Northern countries of Europe in the domain of agriculture through the expedient of education.

The International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) was created on 21 May 1962 following an Agreement between the Governments of seven Southern European countries: France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and Yugoslavia.

The Agreement stipulated that the Center should have as its objective *to provide additional training, in both economic and technical spheres, and to develop the spirit of*

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international cooperation among managers in agriculture in the Mediterranean countries.

In conformance with this object, CIHEAM has progressively opened its membership to the other countries of the Mediterranean Basin since the beginning of the eighties. Its vocation to gather together all the countries in the region was solemnly proclaimed by the Governing Board of CIHEAM in 1983.

This opening up has been given concrete form with the accession of Tunisia (1985), Egypt and Algeria (1986), Malta (1989), Morocco (1991), Albania (1992), and Lebanon (1994). Contacts are in progress with other Mediterranean countries wishing to join the Center. At the present time, the Center comprises thirteen member countries: Albania, Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey (Fig. 1).

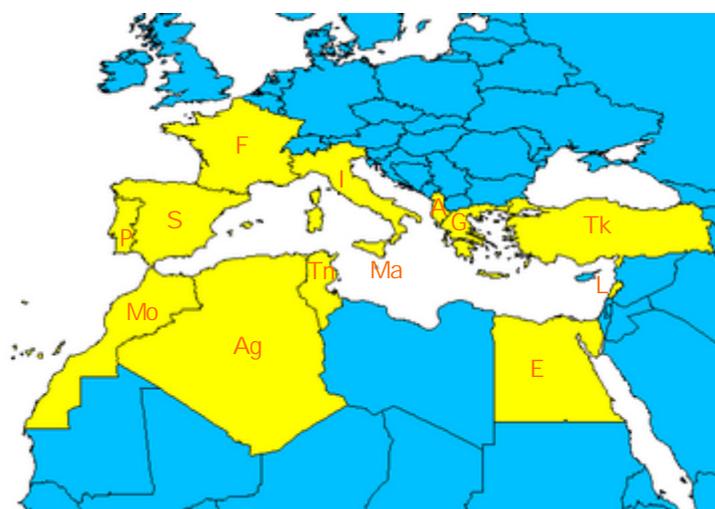


Fig. 1 – Map of the Mediterranean with the Member Countries.
Albania (**A**), Algeria (**Ag**), Egypt (**E**), France (**F**), Greece (**G**), Italy (**I**), Lebanon (**L**), Malta (**Ma**), Morocco (**Mo**), Portugal (**P**), Spain (**S**), Tunisia (**Tn**), Turkey (**Tk**).

- *The Mission*

The permanent mission of CIHEAM, assigned to it by the Agreement in 1962, is to constitute an instrument of cooperation between the countries of the Mediterranean in the domains of post-graduate agricultural education and the promotion of agricultural research through cooperative networks.

In addition, CIHEAM assumes the nature of a regional, intergovernmental organization projecting into the domain of agriculture and the rural sphere to which numerous economic activities, prime among them those of the agri-food industry, are linked, and also looking into problems of particular sensitivity in the region, such as those relating to food safety, the utilization of natural resources, protection of the environment, and agricultural policies including those aimed at sustainable development in the rural world.

During the course of almost four decades of activity, CIHEAM became a standard of excellence in the field of education and research in agriculture, agri-food industry and the environment, working in partnership with the specialist national institutions in both

member countries and others in the Mediterranean region, as well as in cooperation with the international organizations active there.

The cooperation established contributes to harmonizing the development of the rural Mediterranean area, responding to the requirements of socio-economic evolution, national and regional development, and the development and protection of natural resources.

Through the accomplishment of its mission, CIHEAM also constitutes a venue of encounter which permits definition of the types of engineer, teacher, researcher and technician who will be capable of conceiving and implementing agricultural, food and environmental policies which are appropriate to sustainable development in this region. It also places a framework for analysis and follow-up of agricultural and agri-food policy at the disposal of the countries of the region.

- *The Institutional Structure*

The institutional and organizational structure of CIHEAM is sketched in Fig. 2.

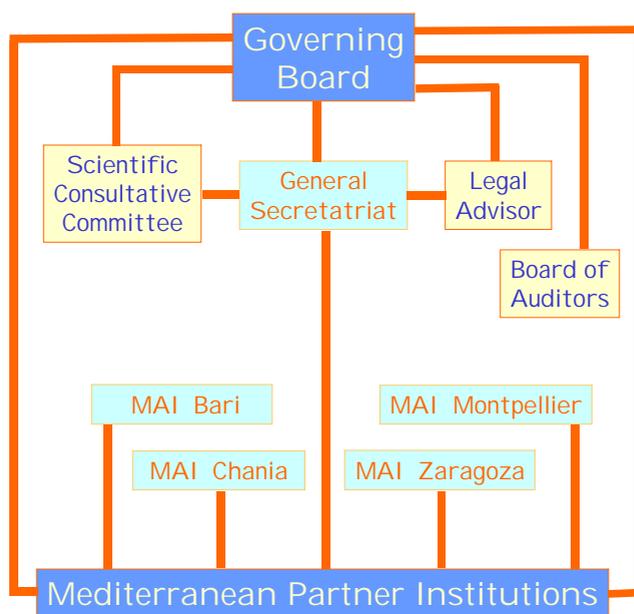


Fig 2 – Institutional and organizational structure of CIHEAM.

The Governing Board is the organ which is responsible for the management of the Center and takes decisions. It is composed of one representative from each of the thirteen member countries. Representatives of the OECD and the Council of Europe are members ex-officio in an advisory capacity. Representatives from the European Commission, the FAO (United Nation Food and Agricultural Organization) and the OADA (Arab Organization for Agricultural Development) participate as observers (Board of Auditors) at the meetings of the Governing Board.

The Council of the Governing Board has a President elected from among the members, on the basis of a two-thirds majority, for a period of four years. The President is assisted by Vice-Presidents elected for the same period and under the same conditions.

The Scientific Consultative Committee consists of a variable number of members who are designated as such for a period of four years by the Governing Board and chosen notably among the members of the establishments for higher education in agriculture and the institutes for agricultural research. The Scientific Consultative Committee meets to discuss questions submitted by the Governing Board and offers advice to the latter.

The General Secretariat (located in Paris) is the "hinge" element of CIHEAM. It plays an essential role providing action, impulse, coordination, and information, operating in an executive capacity alongside the different organs of the Center. The General Secretary is nominated by the Governing Board with a four-year mandate, which can eventually be extended to six years. The Secretariat of the Center comprises the Secretary General, the Directors of the Institutes and the necessary personnel.

Both the Governing Board and the General Secretariat are supported by a Legal Advisory group.

The CIHEAM has four operational Mediterranean Agronomic Institutes (MAIs) representing the major means of action, as it will be explained in the next section of this paper.

The budget of the General Secretariat is financed by obligatory contributions from the member countries with 78.68% of the total coming from the four host countries of the MAIs, and the remaining 21.32% coming from the other countries, following a pre-established formula of division.

For the year 1999, the budget of the General Secretariat amounted to 2,502,724 EUROS.

The working function of the MAIs is ensured through the full financing of each of the host countries (about 11.2 million EUROS for the total of the four institutes).

Certain cooperative actions are financed by external contracts, which raised the global budget for 1999 to 21 million EUROS. An important part of these external finances originates from the Commission of the European Union.

The Co-operation in the Mediterranean Region

- *The Means of Actions*

At present, CIHEAM is endowed with four Mediterranean Agronomic Institutes (MAIs):

The MAI of Bari (Italy) and the MAI of Montpellier (France), which were created at the time of the birth of the Center in 1962.

The MAI of Zaragoza (Spain) accredited as an establishment of CIHEAM in 1969.

The MAI of Chania (Greece) created in 1983.

These institutes operate in strict cooperation with the educational and research institutions of the partner Mediterranean countries with a view to the provision, according to their own specialization, of training at post-graduate level original and supplementary to the educational programmes offered in the national institutions, for the education and improvement of technical and scientific executives in the realms of agriculture and development. The Institutes also constitute active instruments for the promotion of agricultural research, both through the networks for cooperation which they organize and run and through their own laboratories, equipped with the latest advanced technology.

The Institutes of CIHEAM are active in the following areas:

- MAI-Bari: (i) management of soil and water resources
 (ii) integrated protection of Mediterranean fruit crops
 (iii) dissemination of methods of organic production in agriculture.
- MAI-Chania: (i) economic sciences
 (ii) management of enterprises and marketing of agricultural products
 (iii) management of renewable and environmental resources
 (iv) food quality management
 (v) horticultural science and technology
 (vi) natural products (plant biotechnology, application and utilization of natural products).
- MAI-Montpellier: (i) rural societies and the engineering of development
 (ii) strategies for the management of natural resources
 (iii) management of agricultural, agri-food and rural enterprises
 (iv) institutional adaptations currently underway (State, market, civil society, regulation).
- MAI-Zaragoza: (i) improvement of the techniques of plant and animal production in order to ensure the sustainability of Mediterranean systems of agriculture
 (ii) rural adjustment according to environmental conditions
 (iii) the sustainable management of natural resources
 (iv) the improvement of agri-food marketing processes.

- *The Activities*

The activities of CIHEAM are developed through programmes in the domain of Training, Research, Bi-Lateral and Multi-Lateral Projects, Symposia, International Co-operation and Information and Communication Technology.

Although all of them are relevant, we would like to draw the attention on some that have particular significance in the context of Co-operation and Networking.

Training. The program of each MAI offers two types of training:

(i) an extended period of training leading to a diploma (one or two years) with the 1st year accredited by a Diploma in Post-Graduate Specialization (DPGS), and the 2nd year of training and research at depth accredited by the degree of Master of Science; (ii) specialized short courses (two to six weeks).

The evolution of the national education systems of the participating countries has led to the increase in the proportion of specialized short courses which are addressed more towards those professionals who already have experience than to students in post-graduate education (development, administrators, researchers). A good number of specialized short courses are organized at present in the institutions of the member countries.

Teaching is carried out by associate or visiting professors of high caliber, selected for their competence and professional experience. This diversity among the teaching staff favors better understanding and leads to the development of opportunities for cooperation between the nationals participating in the different programmes.

Some quantitative figures about training are given in Table 1.

Table 1. - Courses in Figures (1962-1999)	
Diplomas in Post-graduate Studies and Masters degree	6500
Certificates for attendance on short courses	6650
Number of academic staff who have taught	3770

Research. Research is carried out both at the laboratories of the MAIs and through the expedient of cooperative research networks organized by the Institutes on subjects which are related or which, in certain sectors, assume a regional importance.

The Institutes either manage directly or participate in various programs of research, principally those of the European Commission (DG Agriculture and DG Research). The considerable regional importance of a number of these is indicated by the volume of financing involved and the number of scientific teams and countries taking part.

The importance of the scientific exchanges which take place within the framework of the activities of these networks, seminars and connected workshops must be emphasized, since they imply that several hundred experts of the highest caliber are on the move for periods of several days each year.

Finally, the MAIs organize programs of training and exchanges of accredited researchers from the countries of the South and East of the Mediterranean Basin wishing to spend a period of short duration (two to three months) in a laboratory or on research projects.

Symposia. Every year, CIHEAM organizes numerous themed or technical meetings, workshops, scientific seminars or international symposia, bringing together experts in horizontal subjects concerning the Mediterranean region: agricultural training, agricultural research, trade in agricultural products, food equilibrium, agriculture and the environment, management of water, or technical subjects such as dairy production, brucellosis, genetic resources, product quality etc.

Information and Communication Technology. Conscious of the strategic role which know-how will play in the development of the Mediterranean area, but also preoccupied by the inequality of access to strategic information and the growing need for on-going training, CIHEAM and its partners accord the highest priority to cooperative action in these fields.

It is with this in mind that CIHEAM and its partners have undertaken to build up a vehicle for the creation and diffusion of know-how, modern and accessible to the greatest number, which could take the form of a Mediterranean agronomic university "without walls" for the next millennium. Thanks to the use of the most modern techniques of information and communication, this creation could permit those active in the field, both regionally and locally, to have greater ease of access to the "know-how" produced or accumulated within the Mediterranean scientific community, to profit from a system of training that is "lifelong" and to make use of instruments which provide an opening into the outside world.

Moreover, CIHEAM is participating within the European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD) in the setting in place of an information system (INFOSYS) concerned with the potential of European agricultural research for development, in order to promote the exchange of scientific and technical information between the European research and development institutions and their counterparts in the member countries of the south and east of the Mediterranean Basin.

International Co-operation. In addition to the cooperation maintained by CIHEAM with the national institutions of the participating countries, the Center has signed several cooperation agreements with international or regional organizations with an interest in agriculture in the Mediterranean region: IAO (Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare), UE, FAO, UNESCO, FEZ (Fédération Européenne de Zootechnie), ICARDA (International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas), ACSAD (Arab Center for Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands), OADA etc.

Collaboration with the European Union has developed progressively since 1983, the date of the liaison agreement made between CIHEAM and the European Commission. Currently, and for the four-year period from 1998 to 2002, CIHEAM is particularly engaged in the implementation of a program of cooperation established with the Commission of the European Union and co-financed by it, which comprises a number of activities: specialized courses, trainee mobility, cooperative research, organization of seminars once every year, logistical support, studies, and aid to the decision-making process.

The goal is to assist the Mediterranean countries to face the transition, which in the circumstances prevailing at present marks the economic and social life of all in the region.

- *The Rationale*

Through its *means of actions and activities*, CIHEAM has generated a dynamic *framework* where scientists, experts, trainees, professionals, governmental executives and administrators of the member countries find a privileged working space to examine agricultural problems.

While always attempting to adopt a holistic approach, each problem is analyzed, formulated and tackled by integrating the different hierarchical scales involved (e.g., technical, economical, social; training, research, etc.). However, the methods taken into consideration and the integrative approach to contribute to the solution are exploited in a pragmatic way so that dispersions and inefficiencies are avoided.

One peculiar aspect of the integrative approach of the CIHEAM is in the links between the different activities. A significant example is given by the connections between country-members representatives, networking, research and training activities. Representatives of the country-members of CIHEAM are in strict communication with the Network partners addressing different issues of relevance in Mediterranean agriculture. The various networks receive feed-backs from the representatives to re-orient and revise their action plans, as well as give feed-back to the representatives to report on the results and needs of the work. On the basis of the activities in progress, the networks indicate the research actions and studies to undertake. These indications, in turn, orient on the type of training to focus on (especially advanced short courses and workshops). A quota of the trainees participating in the courses are linked both to the networks and to the research activities. To reinforce the activities, part of the trainees are involved in the network and research programmes, so that a higher efficiency of all actions is obtained and a virtuous looping is established in a continuous growing process of knowledge, updating and human resource qualification. Major outputs and reflections from this looping framework are then discussed and made available through symposia, conferences and communication technology. What described above is synthetically sketched in Fig. 3.

With this rationale, CIHEAM is contributing toward the reduction of inequalities in knowledge, in access to strategic information, in opportunity availability and in human capacity building existing throughout the Mediterranean Region.

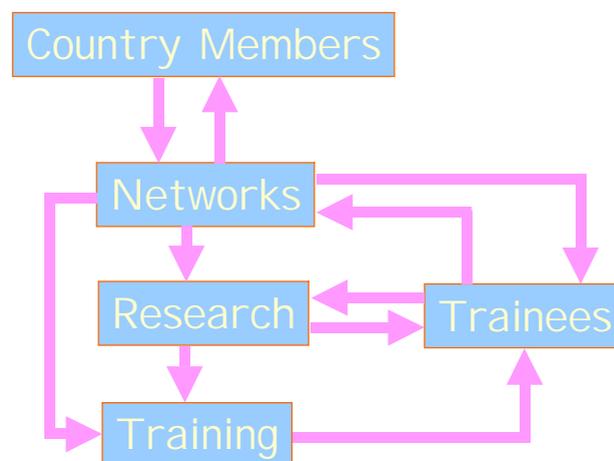


Fig. 3 – Interconnectivity relations between activities

The Networking Approach

- *Networking Principles*

Here the authors would like to expand on one of the most relevant issue of the approaches that CIHEAM in general, and IAM-Bari in particular, have been developing during their long-lasting activity: Networking.

As previously mentioned, networking can assume different meanings and definitions. We will try to clarify as much as possible the intrinsic concepts behind this term and, at the same time, to highlight the approach undertaken by the CIHEAM in its networks.

In general, networking is an approach to carry out a series of *works* (or activities) by *entities* that are obtaining a comparative advantage in working together rather than working alone. A first aspect to consider is the hierarchical scale of the *entities* involved in the network. We may have a simple group of individuals, associations of professionals, individuals engaged in institutional duties, governmental institutions, states.

We'll focus our attention more in the scale of individuals engaged in scientific institutions and the institutions themselves (scientists, universities, research centers, etc.). In Fig. 4 it is reported the main type of networks that are generally encountered.

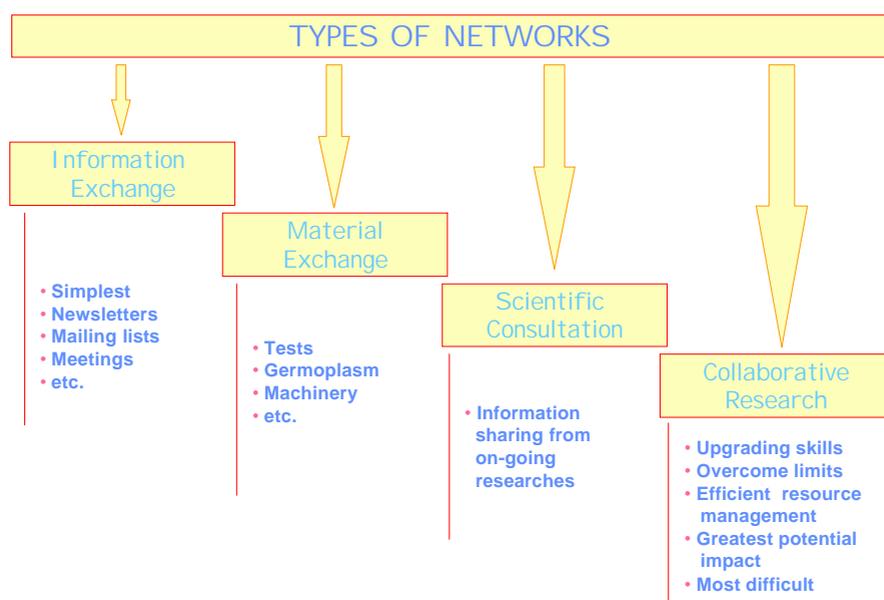


Fig. 4 – Major examples of Network types

The simplest network can be represented by the *Information Exchange*. The partners involved in this type of network tend to exchange information on a certain subject of common interests through “newsletter”, “mailing lists” and periodically through “meetings”. It is generally the simplest among the networks and is mainly based on the communication tools. Nowadays, the cost is essentially confined to a secretariat office which can be undertaken by a partner coordinator whose duty can be alternate with the other partners. Typical network of this kind are represented by “societies” of scientists or professionals.

A more demanding network type is when *Material Exchange* is involved. Its complexity lies in the common protocol to be followed by each partner to generally test the *material* under study. A classical example is represented by the germoplasm exchange. A new crop variety is introduced and performance tests are needed under different environments to validate the advantages of such a new cultivar. ICARDA has used this approach quite often.

A relatively general type of network can be represented by *Scientific Consultation*. Scientists and scientific institutions involved in research on the same subject can have workshops and meetings to share the resulting information from the on-going research. Typical examples of this type of network are found in basic and advanced scientific research (e.g., physics, medicine, biotechnology, etc.). However, they are also found in “societies” of scientists.

The most complex type of network is the one concerned with *Collaborative Research*. It is complex in its coordination and management but also the one with the greatest potential impact. A common research interest is exploited in a way that limits are overcome by joint efforts, efficient resource management, upgrading skills, sharing and exchange of information and equipment, etc. It can be easily noticed that this networking approach may include any of the peculiarities of the previous types and is the one mainly adopted by the CIHEAM. The advantages and the modalities of effective networks, as conceived by CIHEAM, are summarized in the networking principles reported in Fig. 5.

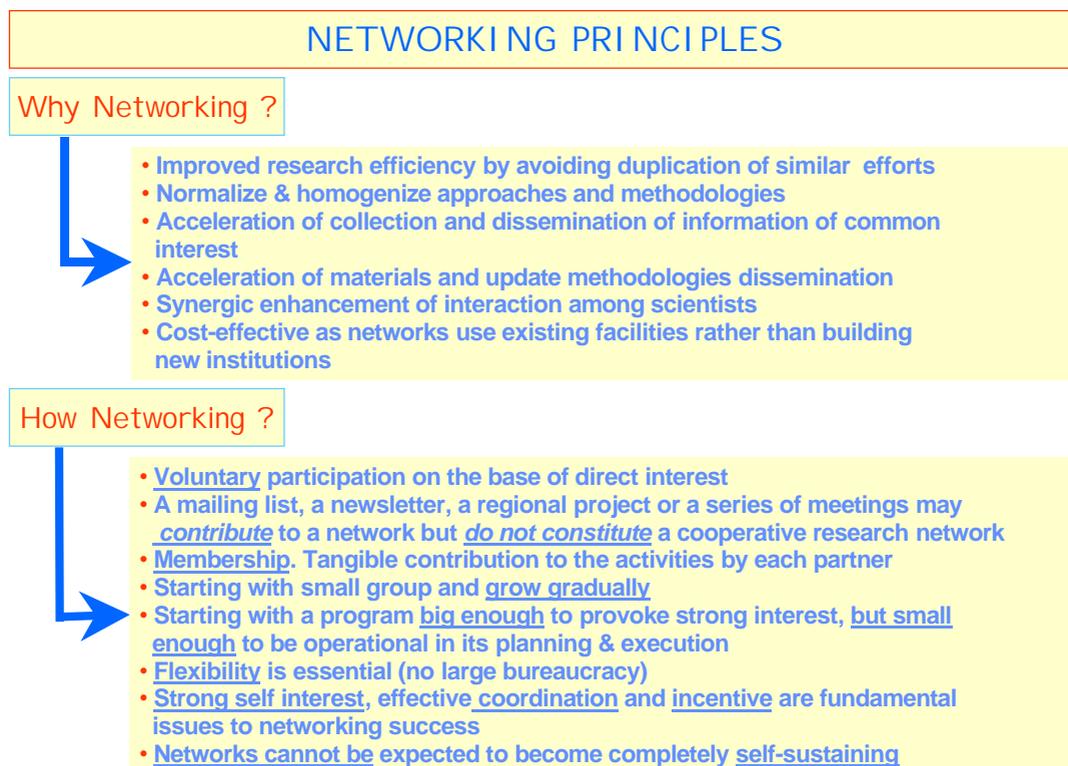


Fig. 5 – Networking principles adopted by CIHEAM.

Some of the most important principles that must not be overlooked are: (i) the voluntary participation, through a strong self-interest and motivation, and (ii) flexibility. The genuine motivation and interest in the subject matter dealt with by the network is a

driving force in “moving” the actions and progressing in the work. If any action needs financial support sooner or later the network is going to fail. Of course, networks cannot be expected to become fully self-sustained in terms of financial support. But the “soul” of the network is in the interests of the partners. Only with some voluntary work (...the willingness to go on), progress can assume a sustainable configuration. The flexibility is essential not to inhibit actions. Generally, when bureaucracy becomes dominant the spirit of networking can be disrupted.

Following the principles indicated in Fig. 5, CIHEAM was able to establish a true cooperation between the partners with a relevant number of outputs and corresponding impacts. The major functionalities of its Networks are summarized in Fig. 6.

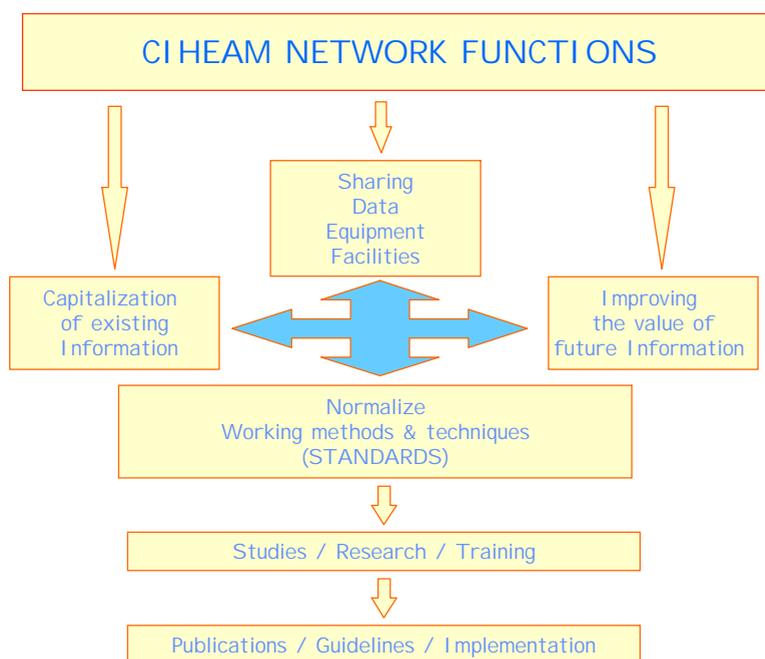


Fig. 6 – Major functionalities of the CIHEAM Networks.

- *The Invisible Impact*

CIHEAM has 34 Networks with 1570 specialists involved. The number of people trained, the number of projects, research results, publications, conferences, meetings and symposia are visible and tangible outputs of the networks’ activities of CIHEAM. Furthermore, there are externalities derived from the impacts of the networking activities that also can be quantified and made visible.

However, there are additional values derived from the special approach of CIHEAM to networking that are not always visible though of huge importance in the framework of cooperation. Sense of belonging to a community, gathering of consensus based on the recognition of a strong scientific reputation, respect of the diversity, safeguarding each other’s dignity, equal opportunity conditions, team spirit, supporting environment, etc., allowed CIHEAM to cumulate an important patrimony of human relations. Indeed, this is where its true values and opportunity lie and this is what distinguishes CIHEAM from all other international organizations active in the Mediterranean affairs.

Those benefiting from the CIHEAM network activities have included professors, experts, researchers, trainees, staff for agriculture and for the agri-food industry, as well as personnel holding positions of responsibility in public agencies and professional organizations. These human assets now number thousands. In one capacity or another, they have all passed through the CIHEAM structures, and in their turn are now developing interactive national networks with frequent reference to their substantial experience in the CIHEAM framework.

This is the heritage which CIHEAM seek to preserve and strengthen for the future, although often not visible to conventional *evaluations*.

Concluding Remarks

CIHEAM has gathered a rich harvest of experience over nearly forty years of service in the development of cooperation relating to higher agronomic training and cooperative research networks in agriculture. The Center functions as a privileged space for analysis and follow-up on agricultural and agri-food policies, it represents a vital focal point in its realms of activities.

Most of the success of CIHEAM lies in its networking approach that has created a web of relations in the Mediterranean countries: it constitutes a resource of true wealth and confers upon it a very special position in the region. Many thousands of nationals from the countries of the Mediterranean Basin (trainees, teachers, researchers, professionals, executives in public administration) have been involved with the Center in some capacity, whether it be to exchange, to give or to receive.

Such a heritage is considered a fitting contribution towards the making of the "Mediterranean" into a zone of shared prosperity, playing the role of mainspring and catalyst for the region.

(•) References and additional information on CIHEAM and its IAMS can be found at:

www.ciheam.org

www.iamb.it www.maich.gr www.iamm.fr www.iamz.ciheam.org