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EACEA-A3-KH/2016/574389

Professor Dr. Jukka Jurvelin  
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**Subject: Erasmus+ Key Action 1 – Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMDs)  
Call for proposals 2016 (EAC/A04/2015)**

**Title: MSc European Forestry**

**Ref.: 574389-EPP-1-2016-1-FI-EPPKA1-JMD-MOB**

*(Please quote this number in all correspondence)*

Dear Professor Dr. Jukka Jurvelin,

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

I am writing to inform you about the selection decision taken by the Head of Department of the Executive Agency, acting in her capacity as authorising officer, based on the recommendations of an Evaluation Committee assisted by external experts, who had assessed your application against the award criteria specified in the call for proposals. The selection decision is based on the quality of the proposal, its relative position in comparison with the other proposals submitted and the budget available. Applications were assessed on a scale from 0 to 100 points and were ranked according to merit.

As a result, given the available budget, the funding threshold has been set at **78/100 points**.

I am pleased to inform you that your application has been selected for EU co-funding. It received **85/100 points**. For your information, out of the 89 eligible applications, **27** have been selected for funding, and **3** have been placed in a reserve list.

The list of all selected projects will be published on the following website of the Executive Agency when all applicants have been notified about the selection results:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/selection-results\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/selection-results_en)

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

The maximum amount of funding to be awarded to your project is **2.592.500 EUR**.

Please note that taking into account the total number of scholarship requests received and the budget available, the number of scholarships you have applied for has been revised and corresponds to **45 Heading 1 EMJMD scholarships (9 Programme Country + 36 Partner Country)** and **8 Heading 4 EMJMD scholarships**.

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

[EACEA-EPI-US-EMJMD@a.ec.europa.eu](mailto:EACEA-EPI-US-EMJMD@a.ec.europa.eu)

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

Furthermore, it is very important that you provide us with the link to your EMJMD project website as soon as this is available, so that this link can also be published on the Executive Agency's website. If you have amendments to make to the project description after publication, please let us know via the above-mentioned EMJMD functional mailbox.

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,



Klaus HAUPT  
Head of Unit

**Annexes:**

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

**Cc: (by email) Dr. Timo Tokola**  
timo.tokola@uef.fi

Proposal number:	574389-EPP-1-2016-1-FI-EPPKA1-JMD-MOB574389-EPP-1-2016-1-FI-EPPKA1-JMD-MOB
Proposal title:	MSc European Forestry
Applicant organisation:	ITA-SUOMEN YLIOPISTO
Contact person:	Timo Tokola

Award Criteria	Score:	85/100
<b>A.1 Relevance of the project</b>		
<p>The proposed EMJMD reflects a common and integrated approach. This EMJMD is based on a previous edition. The course has been jointly redesigned to respond to emerging challenges and needs. How the structure and study tracks have been restructured and improved, and how additional training events have been incorporated to facilitate the introduction of new partners, alumni and ongoing cohorts, is very clearly and convincingly explained. The course aims and structure are clearly defined and are of high quality. A field course and applied period in forestry institutions is included in the first year of study. The course is well integrated among the partnership with useful associate partners involved, and the proposal presents concrete elements of joint practices and procedures. Also, the relevance of the course to achieve the EMJMD's objectives is explicitly and convincingly addressed. An indication of the key successes of, and lessons learned from, the ongoing EMJMD would have been welcomed.</p> <p>All compulsory courses are fully recognised by all consortium HEIs. After completing the first academic year of commonly developed modules, the students' study transcript is fully accepted in the students' second year Consortium HEI. The Masters programme is therefore recognised by the degree awarding HEIs. However, no information is provided about the integration of the EMJMD within the degree catalogues of partners.</p> <p>A double degree is awarded and the arrangements for this award are specified. The issue of why a joint degree is not (as yet) awarded is explained and is based on the inability of the Finnish partner to award such a degree unless the language of the certificate is either Finnish or Swedish, and no concrete steps towards changing the Finnish legislation is in sight. The situation is changing in favour of joint degrees at other partner institutions, and it is stated that the issue will be kept on the agenda.</p> <p>The EMJMD needs analysis is based on recent studies in the sector, which are identified, and on the feedback of current students and alumni. Regarding this latter point, it would have been useful to present a brief outline of student feedback and how the EMJMD has been adapted. There is an excellent analysis of current training provision, demonstrating the distinctiveness of the EMJMD and its added value. The Consortium partners are introduced as world-class units and there is a particularly useful description of the role of the industrial partners. Practical actions for improving efficiency and enhancing capacity of the programme are listed. Financial support for the programme is justified with reference to European strategies and a comprehensive ten-point analysis. Thus, the proposal demonstrates a clearly identified need for the EMJMD. The applicants are seeking further funding, in particular, to facilitate guest lecturers, seminars and student mobility. It is also stated that the HEI environment in which the partners operate has few scholarships and low tuition fees, making it difficult to support the programme and attract the best international students. Whilst this has implications for the sustainability of the course, it is a well-argued and valid point.</p> <p>The proposal defines the academic programme very clearly in terms of academic content, planned activities and student benefits. Internships are offered in all partner and associate partner countries. The relevance of the programme content in the context of the academic field is outlined.</p> <p>Learning outcomes are extensive. The students will be trained in multiple diverse disciplines, such as advanced forest management, intensive biomass production, economics of ecosystem services, climate change, biodiversity, etc. The thematic introduction to Master studies is described in detail and is</p>		

highly relevant. The strength of the programme lies in the fact that associate partners are fully involved in the academic programme. In addition to joint events organised with the full partners, the associate partners will also contribute to teaching as visiting lecturers. Moreover, associate partners will offer the students a large choice of internship placements.

The relevance of the expected results in terms of strengthening innovation and excellence and the way in which the EMJMD will contribute to increasing the attractiveness and internationalisation of the European Higher Education Area are both dealt with sensibly and convincingly. The involvement of renowned enterprises and companies with novel production technologies makes the proposed programme innovative and highly attractive.

The EMJMD involves important international partners and universities from the largest forest bio-economy countries. The programme is highly relevant with regard to internationalisation and the consortium involves 6 main European partners, and multiple associate European and non-European partners (China, Brazil, Canada) both from academia and private sectors. However, the involvement of countries from tropical and equatorial Africa, where forests constitutes are extremely important from an environmental point of view, would have represented an added value in terms of visibility and attracting students. The applicants provide appropriate analysis of how students and staff will improve their learning performance and competences linked to their professional profiles; however, more concrete examples to concerning staff benefits could have been provided. There is a consideration of how the JMD will increase the quality and the attractiveness of the European HIA, ways in which the EMJMD will develop horizontal skills, how the programme supports career planning and how it will develop a joint educational culture between the participating HEIs and Associate and Industrial Partners. The applicants present a thoughtful and logically structured response to this criterion, addressing aspects in a clear and convincing way.

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

The proposal carefully details the academic content of the EMJMD. A wide variety of learning methods, adapted by subject, are outlined. Generic and specific skills in European forestry are conveyed to students with the help of learning methods that require a high level of student participation and field practice. The training programme is diverse and includes field courses, joint introductory courses, global seminars and professional modules. The teaching approach and outcome is stated for each aspect of the training. In addition, self-study packages for students lacking enough knowledge in specific thematic areas, will be developed for all courses, which is excellent. Consultation and guidance of students will be used to orient them towards the study tracks best suited to their future development, based on their interests.

The HEIs and their industry partners will screen the course package, and direct involvement of key industrial partners in teaching of current state-of-art in topics is planned. The companies and field visits provide direct contacts. Also, the internships help the students to get a realistic view of professional life. The wrap-up analysis of the applied period is used to understand the importance of organisational structures and their functionality through dual learning. The use of innovative learning and training tools is discussed and examples of such tools are given. The combination of purely academic knowledge and multidisciplinary problem solving abilities provides graduates with competences to compete globally for PhD positions and to work in a business environment.

Quality monitoring is performed by surveys/questionnaires. The feedback is analysed in Consortium meetings and recommendations are formulated. Student feedback is obtained for all courses. Staff and students are informed of the outcome of this review. The procedures for internal quality review are well detailed and are of good quality, although the involvement of teaching and administrative staff could have been explained more fully. There is emphasis on the strong links with industry and other relevant stakeholders, and study tracks have been developed in the light of feedback from these stakeholders, which is a very useful means of ensuring the pertinence of the course to potential employers. However, there is insufficient concrete information on how this feedback exercise was conducted, precisely who was involved and responses obtained. Nevertheless, in general, both internal and external evaluation procedures are well defined and include appropriate bodies and procedures to ensure effective monitoring and, if necessary, upgrading and improvement of the EMJMD. The Consortium universities have all received excellent external evaluations of academic quality and examples of awards are given to support this statement. The academic excellence of the EMJMD is supported by the claim that graduates are highly demanded in the employment market and examples of employment destinations are given. The percentage of past students gaining employment (or going



into further study) would have supported this claim.

The mobility track is well defined, and there is very good provision for ensuring proper academic induction. During the mandatory mobility periods, the students will visit and learn from all participating universities and become familiar with the special features of forests and the society in each of the countries. The course includes social and intercultural awareness aspects and students will be introduced to the Student's Union and encouraged to take part in local events. There is an established buddy network at the lead University and all partners offer a range of informal activities and assistance. All students will have courses together at the start and end of the programme and will meet at the annual conference. Web based tools have also been developed for day-to-day contact.

The involvement of guest lecturers is considered. The required scholars will be discussed and selected in Consortium Board meetings. A call will be published and the scholar candidates will be evaluated. The benefit of each scholar-visit will be analysed for the academic pre-defined activities and an agreement will be signed. Most of the visits will take place when the students are gathered together. Some additional guest lectures will be managed online as the budget allows three visits per course intake only. Additional opportunities for interaction with experts and guest scholars are provided in all universities through standing networks and personal calls. More concrete information on, for example, the field of expertise of potential experts, or if they will come from industry, governing bodies or other HEIs, would have been welcome.

The proposal clearly explains relevant information provided to students prior to course enrolment and there is a very good level of service provision and support to the student once enrolled on the EMJMD. Student selection criteria are specified. The student selection process is fair and transparent; students are well informed in advance about the eligibility and evaluation criteria and they have the right to appeal against the selection decision. A web page is already up and running, and provides potential students with required information and contacts. Information is sent to successful applicants and there is good support for residency permits and visas. To date, permits have been issued in due time and without major difficulties. Once enrolled, the students are found suitable accommodation, and designated tutors provide individual support at the different Consortium universities. An appropriate insurance scheme is established, there is help with setting up a bank account, integration into the local community, and language courses are provided at each centre.

With respect to equality issues, disabled students and staff can be accommodated and the procedure is explained. Female applicants are encouraged in this traditionally male-dominated field. The consortium has so far succeeded in maintaining a gender balance on the course.

The course rules, student rights and obligations concerning the academic administrative and financial aspects of the EMJMD implementation are very clear and detailed. The rights and obligations of both the students and the consortium are explained, and how payments will be made is stated.

The proposal provides a very clear and detailed description of activities and facilities aimed at exposing students to different country-specific environmental and socio-economic conditions as part of their formal education. This includes a well-planned mobility, well-supported internships, course content, exposure to academics and other stakeholders in the field and professional networking. This is complemented by information given throughout the proposal on more informal integration activities. The proposed measures provide very good opportunities for effective integration and networking in both formal and informal settings. A minor shortcoming is that the proposal could have provided more concrete examples of academic and stakeholder interactions, for example by naming some internship opportunities and where they will be conducted, and by introducing some of the high-level academics that have been, or will be, associated with the EMJMD.

The industrial partners contribute significantly to the programme. Industrial partners are members of the Quality Review Board and contribute to programme design. Industrial partners provide internship positions and transfer specific complementary knowledge and skills to the students. Industrial partners contribute to courses with lectures and demonstrations, visits of industrial plants and field courses. They will also evaluate student performance during the internships. Specific complementary training in the form of Life Long Learning activities, or courses organized by the companies for their employees, will be available to students by industrial partners. Course promotion will be done through the Associate Scientific and Industrial Partners and also by former alumni currently working in different environments. Thus, there is a significant interaction between the EMJMD and non-educational actors. However, the proposal would have gained by providing more specific information on the industrial partners and other stakeholders, for example, those concerned with environmental, climate change and sustainability issues, are not mentioned but would be key actors in this field.

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

The proposal explains very clearly the field of expertise of each of the partners, how they provide complementary expertise and their added value. The HEIs and lead academics have an excellent reputation in the field. This is a very well-established partnership with many years of experience of joint operation and they have a stable, well-developed teaching collaboration. Existing collaboration agreements have been enhanced by updating the Erasmus+ agreements for general mobility and exchange of students and teachers, a new partner has been introduced to give a valuable added dimension to the EMJMD, and the course has been modernised with the introduction of new course elements. Associate partners from all relevant countries are included in the consortium.

The institutional commitment of members of the consortium is very well-demonstrated and is strong. Concrete examples of this commitment are given. Rules and procedures have been jointly developed, agreed by all partners, and common standards have been set. The training role of each partner and associate partner is clear. Partners responsible for each module are identified and tasks, duties and responsible partner(s) are tabulated. Very good quality working mechanisms and operations are explained in detail. There will be student and stakeholder representation in management structures.

In various sections of the proposal there are detailed descriptions of the joint criteria, principles and requirements for student application, selection and admission. The approach is of good quality with special attention to equality. However, although the students' admission requirements are precisely defined, it is not clear how the ranking of the eligible candidates will be decided, since the weight of individual criteria is not shown.

The course modules are graded using a variety of methods (reports, oral and written exams, participation, graded presentations and other documented evidences) to allow for different skills development of students. The individual evaluation methods for each course are provided in a Study Guide for each course and an online thesis seminar is provided. However, mechanisms for performance assessment and student examination could have been described in more detail in the proposal text in addition to the reference to the MSc European Forestry Study Guide.

The proposal explains how the student participation costs have been calculated from a detailed estimation of running costs using financial averaged ratios of full partners in a full-cost approach. This is supplemented by information provided in the appendix. Each partner will contribute by providing in-kind resources, infrastructure and facilities and expertise of its staff. Direct help to some self-paying students' finances is done through tuition grants. Support for these often comes from incorporation of students in ongoing research projects. These aspects are convincingly described.

There is broad consideration of how the lump sum will be used for consortium management, how complementary funding will be mobilised and how available funds will be mobilised within the consortium. For example, how much individual associate partners and foundations (i.e. Catalunya-La Pedrera) will contribute to the EMJMD programme could have been specified. Furthermore, students are expected to contribute with 1000 Euro for the European Forestry Field course. The charges for courses held for students should not be considered a substantial part of complementary funding. It is appreciated that this is a mature consortium and that the partners have proven experience of financial management of a EMJMD but these latter aspects should have been given more attention and more specific information provided.

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

The applicants are very open about the challenge of creating a self-sufficient course and, whilst they have had some success in this direction, it has been insufficient to maintain the course at the desired level. The proposal provides a well-argued need for further EU support and several measures are being actively pursued to facilitate future sustainability. These include distance learning options, a new marketing programme, developing a local grant system for the second year of study and the appointment of a consultant who will renew web pages, provide promotional material, target more visible e-portals and make more direct contact with potential applicants. This year the number of applications has increased which is encouraging. However, no concrete strategy for obtaining financial resources from private sector is presented; potential companies are not named and it is not clear if any preliminary agreements with private organisations have already been set up. Also, the financial contributions from 6 self-paying students per year, which have been attracted within the last 10 years, are not high enough to cover additional expenses of the programme and it is not indicated how many new self-paying students the consortium is able to attract. How many self-funded students are required to ensure sustainability should have been more clearly stated.

The proposal explains how the EMJMD will generate impact at institutional level and how it will enhance the internationalisation strategy of the consortium partners. Plans for the effective internationalisation of the consortium are very well-elaborated. The consortium partners wish to achieve improvement in international ranking, exposure to other research and teaching cultures, strengthening of international networks and collaborations, exposure to interdisciplinary, multi-scale approaches and development of language skills. There is also consideration of how the EMJMD enhances the interaction of students with forest-based business, and how it will improve the co-operation between the international student and research community and the industry. However, there is no discussion on how the award of joint degrees, as intended, can have a positive impact on the HEIs and the expected impact of the EMJMD outside academia is only broadly discussed. The responses are reasonable but rather briefly and generically addressed.

The proposal describes how the EMJMD encourages students to take responsibility for their learning and study plan. However, there is no explanation of how, or if, entrepreneurial skills will be encouraged, and development of initiative, beyond making decisions about the study plan, is also not properly addressed.

A soundly based strategy for maximising employment potential is not proposed. The proposal merely states that industrial partners have a clear vision of what they require from future employees and that students will interact with this industry. There are some general statements on how the consortium takes into account the needs of future employers and steps taken to involve potentially interested players from the private sector but these are too general and lack concrete, convincing discussion. For example, specification of industry skill requirements and how the course structure and content explicitly relates to these requirements is not adequately presented. The range and expertise of industry partners and whether they have (or might) employ students is not made clear. Exposure to the public sector and NGOs, that may be significant users of the students skill set, is only very briefly mentioned with no further detail given.

The consortium is committed to enthusiastic promotion of the EMJMD. Several standard methods of promotion are listed alongside more novel approaches, such as the use of a communication/dissemination consultant and the willingness to promote flexible learning options. International and European Associations will be used to facilitate dissemination, alongside several e-portals, web sites, networks and personal connections. It is stated that all consortium members will be involved but, for effectiveness and efficiency, it would have been better to allocate specific roles and responsibilities for actions related to this crucial task. This activity should also be clearly flagged as an important aspect with respect to management operations and should appear as a regular agenda item on Consortium meeting. Such considerations are not highlighted in the proposal.

The majority of the EMJMD study material is in digital format and available to the students via a Moodle platform. The Consortium is currently working on delivering an online course. Thus, whilst materials may not be available free of charge, this does not constitute a disproportionate limitation.

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

The importance of the region in general, and to this EMJMD specifically, is very well documented and is very convincing. There is ongoing collaboration and exchange and the proposal makes a very good case with respect to the added value for European and Brazilian partners in continuing this cooperation and collaboration. The programme has already attracted good quality students from the region, and thus far 19 EMJMD degrees have been granted to Brazilian students. Two self-funded students will be enrolled this year. A number of appropriate promotion methods to attract students are described but, whilst there is obviously interest from Brazilian students, the numbers stated indicate that some additional promotional methods need to be engaged to attract more self-funded students for future sustainability. Some such additional measures, aimed at both EU and international students, are described in the main body of the proposal.

### **Overall comments**

This is a very good proposal with full, concrete and convincing responses. A truly organised and integrated programme, in a highly relevant field, with strong networking and extensive involvement of private sector, is proposed. Only a few minor improvements are suggested.

Internationally leading organisations will participate in the EMJMD implementation and development. The strengths of the proposal are the very good quality of the project design and implementation, and the project team and the cooperation arrangements. An efficient strategy for the management and



coordination of project activities has been set up. Students' mobility plans are very well conceived and will play a pivotal role in the training of graduates' professional skills. Procedures for the admission, selection, evaluation of students' performance, and defence of the thesis are generally well described. Roles, tasks, and obligations for both students and teaching and administrative staff have been properly defined. Academic and non-academic partners will closely work together. Concrete efforts towards a wide internationalisation of the EMJMD will be expected. Promotion and dissemination strategies of all the activities related to the EMJMD, and the ways by which the most talented students worldwide will be attracted, are very good quality. These aspects are addressed very well with careful attention to clear, detailed and very good quality information. There are, however, some minor improvements suggested in the full evaluation report. For example, how the ranking of the eligible candidates will be decided, better explanation of how teaching and administrative staff will be involved in the internal evaluation procedures, more detail on assessment procedures, selection of guest lecturers and use of lump sum funds. Responses to impact and dissemination could have been more detailed. In particular, how entrepreneurship and initiative will be encouraged, a more soundly based strategy for maximising employment potential is needed. The concrete tasks of specific partners in promotion and dissemination should have been discussed in more depth; a more concrete strategy for sustainability is needed.

The proposal presents a convincing case for the additional award and the relevance of the project in the targeted region (Brazil) is fully justified. The proposal provides an effective strategy to attract talented students from the partner country of the targeted region. The new professionalism created by the proposed EMJMD will aid a more sustainable and rational exploitation of forest resources both in Europe and Brazil. Additional methods used to attract highly talented self-funded students from the targeted region should be considered to facilitate future sustainability. Clear evidence of supplementary added values for both Brazilian and European higher education is presented.