



Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

Erasmus Mundus and External Cooperation

Prof. Pasquale Nappi
Università degli Studi di Ferrara

Via Savonarola, 9
IT - 44121 Ferrara
Italia

Brussels, 19 July 2012
ARES (2012)1029541

Re: Erasmus Mundus Action 1B – Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate Programmes (EMJD)
Call for Proposals EACEA/42/11
Title: International doctorate in Quaternary and Prehistory
Ref.: 532443-1-IT-2012-1-ERA MUNDUS-EMJD
(Please quote this number in all correspondence)

Dear Prof. Pasquale Nappi,

You have submitted a proposal under Action 1 in the framework of the Erasmus Mundus Call for proposals EACEA 42/11.

I am pleased to inform you that your above-mentioned proposal has been selected.

The Agency has received 133 proposals under Action 1B – Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate Programmes – out of which 9 were selected for funding.

All proposals were assessed with the assistance of independent academic experts. Enclosed you will find the consolidated version of the experts' assessments of your proposal. Please take account of the fact that most of the assessments were written by non-native speakers and that the Agency cannot comment on these independent assessments.

The selection decision is based on the quality of the proposal, its relative position in comparison with the other proposals received as well as the budget available.

The Agency will publish the version of the project description that you included in your application on the Erasmus Mundus website:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/selected_projects_promote_english_en.php

It is very important that you provide us with the "url" of your project's website as soon as this is available, so that this link can also be given on the Agency's site. If you have amendments to make to the project description after publication, please let us know via the Erasmus Mundus functional mailbox, EACEA-Erasmus-Mundus@ec.europa.eu.

PLEASE NOTE

In order to issue the Framework Partnership Agreement, we need to proceed with the necessary validations. We kindly ask you to send us the Financial Identification Form and the Legal Entity Form, whose templates are available at the following links:

Financial Identification Form:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm#en

Legal Entity Form:

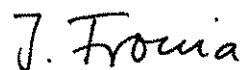
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm#en

Please fill them in according to the instructions given, scan them and e-mail them to eacea-EM-Consortia@ec.europa.eu at your earliest convenience and in any case **no later than 31/08/2012**.

We would also like to take the opportunity to invite you and a representative of one of the partners of your consortium to the 2012 Erasmus Mundus Coordinators' meeting for newly-selected projects, which will take place in Brussels on 20-21 September 2012. 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 a message later in July.

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

Sincerely Yours,



Joachim Fronia

Head of Unit

Annex: Comments and recommendations from the academic experts who assessed your proposal.

Proposal number:	532443-EM-1-2012-1-IT-ERA MUNDUS-EMJD
Proposal title:	International doctorate in Quaternary and Prehistory
Coordinator:	Prof. Carlo Peretto
Applicant organisation:	Università degli Studi di Ferrara

Award Criteria
B.1 Academic and Research quality (25% of the max. score)
<p>The Objectives of the programme are comprehensively and clearly set out. The objectives are described in terms of an analysis of the labor market needs in Europe and in Third countries. The main objective is to form a kind of centre of excellence putting together the scientific potentials, the organizational experiences and the networking of four full partners running doctoral schools in Quaternary and Prehistory, with a high number of non-academic institutions. The programme is said to respond to a lack of researchers in the field. However, it is only asserted that there is a lack of researchers in this field, and no evidence is given that this is so. Indeed there is no evidence basis for the needs analysis.</p> <p>The justification for the added value and distinctiveness of the programme is fairly good, being based on the statement that the proposed EMJD will be the only such programme that is run jointly by different institutions, and which also places an emphasis on professional as well as academic development. The other justification is that doctoral candidates will be trained by specialists teaching in four already existing doctoral schools in the field of Quaternary and Prehistory and will have access to the rich prehistoric and paleontological collections of found pieces from more than a hundred archaeological sites, and will participate in excavations in four different European countries as well as in Morocco, Brazil, Indonesia and Philippines. They will also have an internship in a non-academic institution. That said the discussion of the state of the art could have been given a fuller and more detailed description.</p> <p>The justification of the academic content of the training and research programme is good. Candidates will be dealing with excellent equipment in a high number of diverse specialized laboratories and will be encouraged to develop new research perspectives in diverse areas through an individualized interdisciplinary and inter-sectorial approach. However much of the relevant information is actually quite brief, low on specifics, and buried under extraneous detail. It is not explained how the training and research elements dovetail. More detailed information is needed about the skills acquired in months 28-30.</p>

The inter-sectoral aspect of the proposal is good in so far as there is an impressive list of 11 associate partners including several distinguished museums and foundations; indeed one of the full partners is a museum. Internships in non-academic partner institutions are mandatory for all candidates. That said, research into prehistory is inherently inter-sectoral given the necessary collaboration with museums. Moreover, little information is provided about the informal partners, and the role of businesses. Also, though the annexes confirm the commitment of the associate partners, the fact that they have all signed exactly the same pro forma letter, in French, (including the British Museum) does convey a convincing picture of their degree of commitment and their desire to play an active role in to the programme.

The expected outcomes of the programme are good and in line with the objectives. Carefully selected doctoral candidates from Europe and Third countries will develop not only the knowledge and capacities needed for doing good research in the field of Quaternary and Prehistory, but be provided with the necessary skills for adequate valorisation of the archaeological sites and the cultural heritage through practical research during excavation periods and internships in non-academic environments.

B.2 Partnership experience and composition (25% of the max. score)

On the plus side, the full partners are four Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from IT, FR, ES and PT specializing in Quaternary and Prehistory that all have participated in an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course in the area. The fact that the four partners already have research specialisms in prehistory, and a long track record of collaboration, augurs well for the success of the programme. Additionally there are 12 associated partners in the consortium, and not only in IT, FR, ES and PT, but also the British Museum in London, the Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi and HEI in Morocco, Indonesia and Philippines. The expertise of the key academic and research staff is demonstrated in a detailed way. It is noted that the number of full partners is small, and two of them are entering the partnership jointly, because one of them – UTAD - is not in a position to award doctorates.

The complementarity of the consortium is very well justified in terms of the objectives of the programme. There is one Museum and research institution among the full-partners. Although the geographic diversity of the partners is not great, there are 12 associate partners (the award document states that there are 13 but only 12 are included on the form) including organisations in Georgia, Indonesia and Morocco. Two of these are private. Nevertheless the complementarity as well as the geographical diversity could be enhanced by the participation of a partner from, say, sub-Saharan Africa.

The partnership track record in terms of networking and cooperation is evidenced by the fact that the full partners have been members of the consortium running the EMMC IMQD since 2004 and a high number of collaborations in projects funded by the EU or national bodies. This augurs well for the success of the project from an organizational and scientific perspective.

Four major museums are either full or associate partners. The associate partners also include two private enterprises. They fall into two groups: partners that are committed to offer – mostly remunerated (!) – internships, and partners without formal commitment accepting candidates for an internship on an ad hoc basis. In addition to this, there are 21 private organisations listed among the informal partners of the consortium, many of which will offer the opportunity for paid internships to the students. This is very good. However, it would be even better if these private organisations offering paid internships were included as associate partners.

B.3 European integration and functioning of the programme (20% of the max. score)

The organizational structure of the EMJD programme is clearly described and well designed; integration is good and recognition is made sure (ECTS will be used) and will be formalized during mobility periods by the use of co-tutoring agreements.

The mobility of each candidate will be related to the subject of the thesis, and thus to personal research objectives. It is good that a whole year is spent in the first mobility period at a second institution. Much weight is placed on the identical nature of the training and teaching in the four partner institutions, which is important for the coherence of the programme. This makes it somewhat harder to justify the mandatory mobility periods in terms of the content of the programme, but it is clearly stated that the students will learn from different research domains and disciplines specific to each partner institution.

The mechanisms and procedures for the application, selection, and admission of students are set out clearly and have been well-considered. It is a good idea to ask the candidates to present a research project. The weighting of 40 % to this in the selection process, and 40% to the CV, is good practice. Objectivity will be guaranteed by the composition of the selection committees for European and Third countries candidates. Gender and equity issues are taken into account and a concrete rule is proposed for ensuring fairness. The composition of the committee of evaluation that will perform these tasks is given, and is in line with good practice.

The quality of the joint supervision and monitoring of the candidates activities is excellent. The quality of joint supervision and monitoring of the candidate activities is assured by a College of Coordination of the Doctorate. The composition of the college is given and it is good that it contains two external experts and three from each of the partners. Publication of at least one article per year is required from the students, although no credits are awarded for this. This seems very demanding, especially in the first year of a doctorate. It is good that the results of the doctoral thesis also have to be published.

The degree delivered will be multiple, that is to say a double or triple degree. A procedure is set out for the establishment of a joint degree recognised by all (three) partners which will be set in train if the proposal is successful, which is good. Unfortunately no timetable is given for it establishment.

B.4 Provisions for EMJD candidates and fellowship holders (15% of the max. score)

The information and promotion strategy is excellent. It is based on the structures in place for the existing Masters course. The strategy is well able to reach the best students from Third Countries. Beside the common means for information and promotion (website, brochure) the consortium will use the mailing list created since the EMMC IMQP was established, and the numerous international conferences attended by the partners.

There is a very good schedule of services available at all the partner institutions. Students with special needs are catered for. Each partner will provide special assistance with Visa issues for candidates from Third Countries. Special services are foreseen for families, disabled persons and Third countries students concerning Visa and other documents. Healthcare and risk insurance are presented in a detailed manner.

The language policy of the consortium is very good. Intensive language courses are provided free of charge and recognized by the ECTS system. Mastery of at least two languages is required: English and one other. English will be the main language of instruction, and candidates are offered special English courses to improve writing skills in English. Language courses in the local languages are foreseen and 6 ECTS in two languages are mandatory.

Detailed descriptions of the contracts and the financial agreements with the candidates are provided. However, for the EMJD all the candidates should be employed under employment contracts. In this consortium only the students at URV are. In the application form, section C.1., it is stated that candidates will be employed under stipends. In the award document it says that the candidates at the other three institutions are employed under research contracts, doctoral contracts or stipends. More information is required about the nature of these contracts, and clearer information, because the information given is confusing. No justification is provided for why employment contracts are not the norm, and how the questions of pensions, social security will be answered given that this is so. Given the track record of cooperation between the partners it is surprising that no means has been found to provide a common sound basis of recruitment for the students: for example they could all be employed by URV on employment contracts. Private medical insurance is provided for Third country and European students.

The measures taken to ensure that the career prospects of Erasmus Mundus students are comprehensive. In this regard, however, it is regrettable that only two private organisations are included among the associate partners.

The content of the doctoral agreement is set out clearly, and covers all of the necessary points. It is excellent that the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Good Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers will be recognized.

B.5 Programme Management and Quality Assurance (15% of the max. score)

The degree of institutional commitment from the four partners is undoubted and the management structures suggested look very solid. The organizational arrangements and cooperation mechanisms have been developed in the course of cooperation over the last ten years.

The financial management of the consortium is set out in detail and justified, as is the calculation of the participation costs. The €2000 per annum participations costs are not high, and correspond to the amount of the fees in the most expensive partner HEI. Participation costs are the same for European and Third countries students. The calculation of the costs is very good and the excess will be used for supplementary grants, which is good.

The development and sustainability plan is very good. As all partners have been running doctoral programs on similar subjects and cooperating for more than ten years, the claim that they will be able to do so after the end the funding cycle is plausible. The commitment of three partners to finance three grants every year, and the assumption that it should be possible to continue financing five more grants by the difference between the fees paid by the candidates and the real costs is also convincing. It is stated that some businesses are ready to finance bursaries, but nothing appears to have been secured already and no further details on this point are given. The consortium proposes also to seek grants from other bodies.

Internal evaluation by the doctoral candidates through questionnaires and comprehensive written reports as well as general evaluation by the professors are detailed, defining the main criteria and explaining how transparency will be ensured. Details are also provided on the external evaluation and the publication of the results of this exercise. A strong point is that all negative comments and results will be discussed in the bodies concerned, composed in the case of the external evaluation e.g. of professors, of representatives of the candidates and of external evaluators.

Other comments on the proposal

This is a very strong proposal for a doctorate that is based on an existing Erasmus Mundus Masters

programme. The Italian coordinator and three partners from France, Spain and Portugal have enjoyed a 10 year period of cooperation and are all successfully running doctoral schools with European and third country students. The aims and objectives are clearly set out. The needs analysis is also clear, although evidence is lacking for the claim that there is a strong economic need for experts in pre-history. Although the partnership is small in that there are only four full partners, there are 12 associate partners. Several major Museums number among the partnership, one as a full partner and the other as associates. The diversity and complementarity of the programme are very good, and the partners have a strong track record of cooperation which augurs well for the success of the programme. Another strong feature of the proposal is that participation costs are € 2000 p/a and no difference is made between European and Third country candidates; and the schedule of student services offered in all of the partner HEIs is detailed and informative.

One conspicuous weakness of an otherwise excellent proposal, however, is that the candidates will not all be employed under employment contracts and no justification (for instance requirements of national legislation) for this is provided. Little information is given about the doctoral contracts and the contract of research under which students at MNHN and UNIFE will be taken on, and no justification of why a stipend (contrat de bourse) is issued by UTAD. Another weakness is that there is no joint degree, although this is mitigated by the fact that a framework for establishing one is in place, should the programme be successful in its bid.