

The day-to-day work of an EM coordinator and
the problems (s)he has to face

Prof. Roel Baets

EMA1 Coordinator, Ghent
University

European Master of Science in Photonics



Roel Baets, Bert Coryn
Ghent University

A brief history: 2006-2011

- 2006: “**Erasmus Mundus MSc. in Photonics (EMMP)**”
 - EM-contract for 5 starting classes
 - First EMMP class: 2006-2008
 - Last EMMP class: 2010-2012
- 2006-2011: major efforts to develop an excellent programme
 - Based on high degree of trust and cohesion among partners
 - Based on excellent student feedback
 - Based on reports of our independent Quality Assurance Committee
- 2009-2010: NVAO quality audit: excellent quality confirmed
- 2010 and 2011: two applications for new EM contract
 - Proposal declared of “very good quality” (“Group I”)
 - But no contract
- 2011: “**European MSc. in Photonics (EMSP)**” (name change)
 - Erasmus Mundus Brand Name
 - First EMSP class: 2011-2013: 14 students
 - **Simplified course structure (simpler mobility scheme with fewer options)**
 - **New partnerships**

Change happens

- 2006-2011:
 - Build a programme that makes sense and brings immense value
 - to the students
 - to the institutions involved
 - to society
 - And do so without financial limiting factors nor worries
- 2011-?
 - We are running an excellent programme but we find ourselves to be loosing money
 - We necessarily have to spend effort on creative financial management
 - Live on savings
 - Gratefully accept financial help from home university
 - Non-European partner and sponsor!
 - Contribute to manpower cost from research funds
 - Other...
 - Is it sustainable?

The financial dilemma

- Set tuition fees high?
 - No financial worries
 - No students
(see the examples in Scandinavia)
 - No value for society
- Lower tuition fees (tuition waivers, grants, ...)?
 - You get very good students!
 - You run at a loss

The paradox

- 2006-2011
 - Students had luxurious EM-grants
 - Very large number of applications
 - Quality of selected students: good - very good - excellent

- 2011-?
 - Most students are self-financed
 - Smaller number of applicants
 - Quality of selected students: good - very good - excellent

Excellent students go for quality/appeal,
not for money
(as long as they can survive)

The cost structure

- Pay the salary of a coordinating person
 - Professional coordination requires 50-100% FTE skilled person
- Pay the tuition bill from the participating universities
 - Trend towards “full-cost” tuition for non-EU citizens
 - Massive discrepancies throughout Europe
 - EMSP-programme
 - Expensive UK-partner
 - Swedish partner: political decision in 2011: abrupt change from 0 euro to 16K euro tuition for non-EU; result: KTH will drop out of our programme from 2012 onwards
- Pay for elements of attraction/value/excellence
 - Summer school

How are we surviving?

- Because in each institution there is a core group of professors that believes in it, no matter what
- Because a well-organized international master programme has value and the good applicants somehow recognize that
- Because we can afford, for the time being...
 - Live on savings
 - Gratefully accept financial help from home university
 - Non-European partner and sponsor!
 - Contribute to manpower cost from research funds
 - Other...
 - Inventors of patents agree to give away part of their personal financial benefit for student grants
- Because the Erasmus Mundus Brand Name has an impact in attracting good students

Taiwanese partner

National Taiwan University – NTU



- No 1 academic institution in Asia
 - Local photonics M.Sc.
 - High research output
- 2nd year NTU-students join EMSP for sem. 3 & 4
 - Supported by Chimei-NTU Grant
- Opportunity for EM-students: 4th semester: master thesis at NTU
 - Supported by Chimei Excellence Grant

Taiwanese sponsor



Chimei Innolux Corporation

- Associated industrial partner
- Taiwan's largest display maker, No.3 worldwide
- Chimei Excellence Grant
 - 2 grants awarded to EMSP-students
 - condition: mobility to NTU in semester 4
- Chimei-NTU-Grant
 - 5 grants to NTU-students
 - condition: join EMSP for sem. 3 & sem. 4

My message to EACEA

- Discontinuity from contractual funding to no funding is too abrupt and ill-conditioned: too high risk to delete precious value enabled by tax payers' money
- EM- grants are far too luxurious: much more (10x) impact possible with the same budget
- Call for proposals: structural distinction to be made between continuations and new applications; professional assessment to be made of quality of existing programs
- Erasmus Mundus Brand Name: for maximum two years: **VERY BAD JOKE**

The Value

After five years of running an Erasmus Mundus international master programme:

- The alumni are doing extremely well
- The value for the students is “life-changing”
- The value for the institutions is immeasurable
- The value for the global society even more so

For questions/information:

Coordinator: **Roel Baets**

Programme Officer: **Bert Coryn**

Ghent University

Department of Information Technology

Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 41

B - 9000 Ghent

Belgium

- Phone: +32 (0)9 264 9828
- E-mail: EMSP@intec.UGent.be

www.master-photonics.org