

## ASEM Joint Curriculum Development Programme: Proposal for a pilot scheme

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 General

A steadily growing number of double and joint degrees are currently offered by higher education institutions. “Broadening educational offerings, strengthening research collaboration, advancing internationalization, and raising international visibility/prestige” seem to be the main motivations of HEIs<sup>1</sup>. As a matter of fact, the development of joint degrees requires joint curriculum development and very close cooperation between the partner institutions, given the joint management of the associated administrative and academic processes.

#### 1.2 Recommendations from ASEMME3

In the framework of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME3) in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2011, ASEM Education Ministers “(C13) *Encouraged the ASEM members to increase the number of joint study programmes (in Asian and European studies) and summer schools between Asian and European higher education institutions by using various programmes and funding schemes; an ASEM pilot scheme for joint curriculum development, funded by interested ASEM countries, could be envisaged;*”

#### 1.3 Background

In several ASEM seminars and workshops education experts also underlined the need to set up such a joint pilot programme. A Joint Curriculum Development Programme under the ASEM umbrella would substantially deepen cooperation in ASEM.

For this reason, the ASEM Education Secretariat (AES)<sup>2</sup> has taken the initiative to work out a first draft outline of an ASEM Joint Curriculum Development Programme on tourism education. The reason for choosing this sector is that during the latest ASEM seminar on Tourism and Hospitality in Vienna in November 2013, the necessity of working together in this sector was highly appreciated. A challenge in tourism education is the focus on sustainable development. Tourism (education) can be connected with the three main pillars of sustainable development: the economic development, the socio-cultural development and the environment development. The programme could reflect a clear view on sustainability and applied this outlook throughout the whole curriculum.

### 2. Benefits for the key players in the process

The governments, the higher education institutions for tourism education, the tourism industry as well as the students could all benefit from a Joint Curriculum Development Programme in tourism education.

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<sup>1</sup> Obst, D., Kuder, M. & Banks, C. (2011). *Joint and Double Degree Programs in the Global Context: Report on an International Survey*. Institute of International Education and Freie Universität.

<sup>2</sup> This pilot scheme was worked out with input from Prof. Dr. P.G. Babu, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research in Mumbai (India) and Emeritus Prof. Michael Blakemore, University of Durham (United Kingdom).

### 2.1 Benefits to governments

Governments could benefit economically from this Joint Curriculum Development Programme by the support in their workforce development strategy. It might contribute to economic growth in the tourism sector.

### 2.2 Benefits to higher education institutions for tourism education

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) could work out a joint programme in close cooperation with the tourism industry, resulting in a real life based curriculum, facilitation of work placements, guest lectures and curriculum development. HEIs can thus create strategic alliances. The possibility of scholarships sponsored by the tourism industry could be taken into consideration. HEIs can provide high quality education, embedded in an international network of both business and universities.

### 2.3 Benefits to the tourism industry

Tourism industry (hotels, tourism restaurants, travel agents, airlines, official tourism government,) and higher education institutions in tourism education can benefit from each other. The tourism industry can be a valued partner in the curriculum (development) process, expressing their needs and having a direct input in the programme. On the other hand, the tourism industry has access to a supply of talented internship students or skilled workforce. By auditing the tourism company according to the programme guidelines, the company might benefit and enhance its competitiveness. The cooperation might lead to in-company-trainings for own staff. Advice from experts in the hospitality sector might be another advantage.

### 2.4 Benefits to the students

Students will be able to move around in different cultures, learning from them and gaining insight in the tourism mechanisms from different points of view. They will learn abilities needed to work in multicultural environments. High standard quality education will be offered, benefitting from global curricula and learning settings. The close cooperation with the tourism industry enables students to learn from real life examples. Moreover, the practice based curriculum will help them to get in touch with future employers.

## 3. Target group and modalities of the Joint Curriculum Development Programme

### 3.1 Target group

The ASEM member countries of both regions can work together in a balanced cooperation, e.g. for a joint degree, **a cooperation of minimum three European universities in tourism education from three different European countries, in cooperation with minimum three Asian universities in tourism education from three different countries in the Asian region, together with at least one company of the tourism industry in each region.**

### 3.2 Modalities

- The programme is advised to be a master programme of at least 60 ECTS and therefore focus primarily on advanced knowledge, skills and attitudes to train highly skilled and multi-disciplinary students, scientists and researchers;
- The programme leads to a joint degree (one joint degree) or to a double degree or multiple degree (a degree of at least two or more higher education institutions). Mobility must be undertaken in at least two different universities in each region. Scholarships for students should be available;
- By setting up and implementing the joint programme, lessons learned by Erasmus Mundus or similar initiatives should be taken into account. Accordingly,

the partners are strongly advised to work with the *Erasmus Mundus Handbook of Excellence* of Blakemore & Burquel (2012) during the whole process, in order to have a fully “joined up” programme. Specific attention should go to the following aspects: (1) a clear programme vision, (2) an integrated academic strategy, (3) an integrated institutional strategy and (4) an eye for the value for students in the programme (Blakemore & Burquel, 2012);

- Close integration of theory and practice is necessary. Obviously close cooperation with the Tourism Industry is crucial to the development of such a Joint Curriculum Development Programme: real life input in the curriculum, work placement possibilities, in-company trainings and future employment all require good teamwork. Working with an advisory board is strongly encouraged;
- The integration in the programme of at least one work placement in both regions of 10 credits each is essential;

## 4. Support and facilitation

### 4.1 Partners involved

- Governments willing to take part and to appoint a higher education institution to be part of the Curriculum Development Programme
- Higher education institutions willing to be part of the Curriculum Development Programme or if applicable
- National Agency to launch a call for tender to identify higher education institutions
- Students

### 4.2 Structure

Suggested steps in the project are:

- Preparation phase  
A preparation phase of maximum 1 year is recommended to work out the curriculum and the preliminaries.
- Establishment phase  
The establishment phase consists of a period of maximum 2 years in which the programme is set up and tested for the first time, including student exchange. At the end, an evaluation will give an overview on strong and weak points.

### 4.3 Financial requirements

- Staff costs for a 0,25 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for three years
- Travel costs for academic staff for a period of 3 years
- Material resources
- Grants for students (to be discussed: in cash (travel costs for outgoing mobility) and/or in kind (accommodation for incoming students))

## 5. How to move on

Interested countries should address to the ASEM Education Secretariat at latest by 30 March 2013.