



**ALFA III - ALAS**

**Reform and Design of Masters programs  
"Animal Science" at 7 Universities in 4 Latin  
American countries**

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**ALFA III program**



- The Program's **general objective** is to contribute to the development of the higher education in Latin America through cooperation between the EU and Latin America, as a means of contributing to the economic and social sustainable development of the region.
- The Program's **specific objectives** are:
  - To improve the quality, relevance and accessibility of higher education in Latin America;
  - To contribute to the process of regional integration in Latin America, fostering progress towards the creation of a joint higher education area in the region and exploiting its synergies with the EU.

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**Project justification**



- Livestock sector plays an important role in Latin America.
- This sector is facing many constraints.
- At the same time, population growth, urbanisation and income growth in the regions lead to increased demand for products of animal origin.
- Professionals have to get a good training to be able to address this challenge and have to be prepared with modern tools and approaches to respond to the needs of rural communities and consumers.

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## Partners



- Austria
  - BOKU-University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna
- Spain
  - UPM-Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Madrid
  - UCO-Universidad de Córdoba, Córdoba
- Argentina
  - UNCa-Universidad Nacional de Catamarca, Catamarca
  - INTA-Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (associate)
- Bolivia
  - UMSA-Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, La Paz
  - UMSS-Universidad Mayor de San Simón, Cochabamba
- Mexico
  - URUZA-Unidad Regional Universitaria de Zonas Áridas, Universidad Autónoma Chapingo
  - UADY-Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, Mérida
- Peru
  - UNH-Universidad Nacional Huancavelica, Huancavelica
  - UNALM-Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina, Lima

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## Objectives of the project



### Overall objective:

- Improvement and harmonisation of the higher education in the field of Animal Science at Masters level in 4 LA countries using internationally recognised standards.

### Specific objectives:

- Reform of Masters programs "Animal Science" at 4 Universities in three LA countries
- Design of new Masters programs "Animal Science" at 3 Universities in two LA countries
- (Re-)training of administrative and academic staff
- Development of teaching methodology (interactive learning tools)
- Development of joint courses
- Upgrading and modernisation of equipment
- Strengthen inter-institutional cooperation at national and international levels

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## Reform process – Methods



- Self-evaluation of each Latin American university using a standardized format.
- Evaluation visit of a team consisting of 1 European partner and 1 Latin American partner.
- Reports were discussed during consortium meeting and decisions were made.
- External expert was invited to join the consortium meeting to give additional input.

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## Reform process – Results I



- Gaps in their pertinence to the rural realities.
- Modifications are needed to turn them into drivers of change in Research & Development.
- Heterogeneity between universities
  - Duration of study program
  - Financing of study program
  - Research oriented - practically oriented
  - Number of courses offered

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## Reform process – Results II



- Cooperation within one country, but also across countries in Latin America is still scarce.
- Universities are more oriented towards the USA and Europe.
- Missing funding schemes for student mobility was identified as a major constraint.
- A virtual campus offering on-line courses was seen as a possible solution.

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## Conclusions



- Higher education improvement should primarily focus on curricula strengthening due to its short term nature.
- As a long term goal curricula harmonization across countries should be addressed.

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## Start cooperation / Proposal writing I



- Start partner search immediately
- Include “official partners” of your home institution (existing MoU, ERASMUS-agreement)
- Ask persons to recommend possible partners
- Identify one lead person for writing
- Skip institutions, which do not respond during proposal writing
- Include and inform all units in your home institutions, which you need for the execution of the project (e.g. Center for International Relations, Center for Education, Quality Management Unit, ...)

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## Start cooperation/Proposal writing II



- (Administrative) Coordinating organization should be from EU
  - Better accepted by Latin American partners
  - Reporting is easier
  - EU covers partly costs afterwards, pre-financing from organizations required
- Include 1 (full-time) secretary in the budget for coordinating organization
- At least basic knowledge of Spanish/Portuguese is indispensable
- If possible, include Universities from Spain and/or Portugal
- Plan enough meetings (face-to-face discussions are important)

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## During the project I



- Administrative hurdles at some Latin American universities are a big challenge
- Centralize finances as much as possible
  - E.g. flight booking for all partners is done by BOKU
- Communication via e-mail, telephone and skype
- Deadlines are very often ignored by partners
- Latin American universities have strict holidays, all offices are closed for a given period (summer holidays, Easter, X-mas)

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## During the project II



- Selection of candidates for internships in Europe
  - Set clear criteria (e.g. TOEFL-exam for English)
- Ensure involvement of high management at given stages of the project
- Get in contact with embassies in the respective countries (important for visa applications)
- Financial reporting:
  - EU is extremely strict, changes have to be explained in detail.
  - In-kind contributions have to be included in the report

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## Benefits for partners



- Benefits for EU partners are not very obvious, can be hard to convince partners to join
- Partners start exchanging students with other funds
- Information about funding opportunities are widely distributed
- Joint supervision of Masters students
- Partners can develop a very good network for research projects

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Thank you for  
your attention!!

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