

Urban Knowledge Net –

International Cooperation in Postgraduate Teaching and Research for Sustainable Metropolitan Regions

Final Declaration of the

“International Meeting of Postgraduate Programmes – Sustainable Development in Metropolitan Regions”

Toluca, México, September 18th to 24th, 2013

In order to constitute the Urban Knowledge Net – International Cooperation in Postgraduate Teaching and Research for Sustainable Metropolitan Regions, the representatives of the below mentioned institutions jointly agree in the following determinations:

1. Involved Partner Universities, Programmes and Coordinators

The international partnership project, whose aim is to strengthen and upgrade existing postgraduate education in the field of urban and regional development, is going to be implemented by a network of one German and five Latin American Higher Education Institutions.

Partner 1:

Fachhochschule Frankfurt am Main (FH FFM) – University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Faculty 1: Architecture. Civil Engineering. Geomatics / International Master Programme Urban Agglomerations (M.Sc.)

Project coordinator:

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Michael Peterek, architect and urban planner, course director of the Master Programme “Urban Agglomerations”

Partner 2: Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná (PUCPR), Curitiba, Brazil

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Gestão Urbana (PPGTU)

Project coordinator:

Prof. Dr. Carlos Hardt, architect and urban planner, course coordinator of the Master and Doctorate Programme “Gestão Urbana”

Partner 3a: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México (UAEM), Toluca, Mexico

Facultad de Arquitectura y Diseño / Facultad de Economía-Instituto de Estudios sobre la Universidad / Maestría en Estudios Sustentables Metropolitanos y Regionales

Project coordinator:

Mtro. Jorge Eduardo Valdés Garcés, architect and Director of the Architect and Design Faculty; Mtro. Joel Martínez Bello, Maestro en Economía y Director de la Facultad de Economía, Dr. Sergio González López, urbanist and part of the Comité Académico of the Master Programme “Estudios Sustentables Regionales y Metropolitanos”.

Partner 3b: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México (UAEM), Toluca, Mexico

Facultad de Geografía / Maestría en Análisis Espacial y Geoinformática

Project coordinator:

Dr. Noel Bonfilio Pineda Jaimes, Director de la Facultad de Geografía y Dr. en Geografía; Dra. Xanat Antonio Nemiga, Dra. in Natural Resources Management, coordinator of the Programme “Maestría en Análisis Espacial y Geoinformática”.

Partner 3c: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México (UAEM), Toluca, Mexico

Facultad de Planeación Urbana y Regional / Maestría en Estudios de la Ciudad

Project coordinator:

Mtro. Héctor Campos Alanís, Director de la Facultad de Planeación Urbana y Regional y Mtro. en Estudios Urbanos y Regionales; Dra. Rosa María Sánchez Nájera, Dra. en Ciencias Económicas, Presidenta de la Comisión Académica de la “Maestría en Estudios de la Ciudad”.

Partner 4: El Colegio Mexiquense, AC., Toluca, México

Maestría en Ciencias Sociales con Especialidad en Desarrollo Municipal

Project coordinator:

Dr. José Antonio Álvarez Lobato, Secretario General de El Colegio Mexiquense y Dr. en Geografía; Dra. Anahely Medrado Buenrosto, Dra. en Política Social por la York University, coordinadora de la "Maestría en Ciencias Sociales con Especialidad en Desarrollo Municipal".

Partner 5: Universidade Federal ABC (UFABC), Santo André, São Paulo, Brazil

Center of Engineering, Modeling and Applied Social Sciences

Project coordinator:

Prof. Dr. Klaus Frey, doctor in social sciences, researcher of the Brazilian Council for Scientific Development and Technologies (CNPq), course director of the Master Programme "Public Policies" and member of the Postgraduate Program "Territorial Planning and Management" (Master & Doctorate).

Partner 6: Universidad Piloto de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia

Maestría en Gestión Urbana / Master in Urban Management

Project coordinator:

Prof. M. Sc. Mayerly Rosa Villar Lozano, architect and course director of the Master Programme "Gestión Urbana"

All six universities are well established in the field of urban studies. The postgraduate programmes indicated above form the educational basis for the cooperation. Its central objective is the extension and improvement of teaching, joint module development, international and intercultural exchange in the specific domain of large-scale city-regional and metropolitan developments. In the cases where urban studies related doctoral programmes have already been established (Curitiba and Santo André), these will form an integral part of the project, offering Ph.D. options to qualified students from the rest of the partnership.

The master programme "Urban Agglomerations" started at Fachhochschule Frankfurt in October 2008. It is completely taught in English. It is based on an interdisciplinary and international orientation, imparting specific knowledge in the domain of urban, regional and landscape planning, transport and mobility, GIS, urban technical infrastructure as well as social and cultural connotations. In the third semester students attend an international exchange course.

The "Programa de Pós-Graduação em Gestão Urbana (PPGTU)" in Curitiba initiated a master programme in 2003 and started a PhD programme in March 2009. Teaching activities, master and doctoral theses as well as research projects are related to three basic fields: management and public policies, planning and projects in urban and regional spaces, management and environmental technologies.

The programme "Maestría en Estudios Sustentables Regionales y Metropolitanos", being established in Toluca in 2011, is based on a multidisciplinary approach bringing together theoretical reflection and professional methodologies to identify and deal with the phenomena of large territorial areas. It is enriched by the PhD in Design and the Master in Design, both programmes with diverse lines of research, including strategic design, contextual design, urban and educational design.

The programme "Maestría en Análisis Espacial y Geoinformática",

The Master on Spatial analysis and geoinformatics is a two years (4 semesters) programme of the Geography Faculty, which aims to provide technical and theoretical skills for landscape assessment under a systemic perspective using geographic information technologies. It has three research lines: environmental studies, socioeconomic processes and geoinformatics. Graduates of this program have developed applied research dealing with several social, environmental and economic issues, such as: poverty, social justice and services access, soil degradation, deforestation, urban life quality, among others. This program belongs to the national record of quality postgraduate programs of the National Council of Research (CONACYT).

The programme "Maestría en Estudios de la Ciudad" was created in 2011 and aims to build retrospective analysis, theoretical knowledge of the city, methodologies and tools implementing multi and interdisciplinary research, to review and interpret their nature, functioning and dynamics of the forms, relationships and decisions in the process of urbanization and sustainable territorial change, in light of cultural participation, social and public policy making contributing to the construction of new knowledge.

The program "Maestría en Ciencias Sociales con Especialidad en Desarrollo Municipal", was created in 1987. It has more than 100 graduates and it's the only programme in Mexico with this specialization. The three lines of investigation offered are Territorial Studies and Urban Economy; Right, Power and Development; and Institutions, Public Politics and Civil Society.

The postgraduate programme "Territorial Planning and Management" was accredited by the Brazilian Agency for Higher Education CAPES in 2010 and started its activities at UFABC in May 2011 as a master course and in May 2013 as a doctoral program. Its focus is related to three main areas: territorial dynamics, state, society and territory, policies and instruments of planning and management of the territory. The postgraduate programme in "Public Policies" was

accredited by CAPES in September 2013 starting its activities in May 2014. The main research areas are related to the topics: democracy, institutions and governance; and public policy analysis.

The "Master in Urban Management" in Bogotá started in 1987. With structural focusing elements, the program works on three main research lines: Habitat, Environment and Territory; Government, Local Administration and Citizenship; and Population and Welfare. The Master has an interdisciplinary nature oriented to an integrated reading of all the phenomena and urban problems, considering the incidence of social, territorial, spatial, politic, economic and environmental variables.

2. The Relevance of Sustainable Metropolitan Regions

Worldwide, a rapid urban change is an irreversible global process today, leading to new and highly integrated forms of large urban, metropolitan and regional networks and agglomerations. Generally, such regional and metropolitan agglomerations extend well beyond the traditional limits of one single central municipality alone, incorporating a multiplicity of administrative entities, diversified functional patterns, extensive infrastructural networks, different socio-economic conditions etc. in a wide-spread territory.

Thereby, metropolitan regions bring with them serious physical, demographical, economic, environmental and social challenges for the development, planning and governance of contemporary urban settings. And this applies both, though in different and manifold ways, to the agglomerations of the so-called developing world (still in a phase of continuous expansion) and those of the developed world (where extension and shrinking processes can be registered all at once).

All six partner universities are themselves located in cities within nationally and internationally relevant metropolitan areas:

- Frankfurt in the central European Metropolitan Region of Rhine-Main (around 5 million inhabitants);
- Curitiba in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba (3,3 mill. inhab.), the economic and administrative heart of the Brazilian State of Paraná;
- Toluca, capital city of the Mexican Federal State of Mexico, situated at the outskirts of the Mexico City region, with more than 25 million inhabitants one of the largest megacity-regions worldwide;
- São Paulo, the largest city in Brazil and one of the largest metropolitan regions in the world (almost 20 mill. inhab);
- Bogotá, capital of the country and centre of a fast growing agglomeration of about 7 million people.

The challenges of these contemporary metropolitan regions and the development of concepts of how to deal with them in the future are the central topic and objective of the proposed postgraduate cooperation project. The four Latin-American metropolitan regions share very similar problems of urban fragmentation, environmental degradation and increase in inequalities, urban violence and very uneven insertion in the global economy, whereas their strategies to tackle with these challenges in terms of urban infrastructure, development strategies, institutional arrangements as well as planning and management practices vary in accordance with their particular historical and cultural national background, opening interesting perspectives for the collective generation of comparative knowledge, above all against the background of European and in this specific case German metropolitan planning and governance.

3. Objectives of the Cooperation Project

The central goal of the cooperation is to jointly strengthen and upgrade already existing postgraduate education in the field of urban and regional development, to create networks and synergies between the single programmes and thereby improve the performance and competitiveness of all partners on the national and the international academic market.

Related to the particular field of metropolitan regions, the objective is to generate new and specific knowledge on more sustainable strategies for urban agglomerations, providing an international and intercultural exchange on concepts for metropolitan regions and implementing this knowledge in a set of up-to-date teaching modules for the involved postgraduate programmes as well as doctoral education (where applicable). By establishing and teaching the new modules in English, these will contribute to strengthen the international attraction and competitiveness of each single university and the partnership as a whole.

The base of the cooperation project is the further development of an academic knowledge net, where the involved universities from North and South have been collaborating since 2010 (and in part already earlier). Beyond the establishment of new teaching modules in each single university (and their respective recognition by all partner universities), the goal is to create a durable basis for a long-term commitment and partnership between the involved universities, e.g. developing perspectives of a possible double, multiple or joint postgraduate degree in the field of urban development. Common research activities should be stimulated and activated by the cooperation project, though other financial means will have to be acquired for their ultimate implementation.

These general targets of the project are to be attained by the following detailed set of objectives:

3.1. Curriculum Building and Development of Common Teaching Modules

The six partner universities intend to improve and enlarge the already existing curricula in their respective postgraduate programmes by cooperating in the joint development of new teaching modules on relevant challenges and concepts for metropolitan regions.

The specific topics and contents of these modules, relevant to all master programmes, will be developed in an intercultural perception linking, comparing and exchanging experiences and practices of European urban agglomerations with recent developments in highly dynamic Latin-American city-regions and mega-cities. Doing this and putting side by side different socio-cultural, economic, legal conditions and frameworks, they will contribute to an international exchange and debate on concepts and strategies for a more sustainable development of urban agglomerations.

Specialized excursions, visits to institutions and organisations, to relevant projects and their implementation, insight in social life and applied research will be part of the module building. Thus the students will be imparted profound technical and social competencies for professional life as well as academic research on city-regions, in an overall global and comparative perspective.

All modules will be taught in English. All topics will be synchronized among each other and will be of relevance for all master programmes. The newly developed modules will become an integral part of the single curricula, and credits will be recognized by all partner universities.

Students are enhanced to attend these modules within their master programmes by doing short-time exchange periods or a full exchange semester at the partner universities. They will thus be sensitized for urban and social realities in different contexts, cultures and societies. Beyond the network of the partner universities, additional international students can be attracted to join these international modules, too.

3.2. Enhancement of Student and Teacher Exchange

An integrated part of the cooperation project will be the enhancement of a regular student exchange between the partner universities and their master programmes, with full recognition of the study modules absolved abroad and possibly double and joint degrees in the future as well as allowing for comparative research activities within the students' master and doctoral dissertations. These can both be short-time exchange periods (approx. 3 weeks) or full semesters (approx. 16 to 20 weeks).

Teacher cooperation and teacher exchange will support and extend the joint module development. This includes the lecturing of English taught modules at the partner universities, the performance of workshops for specific topics, e.g. on recent research work, public lectures open to a general professional audience at the partner universities etc. By this, student and lecturers not personally involved in the exchange programme abroad, will be able to profit from an "internationalization at home".

3.3. Common Production of Knowledge: Joint Organisation of International Workshops and Excursions

One workshop with participants from all partner universities will be organized regularly each year, alternately at one of the universities of the network. This should produce intensive exchange and new common knowledge on metropolitan matters and development, beyond the establishment of the single teaching modules. Therefore, the focus of these workshops will be twofold:

First, addressing a specific key issue of metropolitan challenges and development in presentations, conferences, discussions, open to the network members, students as well as other guests from the professional world, eventually also integrating experts from outside the universities;

Second, an annual exchange on the ongoing of the partnership, including the evaluation of the joint modules and other related activities, the guest lecturing, student exchange, research projects, advancement in the integration of the single programmes, development of new network activities etc.

These workshops should always integrate a joint professional excursion (approx. 1 to 3 days) in order to add a practical outlook on up-to-date projects and perspectives within the metropolitan region of the respective host university.

The workshop 2014 will take place in Bogotá.

3.4. Sharing of Knowledge: Establishment of a Common Research and Data Base on City-regional and Metropolitan Issues

Re. In order to better share the developed knowledge on city-regional and metropolitan issues (and eventually make it available to a wider professional world, at least in parts) a joint Internet platform will be established. This platform will present scripts and module documentations, results of the annual workshops, research papers and publications, related student dissertations and theses, best practice documentations and other elements and documents related to the specific issues of the partnership.

3.5. Widening the Network: Integration of Additional Professional Partners and Stakeholders

Contact with and integration of additional partners and stakeholders from the professional and academic world, from public administrations, institutions and civil society will be essential for widening and spreading the results of this academic partnership. Therefore it is a crucial interest and objective of the network to cooperate with such partners as intensely as possible and from the beginning, e.g. by integrating them into the yearly workshops, the excursions, student and research projects, internship and other activities. By such an opening to the world outside the universities, more sustainable results of the academic partnership project will be possible.

3.6. Sensitizing for International Development

The regular exchange of students and teachers will give a detailed insight into the social and physical structures of the different metropolitan areas and lead to an increased understanding of the specific socio-cultural, economic and political situation of the partner countries in general. Day-to-day conditions, difficulties and consequences within the different contexts will become more obvious. Out of this broad view, a better understanding and sensitizing for the issues of international development will be possible. This will not only apply to the persons directly involved in the project, but also to their respective environment at home, at the university and in private life.

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For FH FFM:

Michael Peltz Cardina Auster

For PUCPR Curitiba:

Paulo Cesar Hoff

For UFABC:

Walter B.

For Universidad Piloto de Colombia:

Leandro Torres

For El Colegio Mexiquense, AC:

Carlos

For Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México:

Josef

Manuel

Roberto

Adrian

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