

Experiences of MSc European Forestry Erasmus Mundus participants in the labour market



SILVA Network Annual Conference, Copenhagen, 15-16/5/2008



Outline of the presentation

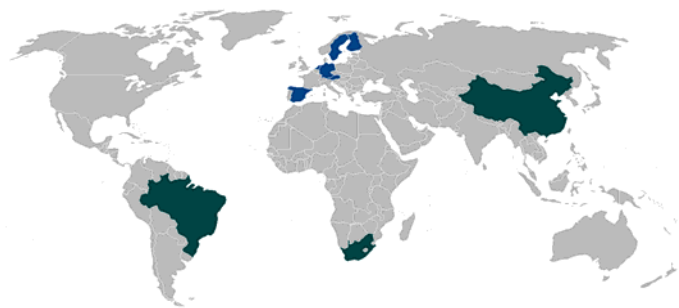
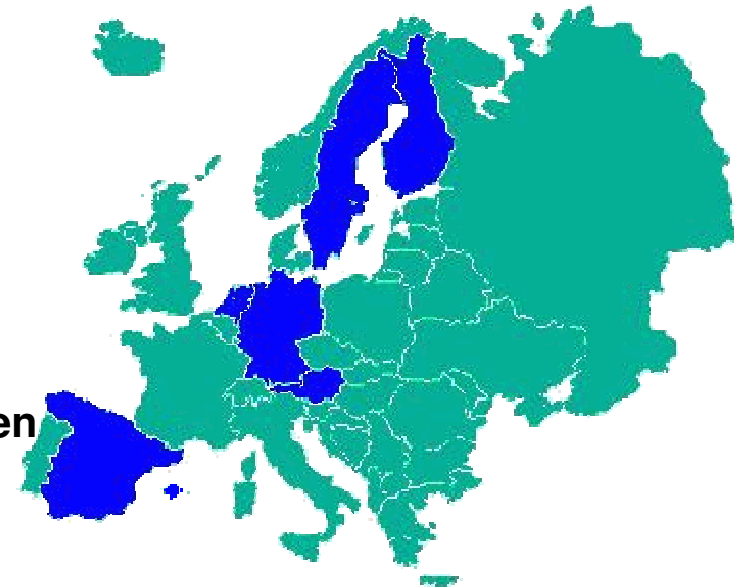
1. MSc European Forestry Erasmus Mundus in brief
 - MSc Course
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 - Employment figures
 - Students' views on employability
3. Discussion



1. MSc European Forestry Erasmus Mundus in brief

• A 2-year (120 ECTS) **double-degree** Masters Course co-organized by the following 6 European universities:

- ✓ University of Freiburg, **Germany**
- ✓ University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU), **Austria**
- ✓ University of Lleida, **Spain**
- ✓ University of Joensuu, **Finland** (Co-ordination)
- ✓ Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, **Sweden**
- ✓ Wageningen University, **The Netherlands**



• In partnership with 3 non-European universities:

- ✓ University of KwaZulu-Natal, **South Africa**
- ✓ Federal University of Parana, **Brazil**
- ✓ Northwest A&F University, **China**



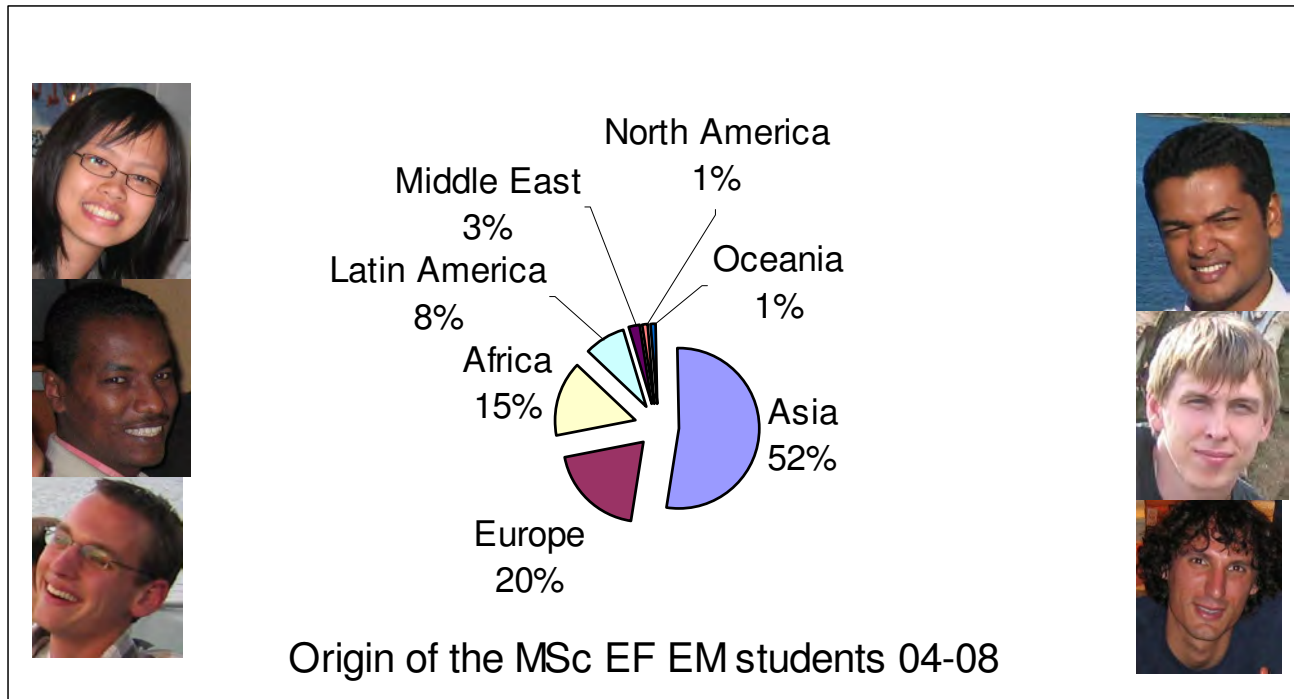
1. MSc European Forestry EM (cont.)

Minimum requirements; participants:

- **Bachelor degree** in forestry, nature management or related sciences
- fluent **English** (TOEFL 550, IELTS 6.0, or equiv.)

Origin of MSc EF EM students between 2004 and 2008*

India	11
Nepal	11
China	10
Bangladesh	8
Indonesia	7
Spain	6
Russia	5
Brazil	4
Ethiopia	4
Germany	4
Thailand	3
Cameroon	2
Lebanon	2
Nigeria	2
Pakistan	2
South Africa	2
Tanzania	2
Uganda	2
OTHERS	20
TOTAL	107

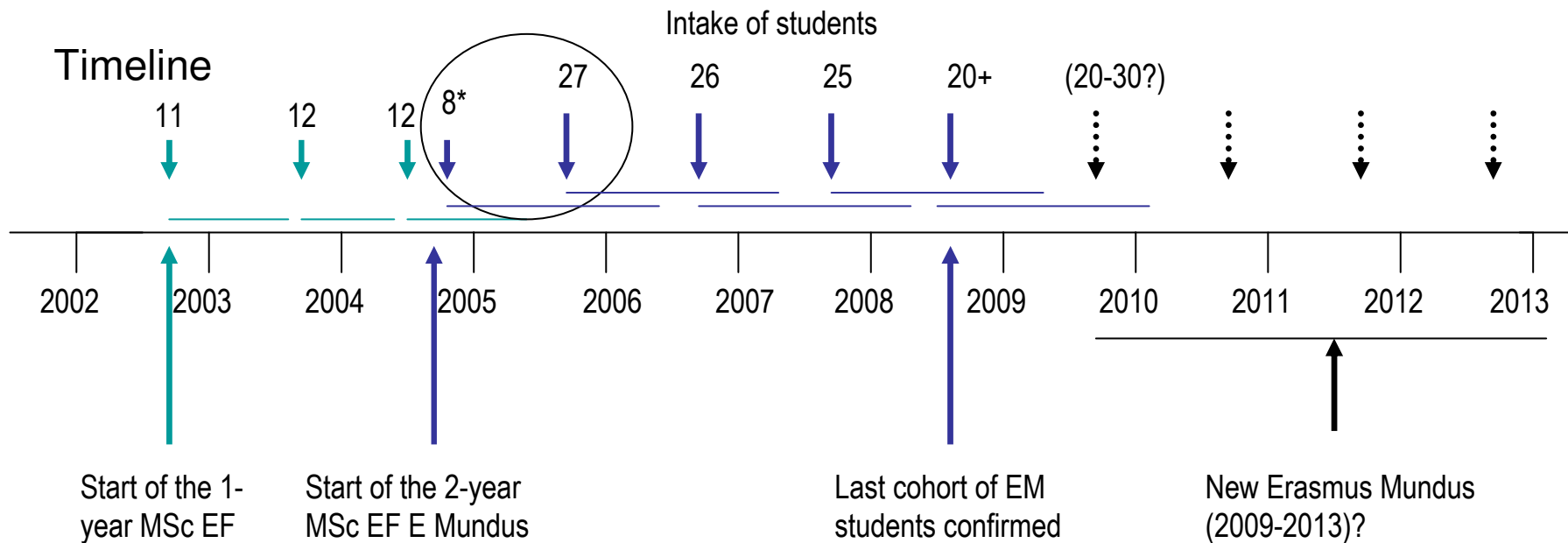




1. MSc European Forestry EM (cont.)

Mission: To provide academic education in forestry focusing on **international forest resource management and utilisation**, supported by a sound understanding of the ecological conditions and their dynamics in Europe.

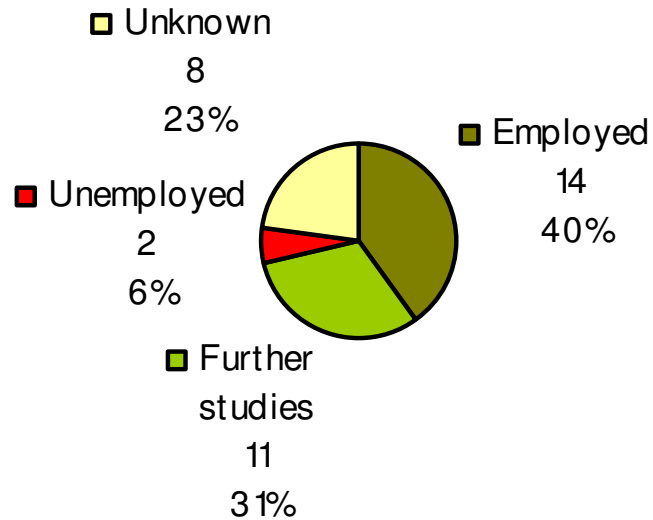
Course structure: a first year of common curriculum with studies at all 6 partner universities, followed by a second year at the preferred partner university





2. Experiences in the labour market

Occupation of the first 35 MSc EF EM participants, 5 months after the minimum study period:



- Completion rate (60%) relatively low and uneven (72% in non-EU, 0% in EU).
- Employment of participants that studies incomplete is relatively high.
- Significant number of “unknown”.

Occupation of MSc EF EM participants according to origin and completion of studies						
		Employed	Further studies	Unemployed	Unknown	TOTAL
Non-EU	With studies completed	5	10	1	5	21
	With studies incomplete	7	0	1	0	8
EU	With studies completed	0	0	0	0	0
	With studies incomplete	2	1	0	3	6
TOTAL		14	11	2	8	35



2. Experiences in the labour market (cont.)

List of MSc EF EM employers and positions

Employer	Position
CIFOR Regional Office, Cameroon	Research assistant
Climate Bridge Ltd. Shanghai, China	(not provided)
Corporación Fondo Biocomercio, Colombia	Coordinator of Monitoring and Evaluation
Forest Technological Centre of Catalonia, Spain	Researcher
Institute of Forestry Policy and Information, Chinese Academy of Forestry	Associate Professor
Mae Fah Luang University's Botanical Garden, Thailand	Forest officer
Ministry of Forestry, Republic of Indonesia	Forest Fire Extinguishing Data Analyst
Mondi Business Paper, South Africa	Environmental Specialist
Sutherland Seedlings, South Africa	Nursery Manager
Sveza, Russia (plywood company)	Marketing specialist
Thai Research Fund, Bangkok, Thailand	Project Coordinator
The Nature Conservancy, Indonesia	Head of Berau office (East Borneo)
Wetlands International, China	(not provided)
(Self-employed, Spain)	Forest consultant

- All are employed in their home countries.
- Industry/company (4), ENGOs (3), research inst.(3), univ. (2), govern. (1), self-employed (1).



2. Experiences in the labour market (cont.)

Universities where MSc EF EM participants conduct further studies

	Students	Level
University of Joensuu, Finland	6	PhD
BOKU- University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna, Austria	2	PhD
University of New Brunswick, Canada	1	PhD
Lakehead University, Canada	1	PhD
TiasNimbas Business School Utrecht (the Netherlands) & Bradford Graduate School of Management (UK)	1	MBA

*Additionally, one student has been accepted for sandwich PhD at Wageningen University (the Netherlands), another one has been accepted for PhD without scholarship at Lakehead University (Canada), and a third one has been recently accepted for PhD at a Japanese university.

- MSc EF Partner Universities in Europe and Canadian universities are main destinations for PhD studies.

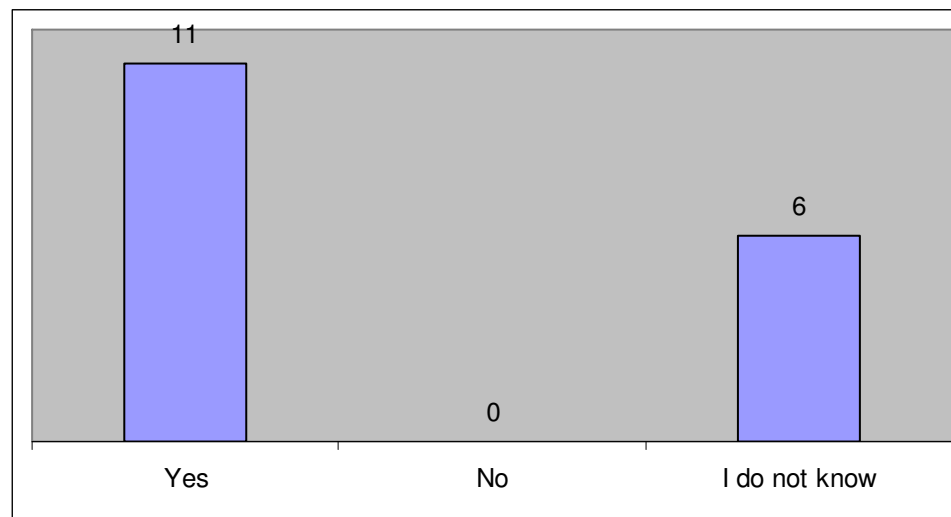


2. Experiences in the labour market (cont.)

Students' views on employability (extracted from anonymous questionnaires):

- *Do you think that the MSc EF EM gives you an advantage on the labour market in comparison to having a MSc in forestry from your home country?*

*(*Asked during the last month of studies by student Bishnu Poudel; response rate 63%)*



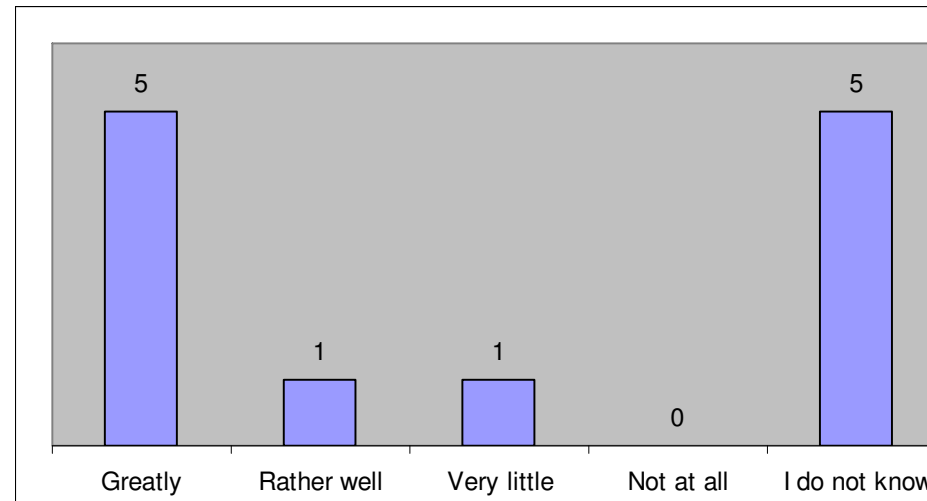


2. Experiences in the labour market (cont.)

Students' views on employability (cont.):

- *How much do you think the completion of the MSc EF EM has improved your opportunities in the labour market?*

*(**Asked 5 months after the minimum study period as part of the programme's Alumni Survey, response rate 60%)*





3. Discussion

- Limitations: experiences of small number of participants (35), mostly from outside Europe, over a short period of time, collected from both formal (questionnaire) and informal (e-mail) inquiries by the MSc coordinating unit.
- Within 5 months, 40% were working at forest organizations at home countries and 31% were carrying out further studies in Europe or Canada.
- Respondents were either very positive or sceptical on the benefits of the MSc for their employability.
- Response rates (~60%) and contact may be enhanced if graduates are offered beneficial services (e.g. newsletters with vacancies, info. etc).



3. Discussion (cont.)

- Current surveys may not be designed to take into account international students (e.g. language of the survey) or the international labour market.
- Need for systematic assessment of graduates experiences that considers these internationalisation issues as well as issues that are characteristic of the forestry field.
- Opportunities for collaboration and coordinated approaches among institutions for the benefit of higher forestry education in Europe and the forestry profession.

Thank you for your attention!



Info. on MSc EF EM can be found at: <http://gis.joensuu.fi/mscef>