ERASMUS MUNDUS EXTERNAL COOPERATION WINDOW (EM ECW)

Call for Proposals: EACEA/13/09 - Lot 21b (Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama)

ERACOL

Coordinating institution:

Erasmus University Medical Center Rotterdam (Erasmus MC)
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

MEMBERS OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Latin American partners:

Universidad Autónoma de Centro América. San José, Costa Rica
Universidad de Costa Rica - Sede del Atlántico. Cartago, Atlántico, Costa Rica
Universidad de Panamá - Centro Regional Universitario de Veraguas. Santiago, Veraguas, Panamá
Universidad del Cauca. Popayán, Cauca, Colombia
Universidad del Rosario. Bogotá, Cundinamarca, Colombia
Universidad Latina de Panamá. Ciudad de Panamá, Panamá

European partners:

Erasmus University Medical Center Rotterdam (Erasmus MC)
Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven, Belgium
Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain
University of Torino, Turin, Italy
Associates:

Agència de Salut Pública de Barcelona (ASPB), Barcelona, Spain
Centre de Recerca en Epidemiologia Ambiental (CREAL), Barcelona, Spain
Colciencias, Administrative Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, Bogotá, Colombia
Department of Health Policy and Management, Erasmus MC, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
Embajada de Panamá, Bruxelles, Belgique
Embassy of Costa Rica, Oslo, Norway
Embassy of Panamá, Stockholm, Sweden
Fundación Gabriel Lewis Galindo, Panamá, Panamá
GGD Rotterdam-Rijnmond, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
Global International Studies, Bogotá, Colombia
Panamerican Health Organization
Royal Netherlands Embassy in Bogotá, Colombia
Royal Netherlands Embassy in Panamá, Panamá
Royal Netherlands Embassy in San José, Costa Rica
Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

ERACOL (Erasmus-Columbus 2013) is intended to achieve mutual enrichment and better understanding between the EU and Latin-American countries. Its major objectives are:

- To create excellently trained graduates in the health sciences at undergraduate, Master’s, doctorate and post-doctorate levels – graduates who can confront local and regional public health problems, and can keep pace with health developments worldwide.
- To achieve sustained improvement in knowledge, teaching and research skills in the public-health sciences in Third countries.
- To enhance transnational research potential for addressing local, regional and global public health challenges – research with a strong social commitment that enhances the value of previous EU-funded projects.
- To increase participation by the most disadvantaged groups of Third countries, whose public health needs will be included on the agenda for the development and implementation of research and interventions in the health sciences.

- To forge lasting links not only between the European and Latin-American partner universities, but also between and within the EU and Latin-America.

- To improve participants’ language and cultural skills, thereby promoting wider mutual enrichment and understanding between the peoples involved.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

**Partners and fields of study**

The ERACOL consortium covers 6 universities in three countries of Lot 21 b in Latin America (Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama) as well as 5 universities in 5 European countries (Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Sweden). The project covers the following thematic fields of study:

- Education, Teacher Training (05- Teacher training, Vocational and Technical Education, Adult Education)
- Mathematics, Informatics (11 – Statistics, Informatics, Computer Sciences, others)
- Medical Sciences (12 - Medicine, Psychiatry, Public Health, Medical Technology)
- Natural Sciences (13 – Biology)
- Social Sciences (14 – Sociology, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences, Development Studies, International Studies)

The particular focus within these areas is to improve health and healthcare, and to reduce socio-economic inequalities. Teaching and research topics include topics of particular relevance to international health and the health situation in the Latin-American countries involved. They include clinical management; socio-economic differences in health and access to care; infectious-disease management and tropical medicine; sexually transmitted diseases; occupational and behavioural health-risk factors, the genetic and environmental determinants of health (such as dementia, glaucoma, stroke, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, myopia, neuropsychiatric diseases, pediatric diseases, and chronic respiratory diseases); and a reduction in the number of deaths caused by preventable factors.

**Mobility**

The planned mobility of 139 persons covers all levels from undergraduates to post-doctorate and staff members, and offers a unique opportunity for all partners to teach and inspire each other. The proposal follows the distribution of the mobility flow stated in the EMECW guidelines:
• 48 students for the undergraduate programme, being 35% of the total mobility flow
• 26 students for the master programme, being 19% of the total mobility flow
• 36 students for the doctorate programme, being 26% of the total mobility flow
• 14 students for the post-doctorate programme, being 10% of the total mobility flow
• 15 teachers for the staff programme, being 11% of the total mobility flow

Most mobility from Latin-America to Europe will involve the training of students at undergraduate, Master’s and PhD levels. Staff mobility will focus mainly on teacher-raining and faculty-building between the various institutions.

A special characteristic of this project is the focus on students from vulnerable groups (Target group 3, defined either by socio-economic indicators, gender, physical disability or ethnic backgrounds), who are currently underrepresented in Latin-American institutions for higher education, and therefore represent tremendous untapped potential in Latin America. The proposal includes the mobility of 38 students from vulnerable groups (27% of total mobility. Students from these groups will be selected on the basis of a list of criteria (still to be defined by the partners in the consortium agreement), and will be particularly encouraged to participate in the mobility schemes. A substantial number of the research and intervention projects envisaged will also focus on improving the health and living circumstances of these vulnerable populations.

**Good organisation, management and communication**

In order for such a large consortium to function smoothly, it is of the utmost importance to have a good structure for internal and external communication, and a good agreement on the distribution of activities and responsibilities. It is equally essential to formulate a clear description of the selection process – one which ensures that participants in the mobility scheme are selected impartially, on the basis of merit, and with full account to the importance of selecting students from vulnerable groups in the participating Third Countries.

The proposed management structure is designed to support the operation of the project and to facilitate communication. Internal communication will be ensured by regular conference calls in which each partner is represented by 2 persons; this will ensure continuity in the event of later absence, whether temporary or permanent. A consortium agreement will be drafted and signed by each of the partners and will include the mobility numbers, the planning of the programme, the communication and marketing plan, and the measures to be taken in the event of problems.

If it does not already have such an office, each partner university will ensure the establishment of an office that will manage the inward and outward mobility flows of the project, provide information on the project, and provide assistance on issues such as visas, housing, and familiarisation with
the host institution and host country. To facilitate communication and to detect any problems at an early stage, incoming beneficiaries of the project will be assigned a local contact person or tutor.

The progress of the project in terms of quality and achievement of the targets set will be monitored at three levels: (1.) by the Executive Committee (in which representatives from each partner university will participate), which will oversee the exchange activities, learning objectives and curricula; (2.) by the Local University Quality Control Units, which will implement and evaluate the mobility scheme within each university; and (3.) by the Audit Unit, which will evaluate compliance with project procedure and guidelines by all partners involved.

External communication will involve publicity campaigns that ensure the visibility of the mobility scheme, the visibility of the external actions of the EU, and communication between the students, researchers and staff, as well as the partners, associates and other important institutions that are either important to the mobility itself or to the research and educational topics covered in the project. Whereas the key activities for the publicity campaigns will involve press releases and information on websites and relevant public events in the various countries, contacts with the members of the partnership and associates will take place on a tailor-made basis, according to the specific needs and interests of the stakeholders.

**Responding to thematic needs and to issues such as equity and brain-drain**

ERACOL will address the thematic fields of Education, Mathematics, Health Sciences, Natural and Social Sciences, all of which are centred on health and public health. The programmes provided by the consortium will give participants top-level training that prepares them for careers in clinical, biomedical, public-health or applied research. Such studies will enable them to confront the challenges in the natural sciences, health sciences, social sciences, and policy sector that face them – and the world – both now and in the future. As most health threats have a significant international dimension, this international perspective will be of enormous importance.

We will pay special attention to equal opportunities, gender balance and social equity, all of which will be important criteria in the selection mechanism. Socio-economic differences in health will be important topics in the educational and research topics included in the programme. For people with low socio-economic resources, health is just one of their worries, as it is often compounded by a lack of financial means and health knowledge. Improving the health of these populations will stimulate social participation, open opportunities to pursue different careers, generate more equal chances, and improve social equity.

ERACOL has specified a number of measures and agreements to prevent brain-drain. Firstly, in order to obtain a degree, participants should comply with the three following requirements, which they will acknowledge in a written agreement prior to participating in a study, training, or research programme abroad: 1.) to commit themselves to the specific period of study, training or research abroad, 2.) to successfully complete the course or programmes agreed, and 3.) to return to their
home countries after this period. While it will be possible for participants to receive a double title, they will receive the title from their university of origin only when they return to the country in which that university is located.

Secondly, the exchange period envisaged in the project is shorter than the total duration of an undergraduate or post-graduate programme. This will ensure that a substantial part of the education or research will be received or conducted upon the participants’ return to their home countries.

Thirdly, the research topics covered in the project will be directly relevant to Third Countries’ needs, ensuring that participants return to their home countries with knowledge and skills that ensure they find suitable professional opportunities there.

Finally, all agreements that are made between Third country students and their tutors and academic staff at host universities will apply solely to the academic periods offered under the project in question. Any scope for further education or work at the host universities will be explicitly excluded.
## Number of Individual Mobility Activities envisaged

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<tr>
<th>Type of Mobility</th>
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<th>Target Group 3</th>
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</table>

- Target group 1: Students and staff of the universities that are members of the partnership
- Target group 2: Nationals of Third countries not registered at a university that is a member of the partnership, but fulfils eligibility criteria
- Target group 3: Nationals of Third countries who belong to a vulnerable group and fulfil eligibility criteria
Duration : 2010-2013

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