



**Erasmus Mundus Students & Alumni  
Association (EMA)**

Date: 11/12, Oct. 2007

Ref: EMA-CAT-005

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**Conference & Events Advisory Team  
Annual Report (2006/2007) \***

**Summary**

In accordance with *Paragraph 5 & 11, Article 4.3* of the *Statute of EMA*, the Steering Committee (currently represented by Launch Committee) has the obligation to create an annual report covering the main activities and associated expenditures and Steering Committee members who represent a Service Team are responsible for delivering timely and accurate report to the committee on the above matters. A Launch Committee decision adopted on 27 September 2007 further specifies that each of the present service teams shall make an annual report to be made available to the General Assembly of EMA.

This report covers the roles and missions and tasks of the conference & events advisory team. It provides information regarding the main activities undertaken and key achievements made by the team as a whole during the past year. It also highlights the key challenges facing the team and the team's visions and plans for the future.

The overarching goal of the team is to assist in constructing a strong community with ever-lasting inter-personal relationships among its members, through the organization of EMA conferences and events. The report also recommends decisions to be taken at EMA General Assembly at its first session.

In exercising the authority and parliament power over EMA, the General Assembly shall review the report representing the performance of the team, provide guidance and take decisions, as appropriate.

\* This report is prepared by the team communicator, in accordance with EMA Statute, based on extensive consultations and has been agreed and approved by the team for submission to the first EMA General Assembly.

## 1. About the team and this report

The Conference & Events Team (hereafter to be referred to as “the team”, or “CAT”)<sup>1</sup> was established during the Erasmus Mundus (EM) Student Seminar in June 2006, together with other service teams and the Launch Committee. It has been responsible for initiating ideas for and organizing conferences and events for EM students and alumni, under the direction of the EMA Launch Committee and European Commission and in cooperation with other service teams.

The team consists of the following seven members from six countries on four continents:

**Table 1. The present CAT membership**

Members	Nationality	Participating Status
Chunyu Liang*	China	Yes
Ricardo Chavez	Mexico	Yes
Nataliya Stupak	Ukraine	Yes
Ayeray Medina	Argentina	Yes
Tanja Kähkönen	Finland	Yes
Andriy Ilyuk	Ukraine	Yes
Shashank Shekhar	India	Yes <sup>2</sup>

\*Team communicator.

### Missions of the team are as follows:

- To create a platform for the communication, and cooperation among the EM students and alumni body, via the implementation of EMA conferences and events;
- To promote networking among EMA members and contribute to the establishment of a united community, through providing various means of support for different events.
- To promote Europe as a centre of excellence in international higher education on all EMA organized conferences and events, in close cooperation with other EMA teams (esp. the promotion team).

In accordance with the Launch Committee decision on 27 September 2007, each of the EMA service teams shall report on its activities to the General Assembly (GA). In exercising the authority and parliament power over EMA, the GA shall review the report representing the performance of the team, provide guidance and take decisions, as appropriate.

This annual report by the EMA CAT provides information to the GA, at its first session, on progress made towards and from the perspective of the operationalization of EMA organized conferences and events during its “*launch period*” - June 2006 until early October 2007. It covers the main activities undertaken during this launch period and recommends decisions to be taken by the GA. It reports on the key

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the name of our team has changed along the process of gradual development as part of the association.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. S. Shekhar's participation in the team has ceased in October 2006 due to email blockages. The team was not notified by him about the expiration of his email address.

achievements and other matters relating to the development of EMA as well as the EMA CAT in accordance with the team's missions and relevant decisions made by the Launch Committee over the launch period.

In addition, the report contains information on the resource requirements foreseen for implementing the planned conferences and events for the biennium 2007-2008 and outlines the key challenges awaiting EMA and CAT in achieving its missions.

This report, which provides an overview on various matters covered during the launch period, is based on and should be read in conjunction with relevant background information, discussions and decisions within and/or taken by the launch committee as well as those among the seven service teams. A presentation will be made to a relevant GA session as to the many aspects relating to these aspects.

## **2. Work undertaken during the *launch period***

This section highlights the key achievements made by the team as a whole during the launch period. Over the past 15 months, the most noted milestones achieved by the team can be divided into three parts:

1) Initiating and gathering ideas for activities to be implemented by EMA, and upon intense discussion with the Launch Committee, service provider as well as the European Commission, a number of proposals<sup>3</sup> made by the team have been included to the Commission's call for tender to contract a Service Provider for EMA;

2) Active participation in policy-related discussion with other service teams and the European Commission as to shaping the development of EMA during the launch period. A number of suggestions originated by the team have been adopted by the Launch Committee and the Commission;

3) Implementing the events set forward by the EMA Launch Committee – the team is currently in charge of the organization of several events that the Launch Committee has decided to run.

**Table 2. Summary of the team's main work undertaken and key achievements (2006/2007)**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Time/Venue/Means</b>	<b>Process &amp; outcome</b>
1. Preparation for first Launch Committee & Liaison Group <sup>4</sup> meeting	19-20 Oct. 2006, Brussels. Electronic discussion and face-to-face meeting	The team delivered its first proposal to the Launch Committee and European Commission as to what types of needs are identified from the students/alumni body in terms of organizing EMA events. The majority of the proposals have been adopted by the meeting: - to support thematic meetings run by EMA members sharing similar interests; - to support regional/national alumni network events attended by EMA members present in the region/country; - to support other type of EMA members' get-togethers. Request accepted by the European Commission as to allocating financial resources to support the above-mentioned events.

<sup>3</sup> A discussion document produced by the team is available online <http://www.erasmusmundus-alumni.eu/index.php?id=80>, see also team document ref: **EMA-CAT-01; EMA-CAT-02.**

<sup>4</sup> Liaison Group refers to the enlarged body of nominated EMA members consisting of the 7 service teams.

2. Participation in the “Erasmus Mundus Conference on Enhancing the Attractiveness of European Higher Education”	28-29 November 2006. Brussels.	<p>The team communicator has collected the views of the team (as well as the LC) and as a student representative on the conference the following key points were delivered to the European Commission, all of which have been taken into serious consideration later in shaping the Erasmus Mundus II period and have been reflected when developing the proposal for Erasmus Mundus II<sup>5</sup> (2009-2013):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The EM programme should also grant scholarships to EU students;</li> <li>- The EM programme should expand to PhD level;</li> <li>- Career and placement opportunities should be incorporated into EM courses so as to raise the profile of EM courses among employers;</li> </ul>
3. Participation in Launch Committee meeting with European Commission	12 Feb 2007, Brussels	<p>LC was informed during the meeting that there will be a gap period where there will be no service provider for EMA (Feb to June 2007) until the new one is contracted.</p> <p>October proposals as to organizing various EMA events are confirmed to be included into the European Commission’s call for tender’s terms of reference;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Started exploring the feasibility of EMA events back-to-back with European Higher Education Fair in all parts of the world;</li> <li>- Started to initiate ideas of running an academic thematic conference, to be further discussed in July with new service provider</li> </ul>
4. Launch Committee meeting with European Commission and new service provider	3-4 July, 2007 Brussels	<p>The meeting approved the proposal of organizing the 1<sup>st</sup> EM thematic meeting under the theme of climate change, which could involve the participation from a wide range of EM courses.</p> <p>In addition to providing input to the further development of EMA with the new service provider, the team stressed the importance of providing placement opportunities to EMA members and offered to re-distribute the EMA conference budget in order to hire professional career service open for all EMA members.</p> <p>The team’s proposal as to opening the Launch Committee meetings for active EM course representatives as observers is not accepted. The team shall continue to request transparency in the decision-making process for the association.</p>
5. Participation in the Inaugural Meeting of Asia-Europe Alumni Network	31 Aug-1 Sep 2007	<p>The team communicator was assigned by the Launch Committee as a representative of EMA to attend this event. The key achievement is that an amount of 10000 EUR is negotiated to be contributed by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) to support the preparation and organization of the first EM Conference on Climate Change, under the condition that the conference opens a special side-meeting or workshop targeting climate change in Asia, which was later accepted by the Launch Committee.</p> <p>Given that some 70% of EM course students come from Asia, this meeting with ASEF has identified a large potential for cooperation between EMA and Asia-Europe Foundation in the area of promoting communications and</p>

<sup>5</sup> This can be seen from the commission’s adopted proposal on Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013.

		social and cultural exchange among academic alumni body between the two regions (Asia and Europe) <sup>6</sup> . The GA in October 2007 will be requested to consider establishing a firm and long-term relations with ASEF in the above-mentioned aspects.
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### 3. Future plans and challenges

The team is committed in meeting its missions by providing continuous support in initiating and assisting in EMA-associated conferences and events, with the direction from the GA, Steering Committee and the European Commission.

In the near future (until the end of the present budget year ending in July 2008), the team has the following events set on its agenda:

**Table 3. Planned major activities on CAT agenda 2007/2008.**

<i>The First EMA National Alumni Network Event – Beijing event</i>	To be held in coincidence with the on-going European Higher Educational Fair. This event is currently in its final preparation stage and is to take place 20-21 October 2007 in Beijing, one week following the General Assembly. All EMA members currently in or around China are invited to attend the event.
<i>The First Erasmus Mundus Conference on Climate Change – the role of higher education in climate change<sup>7</sup></i>	This event has received approval by the EMA Launch Committee and European Commission and is currently in its development stage. To reach a significant and successful scale, the event is facing a deficit of about 25 000 to 30 000 EUR (after considering the potential 10 000 EUR contribution from Asia-Europe Foundation) and the team is working hard to resolve this.
<i>A Latin American Alumni Event</i>	in Mexico, in coincidence with the European Higher Education Fair that will take place in Mexico City <sup>8</sup>
<i>A few more small-scale<sup>9</sup> regional or national EM alumni events</i>	Possibly taking place in Africa, South Asia, North America, Eastern and/or Northern Europe as well as other parts of the world <sup>10</sup> .

Whereas future EMA supported conferences and events will be subject to Steering Committee's decisions, the overarching goal of the team is to assist in

<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that highlighting this does not imply that the team will prioritize EMA events only between the two regions. Instead, the team will strive to explore more possibilities of establishing similar types of platforms for other regions as well.

<sup>7</sup> Sub-theme is subject to change as per real needs and upon consultation with more experts.

<sup>8</sup> To be further confirmed with the European Commission and to be approved by the Steering Committee.

<sup>9</sup> An alumni event estimated to involve about or less than 30 participants from the same country or region.

<sup>10</sup> This will require the re-distribution of the EMA budget for conferences and events, i.e. dividing the budget allocated for one single event into several small-scale events run by various interested groups, subject to Steering Committee approval.

constructing a strong community with ever-lasting inter-personal relationships among its members, through the organization of EMA conferences and events.

The challenges that the team has overcome during this past year have paved the way for organizing conferences and other events in future. The EMA members come from six different continents and have various academic background and interests, and this fact has and will have inevitable influence on planning and organizing conferences and events. The team needs to serve the interests of all the EMA members. Satisfying the needs of all the EMA members in providing them possibilities for networking in various conferences and other events in many different regions is one major challenge for our team and the whole EMA. Furthermore, the EMA members come from different courses and disciplines, promoting the collaboration and networking between the alumni and students of different EM course is another crucial challenge.

Sufficient funding will be necessary for realizing all these activities for the ever-enlargening EMA student and alumni body. By experience, the preparation and organization of conferences and other types of events are the most substantial costs for almost all associations. In addition to the continuous development of all types of EMA conferences and events, a core task and fundamental challenge facing the alumni community relates to securing sufficient funding for all these planned and future events. At the early stage of shaping the structure of EMA, a few proposals for organizing EMA events arisen from the student body had to be already declined this past year due to lack of funding and the gap period (February – July 2007) when there was no service provider for EMA and only minimal services could be maintained. In order to reach a higher stage of implementing and facilitating EMA organized events and to provide more support to the activities requests, additional and stable funds will be needed.

The European Commission has generously committed a budget of 53 200 EUR for EMA supported conferences and events. The budget was based on an estimation of 13 300 EUR/event \* 4 events in Europe, each involving about 30 participants coming from within Europe. The team proposes to re-distribute the budget so as to support more and different events proposed by EMA community. Based on a yearly estimation and with a view of supporting 1 major event (e.g. an high quality academic conference involving above 80 participants with full financial support), 3 middle-sized events (e.g. regional or national alumni network events, involving about 30 participants by partial subsidy), and up to 10 small-scale get-togethers (i.e. small-sized interested group gatherings without incurring travel costs, each estimated to require about or less than 500 EUR), the following resources will become necessary to ensure wide coverage of the benefits from EMA events fund.

**Table 4. Estimated budgetary requirement in the coming biennium (on yearly basis)<sup>11</sup>**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Travel costs</b>	<b>Other costs (EUR)</b>	<b>Total (EUR)</b>
<b>1 Major conference/year</b>	<b>80 *500 EUR/person</b>	<b>10 000</b>	<b>50 000</b>

<sup>11</sup> Please note that the approval for financial contribution of EMA supported events is made by the Steering Committee. The team can request an approval but no guarantee can be made without consulting the Steering Committee (and other service teams).

<b>3 middle sized events/conferences</b>	<b>30 *200EUR/person*3</b>	<b>3 000</b>	<b>21 000</b>
<b>Small-scale activities</b>	<b>500EUR/event*10 events</b>	<b>3 000</b>	<b>8 000</b>
		<b>Sum</b>	<b>79 000</b>

In cooperation with other service teams, CAT will strive to resolve financial challenge via various channels, e.g. through external sponsorship, or cooperation with external organizations with the direction and permission by the Steering Committee and European Commission. Building contacts with external organizations that could sponsor EMA events is another direction that the team will work towards, in cooperation with other service teams. The GA is requested to advise other feasible means in addition to these.

#### **4. Recruitment – welcome to new team members!**

For its continuous and healthy development, the team is currently recruiting new team members, who are self-motivated and committed, to join!

CAT is a very diverse team and has maintained very nice, warm, and respectful working relations. In addition to making contributions to the development of EMA, it is a good platform to utilize and further develop various skills and experiences later needed in professional life:

- Organizational skills. Team members will be actively involved in operating EMA events; therefore, experiences in conference/events organization are highly preferable.

- Fund-raising, negotiating skills, demonstrated experience in raising fund is highly appreciated.

- Budget management. Under the guidance given by the GA and the Steering Committee, the team has a considerable amount of budget to manage in cooperation with EMA service provider. The team needs to conduct professional estimation/calculation on budgetary plans<sup>12</sup> for conferences and events to be organized by EMA and to submit them to the Steering Committee for approval. This also applies to recommending any changes to the budget plans.

- Intercultural communication. The team members will have the opportunity to communicate, understand and appreciate the needs and various perspectives of EMA members coming from different countries and having various cultural backgrounds. Serving as a channel between the alumni body and EMA/European Commission will become a valuable experience. Team members from particular regions will have the opportunity to coordinate regional events for EMA (e.g. someone from a Latin American country may be nominated to take the responsibility to coordinate an alumni event taking place in the region).

The team encourages and welcomes motivated General Assembly participants with the above (or wishing to develop the above) skills and experiences to join us!

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<sup>12</sup> According to the present agreement between the European Commission and the service provider, four major conferences or events can be set forward by the EMA Steering Committee for the period from July 2007 to June 2008.

## 5. Election of the new team coordinator

The current term of office for the present CAT communicator<sup>13</sup>, Mr. Chunyu Liang, serving as a Launch Committee member, is to cease on the first session of EMA GA<sup>14</sup>.

A team leader election will be organised during the General Assembly following an open and democratic approach, although this is not defined by the Statute. Anyone with relevant skills and experiences who's willing to contribute to the development of EMA will be welcome to join the election.

## 5. Team message to the GA

The team applies an open communication environment and welcomes any EMA members to provide input, be it constructive improvement requests or criticism on the work that has been undertaken.

Expressions of interests to self-organize EMA-supported conferences and events will be highly welcomed!

## 6. Team member profiles

**Mr.Chunyu Liang** (Chinese), Team Communicator.

Chunyu is an alumnus from the Erasmus Mundus Masters Course in Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management (MESPOM). He holds his first degree in environmental engineering and has received enhanced training in thermal science and energy engineering. He has studied in China, USA, Hungary, Greece and the UK. As a project assistant, he used to be highly involved in the organization and preparation of a number of large-scale international conferences and workshops in the field of renewable energy and climate change and he wishes to contribute back to the EMA using his skills and experiences.

With four years' experience in implementing clean development projects, Chunyu is currently working as a project manager with a leading company in the world in the field of greenhouse gas emissions reduction. Out of office, Chunyu likes outdoor activities, karaoke, reading and researching and he is recognized as a good Chinese cook.

**Ms. Tanja Kähkönen** (Finnish), a distinguished contributing team member, is currently at the final phase of her studies in the Master of Science in European Forestry Erasmus Mundus Programme.

Tanja has earlier received a Master's Degree in Agriculture and Forestry majoring in management of forest ecosystems. She is a skillful researcher in the field of forestry, and plans to continue to PhD studies in forestry after completing her MSc course. Tanja enjoys outdoors, reading, music, dancing and cooking.

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<sup>13</sup> to be called team coordinator upon the adoption of the EMA statute.

<sup>14</sup> A Launch Committee member, or any future Steering Committee member, is allowed to pursue an additional consecutive terms in accordance with EMA statute. Steering Committee members shall be elected by the respective teams.

Tanja has a lovely four-year-old daughter who always keeps her busy out of university.

**Mr. Ricardo Chávez** (Mexican), an EM alumnus and enthusiastic contributing team member.

Ricardo has a chemistry background before he joined the Erasmus Mundus course – European Master in Materials Science (EMMS). He has working experience with Robert Bosch and Hexcel Composites. He speaks German, Portuguese, French and English. He has been providing enormous constructive inputs over the course of the development of the team.

Ricardo is currently pursuing his PhD study in Germany.

**Ms. Ayeray Mirta Medina Bustos** (Argentinean), an active member of the team and the designer of EMA logo. Alumna from the Erasmus Mundus Master in Applied Ethics.

Ayeray holds three masters degrees from Scandinavian History to applied Ethics and Child studies. She has working experience from a Professor of Civic Education and Ethics, to a clinical psychologist and director of an association focusing on research and marketing. She holds a high level appreciation towards arts and her work has won the EMA logo competition in 2006.

Ayeray is currently pursuing her PhD study on Peace and Development at Leeds University, UK. She likes ballet dance, belly dance, Jazz and Modern dance as well as singing.

**Mr. Andriy Ilyuk** (Ukrainian), active member of the team and is a student from the Erasmus Mundus European Legal Practice (ELPIS) course, during which he has studied in Hanover (Germany), Rouen (France), and Lisbon (Portugal). He has experience of working as a lawyer, lecturer in law, and translator. He likes traveling, hiking, reading, and practicing sports. In the course of his study and work Andriy has organized or helped to organize several conferences on law and social sciences in general.