

NOVA UNIVERSITY NETWORK

ANNUAL REPORT 2013



NOVA
UNIVERSITY NETWORK

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Abbreviations of NOVA member institutions

AU-ST	University of Aarhus, Science and Technology
HU-AF	University of Helsinki, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry
HU-V	University of Helsinki, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
LBHI	Agricultural University of Iceland
LIFE	<i>University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Life Sciences (ceased to exist as per 31 December 2012)</i>
KU-HEALTH	University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences
KU-SCIENCE	University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Science
NVH	Norwegian School of Veterinary Sciences
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
UEF-F	University of Eastern Finland, School of Forest Sciences
UMB	Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Abbreviations of BOVA member institutions

EMU	Estonian University of Life Sciences (Estonia)
ASU	Aleksandras Stulginskis University (Lithuania)
LLU	The Latvia University of Agriculture
LSMU-VA	Lithuanian University of Health Sciences – Veterinary Academy

Text (where nothing else stated) and layout: Terttu Virri, central NOVA coordinator 2012-2013.

1. Words from the Chair

The year 2013 was distinctively a year of change in the NOVA University Network. The operational environment changed in many ways in most of the NOVA member institutions, due to the organisational restructuring and development of the research schools in the Nordic countries. It was clearly time to update the NOVA strategy, one year ahead of time.

In the spring 2013, the NOVA Board, NOVA Committee for Education and Research (KUF) and the local NOVA coordinators gathered in Uppsala for a two day strategy seminar, hosted by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. The seminar was very fruitful, with the outcome that NOVA UN is useful and cooperation within Nordic countries has added value. It was agreed that NOVA should be more flexible and economical, to better meet the requirements of today and future. The new NOVA UN strategy includes substantial changes in the NOVA organisation, as the aim was to achieve a more streamlined organisation.

In the year 2013, many successful NOVA courses took place. The courses represented all the different research areas of NOVA: agriculture, forestry and veterinary medicine. Also a PhD course of applied statistics was held, which gathered students from almost all the NOVA member institutes. The NOVA PhD courses are very important for the education of the students, and are the core function of the NOVA UN. Thank you for all the students and teachers, who made these courses possible and beneficial.

The aim of the NOVA UN is to further develop the concept of the PhD courses. Some changes in the application process and application requirements are already in effect in 2014, but they should be further reviewed and developed to be more applicant-friendly. The bureaucracy should not prevent prospective applicants from applying for a NOVA course grant.

The secretariat of the NOVA UN will move from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Helsinki, to the newly created Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), which continues hosting old established disciplines. For the local NOVA team of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (HU-V), having the responsibility of the secretariat for two years has been a valuable experience. We have been able to act at the very core of the NOVA UN and learnt a lot about NOVA functions at grass roots level. We wish to thank NOVA UN for these two years of our chairmanship, and hand the baton over to the NMBU. May the future of NOVA be successful!



Antti Sukura

Chair of the NOVA Board 2012-2013

2. Activities 2013

2.1 PhD education

In 2013, NOVA announced one open call for applications for PhD courses¹. During this call, a total number of 12 applications were received, of which 9 got funding. Rejections were caused by the lack of Nordic dimension or by severe shortcomings in the application. The total amount of funds reserved for the PhD courses in 2014 courses is 120 718 €.

Eleven PhD courses were run in 2013, attracting total of 236 students and thereof 204 NOVA students. One course was cancelled, due to the low number of students enrolled in the course.

Table 1 PhD courses in 2013, ECTS, number of students

Host institute	Course title	ECTS	Number of NOVA students*	Total number of students
AU ST	Breeding for Disease and Pest Resistance in Crop Plants	5	23	24
HU-AF	Breeding Plans for Sustainable Animal Breeding	5	21	25
HU-AF	Understanding, assessing and improving Ecosystem Services in Global North and South with focus on organic and agro-ecological farming system development	4	9	15
HU-V	Molecular typing and next generation sequencing of food- and water-borne pathogens	2,5	26	29
HU-V	Experimental and laboratory animal pathology	4	12	14
KU-SCI	Management of forest ecosystems for bioenergy, with implications for climate change	4	14	18
SLU	Spreading and adaptation of weeds, pest insects and plant pathogens in current and future climate and cropping systems	6	7	10
SLU	Invasive and Emerging Plant Diseases	6	22	24
SLU	Sustainable Beef and Lamb Production Systems in an International Perspective - NOVA2	4	17	17
SLU	Applied statistics with R for the agricultural, life, and veterinary sciences	6	34	40
UEF-F	Planning REDD inventory: Using existing databases, field work and remote sensing based concepts	4	19	20
*both PhD students and Master students in the course			204	236
CANCELLED				
Post graduate course in Research Methodology, Planning of Controlled Clinical and Experimental Trials (CCT) and Basic and Laboratory research (BLR)		6		

Table 2 Number of PhD courses and PhD students 2003-2013

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of PhD courses	17	13	16	14	14	17	19	19	21	16	11
Number of NOVA PhD students on the courses	270	186	162	200	197	264	301	331	317	265	193

¹ The courses that were granted in 2013 will run in 2014

The number of the NOVA courses in 2013 was the lowest since 2003, but the total number of NOVA PhD students attending these courses wasn't that low compared to the amount of courses. The majority of the participants in PhD courses in 2013 were NOVA students (see *table 3*), which is the main target group for the courses. "Other students" –category on the *table 3* includes the following groups: Other Nordic non-NOVA students, students coming from industry and all other students not falling into the other groups. *Table 4* shows that there the share of the NOVA students has risen from steady 75 % during 2010-2012 to 85% (year 2013).

Table 3 Student groups in NOVA PhD courses in 2013, absolute numbers and percentages

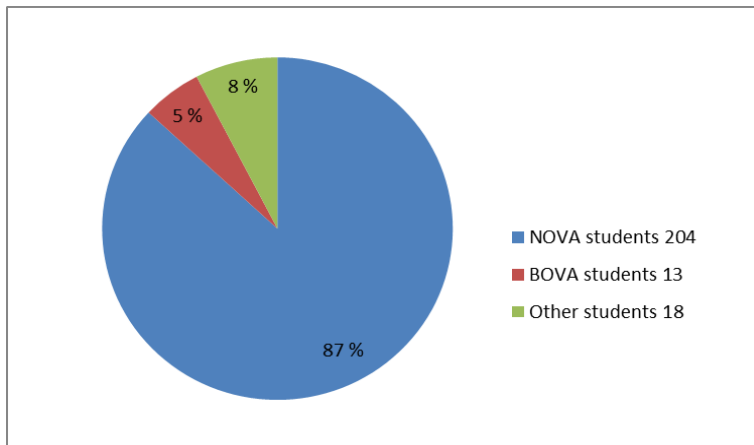
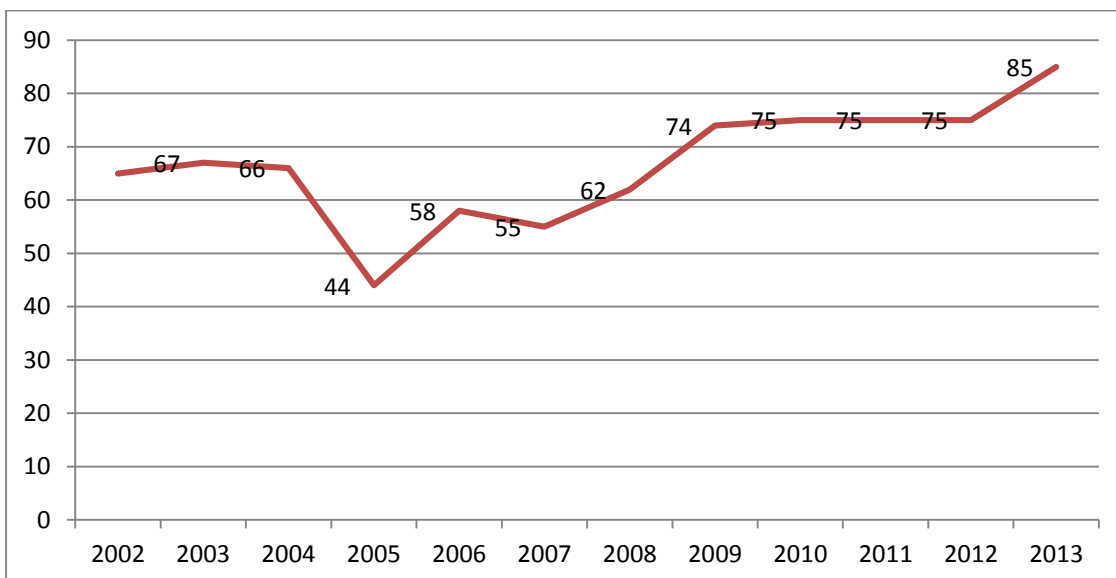


Table 4 Percentage of NOVA PhD students in the NOVA PhD courses, 2002-2013



In 2013, the average percentage of the students from the hosting institution was 33%, minimum percentage being 4% and maximum 57%. *Table 5a* (next page) shows the number of students in all the NOVA PhD courses in 2013 and *table 5b* (next page) is a chart showing the same numbers in percentages.

Table 5a Student attendance by member institution in all the PhD courses in 2013

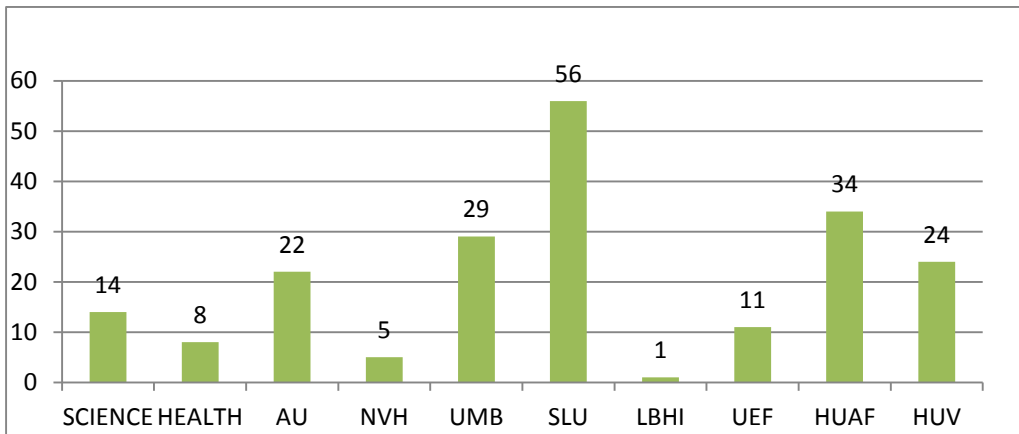


Table 5b Percentage of students by member institution, all the PhD courses in 2013

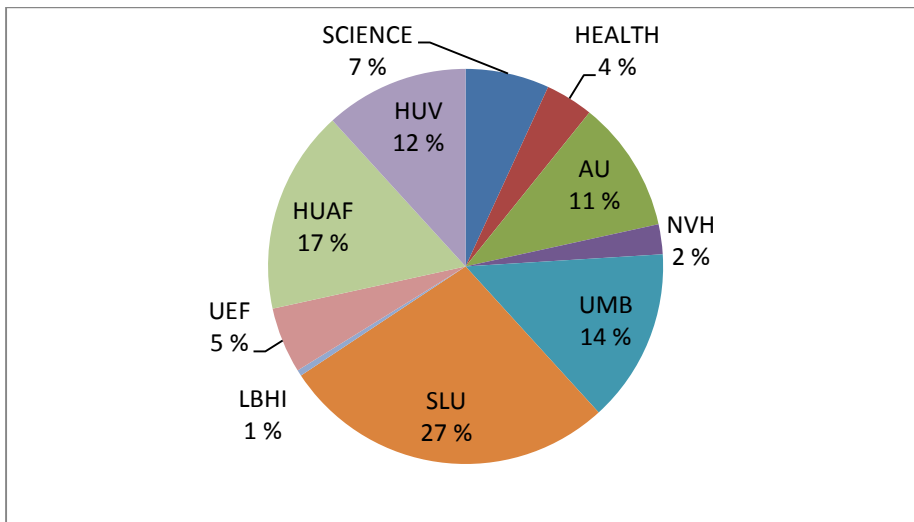


Table 6 Share of students (PhD), by member, years 2003-2012 and 2013

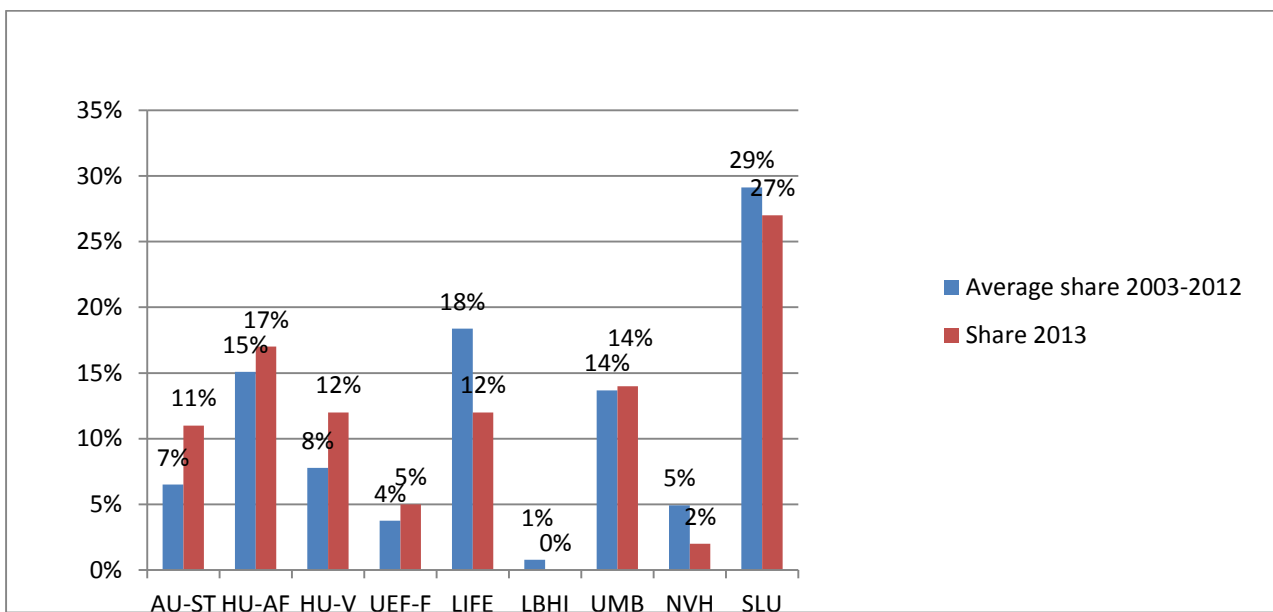


Table 7 Final grant amount, price per student and per ECTS - PhD courses 2013

Course title	ECTS	Number of NOVA students	All students	Grant paid*	Price per NOVA student	Price per 1 ECTS (all students)	Nova student ECTS price	Maximum grant according to the decision	Percentage used
Breeding for Disease and Pest Resistance in Crop Plants	5	23	24	28800	1252	240	250	30000	96
Molecular typing and next generation sequencing of food- and water-borne pathogens	2,5	26	29	12476	480	172	192	24000	52
Spreading and adaptation of weeds, pest insects and plant pathogens in current and future climate and cropping systems	6	7	10	13066	1867	218	311	16000	82
Invasive and Emerging Plant Diseases	6	22	24	26520	1205	184	201	35000	76
Sustainable Beef and Lamb Production Systems in an International Perspective - NOVA2	4	17	17	17000	1000	250	250	18528	92
Understanding, assessing and improving Ecosystem Services in Global North and South with focus on organic and agro-ecological farming system development	4	9	15	8993	999	150	250	17000	53
Planning REDD inventory: Using existing databases, field work and remote sensing based concepts	4	19	20	15977	841	200	210	21000	76
Breeding Plans for Sustainable Animal Breeding	5	21	25	31227	1487	250	297	50599	62
Applied statistics with R for the agricultural, life, and veterinary sciences ***	6	34	40	19418	571	81	95	27000	72
Management of forest ecosystems for bioenergy, with implications for climate change	4	14	18	13749	982	191	246	19611	70
Experimental and laboratory animal pathology	4	12	14	8677	723	155	181	25000	35

Table 7 shows the total cost of each PhD course (i.e. the euro amount paid) in 2013 and calculations of the cost both per NOVA student and all students in each course. Also the price of 1 ECTS is shown, calculated by dividing the cost of the course by total amount of ECTS produced (all students). The final amount (on the table section “grant paid”) of the grant for each course depended on the actual number of the NOVA PhD students in the course, for which NOVA paid maximum of 200€ each. The maximum number of PhD students that could be counted in the before mentioned maximum amount, is 25. In addition to that, only up to 50% of the NOVA students in a course from the hosting NOVA institution are counted when calculation the final grant.

The total amount of funding granted to these 16 courses was 283 738 €, of which 69% was used (195 903 €). One of the courses could claim only 35 % of the maximum grant. This was due to the fact that the number of NOVA PhD students at this course was very low.

2.2 Master level education

In 2013, two NOVA intensive master courses took place. The regular maximum grant for the master courses is 5000 €. One course, that got funding in 2012, was postponed and will run through spring 2014. The teacher student ratio in the two master courses was quite high, for the course “Bee conservation...” one teacher per 2,6 students and for the “Molecular plant-microbe...” course one teacher per 4 students.

Table 8 NOVA master level courses in 2013

Course	Host	ECTS	Grant €	Grant used €	Students				Teachers			
					NOVA students	BOVA students	Other	Total	NOVA	Baltic	Other	Total
Bee conservation and management*	HU- AF	3	3500	3500	12	0	1	13	4		1	5
Molecular plant-microbe interactions laboratory course	HU- AF	3	4950	4950	20			20	4		1	5
Cryptogams and nature conservation**	SLU	5	4983									
Cancelled												
Plant pathology in a changing world 2011 - 2013	HU- AF	5	5000									

**Will be reported only in 2014
* + funding of 5000 € from BICOPLL

During 2013, NOVA funded the following projects:

- A meeting of the veterinarians and teaching hospital directors, NOVAVet
- Agroecology: Developing new digital farm cases and a repository for shared resources, part 3
- NOVA-BOVA-Nordplus network meeting
- BeeNOVA network planning (PhD course)

2.3 Mobility

The NOVA BOVA Nordplus network, which gets its funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers via the Nordplus programme, was coordinated during the academic year 2012-2013 by Janna Koivisto from HU-V. With Nordplus funds, applied yearly in an open call, intensive master courses which are open to all NOVA and BOVA master students are organized. The network also gives grants for students and teachers in mobility within NOVA and BOVA universities. Scholarships for students are awarded to cover living expenses and travel costs, whereas teachers can apply for funding of mobility between NOVA institutions. Their stay must be related to specific and integrated teaching activities. During the academic year 2012-2013 5 NOVA teachers participated in Nordplus teacher mobility.

Table 9 describes the number of master students who have received mobility support per academic year, both in normal mobility (i.e. more than for weeks) and in express mobility (less than four weeks).

Table 9 Mobility numbers, NOVA master level students

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
No. of students on Nordplus > 4 weeks	43	68	37	52	53	23	29	39	47	35
No. of students on Nordplus < 4 weeks	12	17	35	50	73	69	70	66	45	42
Total students on Nordplus mobility	55	85	72	102	126	92	99	105	92	77

2.4 NOVA BOVA Nordplus Network activities

NOVA BOVA Nordplus network was established in 2008. The local coordinators are important players in the network activities. They network met regularly during 2013. Mostly the meetings took place as video meetings, due to the fact that from the academic year 2012/2013 onwards, Nordplus ceased to support network meetings. One face-to-face meeting was organized, in Lithuania (this meeting was supported by NOVA).

The network was granted to run two intensive master courses during 2013, which NOVA supported with so called NOVA guarantee (paying travel grants to the students). These courses were

1. Agrifood Supply Chains in the Baltic Sea Region, EMU, March 2013
2. Small animal oncology, August, LLU
3. Genetic components of forest biodiversity: threats and solutions, ASU, September
4. Food texture and microstructure, LLU, 21-25 October, 2013
5. Land Administration in Baltic Countries, ASU, 21-25 October, 2013

3. Strategy Seminar

In 2012, the Danish NOVA members presented a suggestion of making some changes to NOVA, both in administration and function. As a result, a decision about renewing the NOVA strategy one year ahead of the schedule was done. It was agreed that a strategy meeting will be held in 2013, instead of an annual seminar, and the new strategy for the years 2014 – 2017 will be formulated.

The strategy seminar took place in Uppsala, Sweden, 24.-25.5.2013, facilitated by SLU. The participants were the members of the Board, the KUF and local NOVA coordinators. At the beginning of the seminar, every NOVA member institutions' views (staff's, students' and leaders') on NOVA were presented. The secretary had prepared a vast range of background material to support the discussions. For example budget comparison and member fee comparisons 2008 - 2013 were presented.

The work was continued in groups. The main issues handled in the groups were formulation of the main aim of NOVA and level of external focus in NOVA functions. Discussions about funding PhD and Master courses, and role of the NOVA internal networks also took place.

On the second day of the seminar, a general discussion took place, followed by the Board meeting and parallel KUF discussion session. The strategy seminar provided a solid foundation to proceed with the strategy formulation.

4. NOVA Board, NOVA KUF and NOVA EC activities

The NOVA Board had three meetings in 2013: A video meeting in February, meeting in Uppsala in connection to the strategy seminar in May, and a meeting in Helsinki in October. No member changes in the Board took place.

The main task of the NOVA Board during 2013 was formulating a new strategy. The main arena for discussion was the strategy seminar (see chapter 3). Further discussions took place by email and at the Board meeting in October. The NOVA EC was actively involved in the strategy writing process, and NOVA KUF gave input regarding the renewal of the PhD grant evaluation process and application requirements. The new strategy will be valid for four years, 2014-2017. It will be confirmed at the first meeting of the NOVA Board, in February 2014, after which it can be downloaded from the NOVA web site.

The NOVA KUF met four times during 2013, with three official meetings and one discussion session. Video meetings took place in March and September, discussion session in connection to the strategy seminar in May and face-to-face meeting in Reykjavik in November, this being the very last meeting of the KUF due to the decision to streamline the NOVA management (new strategy). Decisions on the PhD grants and other grants more than 5000 euro value were made at the November meeting. The KUF members evaluated in total 12 PhD course applications, from which 9 got funding.

The NOVA Executive Committee, formed by the NOVA chair, the KUF chair and a NSB representative (Tommy Chan, HU-AF), and the central coordinator as presenting official and secretary, decided on seven different financial matters within its field of operation: three master course grants and 2 planning grants and 2 network support grants. All the EC meetings were carried out as E-mail meetings.

5. NOVA Student Board

The NOVA student Board had two face-to-face meetings during 2013. The first meeting took place in Joensuu (University of Eastern Finland) in May and the second one in Helsinki (University of Helsinki) in September. The NSB chair was Julia Weijola (HU-AF) and the students representing NSB at the KUF meetings were Marcus Andersson (SLU) and Hanna Husum (UMB). The representatives of the NSB have been attending the Board and the KUF meetings, presenting an activity follow-up at each meeting. The NSB formulated an updated statutes and was actively involved in bringing the students' views for the new NOVA strategy.

6 Cooperation partners

NOVA's cooperation partners remained the same than in 2012, *BOVA university network and Nordic Forest Research Cooperation Committee (SNS)*, which continued giving financial support for forestry related NOVA PhD courses. In 2013, the support was 10 561€. Because of the NOVA strategy renewal process, the usual meeting with NOVA KUF and BOVA Coordination Committee was not held.

7. Financial Accounts 2013

Table 10 Balance statement 31.12.2013

	Explanation	Income	expenses	balance
1.1.2013	balance			475 691,00
	member fees	272501,00		748 192,00
	SNS	10561,00		758 753,00
	return Nova guarantee*	7908,00		766 661,00
	all expenses		415 265,00	351 396,00
23.12.2013	transfer to UMB		250 000,00	101 396,00

* In the final accounts, this income included (table 10) in the NOVA guarantee

Table 11 Accounts 2013, profit and loss

	Budget 2013	Final accounts	
Member fees			
AU-A	34 172	34 172	
HU-AF	27 574	27 574	
HU-V	8 020	8 020	
LBHI	2 273	2 273	
LIFE	59 680	59 680	
NVH	12 164	12 164	
SLU	80 437	80 437	
UEF-F	5 856	5 856	
UMB	42 325	42 325	
Total member fees	272 501	272 501	
External funding SNS	11 000	10 561	
Total fees and external funding	283 501	283 062	
Activities			
PhD courses	-378 670,00	-228 403	60,3 %
Other projects	-100 000,00	-48 215	48,2 %
NOVA guarantee and N+ support*	-65 000,00	-28 186	43,4 %
NSB	-17 000,00	-6 558	38,6 %
Strategy Seminar	-10 000,00	-8 781	87,8 %
Total activities	-570 670,00	-320 143	
Secretariat			
Salaries	-68 000,00	-68 761	101,1 %
Travels	-5 000,00	-4 372	87,4 %
Other	-20 000,00	-14 081	70,4 %
Total secretariat	-93 000,00	-87 214	
Total activities and secretariat	-663 670,00	-407 357	61,38 %
Result	-380 169,00	-124 295	
equity 31.12.2012	475 691		
equity 31.12.2013	351 396		

* NOVA guarantee 2013		32070
Nordplus support		4024
	total	36094
Returned (by LBHI) unused NOVA guarantee 2012-2013		7908
	total	28186