

# Annual report

2006

NOVA University Network



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**Appendix:** [http://www.nova-university.org/PDFer/Append2006\\_1.pdf](http://www.nova-university.org/PDFer/Append2006_1.pdf)

# Annual report 2006

## From the Chairman

The year 2006 was marked by change and renewed optimism for NOVA UN (NOVA). I hope that this will manifest itself in an improved and strengthened organisation. The external evaluation carried out at the beginning of the year identified potential organisational improvements, and also praised the endeavour of NOVA to organize joint international teaching as unique and courageous. The NOVA PhD courses were defined as success stories, and NOVA was recommended as an example for other European regions with regard to implanting the political ideas of the Bologna declaration of higher education. The evaluator also made the following recommendations:

- All levels of NOVA, including the member universities should get involved in revising the organisation's strategy.
- The harmonisation of curriculum structure between member universities should be prioritised.
- Mutual course recognition is an important strategic goal.
- Short intensive MSc courses are an attractive alternative to joint MSc programmes.
- A central office with a few full time officers is essential for central coordination of projects and to maintain the secretarial functions of the organization.

As a result of recommendations and discussions at the annual seminar 2006, it was decided that NOVA will launch a new central organisation from January 2007. After 10 years with a NOVA rector, it was decided to change the organisational structure. A full time Secretary General and a part time Central Coordinator will, together with the chairmen of the Board and KUF, and a student representative, form the new NOVA secretariat and the Executive Committee. The Board decided to formulate a new NOVA strategy that should follow the former plan. The adopted changes in the secretariat, other suggestions from the evaluation process, as well as discussions at the annual seminar, have formed the basis for developing the new NOVA strategy. Involvement of the member universities is a key to this work.

At the annual seminar on the Faeroe Islands in June 2006 it became clear to me that within NOVA there is a great deal of optimism and support for our central ideology; namely that we stand stronger together than alone. The total of all knowledge in the NOVA universities can and should be available as a resource for future teaching at the individual member institutions. I am optimistic for the next year and believe that NOVA has an important role to play, and that it will make a positive difference for all member institutions by increasing our opportunities and by improving internationalisation.

Finally I want to take this opportunity to thank Paul Jensén for his devoted work as NOVA rector during almost six years. Thanks also to Ina Skanung Larsson and Vilis Brukas for their great contributions in the NOVA secretariat.

Lars Moe

# The Year 2006 – important achievements

## NOVA projects and activities

### PhD education

Fourteen PhD courses with NOVA funding were held during 2006 (Table 1), where a total of 346 students, out of which 200 were NOVA PhD students, participated. Fifty-seven of the participants came from the Baltic countries. Close to 10% of all PhD students at the member institutions take part in NOVA courses annually. Four courses were organised by course leaders from HU-AF, three from KVL and UMB, two from HU-V and one each from SLU and NVH.

Table 1. NOVA PhD courses 2006

Topics	ECTS	Host institution
Plant Breeding	5	HU-AF
Animal Breeding	5	UMB
Veterinary Epidemiology	4	HU-V
Plant Pathology	5	UMB
Informatics in Agriculture	6	KVL
Agro Ecology	4	KVL
Pig herd health and welfare	2	HU-V
Urban Forestry & Urban Greening	4	UMB(KVL)
Social Insects	4	HU-AF
Agro-Biotechnology	4	HU-AF
Veterinary Clinical Research	6	KVL
Bioremediation	5	HU-AF
Plant Microscopy	3	SLU
Reproduction	3	NVH

Compared to the previous years, the average number of participating students has increased, both for NOVA and non-NOVA students.

The total NOVA funding was €300 000, on average €21 425 per course.

### Course feedback from BIOREMEDIATION OF BOREAL SOILS

By Lara Valentín-Carrera, PhD student at University of Helsinki

I saw the announcement of this particular course on the notice board of my faculty and immediately sent an e-mail to the organizing party expressing my great interest in participating. Why so?

I am a non-Finnish speaking Ph.D student in the University of Helsinki and my studies are concentrated on bioremediation of chlorophenols-contaminated soils.

This is a field in which it is difficult to find international Ph.D. level courses. Thus, Bioremediation of Boreal Soils showed itself as a good and interesting opportunity for me to improve my expertise in my own field.

My expectations were highly fulfilled. Already from the very beginning of the course all the necessary information was well accessible thanks to the tremendous effort of the secretary and course organizers. On my opinion everybody had worked very hard in order to provide us with a high quality course. Invited professors were obviously experts on their field and laboratory work was, indeed, very well organized. I can already now say that this course has been useful for my work. Moreover, the course was of course an excellent opportunity to get to know to some very nice people from all over Europe who, just like me, are starting their careers in the scientific world.

In the application round for funding of NOVA courses in 2007 (deadline April 15, 2006), 30 individual applications were registered in the web-based system. This was an all-time high, an increase of 50% compared to 2005, and very encouraging. In total, 15 courses were granted funding, four of which are new subject areas.

### MSc education

The priority areas for 2006 were:

- Agroecology
- Aquaculture
- Biosystems Engineering
- Plant Pathology
- Urban Forestry and Urban Greening
- Veterinary Medicine

The Nordic programme in Agroecology continues to be productive, and this programme has achieved more than 1800 ECTS from courses and over 200 ECTS from Master thesis examinations during 2006.

Aquaculture and Biosystems Engineering have both continued with status as Nordplus Joint Nordic MSc Programme candidates, with a total Nordplus funding of €30 000 for 2006-2007, mobility grants included. The first joint intensive course in Aquaculture was held in September 2006, on the island of Bornholm (see student feedback below).

**FEEDBACK from the first Intensive Master Course in Aquaculture – the BORNHOLM FIELD COURSE**  
By Naveed, from Pakistan, Master student at UMB

It was my first course with NOVA and I found it marvelous. Bornholm is very nice place with all kinds of beauty and fun. Field course with NOVA made me know different kinds of research work and literature from all NOVA country teachers plus it gathers about people from 19 different countries. So it was very nice opportunity to know about different people, countries, culture and more. On our way to Bornholm we passed through Sweden, so I got an opportunity to visit Sweden too. We visited a mussel and eel farm in Sweden. The eel farm was very nice and we had a good briefing there. During our last days in Bornholm we had a nice party from Danish Host in a Hotel and we also explored different locations in Bornholm. In the end, it was a great opportunity for me to attend this course, both for education and for fun.

Plant Pathology held its third Nordic MSc course in November 2006, with 13 Nordic and 7 non-Nordic participants.

The international Master’s programme in Urban Forestry and Urban Greening was run for the second time, with 8 international students. SLU hosts the programme and shares responsibilities with KVL. The goal is to develop the programme to a full 2-year MSc programme, with all relevant NOVA members participating. An application for Erasmus Mundus status will be sent from KVL in May 2007.

**Distance learning – ICT based courses and projects**

The NOVA Strategy 2004-2006 gives high priority to developing distance learning concepts.

In total, four different events with almost 70 students and a large number of teachers were carried out during 2006. Three of the events were launched within the prioritised MSc areas.

Important key information	2003	2004	2005	2006
<u>Number</u> of <b>PhD</b> courses	17	13	16	14
<u>Number</u> of NOVA member <b>PhD</b> students in NOVA PhD courses	270	186	162	200
<u>Number</u> of <b>PhD</b> students taking NOVA PhD courses in relation to all NOVA member PhD students, %	12.7	9.3	7.9	9.8
<u>Number</u> of NOVA <b>MSc</b> students in NOVA Nordplus mobilities	33	55	85	116
<u>Number</u> of NOVA <b>MSc</b> students in mobility in relation to all NOVA member MSc students, %	1.1	1.5	2.3	2.8
<b>MSc</b> ECTS in NOVA courses	927	1 677	2 191	2 486

**REPORT from UFUG**  
by Thomas B Randrup, KVL

Urban Forestry & Urban Greening (UFUG) is still a relatively new academic field, with forestry and landscape architecture as the two major academic components. The program combines humanistic and social aspects with economic and ecological issues in planning and management.

The UFUG program is formally linked to the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) in Alnarp, with KVL (from 2007 - Copenhagen University, Faculty of Life Sciences (LIFE)) in Denmark as partner. Of the 60 ECTS offered, 30 is given at LIFE and 30 at SLU. The program is aimed at Nordic and International students and practitioners, and formal requirements are a Bachelor's degree or equivalent in forest management, landscape architecture and similar relevant biological and planning related educations such as biology, ecology, geography, town planning and architecture.

Challenged by the NOVA secretariat, I have listed what I believe is the most important lessons learned during our first two years of existence. The list is purely subjective:

- Formulate a clear vision / future career possibilities for students
- Make sure that the program has a clear and preferably unique academic profile
- Identify a program leader
- Identify potential students / create links to other universities
- Keep focus on the academic ambition. Secure uniform academic ambitions at all involved universities. Use existing expertise / existing courses
- Move teachers rather than students
- Formal agreements between involved universities are needed, and should be signed at highest possible level.
- Pre-acceptance of all courses, at all universities is needed.
- Selection of students should be acknowledged as a joint task.
- Minimise the bureaucracy – use NOVA.

## **International projects**

As in 2004 and 2005, the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR) has given considerable support to activities related to NOVA-BOVA cooperation. €2 032 was allocated to supporting intensive MSc courses in the BOVA universities, and €3 357 to the project Virtual University in the Baltic States (VUSABALT). Remaining funds from NOVA-BOVA projects, €1 856, enabled the establishment of half a position for a NOVA-BOVA coordinator in the NOVA secretariat. NMR also allocated €63 653 for funding Baltic PhD students in NOVA PhD courses. From 2007, this funding will be allocated directly to the BOVA secretariat.

## **Administrative projects and organisation**

The administrative web-based system for PhD course application and administration has been further developed during 2006. The improvements are much appreciated by the users, and the system is now in full use. The system for student information has also been implemented.

The NOVA Student Forum (NSF) has been active in the NOVA Board and in KUF, and contributed significantly at the annual NOVA seminar. NSF held three executive seminars during 2006.

## **Evaluation and NOVA seminar**

The NOVA Board decided in 2005 to launch a thorough external evaluation of NOVA's performance during its first 10 years. Special attention was given to 2004-2006, the period of the first NOVA strategy. The process was launched during late autumn 2005, with the selection of an evaluator (Prof. Cees M. Karssen, former rector of Wageningen University & Research Centre, The Netherlands). A final report was submitted in April 2006. The evaluation results have been used as a background for developing a second NOVA strategy, commencing 2007, to modify organisational structures and procedures, reallocate financial and human capacities, and prioritise activities.

The annual NOVA seminar was held on the Faeroe Island in early June 2006, with around 75 participants. The seminar was used to initiate discussions on a new strategy, from 2007 and on. During the seminar, Thomas B Randrup from KVL and Ulrika Åkerlund from SLU were awarded the 2006 NOVA Prize, for their outstanding efforts in the Urban Forestry & Urban Greening network.

## **External relations and funding**

NOVA has continued to develop its relations with a number of important external organisations, such as NMR, Nordplus, NordForsk, SNS and NJF. NOVA has received €78 683 from NMR. Indirectly, via Nordplus and NordForsk, NOVA received more than €132 000 in support, for different activities. Two NOVA PhD courses in forestry will each get €4 000 from SNS for course development.

## **Concluding remarks**

The slightly negative trend from 2005, with a decreasing number of participants in NOVA PhD courses, and low number of MSc mobilities, has turned. Increasing numbers of NOVA PhD students, both in total and per course, a large increase in the number of applications for PhD course funding, and a break through regarding joint windows for intensive MSc courses allows us to conclude that NOVA is on the right track.

By further improving marketing and administration of NOVA PhD courses, marketing and funding of intensive Master courses and student mobility grants, and by continuing to work on the implementation of summer and winter mobility windows, we hope that 2007 will be the year when NOVA consolidates its main activities on PhD and MSc levels, and lays the foundation for a strong new strategic period 2007-2010.

A new organization, focusing on well functioning local NOVA teams and a small and effective central secretariat, will be launched in January 2007. The new NOVA strategy will be discussed locally during March 2007 and at the Annual seminar in Uppsala in May/June.

After the NOVA Board has decided on the new strategy at the meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, everything will be set for NOVA to meet the future.

Oslo and Uppsala, May 14, 2007

Lars Moe  
Chair of NOVA Board

Knut Wålstedt  
Secretary General

## Financial report for 2006

Funding and activities/expenses , Euro	2005	2006	2007
	Actual	Actual	Budget
<b>Funding</b>			
Member fees	732 682	715 720	690.000
External funding	349 133	309 428	130 000
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>1 081 815</b>	<b>1 025 148</b>	<b>820 000</b>
<b>Activities and expenses</b>			
Projects internal funding	-739 113	-656 114	-597 250
Projects external funding	-258 000	-309 428	-130 000
Regained from projects	126 168	86 408	44 000
Secretariat	-204 764	-212 780	-136 500
<b>Total activities and expenses</b>	<b>-1 075 709</b>	<b>-1 091 914</b>	<b>-819 750</b>
<b>Annual surplus/deficit</b>	<b>6 105</b>	<b>-66 766</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Accumulated surplus</b>	91 640	24 874	25 124
<b>Balance statement, euro</b>	<b>Beg of year</b>		<b>End of year</b>
<b>Assets</b>			
Computers	3 727		2 733
Notes payable, external funding	43 313		30 076
Cash	562 993		420 103
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>610 033</b>		<b>452 912</b>
<b>Liabilities and equity</b>			
Equity			
Beg of year	-91 640		
Surplus 2006		-66 766	
End of year			-24 874
Funds set aside	-448 698		-335 655
Liabilities	-69 695		-92 383
<b>Total liabilities and equity</b>	<b>-610 033</b>		<b>-452 912</b>

### Confirmation of the financial report

The NOVA University Network Board approved the financial report for 2006 on May 14, 2007.

Lars Moe  
Chair of NOVA Board  
Rector, NVH

Per Holten Andersen  
Dean, LIFE

Knut Hove  
Rector, UMB

Antti Sukura (Hannu Saloniemi, until Dec. 2006)  
Dean, Univ. of Helsinki, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

Lisa Sennerby-Forsse  
(Ann-Christin Bylund, until June 2006)  
Rector, SLU

Agust Sigurdsson  
Rector, LBHI

Jukka Kola  
Dean, Univ. of Helsinki, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry

Marlene Areskog  
Chair of NOVA Student Forum (NSF)

Additional information and statistics is presented in an e-based appendix which may be found at [www.nova-university.org](http://www.nova-university.org)

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The Forestry, Veterinary and Agricultural University Network

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