



## ***Erasmus Policy Strategy*** **January 2014**





## **1. ISARA-Lyon's International Strategy**

ISARA-Lyon's international strategy aims to:

- Increase the students' international awareness and skills with the internationalization of careers in mind, via the development of various geographical, cultural and thematic opportunities.
- Extend the international awareness and skills of the teaching staff.
- Enhance and increase the visibility of our strategic themes of excellence: agroecology and sustainable food systems.

The choice to internationalize our teaching and research activities strongly differentiates our approach while orientating our professional practices.

### **1.1. Raising the international awareness of our students**

The coherence of an international curriculum is a way to differentiate our higher education institution.

All ISARA engineering students shall spend an academic period or internship abroad as a prerequisite for graduation. Academic mobility occurs at Master Level (specializations and modular curriculum). All the internships (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year) as well as the master's thesis (5<sup>th</sup> year) may be carried out in another country.

The mobility of students attending professional Bachelor curricula (recently developed) is also increasing steadily.

We have developed International Master Programmes (Agroecology, Food Identity, Green Food Industries – this latter at project stage) which involve spending at least one semester abroad.

Consequently, we shall ensure a large flow of outgoing students:

- By strengthening our cooperation with universities of particularly popular areas (e.g. Northern Europe, the United States and Canada)
- By developing new exchange opportunities in Asia, Africa and Oceania to enable mobility in areas where agriculture and food are priority activities.
- By increasing the number of overseas students we welcome from various cultural and social origins.

Our international strategy for partnership development is based on two main criteria:

- Thematic specializations: develop exchange programmes with universities offering similar or complementary specializations to ISARA-Lyon, enabling students to specialize in subjects not offered at ISARA-Lyon.
- The main activities of the targeted regions / countries, to enable the development of a professional network (enterprises, organizations, research centres...) likely to provide our students with internships or master theses opportunities.



Currently, ISARA-Lyon, as part of the FESIA network (4 French Higher Education Institutions specialized in agricultural and food science), participates in 5 double degree programmes, 3 of them with universities of the Americas (Brazil, Chile, Mexico) and the remaining two with European universities (Norway and the Netherlands).

Our double degree development policy meets the needs of the job market (i.e. the specific skills and scientific subjects required by the job market). These double degree programmes began with test exchanges to ensure the interest and compatibility of each partner's curriculum.

### **1.2.Raising the international awareness of our teaching staff**

The future of agricultural and food sectors must be apprehended at an international scale. It is essential that our teaching staff adapt to a diverse public, which, in addition to excellent language skills, requires international scientific and cultural awareness. Members of our team will have to acquire new skills abroad, through short and long mobility periods at partner universities.

Moreover, ISARA-Lyon is doing its utmost to host a higher number of foreign lecturers and researchers through short-term mobility plans for common teaching assignments, involvement in European programmes (Erasmus intensive programmes, research projects) and sabbatical periods.

These mobility opportunities are specifically supported by our institution (language training, integration support and buddy schemes, pre-departure preparation amongst others).

### **1.3.Enhancing the visibility of our strategic themes of excellence**

ISARA-Lyon wants to promote its two strategic themes of excellence, agroecology and sustainable food systems at an international scale, both in terms of teaching and research.

To this end and in partnership with FESIA, ISARA-Lyon is developing international master programmes taught entirely in English, leading to the award of double or multiple degrees. At this present time, ISARA-Lyon coordinates a Master programme in agroecology (with a possibility to specialize in organic agriculture) and is a partner of the Erasmus Mundus Food Identity programme. We are also developing a Master programme in food science supported by the Erasmus programme (526585-LLP-1-2012-1-FR-ERASMUS-EMCR).

These programmes are open to students of every country and aim to bring recognition at an international level of ISARA-Lyon's expertise in these domains.

Applied research cooperation will be developed in the coming years in agroecology (with developing and emerging countries) and sustainable food systems (with European countries). They are based on existing long-term partnerships and teaching cooperation (Master Programmes, Intensive Programmes, etc.)



## **2. Development and implementation of European and international cooperation projects in education and training**

ISARA-Lyon is, and will keep on, developing European and international cooperation projects in line with its general strategy aiming to bring greater international recognition to its expertise in agroecology and sustainable food systems, across its three main activities: higher education, research, and advisory services.

Educational actions have already been developed in agroecology: ISARA-Lyon coordinates an international Master programme in agroecology, a European Master programme in organic agriculture, as well as a Summer School in agroecology. ISARA-Lyon also participates in several research projects around this subject. Our strategy for the coming years aims particularly to expand and maintain a network of international stakeholders active in agroecology with a view to developing applied research cooperation with professional organizations (farmers, NGOs, technical centres), notably in developing and emerging countries. Projects are thus eligible for the new Erasmus Plus programme, under the sub-programmes "Knowledge Alliances" and "Capacity Building".

Moreover, ISARA-Lyon would like to make its Master programme in Agroecology more attractive by applying for Erasmus Mundus programme status.

As regards food science, the European Commission has been supporting the development of a Master programme coordinated by ISARA-Lyon since 2012. We have also been coordinating European Intensive Programmes in food science for several years, which has lead to research cooperation.

In the future, ISARA-Lyon wants to highlight one of its strengths in food science: innovation and entrepreneurship. These subjects are already strongly showcased at national level (business creation incubator, expertise projects in entrepreneurship and eco-innovation, Ecotrophelia competition...) and will now be promoted at a larger scale through "Knowledge Alliances" projects in business creation and technology transfers.



### **3. Expected impact of ISARA-Lyon participation in the Erasmus Plus on the modernization of the institution in relation with the objectives of its expected policy**

For a relatively small scale institution as regards other actors in higher education in Europe and internationally, ISARA-Lyon has developed a recognized know-how and a long experience in networking and collaborative work, on which it will continue to build by coordinating and participating in European education and research projects.

The participation in the Programme will support and give greater visibility to our international cooperation actions, especially:

*As regards Priority 1 of the Modernization Agenda:*

- Reinforce the employability of our students, enabling them to acquire complementary scientific, technical, linguistic and cultural competencies, which will be recognized and valued in other countries
- Profit from the scientific excellence of our international partner universities while offering them our expertise in the field of cooperation with enterprises, to develop high-level curricula.

*As regards Priority 2 of the Modernization Agenda:*

- To support e-learning and blended learning actions
- To more easily develop training projects in cooperation with future employers
- To enable our professors and researchers to acquire new skills abroad, which they will then put to good use for their students and research partners

*As regards Priority 3 of the Modernization Agenda:*

- To recruit talented international students to our programmes, by making these programmes more visible, easier to understand and better known abroad (ECTS system, diploma supplement, learning outcomes) and by helping us to improve our assessment of applications coming from countries which do not work within the ECTS system.

*As regards Priority 4 of the Modernization Agenda:*

- To give a European dimension to our business creation, entrepreneurship, innovation and technology transfer projects. These European projects will be built on the back of experience acquired at national and local levels (Agrapole business creation incubator, ANR projects, ERDF project on entrepreneurship, Ecotrophelia, advisory services, etc.).



*As regards Priority 5 of the Modernization Agenda:*

- To guarantee a fair access to mobility and the international Master programmes for students of every origin and background. ISARA-Lyon is a non-profit organization and as such we are continuously looking for external funding, in order to ensure high quality programmes, the costs of which must not be borne by students. To this aim, we have created a foundation (Terra Isara) which financially supports students from various cultural and social origins.