



BOVA coordinators evaluation: cooperation results, role of coordinator at university

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Some historical issues



- **Mid 1990s NOVABA program – Nordic project in Baltic states**
- **BOVA contact persons at each member university**
- **Main field of activity – organization of short intensive Master courses at Baltic universities (2-4 per year at each university)**
- **Gained excellent experience in organization of Master courses**
- **Responsibility for coordination of all other NOVA-BOVA activities at Universities (not so much at that time)**
- **Communicating mainly with NOVA secretariat and between universities.**
- **NOVA secretariat – a central coordination unit for BOVA contact person until 2000.**

Institutional changes in 2002



- **NOVA-BOVA coordinator employed at NOVA secretariat**
- **Establishment of BOVA secretariat in Lithuanian University of Agriculture in 2002 (1,0 position till Oct 2003 and 1,25 positions after)**
- **BOVA coordinators employed in each Baltic country (at 0,25 positions)**
- **Change of central coordination unit: BOVA activities coordinated from BOVA secretariat, NOVA related activities are linked to NOVA-BOVA coordinator**

Changed tasks for secretariat and coordinators



Long list of stated tasks since summer 2002:

- Maintenance of co-operation between BOVA and NOVA universities;
- Setting and implementation of joint international projects in the field of studies and research;
- Organisation and implementation of short intensive MSc and PhD courses in BOVA universities;
- Organisation of specialised courses for teachers, researches, PhD students in the field of methodology of research, scientific writing, new methods of teaching (distance methods etc), evaluation of study level etc;
- Initiation of creation joint study programmes in BOVA - NOVA universities
- Creation of professional networks between NOVA-BOVA universities;
- Promotion of BOVA teachers to participate in the EU financed research projects;
- External fund raising for joint activities;
- Preparation and maintenance of BOVA web page;
- Organisation of BOVA conference;
- Contacts with relevant organisations.

Tasks has been not divided between central coordination unit and local coordinators, secretariat and coordinators operate as a single unit.

Recognized roles of BOVA coordinator nationally and internationally



- **Run of practical activities at home university, overall coordination of NOVA-BOVA activities at home university**
- **Management of information available from NOVA-BOVA network at home university**
- **Promotion of NOVA-BOVA nationally**
- **Engagement of teaching staff from home university to NOVA-BOVA activity, assistance to teaching staff at university**
- **Reporting to NOVA-BOVA network**

Recognized activities - continued



- **Relation with central secretariat is based on mainly accepting proposals from secretariat**
- **A lot of other main responsibilities at home university (seems to be extremely busy with home duties). Recognized overloading problem**
- **Focusing to accept and implement proposals from secretariats but weak feedback with information on activities (contribution to web, NOVA-BOVA News or E-News)**
- **All cooperation is understood as NOVA-BOVA but not BOVA (spread of information, websites of member universities, etc.)**

Share of time



- **All-round coordination of BOVA and N-B activities at the operational/executive level**
- **Share of working time of local coordinator (10 working hours per week)**
 - **organisation of short MSc courses (≥ 30 %),**
 - **N-B networks (~ 20 %),**
 - **N-B working group on joint MSc programmes (15-20 %)**
 - **engaging Baltic PhD students into NOVA courses (10-20 %).**
- **Coordinators are very competent in this work and receive high credits from both, rectors, N-B Coordination Committee members, secretariats and network representatives.**

Achievements



- | | | |
|------------------------|----------|--|
| most successful | 1 | BOVA secretariat |
| | 2 | External funds for different activities |
| | 3 | Development of MSc programs |
| | 4 | Organisation of master courses |
| | 5 | Baltic students at NOVA PhD courses |
| | 6 | NOVA-BOVA conference |
| | 7 | Academic networks |
| less successful | 8 | Planning and coordination |

Working environment for coordinators



- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|--|
| most actual | 1 | Staff overloaded |
| | 2 | Lack of motivation tools for teachers at universities |
| | 3 | Lack of BOVA internal funds |
| | 4 | Lack of clear strategy and policies at university |
| | 5 | Lack of interest from NOVA (teachers) |
| | 6 | Lack of critical mass in some areas |
| less actual | 7 | Language problems |

Identified problems



- **Increasing number of cooperation activities while the human capacities for coordination remain at the same level.**
- **Heavy overload of the coordinators (0.25 positions for BOVA coordination, and assigned many other tasks at the home universities)**
- **Coordinators at all three agricultural universities indicated overload as the principle issue.**
- **Getting worse, as number of activities is rising and the member universities are also expected to be more proactive in future.**
- **Negative consequences of increasing overload: delays in communication between secretariats and selected coordinators, and a hasty organisation of selected N-B MSc courses.**

Ways to solve the problem



- **Several potential ways to solve the problem:**
 - redistribution of the tasks so that other personal takes over part of other duties enabling coordinators to focus on BOVA activities;
 - focus on development of fewer but strongest academic NOVA-BOVA networks;
 - further clarification and distinction of functions of coordinators;
 - clear definition of functional relationships (communication, control, etc.) between the BOVA secretariat and coordinators
 - clarification of subordination of coordinators at home universities.

Central secretariat



- **BOVA coordinators have appreciated effective communication, rapid spread of relevant information, and adequate follow-up of the planned activities. A strong evidence of recognition of performance has been the BOVA Board's (September 2004) decision to allocate internal funds.**
- **The most severe pitfall for the BOVA secretariat is the increasing workload as number of cooperation activities is rising while the human capacities for coordination remain at the same level.**
- **Desired prospective from secretariat:**
 - **member universities should take larger responsibility in planning, initiation, implementation, and coordination of joint activities;**
 - **focus on a few strong activities/networks, with considerable motivation and incentives to work on their own;**
 - **in the longer-term, the human capacities of the BOVA secretariat could be increased.**



Thank you !
