



**BOVA University Network  
activities in 2008  
Report to the BOVA Rector's Board**

**Jelgava, January 2009**

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# 1 Background

BOVA University Network has continued its activities, following the strategic document approved by BOVA Rector's Board in January 2006 "BOVA University strategy for 2006-2008" and approved by BOVA Rector's Board in February 2008 "BOVA Action Plan for 2008".

Basic evaluations and conclusions of progress are drawn in this report comparing the actual achievements and stated tasks.

The financial basis for the BOVA University Network operation was stated by BOVA Rectors' Board and consists of different financial sources. BOVA UN budget, consisting of each member's annual fee, made the platform for administrative activities, internal BOVA funds from member universities used for implementing of BOVA academic activities. Many of external funds were raised by the BOVA secretariat as well as by each member institution separately with an effort of BOVA coordinators used for BOVA activities and joint activities with NOVA UN.

This report aims to provide a terse review of strategic decisions made during 2008 and all activities in the BOVA UN network during this year. Results are generally estimated by both quantitative and qualitative indicators reflecting achievements in the network. Suggestions for the improvement of network activities are proposed.

## 2 Organisational objectives

BOVA University Network continued the activities during the year 2008 already for the 12<sup>th</sup> year from the establishment of the BOVA University.

At the end of the year 2008 at the BOVA Rectors' Board meeting a decision was made to change the name of "BOVA University" to "BOVA University Network" (short version BOVA UN), as this name more clearly explains the essence of the network, the ways of actions and legitimate activities.

BOVA University Network has the organisational structure established in 2006 and stated in the Statute of the BOVA University Network and this structure has not been changed since its adoption.

After rotation in the BOVA University Network for the second year the leadership of BOVA UN was entrusted to the LLU rector, prof. Juris Skujans. The BOVA Secretariat continued its duties being located at LLU. The BOVA CC was successfully conducted by the BOVA CC chairman Dr. Steponas Raudonius (LZUU), appointed in 2007. Some positional changes took place in the BOVA CC in 2008, the new member from EMU, vice-rector of studies Jyri Lehtsaar started his duties as a member of BOVA CC.

BOVA Strategy for a three-year period (2006-2008) was developed and approved in 2006. During 2008 BOVA University network continued to achieve the defined tasks taking into account the real situation and limited recourses for completing stated actions.

By the same time during this year a Working Group was established. It was responsible for the evaluation of the implementation of the previous BOVA Strategy and development of the BOVA UN Strategy for the next period 2009-20011. The established Working Group carried out a SWOT analysis for BOVA University and basing on the results of this analysis and many of joint BOVA meetings, the new version of Strategy for the period of 2009-2011 will be presented for the approval to the BOVA Rector's Board at the beginning of 2009.

An important task was announced at the beginning of the year – to strengthen cooperation with NOVA UN basing on the Letter of Intent on cooperation between NOVA and BOVA signed by the BOVA rector and Chairman of NOVA on May 10, 2007.

This task was successfully performed by the following actions:

1. NOVA KUF and BOVA CC first joint meeting in Helsinki, on April 24, 2008. This meeting was the first but it was successful, leading to the establishment of professional contacts between the main responsible person for studies in NOVA and BOVA member institutions. Both bodies made the exchange of information and ideas for joint cooperation in the future on the operational level and agreed on a task to prepare suggestions for the development of cooperation between two organisations for the joint NOVA and BOVA Boards meeting.
2. NOVA and BOVA Boards joint meeting in Jelgava on October 20- 21, 2008. The main achievement – establishment of personal contacts on leadership level, open discussion about willingness and readiness of further close cooperation and signing the Cooperation Agreement between NOVA UN and BOVA UN. In this agreement the main areas for our joint cooperation are stated, and next year's period will be focused on the implementation of this agreement. But firstly this

agreement shows the political will to keep and continue the cooperation between two related organisations.

3. On the Secretariat's level the contact with new NOVA central coordinator was established and close communication was maintained to perform the collaboration between NOVA and BOVA as regards different activities' (NOVA PhD courses, NOVA and BOVA master level courses, Nordplus networks activities etc.).
4. On NOVA and BOVA coordinators level the NOVA/BOVA Nordplus network (based on Nordplus programme project) was established aimed at the coordination of the students and teachers mobility between NOVA UN and BOVA UN.

Following BOVA University Network strategy and the BOVA Action Plan the following basic activities were proposed for 2008 and approved by the Board in February 2008:

- Development and implementation of BOVA Intensive Master courses (on the base on internal funds or other available resources);
- Further development of joint Master education (full programmes or semesters);
- Development of BOVA Intensive Doctoral courses (on the basis of internal funds) or NOVA-BOVA PhD courses (on external funds);
- Continuation with mobility of Baltic doctoral students to the NOVA PhD courses;
- Implementation of competence rising activities for teaching staff from BOVA member universities;
- information services inside network assurance, increase of flow of information from member universities, information flow between NOVA UN and BOVA UN;
- Arrange BOVA seminar to evaluate the achievements reached during the year;
- Strengthen the cooperation with NOVA UN.

This report estimates the level of achievement of each activity.

### **3 Academic activities**

This period could be called as the real beginning of offering BOVA courses (both types: Master level and Doctoral level) based on internal funding. When in 2007 BOVA UN started this process, many of activities were run on still available external sources because many of existing academic networks had the final year of their internal projects. This year most of the activities especially on Master level were run on internal funds.

Also the jointly developed master programme at EMU "Management of biodiversity and multifunctional landscapes" offered the programme courses on internal basis for admitted students, exchange students and BOVA students, because the big EU CD project funds were finished already by the end of 2007.

Basing on the previously elaborated application procedure for course organisers to apply for organization of BOVA Master level course or BOVA Doctoral level course, the "Call for application" was announced in September 2007. The evaluation of all the applications and suggestions for approval was made by BOVA CC and BOVA Rectors'

Board at the annual meeting on February 6, 2008 approved a list of BOVA master courses which were planned to be carried out in 2008 under the BOVA UN umbrella.

Further preparation and implementation of the approved activities fell upon the course leaders who were responsible for the course contextual aspects and leadership of the teaching team. BOVA coordinators acted in these activities as major assistants to ensure all the necessary organizational things and financial management of the activities as well as the proper information flow to the interested persons.

During the first half of the year based on the self-evaluation and recommendations from BOVA CC, the application procedure for the BOVA course was significantly improved to ensure the quality assurance for the proposed BOVA Intensive courses and new version of “Call of Application” was announced at the end of August 2008.

This year BOVA UN hopes that the existing networks will use the possibility and apply to organize the network activities (courses) using the BOVA scheme, but this is not happening as planned. On the other hand, it was confirmed that the new active persons appear and want to realize their knowledge in an international arena through the BOVA UN. Great job again was done by the BOVA coordinators who made the popularization of BOVA activities among the institution teaching staff. But still the activity from the teaching staff could have been bigger; the motivation tool for the academic personnel is still missing.

Academic activities in BOVA network based on academic networks activities working under the BOVA umbrella and efforts of independent groups of teachers implementing joint activities but not acting as a network yet.

During 2008 some of the academic networks showed a very passive way of acting, only one of them continued to realise the fully developed product - the jointly developed master programme “Management of Biodiversity and Multifunctional Landscapes”.

Academic activities within BOVA UN could be divided into 3 areas:

- Master level education;
- Doctoral level education;
- Competence rising for teaching staff.

In all these areas the activities were offered by BOVA UN effort and in cooperation with NOVA UN.

## **3.1 Master level education**

### **3.1.1 Joint master programmes**

Three networks lead by professors from BOVA member universities have worked in the previous years in this field. 2 of the academic networks have stopped their activities: Bioinformatics and Agroecology, but the third one most successful on Biodiversity and multifunctional landscapes this year has offered a fully developed final product – a jointly developed master programme “Management of Biodiversity and multifunctional landscapes”. Unfortunately, we could not call this program because the Joint master programmes are not fulfilling all the obligatory requirements.

In the framework of JP “BioLandMan” spring semester of 2007/2008 study year and autumn semester of 2008/2009 study year were conducted. In total, 20 courses were performed (including 2 of them offered at LLU). The first students for this programme were

admitted by September 1, 2007 at EMU, other interested students took part in separate courses during the autumn semester of 2007 and in the spring semester of 2008. The second admission to this programme was finished by September 1, 2008 and this time 8 foreign students submitted applications to the full programme. In addition to these programme students, other interested students were welcomed to take part in separate course, ERASMUS exchange students, other BOVA member institution students. Unfortunately, not so many students from BOVA UN participated in the courses in this programme, mainly because of financial reasons. In the coming year it is foreseen that more students will be attracted to these courses with the Nordplus grants.

This programme is a success story and the highest appreciation is to the EMU side as the leader and especially to the network leader prof. Ingmar Ott for the insistence in implementation of this project and enthusiasm during all these years and, of course, many other persons who took an active part in the implementation of this project.

As regards to two other networks, the aim of which was also to develop a joint full master programme (Agroecology and Bioinformatics), the BOVA Rectors' Board at the last meeting proposed, that for these tasks it is necessary to attract EU money because it will be difficult to find sources on an internal basis.

### **3.1.2 BOVA Intensive Master Courses (BIMC)**

Following the accepted procedure during the year 2008 in the framework of BOVA UN 5 intensive Master courses were organised (cf. table below). 6 courses were accepted but 1 of them was postponed to the year 2009.

6 short intensive MSc courses were prepared by the course teaching teams and almost all were offered to the students from the BOVA member universities and other interested students doing studies in the ERASMUS exchange programme at BOVA universities in 2008. One of the planned and prepared courses wasn't able to be conducted due to serious health problems of two of the leading professors; therefore BOVA CC took the responsibility to postpone the course to the spring semester of 2009.

Totally, 5 Intensive master courses were offered by the BOVA member Universities, involving 95 students and 38 lecturers. 3 courses took place at EMU, 1 at LLU and 1 at LVA.

The students' distribution who participated at the BOVA Intensive Master Courses by universities is the following: EMU- 50; LLU- 17; LVA - 10; LZUU - 8; others - 10.

The teachers' involvement in the courses by universities is the following: EMU - 14; LVA - 5; LLU - 4; LZUU – 2; others – 13.

This year's figures are difficult to compare with last year's figures because of a completely different situation. Last year's courses almost all were financed by external internal funds raised by the academic networks; therefore any limitation on the number of performed activities was put. The task set for this year was almost fulfilled, but as in previous years, the number of participants could have been bigger. The teachers' involvement in the preparation of the course and conducting the course is very good, and positive is the fact that many good lecturers from outside as well were attracted to participate in BOVA activities.

It is important to note that for the 3 last courses mentioned in the table above, the NORDPLUS financial grant (each course for the maximum of 5 000 EUR) was received basing on 3 submitted projects to the Nordplus from BOVA secretariat. Nordplus support is supposed to be 50 % of the course budget, therefore all the received grant will not be possible

to use due to a smaller number of participants compared to what had been planned in the projects and none student from the Nordic countries.

**Table. BOVA Intensive Master courses in 2008**

No.	Course title	Course place, leader	Course period	Number of students	Number of lecturers
1.	<b>Energy Crops and Biogas Production</b>	EMU, Tartu Dr.Argo Normak	Distance learning part: February 10-28, 2008  Meeting in person: <b>March 3-7, 2008</b>	EMU – 32 LLU – 5 LZUU – 1 Other – 2 <b>Totally: 40</b>	EMU – 7 LZUU – 1 Other – 3 <b>Total: 11</b>
2.	<b>Organic Animal Husbandry and Animal Welfare</b>	EMU, Tartu Sen. scientist Allan Kaasik	Distance learning part: March 17-21, 2008  Meeting in person: <b>March 24-28, 2008</b>	EMU – 3 LLU – 1 LVA – 2 Other – 8 <b>Totally: 14</b>	EMU – 5 LLU – 1 Other – 4 <b>Totally: 10</b>
3.	<b>Soil and Water Relationship (2 week course)</b>	EMU, Tartu Prof. Svatopluk Matula (Czech Republic) PhD Merrit Noormet, EMU	Distance learning part: April 15 – May 12, 2008  Meeting in person: <b>May 13-25, 2008</b>	EMU – 7 LLU – 1 LZUU – 3 <b>Totally: 11</b>	EMU – 1 Other – 2 <b>Totally: 3</b>
4.	<b>Evaluation of Quality of Poultry Meat and Eggs</b>	LVA, Kaunas, Prof. Romas Gružasuskas	Distance learning part: from September 17, 2008  Meeting in person: <b>September 22 – 26, 2008</b>	EMU – 4 LLU – 6 LVA – 8 <b>Totally: 18</b>	LVA – 5 Other – 3 <b>Totally: 8</b>
5.	<b>Forest Tree Breeding</b>	LLU, Jelgava, Dr.Imants Baumanis (LFRI “Silava”), asist.Āris Jansons	Distance learning part: September 15 -28, 2008  Meeting in person: <b>March 3-7, 2008</b>	EMU – 4 LLU – 4 LZUU – 4 <b>Totally : 12</b>	LLU- 3 EMU – 1 LZUU – 1 Other – 1 <b>Totally: 6</b>
6.	<b>Renewable Energy Sources</b>	LZUU, Kaunas Dr. Kestutis Navickas	Distance learning part: October 6-31, 2008  Meeting in person: <b>November 3-7, 2008</b>	<i>Postponed to 2009</i>	
<b>Total:</b>				<b>95</b>	<b>38</b>

Also this year we did not succeeded in attracting NOVA master level students to our courses. The reason is that the timetable of our courses is not fitting in the “open window” system on the NOVA side. The work on the popularisation of the BOVA courses among the



NOVA students should be continued and some plans for that have been made for 2009. On the help to fulfil this task is coming the new NORDPLUS GRANT scheme opening mobility for students and teachers among Nordic and Baltic countries.

All courses were supported publishing all information on the course on the BOVA website, as well as spreading the information with the help of the BOVA coordinators and preparing the course leaflets. Course leaders and teaching teams were strongly assisted by the BOVA coordinators with the distance learning part and meetings in person organisation; those allow them to pay more attention to professional side not to organizational.

The financial part of each course was typically completed by each member university where the course took place and by local BOVA coordinators. Good management from the financial side was established between the BOVA member universities and proposed to be continued in the same way. The new challenge now is how to utilise possible student grants received from Nordplus in the BOVA activities.

Each course was evaluated by students and teachers using common questionnaires provided by the BOVA secretariat. These questionnaires were summarised by the BOVA coordinators and the course reports were sent to the BOVA Secretariat basing on which all the abovementioned information is presented.

The majority of students stated that the chosen course suited their study plans well and that time allocation of the course was appropriate. The teachers gave the evaluation on the overall level of students and it was good that all found the level sufficient and good. Many teachers found it beneficial to meet and work together with colleagues from other institutions. As regards the repeating of the courses, the majority mentioned that the courses could be repeated every second year.

The overall evaluation of the master courses on a 10-point scale was 8.2 by participants, and compared with the last year's figures this evaluation point remains the same. It means that it is possible to improve the course quality further, paying a special attention to the distance part development.

### **3.1.3 Cooperation with NOVA UN**

The NOVA BOVA course for sustainable pig production – is a course initiated by the NOVA side (SLU), and with a big help from the NOVA secretariat was developed in the joint activity, external funds have been raised and activity fully performed: I part in Sweden and II part in Estonia. This is an excellent example how joint NOVA BOVA activities can be implemented, but, of course, firstly there should be initiators on one side and the interested persons on the other side and there should be someone, who searches for the possible funds.

In this activity the teachers from SLU (2), EMU (2) and LLU (1) were involved. Firstly 25 students for this course were registered, but due to very strong admission rules at SLU even for one single course, the dropout of participants appeared drastically and finally only 8 students (3 from SLU and 5 from EMU) participated. This activity received 12 000 EUR grant from Nordplus and 4 000 EUR from NOVA. Of course, the course leaders have seen the keystones in the activity but are concerned to continue with such activity in the future and BOVA colleagues do not see anything against it. This model should be developed further and could be presented to the NOVA and the BOVA side as an example of a possible common action in the field of master level education.

### 3.1.4 Teachers mobility using ERASMUS grants within Lifelong learning programme and other funds

BOVA UN also this year for the activities continued to use the available financial sources from LLP/ERASMUS. Agreements for teacher mobility in the framework of this programme were signed by the BOVA member universities in wide range with other BOVA member universities, the NOVA member universities and other HEI of EU countries. This gave substantial support for the BOVA activities. The mobility figures are presented in the table below.

**Table. Teacher mobility acting in the BOVA activities within LLP**

<b>BOVA member university</b>	<b>Number of mobility's to other BOVA member universities</b>	<b>Number of received teachers from Nordic and other EU countries</b>	<b>Total number of mobility's</b>
EMU	2	11	13
LLU	1	5	6
LZUU	2	-	2
LVA	-	-	-
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>

Comparing with the previous year's results on ERASMUS mobility, the number of total mobilities has increased more than twice: in 2007 – 8 mobilities but in 2008 – 21 mobilities.

In addition to the LLP sources BOVA UN thought the joint NOVA/BOVA Nordplus network application (submitted by NOVA side) has applied for 9 teacher's mobility grants. But due to the very big delay in final answer from Nordplus it was impossible to use these grants in the year 2008. But these Nordplus grants are possible to use also for the year 2009 spring semester, thus giving us some financial support for the activities in 2009.

It is quite complicated to analyze if the use of LLP or Nordplus funds is adequate because of some existing regulations in the LLP as well as in Nordplus programme, which set some limitations. But in the performance of the BOVA activities for teachers' mobility, firstly the possible cover of expenses from LLP is always studied and this process will be continued and surely the Nordplus offers also will be taken into consideration.

## 3.2 Doctoral level education

Doctoral level education at BOVA UN could be characterised this year as the development of rather new and unique BOVA Doctoral courses aimed at BOVA Doctoral students and other interested students and a continuation of participation of BOVA Doctoral students in a very well developed scheme of NOVA PhD courses, in another words, the Doctoral students thought the BOVA UN have 2 options: to take part in BIDC (BOVA Intencive Doctoral courses) and/or to apply for available NordForsk funds to participate in the NOVA PhD courses in Nordic countries. Both these possibilities have been used by students and appreciated.

### 3.2.1 BOVA Intensive Doctoral courses (BIDC)

The development of BIDC started in the 2007 and in the year 2008 this activity was continued.

Following the established procedure in the BOVA UN on applying for organisation of BOVA courses 2 Doctoral courses were approved by BOVA CC and BOVA Rectors' Board to be offered in 2008 on BOVA UN internal funds. The planned number of BOVA Doctoral courses was higher (4 to 5) but the teaching staff showed reserved interest on initiation of Doctoral courses. But, nevertheless, some of BOVA member institutions offered to other BOVA partners other possible Doctoral courses, conducted by foreign visiting lecturers from other projects and using other financial sources.

**Table. BOVA Intensive Doctoral courses and other doctoral courses in 2008**

No.	Course title	Course place, leader	Course period	Number of students	Number of lecturers
1.	Procedures for Writing a CC Journal Scientific Article in English	EMU, Tartu	June 8 - 14, 2008	EMU – 3 LLU – 6 LVA – 2 LZUU – 3 <b>Total: 14</b>	EMU - 3 Other – 2 <b>Total: 5</b>
2.	Computational Methods of System Biology	LLU, Jelgava Dr.Egils Stalidzans	Distance education September 22 – October 17, 2008  Meeting in person, November 3 – 7, 2008	LLU – 7 EMU – 3 LZUU – 6 <b>Total: 16</b>	LLU - 2 EMU-1 Other - 1 <b>Total: 4</b>
3.	Dairy Cattle production environment and welfare – aspects of precision livestock farming  <i>(open for BOVA and NOVA students, offered by Vetnetwork)</i>	Emu, Tartu	May 26 -30, 2008	LVA – 1 LLU – 1 EMU - 5 Other – 1 <b>Total: 9</b>	<b>Total: 11</b>  (Belgium, Estonia, Finland)
4.	Designing forest to provide multiple services <i>(open for BOVA students)</i>	EMU, Tartu Visiting lecturer von Gadow, from Gottingen	September 8-12, 2008	LLU – 2 EMU -12 other – 2 <b>Total: 16</b>	<b>1</b>
5.	Introductory course in Bioinformatics <i>(open for BOVA students)</i>	LVA, Kaunas, Visiting lecturer prof. H. Christensen from Un. of Copenhagen	December 2-3, 2008	LVA – 17 EMU – 1 <b>Total - 18</b>	<b>1</b>

In total, 2 BOVA doctoral courses and additionally 3 doctoral courses at BOVA Member universities have been offered to Doctoral students and to the interested PhD students from other countries were invited to participate. The table below shows some figures regarding this activity.

The total number of students who participated in BDC was 30 students from all 4 BOVA member institutions, but in additionally offered courses by member institutions – 43. This number is a bit lower, compared to the previous year (82), but, still, it is a real input for our Baltic doctoral student’s education.

As regards BOVA teachers’ involvement in the BDC, the situation has changed - not so many are willing to teach in the Doctoral courses but positive is the fact that course leaders have attracted professional lecturers from other countries.

To stimulate BOVA professors to work more actively on the development of BDC is one of the main tasks for the next strategic period.

Overall, the evaluation of the Doctoral courses on a 10-point scale is close to 9 by participants and comparing with the master level courses is higher. It shows that we are on the right track, focusing on quality, rather than quantity.

### 3.2.2 Baltic doctoral students in the NOVA PhD courses

For many years BOVA has used the unique possibility to apply for the support money to the NordForsk for the BOVA Doctoral students willing to participate in NOVA PhD courses. This Instrument of support has stopped since 2008 by NordForsk. BOVA was informed about it.

The only way how BOVA could act in the year 2008, was to discuss with NordForsk the possibility to use savings from the previous grants received in 2007 for the activities in 2008.

After the communication in writing with the responsible person at the NordForsk, this permission was received, thus giving a possibility to send more students for the available funds than it was planned in the original application

The table below presents the use of available funds among the member universities.

**Table. Distribution of BOVA doctoral students to NOVA PhD courses among BOVA member universities.**

University	Number of students	Number of different courses	Used Scholarships, aprox. EUR
EMU	18	12 from 12	11 000
LLU	12	7 from 12	9 000
LZUU	6	4 from 12	2 500
LVA	2	2 from 12	1 500
<b>Total:</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>24 000</b>

Unused money left because of cancelling one of the NOVA course on approx. amount 1 500 EUR.

BOVA secretary as a responsible person has made the final report for both projects Nr. 070040 “Mobility scholarships for Baltic students to attend NOVA PhD courses” and Nr.

070412 "Mobility scholarships for Baltic students to attend NOVA PhD courses (2007/2008) to NordForsk and the unused money has been sent back.

At the beginning of the year NOVA UN informed that they had relieved BOVA doctoral students from the membership fee of NOVA Ph D courses, this is the step forward to the strengthening the existing cooperation.

The same conditions were announced by NOVA UN also for the year 2009 – The students from any of the BOVA university network members are relieved from the course fee (but not accommodation) and the BOVA students are welcomed to participate in NOVA courses, but, of course, if they are able to cover the travel and accommodation expenses themselves.

These conditions are also stated in the cooperation agreement signed between NOVA UN and BOVA UN and hopefully will help prolong this useful cooperation in Doctoral education field between these two networks.

In the year 2008 the process of advertising to NOVA PhD course leader to organise course in Baltics was continued. As a result, it was agreed that one of the courses "Applied statistics with R for the agricultural, life and veterinary science" would take place in Jelgava, Latvia on August 9-15, 2009.

As in previous years, the evaluation score of the courses made by the students who participated was very high. The high scientific level, a lot of useful scientific information, useful establishment of contacts between young researchers, and many other points were stressed in the students' reports. A number of students who participated once in the NOVA courses are applying again and again, but this time as the resources were very limited, the students who applied for the first time, had a priority.

Doctoral student distribution among member universities shows that the most active universities were EMU and LLU. EMU students make around 47%, LLU – 32 %, LZUU – 16 % and LVA – 5 % from total number of applicants. The low number of participation from Lithuanian side is partly explained by the fact that the courses did not suit thematically their doctoral students.

Despite the non available support from the NordForsk, BOVA UN is looking forward to continue this kind of cooperation with NOVA UN, each member university informed the NOVA side on the joint Boards meeting that will search all available national funds or through EU money to support their student's participation in the NOVA PhD courses in the future.

### **3.3 Teachers competence raising activities**

BOVA UN in the 2008 paid more attention to the activity that concerns rising of competences of BOVA teachers and scientists, as in the year 2007, this area was left not covered. To make this activity more available for bigger part of academic staff, activities were planned and offered in shorter time as usual BOVA courses, course for 2 -3 days, taking into account that most of the teachers and scientists are very busy.

Very high level lecturers have been invited to the courses, and the evaluation made by participants is very positive. Such activity is recognised by BOVA leadership as a motivation tool for teachers: participants at BOVA course today and active actors in the future under the BOVA UN umbrella but in the new category as the initiators and teachers in new BOVA courses.

The table below presents the summary on participation at the course for teachers competence rising.

**Table. Courses for teacher's competence rising in BOVA Universities in 2008**

No.	Course title	Course place, leader	Course period	Number of participants	Number of lecturers
1.	Methodology of Research	EMU, Tartu Prof. Henri Charles Dubourguier	February 11-12, 2008	EMU - 9 LLU - 11 LVA - 2 LZUU - 6 Others - 26 <b>Totally: 54</b>	EMU - 1
2.	Scientific Writing	LZUU, Kaunas Dr. Stephan Stalter	October 15-17, 2008	LLU-13 LVA - 3 LZUU - 11 EMU - 1 <b>Totally: 28</b>	HU - 1

From the results, presented in this table, it can be observed that in total 56 teachers and scientists from BOVA UN took this opportunity, respectively: from EMU – 10; LLU – 24; LZUU – 17 and LVA – 5. These numbers show perfectly how popular these activities are among the teaching staff. Participants from outside mainly Estonian HEI have the rights to participate in the course, but, of course, they paid all the course expenses themselves.

### **3.4 Evaluation of achievements**

Each year BOVA plans to arrange a seminar on certain theme, by the same making the self- evaluation of achievements during the year.

For this year it was planned to arrange a joint NOVA-BOVA seminar “Development and planning of joint international courses on master level” (co financed on 50- % by Nordplus). Due to the delayed final answer from Nordplus, this activity was postponed to 2009 to be performed on adequate level and involving both NOVA and BOVA sides.

But even not arranging BOVA seminar, the evaluation of achievements for BOVA UN are performed in different way, by making the SWOT analysis, many meetings on different levels during which all the conclusions and recommendations regarding the BOVA UN development were taken into account and included into the draft of the BOVA University network Strategy for the period 2009- 2011.

## **4 Information services of BOVA University Network**

For the dissemination of information about BOVA UN and the offered activities and also for the access to the visible information of BOVA UN the BOVA, the webpage has been used as it was in the previous years. The maintenance of the webpage is the competence of LLU and BOVA secretary, responsible for the information upload to the webpage basing on the information submitted by BOVA coordinators or course leaders or networks leaders. All

the member universities have their homepage on the first page of university homepage or under the International activities page the direct link to the BOVA webpage; it has made the information flow easier for the respective university students.

The BOVA leaflet, issued in 2007, was successfully used by the students' teachers and other visitors. In the leaflet a short overview of BOVA activities is presented. The anniversary publication "BOVA – 10 years of successful cooperation in studies of agriculture, forestry and veterinary" which was published in October 2006 also reflected the international events, thus providing information about BOVA UN.

There are very few anniversary copies left, but the BOVA leaflet is in sufficient amount at BOVA member institutions, therefore it has not been planned to produce any new information leaflet about BOVA UN.

In addition to all the above mentioned, a new printed material will be produced at the end of the year by the NOVA/BOVA Nordplus network team on the available small funds from Nordplus with co financing of HU -AF. The title of this leaflet is "NORDPLUS – Nordic and Baltic Educational Cooperation Starts with Nordplus". Its aim is to give an overview to the Nordic and Baltic students about Nordplus and short information about NOVA and BOVA member universities.

## 5 Fund-raising activities

One of the major tasks for BOVA Secretariat and all those involved in the BOVA UN actions are to search for external donors and possible fund raising.

**Table. External funds in 2008, rounded off numbers.**

Purpose	Donor	Amount in Euro
Baltic PhD students in NOVA courses (raised by BOVA in 2007, but used for activities in 2008)	NordForsk	25 500
Intensive master level courses: "Evaluation of quality of poultry meat and egg" "Forest tree breeding" "Renewable energy sources" (raised by BOVA Secretariat)	Nordplus (Higher Education) programme	15 000
NOVA BOVA Intensive course in sustainable pig production (raised by NOVA secretariat)	Nordplus (Higher Education pr.)	13 000
Project "NOVA/BOVA Nordplus network" - Student and teachers mobility; - network support; - Joint seminar (raised by NOVA Nordplus coordinator)	Nordplus (Higher Education) programme	42 000
BOVA course "Energy crops and biogas production" (raised by EMU)	Estonian Rural development foundation	12 800
Support of Nordplus activities in Lithuania (raised by LZUU and LVA)	LR - Education Exchange Support Found.	5 500
<b>Total:</b>		<b>113 800</b>

This work was done by BOVA secretariat working in very close connection with BOVA coordinators (3 applications to Nordplus programme). As a result of joint work with NOVA UN there were 2 applications submitted to Nordplus programme. Each member university made an effort to attract national funds for activities and the partners from EMU, LZUU and LVA succeeded in that.

The biggest donor supporting BOVA doctoral student's participation at the NOVA PhD courses has stopped the instrument of support; therefore no new allocations were submitted to the NordForks in 2008, but for this year activities the funds available from the previous year applications were used with the special sub agreement from NordForsk on the use of available funds. The summary of the raised funds is presented in the table below.

The table above does not include funds raised by networks, operating under BOVA umbrella. The internal funds of each BOVA member university for support of BOVA activities are shown in chapter 7.

## 6 Administrative capacities

BOVA administration capacities in 2008 were BOVA rector working on voluntary basis, and 1.0 full time secretary's position at LLU. Member universities took care on BOVA coordinators at home universities trying to keep available working capacities equal to approximately 0.25 -0.5 positions. BOVA CC works on voluntary basis (2 members for each member university).

Additionally to the existing administrative duties, BOVA coordinators, since the establishment of NOV/BOVA Nordplus network, have had additional duties acting as Nordplus coordinators in the respective institutions for the sake of the BOVA UN.

The positive, optimistic and creative way of acting and thinking of all 4 BOVA coordinators, namely: Gatis Kasparinskis (LLU), Kylli Korgesaar (EMU), Minvydas Liegus (LZUU) and Kristina Kavaliauskaite (LVA) deserve the highest appreciation from BOVA Secretariat, BOVA CC and BOVA Rectors' Board.

## 7 Budget for BOVA administration and activities

The BOVA administration was funded from internal BOVA funds. A joint pool of € 20.000 was made by shares from member universities. In the year 2008 comparing with the previous years, there was a slight increase in the joint pool. All BOVA funds made from membership fee are aimed at costs related to BOVA Secretariat, BOVA meetings on various levels, cooperation with NOVA UN and other events useful for BOVA University Network development.

The summary of the available funds and the use of internal BOVA funds for administration are presented in the tables below.

**Table. Available funds**

Source	Amount in Euro
Contributions from member universities	20 000
Savings from 2007	5 268
<b>Total:</b>	<b>25 268</b>



**Table. Use of internal BOVA funds** (approx. figures in Euro).

<i>List of expenses</i>	<i>Amount used</i>
Salaries (BOVA secretary)	12 000
Administration costs	
- BOVA meetings (5 events)	2 160
- meetings with NOVA (4 events)	5 630
- office costs (webpage, consumables)	710
<b>Total</b>	<b>20 500</b>

***Amount of € 4 768 remained as savings from year 2008.***

The savings appeared due to economical approach: trying to act modestly; combine some of meetings together, some support from NOVA side and the biggest savings made because the joint NOVA-BOVA seminar (planned to be held in November 2008) did not take place due the delayed response on co financing from Nordplus programme.

It is proposed to transfer this amount to the year 2009 and utilise it for BOVA activities or BOVA-NOVA activities which will be short of funds.

As internal BOVA UN funds are marked also the funds from each BOVA member university used to support BOVA activities such as participation of teachers and students in courses, meetings, remuneration of teachers and other costs related to the activities. These funds made a very important contribution to ensuring proper implementation of planned activities within BOVA UN. Each member university basing on the number of teachers and students participating in the activities had allocated such funds in one or another way (depends on each institution's financial management).

Summarising the figures submitted by BOVA coordinators the following financial contribution by each member university was made this year:

- LLU - 9 700 EUR;
- LZUU – 4 000 EUR;
- LVA – 750 EUR;
- EMU – 18 000 EUR.

The total input from BOVA member universities for implementation of BOVA activities **is around 32 450 EUR** which shows that these funds proportions have been increased about 6 times comparing with last year (around 5 500 EUR).

But all the activities were not based only on internal funds; some of them fully or partly were funded also from external sources (Appendix 1).

Additionally the “nature funds” from each member university are an added value to the BOVA University network activities and operation of BOVA UN in general.

Availability of funds or attraction of funds highly depends not only on each involved party's physical participation in BOVA network activities but also on political will to strengthen the cooperation in the Baltic region and further its development.

Report compiled by:

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