

Student Agreement

Université libre de Bruxelles, having its registered office at Avenue Franklin D. Roosevelt 50, 1050 Brussels, Belgium, coordinating institution of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in Tropical Biodiversity and Ecosystems (TROPIMUNDO), hereafter referred to as ‘the Consortium Coordinator’, on behalf of the TROPIMUNDO Consortium formed by:

- Université libre de Bruxelles, hereafter referred to as ‘ULB’,
- Vrije Universiteit Brussel, hereafter referred to as ‘VUB’,
- Sorbonne Université, hereafter referred to as ‘SU’,
- Muséum national d’Histoire naturelle, hereafter referred to as ‘MNHN’,
- Università degli Studi di Firenze, hereafter referred to as ‘UNIFI’,
- Université de Guyane, hereafter referred to as ‘UdG’,
- Université des Antilles, hereafter referred to as ‘UdA’, and
- Université de La Réunion, hereafter referred to as ‘UNIRÉ’,

hereafter referred to as the (European) Programme Country Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and,

- Université de Dschang, hereafter referred to as ‘UDsch’,
- Université d’Antananarivo, hereafter referred to as ‘UNIVANTA’,
- University of Ruhuna, hereafter referred to as ‘RUH’, and
- Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, hereafter referred to as ‘UMT’,

hereafter referred to as the Partner Country HEIs,

and the Student:

FAMILY NAME(S)/SURNAME(S) :			
Given name(s) :			
Date of birth: <i>(dd-mm-yyyy)</i>		Place of birth: <i>(City, Country)</i>	
Nationality:		Passport n°:	
Address:			

hereafter referred to as ‘the Student’,

agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. General Information

1.1. Programme

The Consortium offers a two-year Erasmus Mundus Masters Course in Tropical Biodiversity and Ecosystems – TROPIMUNDO, hereafter referred to as ‘TROPIMUNDO’.

1.2. Mobility scheme

Every TROPIMUNDO Trajectory has a unique code representing semesters (S) composed of a number: ‘1’ for a semester at ULB and VUB, ‘2’ for a semester at SU or MNHN, ‘3’ for a semester at UNIFI, and ‘4’ for a semester at UdG. It is followed by an acronym: ‘AMA’ for a semester at UdA, ‘AFD’ for a semester at UDsch, ‘AFA’ for a semester at ‘UNIVANTA’, ‘AFR’ for a semester at ‘UNIRé’, ‘ASR’ for a semester at RUH and ‘AST’ for a semester at UMT, and it is finally followed by one of the same numbers as above but different from the first number. In this unique code, the first number corresponds to the first semester, the acronym to the second semester and the second number to the third semester. The fourth semester is by default in the same institution(s) as the first semester, but can be changed in agreement with the Coordination Office to correspond to any of the Programme Country HEIs.

The Student is enrolled in the Trajectory mentioned on their Course Mark sheet available on their personal account on the **TROPIMUNDO AIM-tool**¹. The Student will have to attend courses/be based at the respective universities during four consecutive semesters. However, the course programme might be subject to changes.

The courses will begin in September Year X and end in September Year X+2. The supervision of the student’s master thesis will be organized in collaboration between one or more Programme Country institutions, possibly with collaboration of a Partner Country institution and/or an Associate Partner of TROPIMUNDO and/or an external partner (each of which will make an official supervisor available), and defended at any Programme Country institution on the Trajectory of the Student. Upon definition of a topic and identification of supervisors as indicated in the **Thesis Guidelines**, the Student will sign a separate Thesis Charter (included in the **Thesis Proposal template**).

The Student declares to follow-up the guidelines provided by the TROPIMUNDO Coordination Office with respect to the Mobility scheme and its administrative logistics.

1.3. Type of diploma

At the end of TROPIMUNDO, and provided the Student meets the academic requirements for graduation, the Student will receive a joint degree and possibly additional multiple degrees from two or more European partners. In addition, the Student will receive a Diploma Supplement from at least one of the universities involved on the Student’s Trajectory, a TROPIMUNDO Certificate signed on behalf of all institutions involved in the TROPIMUNDO Consortium, a Europass Mobility, and, at the initiative of the student, a Europass Language Passport, a European Skills Passport and a Europass CV.

¹ TROPIMUNDO Application-Information-Management-tool to which the Student has a unique access.

2. Student's Commitment

The Student declares that all information submitted at the application stage is correct and complete, and that at the time of enrolment, s/he will provide all documents requested to the different universities involved.

The Student hereby commits her/himself to duly take part in the masters' programme, in accordance with all terms and conditions of the present agreement, and without embarking on any vocational occupation with a regular salary during the whole duration of the course.

3. Obligations of the Student

The Student shall inform the Consortium Coordinator of any problem (academic, logistic, administrative) that could arise, and shall comply with the following requirements:

3.1. Attendance

The Student will duly attend the TROPIMUNDO programme (lectures, exercises, practical works, excursions, field courses and thesis research). Otherwise, the Student will have to justify non-attendance by providing medical certificates or ask in advance the Local TROPIMUNDO Coordinator for permission.

The Consortium will consider regular course attendance as a mandatory part of the qualification for which the Student is preparing. Lack in course attendance greater than 25% would result in the exclusion of the Student from the TROPIMUNDO programme.

3.2. Examinations

The Student will attend all examinations required by the TROPIMUNDO programme.

Local regulations will apply regarding examinations and students' evaluation, but if necessary, exceptions may be granted by the Inter-University Jury. The Consortium will use grading scales of each partner country and course marks will subsequently be converted to a common TROPIMUNDO scale following rules agreed upon. Upon completion of the programme, students' overall grades will be converted into the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) grading scale.

In case of failing, the Student will have the possibility to resit the examination once in that same academic year. Since the periods in which exams and resit exams vary between partners, the general rule will be applied that the date and time of a resit exam will be agreed by the teacher and the student according to both academic agendas.

If the student is already in the HEI of the next mobility period or is visiting a TROPIMUNDO Associated Partner, an exam for an HEI of a previous mobility period can also be held by Skype under supervision of the Local Coordinator or Associate Partner contact person. The Full or Associate Partner will provide conditions (room, invigilating) to allow the student to resit the examination according to the original HEI material and will be responsible for returning the completed exam material for proofreading to the respective HEI. If the student fails the exam again, the Steering Board (STEB) will decide on a case-by-case basis whether s/he can be accepted into the second year or obtain the diploma (depending on whether the course belongs to the first or second year).

Upon request by the student or teacher, any unresolved conflict in organising the resit exam date or venue may be presented to the JURY for resolution. In that case the JURY will consult with both parties and set a new date that will be final. If the resit exam is oral and the teacher is withheld on that new date, he will have to have the resit exam organised in written form on that date.

Students wishing to follow courses in excess of the default annual maximum of 60 ECTS must seek authorisation themselves by filling and signing a declaration. For instance, students that have failed a first year course twice (for any reason incl. absence to the exam) and that are nevertheless allowed to proceed into the second year, need to fill this declaration if they wish to add the failed courses of the first year to the programme of the second year, hence increasing their annual load to >60 ECTS. This also applies for the Thesis proposal. If they do not fill the respective declaration, the universities will only consider the annual maximum of 60 ECTS and the student will be forced to take or resit any additional courses in a third year.

In all cases, a Student may be authorised to repeat the year but, should the Student have already used two years of scholarship or should the Student be self-funded, any third year will be at the Student's own cost.

Depending on the policies of the degree-awarding universities, the Student may be required to have passed all the examinations before being allowed to defend the MSc thesis.

With respect to the MSc. Thesis, the student declares to respect the **Thesis Guidelines** available on the TROPIMUNDO AIM-tool, as well as the guidelines on the use of the AIM-tool itself informed through regular e-mails.

3.3. Behaviour/Ethics

The Student will respect the local cultures and comply with national laws of host countries and regulations in force in host institutions, including use of computers and access to certain websites and responsibilities. The Student shall commit no fraudulent act, such as cheating, falsification or plagiarism; otherwise, the Student might be excluded from the programme.

The Student is obliged to send the TROPIMUNDO Coordination Office any certification they may have in relation to potentially dangerous activities that may be undertaken during their free time in their stays with partner institutes. This includes, but is not limited to, Underwater Diving, Rock Climbing and Speleology, and Air Sports. If such activities are carried out during the TROPIMUNDO semesters, it will be at the Student's own risk or at the risk of the external organizer of the activity.

With regard to Underwater Diving, TROPIMUNDO follows the instructions of the European Marine Board (<http://www.marineboard.eu/>) and the BELSPO Working Group 'Scientific Diving' (http://www.belspo.be/belspo/northsea/diving_en.stm). Hence, all TROPIMUNDO students required to dive for research purposes will need a letter from the Supervisors and course responsible proving this requirement and sharing responsibility² and students will need the Belgian or European Scientific Diver Certificate, a recent medical exam (in concordance with the Belgian Royal Decree of 23 December 2003, art. 15, 16 and 17 with regard to labour in hyperbaric environments) as well as a diving insurance. In addition, the student must check which hierarchic responsible persons within the university structure need to be informed about the diving (President of the Jury, President of the Department, Dean of the Faculty...). The home university

² In this context the 'supervisors' are understood as (i) the Main Supervisor, and (ii) the Supervisor of each of the Degree-awarding institutions involved in the thesis.

(usually S1 university) is also responsible to provide a risk analysis for the student prior to any diving activities and all scientific diving has to abide by the regulations in the Belgian Royal Decree of 23 December 2003 concerning the protection of workers against the risks of working in a hyperbaric environment, at the very least, but possibly also to stricter diving regulations in the country where the diving will take place. Students who do not have a Belgian or European Scientific Diver Certificate are not allowed to dive. At all times the student must be ready to provide their Diving Certification & Log book (online). Students may never dive or swim alone, without someone on the watch (on a boat or on the shore).

3.4. Health risks

The Student accepts to travel to the tropics and is fully aware of the risks associated to studying in a tropical environment. The Student will take all precautions to avoid encounters with venomous or behaviourally dangerous animals (arthropods, fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, etc.). The Student will also visit a medical unit specialized in tropical diseases before travelling to the tropics and follow the medical guidelines as prescribed (*e.g.*, with respect to malaria). In addition, the student is required to abide by all the safety regulations imposed or advised by the local staff of the participating institutions.

3.5. Intellectual property rights and scientific publication

The Student is not allowed to publish any part of a course or fieldwork without authorization by and implication of the teaching staff involved, and possibly fellow-students. The same is true for publication of thesis data, which is to be done in close consultation with supervisors (and possible research staff and fellow-students) involved as per the Thesis Charter. This is valid for any type of publication (peer-reviewed, popularizing, conference presentation or poster).

In all these cases and for each publication the Student agrees:

- (i) to seek authorization for publication from the supervisors;
- (ii) to agree with the supervisors on the co-authorship list. This may for instance involve persons that the Student has not encountered personally but that played a significant role in generating the scientific ideas, collecting the scientific data, obtaining the funds needed to perform (part of) the research, etc. well ahead of the arrival of the Student.
- (iii) to agree with the supervisors on the order of the authors;
- (iv) to consult closely with the supervisors in a first phase and with all co-authors in a second phase on the writing and content of the scientific publication;
- (v) to follow the guidelines for publications provided in the course on Scientific Presentation Skills and Career Planning.

4. Rights of the Student

The Student will benefit from a masters programme and a service offer in accordance to what has been announced in promotional documents and by the Consortium. The Student will notably have the following rights:

4.1. Equality

Every Student enrolled in the masters programme is entitled to:

- be treated and served by the Consortium in the same way as home students, irrespective of gender, ethnic background, religion or other belief, sexual orientation, or disability;
- be considered as an equal partner in the masters programme;
- appeal against any act the Student would consider as discriminatory. In this case, the Student may appeal to the Coordination Office (COFF).

4.2. Administrative and Academic Issues

The Student has the right to:

- be informed on the masters programme in a transparent manner, and therefore be provided with all relevant and exhaustive information, particularly regarding admission requirements and criteria, prerequisites, course content, learning outcomes, and degree award. This information is provided through the TROPIMUNDO AIM-tool, but may be subject to changes;
- benefit from an appropriate counselling, both before and during the masters programme;
- have a free access to adequate services and means of support in order to complete the programme.

4.3. Student Participation and Involvement

The Student has the right to:

- take an active part in the implementation of the masters programme by being involved in decision-making bodies and course evaluation;
- organize themselves in legally recognized entities such as alumni associations, in particular the Erasmus Mundus Association (EMA), the membership of which is free and very strongly recommended by the TROPIMUNDO Coordination Office.

4.4. Assistance

The Student may ask assistance from the International Relations Office and from the Local Administrative Manager of each host institution (*e.g.*, help with visa request, residence permit, and accommodation).

4.5. Privacy and Personal Data Protection

Information relating to individuals (personal data) is collected and used in accordance with the regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 (Official Journal L 281, 23/11/1995 P. 0031 – 0050). Every student has the right to privacy and to protection of individual information stored in the online TROPIMUNDO AIM-tool. The

Consortium commits itself to deal with all personal data appropriately – in a secure and confidential way – and to respect e-mail privacy.

The Student accepts to receive e-mails from TROPIMUNDO and its Full and Associate Partners and allows TROPIMUNDO to share all personal data stored in the TROPIMUNDO AIM-tool with the Coordinating and administrative staff of the Partner Institutes, and in turn allows them to use it for storage and use within their own institutional student databases. E-mail addresses will not be given to external parties without consent of the Student. The Student declares to have been informed of the TROPIMUNDO's GDPR as indicated in the Student's Account & Security information on the TROPIMUNDO AIM-tool.

Through this Student Agreement, the Student gives authorisation to other TROPIMUNDO students to upload photographs on which they can be recognized onto the TROPIMUNDO Photographs database and the Annual TROPIMUNDO Photograph Contest (accessible through the Student's account). In addition, the Student authorises the TROPIMUNDO Coordination to re-distribute on the TROPIMUNDO social media any photographs on which they can be recognized, taken at public events or made public through the online TROPIMUNDO AIM-tool, the students' social media or e-mail.

In the event that the Student becomes the laureate of the Lorenzo Borella Memorial Award for the Best TROPIMUNDO Thesis or of the TROPIMUNDO Best Student Award, the Student authorises the TROPIMUNDO Coordination Office to make their MSc. Thesis available through the online TROPIMUNDO AIM-tool to which current and future TROPIMUNDO students have reserved access (not accessible to the public at large). In turn, each Student also declares that s/he will not distribute the MSc. Theses nor any other documents they find on the TROPIMUNDO AIM-tool without seeking and receiving authorisation from the General Coordinator. The Laureate of an award also authorises the TROPIMUNDO Coordination Office to publicise the award information through the social media using their photograph.

4.6. Health Insurance

During their entire participation in the TROPIMUNDO programme (1st September of the first year until 30 September at the end of the second year of the MSc programme), a medical insurance coverage will be offered to the Student, at no extra cost. Moreover, the Student will have access to medical services on the campuses of host institutions, in the same way as regular students. This insurance abides by the minimum requirements for the health and accident insurance coverage of the EACEA.

The Student declares to have taken notice that the U.S.A. or Canada are excluded from their insurance coverage and should they decide to go there for any purposes, insurance supplements will be at their own cost. In this case they should contact the insurance company to take an additional insurance contract for the period spent in these countries.

5. Obligations of the Consortium

On behalf of the Consortium, the coordinating institution hereby commits itself to provide the Student with a masters programme of excellence and a high-level service offer, in accordance to what has been announced in promotional documents, particularly regarding issues such as

tuition, supervision, timetable, course content and evaluation. However, the course programme and timetable may be subject to changes.

The Consortium will contribute to the integration of the Student notably by providing all useful information required.

6. Rights of the Consortium

The Consortium has the right to terminate this contract if:

- The Student does not meet the requirements mentioned in Articles 2 and 3;
- The Student has been admitted in the TROPIMUNDO programme based on false information.

7. Financial Provisions

7.1. Tuition fees

Tuition fees are set to 4,500 EUR per year for Programme Country students³ and 9,000 EUR per year for Partner Country students⁴, and cover Consortium enrolment fees, insurance cost as specified in Article 4.6 and all other costs for obligatory course modules/trainings/seminars, including administrative costs related to the issuing of the joint-diploma and the diploma supplement (see TROPIMUNDO homepage for further details). The tuition fees are paid by the Student to the Coordinating institution (ULB) which in turn transfers the budgets agreed to the various partners.

The tuition fees **do not** include costs related to visa and preparatory documents, medical check-ups, accommodation, living expenses and travel and transportation costs (e.g., for some field trips). The potential additional costs of the main field courses organised by the Partner Country HEIs are indicated in the detailed course description available through the TROPIMUNDO website and the AIM-tool.

7.2. Scholarship

The scholarship holder declares not to have benefited from a previous EMJMD scholarship or an Erasmus Mundus Master Course/Joint Doctorate scholarship. The scholarship holder commits not to benefit from another EU funded scholarship scheme to follow the same EMJMD course for the entire period of the course. The financial support shall be repaid by the scholarship holder in case of fraud or false declaration.

The Student selected by the Consortium to receive an Erasmus Mundus scholarship will be paid the following amounts:

- an **annual tuition fees** to participate in the programme as indicated in Article 7.1 that will be paid directly by the EACEA to the Coordinating Institution;

³ Nationals from EU Member States + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Serbia, Norway, Turkey and FYROM.

⁴ Nationals from all other countries that have not carried out their main activity for more than 12 months over the last 5 years (counting back from the submission deadline) in any Programme Country.

- a **monthly instalment of 1,000 EUR** paid to the Student from the start until the end of the study programme⁵ and for a maximum of 24 months, *except* for periods students spent in their country of residence and for Partner Country students for periods exceeding 3 months spent in any Partner Country;
- a **contribution to travel costs** (incl. thesis fieldwork abroad if applicable) of **2,000 or 3,000 EUR per year** depending of the distance between residence and the coordinating HEI (ULB) for student resident of a Partner Country and **of 1,000 EUR** for a student resident of a Programme Country, paid to the Student at the beginning of each year. The Student agrees that the carbon offsetting fee corresponding to its personal international mobility between TROPIMUNDO partners may be deducted from this amount;
- a **contribution to installation costs of 1,000 EUR** and only for student resident of a Partner Country paid at the beginning of the Master programme.

The scholarship is a full scholarship, meant to cover all costs (e.g., tuition fees, travelling, visa costs, accommodation, living expenses, etc.). There will be no further funding.

The scholarship will be paid by ULB by bank transfer to the account number mentioned in Annex, which must be a European bank account. The Student shall inform as soon as possible the TROPIMUNDO Administrative Manager on any change in the bank details.

The scholarship does not create any employer-employee link between the Consortium Coordinator and the Student; therefore, it is not subject to direct taxation.

The Student must not have already received an Erasmus Mundus Scholarship. Furthermore, Erasmus Mundus scholarship holders cannot at the same time be beneficiaries of a grant for student or staff mobility in the framework of other higher education programmes funded by the EU budget.

Unjustified/ineligible scholarship payments may have to be reimbursed in case of prior leaving the course (e.g. exclusion from the programme because of fraudulent act). According to the number of months attended and a copy of return ticket, the Coordination Office (COFF) will set the amount to be reimbursed. The Consortium has the possibility to reallocate the remaining monthly allowance, participation costs and fixed contribution costs to another student.

7.3. Payment of Accommodation

In some countries, the university will secure accommodation for the Student but payment of rent and any deposit will be the sole responsibility of the Student.

8. Modification, Termination and Resolution of claims

The Consortium bears no responsibility for accidents, illnesses, injuries, losses or to damages to persons or goods resulting from or related to the activities planned in the present agreement.

Any modification to the present Student Agreement or respective Annexes must be communicated immediately by the Student in writing to the Consortium Coordinator. Upon

⁵ The « end » is understood as the last official activity in the context of the action (e.g., master thesis defense).

mutual agreement of contractual modifications, the Consortium Coordinator will issue an addendum to the present agreement.

Without prejudice to the general consequences laid down in national law applicable in the present agreement, the Consortium Coordinator reserves the right to cease the effects of the present agreement, without recourse to any juridical procedure apart from adequate communication to the Student. Failing agreement by both parts, the Belgian courts are designated as the only competent authorities to resolve any legal dispute between the TROPIMUNDO Consortium and the Student emerging from the agreement. The present contract will be governed by Belgian Law.

Both parties declare they have read and accept the conditions hereby defined. Each party receives one copy of the Student Agreement.

Signature of the Student

Signature of the TROPIMUNDO General
Coordinator, on behalf of the Consortium

Student's Name:

Farid DAHDOUH-GUEBAS

Date and Place:

Date and Place:

Student Agreement Annex: Financial information

European bank account details

Personal details of the account holder (the Student)

Surname(S) (in UPPERCASE):	
Given name(s) (in Lowercase):	
Date of birth (DD-MM-YYYY):	
Gender (M/F):	
Address:	
Postal code or ZIP Code:	
City:	
State or Province (if applicable):	
Country:	
Telephone number:	
E-mail address:	
Parents' address (if different from above):	
Postal code or ZIP Code:	
City:	
State or Province (if applicable):	
Country:	
Telephone number:	

Bank information

Name of the bank:	
Branch address (no P.O. Box):	
Postal code:	
City:	
EU Country:	
Account number:	
IBAN code:	
BIC code:	
SWIFT code (if applicable):	