



W. SZAFER INSTITUTE OF BOTANY POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT

The W. Szafer Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IB PAS) is a research centre focused on the study of flora and mycobiota diversity in the context of palaeoenvironment, evolution, organism interactions, and ecological phenomena on different organisational levels, from molecular to ecosystem. Global biodiversity protection is a key topic for the ongoing investigations. Due to these global interests, long-term collaborations with the scientific community all over the world and the work of the researchers on almost all continents, the IB PAS is interested in joining the Erasmus+ Programme to enlarge its network and partnerships. The IB PAS is also the coordinator of the Doctoral School of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, composed of five scientific institutes. As such the IB PAS aims at the constant improvement of the quality of teaching, learning and tutoring system. In this context the Erasmus+ Programme will help in the active participation of the IB PAS in the European Education Area at an international level, which will also strengthen compliance with the European principles included in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

The participation of the IB PAS in the Erasmus+ Programme is an important constituent of the strategy for the internationalisation of the Institute. The high need of the staff and Ph.D. students mobility is inscribed in the training and increasing qualifications plan, which is a key objective of the career development plan of the IB PAS personnel. The IB PAS has a long history of international cooperation, but for decades it has been based on the mobility of advanced researchers and on a very short research visits. The Erasmus+ Programme gives a great opportunity to make this mobility possible and accessible to researchers at all levels, senior and young staff, and for a long-lasting mobility period. The IB PAS policy also aims at the modernisation of education, therefore, it is particularly interested in enhancing the mobility of PhD students and young scientists to promote their multiple training and gaining of significant experience that will help them in reaching independence and leadership. Moreover, the involvement of the IB PAS in the Erasmus+ Programme will offer substantial improvement of the administration staff to provide an adequate management for all applicants of the programme, both outgoing and incoming participants.

The expected impact of participation of the IB PAS in the Erasmus+ Programme is very high as it is relevant to its main research and education policy. A long-lasting mobility program is a great way to exchange ideas in biological sciences and promote excellence of research among scientists and administrative staff working in the European Research Area. Building an institutional network will improve significantly the chances to establish and reinforce new cooperation with research group partners from other countries, and to develop joint international scientific projects within the framework of the European Commission programs. These actions will increase the capacity to operate at international level. At higher educational level, the participation of the IB PAS in the Erasmus+ Programme will increase the quality of teaching activities for all participants of the Third Cycle programmes.

The European principles included in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education belong to the long-term strategy of the IB PAS, which over the past few years has created an optimal

research and training environmental conditions for employees and visitors. A series of actions have been taking place to improve the overall quality of the working environment due to the development of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers according to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, which was first supported by the Director of the IB PAS in 2015. In 2017 the IB PAS was awarded the distinction "HR Excellence in Research" by the European Commission, which included several actions focused on encouragement of the mobility among staff and non-discrimination policies. Those aspects are taken into account in the institutional rules of IB PAS and can act as important indicators needed for an adequate participation in the Erasmus+ Programme. Therefore, the IB PAS confirms that all mobility activities will be fully acknowledged and they will be supported by researchers and administrative staff as it plays a key role in the professional development plan of the researchers at various levels. New criteria such as mobility and teaching activity were added to the requirements for professional promotion followed by the Scientific Staff Development Commission appointed by the Director of IB PAS. The IB PAS has implemented rules that encourage domestic and foreign travel and open up the possibility of planning visits within research projects and grants in accordance with national legislation. Mobility and teaching were also clearly related to the promotion systems used to reward employees and students properly.

In order to ensure the quality of implementation of the mobility for learning and teaching, the IB PAS will improve management skills and internationalisation strategies as well as perform training to support appropriately all participants at research and administrative levels. The IB PAS will recognise the importance of the visibility of the results obtained by mobile participants conducting research in cooperation with the Erasmus+ Programme and will permit to continue research by scientific staff and students after the implementation phase of the mobility. The IB PAS will also guarantee full recognition of the ECTS points for incoming and outgoing students participating in the Doctoral School of Natural and Agricultural Sciences as well as will promote actions undertaken by students within the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme. Finally, the IB PAS will strengthen all activities that ensure equal and equitable access for all participants, especially for people with fewer opportunities, according to the non-discrimination policy of the Institute.

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