

# NORAGRIC ELECTRONIC BULLETIN

## No. 1/07 May 2007

The Noragric Electronic Bulletin is produced three times a year and gives a summary of Noragric's activities during the intervals between each Bulletin including information on staff and visitors, seminars, projects, etc. The Bulletin is sent by e-mail to our networks and partners but is also available on the Noragric website, [www.umb.no/noragric](http://www.umb.no/noragric).

We hope you find the information in the Bulletin useful and we are always interested in suggestions for improvement or other comments. Please forward this Bulletin to contacts who may be interested in Noragric's activities. If you do not wish to receive the Bulletin by e-mail, or would prefer receiving notice by e-mail when a new issue is available on our website, please send an e-mail to the Editor.

To reach staff by e-mail, write <firstname.lastname@umb.no>. An overview of staff names, telephone extensions and e-mail addresses can also be found on the Noragric website (Staff).

This issue of the Bulletin summarizes Noragric's activities from January 2007.

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### **News**

#### **PhD stipends**

Six new PhD students will be joining Noragric this year, including three under the Quota scheme and one with a UMB scholarship. One of the Quota stipends is linked to the new Research Council of Norway-NFR funded project "Protected Areas and Poverty in Africa (PAPIA)" (see *Electronic Bulletin of December 2006*), coordinated by NINA and with Prof. Pål Vedeld as main researcher at Noragric. The Ugandan student will be focusing on protected areas management in Mt. Elgon. The other Quota student will be linked to the new NUFU project "Education, Research and Training for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Himalayan Watersheds" with Prof. Bishal Sitaula as coordinator for Noragric/UMB and Tribhuvan University, Nepal, as the main partner institution in the South. The third Quota student is from Kenya and started in January. He will be focusing his research on "Conflict, Islam and Politics in Somalia: The rise of the union of Islamic court". The UMB stipend has been awarded to a student who will be working under the NFR-funded project "Property, Possession and Conflict in Re/building Settlements", coordinated by the Oslo School of Architecture and Design and with Dr Knut Nustad as main researcher for

Noragric. In addition, two PhD scholarships are included in the programme “Reversing Food Insecurity and Environmental Degradation in Zambia through Conservation Agriculture”. It is expected that the two students will join Noragric’s PhD programme this year.

### **PhD Research School**

In preparing for the new Research School starting this autumn, partner Roskilde University (Denmark) visited Noragric in March to discuss the programme and logistical details. The Research School is a sandwich programme between Noragric, Roskilde University, and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, U.K. The PhD students will attend courses at the three network partners. Main contact: Prof. N. Shanmugaratnam

### **UMB’s Health and Development programme**

UMB together with partners Tribhuvan University, Nepal, Kathmandu University, Nepal, and Comsats Institute of Information Technology (CIIT), Abbottabad, Pakistan are in the process of applying for funds to start up a Master’s degree programme within Sustainable Sanitation, Health and Development. Start-up funds from NORAD’s Programme for Master Studies (NOMA) equaling NOK 200,000 were recently provided to develop a full application. The proposed Master’s degree will have an interdisciplinary character, and the overall aim will be to produce professionals with competence and skills to evaluate and improve water and sanitation conditions in a social context and to see the effects of water and sanitation on the health and development of local inhabitants. Improved water and sanitation is highly needed both in Nepal and Pakistan. Main contact: Dr Cassandra Bergstrøm

### **Thor Heyerdahl professorship**

The announcement for applications for the new Thor Heyerdahl Professorship at Noragric was released in April, deadline 12 May. The professorship is the first of its kind in Europe and the result of an agreement between UMB and the Thor Heyerdahl Institute, funded by NOK 2,3 million from each partner. The professorship will be linked to UMB’s Health and Development programme. Thor Heyerdahl captivated much of the world with his Kon-Tiki expedition in 1947 and other expeditions. UMB was deemed the best university to house the new professorship by the Heyerdahl Institute. The job description and how to apply are found via Noragric’s homepage: [www.umb.no/noragric](http://www.umb.no/noragric) Main contact: Prof Ruth Haug.

### **Publications, articles, presentations at seminars**

*Since the full list of publications and presentations produced by Noragric staff is too long to include in this Bulletin, we refer readers to the Noragric website, Publications, and further to All Publications, Forskdok, <http://www.umb.no/noragric/publications/default.htm> The website also lists publications in the Noragric Reports and Working Papers series.*

### **Workshops, meetings and seminars**

As chair of the NOMA Board (NORAD’s programme for Master’s Studies), Prof. Haug chaired the opening plenary session and a workshop on Natural Resources and Development at a 3-day seminar in January, organised by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU).

Prof. Haug, Prof. Vedeld and Prof. Sitaula travelled to Bangalore, India, late January to attend the inaugural meeting regarding the academic and research partnership with the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE), an initiative mentioned in the December 2006 issue of the Electronic Bulletin.

A workshop was organised on 5 February at Kathmandu University, Nepal, to discuss the new pilot project for developing a teacher education programme in Environment and Sustainable Development in Nepal. Prof. Haug and Prof. Bishal Sitaula attended. This programme has received start-up funds from the NOMA programme to further develop a full Master programme.

Prof. Bishal Sitaula and Dr Thor S. Larsen attended the first workshop from 15-18 March of the SIU-funded four-year project called “Education, Research and Training for Global Environmental Change and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Western Balkans”. This is a joint project between Noragric and the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Belgrade, Serbia, in collaboration with eleven West Balkan (WB) institutions. The aim of the workshop was to establish network collaboration between participants, set up a work plan, and to begin with activities related to a new education programme. A core group was established for curriculum development for the educational programme in Global Change and Management of Natural Resources in the Western Balkans.

Prof. Ruth Haug and Dr Fred Johnsen travelled to Zambia 24-28 April to sign the agreement with the Conservation Farming Unit of the Zambia National Farmer’s Union which received NOK 146 million from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to implement a project entitled “Reversing Food Insecurity and Environmental Degradation in Zambia through Conservation Agriculture”. Noragric’s role includes the design, establishment and implementation of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system of the project.

The annual meeting under the frame agreement with NORAD/Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 28 February resulted in, among others, the approval of some new projects. These include further activities under the TARP II collaboration with Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania (contact: Dr Fred Johnsen); an assessment of carbon emission quotas and how these are used (contact: Dr Jens Aune); and trade (contact: Prof. Ruth Haug). Dr Stein Bie’s secondment to work with the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development in Bonn, Germany, has been extended until mid June.

Prof. Haug was invited to give a presentation related to “Driving forces and interests that either promote or hinder food security for all” at a one-day seminar organised on 16 March by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs focusing on “Hunger and Food security”. The objective of the seminar was to bring forth political recommendations under three themes, the others being “Chronic hunger and the long-term role of development cooperation” and “Hunger catastrophes and international response”.

Dr Kjell Esser attended a meeting in early March to discuss future collaboration between UMB and the regional Østfold University College. This college offers Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes taught in English, French and German. Noragric’s involvement in the collaboration would entail offering English language proficiency to staff and students and offering Norwegian language courses and introduction to Norwegian culture to international students. UMB’s objective is to become a fully double-language university (English/Norwegian) in the mid-term future.

## **Staff**

A one-day staff retreat was held on 10 January to discuss challenges and opportunities for Noragric’s Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes. Some decisions included basing the

Master in International Environmental Studies programme on the same model as the Master programme in Development Studies, i.e., a common, mandatory introductory platform from which students can branch off towards special interests. Also, the language courses taught by staff from Østfold University College (see above), will become part of the Bachelor programme. Contact: Dr Kjell Esser.

Five people, three internal and two external, have applied for the position of Head of Department. Prof Ruth Haug's term comes to an end on 30 October 2007 but when her successor will take over will be arranged between UMB, Prof Haug and the person in question, who is to be announced by June.

Noragric congratulated Dr Bishal Sitaula in April on obtaining the title of Professor.

Prof. Arild Vatn has taken over academic responsibility for the revised MNRSA programme, now renamed Master's programme in International Environmental Studies.

Dr Cassandra Bergstrøm, coordinator of the UMB Health and Development programme, will be returning to Noragric full-time later this summer after spending 3 years on Svalbard (Spitsbergen) with her family.

Noragric's administrative staff went on a 2-day study tour to the Netherlands in late April. A one-day visit to the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague gave insight into ISS' activities within research and teaching (Master's and PhD level) in Development Studies, followed by a one-day visit to the University of Leiden (Institute of Environmental Sciences and the Africa Study Centre's library). Possible student exchange and future collaboration on thematic issues were discussed.

Sabbaticals have been granted to Prof. Paul Vedeld and Dr Randi Kaarhus starting in August 2007. Prof Vedeld will spend his one-year sabbatical at the University of California, Davis (USA) whilst Dr Kaarhus will be staying at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, Brighton, U.K. Leave of absence of administrative staff includes Ingunn Andersen (Study Coordinator for the Master programmes) who will be at Noragric in a 40% position for one year as she teaches Spanish at a secondary school. 60% of her position has been announced, for which 8 applicants applied. Lars Øimoen, Noragric's IT expert, will be spending 18 months in Malawi starting mid-May as he works for the Peace Corps Volunteers for Sustainable Development programme.

## **Visitors**

Stine Kaasa of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Noragric on 13 February to talk about Noragric's input into the implementation of the Norwegian Action Plan on the Environment.

On 24 April, Dr Marcia F. Macomber of CGIAR came to Noragric to present research themes under the CGIAR Challenge Programme on Water and Food (CPWF) and its goals towards capacity building. The CPWF is a research initiative seeking to develop innovations to improve water management for agriculture, the environment and livelihoods at the crop, catchment, and basin level. CPWF works in 9 river basins around the world, four in Asia, three in Africa, and two in Latin America.

Professor Zinabu Gebremariam, President of Hawassa University, Ethiopia, is spending 6 months at Noragric to write manuscripts on Lake Awassa, one or two with UMB scientists at the Department of Ecology and Natural Resource Management. Professor Zinabu's research interest lies in Human Activity and Water Quality Changes in the Ethiopian rift-valley lakes. Noragric and Hawassa University have had long and fruitful collaboration over the last 18 years.

Dr Lyla Mehta, Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, U.K., will be returning to Noragric for the second part of her sabbatical from mid-May. She spent four months at Noragric as guest researcher in 2006. Among others, she participated in the IDS/Noragric roundtable seminar on 21 April and the Noragric 20-year anniversary in June.