

MIT-Portugal Program (MPP)
External Review Committee

Report of Assessment

March 2008

The External Review Committee of the MIT-Portugal Program (MPP) met on March 14, 2008, in Lisbon.

The following members were present:

-Prof. dr. Henk Sol, Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Groningen University, the Netherlands (Chair)

-Prof. Roland Clift, Ph.D., CBE, Distinguished Professor of Environmental Technology, University of Surrey, UK

-Prof. César Dopazo, Ph.D., Full Professor of Fluid Mechanics, University of Zaragoza, Spain

-Prof. Nick Oliver, Ph.D., Head of School of Management and Economics, University of Edinburgh, UK

-Mr. Robert Skinner, Executive Director, Transportation Research Board, National Academy of Sciences, USA.

Dr. Peter Cavanaugh, D.Sc., Chairman of Biomedical Engineering, Cleveland Clinic, USA was unable to attend, but brought in his advice on beforehand.

The Committee assessed the progress of the program on the basis of the material submitted and of the discussions according to the agenda enclosed. It did make a global assessment of the projects and project proposals as being part of the focus area programmes and the underlying governance processes.

The ERC endorses the proposal for the budget 2008/2009. By doing so it endorses the projects being part of the MPP.

The MPP is getting off from a good start and is showing nice achievements.

The ERC strongly advises to adhere to the mission of the Program by establishing the research agenda through the PhD programmes in close interaction with the corporate world. Maintaining an appropriate balance between the educational and research aspects is crucial. Articulating academic leadership and academic entrepreneurship with the Portuguese partners involved could make the Program stronger. The Professional Masters should support this. Great care should be exercised in initiating additional projects and in increasing institutional participation in the focus areas.

The Committee is pleased to see that the Program's relationships with the corporate world are developing. In the meeting with representatives of the corporations involved in MPP it became clear that the engagements are still in an early stage.

It is suggested again that the Program and Focus Areas should strive to be self-sustaining before the end of the Program.

The Committee met with the Deans of the institutions involved and is very pleased with their constructive support.

The ERC welcomes the initiative from the Deans to create a separate Association MPP to facilitate a full further development of the Program. This initiative is of utmost importance for a smooth administration of MPP.

Again, attention should be paid to the availability of fellowships for students from non EU countries.

The ERC welcomes the initiative to translate the goals and objectives of the program and the sub-programs into measurable metrics, addressing quality, productivity, vitality and relevance.

In addition, it is useful for the Portuguese partners to reflect on what they really want to get out of MPP.

The Program exemplifies the synergistic interaction between institutions, which could be accompanied by new initiatives for Graduate School programs, for international fellowships and for top research programs.

It is advised again to allocate budgets to institutions on the condition that capacity for the MPP program is compensated for other tasks.

The ERC did receive student evaluations and did have the opportunity to meet with students at the meeting. It was heapily impressed by the articulated and enthusiastic support from the students present.

Again, attention should be paid to the availability of fellowships for students from non EU countries.

We repeat our recommendation to establish a Curriculum Committee with representation from each of the four focus areas. This committee should meet at least twice a year so that there can be coordination in the development of new courses and in the refinement of existing courses.

On behalf of the ERC,
Henk G.Sol, chairman