

2012

# French cooperation in higher education



The involvement of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) in the area of higher education is deeply ingrained in the tradition of French cooperation. While the ultimate aim is to train the **foreign elite**, with the double concern of **support for development and/or influence**, the objectives of this cooperation have become wider as a result of recent changes.

The aim is to help French higher educational establishments to open up internationally, which is a sign of recognition and quality on an increasingly-competitive world education market.

This ambition is fulfilled by policies to promote French higher education and to host foreign students, which are set out in two separate brochures (*Receiving foreign students in France* and *France and higher vocational education abroad*), and by actions to support university cooperation programmes, which are discussed in this brochure.

The MAE is also involved in different ways: from operating grants to the financing of complex projects through the Priority Solidarity Fund (PSF); from advice to participation in the steering committees and boards of directors to define the strategic trends of projects and programmes.

The MAE's driving force is its human resources, both on the functions of expertise and leadership carried out by its 125 international technical experts in the field of universities, and on the roles of monitoring, advice and support played by its cooperation and cultural action advisers and its scientific and/or university cooperation attachés. These actors are the defenders of French expertise in terms of higher training.



F'SATI stand during a trade show to promote higher education © Communication F'SATI.



# Building the European higher education area

The harmonization of university courses based on the Bachelor's degree (*licence*), Master's degree (*master*) and Doctorate (*doctorat*) system, or LMD system, under the Sorbonne-Bologna process aims to encourage student mobility and facilitate the creation of integrated courses between European higher-education establishments. During the Louvain ministerial conference in 2009, the countries involved in the process, i.e. not only European Union (EU) Member States but European countries in general, set themselves an ambitious target: **by 2020, 20% of students should have studied abroad during few months.**

Given this, one of the MAE's main objectives is to **increase supervised student mobility** within quality courses which are co-designed by French and foreign universities. This is the mission of bodies operating as "network coordinators", with the **Franco-German University** being the best example.

The **French-Dutch network for higher education and research (RFN)**, a bi-national structure based in

Lille and Utrecht, each year organizes French-Dutch university meetings, issues excellence grants at master's and doctoral level and liaises daily between higher education and research establishments in both countries.

Furthermore, the MAE and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR) are seeking to boost student mobility with several "target" countries. They thus jointly funded **master's programmes with the authorities in the countries concerned**, i.e. Austria, Greece, the Czech Republic, Poland, Portugal and Spain. The master's projects, submitted by a French or partner-country establishment, following a call for projects and selected based on assessments conducted by experts from both countries, receive incentive financing for three years. Partnerships for master's programmes began with Ukraine in 2010 and Belgium and Norway in 2011.



Students attending the Franco-German University. © Communication UFA.

## Encouraging partnerships with world-class universities and research centres

The United States, which attracts the elite of the world's higher education, is also France's foremost scientific partner. American and Canadian universities linking training, research and innovation are a priority target for MAE action to support the French knowledge economy.

Launched with the help of the MAE and the Île-de-France region, the **Alliance programme** unites the university of Paris 1, the École polytechnique and the Institut d'études politiques de Paris (IEP: institute of political science) with Columbia University in New York. The consortium offers about fifteen high-level joint and dual degrees and organizes 40 annual conferences. The major involvement of the establishments ensures the success of this innovative programme.

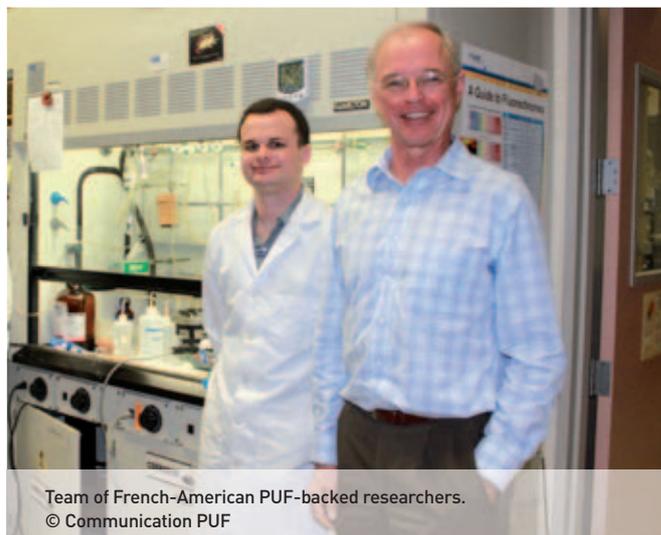
**Doctoral mobility** and research projects with North America are encouraged via specific tools:

- over **30 Châteaubriand grants** are issued each year by the French Embassy in Washington to help American doctorate students study in France;
- **4 funds** were created by the MAE within renowned American institutions: the **University of California at Berkeley, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Chicago and Stanford University**. In total, 70 joint research projects and seminars are supported each year as part of calls for projects open to all French universities and schools. French-Canadian cooperation is driven by a similar instrument, the **France Canada Research Fund (FCRF)**;
- embassies' university services promote the **mechanism of joint thesis supervision**, which is flexible and structured: the Frontenac programme, managed by the French Consulate in Montreal, thus supported the mobility of over 150 doctoral students from France and Quebec since its creation in 1996.



### THE PARTNER UNIVERSITY FUND (PUF)

The PUF was created in 2007 under the French American Cultural Exchange foundation to help establish **sustainable academic partnerships** between the United States and France. Strong commitment from the MAE and private American donors enabled **several major calls for projects to be made** that were open to all French and American higher education establishments and research bodies. **Each year, the PUF supports almost 40 interdisciplinary projects of excellence through grants totalling over one million dollars.** The actions, which are financed for three consecutive years, are very diverse in nature: student mobility and joint degrees, co-supervised thesis, visiting professors, joint publications, etc. In less than five years of operations, the PUF has showed the immense potential of lasting cooperation between France and the United States.



Team of French-American PUF-backed researchers.  
© Communication PUF



## THE FRANCO-GERMAN UNIVERSITY (FGU)

Created in 1997 and based in Saarbrücken, the FGU does not provide training itself but supports and approves 150 Franco-German and trinational courses of excellence, at bachelor's and master's degree level, as well as 25 binational graduate schools. As a result of co-funding from France and Germany, each year 5,000 FGU students register for tailored courses which involve a period of study in the partner country.

In a decade, the FGU has built a network of 180 French, German and international establishments. A bilateral university cooperation agency that is unique in Europe, it has developed recognized expertise and has established itself as an actor in quality-assurance for training. Acknowledging this success, France and Germany have set themselves a target of doubling the number of beneficiaries of the FGU programmes by 2020.



The network of member establishments of the Franco-German University. © Communication UFA

## Training the business elite



CFVG graduation ceremony. © Communication CFVG

The MAE takes part in capacity building for partner countries by supporting the training of the business elite.

It therefore develops, in partnership with a number of target countries, **education centres offering courses in management excellence**. In the North Africa-Middle East Region, after the *École supérieure des affaires* in Beirut (ESA) and the *École supérieure algérienne des affaires* in Algeria (ESAA, *see box opposite*), the most recent centre is the **French Arabian School of Management and Finance in Manama** (Bahrain), which offers a Master of Business Administration (MBA) as a result of its partnership with the Arabian Gulf University and the *École des sciences économiques et commerciales* (ESSEC: Institute of Economic and Commercial Sciences).

The **French University in Armenia (UFAR)**, which opened in 2000, today has over 800 students and issues dual degrees in law, marketing and management, in partnership with the University of Lyon 3. The UFAR prepares executives to meet the needs of the Armenian labour market and to develop economic relations between Armenia and France or

other European countries. The employment rate of UFAR graduates is close to 80%.

Set up in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, the **Centre franco-vietnamien de formation à la gestion** (CFVG: Franco-Vietnamese management school) offers an EPAS-accredited MBA (international label for the European Foundation for Management Development) which will celebrate 20 years in 2012, two specialized master's and a doctoral programme which opened in 2010, as initial and above all continuous training. A leading institution in Vietnam, the CFVG accounts for 15% of students registered for international master's in management. It has the **support of many partners**: prestigious Vietnamese universities, the *Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Paris* (CCIP: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Paris) and renowned French academic institutions [ESCP Europe (a school of management), University of Paris Dauphine, Audencia, EM Strasbourg (a business school), Rouen Business School, School of Knowledge Economy and Management (SKEMA), IAE Paris (a graduate business school), University of Lille Nord]. The CFVG works closely with Vietnamese companies or foreign companies established in Vietnam.



# Training executives on leading-edge technology to support economic changes

The higher education systems in emerging countries are experiencing unprecedented modernization and expansion. **University engineering has become a genuine market, while the export of expertise can lead to the creation of “French-style” schools.**

With the help of the MAE, French establishments have created **engineering schools** in China to support the economic development of certain high-tech industrial sectors. Based on the teaching model which proved successful for the École centrale de Pékin engineering graduate school in Beijing, the following were developed: the Franco-Chinese Institute of Engineering and Management (IFCIM) in Shanghai, the Franco-Chinese Institute of Aeronautical Engineering in Tianjin, the Franco-Chinese Institute of Nuclear Energy (IFCEN) in Guangzhou and the China-EU Institute for Clean and Renewable Energy (ICARE) in Wuhan.

## THE ÉCOLE SUPÉRIEURE DES AFFAIRES (ESA) IN BEIRUT AND THE ÉCOLE SUPÉRIEURE ALGÉRIENNE DES AFFAIRES (ESAA) IN ALGIERS

Created in 1996 following an intergovernmental agreement, the ESA (business school) in Beirut enjoys significant regional influence. The partnership with the MAE, the CCIP and the Banque du Liban (Central Bank of Lebanon) places education at the heart of the needs of companies from Lebanon and the Middle East. The ESA offers seven management courses and has a network of 2,300 alumni, all of whom jointly graduated with a partner institution.

In 2004, the ESAA (business school) in Algiers was founded on the same model and is built on a partnership between the MAE, partner schools (University of Lille 2, Euromed Management, ESCP Europe) and French and Algerian chambers of commerce and industry. It offers three degrees in management sciences, via basic training or continuing education.



Class of 2011 at the ESAA in Algiers. © Communication ESAA

Chinese schools had been preceded by the PFIEV, **a training programme for high-quality engineers in Vietnam**. The PFIEV brings French expertise to four of the country's most prestigious universities. The programme produces scientific executives capable of adapting to the rapid changes in the economy. Training options were selected based on the priorities of industrial development in Vietnam, in the sectors in which French companies were operating in Asia such as aeronautics, telecommunications, energy, civil engineering and urban development.

In Latin America, **FITEC Programmes** [France Ingénieurs Technologie (France engineers technology)] allow French and Latin American establishments which train high-level engineers to exchange student engineers and lecturer-researchers. FITEC programmes have been set up in Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Argentina and are currently being created in the Dominican Republic and Colombia. The companies themselves take part in defining and financing the training programmes.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF HANOI (USTH)

The USTH is a high-level Vietnamese university which was created in partnership with a consortium of 60 French higher-education establishments and research bodies. It is based on the link between education, research and innovation and is a **new university model** which meets international standards, focusing on high-level research, in an environment of high-tech companies. It plans to open 6 joint international units, with 400 doctoral students, making up the pool of USTH lecturers, to receive their training in France. In total, 8,000 students, future science and technology executives who can lead international teams, will be trained at the USTH by 2020.



Biotechnology-pharmacology students at the University of Science and Technology of Hanoi. © Communication USTH



# Promoting French within the university

The spread of the French language and university cooperation go hand in hand. **As well as its policy of promoting the teaching of the French language, the MAE provides support to higher-education courses which are taught through French.**

The **Collège juridique franco-roumain d'études européennes** (French-Romanian college of law for European studies) in Bucharest was set up in 1995 within the faculty of law at the University of Bucharest. It receives support from a consortium of French universities coordinated by the University of Paris 1 and trains French-speaking lawyers who fully understand European issues.

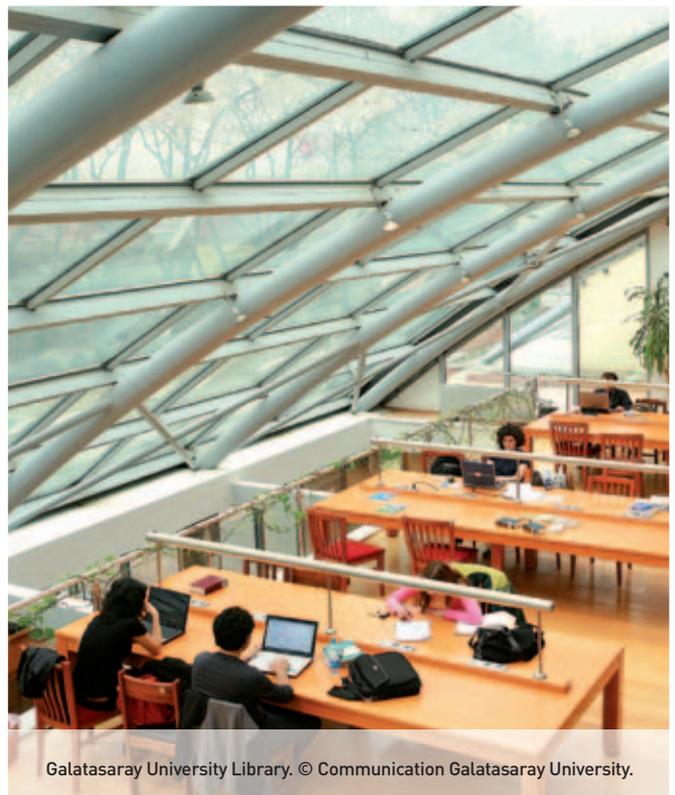
In Minsk, the **CFB** (the French-Belarusian centre for European studies) offers the French-speaking public a master's-level study programme covering Europe and the European Union legal system, in partnership with the University of Bordeaux 4.

**The French university colleges in Moscow and Saint Petersburg**, built in order to propagate French thought, provide multidisciplinary courses in human and social sciences (sociology, law, history and literature). For 20 years, they have been successfully training the French-speaking Russian elite. Graduates of these colleges can continue their studies at master 2 level in French partner establishments.

France was also involved in the creation of **French-speaking universities** in their own right. The export of French expertise in higher education has been embodied for the past two decades at **Galatasaray University** (see box opposite) in Istanbul or more recently at the **French University in Egypt** (UFE) which on the basis of a public/private partnership, trains specialists in the areas of engineering, management, applied languages and international relations, and thus helps to revive French-Egyptian bilateral relations.

## GALATASARAY UNIVERSITY

Created on 14 April through an intergovernmental agreement, Galatasaray University now has over 3,200 students spread across faculties (law, communications, economic and administrative sciences, arts and sciences, and engineering and technology). A high-quality establishment, it was chosen by the Turkish authorities to be one of six universities in the country responsible for training lecturer-researchers. France is involved in the University's governance and is financing about thirty teaching posts. The support consortium at Galatasaray University, made up of about thirty French universities, is aimed at structuring international cooperation (e.g. by setting up dual courses) and consolidating the status of French-language teaching.



Galatasaray University Library. © Communication Galatasaray University.

## Creating public higher education which meets the needs of society

The Priority Solidarity Fund (PSF) is one of the MAE's main tools for supporting the modernization of higher education and the reforms underway in developing countries. This tool is strengthened by posting international technical experts to partner countries. In 2011, **22 PSF projects were in operation** in the area of higher education, amounting to €46 million in multi-year commitments.

The PSF project to **support empowerment and international upgrading at the Cambodia University of Health Science**, which is part of medical cooperation with Cambodia which began in the early 1990s, meets the objectives for training doctors in a growing number of specialties and improving healthcare for the people of Cambodia. The PSF project to **support medical training in Laos** harbours the same ambitions and in 2010 gained regional influence through the **Mekong Health Congress**.

PSF projects enable improved training to be provided to trainers, which is necessary in order to maintain the quality of university education. In Dakar, nine young lecturers at the **Interstate School of Veterinary Science and Medicine (EISMV)** were able to submit their theses thanks to PSF support.

One of the aims of PSF in target countries as regards higher education is also to support the transition to the LMD system.

Finally, PSF projects help to create professional university courses and strengthen partnerships between universities and companies. They thus help public higher-education establishments to adapt to the challenges posed by their environment.



University expo, stand of the Cambodia University of Health Science, supported by an FSP project.  
© Communication Cambodia University of Health Science.

### THE PSF PROJECT TO SUPPORT UNIVERSITIES BY PROVIDING A GREATER RANGE OF ESTABLISHMENTS, CREATING GRADUATE SCHOOLS AND OPENING UP TO ENTERPRISE (U3E)

Each year, the huge increase in numbers graduating from secondary school in Senegal – up by 50% between 2009 and 2010 – makes the need to complete the reform of the university sector all the more urgent. The PSF's U3E project, implemented thanks to support from two French international technical experts, aims to guide this evolution.

The project enabled eleven professional degrees to be created within Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD) in Dakar and newly-created regional universities in 2007 (Bambey, Thiès, Ziguinchor).

The U3E is a pioneering project: this type of degree could serve as a model and can be extended as part of the establishment of the LMD system in Senegal.



# Helping to create regional centres of excellence

Support for regional centres of excellence is part of a regional harmonization approach and is also a response to Africa's training and qualification needs. Focusing on targeted areas of competence (water, energy and the environment in the case of the International Institute for Water and Environmental Engineering (2iE) in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso), these centres aim to train qualified professionals (doctors, engineers, technicians, researchers) to a **level of excellence** in line with the highest international standards. Emphasis is placed on the professionalization of education, such as at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology within the **F'SATI** (French South African Institute of Technology) in South Africa.

The **regional approach** allows the competences and capabilities to be pooled and gives these centres greater visibility. The creation of a **Higher Education for Professions in Central Africa Expert Support**

## SUPPORT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING (2iE)

Based in Ouagadougou, the 2iE Institute, formerly known as Group EIER-ETSHER, aims to train innovative human resources in order to support development in Africa. The training provided ranges from professional degrees (five of which are available through distance learning) to doctoral studies.

France has supported the 2iE since its creation. Between 2007 and 2010, €10 million in support from the MAE (from an PSF project and central funds) enabled Group EIER-ETSHER to change from an inter-state school to a foundation, the 2iE. The 2iE is now a centre of excellence, recognized by African and European institutions.

**Team** (PAPESAC) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, attached to the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), is an example of this.

The benefit of investing in these centres also lies in their ability to raise funds from other donors and thus to acquire an **independence** based on a sustainable model which remains the ultimate objective of France's cooperation. Close links with the economic world, not only to raise funds but also to establish true partnerships, are consistently encouraged: the F'SATI has thus opened a chair financed by Alcatel and receives grants from various industrial partners.

The MAE provided financial support to these centres, mainly through the PSF, as is the case for 2iE (see *box below*) and it now favours co-financing alongside other donors. Today, the support from the MAE can be seen in the human resources which are made available for a support and facilitation mission.



F'SATI stand. © Communication F'SATI

Directorate-General of Global Affairs,  
Development and Partnerships  
Mobility and Attractiveness Directorate  
Higher Education Department

## Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The missions of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs are:

- summarize information on the changing global economy and put it into perspective, prepare decisions on the French government's foreign policy;
- draft France's foreign policy;
- coordinate France's international relations;
- protect French interests abroad and assist French nationals outside France.

The creation of the Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships (DGM) in April 2009, as part of the reform of the Ministry, enables diplomacy to anticipate, identify and respond to the challenges of globalisation more effectively.

Confronted with global issues that have a direct impact on the lives of our citizens and multiple actors, the Ministry intends to emphasise the need to tackle global issues, in the firm belief that every major economic, cultural and societal issue calls for collective action with more outward focus, anticipation, interministerial coordination, responsiveness, interdisciplinarity and a resolutely European approach.



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