



Bimonthly Newsletter n°40, May 2020

Newsletter

Since the last issue of our newsletter, many countries are in lockdown. This implies several consequences, including the importance of technologies for the implementation of distance training and for meetings relating to our collaborations under negotiation. Indeed, one of the difficulties is that nobody knows the dates of unlock or those relating to travel authorizations.

In this particular context, we inform you of several information concerning:

- the advancement of our openness to Latin America,
- an overview of activities that USF-AWB can propose to your university,
- and a partnership with the National Institute of Management Sciences of Libreville, Gabon.

Wishing good reading. ■

Prof. Robert Laurini, president of USF-AWB.

Opening on Latin America

As announced in previous issues, USF-AWB has also decided to go to Latin American countries. Slowly, the organization gets set up. In France, the head is Dr. Jean Ruffier, sociologist, professor emeritus of the University Jean Moulin of Lyon, France. In Latin America, we have established a list of correspondents. For this purpose, a file of more than 900 recipients has been set up. In addition to the English and French versions, USF now has a Spanish-speaking version of its newsletter.

Following the issue #1 of our newsletter in Spanish, published last March, several solicitations have arrived, from the proposal of various professors to collaborate at USF (Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Uruguay, Venezuela, etc.) up to assistance for the design of a computer engineering school.

We also expect to gain power thanks to the help of the cultural and scientific services of

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the French Embassies in these countries.

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USF-AWB Areas of Activity

Support for the establishment of research laboratories

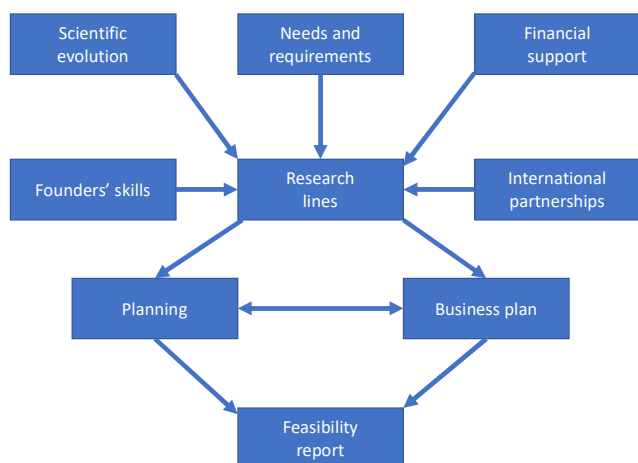
The starting point for the creation of a research organization, even of small dimensions, is the definition of 10-year lines of research.



To this end, USF-AWB has deployed a methodology that combines major scientific developments, socio-economic needs, the expertise of founding members, funding support and potential partnerships. Once these lines are defined together with some planning, it is possible to put together a business plan.

A week-long seminar for future holders of laboratory projects can be organized quickly for a dozen people, especially where laboratory projects are in the pipes.

Indeed, in many places, university professors are recruited primarily for teaching; in other words, their skills must cover the whole spectrum of training. On the other hand, the effectiveness of a laboratory is, in the first place, to focus on a more restricted problem with more complementary people than experts of the same specialty. Faced with these two facets, the identification of lines of research is a difficult challenge.



Once defined, a potential increase should be explained, including premises, profiles of new members, scientific team, publications policy and international outreach. This will include Master and PhD topics to launch as quickly as possible.

Ultimately, a feasibility report could be drafted and submitted to academic authorities.

This seminar will be taught by professors who have set up research laboratories and who are familiar with all the problems of creation. ■

Twinning and sponsorship of research laboratories

Two interesting mechanisms, sponsorship and twinning of laboratories, are designed to boost research in existing laboratories, to speed up and gain international recognition.

Sponsorship. In this mechanism, a professor emeritus, former head of a research center, helps in the duration to gain power. The first role of this sponsor is to better formulate the research problems, organize thematic seminars, encourage international collaborations with laboratories with similar visions, propose lecturers, help in the writing of publications and theses, assist in the drafting of projects, assist in the search for funding, in the purchase of equipment, assist in the definition of thesis committees, assist in the choice of the most interesting journals or conferences, or the ability to find colleagues with whom to build partnerships.

Twinning. It is a mechanism for more mature laboratories. The aim is to find two laboratories in two different countries with similar or complementary lines of research. The advantages of a twinning are the ability to exchange information at various levels, for example at the level of teacher exchanges, to propose post-docs, to organize joint symposia, to write joint articles, etc. ■

Establishment of a doctoral school

We have seen doctoral schools that were limited to a head, a secretary, a stamp and header paper! Creating a doctoral school is much more than that!

In fact, this must be not only a regrouping of laboratories each with several doctoral students, but above all a place of validation of the procedures of PhD committees and doctoral students. Such training must include two aspects, one thematic and the other professional.



The **thematic aspect** should include seminars given by recognized researchers in their discipline, taking advantage of the presence of thesis committee members or passing visitors for ad hoc conferences, etc. A minimum of two seminars or conferences per month is a very correct goal.

The **professional aspect** should include a reinforcement on scientific methodologies, a training on the writing of articles, especially in English and also on the writing of dissertations. A one-week course program would be welcome. In this spirit, USF-AWB members have even written a book on writing theses, in French and English. For your information, a Chinese version is being translated. And it is quite possible to provide a Spanish version. If a university or publishing house is interested, it can contact us immediately.

A doctoral school must also validate registrations for PhD's, verify the progress of research work and resolve disputes that may arise in the relations between doctoral students and PhD supervisors. ■

Creation of master-type training

The role of master's education is both to provide students with vocational training that enables them to be as effective as possible in the socio-economic world (jobs), and also to introduce them to research problems, giving them the latest knowledge in the field of specialization.



To create such training is to combine the presentation of new discoveries, the hard points from the professional point of view, the elements of project management, the experience of local professors-researchers, the possibilities of internships in companies and laboratories, the topics of the master's dissertations, etc.

Once, a colleague had created a very interesting master's program in artificial intelligence: it had been based on the master's programs of the more prestigious universities. He was asked whether he had teachers capable of teaching such classes; the answer was no. In a new iteration, it was much better to match the disciplinary requirements with

the competencies of the teacher-researchers.

Do not forget that the duration of a master's course cannot exceed 4 or 5 years.

We have experts in virtually every academic specialty that can help you. ■

Other activities

USF can also help in the reorganization of Bachelor degrees, professionalization, internationalization, approach to the socio-economic environment, etc.

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Partnership with the National Institute of Management Sciences of Libreville, Gabon

We have just established an agreement with the National Institute of Management Sciences of Libreville initially to organize teaching missions in two areas: that of economics, management, in particular, marketing and business computing.



A Skype-interview was held with the director of the institute Dr Jocelyn Nembé. This interview allowed us to measure the needs of the National Institute of Management Sciences. These needs go beyond the immediate scope of teaching missions. The needs also concern pedagogical engineering for the assembly of new professional Masters, a preliminary study regarding the setting up of a Master research; and finally, the question of setting up a research laboratory in the field of management. The current stage is the search for teachers to carry out the missions that the institute needs.

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