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UNIVERSITÉ DE NANTES



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Mobility Report

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Introduction:

DOCKSIDE is a structural project between European and Cambodian universities, and the Cambodian Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS). It aims to improve the quality of doctoral programs and to increase the research capacity of Khmer Higher Education Institutions (HEI). The key factor of success for this project lies in the scientific multi-disciplinary cooperation on a few specific topics include, Environmental and Maritime Research (EMR); the development of organizational capacity of Cambodian HEIs in order to implement the administrative reform proposed by Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and the improvement of quality of PhD and Master Programs.

In May 2017, DOCKSIDE called for PhD candidates, Master Students and Researcher mobility to EU up to three months. The focus of the mobility was on environmental maritime which was perfectly match with my research topic. As a PhD. student of the National University of Management, I was qualified to apply for this scholarship. Thus, I've submitted my research proposal along with others documents as required include copy of CV and motivation letter on Jun 30th 2017. The selection process carried-on by the evaluation panel consists of professors from consortium universities (Nantes, Vigo, Southern Denmark and Battambang) to evaluate the research proposals submitted by applicants from partner universities in Cambodia. Based on technical cumulative scores provided by each panel members, I was officially selected. On July 31, 2017, I received an official acceptance letter from DOCKSIDE for 3 months mobility program.

With guidance from MR. NIKOLA KUTIN, DOCKSIDE International Project Coordinator, I sorted out potential supervisors from the list provided. The list gives a brief of insights about academic backgrounds of all professors from the three universities, Nantes - France, Vigo - Spain and Southern Denmark – Denmark.

In the process, I found out that Prof. Thomas Vallée from University of Nantes was the most suited supervisor who would be able to support me based on his academic background and my research topic. I communicated with Prof. Thomas about the expectation and the mobility program, and we came to an agreement on supervisor roles and addressed some logistical assistance in France during the three months (November 01 2017 to January 30, 2018) mobility program.

Outputs:

- Better understand about the structure of research, problems, methods, citation and the model that could best respond to my research topic
- With guidance and support from Prof. Thomas Vallée, a research article was drafted.

Previous topic: The potential impacts of urbanization on maritime activities in Cambodia.

Agreed topic: Cambodia development and the sustainable development goals by looking at a) water quality versus urbanization and economic development, b) International competition for the use of Mekong river, c) National competition for the use of Mekong river). Using Input /output models to analyze the impact of economic activities on water quality (Case of Mekong River) at Cambodia and extend to regional impact.

- Networking with professors and peer students in EU to support my research
- Expand my knowledge via building and linking with global resources, international journals Research Gate and Elsevier

Activities during motility period:

To get most out the program, Professor Thomas Vallée (my Supervisor) set up a briefing meeting right on the first week upon my arrival to layout the plan over the next three months working. The meeting discussed about logistical needs to ensure comfort during my stay given the weather in France was extremely cold opposites to Cambodia, clarified research topic, problems and methods, explored extra support from other professors in Nantes, and agreed on the frequency of meeting to discuss the progress. The outcomes of the meeting are:

- Agreed to meet on monthly basis to discuss progress in between, we could meet on ad hoc basis as our office were very close to access at anytime.
 - Identified some of the weak points of my research proposal from the topics was a bit too broad “The Potential Impacts of Urbanization on Maritime Activities in Cambodia”, model to use to answer to the research questions etc.
 - Prof. Thomas, provided me with all kind of relevant research articles, recommended me to useful links from international scientific research journals.
 - Build network with key professors who has relevant academic background.
- Prof. Patrice Guillotreau, shared with me about Input-output models and how to use the models to analyze an environmental impacts cause by economic activities, we went through the equations, tables and data required for analysis. This model is useful to analysis impact of economic activities given my topic is focus on quality of water in Mekong. This model can also extend to analyze regional impact as Mekong is shared within 6 countries countries from upstream to downstream include, China, Myanmar, Thai, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.
- Enrolled in an international research journal (Research Gate and Elsevier), with the journals I could access to relevant research papers that has been done by other researchers or scholars. The resources help me to understand my topic wider; it gives me insightful information not just about what has been done but also the gaps which is significant for literature review.

- Attended workshop conferences hosted by University of Nantes, research findings were presented by researchers and scholars. Learned the process of defending the research finding, data translation and how to handle audiences.
- Participated in the ERASMUS+ networking - This forum provided opportunity to meet peers students, scholars funded by Erasmus who came from different part of the world to join in the evening gathering.
- Attended New Year party at the university of Nantes
- Attended 10th years anniversary of Maison des Chercheurs Etrangers
- Enjoyed delicious typical lunch at the University's canteen with my peer students from Bulgaria, Africa, Vietnam and French.

Way forward:

- Share lesson learned with students at the universities
- Be a resource person to assist students during pre-departure to Europe when needed
- Continue to work with supervisors to finalize the article
- Present the finding to stakeholder (Universities, donor) in Khmer or in Europe where opportunity is opened
- Publish articles in journal
- Continue to actively involve and support DOCKSIDE when needed
- Continue to seek further support from EU universities or projects to attend conference to present findings, and to build advance research skills.

Personal message:

Dockside's Mobility Program has been an eyes opening for my PhD. and personal life! The exposure in Europe along with my involvement in the project implementation has given me the opportunities to experience and learn from highly professional professors, peers, researchers and enable me access to international network that would be resourceful for academic development. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all members of DOCKSIDE, ERASMUS +, the National University of Management (H.E Prof. Hor Peng, Rector of NUM, and Prof. Kang Sovannara, Director of School of Graduate Studies), University of Nantes – France and all panels who made my scholarship possible.

My special thanks to Prof. Thomas Vallée for allocating precious time to be my supervisor, with clear guidance, I am strongly confident that I could execute my research work as planned. Thanks to Ms. Ria Deniska for all admin and logistical supports during my time in Nantes, a big thank to Mr. Nikola Kutin, who was always be there to support me day or night whenever I need help, during my time in France.

Thanks,