

BALTECH ANNUAL REPORT

Academic year 2005-2006

1. Summary

The work of BALTECH can be characterized as a slow moving process with an aim to identify topics of joint interest among the members. The biggest value lies perhaps in the fact that Baltech is a forum of exchange of information and ideas on what is going on between four universities of technology in Sweden and Finland and all universities of technology in the Baltic countries. In addition to this, there is a large number of research projects and other university related activities between the Baltech universities living their own lives outside Baltech. In spite of the large number of activities initiated by Baltech it has and still is difficult to get Baltech off the ground and flying high, far and adventurously. Obviously the value of Baltech is restrained. The underlying reasons for this have to be analyzed.

2. Finances

Baltech is financed 100% by the members. Each university contributes with a 5.000 Euro annual membership fee. The finances are good and revenues by far exceed the costs. All Baltech funds are administered by the university hosting the secretariat, ie right now the funds are with TTU. (Encl 1.)

3. Research Cooperation

The aim of the Task Forces, initiated in 2003, has been to identify research areas of common interest. However, it has been difficult to activate the participants. Thus it has been decided to evaluate their sustainability and make an evaluation of which ones will continue and which ones not. At present four out of five Task Forces have presented action plans and budgets, ie all but task force number 1 as presented below.

The present Task Force are:

1. Product Development
2. Clean Energy, (RTU in charge)
3. Sustainable Transport (KTH)
4. Eco-systems management (KTH)
5. Integrated Environmental Management (LUI)

4. Educational cooperation

Two applications for Erasmus Mundus funding have been handed in:

„Environmental management and Cleaner Production”
KTH is coordinator, and RTU, TKK, TUT and VGTU are partners.
and
“Industrial Engineering and Management”.
TTU is coordinator, and KTU, RTU, TUT and VGTU are partners.

Approval of the application is expected in the fall 2006.

5. Summer school

Baltech has encouraged the participation at summer schools organized by our universities. So far the response has been rather poor, although some minor projects have been financed.

Statutes for summer school qualification have yet to be worked out. The main principle is that support is given to the organizer of the summer school and priority should be given compensation for travel costs and participation fees of participants from the Baltech universities.

6. Conference

The conference „Cooperation between Centres of Excellence, Centres of Competence and Technology Platforms” was arranged in Vilnius on March 31, 2006. The target group of the conference was academic and administrative staff at the universities dealing with questions related to the conference topic. Approximately 40 persons participated. (Enclosure 2). Initially the conference was scheduled for the fall 2005, but had to be postponed due to lack of response from the members. According to the plans, Baltech should and could arrange two conferences per year.

7. Student activities

As from the spring 2006 the Secretariat has invited the student union at TUT to take part of Baltech activities and encouraged them to participate. As a first step, a student conference among the Baltech student unions will take place in Tallinn on June 15-16. The aim is to identify topics of joint interest and to set up a steering committee. The conference will be financed by Baltech.

There is a general consent among board members that Baltech should encourage student activities. (Enclosure 3).

8. Web page

The web-page www.baltech.info, which was launched in 2005, has further been elaborated upon and it *could* act as an active tool in the contacts between the universities. Very few people will for obvious reasons actively look for information on the site, thus information on Baltech activities has to be provided to various staff categories and units at each university in order to make it more useful. When the web site was worked out the prime objective was user friendliness based on functionality and topics rather than university specific information.

9. Governance and administrative routines

Short weekly meetings are held at TTÜ with the Chairman of the Board (prof Jakob Kübarsepp), the Secretary of Baltech (Toomas Käbin) and the web administrator (Hedvi Valgemäe). As of late also representatives of the student's union have been invited. Pertinent information on all Baltech activities is constantly provided to the board members, who in turn are requested to carry the information on in their respective university.

Baltech has signed the following agreements:

- Lennart Nilsson/KTH, coordinator of the Task Forces and research cooperation.
- Käbin Consulting OÜ/Toomas Käbin, secretary of the Baltech.

10. Board meetings

Two board meetings have been arranged, both in Vilnius, one on October 31, 2005 and the other on March 30, 2006. The main issue at the board meetings has been to report on latest developments at each and every university and to identify issues of joint interest for future projects and conferences. (Enclosure 4).

11. Information gathering

In order to identify current topics of joint concern, a field trip to all Baltech universities (except u) was done in the fall 2005 by TTÜ/Hedvi Valgemäe. The trip gave some ideas on which fields should operate and what should be published on the web site:

Personnel exchange - researchers, teaching staff, employees

Student mobility

Scholarships for students

Summer schools

Libraries

Promotional activities (within the universities)

How to improve information exchange within Baltech:

E-mail lists

Conference & events info

Job offers

There are some problems with communication within the Baltech and these of course are carried to the web site and appear as problems with updating and adding the information.

12. Nordtek

The secretariat exchanges information with Nordtek on a regular basis and has been invited to participate at some of the Nordtek annual meeting events in Helsinki in June 2006.

13. Problems

From the Secretariat we feel that the response and feedback to our ideas and suggestions is weak, this also goes for implementation of issues that have jointly been agreed upon.

Further, it seems that the information sent by the secretariat to the universities does not reach beyond the board members.

One idea to solve these shortcomings is to engage the international offices and possibly other units at the universities, who are more acquainted with operational work. One of the first steps in order hopefully to accomplish this is to engage the student unions.

No doubt, it is of utmost importance that Baltech is working with projects of common interest of all participants.