Project Planning Report

December 5, 2001

U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY
2001 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY AFFILIATIONS PROGRAM
PROPOSAL FOR A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN:

FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
AND
BUDAPEST UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMICS

Submitted by:

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Academic Fields of Project:
Environmental Studies (including atmospheric sciences, biology, chemistry, civil engineering, environmental economics, environmental sciences, history of science, science education, and science ethics)

Funding Amounts:
- Amount awarded by DOS: $120,000
- Total project cost: $496,176
- U.S. institution's cost share: $352,626
- Foreign institution's cost share: $23,550

Number of U.S. participants to be exchanged: 11 (minimum)
- Males: 9
- Females: 2

Number of Hungarian Participants to be exchanged: 11 (minimum)
- Males: 9
- Females: 2

Awarded project start date and end date: 5 Sept. 2001 through 4 Dec. 2004 (39 months)

PLANNING REPORT

A Partnership Between
Florida Institute of Technology and Budapest University of Technology and Economics
"Addressing Environmental Obstacles to Developing a Market Economy
Through a Partnership Program in Environmental Studies"
U.S. Department of State CUAP Program; CFDA 19.406

The announcement of the CUAP award was received by fax from the DOS on September 11, 2001. The first full meeting of our program working group was held shortly thereafter, on September 25, 2001. Most of the Florida Tech faculty listed in our original proposal attended this organizational meeting, except for a few that had schedule conflicts with classes or other university duties. These participants were apprised of developments via phone and email. The Florida Tech group has met roughly bi-weekly since then. Similar organizational activities were initiated at BUTE in October. The main objectives of all these meetings have been to:

(1) Initiate and facilitate potential collaborative connections between Florida Tech faculty and their BUTE colleagues;
(2) revise the original program plan to reflect the actual award date and the opinions of potential faculty participants;
(3) identify the first exchange participants and determine the necessary logistics; and
(4) create an identity and procedural structure for the program.

Dr. Gordon Nelson serves as the PI on the CUAP project, and is responsible for its overall management. Dr. Terry Oswalt serves as Dr. Nelson's executive assistant.

While the focus of the exchange program remains the same as outlined in our original proposal to the DOS we have made two substantial changes. Reflecting the actual date of award, the program began about six months later than originally proposed. Also, our planning discussions with Florida Tech and BUTE faculty have convinced us that the program will be most successful if the timing and the duration of planned visits are shorter and more flexible than described in the original proposal. Visits will most likely be 1-6 weeks, rather than full semester exchanges. This will have an adverse impact on our travel expenses (i.e. more air fare costs), however, it minimizes the logistical difficulties imposed by teaching duties, family obligations, research project needs, etc. Most importantly, *shorter visits will allow more faculty to participate than we originally envisioned*, hopefully leading to more long-term collaborations.

Activities to Date

The Florida Institute of Technology (Florida Tech) PI, Gordon Nelson, visited Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BUTE) the week of October 21st. This week involved a large number of meetings with BUTE participants and others who may have interest over the duration of the support period. Lengthy planning meetings were held with Prof. Imre Hronszky, BUTE PI and Head of the Department of Innovation Studies and History of Technology.
A seminar was held with BUTE participants and smaller meetings were held with key BUTE faculty and administrators shown in Table 1.

During a luncheon meeting the Florida and Hungarian PIs met with Dr. Istvan Takacs, Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Cultural and Scientific and

TABLE 1. Summary of Meetings Between G. Nelson and BUTE Participants
(October 2001)

Prof. Gyorgy Horvai, Vice Rector
Prof. Antal Adam, Director – Department of Research and International Relations
Mr. Andras Tokai, Counselor, Department of Scientific and Research Affairs

Prof. Janos Szlavik, Head, Department of Environmental Economics
Dr. Miklos Fule, Associate Professor

Prof. Laszlo Somlyody, Head, Department of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering

Prof. Peter Arato, Director- Center for Information Technology
Dr. Laszlo Vajta, Deputy Head, Department of Control Engineering and Information Technology

Prof. Gyorgy Keglevich, Head, Department of Organic Chemical Technology
Prof. Gyorgy Marosi, Deputy Head

Prof. Ferenc Csempesz, Vice Dean of Scientific and International Affairs, Faculty of Science
Prof. Laszlo Kozma, Vice Dean of Economic Affairs, Eotvos Lorand University (ELTE)

Dr. Hauser Zoltan, Rector, Eszterhazy Karoly Foiskola, Eger
Dr. Kis-Toth Lajos, Vice Rector

Dr. Istvan Takacs, Deputy Director General,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cultural and Scientific and Information Department

Peter Judak, Counselor
Ministry of Education, Department of International and Bilateral Relations

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Information Department and Peter Judak, Counselor of the Ministry of Education in the Department of International and Bilateral Relations. The group discussed the grant program of the US/Hungary Joint Fund. Dr. Hronszky has since submitted a proposal allied with the present project. Funds have been requested from the US/Hungary Joint Fund to support a week-long seminar at the end of June 2002. It will be held in Eger, Hungary, and will focus on the subject of ecotourism, a new concept in Hungary, and ecological issues presented by the preservation of sensitive sites that may be of interest to tourists. Appendix 1 contains a workshop prospectus.

Two days of the meeting will be spent in a joint discussion (seminar) with the Hungarian and Florida Tech teams. Two days will be spent visiting potential ecotourism sites in the Carpathian Mountains and the Upper-Tisza river region, where a major cyanide contamination incident occured. A plenary wrap-up session on the final day will be held in Budapest to generate conclusions for the seminar. The US/Hungary Joint Fund proposal will provide for travel of six Florida Tech participants to Hungary and for Hungarian conference and living expenses. These participants will include Drs. Thomas Marcinkowski (Science Education), John Morris (Biological Sciences), and Drs. Karen Chambliss, Andrew Cudmore, Michael Slotkin and Alexander Vamosi (all from the School of Management. Dr. Nelson will attend with support provided by the DOS CUAP program. Awards will be made in the February-March time frame. This is the first of what we anticipate will be a number of joint proposals for additional funding for various projects related to the partnership.

Since the notification of the CUAP award a few weeks ago, we have officially launched our program activities. For example, we have instituted regular group meetings, initiated several research collaborations, submitted a joint proposal for the summer 2002 workshop on Ecotourism outlined above, and planned several exchanges for the next six months. Well over a dozen faculty members at both sites have expressed interest in collaborating through our

partnership project. Updated resumes for Florida Tech faculty participants and their research interests are provided as a separate document ("Summary of Florida Tech Faculty Experience and Prospective Research Areas," Dec. 2001). BUTE faculty are listed in our original proposal (resumes for new participants will be forwarded to the CUAP/EPP office as the latter are identified).

Since the project has just been initiated, rather modest expenditures have been made so far (most are related to the Florida PI's planning visit to BUTE). These are summarized in Appendix 2.

During this organizational phase, we have also begun work on a prototype website for the project. Dr. Iver Duedall, of the Division of Marine and Environmental Sciences has agreed to host the CUAP website, the content of which will be moderated by Dr. Oswalt. The site will provide a readily accessible source of information about the program, the research projects and the participants, as well as links to other related curriculum materials and information sources. It will also serve as the archive for the images and materials developed during the project.

Future Activities

The revised plan for our partnership program is outlined in Table 2. While this general plan will be followed, we expect to make changes in the program as participants provide feedback on their experiences and new collaborations and opportunities develop. We will keep the CUAP program officer fully apprised of any substantive changes that may be considered.

TABLE 2. Summary of BUTE – Florida Tech Partnership Activities

(Revised, December 2001)

Year	Spring	Summer	Fall
2001	Pre-award planning	Pre-award planning **Phase 1 completed**	Grant award 9/11; Florida PI visits BUTE 10/23-27 Joint ecotourism workshop proposal submitted, 10/15
2002	BUTE PI visits Florida, 1/23-2/25; Two BUTE faculty visit Florida, 3/15-4/15	Joint ecotourism workshop at BUTE 6/24-29 6 Florida faculty to BUTE including Florida Site Dir.	(2-4 week visits) 2-3 faculty to BUTE 2-3 faculty to Florida
2003	(2-4 week visits) 2-3 faculty to BUTE 2-3 faculty to Florida	1 BUTE faculty to Florida BUTE Site Dir. to Florida External evaluation Student program planning	(2-4 week visits) 2-3 faculty to BUTE 2-3 faculty to Florida
2004	(2-4 week visits) 2-3 faculty to BUTE 2-3 faculty to Florida	**Phase 3 begins** Each Site Director visits External evaluation Student program planning	(2-4 week visits) 2-3 faculty to BUTE 2-3 faculty to Florida Student program planning
2005	**Phase 4 begins** Continued faculty exchanges, as funds permit Expansion of project areas Student program planning	Each Site Director visits External evaluation Final evaluation & report Student program finalized	Post-project development Student exchanges begin

In the spring of 2002 we have arranged an extended visit by the BUTE PI, Imre Hronszky, to Florida Tech (January 23 to February 23, 2002). Dr. Hronszky is both an administrator and participant in the project. His area of interest includes concepts of risk and risk assessment. During his visit to Florida Tech he will give several seminars, deliver a humanities lecture series public talk, and lecture classes in a number of environmentally related courses. In addition he will visit departments on campus and discuss opportunities presented by the BUTE/Florida Tech partnership.

Drs. Szlavik and Fule will visit Florida Tech for six weeks beginning in mid-March. They will give several seminars, present a humanities lecture series public talk, deliver lectures to several classes, and facilitate specific research projects, particularly in the ecotourism arena.

These initial visits of BUTE faculty will help finalize plans for summer and fall 2002. It is expected that several Florida Tech faculty will visit Hungary in the summer and in the fall semester. The exact plans and formalization of Florida Tech trips to Hungary will depend upon the outcome of the visits of the BUTE faculty and the success of the US/Hungary Joint Fund proposal described above. Assuming the success of the latter, several Florida Tech participants will extend their visits in Hungary to work with their specific partners. Dr. Nelson will also participate in the Ecotourism/ecology seminar. He will extend his visit an additional week beyond the Ecotourism/ecology seminar and will attend an international conference hosted by the Department of Organic Chemical Technology in Budapest on polymer degradation. He will also visit agencies in Hungary and Germany seeking additional funding for our partnership.

In summary, we are pleased to report that the BUTE/Florida Tech partnership has been successfully launched. Participants at both institutions eagerly look forward to a long and productive collaboration.

APPENDIX 1

Prospectus for a Joint BUTE/Florida Tech Ecotourism Workshop
24-29 June 2002, Budapest and Eger, Hungary

PI: Imre Hronszky (BUTE); coPI: Gordon Nelson (Florida Tech)

Full proposal submitted to U.S./Hungarian Science & Technology Joint Board in November 2001
Funds requested: 4,624,800 HUF

Abstract

Ecotourism consists of leisure activities requiring travel to an area restricted from development by policy, by virtue of a difficult environment, or by difficult access, centering on the visitor's interaction with nature. While nature-based tourism is the fastest growing segment of the world tourism industry, in Hungary, nature-based tourism is in its nascent stage of development. The natural beauty of Hungary offers the potential for economic growth via the utilization of environmental assets, but how does one insure that the use of those assets will not damage or destroy sensitive ecologies or reduce biodiversity?

We propose to host a U.S./Hungary workshop focusing on ways to conserve biodiversity in central Europe through carefully managed ecotourism. The workshop will be organized by the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BUTE) and the Florida Institute of Technology (Florida Tech) and extends the two universities' joint partnership in environmental studies recently funded by the U.S. State Department. The workshop will bring together scientists and management faculty from Florida Tech who are experts in biological conservation, biodiversity, ecology, environmental education, and market-based ecotourism with Hungarian collaborators.

The planned workshop will provide a forum for the comparison of experiences, matching of expertise, and the planning of follow-on research projects between the partners. Presentations will focus on environmental risks associated with tourism and strategies for implementing ecotourism in Hungary that can replace the undesirable effects of traditional tourism in environmentally sensitive areas. Of particular focus will be the identification of biodiversity issues and possible solutions. In addition, market-based strategies for conserving biodiversity, which cannot be achieved exclusively through state-subsidized programs, will be explored. Following workshop presentations and discussions, participants will visit carefully chosen sites in the upper Tisza River region that may serve as a basis for long-term cooperation of the two expert panels in connection with the development of ecotourism in Hungary. A working summary session will complete the workshop.

Overview

The United States Congressional Office of Technology Assessment defines ecotourism, or nature-based tourism, as leisure activities, requiring travel to an area restricted from development by policy, by virtue of a difficult environment, or by difficult access, centering on a visitor's interaction with nature. While ecotourism is the fastest growing segment of the world tourism industry, in Hungary, nature-based tourism is in its nascent stage of development. The natural landscapes of the middle Danubian basin offer the potential for economic growth via the utilization of environmental assets. The issues confronting Hungarian planners, and the focus of these proposed workshops, revolve around how best to surmount the economic, ecological, managerial, and educational deficiencies that serve to stymie ecotourism development.

Workshop #1: Antecedents (Slotkin, Fule)

Brevard County, the local county in which FL Tech is located, provides for a diversity of plant and wildlife habitats which increasingly draws tourists from throughout the United States as well as international travelers. In an effort to preserve its environmental assets, Brevard County has adopted a market-based approach in which targeted lands, representing vital habitats for plant and wildlife, are purchased from private landowners under a willing buyer-willing seller framework. It is these, and other protected lands, which provide the foundation for ecotourism. Workshop leaders and participants, utilizing the Brevard Model as a benchmark, will explore how market-based solutions towards the preservation of the environmental asset might be applied in Hungary.

Workshop #2: Coordination & Planning (Chambliss, Cudmore)

The promotion of nature-based tourism involves the collaboration of government agencies, entrepreneurs, and environmentalists. Attempts at coordination are ripe with what the finance literature refers to as agency conflicts. Additionally, success at drawing ecotourists necessitates a comprehensive business plan with firm grounding in project analysis and capital budgeting decisions. Workshop leaders and participants, utilizing examples of well-coordinated and inefficiently coordinated nature-tourism festivals held in the state of Florida, will explore the managerial hurdles that must be overcome for this developing industry to thrive.

Workshop #3: Estimating Economic Impacts (Vamosi, Fule)

Competing methodologies are available to ascertain economic impacts. Survey instruments, in design and practical usage, are imperfect. Nevertheless, economic assessments are vital to furtherance of ecotourism, and in this workshop, leaders and participants investigate what methodologies, survey designs, and surveying practices are appropriate for the study of ecotourism impacts in Hungary.

Workshop #4: Education/Marketing (Marcinkowski, Cudmore, Chambliss)

The effectiveness of directed marketing efforts depends upon the overall goals of the organizers of each ecotourism event. Fervent public support for the preservation of lands providing the opportunities for ecotourism is engendered via education. A compelling argument can be formed to devise a means of educating Hungarians to the advantages that land set-asides contribute to their quality of life. In a related sense, strategic marketing of this emerging economic opportunity, particularly directed towards those EU member countries whose citizens might constitute the target ecotourist market, is vital. In this workshop, leaders and participants explore what goals and precepts are necessary for a successful education and marketing plan.

Workshop #5: Sustainability (Bush, Marcinkowksi, Slotkin, Vamosi)

In a general sense, "sustainability" demands that future generations be left no worse off than their predecessors. Is ecotourism sustainable, or better yet, to what degree can ecotourism be advanced before it destroys the very foundations upon which it is built? In this workshop, ecologists, educators and economists explore the various methodologies, both in hard and social sciences, which can be utilized to formulate a sustainable "carrying capacity" for the natural landscapes, and potential tourist draws, of Hungary.

APPENDIX 2.
Project Budget

(This document is not for public use. If you need this information, contact one of the project directors)