

# OVERSEAS, OVERWHELMED

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## Abroad Perspective

Central Asia is not a region many institutions look to for establishing partnerships and exchange agreements. For those institutions interested in getting off the beaten track, the Tashkent Institute Of Irrigation And Agricultural Mechanization Engineers (TIAME), represents an interesting prospect in this part of the world.

According to Jusip Kazbekov, Director of Hydroinformatics and Water Resources at the Institute, TIAME is the leading academic and scientific institution in Central Asia for educating specialists in water resource management and agriculture. With support from the Natural Resource Management Project (NRMP) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), TIAME is a key player in working to improve energy efficiency and water resource management in Central Asia.

In the future the Centre intends to develop new projects on effective water resources management in collaboration with local and international institutions and experts, as well as providing primary and refresher training to water resources specialists in the region.

TIAME is very interested in finding some partners in Canada that are involved in water resource management. For additional information please contact either NRMP ([pludgate@nrmp.uz](mailto:pludgate@nrmp.uz)) or TIAME ([hydrotech@uzsci.net](mailto:hydrotech@uzsci.net)) offices in Tashkent, or visit <http://www.nrmp.uz/> and <http://www.nrmp.uz/tiame.htm> ♦

## Let's Go Canada!

This week, the Australians begin a series of education fairs in India. Australia holds two fairs per year in this country; one in Fall, and one in Spring.

There's a good deal of concern among Australian institutions regarding the recruitment of Indian students, as the numbers of new students for their last intake (February 2002) was well down.

This has been attributed to much tougher visa screening and the resulting public perception in India. In mid-2001, the Australian Immigration department stamped Indian student applicants as officially "least desirable". China, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon are also countries where students will face tougher visa tests to study in Australia. This action was taken as a response to significant numbers of successful visa applicants who travelled to Australia and never attended class.

Only twenty Australian institutions are expected to take part in this weeks' first fair in New Delhi. The number of participants is usually double. ♦

## Over the Counter

*This week we continue covering issues raised by working with agents in China.*

Higher-Edge has taken three visits to China in the first quarter of this year and concludes the following. Recruitment Agencies work according to provincial boundaries - separate licences are required for each province. It is not utterly clear whether such licensees are truly permitted to sub-licence to others. What is clear is that this practice is ubiquitous throughout China.

Agencies typically charge students 4000 to 5000 dollars for their service (which largely includes the processing of the application to the institution and to the Immigration section of the Canadian Embassy). An institution that works with a certain agency might well, unwittingly, have licenced the use of its authority to literally countless others through the sub-licence system. Indeed, a licence is no assurance that the agency is beyond reproach in its service to students.

Agents do participate in frauds of many kinds. Preparing fraudulent documentation is one example. Another is offering a service, such as ESL instruction in conjunction with a Canadian institution which typically bears the up-front cost. The institution is using ESL as a loss-leader to ultimately get tuition-paying students. However, unbeknownst to the institution, the agency may be collecting even in the tens of thousands of dollars from a single student for the ESL service provided.

It goes without saying that there are copious and wonderful students in China and some potentially excellent working partners to assist in recruiting them. However, due diligence in China is an utmost requirement if an institution takes seriously the preservation of the lustre and integrity of its name. For more general information on "working with agents" in China, contact [kevin.thompson@dfait-maeci.gc.ca](mailto:kevin.thompson@dfait-maeci.gc.ca) who handles the Education portfolio in Canada's Embassy in Beijing. ♦

## Globe Tipping

When using taxis abroad, it is not uncommon to become a target for overpricing. For example, in some Latin America countries, the use of meters in taxis tends to be a rarity.

A good way to avoid being taken advantage of is to ask local people how much they would pay to get from point A to point B. Given that one asks the taxi driver about the fare BEFORE getting into the taxi, one at least has some leverage and bargaining power to avoid overpaying for the ride. ♦

Please direct questions and comments to Isabelle Faucher: [isabelle@higher-edge.com](mailto:isabelle@higher-edge.com)

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