The story of the BI-Fudan MBA Programme
Over 20 years (1996-2016)

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BI Norwegian Business School established the collaboration with Fudan University in Shanghai in 1995 as one of the founding partners of the Nordic Centre. The following year, BI and Fudan School of Management established the BI-Fudan Master of Management in Change Management. The programme was recognized by the Chinese Ministry of Education as the first foreign-joint Master’s degree programme in the People’s Republic of China. Today the BI-Fudan MBA has over 2100 alumni and is ranked as No. 48 in the Financial Times EMBA worldwide ranking.
The Birth of the Programme

One meeting in Oslo, in the autumn of 1994, was the unexpected start of a success story—of BI and the Fudan University’s long-lived collaboration. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the flagship of the partnership, The BI-Fudan MBA programme, but it was a plan long in the making.

At the end of November 1994, the president of Fudan University in Shanghai, Professor Yang, visited Norway. His years in Copenhagen, Denmark as a young student and researcher at the Niels Bohr Institute had made him fascinated by the Nordic Model. As president of Fudan University, he wanted to present this model to China as an alternative to the American system.

In Oslo, Professor Yang invited Professor Kjell A. Eliassen of BI Norwegian Business and Professor Christoph Harbsmeier from the University of Oslo to a meeting. They met at Canton, the most authentic Chinese restaurant in Oslo at the time. President Yang’s aim was to find a way to create a Nordic Centre at Fudan University.

An American Centre and a Korean Centre were already successfully established at Fudan campus; now President Yang suggested finding funding to host a Nordic Centre in a building at the old campus.

On behalf of the joint University of Oslo (UIO)–BI Cooperation Committee, the Professors Harbsmeier and Eliassen were already working on a proposal for a joint University of Oslo–BI Asian strategy. Their task was to identify the different geographical and institutional options to establish cooperation agreements with one or more Asian universities—which fit perfectly with President Yang’s proposal.

During his visit to Oslo, President Yang also contacted Professor Stein Kuhnle of the Department of Comparative Politics at the University of Bergen. Professor Kuhnle had, since 1990, given several lectures on the Nordic Welfare State model and work on cooperative projects with professors at Fudan University. During his visits to Shanghai, Professor Kuhnle had taken part in informal discussions on the idea of establishing a Nordic Centre at Fudan University.

Changes and Modernization

The early 1990s were a historic period of economic and political changes and modernization in China. Improving relations with the outside world was an important philosophical shift in the government’s programme of reform. The strategy for achieving these aims of becoming a modern, industrial nation was the socialist market economy.

Ten years prior to the birth of the Nordic Centre at Fudan University, Deng Xiaoping had said: “We are doing something that China has never done before, not in a thousand years”. In addition, he noted: “current reforms will have an impact not only domestically, but also internationally.”
The Chinese government’s Open Door policy and its firm dedication to fully take part in international cooperation was applauded worldwide. During the implementation of the policy in the late 1980s and beginning of the 90s, many Chinese went to America to study and trade. New Chinese companies were established and growing, and companies from abroad were queuing up to establish businesses in China. In this new world of international business, new knowledge was highly in demand.

China had to meet the new situation with more knowledge. The Fudan University management saw the need to internationalize the education they offered and looked to find partner universities around the world. China had just started to offer MBA programmes from the early 1990s—Fudan University School of Management having two MBA classes from 1993-1994. The school’s management thus recognized the need of more experience.

They saw that while American education was well-recognized, both Europe and Japan also had good education systems and knowledge about how to do business internationally. In the beginning, many Japanese corporations came to China, so a joint programme was established, but the language problems turned out to be major ones. Instead, the university focused more on Europe, and on potential partners in France, Germany, England and Italy to establish partnerships and effectively catch up with the international standards and trends. Widely successful, the MBA and EMBA instruction at Fudan ranks highly when compared to other universities both in China and internationally.

The Challenge of Funding

In Norway, the planning continued. Professor Eliassen had learned from the experiences of several Norwegian and Nordic university centres around the world—that the general problem was having too little funding for basic activities and day-to-day operations. Obtaining funding for special events from the member institutions or sponsors was seldom a problem. Rather, the big challenge was to finance the daily running of the centres. The idea was therefore to use an executive master programme in business administration as a continuous activity in the Centre to facilitate part of the basic funding and to create activities in the Centre most of the year.

As BI already ran an MBA programme in Oslo, Professor Eliassen used this programme as a model to develop a Master of Management programme with the assistance of the leading professors of Project Management at BI, Svein Arne Jessen and Erling S. Andersen—the thinking being that the major changes going on in China required great knowledge of Project Management. Project organization was prevalent in the new efficiency- and change-oriented Chinese businesses.

They knew the programme needed to initially be implemented with European teachers working alongside Chinese co-teachers, with the goal to gradually change to have a majority of the modules be taught exclusively by Chinese teachers.

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both before and after 1994, had strategies in place for increased Norwegian activities in different parts of the world, and so this proposal complemented the new direction of Norway’s strategy within Asia. With the proposal of the Nordic Centre and the proposal of a BI-Fudan Master of Management programme as the main continuous activity within the Centre, Professor Eliassen managed to get funding from the Ministry. However, the Centre development had to also be partly financed by entry fees and annual membership fees from the participating Nordic universities, as well as have the management programme be co-funded from BI—an arrangement that was agreeable to President Yang at Fudan University.
The Centre for European and Asian Studies at BI immediately started planning of both the establishment of the BI-Fudan Master of Management Programme and of the Nordic Centre, through the small committee consisting of representatives from the universities of Oslo, Bergen and BI.

In Shanghai, President Yang of Fudan University formally accepted the position of President of the Nordic Centre. Chen Yinzhang was recruited as Deputy Director of the Centre and also acted as a representative for BI at Fudan.

**The Nordic Centre**

The three initiating institutions were all from Norway: BI, the University of Oslo and the University of Bergen, but to truly make it a Nordic Centre, other Nordic universities were invited to participate. The response was very positive, and before the opening, 15 universities were added to the list of members.

**Grand Opening**

On November 8, 1995, Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland opened the new Nordic Centre at Fudan University during her official visit to China. Half a year later, in March 1996, the new flagship of Chinese-Norwegian academic collaboration eventually was opened: The BI-Fudan Master of Management Programme in Change Management.

**Change**

Change has been a common thread throughout the programme’s history. Not only was the programme called the BI–Fudan Master of Management in Change Management from its inception in 1996, but BI and Fudan has managed to change the programme itself in line with market needs and the community around them.

In 1996, the programme consisted of 10 modules with a thesis at the end; each of the modules included an intense one-week course of lecturing, seminars and group work. The programme duration was eighteen months. Upon completion of the programme, the students were awarded the degree of Master of Management from the BI Norwegian Business School and a diploma from Fudan University. In the first year of the program, tuition fees were $6,000USD.
The Programme Module

The programme was originally organized in 10 modules:
- Module 1: Introduction to Project and Change Management
- Module 2: Business Strategy
- Module 3: Business Logistics
- Module 4: Public Management
- Module 5: Financial Management
- Module 6: Human Resource Management
- Module 7: Marketing Management
- Module 8: Quality Management
- Module 9: Technology Management
- Module 10: Business Negotiations and Culture

As the number of students attending the programme increased, it became clear that many of them had initial difficulties, both in understanding English and in the basics of topics of the taught courses. To help new students, a beginner’s course, a “Module Zero”, was started. The course contained introductions to economics, financial accounting and basic finance matters. Basic knowledge in these fields would help the new students understand, and establish a common platform for attending the ten courses of the programme. Later Economics and Finance became part of the core curriculum.

The Transfer to an MBA Programme

By the end of the 1990s, MBA programmes had become the main type of programme offered by business schools all over the world. Internationally, and now also in China, professionals saw MBA programmes as an opportunity to invest in their long term career success. The number of MBA programmes offered by Chinese universities grew rapidly. Even if the Change Management programme was still quite unique in terms of its global perspective, module structure, English language of instruction and international professors, new changes was required to meet the rising competition and the international trends.

After 7 years, the Master of Management programme was revised and upgraded into a Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme. The first class of MBA students started in 2003. After that, there have been two classes of MBA students every year. The 26th class began their MBA in June 2016 at Fudan.

The students were introduced to the concept of modern project management as a change facilitator, and then given a comprehensive explanation of the project approach. Additional modules focused on central management issues and included environmental management aspects. The last module summed up the programme through an interactive instruction of business negotiations techniques and cross-cultural thinking. The overall goal was to understand how different cultures may learn and benefit from each other in facilitating necessary and beneficial changes.

The first two classes had 20 students. After the third year, the programme moved into a new classroom with more space with capacity increasing to 48 seats. Gradually the number of students rose and the classes averaged 40 to 45 students.
Both the name and the module structure continued to change. Operational Management had become much more relevant, and Corporate Finance, Financial Accounting, and other courses related to the MBA education were added to create a much more holistic programme. From the start of the programme in 1996, a number of participants had come from the public sector. The number coming from this sector had decreased in line with the development of the economy and the impressive growth of the private sector. Thus, the Public Sector Management course was now less relevant, and was eventually removed from the syllabus.

The modules were reduced from five-day courses to four-day courses, with an interval of four to five weeks between the modules. This made it easier to combine studies with work, and became common to most MBA programmes in China.

During the following years, a number of new courses were added to give students more opportunities to choose according to their interests and needs. Now the programme consists of 15 modules, where of 11 are core courses and four are electives. Here are nine electives to choose from. In cooperation with BI’s international EMBA programme three of the elective courses are held at three of the top-ranking international business schools: the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley, and the IE Business School in Madrid, Spain.

To emphasize the international focus and BI’s role in partnership with Fudan University School of Management, the last core module in the MBA programme is held at BI’s campus in Oslo. The module concludes with the graduation, which takes place in April and October.

The international business climate changes fast, and the programme follows the latest trends to offer the master students the most up-to-date knowledge. Courses in entrepreneurship and innovation have been offered among the electives for some years, and newest module is a course in sharing economy.

Making Customized Programmes

In 1996, Ericsson decided to establish an in-house master program in INFOCOM management. The programme was designed to give a master’s degree in ICT Management to classes consisting of both mid-level Ericsson managers and managers from their customers, China Telecom and China Mobile. In early 1997, Ericsson issued a tender for developing and running this programme. There were several proposals from both European and US business schools lining up with Chinese partners.

BI, in cooperation with Fudan University School of Management, won the tender. One main advantage was that the Master of Management programme in Change Management was already running with State Educational Commission’s approval — other schools would have had to develop new joint programs and have them accepted by the Commission.

Adapted to the requirements of Ericsson INFOCOM program, the first run of the programme with the Ericsson China Academy started with 40 students on February 23, 1998 and ran until December of 1999 with a graduation ceremony in Beijing. A new program with 40 students was planned for every year with graduation programs in Oslo and/or Lund University in Sweden.
Having both Chinese Ericsson managers and managers from Chinese telecommunication companies in the same class turned out to be very successful, and Ericsson China Academy bought 5 programs. Today a large part of the top management of Chinese telecom companies is educated at the Ericsson China Academy and hold a Master of Management or EMBA degree from BI.

After this success, BI and Fudan were asked to run a similar program for the managers of a large Chinese ICT company and in 2000, BI developed and started a similar program for Alcatel Bell in Shanghai.

The Fruits of Good Collaboration

There are many reasons why cooperation between BI and Fudan has been a success. The BI-Fudan programme was from the outset recognized and supported by key forces within the governments both in China and in Norway. The two countries wanted more contact and a better relationship. The Norwegian Prime Minister opened the Nordic Centre during her visit to China in 1995, so when General Secretary Jiang Zemin visited Norway in 1996, the academic collaboration was a natural issue to discuss.

The key factor of the BI-Fudan cooperation has been the equal partnership. Both sides have provided dedicated and committed people to bring the programme forward. These people have been fundamentally interested in its success, and have been willing to stretch to solve the challenges that have emerged.

From the early 1990s, the Fudan University School of Management had run their first MBA programmes with a students—a handful each year. The American Centre at the Fudan University had already been established ten years before the start of the BI-Fudan programme, but the BI-Fudan was the first joint programme approved by the Ministry of Education.

The Dean of Fudan university School of Management saw that the school needed more experience in running MBA programmes, and starting new joint programmes together with partner schools from abroad was an effective way to get this experience. To Fudan University, the start of the Master of Management programme in association with BI was a golden opportunity. In the first classes of the Change Management programme some junior faculty members and university staff went through the programme, others were attending the class as co-teachers. Some of them were later teaching in Fudan’s own MBA programmes the following semesters; the co-teacher system has successfully existed like this throughout the 20 years.

Soon after the partnership with BI was established, the Fudan University School of Management also started collaboration with the MIT Sloan School of Management. In 2002, a joint venture was created with the Olin Business School at Washington University. Today Fudan has more than 10 school partnerships with leading business schools from the US and Europe.

An Arranged Marriage

There is a Chinese saying: “The wife you married while you were poor, you should not divorce”. BI and Fudan have maintained a long-term relationship, and after delivering quality education for 20 years, the collaboration has great credibility.
Although Fudan School of Management wanted partners, BI Norwegian Business School was not their first choice; it was the request of management at Fudan University who asked that the School of Management become BI’s collaborator to establish and run the new Master’s degree programme. In the beginning, there was some scepticism, but it helped that BI played such a central role in the creation of the Nordic Centre, and came up with the idea of creating a Change Management programme. The fact that the Norwegian government gave funding and scholarships, also was a welcomed factor. Without external funding, new master programmes would hardly be a reality. The grants were given for two plus two years, and ended after four years. With cooperation running so smoothly and seeing such immediate success, the relationship was able to flourish and mature.

Joint Office

BI is represented in China through the BI Liaison office, which currently hosts five full-time BI employees, and which is co-located with the Fudan staff in the BI-Fudan MBA administration. BI has had representatives present at the office at Fudan throughout its 20 year history. The Fudan staff is led by Executive Director Xu Huizhong. Xu Huizhong has played a central role in the management of the programme through the last 18 years of the programme’s history. The co-location and the experienced administration combined has made the cooperation between the two partner schools smoother and also influenced the quality of the programme.

An international university campus

The Fudan University has expanded greatly over the last 20 years. It merged with Shanghai Medical University (in 2000). Now the university comprises, among others, an engineering school, IT computer science, material science, media science and a law school.

There were very few foreign students on campus in 1996. Now approximately ten percent of the 30,000 students at Fudan University are non-Chinese. While most of the foreign students are from Japan and Korea, over the last years the number of Americans and Europeans has been rising. In summer, the number of international students swells by approximately another 3,000 when the summer courses in Chinese language are arranged, creating quite an international environment at the campus.

The Foreign Affairs Office of Fudan University coordinates all the international cooperation projects and programmes of the university. In the beginning, the Office provided much practical help to the newborn master programme. The Foreign Affairs Office of Fudan University and the Nordic Centre still support the BI-Fudan Programme in a number of practical matters and technical issues.

An International Mindset

The BI-Fudan MBA programme is truly international. This applies both to the academic contents of the curriculum, to the courses run in Shanghai, Singapore, USA, Spain and Oslo, and to the students and professors. This is compared to most of the competitor MBA programmes, which visit their parent university only. During the first 20 years of operation, students from 32 different countries all over the world have attended. The goal is to have a mix of international and Chinese participants, although naturally the majority of students are Chinese. An important objective of teaching has been to develop an international mindset.
There are several MBA programmes for international cooperation in China. The uniqueness of the BI-Fudan MBA programme is its incorporation of so-called Nordic Model and the Nordic business tradition, while focuses on the areas it naturally complements existing Chinese business practices. The Nordic tradition is characterized by participatory management, and cooperation is often networked with a high degree of knowledge sharing, both between employees and between management and employees. A major advantage of this model is that it is flexible and so enables companies to react quickly to market changes. This creates a favourable environment for innovation and entrepreneurship. Which is also the core of the MBA programme.

Sharing is essential, which this programme is constantly encouraging between students. By sharing their experiences in class and learning from fellow students, the participants of the programme get a unique opportunity to find their own way of performing the role of leadership. The students are encouraged to participate and to discuss in class, to improve sharing of ideas and experiences. To many students this way of learning is a new experience. During the MBA education, we see students participate more and more. They realize the value of sharing knowledge, and eventually they want to share. In this way, learning increases and the education becomes more relevant.

Discussing practical examples from their everyday work is a crucial component to the outcome of the programme. In this way, the theoretical knowledge links with practical business life; the students feel that they can relate the new knowledge to their work. They learn that the experience of fellow students may be very relevant to their own daily doings and challenges. They get more perspective, maybe even new solutions to old problems.

500 Years of Experience

The students of the BI-Fudan programme have a long working experience. In the most recent classes, the students of each class have had an average of 11 years of experience. By learning together with 40-45 other highly experienced professionals in class, and guided by highly skilled professors, they may actually share approximately 500 years of experience.
Students learn for themselves and benefit their personal career, but they also bring benefit to their companies. Student feedback has indicated that alumni have become better not only at the performing of their own job, but also at being better co-players with their associates at work after graduating from the BI-Fudan MBA programme.

The Challenge of English

In the beginning, it was a challenge both to the students and to the professors that the whole programme was taught in English, this being the first English-taught programme at Fudan. Professors who could teach in English had to be found, and not many had capacity at that time. Today, the situation is entirely different, as there are many Chinese professors giving instruction in English. Nevertheless, co-teachers are still used to support the students in class. In some classes, the co-teachers sum up the main points in Chinese after each lecture. Of course, nowadays the students usually know English very well, and many of them even use English as their daily working language.

Experienced and Skilled Students

Competent and experienced students have been a success factor during the history of the BI-Fudan programme. In the early years, most of the private sector participants came from Nordic joint ventures located in Shanghai. Gradually, however, also other international companies and big Chinese companies sent their managers (participants mostly being from mid-level management).

One of the most attractive features of the programme, in addition to awarding an international business master degree, is that students are able to get a degree that was recognized by Chinese authorities, and at the same time, is relevant for advancement in the Chinese hierarchy. While Chinese law did not allow double degrees with foreign institutions, they do allow foreign universities to give a recognized degree in China and at the same time allow the Chinese partner institution to issue a certificate indicating that this degree was taken at this institution. Thus, students receive a degree and certificate useful for upward mobility in the Chinese system. This was important, because the number of master students allowed to enter a Chinese university was, and is today, quite limited. The foreign degree with a certificate was a way to circumvent this restriction — it was seen nearly as being a student inside the restricted numbers of Chinese students recruited to Chinese programmes.

As a support to the public sector and small companies in China, grants were provided for Chinese public managers and Chinese SMB managers during the first years of the program. A great number of the companies taking part in the Norwegian Business delegation that accompanied the Norwegian Prime Minister on her visit in November 1995 contributed grant for combined total of 29. As a result of an initiative from the Norwegian Prime Minister’s Office, NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) agreed to match the private sector grants to the Centre one to one. This strategy of giving grants to public managers and then to have them in the same class as the managers from private companies was a great success. The positive outcome led NORAD to give a further 29 grants to future public managers in the following year. BI thus secured, through Norwegian enterprises and NORAD, in total 87 grants for Chinese public officials and SMB managers.
To ensure the quality of students, a limit of five years of professional experience was set, though many participants have had much more than ten years of working experience when starting out the programme. According to the profile of the six most recent classes, the average management experience has been 5.6 years.

China’s professional managers have changed in many ways during the 20 years the BI-Fudan programme has existed, which has been reflected in the classes. Shanghai’s business environment has become increasingly international; today’s students have much higher English skills, and they are more extroverted and confident than ever before. Sharing has been a core value in the programme since its inception and while in the early days, it was a challenge to achieve open and good discussions in the classroom; now there are ongoing lively discussions on a variety of topics.

All students evaluate their classes and give feedback. The experiences and advice of the graduated students are taken into consideration as the modules of the programme adapt and change. This also affects the work of the professors. Many of the professors have become highly experienced in teaching their topics, but they also have to develop and improve the courses and their way of teaching. From time to time, the composition of modules has been changed, as there has been and will always be a balance between experience and modernization.

An Active Alumni Network

BI is known for its excellent alumni network, with the active network of BI alumni including over 70,000 members both in Norway and internationally. The alumni of the Masters of the BI-Fudan programme are affiliated with this network through their own joint association for both students and alumni, called “the Join and Share Community.”

Sharing remains a key word with the BI-Fudan alumni. Every year the alumni association organizes a large number of different events and have an active Facebook group where old classmates can keep in contact. Alumni in different branches and with the same interest gather in different clubs within the alumni organization, so you will find industries clubs for leaders in the same industries, i.e. marketing, IT management and the medical and health industry while other clubs are based on their functions at work. Still others are based on the alumni’s interests, like golf and wines. At the alumni events, the professionals get the opportunity to refresh their knowledge, strengthen and broaden their professional network and to get professional refill through sharing experiences.
The BI-Fudan alumni are important to the programme, and numbers roughly 2,200 members. In the past 20 years, the alumni have been the most important channel for recruiting new students. In recent years, the programme has had around 60 percent of students come through referrals by former students. When leaders and other highly skilled professionals give recommendations, the message to the potential applicant is much stronger than just reading a brochure or a website.

Even before they apply, prospective students are invited to take part in some of the alumni events. To get to know the programme better in advance, and to meet some of their future classmates, the applicants are also invited to participate in a group interview where different aspect of the programme are discussed. Former students are also invited to participate in the group interviews of new applicants, to share their experiences.

An Inspired Faculty

One important goal of the programme is to provide Chinese and international professionals with a recognized MBA that can bring new knowledge to their enterprises and industries. In the fierce competition among MBA programmes, it is critical to deliver relevant and timely content.

BI has always sent their best, top lecturers to the programme; people who are pragmatic, willing to change, and adaptable. Initially BI was the one partner who brought the main business knowledge into the partnership, but this has changed as scientific contribution has become much more reciprocal. In the beginning, mainly BI professors lectured, however, today, Chinese professors teach a number of courses. In addition the Chinese professors always have played the important role of co-teachers for support.
The professors who have taught in the Change Management programme have been among the world leaders in this field. Change Management is about how to deal with the rapid development of various changes in the business environment, with particular focus on the Chinese market. With the strong growth of Chinese economy and major changes in business in both China and internationally, such knowledge has been essential to managers operating in the Chinese market.

The international and Chinese professors appreciate teaching in the programme, as active students and good discussions in the classes create a very good environment for both teaching and learning. The master’s students are often experienced and skilled managers who are committed and demanding students. This adds an extra challenge to the professors who teach as they must captivate the students’ interest and hold their attention to succeed. In this area, there has been a lot to learn also for BI’s experienced professors.

**Top Ranking and High Quality**

The BI-Fudan Master of Management programme was the first master’s programme in China to receive the acceptance of the Chinese Ministry of Education, allowing a foreign university to give a recognized degree in China.

Being the first to get this recognition with a foreign degree and a Chinese university certificate, the programme has become the largest cooperative master’s programme in business management with a foreign university in China, in terms of the number of alumni.

In 1996, the number of rival master programmes was limited. Only the largest and best Chinese business schools had an MBA programme, but after some years, MBA programmes were offered by a large number of the smaller schools, with varying quality. In the late 1990s, the Ministry of Education stopped approving new MBA programmes in China. The number of MBAs had grown too high, and it was important to ensure the quality of the existing programmes, rather than start new ones. To be competitive, BI, Fudan, and the joint programme administration had to be attentive to maintaining quality and the reputation of the programme. Obtaining high quality became essential to meet the increasing competition.

International ranking became extremely important, especially the Financial Times’ ranking. This is the most prestigious of all the rankings of the academic communities worldwide. Most of the competitors relate to this ranking. Competition for ranking is fierce and many universities adapt their study to get the highest possible position on the charts.
FT rankings and other ranking lists have several functions. Students use them when selecting which university to choose, and employers hiring managers use rankings when choosing between candidates. Employers also use the rankings when deciding to which programmes they should send their staff.

Good ranking of the BI-Fudan MBA programme has a positive impact on BI’s and Fudan’s own rankings as well. As of March 2016, 73 business schools in the world hold the so-called Triple Crown accreditation from the most sought-after international accreditations: AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS. These are three of the highest regarded international accreditations in the realm of higher business education, and BI Norwegian Business School is Triple Crown accredited.

The ranking process requires a lot of reporting. Students and alumni are interviewed and surveyed. In addition, both BI and Fudan School of Management report in detail about the programme and the professors. Students report their salary level and career prior to the studies and their expectations in these areas. Similarly, former students are asked about their salary increases and careers after graduation, and whether their expectations concerning this are met.

From the students’ perspective, accreditation provides a list of viable schools, and students who select accredited schools are getting an MBA that will most likely benefit their career options and afford them a study of high quality. The BI-Fudan MBA Programme has an ambition to be the most influential institution educating Chinese business managers and middle managers. The feedback from the alumni has been very good, with many reporting that the programme has improved their career and salary.

The Rankings

The BI-Fudan MBA places No. 48 worldwide and ranked No. 6 globally amongst Part-time MBA Programmes in 2015 by Financial Times (FT). BI Norwegian Business School is ranked No. 1 in Norway, and was ranked No. 44 in Financial Times European Business School Rankings 2014. Fudan is ranked as No.3 in China, and No. 96 Best Global University in the US News ranking of 2016.

A Future of Change

According to China’s new Five Year Plan, new visions, enterprise and innovation are important factors to the country’s lasting success. China’s leaders have stressed that tough measures are required to ensure a continued increase of prosperity in the country. The BI-Fudan programme aims to continue providing the tools that enables managers to implement changes.

The One Belt and One Road Initiative is a development strategy and framework, proposed by Xi Jinping in 2013. The initiative focuses on connectivity and cooperation between China and the rest of Eurasia. It consists of two main components, the land-based «Silk Road Economic Belt» and the ocean-going «Maritime Silk Road». The strategy underlines China’s push to take an even bigger role in global affairs and are plans with major impacts and repercussions.

Great innovators are seen as society’s heroes in China. Innovation and entrepreneurship are important subjects, and will be so in the future. That is why the BI-Fudan MBA programme has implemented a separate module at Berkeley focusing on entrepreneurship creativity, which has become one of the most popular electives.
Although the growth in the Chinese economy still is high compared to other major countries, there are clear signs that growth over the coming years may be slower than seen historically. In this new situation, fewer of the Chinese corporations and joint ventures are likely to sponsor students for the programme—despite the fact is that harder times require business managers with even more knowledge.

During recent years, China’s MBA market has grown very rapidly. This development has probably reached its peak. In the future, we will see a more mature market, with more intensive competition between the universities. Only the best MBA programmes will succeed in this competition. The BI-Fudan MBA programme has a clear ambition to stay in the position as one of the best foreign cooperative MBA programmes in China. The programme has always changed in line with varying demands, and so it will in the future; we live what we teach.