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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUA-Agricultural University of Athens
AUT-Agricultural University of Tirana
EUT-European University of Tirana
EU-European Union
CULS- Czech University of Life Sciences Prague
D-deliverable
UHZ-University of Haxhi Zeka
UC-Universium College
UNSA-University of Sarajevo
UNBI-University of Bihac
USAMVB - University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest
WP-Work package

Purpose, Objectives and Elements of Meeting

STEPS Final Conference Meeting was held in Tirana, in Agricultural University of Tirana, as a four-day event, from 10th to 13th January 2023. This was the final meeting organized in the frame of STEPS project, with the participation of project partners and students, who are pursuing a Joint Master of Science in Sustainable Food Production Systems, with two profiles: 1. Food Engineering, Quality and Safety; 2. Management of Food Systems. The project's history and evolution, objectives achieved, partnership, sustainability of the STEPS master programme in the future, were some of the topic's discussed in the meeting. Management issues regarding the finalized of some deliverables (reports) and preparation of documentation for the Final Report were also discussed in the meeting.



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT), Albania

[Leader]

1. Prof. Dr. Renata Kongoli
2. Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku (Rector of AUT)
3. Prof. Dr. Kapllan Sulaj (Dean of FBF-AUT)
4. Prof. Asoc. Nertil Xhaferaj
5. Dr. Enkeleda Berberi
6. Dr. Alketa Shehaj
7. Dr. Klotilda Marku
8. Phd Cand. Mamica Ruci

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CULS), Czech Republic

9. Jakup Husak
10. Jiri Zeleny

University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest (USAMVB), Romania

11. Assoc. Prof. dr. Maria TOADER
12. Prof. Dr. Viorel ION
13. Lect. Dr. Adrian Gheorghe BASA

Agricultural University of Athens (AUA), Greece

1. Assoc. Prof. Giannis Tsoulfas
2. Assoc. Prof. Katerina Marinagi
3. Assoc. Prof. Kanellos Toudas

Research Innovation and Development Lab Private Company (ReadLab), Greece

4. Alex Vuoros (*will attend online*)
5. Vassiliki Chatzipetrou

European University of Tirana (UET), Albania

6. Kebjana Haka
7. Fatri Morina

University "Haxhi Zeka" (UHZ), Kosovo

8. Prof. Dr. Agim Rysha
9. Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Hoxha
10. Prof. Assoc. Dr. Nexhdet Shala
11. Prof. Assoc. Dr. Arsim Elshani

Universum College (UC), Kosovo

12. Prof. Assoc. Sejdi Xhemaili
13. Prof. Assoc. Filipi Ruxho
14. Prof. Dr. Gentiana Berisha
15. Ms. Gabriela Uka
16. Prof. Uran Rraci
17. Prof. Ass. Fejzullah Beha

University of Bihac (UNBI), Bosnia and Herzegovina

18. Emir Mujic

University of Sarajevo (UNSA), Bosnia and Herzegovina

19. Prof. Dr Sabahudin Bajramovic

20. Prof. Dr Zlatan Saric

21. Prof. Dr Amir Ganic

22. Prof. Dr Vedad Falan

Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Una- Sana Canton (MESCS USK), Bosnia and Herzegovina

STEPS Master of Science Students

Wednesday, January 11th, 2023

1. Welcome and official opening of the Final meeting

Prof. Dr. Renata Kongoli, as the STEPS project coordinator, held the welcome speech. She made a short introduction and a brief description of the project, focus on relevant goals and objectives of the meeting. Prof. Kongoli welcomes also the special guests in the meeting: the Rector of Agricultural University of Tirana, **Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku**, the Dean of the Faculty of Food and Biotechnology, **Prof. Dr. Kapllan Sulaj** and the Representative of Erasmus + Office in Tirana, Albania.

All of the participants at the STEPS project's final meeting were thanked by the rector of the AUT, **Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku**, in his opening remarks. A special acknowledgment was addressed to the STEPS project's partners from Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Greece, and the Czech Republic for all of their efforts and contributions. Also, being the first generation that will be graduated in the field of "Sustainable Food production Systems," the Rector gave special attention in his remarks to the STEPS Master's students present at the conference. At the end of his speech, he hoped for other equally fruitful collaborations in the field of education and science.

Prof. Dr. Kapllan Sulaj, initially spoke on behalf of the Faculty of Biotechnology and Food and welcomed the STEPS project participants to the meeting. In his speech, he emphasized the importance of this project, which has been finalized with the opening of a Scientific Master's degree in "Sustainable food production systems". He also expressed his gratitude to the STEPS project's partners for their efforts and contributions. He concluded by expressing his expectation for other successful collaboration in the future.

Erasmus office representative in Tirana:

The Representative of Erasmus + Office in Tirana, Mrs. Ada Ramaj, was present in the final meeting of STEPS project. The following is a quote of Mrs. Ada Ramaj speech during the meeting:

"Erasmus + programme puts an extra attention on the environment, and we have it in this Master of Science programme. We want healthier food, and this Master of Science programme foresees socially accepted food production of high quality.

Sustainability is also an important component. I would like to mention here the development of 2 labs: "Food quality control Lab" and "Food production Systems management lab". Both will help the students to have the very much needed practical part of the studies.

Also, with great pleasure I notice the good work and I take the opportunity to congratulate all the staff that had an energetic start of the project and with the same enthusiasm and dedication implemented and finalized it."

2. Agenda overview - goal and expected outcomes of the meeting

Prof. Dr. R. Kongoli made a brief presentation of the agenda regarding the activities that will be developed during the 2 days of the meeting and expected outcomes of the meeting regarding the STEPS project. Also, she delivered to all the participants the final Booklet of STEPS project.

3. The project's history and evolution - rationale, objectives, partnership, future trends

STEPS project background, development, implementation of the project during these 3 years with all the difficulties and obstacles encountered were underline in the presentation of **Prof.Dr. Renata Kongoli**.

A special section of the presentation was dedicated to the structure and licensing/accreditation of Joint Master of Science programme "Sustainable Food Production Systems/STEPS" as the main aim of the project. She explained some of the reason that forced the consortium to open the STEPS master as joint at country level. According to Prof.Dr. Renata Kongoli some of the factors are as follows:

- Different priorities of agri-food sectors in three countries
- Different Legislative Framework and National Strategies



- Different accreditation process
- Difficulties in staff and student exchange, because of Visas, costs, COVID-19

She continued by mention some of the factors that served as the main driver and where the design of the master program was based:

- The results obtain after the analyzes of stakeholders needs data in frame of sustainable food production system in Albania, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- The results obtain after the survey of best practices in frame of sustainable food production systems master programs implemented in EU countries and worldwide.
- Bologna convention regarding the Higher Education Polices.
- Higher Education legislation and policies applied in Western Balkan countries, Albania, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina

At the end of her word **Prof. Dr. Renata Kongoli** analyses the impact that the Master of Science in “Sustainable Food Production Systems” will have at country level, regional level and wider.

4. Development of STEPS master structure and courses design

The development of STEPS master structure and courses design was part of the WP-2, for which USAMVB is the task leader. **Prof. Dr. Maria Toader** gave a comprehensive presentation regarding the design of STEPS master curriculum and the design of STEPS master courses. Basically, she explained:

- The methodology followed for the development of STEPS master structure
- Type of courses developed
- No. of core courses (Food engineering, quality, and safety (courses) – 3 (50%) and Food production systems management (courses) – 3 (50%)
- No. of elective courses
- Type of syllabus used for STEPS master courses¹

5. Development and harmonize the content of the STEPS courses.

Development and harmonization of the content of the STEPS master was part of WP-4, for which UNSA was the task leader. **Prof. Dr Milenko Blesic**, on behalf of his colleague (UNSA) gave a comprehensive presentation regarding the harmonization of STEPS master courses. Basically **Prof. Dr Milenko Blesic** explain how the Academic staff from all project partner HEIs, with the supervision and support of academic staff from program partner HEIs, developed core/compulsory and elective STEPS courses according to all mutually agreed criteria (unique form of syllabus, ECTS allocation, defined learning objectives and learning outcomes, etc.). he continued by saying that STEPS courses are developed for four STEPS study programs (AUT & EUT – Albania; UHZ & UC – Kosovo; UNBI – BiH; UNSA – BiH). He continued by underlining that a total of 87 STEPS courses were developed. Among them are 6 STEPS core/compulsory courses for all four STEPS study programs, which were developed with a very high degree of mutual harmonization.

All developed STEPS courses are presented in the Catalogue of STEPS courses.²

6. Implementation of STEPS infrastructure (laboratory development) and master program

Development of STEPS infrastructure was part of WP-5, for which the UNBI was task leader. **Prof. Assoc. Dr. Emir Mujic**, contact point of UNBI team gave a comprehensive presentation regarding the harmonization of STEPS master courses (via online). **Prof. Assoc. Dr. Emir Mujic** underlined that all partner universities have successfully completed

¹ For a detailed information in the frame of STEPS master structure development and courses design check the report D2.2- <http://steps-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/D2.1-STEPS-structure-and-courses.pdf>

D2.4- <http://steps-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/D2.4.-final-version.pdf>

² For a detailed information in the frame of STEPS courses development and harmonization check the report D4.2-Development and harmonization of STEPS courses

their tendering procedures for equipment procurement and installation. Completion of activities in task 5.1 Development of teaching/learning environment provided conditions for the development of two types of laboratories ("Food Quality Control Lab" and "Food Production Systems Management Lab"), and for continuing work on the activities 5.2 and 5.3 within WP5³. The equipment is intensively used for the improvement of the quality of teaching and the level of knowledge delivered also improving the potentials of the scientific staff to prepare and publish research articles in international scientific journals and conferences.

7. Establishing STEPS LMS platform - Activities and results

Alex Vorus, ReadLab P.C; Vassiliki Chatzipetrou

In the presentation of Mrs Vassiliki Chatzipetrou for the Establishing STEPS LMS platform, which was done as a form of discussion, she presented the format of the platform, and why it was chosen. Two platforms were taken into consideration, Moodle and Open edX technology. After some evaluation regarding the flexibility, user-friendly, didactic material that can be used or other parameters, was chosen Open edX.

Open edX technology allows the creation of engaging learning sequences, creating simple problems, uploading videos, and photos, creating discussions, making assessments and giving feedback to students and tracking their performance. Also, this platform can, if it is developed, to emit certificates for the students who enroll and finish a course. Based on STEPS partner lectures' experience delivering massive open online courses, this technology is a modern approach that allows the course to handle many concurrent participants. As a result, Mrs. Vassiliki Chatzipetrou advised all the partner country participants to keep using the platform and upload as much material as possible to help students prepare themselves.

8. Development and delivery of courses via STEPS platform - Activities and results

Dr. Alketa Shehaj, Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT)

Prof. Assoc. Giannis Tsoulfas

The STEPS platform LMS is very important for this project, that why all the partners have given their full contribution in this process. During the presentation, Dr. Alketa Shehaj, has given an overview of the process till the beginning of the implementation of the LMS platform, the trainings that were done from the DAE TEAM and Kostika Gorica. During the presentation, Dr. Alketa Shehaj, has given some data on the no of the academic staff and students that were registered in the platform, no of the courses that were opened, languages that were uses etc. It was given a presentation of the platform for all the benefits that the staff can have form using it, and for the evaluation of the students. Also this platform is very friendly for the students, because of the facilities for using it.

But, during the discussion it was underlined the fact that was difficult to convince the academic staff to upload the material in the platform, but all the countries partner representative were convinced that this platform is necessary and they will continue to push the staff to upload the remain material in the platform, and will rich it will new material.

9. Our experiences with LMS platform for developing courses and teachers' competencies

EUT, UNSA, UNBI, UHZ, UC; students' representatives

Students from all the partner countries where the Master of Science STEPS, with two profiles study programs, was implemented expressed their experience in using the platform. Some of them were familiar and for others was a

³ For a detailed information in the frame of STEPS infrastructure development check the reports on:

D5.2-<http://steps-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/1.-WP5-D5.2.-Development-of-research-labs-V-05-final-version-29.11.2021-new-FINAL-According-to-QE.doc.pdf>

D5.3-<http://steps-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/WP5-D5.3.-Development-of-experiments-simulations-and-training-material-draft-tampl-UNBI-UNSA-UHZ-AUT-EUT-contr.-V05.pdf>



new experience. All said that with the help of the academic staff, they were able to register on the platform, enroll in the courses, and follow all the instructions that were needed. They follow the courses on-site in the class and then the lectures upload the material on the platform, where the students can read them when they have free time, also make the exercise or respond to a discussion that the lecture has opened with the subject of the courses they follow. Some of them were familiar with almost all the platforms, but some others were trying to use as much as possible to learn every step and option of the platform.

10. Dissemination /exploitation of STEPS project

Dissemination & Exploitation of STEPS project was part of WP-9 for which AUT is the task leader. **Dr. Enkeleda Berberi**, on behalf of her colleague from AUT) gave a comprehensive presentation regarding the dissemination activities implemented in the frame of STEPS project. She was focused on the work done in all the task that are part of WP9. A special section in her presentation was dedicated to the T9.4 “Organization of workshop”, T9.5 “Laboratory demonstration”, dissemination material that have been developed from the partner countries:

- ✓ No. of leaflet printed,
- ✓ No. newsletters
- ✓ No. of articles and participation in scientific conferences
- ✓ No. of stakeholders in workshop/lab. demonstrations
- ✓ topic that was discussed during workshop
- ✓ type of laboratory demonstration,
- ✓ Results from questionnaire delivered during the workshop/lab demonstration
- ✓ others⁴

11. Quality assurance and monitoring - Activities and results

Quality assurance and monitoring is part of WP-8 for which Read Lab. P.C is the task leader. Mrs. Vassiliki Chatzipetrou on behalf of her colleague (Read Lab P.C.) gave a comprehensive presentation regarding the quality assurance and deliverable monitoring of STEPS project. Briefly in her [presentation it was underline:

- D3.2 Training seminars – in progress (due date: end of project?)

Final Review Recommendation: All training seminars should be summarized in a single deliverable. It is necessary to highlight numbers of seminars, participants

- D3.3 Continuous professional development

Final Review Recommendation: Prepare a complete and full of demonstrated impact on teachers’ professional development report.

- D4.3 Digitized educational material

Final Review Recommendation: It is necessary to report numbers and demonstrate the quality of the material developed, by providing links and giving access.

- D5.3 Experiments/Simulations and training material

Final Review Recommendation: It is necessary to report numbers and demonstrate the quality of the material developed, by providing links and giving access.

⁴ For a detailed information in the frame of STEPS project dissemination activities check the main STEPS website, www.steps-project.eu and the reports

D9.4-Organization of workshops

D9.5-Organization of Laboratory Demonstration

D9.7-Third Annual Report (Dissemination & Exploitation)

- D6.1 Preparation for Accreditation
Recommendation: To avoid duplicated information, single chapters could be used for joint MSc programmes (accreditation procedures could stand on a country level, in this case – Albania, Kosovo)
- D7.2 STEPS program delivery
Final Review Recommendation: It is necessary to highlight important information (based on numbers) related to the added value and the impact of the MSc programme.

Thursday, 12th of January 2023

1. Agenda overview

Prof. Dr. Renata Kongoli, contact person and Project manager, hold the opening speech, and presented the agenda of the second day of meeting which was held in AUT.

2. Agreement on Education, Scientific and Technical cooperation in frame of Sustainability of STEPS project.

All the STEPS partners were familiar with the document of **Agreement on Education, Scientific and Technical cooperation in frame of Sustainability of STEPS project**. They have all contributed to deliver a final version of the Agreement and all the partners have agreed to sign it.

3. Management of the project

Prof. Renata Kongoli, gave a comprehensive presentation regarding the management of the project⁵. After a detailed check of all deliverables, she underlines the necessity to respect the established deadline for the:

- Formatting of the reports in accordance with the STEPS template for reporting (January 20, 2023)
- Finalization of the reports in accordance with the recommendation of the Quality Team (January 27, 2023)
- Finalization of Financial statement from each STEPS partner
- Contribution of each STEPS partner in the Final Technical Report of STEPS project.

4. Overview of deliverables, budget and supporting documents of each institution

1. **AUT, Renata Kongoli** (10min)
2. **EUT, Kebjana Haka** (10min)
3. **UHZ, Agim Ryshaj** (10min)
4. **UC, Uran Rraci** (10min)
5. **UNBI, Emir Mujic** (10min)
6. **UNSA, Sabahudin Bajramovic** (10min)
7. **MESK USK**, (10min)
8. **USAM VB, Maria Toader**(10min)
9. **CULS, Michal Lošták** (10min)
10. **AUA Giannis Tsoulfas** (10 min)
11. **ReadLab P.C Alex Vuros** (10 min)

All the contact points of STEPS partner (contact point of UNBI and MESKUSK attend the meeting online) gave a short

⁵ A detailed information regarding the meetings organized in the frame of STEPS project can be found in www.steps-project.eu. D10.3. Coordination and Management (Second Annual report and Third Annual report)



presentation where do they stand in the frame of task and their deliverables for which they are leader. Furthermore, they gave a general information about the financial statement.

AUT reported in frame of WP-9 and WP 10. EUT reported in frame of WP-1. UHZ reported in frame of WP-3. UC reported about the financial statement. UNBI reported on WP-5 and on WP-7. UNSA reported on WP4. USAMVB reported in the frame of Wp-2. ReadLab. P.C reported in frame of WP-8. CULS and AUA reported about the financial statement.

4. How to write the Final Report, Final Discussion, Conclusions, Closure of the meeting

Prof. Dr. Renata Kongoli, Agricultural University of Tirana, All Partners

The final discussion was focused on the development of the Final report. Each partner of the STEPS project must compile the Table of Achievement referring to the work package for which they were responsible.

CONCLUSION

After a two-day meeting in Agricultural University of Tirana conclusion along with the setting a deadline for the delivered of reports are as follows:

- 1. The reports outlined in each WP (which are not finalized) must be submitted to the coordinator by all STEPS project partners during the month of January 2023**
- 2. It was decided that all the partners must fill the financial table within the month of January 2023.**
- 3. STEPS partner who hasn't signed the "Agreement on Agreement on Education, Scientific and Technical cooperation in frame of Sustainability of STEPS project" must do it within the month of January 2023.**
- 4. Each partner of the STEPS project must compile the Table of Achievement referring to the work package for which they were responsible and delivered it within the month of January 2023.**

Recommendation for each partner in order to fulfill their obligations are as follows:

D3.2 Training seminars – in progress (due date: end of project?)

Final Review Recommendation: All training seminars should be summarized in a single deliverable. It is necessary to highlight numbers of seminars, participants

D3.3 Continuous professional development

Final Review Recommendation: Prepare a complete and full of demonstrated impact on teachers' professional development report.

D4.3 Digitized educational material

Final Review Recommendation: It is necessary to report numbers and demonstrate the quality of the material developed, by providing links and giving access.

D5.3 Experiments/Simulations and training material

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D6.1 Preparation for Accreditation

Recommendation: To avoid duplicated information, single chapters could be used for joint MSc programmes (accreditation procedures could stand on a country level, in this case – Albania, Kosovo)

D7.2 STEPS program delivery

Final Review Recommendation: It is necessary to highlight important information (based on numbers) related to the added value and the impact of the MSc programme.