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**D 6.1. PREPARATION OF THE APPLICATION
OF STEPS PROGRAMME FOR
ACCREDITATION
WP6 - DEVELOPMENT
STEPS application for official accreditation**



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Deliverable 6.1. STEPS application for accreditation

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Author(s):	<i>Adisa Eminoglu, Albija Trnavci, Nezira Sadiković</i>
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Approved on behalf of STEPS

Name

Partner

STEPS Management Team

Position

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The accreditation of the Study Programme Master of Sciences in "Sustainable Food Production Systems" (STEPS) in Western Balkans countries involved in the project STEPS, is one of the objectives of the project; this study programme will be in compliance with the national legislation of each partner country who prepare and deliver the application and the Bologna convention. Partner countries HEIs prepared and submitted the application and a self-evaluation report to the national authorities in Western Balkans countries.

1 INTRODUCTION

2.1. Aims and objectives of STEPS project

The main objective of the project is the implementation of a modern MSc programme on “Sustainable food production systems”, compliant with the Bologna convention. Food culture and sociology, agriculture and rural development, food engineering, quality and safety, environmental footprints, economics, management and governance will be combined in a flexible and modular educational programme, designed and developed in the light of the European initiative for the transition to a circular economy.

Partner countries' HEIs will be supported in order to help them provide an education aligned to the needs of the labor market and society. Laboratories will be equipped with experimental devices, computers and software. Scientific staff of the HEIs involved in the consortium will have the opportunity to enrich their scientific background and be familiarized with modern educational methodologies and ICT tools, in order to practise student-based approaches, and provide teaching based on learning outcomes.

2.2. Guidelines

The following guidelines were provided to Western Balkans HEIs to facilitate the preparation of the accreditation process as well as the objectives of this work package.

1. *Organisational structure of HEIs, funding and financial related mechanisms,*
2. *Strategy of the HEIs at institutional level,*
3. *Structure of the STEPS study programme, the number, the list of courses and the sum of the ECTS offered by the STEPS study programme,*
4. *Courses content and ECTS credits assigned,*
5. *Assessment and examination procedures and grading*
6. *Capacity of the institutions and laboratories to accommodate students, laboratory exercises and demonstrations, in terms of infrastructures, faculty and administration services.*
7. *Arrangements that will ensure the sustainability of the STEPS study programme”*
8. *Preparation of the application of STEPS study programme for accreditation at the University,*
9. *Preparation and submission of application and self-evaluation report,*
10. *Review of the self-evaluation report by the National Accreditation Agency*
11. *Organisation of a visit of external experts (Commission of Experts) and conduction of the external evaluation report,*
12. *Specification of subsequent activities carried out by HEIs in compliance to the recommendations of the Commission of Experts Report*

Provide all documents related to the **Preparation of the application of STEPS study programme for accreditation** (scanned PDF file), depending on your internal procedures, with translation of the

document or document title. Supporting documents for development experiments / simulations and training material should include:

- ✓ *Documents/procedures (e.g. Procedures at Universities, Requirements, Decisions)*
- ✓ *Documents (e.g. Decision), Reports-Self-evaluation;*
- ✓ *Accreditation application documents / procedures.*
- ✓ *Other information you consider relevant in the accreditation process.*

2 STEPS APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION IN PARTNER COUNTRIES HEIs

Accreditation of study programmes is an obligation for all the countries involved in the consortium. All HEIs are Institutionally accredited and have significant experience in related applications and procedures / applications. Accreditation of STEPS was carried out on the basis of a plan prepared by the higher education institutions, the educational authority and the Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance.

Partner countries HEIs prepared and submitted the application and a self-evaluation report to the national authorities in Western Balkans countries:

- *UET and AUT apply for accreditation of the STEPS programme in Albania*
- *UHZ and UC applied for accreditation of the STEPS programme in Kosovo*
- *UNSA and UNBI assisted by MESCS USK applied for accreditation in Bosnia-Herzegovina*

Official accreditation of study programmes in Western Balkans is structured according to a 4-step model that includes:

- *Preparation and submission of application and self-evaluation report*
- *Review of the self-evaluation report by the National Accreditation Agency*
- *Organization of the visit of external experts (Commission of Experts) and conduction of the external evaluation report*
- *Subsequent activities carried out by HEIs in compliance to the recommendations of the Commission of Experts report*

Partner countries HEIs prepared the application that includes all the formal information about the status, Regulation of University Studies, the financial issue, and the legal documents etc. while they also prepared a self-evaluation report to be submitted to the national authorities. Self-evaluation report is the results of the internal evaluation of the STEPS programme based on European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG).

3 STEPS APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION IN ALBANIA

STEPS application for accreditation at Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT-P1) and European University of Tirana (EUT-P2)

3.1 Organisational structure of HEIs, funding and financial related mechanisms

Established on November 1, 1951, AUT is the oldest university in Albania. Initially, it operated as the Higher State Institute for Agriculture and further during the history of its operation, it was granted the status as the Agricultural University of Tirana. AUT carefully preserves its academic values, demonstrated by its ambitious development and research strategies, continuous staff training, increased international collaboration, and institutionalisation of relationships with business companies. Considering the study programs offered, AUT is a unique centre of higher education in Albania. The focus of its activity is education, scientific research and knowledge transfer. AUT promotes basic and applied scientific research; it ensures the coordination and development of research projects at national and international level, promotes the acquisition of the most advanced scientific and technological knowledge, and gives value to its expertise and research skills in various fields of science and research. The main pillars of the organizational structure of AUT are:

Academic senate - The Senate is the highest collegial academic body, responsible for fulfilling the mission of UBT, which is chaired by the Rector of AUT and currently consists of 25 members, representing all the main units. The senate consists of 22 members who are academic staff and 3 students.

Governing Board- the Governing Board is the highest collegial administrative body, which guarantees the fulfilment of the mission of AUT, its financial and administrative activity

Rectorate- the Rectorate is a collegial decision-making body. It is headed by the rector and consists of the rector, deputy rectors, and the administrator of AUT and the deans of the faculties.

The HEI, AUT, is composed of 5 faculties as follow:

- Faculty of Agriculture and Environment
- Faculty of Economics and Agribusiness
- Faculty of Biotechnology and Food
- Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
- Faculty of Forest Sciences

European University of Tirana is a leading university and research centre in Albania, established in full compliance with the criteria of the Bologna Charter in 2006, including study programmes in the three levels of study: BA; MA and Doctorates. UET engages in high quality teaching and research as well as exchange programmes and capacity building projects with local and international partners

in the following major disciplines: economy, finance, business, law, social sciences, political sciences, and communication and information technology.

The European University of Tirana is particularly interested in the link between study programmes, research and labor market as well as the community. As such, UET has established the Labor Market Boards for each department which are composed of highly qualified professionals from the public sector, business and various relevant CSOs working to promote common interests. The purpose of the board is to provide feedback and insights regarding the needs/demands of the labor market so as UET can link education, research and study programmes with the labor market and needs of the society. In addition, they serve as a network for employment opportunities for its graduates.

UET has a pool of highly qualified researchers, lecturers and project managers and it works closely with a well-established network of higher education institutions, businesses, research institutes and other stakeholders. UET pays particular importance to its strategic communication, visibility of actions, dissemination of information, knowledge-sharing and exchange of experiences and know-how.

European University of Tirana is composed of 5 faculties as follow:

- Faculty of Economics, Business and Development
- Faculty of Law, Political Science and International Relations
- Faculty of Engineering, Informatics and Architecture
- Faculty of Humanities, Education and Liberal Arts
- Faculty of Medical Technical Sciences

3.2 Strategy of the HEIs at institutional level

Agricultural University of Tirana works according to the Albanian Legislation for the HEI 80_2015, which has three main focuses: teaching, scientific research and transfer technology. AUT also has developed a strategy plan 2016-2025, which was developed after a long consultation with the academic staff and third interested parties.

The main involving area are:

- Sustainable agricultural production chain (plants, animals)
- Agricultural products and livestock processing chain
- Economy and Agribusiness management and tourism
- Strategies and Rural development policies
- Food and animal protection chain
- Agro environment, multifunctional use of the green space

European University of Tirana aims to consolidate its identity as the main centre of knowledge production in Albania and to further its transformation from an institution of higher education focused almost exclusively on teaching to an elite research entity whose academic output is

respected and contributes to the improvement of teaching and student experience. In 2015, UET signed "The European Charter for Researchers" and "The Code of Conduct", aiming to promote scientific research, focusing on its quality.

Through scientific research EUT aims to:

- Achieve and consolidate recognition, regarding its teaching practices and research output, as one of the best universities in Albania and the Western Balkan region;
- Aid in the advancement of knowledge and in the perfection of professional practice with the goal of impacting social and economic development through knowledge transfer beyond the academic community towards public and private institutions as well as interest groups;
- Create a stimulating research environment for both students and academics alike through:
- The standardisation and internationalisation of academic research.
- Continuous training and periodic certifications for the academic staff regarding their ability to publish original scientific knowledge.
- Project and expand its reputation as a national centre of academic excellence.

3.3 Structure of the STEPS study programme, the number, the list of courses and the sum of the ECTS offered by the STEPS study programme

Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT) and European University of Tirana (EUT) are offering from November 2022, a Joint Master of Sciences Study Program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" with two profiles:

1. Engineering and Food Safety;
2. Food Production Systems Management.

The AUT & EUT Curriculum is a two-year joint study program consisting of:

- 6 agreed core courses in the first semester: FEQS courses, "Fundamentals of Sustainable Agri-Food Systems", "Agricultural and Food Industry Waste Management", "Advanced Food Science and Technology", Research Methodologies and Tools and MFPS courses: "Food Ethics" and "Governance", Policy and Legislation in the Agri-food Sector" with 5 ECTS each course, with a total of 30 ECTS for the first semester.
- 14 elective courses in the second and third semesters: FEQS courses: "Ecological Sustainability for Fish Management and Conservation", "Environment Chemistry towards Food Processing", "Innovative Practices of Harvesting and Post Harvesting", "Innovative Product Development", "Quality and Sustainability of Animal-source Food Production", "Quality System Development", "Management and Shelf-Life Assessment of Food", "Traceability Systems of Food Products", MFPS courses: "Business Economics and International Trade in the Agri-food Sector", "Consumer Science and Sustainable Consumption", "Data Analysis and Decision-Making",

“Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Food Production Systems”, “Management of Sustainable Food Supply and Value Chain”, “Marketing of Sustainable Agri-Food Products”, “Total Quality Management in the Agri-Food Sector” with 5 ETCS for each courses, and, finally, a master thesis in the fourth semester as a master Thesis.

In the first semester, both study profiles will be followed, and in the second semester, the students will have the opportunity to choose which study profile they will continue to follow based on their needs and desires. The courses in each study program profile are offered in both universities following the arrangements of collaboration between the universities.

To fulfil the project goals, the program has a balanced ratio of courses from the group Food Engineering, Quality and Safety (FEQS) and the Group Management of Food Production Systems (MFPS), but as the profile requires some specific courses this balance is lightly dropped. In the “Engineering and Food Safety” profile of study there are 11 FEQS and 7 MFPS and in the second profile; “Food Production Systems Management” are 8 FEQS and 10 MFPS.

The Master of Science “Sustainable Food Production Systems”, will be developed in two years of study, divided into three semesters. There will be 6 courses each semester with 5 ECTS, totalling 18 courses with 90 ECTS. The last semester is the Master thesis where the students will apply all their theoretical and practical knowledge gained during their years of studies. They will work individually and will have a supervisor to support and help them. The development and final exam will be held in the final semester and have 30 ECTS, with a total of 120 ECTS for all the Master Programs.

3.4 Courses content and ECTS credits assigned

As mentioned above each course (core or elective courses) has 5 ETCS and their contents are described in the syllabus of each course.

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3.5 Assessment and examination procedures and grading

The assessment of the students will be done as described in the point 5 of the regulation of this study program.

It is based on the principle of continuous control. The final grade is the result of the combination of continuous assessment during the year and the final exam, according to the following elements:

- Practical lessons, seminars, exercises, laboratory practices, course assignments (20%)
- Control task/Intermediate test (written and oral) (20 %)
- Final written and oral exam (60 %).

As described in the syllabus and in the regulation of this study program, point 5.2, the degree of acquisition of written and/or oral knowledge is scored from 0-100 points and the final result is converted into a grade from 4 (four) to 10 (ten). Grades five through ten are passing. In all forms of

knowledge control, the point evaluation system is also used, the corresponding value must be converted into a grade, as follows:

Total Points Level Grading:

- Point 95-100 convert to grade: 10
- Point 85-94 convert to grade: 9
- Point 75-84 convert to grade: 8
- Point 65-74 convert to grade: 7
- Point 55-64 convert to grade: 6
- Point 45-54 convert to grade: 5
- Point 1- 44 convert to grade: 4

3.6 Capacity of the institutions and laboratories to accommodate students, laboratory exercises and demonstrations, in terms of infrastructures, faculty and administration services.

The AUT as described above is one of the oldest universities in Tirana that has some scientific laboratories as follow:

- Laboratory of Agri-Environment and Ecology
- Laboratory of Plant protection
- Laboratory of Plant Biotechnology
- Scientific laboratory of Horticulture
- Laboratory of Animal Biotechnology
- Laboratory of Fisheries and aquaculture
- Laboratory of computer science
- Accounting laboratory
- Laboratory of Agri-Food Technology
- Laboratory of Food and Nutrition
- Laboratory of Food Science in the Food Research Centre created mostly with the laboratory device bought from the STEPS project.
- Laboratory of Food Safety
- Laboratory of Public Health etc.

All the students that study on the AUT campus can work in this laboratory and prepare their Master's thesis or make analyses as described in the syllabus of each course.

Academic staff have most of the devices they need to prepare lessons, including a computer, printer, and photocopiers (some of which were purchased through the STEPS project).

The lecture hall is equipped with a video projector so the students can view the lesson.

There is also a library and a study hall at the University where students can study. The AUT opened this year brand new dormitories, built from the beginning, because of the damage caused by the earthquake that hit Albania in November 2019. This way the students have a great condition to pass all day in the campus AUT University.

3.7 Arrangements that will ensure the sustainability of the STEPS study programme

Both Universities are dedicated to making this Master's continue because it is in their interest. They have assigned an arrangement between them to ensure this process. The master's "Sustainability in the Food production system", is really important for Universities because the possibilities are given to all the students that follow this Master, to have the possibility to study in one of the fields at this moment and the ones to come.

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(https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Duk2cNSiluNQD_CTE4crqt8NOPFvp_kU)

3.8 Accreditation process of the study program Master of Science in "Sustainable Food Production Systems"

Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT) and European University of Tirana (EUT) prepared the application for opening of the Joint Master of Sciences Study Program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" with two profiles: 1. Engineering and Food Safety; 2. Food Production Systems Management. The First application, done in February 2020, didn't have the approval of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth in Albania (MESY).

European University of Tirana (EUT) and Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT) have resubmitted the Application Form to the Ministry of Education and Sports on 30 September 2021, and this time has successfully passed the first phase of the process.

AUT and EUT have submitted the documents for the second and final phase of the application (*Department Proposal, Academic Senate Decision, Administration Board Decision, list of academic staff and their contracts and qualifications, Study Program Regulation, Curricula, Syllabus, MoU for offering a joint program, etc.*). AUT and EUT have been formally notified by the **Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of Albania** for the successful first phase in April 2022 (*Notification from Ministry of Education and Sports, No. 2219 Prot., date 4.4.2022*) but the notification through Application System came in March, so the documents for the second phase have been submitted to the Ministry on 24th March 2022.

The notification from the **Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of Albania**, approving the application for opening/licensing the Joint Master in STEPS has come on 04.10.2022. The dissemination of the news was done by articles in the websites, or in the Social Medias of both Universities.

The application of the students for the enrollment in the Master of Science, "Sustainable Food Production System" was done from 05.10-18.10.2022, where a lot of students were interested in this Master.

The evaluation of the student's document was done by the AD HOC commission of the Faculty of Biotechnology and Food and the list of winners was signed by the Dean in the first week of November 2022.

The enrollment of the students is done and the first year of the Master of Science in "Sustainable Food Production System" began on 07.11.2022.

According to Albanian legislation, the process of opening/licensing of a new study programme is different from other countries. HEI's first must apply for licence and after the confirmation by the **Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of Albania, can** open the new study programme, start with the implementation procedures (enrolment of students, development of courses, etc.) and after that they can apply for accreditation of the study programme.

All the procedures are based on **Albania Education Law, No.80/2015** and also in reference with **the Guidance No1. date January 14-th, 2020 of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of Albania.**

Article 106 "Accreditation", Points 2-8 of this law, explain the procedures for the accreditation of MSC study program as below:

- 1. Accreditation of study programs is the process of certifying their quality, in accordance with state quality standards.*
- 2. The first institutional and program accreditation is performed before the issuance of the first diplomas by a higher education institution. Institutional accreditation precedes that of study programs.*
- 3. The validity of any institutional accreditation and related study programs cannot last more than 6 years.*
- 4. The decision for accreditation is positive or negative. In case the higher education institution is not accredited institutionally or for a study program, it cannot issue diplomas for the respective study programs it has offered.*
- 5. The standards on the basis of which the accreditation is granted, must be met for the entire period of validity of the accreditation. If the ministry responsible for education finds deviations from these standards, it sets conditions and deadlines for their fulfilment.*
- 6. For institutions of higher education, which develop joint study programs with foreign institutions of higher education, as well as for branches of foreign institutions of higher education operating in the Republic of Albania, evaluation and accreditation are performed by taking into account their assessment and accreditation in the country of origin.*
- 7. Expenditures for external quality assessment and accreditation are borne by the higher education institutions themselves, according to the tariffs determined by a decision of the Council of Ministers.*

The Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT) and European University of Tirana (UET) are both accredited institutions.

AUT has been accredited as an institution for the first time in 2017 and in 2021 has been reaccredited for 5 years. At AUT some of the study programs are accredited, and the others are in the process to be accredited by the **Quality Assurance Agency in HEI**.

European University of Tirana got its first accreditation (institutional and first level of diploma) in June 2009 and has been reaccredited since then.

The Faculty of the Food and Biotechnology, part of the Agricultural University of Tirana, that offers this study program in collaboration with the European University of Tirana, have all the academic and non-academic staff, infrastructure, equipment and all the other necessity to fulfil the requirement of **Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of Albania** and **Quality Assurance Agency in HEI**, in order to offer this study program.

According to **Quality Assurance Agency in HEI**, each HEIs that is seeking accreditation of study programs must submit the request for accreditation of a study program according to the approved format, during each academic year, within the period October 1 - May 31 but at least 1 year before the graduation of the first students, for the programs of new or completion of the first accreditation or periodic accreditation.

During the academic year 2022-2023, AUT-EUT will start the procedure to apply for the accreditation of the study program. The procedure will last at least 6 months, where during this time, an internal evaluation team will evaluate all the documentation, and will prepare a self-evaluation report as the **Quality Assurance Agency in HEI** requires. After that an external evaluation will complete the procedure, which will evaluate the quality of the study programs, syllabus, infrastructure, academic and non-academic staff etc.

4. STEPS APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION IN KOSOVO

STEPS application for accreditation at University Haxhi Zeka (UHZ-P3) and Universum College (UC-P4)

4.1 Organisational Structure of HEIs

University "Haxhi Zeka" (UHZ) was formally established in 2011 at a time when the state of Kosovo aimed to develop higher education and increase study opportunities for all students in Kosovo and the region. Currently, the University Haxhi Zeka is the second largest public university in Kosovo, with over 10,000 students, 5 faculties and 13 study programs. The study programs offered are study programs organised according to the Bologna system, three-year with 180 ECTS, respectively 4-year with 240 ECTS at the Bachelor level, while two-year with 120 ECTS, respectively 1-year with 60 ECTS.

Universum College (UC) was established in March 2005, in Prishtina, the capital city, and Ferizaj, the second largest and one of the most economically developed cities in Kosovo. Universum College thrives on providing high quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities to a Kosovar and international student body through teaching excellence, lifelong learning, applied research and partnership building, thus, preparing students to be thoughtful, responsible and successful citizens who support the development of Kosovo and the region. Currently, Universum College offers 11 Bachelor level and four Master level programs. With the ever-increasing emphasis in globalisation, Universum College has enshrined internationalisation and regionalization into its development perspectives. Today, Universum College is recognized as the most internationalised higher education institution in Kosovo, proudly establishing cooperation with some of the most respected educational institutions in the world.

4.2 Strategy of UPHZ and UC for the study program

The mission of the Faculty of Agribusiness at UPHZ and Management Department at UC is to provide quality education and to prepare professional candidates for the labor market in the fields of agriculture and food, which will contribute to the economic development of the Peja and Prishtina region and the country.

This mission is in line with the overall mission of "Haxhi Zeka" University, which states that "Haxhi Zeka University continues its positive academic and artistic tradition, it creates environment and transformative academic experiences in order to achieve its aims. It also applies advanced scientific standards and assists the economic development of the Peja region and the country in general". Similarly, the mission of Universum College is to support our students to become good citizens, successful & broad-minded leaders and thrive in the Revolution 4.0, the digital and globalised era. UC does this by providing one-on-one academic & life coaching, putting our students and learning at the centre in an innovative, digitally enhanced environment that fosters creativity, inquiry,

teamwork, innovation and entrepreneurial mindsets. Our commitment with quality, teacher excellence and applied research builds the bases for a strong and vigorous nation and region.”

This is in line with the objective of the project and also complies with the mission of UPHZ in order to offer a joint program that fulfils a gap in the market.

Both institutions guarantee their functioning based on the regulations and instructions which are in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. All academic staff are obliged to respect and adhere to these rules during lectures and exercises, entry and exit of lectures and exercises⁸, students are obliged to participate in the lesson and give their contribution in open discussions regarding the respective courses and courses.

Institutions through the study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" aims to train new scientific and professional staff in the field of sustainable food production systems, which will contribute to the development of Kosovo and especially the Dukagjini region, as a region that represents the largest potential in the country for the development of the Agro-industry sector.

The graduates of this study program will also be prepared to overcome the challenges of society such as: food shortages, sustainable development of food production, uncertainty about food production as a result of climate change, political impacts and economic mismanagement of food products, food safety, etc.

In addition to the importance of food production in terms of resource utilization, volume and marketing, and increasing numbers of people, it is also necessary to understand the concept of sustainability in food production systems.

Therefore, food production is increasingly being promoted by experts as something that implicates the use of resources, whether agricultural, food or energy, so that there are no restrictions on their use in the future.

This program is for students who are interested in obtaining a degree in the field of sustainable food production systems. It provides professional and specialized education through the application of advanced and contemporary methods with a focus on sustainable food systems throughout the value chain from the field to the table.

The advanced knowledge gained through this program will enable graduates to work in private and public companies or to start new businesses, especially in rural areas. This program, which is designed for students who are interested in preparing to manage and implement sustainable food production, will also provide opportunities for economic benefits, job creation and the encouragement of new businesses, and food safety. UPHZ and UC aim to provide curricular programs of study and academic and scientific research, oriented according to market needs and with active participation in local, national and regional economies. The study program has a well-

defined didactic and research concept. As a result of this study approach, research methods and teaching methods offered by this program, effective and acceptable advanced knowledge are provided for students. The program enables the creation of competitive skills of students in sustainable food production systems.

The content of the new MSc program in addition to the basic aspects of sustainable food production systems will also address other aspects related to food engineering, value chain, quality and food safety management as well as economics and environmental management of food systems and food production.

4.3. Structure of the STEPS study programme, the number, the list of courses and the sum of the ECTS offered by the STEPS study programme

The Master study program “Sustainable Food Production Systems” is designed to enable and prepare students for a successful career in the sustainable food production sector, through the application of advanced and contemporary methods in the field of sustainable food production. This program meets the needs of students to pursue a Master's degree after completing a Bachelor Degree in Agriculture and Food. The program modules, besides providing advanced knowledge in the field of sustainable food production systems, also influence the improvement of students' research skills in using the faculty laboratories and the laboratories of the Agriculture Institute in Peja. After the completion of the program, candidates will enter the labor market as professionals increasing the quality of local agri-food products and competitive to regional and international level.

The FAB through this program will prepare students through selected professional courses and practical work in organizations and companies dealing with sustainable food production, and will be one of the first faculties offering Master studies with a focus on sustainable production. The agreements signed with many Universities from the region and the EU will be used for mobility and research purposes, as this study program is comparable and compatible with some study programs and curricula of universities of the European Higher Education Area. The curriculum of this program has a logical flow and is in line with European Higher Education programs.

Some of the expected outcomes and competencies achieved after completing the studies are as follows:

Skills:

- Students will acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills;
- Through research at the labs of the Faculty of Agribusiness and the Kosovo Institute of Agriculture in Peja, students will develop skills in the use of laboratory equipment and in the analysis of chemical quality, food safety and sensory quality of agri-food products;
- Students will become familiar with the most advanced methods of obtaining sustainable food products

- Students will be trained for employment in the private and public sector, both in Kosovo and abroad;
- Graduates will acquire knowledge and skills to work in various food and agro-processing enterprises in Kosovo and beyond;
- Students will be competent to work on research and scientific projects;

Competencies:

- Contribute to teamwork in a cross-cultural group, to show leadership capabilities in time planning and organization, and to perform advanced tasks within the specified timeframe.
- Present and discuss arguments based on a constructive dialogue with professionals and non-professionals, both verbally and in writing form, in an international context.
- Demonstrate advanced conceptual understanding of the specifics, dynamics, interdisciplinary aspects and trends for sustainable food management and development.
- Lead scientific and (or) practical activities in various international working groups on the requirements of professional ethics, human principles, equality and non-discrimination, while respecting cultural differences and ethical principles.
- Develop innovative solutions by assessing the potential social, ethical and legal consequences, understanding the moral responsibility for one's own activities and the impact of their outcomes in different contexts.
- Analyse the relationship between theory - practice and experimental study and research methodologies: to design, implement research and interpret the findings.

The courses' syllabi include: objectives; thematic content; expected learning outcomes; distribution of teaching weeks, student activities, assessment system; literature/textbooks etc.

Based on the UHZ statute, it is clearly defined that the student in the language in which it has applied for the study program, must respect all the rights and obligations required by the program itself and as such must fulfill them during the study. Where in the language of instruction is determined the adequate academic staff for teaching in the language where students begin their studies. In cases when the professor is from outside, training is organized for students. The student's relationship with the professors is regulated based on the course syllabus offered by the professor and on the basis of the frameworks required by the syllabus in question in order to achieve progress by the student himself with his commitments throughout the semester and with the work and commitments offered by the professor himself, where a mutual cooperation will bring positive effects on student development. Based on the Strategy of the University "Haxhi Zeka" are clearly defined objectives and goals which are appropriate and compatible for the Business Informatics program to achieve the best learning outcomes for the development of students, who will be part of this program. Achieving these objectives based on the strategy will provide flexibility and positive outcomes to meet the essential needs of students. At the beginning of the semester each lecturer introduces and clearly defines the rights and obligations based on the syllabus offered

to students and based on which are determined the assessment mechanisms which will be developed in a clear and objective manner.

The curriculum of the Master program is structured by combining the main and elective courses. The program lasts 2 years (4 semesters) and is structured as follows: In the first, second and third semesters advanced knowledge in sustainable production systems will be acquired. While in the fourth semester students will individually conduct research and write the Master Thesis under the supervision of the mentors. The program is structured differently for Universum College as during the second-year students choose courses that are focused on only in management specialisation. This structure of the program is also agreed in the memorandum of understanding signed by UPHZ and UC. According to the agreement between both UPHZ and UC, there will be staff exchange as well as co-mentoring of master thesis. Additionally, partners will share non-human resources.

The program consists of 6 compulsory and 17 elective courses. All courses have 5 credits and a total of 120 ECTS credits are required to obtain the MSc degree in Sustainable Food Production Systems. 90 ECTS credits are taken from the courses, 30 ECTS credits from the Master Thesis (this is identical for UPHZ and UC, regardless of the specialisation). All modules are assessed according to ECTS standards, under Kosovo legislation in force, an ECTS credit equals 25 hours of effective work. The courses consist of lectures, seminars, practice, assignments and project proposals. A subject of 5 ECTS / 125 working hours can be calculated as follows: Implementation of this study program will be done through the provision of theoretical knowledge (seminar lectures) as well as the practical part (laboratory exercises and practical work/internship in the private sector). The ratio between theory and practice will be 60% to 40%. The curriculum is designed according to the European model of ECTS credit transfer. In cases when the standards of student achievement are insufficient or when they are not evaluated as provided in the course syllabus then based on the decisions of the unit respecting the Statute of the UHZ and UC, lectures, exercises are provided and necessary additional activities for learning, ie in the form of tutoring. The program is offered in Albanian, but the courses' materials are provided in English language, and some professors may also teach in English language. The lectures in English taught by engaged professors and visiting professors will not be a problem for students since knowledge of English is a legal requirement for admission to Master studies under Administrative Instruction (QRK) No.03 / 2018 on foreign languages in the second and third cycle program

4.4. Courses content and ECTS credits assigned

As mentioned above each course (core or elective courses) has 5 ECTS and their contents are described in the syllabus of each course.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/19IIMQ1jpgy0UpeRw4HRnTzKD-FGOp0Nn>).

4.5 Assessment and examination procedures and grading

University of Peja and Universum College have established clear regulations in regards to the assessment criteria which describes the multitude of assessment methods and strategies which are

employed by the college academic staff with the mission of ensuring a fair student assessment that contributes to the process of academic excellence.

In all courses there are various assessments which serve as means for all students to demonstrate their achievement and show that they have mastered the course content. Practically, this means that a student's final grade is not entirely dependent on his/her final exam.

By having a rich variation of assessment methods, institutions are able to evaluate the certain aspects of the student's learning process. Different components will show different results of the students' learning capacities. For example: performance on an essay assignment permits the instructor to evaluate the critical thinking of students; completion of a dissertation provides UPHZ and UC the opportunity to assess students' ability to articulate and sustain an original argument; term projects permit evaluation of students to, for example, follow directions, and conduct and apply research; written examinations permit us to assess subject knowledge retention and application.

Assessment methods are designed in such a way that students with a range of learning styles have the opportunity to excel. Further, the rich variety of assessment methods enables students to express their talents and develop their competencies in time management, memorization and application of data, and spoken and written communication. Each course has its own assessment methods where each of them are listed in the syllabus along with percentage of weights assigned to each particular assessment method. For example, a given course might have the following assessment criteria and weights presented in a syllabus: class participation and discussion (10%), presentation (15%), essay (15%), mid-term exam (25%), final exam (35%).

An additional assessment method is the provision of student self-appraisal forms which enables students to reflect upon their course and degree aims. This allows academic staff to track and respond to students' subjective experience of their individual educational progress.

The following are guidelines of assessment methods criteria at Universum College:

Examinations:

10	<p>Outstanding answer. The student communicates a deep understanding of the subject matter beyond the classroom instruction and a clear interpretation of the question. The answer reflects a detailed and comprehensive analysis with supporting evidence and logical arguments. The student with this grade has an exceptional ability to synthesize information in order to respond to the question at hand. Style, grammar, writing, and presentation are all superb. This score reflects the highest level of critical thinking and originality.</p>
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9	<p>Excellent answer. The student communicates an extensive understanding of the subject matter and demonstrates knowledge about related theories and concepts. The answer directly responds to the question with clear and thoughtful arguments, supporting evidence, and strong analysis. The answer is written well with proper grammar and style with a logical structure. The answer is a well thought out evaluation and synthesis of the information. Students clearly demonstrate originality and critical thinking.</p>
8	<p>A very good answer. The student demonstrates a wide understanding of the subject at issue and demonstrates an understanding of related theories and concepts. The answer reflects concepts within the context of the question. Students are able to analyse, synthesise information, and use supporting evidence logically in crafting their answer. The answer itself is written and structured well. Answers contain logical arguments but that are less developed than the 9 or 10 answers. The answer lacks insight and originality.</p>
7	<p>A competent answer. The student has a measured understanding of the subject matter and can identify related concepts and theories. A basic understanding of the question is expressed with an identification of key words and concepts in the call of the question. The student here is limited to identifying concepts and lacks detailed analysis, evidence, and understanding of the question. The student relies on key topics covered in class without an ability to present supporting evidence or evaluation. Arguments are presented but not developed. The answer itself contains errors in style, grammar, and presentation. The structure is sufficient to communicate an answer.</p>
6	<p>An adequate answer. The student shows a reasonable knowledge of the subject matter but lacks understanding. The student struggles to express an understanding of the question and has trouble identifying the important concepts within the question. The answer expresses limited evidence, relying only on key topics covered in class with very weak evaluation. Arguments are superficial, unbalanced and lack analysis. The answer is descriptive in nature with no meaningful analysis or argument. The answer itself contains numerous errors in style, grammar, and presentation. The structure confuses the reader and the length is too short or incomplete. Some key points are missed.</p>
5	<p>A marginal fail. The student has little knowledge or understanding of the subject. The answer is barely relevant to the question and expresses very basic material. The structure of the answer reflects an attempt to express an argument or an analysis or an evaluation but is incomplete and marginally related. No evidence is provided and the answer is poorly presented. The answer contains many errors and omissions and is loosely structured at best. None or few of the key points are addressed or identified. The student has likely missed a significant amount of the lectures and turned in few assignments and therefore is unable to develop thoughtful answers to examination questions.</p>
4	<p>A poor fail. Students lack understanding of the subject. Students are unable to identify relevant key topics that relate to the question. More errors and omissions than not. Structure is almost non-existent and insufficient in length to develop anything more than identification.</p>

3/2	<p>A very poor fail. Students demonstrate clear incapacity to understand the question or the subject matter. Barely any indication of an effort to organize, structure, identify evidence or key words, or provide a structure. Contains fundamental errors and misunderstandings. Very poor standard of presentation, lacking coherence, confused and rambling.</p>
1/0	<p>An exceptionally poor fail. No serious attempt or no attempt at all. Students has almost no understanding of the subject or the question.</p>

Coursework

10	<p>An outstanding answer. The student communicates a deep understanding of the subject matter beyond the classroom instruction with full knowledge of related concepts and theories. Students have excellent insight and strong critical thinking skills and are able to apply these strengths into an original, compelling argument. The student demonstrates a strong ability to synthesise information. Clear strong evidence is offered with detailed analysis and well-developed evaluation. The assignment is well structured, well written, and well presented with style and perfect grammar. The argument is logically sound and balanced.</p>
9	<p>An excellent answer. The student shows an extensive comprehension and knowledge regarding the subject matter beyond the classroom instruction and is able to articulate and explain related concepts and theories. Students use clear evidence to support their analysis and indicate decent critical thinking skills and insight. Students present well thought out evaluation and a balanced, logical argument. Assignment presents good structure and presentation with excellent grammar and style.</p>
8	<p>A very good answer. The student's answer expresses a wide understanding of the subject matter and knowledge of related theories and concepts. The student identifies supporting evidence to support their argument and analysis. Student presents a logical argument and develops it but without the comprehensive details and conclusion of a 9 or 10. The answer is written well with solid structure and organisation. The answer lacks some insight and originality.</p>
7	<p>A competent answer. The student shows measured understanding of the subject matter and identifies related concepts and theories. The answer is limited in scope and while it directly responds to the assignment tasked, it does not explore beyond. The student relies mainly on classroom instruction without indicating outside resources. The analysis, evaluation and presentation are lacking and the arguments are not developed. The work contains errors and omissions but is adequately written and structured.</p>

6	<p>An adequate answer. The student shows a reasonable understanding of the subject matter but lacks depth or ability to identify related concepts or theories. The student shows lack of attention to the assignment and fails to identify key issues or develop main points. Singular evidence is provided without an effort to develop the analysis or evaluation of the subject matter. The answer contains errors and omissions and is mainly descriptive in nature without much argument or analysis. The organization and presentation is weak and disjointed and the assignment is incomplete. Arguments are superficial or unbalanced.</p>
5	<p>A marginal fail. The student demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the subject and marginal relevance to the assignment. The answer addresses only basic concepts and an attempted argument without any real analysis or evaluation. The response contains substantial errors and omissions and is presented poorly without structure.</p>
4	<p>A poor fail. The student shows only a basic grasp of the subject matter with no ability to relate main topics to the assignment. The student shows a general lack of understanding of the subject matter and is unable to construct an argument. Presentation and structure are lousy with numerous errors and omissions.</p>
3/2	<p>A very poor fail. The student failed to understand the assignment. Answer lacks any relation to the assignment and little work is done to present an answer at all. Fundamental errors and misunderstandings are communicated which show a general lack of understanding of the subject matter or effort. Poor structure and underdeveloped presentation. Answers express confusion, redundancy or rambling.</p>
1/0	<p>An exceptionally poor fail. This is no attempt or such a limited attempt as to not merit serious assessment. Student barely engages in the question or an explanation and only displays a hint of understanding.</p>

Oral Presentations

10	<p>An outstanding presentation. This presentation is excellent in all respects and entirely relevant to the assignment proposal. Students are within the imposed time limits. Shows full knowledge and understanding of the subject, including proposal and discussion of new ideas. Student has clearly done thorough research and spent ample time on preparation. The oral presentation is organized and well structured, with arguments set out in a concise and persuasive manner and key points emphasised. A confident and engaging presentation, which is appropriately paced, clearly audible and delivered with enthusiasm. Positive body language and eye contact maintained with little or no reliance on prompts. Creative use of visual aids. Questions responded to with courtesy and authority. Little scope for improvement.</p>
9	<p>An excellent presentation. This presentation is excellent in most respects showing evidence of wide knowledge and understanding of the subject with some new ideas proposed, and all within the context of the call of the assignment. Students are within imposed time limits. Clear evidence of outside research and preparation. Well structured, with arguments set out in a concise and persuasive manner and key points emphasised. A confident and engaging presentation, which is appropriately paced, clearly audible and delivered with enthusiasm. Positive body language and eye contact maintained with little reliance on prompts. Successful use of visual aids. Questions responded to with courtesy and authority. Scope for some or minor improvement in limited areas.</p>
8	<p>A very good presentation. This presentation is very good in all respects showing evidence of broad knowledge and understanding of the subject, in the context of the assignment. Time limits are observed, perhaps slightly longer or shorter necessitating a lower mark. Evidence of research beyond core material and sound preparation. Mostly accurate but may contain occasional errors. Well structured, with logical and convincing arguments and key points covered. A generally confident and engaging presentation, which is appropriately paced and clearly audible. Use of prompts while maintaining eye contact and suitable body language. Well-chosen visual aids. Informed and courteous answers to questions.</p>
7	<p>A competent presentation. This presentation is competent showing sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and some related theories and concepts, mostly relevant to the brief. Most aspects of the presentation identify with mediocre work and indicate limited research beyond core material and only satisfactory preparation. Well-structured but with insufficient analysis and evaluation. . Time limits are observed, perhaps slightly longer or shorter necessitating a lower mark. Generally good delivery, which is appropriately paced and clearly audible. Use of prompts while maintaining eye contact and suitable body language. Generally well-chosen visual aids. Reasonably well-informed and courteous answers to questions.</p>

6	<p>An adequate presentation. This presentation is adequate and is merely satisfactory in most respects. Students show reasonable knowledge and understanding of the subject, but lacking focus on the call of the assignment. Time limits are not observed and presentation is notably longer or shorter. It is clear that students conducted barely any research beyond core material and did less than adequate preparation. Presentation contains notable errors, missed key points, and arguments not fully developed. Structure weak or barely adequate, could be better organised, and is not easy to follow. Delivery lacks confidence and sometimes fails to maintain the interest of the audience. Pace and/or audibility may not be appropriate throughout. Use of prompts detracts from the maintenance of eye contact. Selection and use of visual aids could be improved. Competent answers to some questions, flawed answers to some.</p>
5	<p>A failed presentation. This presentation is poor and the student demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of the subject and marginal relevance to the call of the assignment. Poor adherence to time limits. Inadequate preparation and reliance on basic material only. Contains substantial errors, most key points missed and arguments poorly constructed and incomplete. Disjointed structure and clumsily expressed. Unconvincing delivery and a failure to engage the audience. Pace and/or audibility is often not appropriate. Reads from notes with insufficient eye contact. Little thought given to visual aids. Inability to deal with questions in a meaningful way.</p>
4	<p>A very poor fail. The student misinterprets the call of the assignment. The presentation demonstrates little thought or effort and minimal knowledge by the student. Time limits are grossly ignored. This presentation contains fundamental errors and misunderstandings key to the assignment. Very poor standard of presentation, lacking coherence, confused and rambling. Unable to answer questions.</p>
3/2/1	<p>An exceptionally poor fail. This presentation suggests only a minor ability to reference the subject and demonstrates almost no relevance to the assignment. This score reflects no serious attempt at preparing or presenting or no attempt at all.</p>

4.6. Capacity of the institutions and laboratories to accommodate students, laboratory exercises and demonstrations, in terms of infrastructures, faculty and administration services.

The building where the Faculty of Agribusiness (UPHZ) and the Department of Management (UC) is located has the following facilities at disposal:

- An amphitheatre;
- Two rooms;
- 4 laboratories;
- Dean's office;
- Office of Vice-deans;
- Office of the Coordinator for Academic Quality and Evaluation;
- Office of the Dean's Assistant;
- Office for Legal Officer;
- Office for Administration Officer,

- Lounge of Professors;
- Office of Professors,
- Two Offices for Teaching Assistants
- Library
- Career Office
- Student Services
- Student IT Lab
- VR Lab
- Electronics and Robotics Lab
- Canteen and Coffee Shop
- Sports Field
- Individual Study Rooms
- Student Lounge
- Student Union
- Parking Space
- Facilities for the disabled students

4.7 Arrangements that will ensure the sustainability of the STEPS study programme

According to Law No.04/L-037/2011 on Higher Education and Administrative Instructions 15/2018 on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Kosovo, each institution is obliged to sign an agreement with at least one other HEI in order to exchange students. UC and UP HZ have signed an agreement to develop a joint degree, but also provide the necessary resources to ensure the sustainability of the program. This is in compliance with finances as well as the strategy of each institution. For more details, please see the documents provided here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1Jh-tTvDDDXI8U6UzwFMjERmcT5NDYzao>.

4.8. The Accreditation process of the study program Master of Science in “Sustainable Food Production Systems”

As a base for accreditation of study programs in the Republic of Kosovo is Law No.04/L-037/2011 on higher education, Administrative Instructions no. 9/2017 for accreditation of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Republic of Kosovo, and the Law no. 05/L-031 on General Administrative Procedure. Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) is an independent authority, which accredits and reaccredits public and private institutions of higher education in Kosovo for a limited time. The KAA has its Accreditation Manual, which reflects the provisions of the above-mentioned laws and regulations and is applicable for external quality assurance processes for accreditation and re-accreditation of higher education institutions as well as for accreditation and re-accreditation of bachelor and masters study programs.

The decision to offer the new study program was greatly influenced by the UHZ participation in the implementation of the "STEPS project - MSc. in Sustainable Food Production Systems ", which is funded by the EU through the Erasmus +. In addition to UHZ, the STEPS project also includes other universities from three Western Balkan countries (Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia & Herzegovina, as well as universities from three EU countries (Czech Republic, Romania, and Greece).

Except for the engagement of the experts from Haxhi Zeka University, other experts from the above-mentioned countries have also been involved in this project, who have supported the development of the Master program in Sustainable Food Production Systems, and in later stages will support the establishment of laboratories and other prerequisites for the implementation of this study program.

Alternatively, the ultimate objective of the STEPS project is to support the development and operationalization of this Master's program, which focuses on the application of sustainability principles in food production systems. Among participants from Kosovo in the STEPS project, besides the public university "Haxhi Zeka " in Peja, the private college "Universum " from Pristina also participates in. The University Haxhi Zeka has signed a cooperation memorandum with the college "Universum" from Pristina on 23/12/2020. The UHZ will cooperate with Universum College, so that; the students attending this program at Haxhi Zeka University will have the opportunity, if interested, to attend the same program at Universum College after the first semester. The Universum College is specialised in the management field.

The application process for the accreditation of the MSc. Program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" is presented below:

- In October 2020, the University Haxhi Zeka has submitted a formal Application to the Kosovo Accreditation Agency for accreditation of the Master study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems"
- In January 2021 it submitted the Self Evaluation report to the KAA.
- The evaluation of the study program by external experts took place on March 29th, 2021.
- **The decision for accreditation of the Master's study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" was taken on April 19th 2021.**
- The senate of the University "Haxhi Zeka" on September 7th, 2021 has decided to do a public announcement for the enrolment of 25 students in the study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" for the academic year 2021/2022
- More than 50 students have applied to the Mater Program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" 25 students are enrolled in the study program
- The study program is being implemented in October 2021.

5. STEPS APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

5.1. STEPS application for accreditation at University of Bihać (UNBI-P5)

5.1.1. Organizational structure of University of Bihać, funding and financial related mechanisms

The University of Bihać is a public institution which organizes and conducts academic studies, scientific and expert research, and nurtures scientific, technological and artistic creation. The Head Office of the University of Bihać is located in Pape Ivana Pavla II 2/2. In the academic year 2006/2007, the University of Bihać implemented ECTS – the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System as a tool for making studies more uniform and in accordance with the European Higher Education Area. Based on the Act on Amendments to the Act of the University of Bihać (Official Gazette of USK 8/06) and Study Rules for the First Cycle Studies (No.10-38-10599-2/06, September 28, 2006), University of Bihać implemented studies according to the principles of Bologna declaration. With the Registration Conclusion of Court Register of 2010, the University of Bihać became a Legal Entity, with unique ID and unique Federal Pension and Disability Insurance number. University of Bihać is generally financed from three different sources of funds:

- *the USC budget,*
- *the resources of its own activities (the University's own incomes), and*
- *donations and grants.*

According to the Treasury Legislation, all previously mentioned funds are part of the public revenues of the Una-Sana Canton, and therefore must be paid to the Deposit Account and can be realized only through the Treasury, with prior planning in the Budget in accordance with the Budget Execution Law (by the amount and purpose of funds). Donations and grants not planned in the budget, but obtained during the year, are allocated by the decision of the USC Government, leading to an increase in the budget. Unspent funds, donations and grants may be transferred into the next fiscal year, provided that the same must be spent by the June 30 of the following year, or even after that deadline, if the approval of the donor is provided. Budget funds and funds of its own activities (custom funds) that are planned by the Budget, unspent during the fiscal year, i.e. from 01 Jan. to 31 Dec. are considered as public revenues.

Funds obtained by the University are determined and allocated by the financial plan or budget of the Una-Sana Canton. The financial plan is adopted by the Governing Board of the University, to which the financial reports on the execution of the adopted plan are submitted at the end of a fiscal year. The Financial Report follows the Report on the University operation.

Today, the University of Bihać is made of seven academic divisions or faculties:

- Faculty of Biotechnical Sciences
- Faculty of Economy
- Islamic Faculty of Pedagogy
- Faculty of Pedagogy
- Faculty of Law

- Faculty of Technical Sciences
- Faculty of Health Studies

5.1.2. Strategy of the University of Bihać at institutional level

The creation of the existing [Development Strategy of the University of Bihać 2017-2022](#) was one of the most important priorities of UNBI, and it was formalized by the Senate Decision on the appointment of the Team for the Development of the Development Strategy of the University of Bihać in February 2017. It is important to point out that a large number of representatives of interested stakeholders were involved in the discussions on the strategic development priorities of the University of Bihać, as well as in the preparation of the Strategy proposal itself. It is particularly important to point out the direct involvement of the University management itself, led by the rector, vice-rectors, Steering Board members, the Senate, and the deans of the organizational units. The Center for Quality Assurance organized thematic discussions with the representatives of the academic and non-teaching staff in the process of self-evaluation and internal evaluation. All employees of the University had the opportunity to propose strategic priorities and development directions of the University of Bihać, by filling in and submitting self-evaluation forms, which were analyzed and appropriately included in this document. Students were also consulted on the Development Strategy of the University of Bihać, at formally held meetings with student representatives organized through the Students Union of the University of Bihać. Several meetings organized at the level of the local community, including the Bihać City Administration, cantonal ministers and the Prime Minister of the USC Government, were used to discuss the strategic directions of development of the University of Bihać. In this same period, the meetings of the UNBI management representatives with partners from other higher education institutions in the country and abroad were an ideal opportunity to present and confirm the strategic development directions of the University of Bihać. An important role in the strategy proposal preparation was occupied by the market representatives, that is, key business entities. Through its cooperation with the USC Chamber of Commerce, which represents over 500 business entities from the USC area, the University received relevant information about the expectations and demands of business representatives in the USC area. Also, in the preparation of the proposal for the Strategy, numerous already existing strategic documents at the level of BiH and the EU were consulted.

5.1.3 Structure of the STEPS study programme, the number, the list of courses and the sum of the ECTS offered by the STEPS study programme

Structure and content of the study programme MSc STEPS at UNBI are based on contemporary scientific and expert knowledge in the area of primary agricultural production and food technology. While creating the study, we accepted the highest standards of modern higher education, based on the Bologna principles. Since the study deals with some of the most important challenges humanity faces today (questions of food, ever growing population, scarce resources, climate changes, economic and political impact on food distribution, food safety, etc.), its main intention is to provide wide basic knowledge to future MSc on the most important general elements of food

production systems, and especially those of domineering challenges such as systems' sustainability, chain supplies, and supply values, food quality and safety, while providing specialisation in the fields of students personal interests.

The study programme also has a potential to help the market by increasing the number of highly competent experts in the areas of agriculture and food, capable of landing management and food engineering work positions in primary production and food industry and other similar areas that deal with sustainable food production. The study programme consists of carefully chosen courses in the areas of general knowledge, theory and methodology, science and applied science. All courses are defined in such a manner to accentuate modern scientific and expert achievements in their respective areas, and are also acceptable and applicable to this level of higher education. The MSc STEPS study programme is created in accordance with the regulations and subordinate regulations of higher education in B&H and Una Sana Canton, as well as the Bologna Declaration. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is also applied. Suggested second cycle study programme at the Faculty of Biotechnical Sciences at the UNBI equates to 60 ECTS credits. This is equivalent to two semesters of study. The final master's thesis is written in the second semester. Courses are divided into core s and elective s. The entire study is constructed as a modular system that combines two groups of courses in the area of sustainable food production systems. The first group consists of courses dealing with food engineering and quality and safety of food, while the second consists of courses dealing with food production systems management. The modular curriculum organisation of the interdisciplinary studies implies more teaching staff is involved in the courses, which will provide more efficient and stronger bond between the teaching materials in order to reach a more defined second cycle study programme. Second cycle study programme suggestion is delivered by STEPS consortium of higher education institutions participating in the STEPS Project. Besides being implemented at two Universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, study programmes are also delivered under the same name and partly the same contents at two Universities in Albania, and two Universities in Kosovo. Project teams of all six partner institutions of the STEPS project developed the second cycle study programme which consists of six core courses implemented in the first semester that will be the same at all Universities involved. Those are: Fundamentals of Sustainable Agri Food Systems, Agriculture and Food Industry Waste Management, Advanced Food Science and Technology, Governance, Policy and Legislation in the Agri Food Sector, Food Ethics, and Methodology Research and Tools.

Elective courses are created in a way they respect project guidelines and sustainability concepts for courses are created in a way they respect project guidelines and sustainability concepts for each University they are implemented at respectively. They are modelled according to the rules and each University they are implemented at respectively. They are modelled according to the rules and capacities of the implementing Universities, stakeholder analysis capacities of the implementing Universities, stakeholder analysis results, and market rules of their results, and market rules of their respective countries. The Faculty of Biotechnical Sciences at the University of Bihać holds 10 respected countries. The Faculty of Biotechnical Sciences at the University of Bihać holds 10 elective courses in the second semester, each from two basic study programme groups (Food elective

courses in the second semester, each from two basic study programme groups (Food Engineering, Food Quality and Safety Engineering, Food Quality and Safety and Food Production Systems Management). Engineering and Food Production Systems Management). Engineering and management courses from the two aforementioned groups are at the ratio 70 to 30 in favour of and management courses from the two aforementioned groups are at the ratio 70 to 30 in favour of engineering courses. Students will choose at least two courses (10 ECTS) from the first group, and engineering courses. Students will choose at least two courses (10 ECTS) from the first group, and at least one from the second group (5ast one from the second group (5 ECTS), corresponding to 15 ECTS credits for the second ECTS), corresponding to 15 ECTS credits for the second semester. This governs students towards both engineering and sustainable food production systems semester. This governs students towards both engineering and sustainable food production systems disciplines. Elective course disciplines. Elective courses selection process will be conducted as a selection process will be conducted as an online survey which will be an online survey which will be created by the University info service. Electives that receive the most votes will be implemented by the University info service. Electives that receive the most votes will be implemented in the second semester. Elective courses have been approved by the EU Universities partners of the second semester. Elective courses have been approved by the EU Universities partners of STEPS projects (Engineering discipSTEPS projects (Engineering disciplines in Athens and Bucharest, and Management in Prague and lines in Athens and Bucharest, and Management in Prague and Athens).

Second cycle study programme is considered completed after students finish and defend their Master's thesis at the end of the programme on the subject, they have previously agreed upon witMaster's thesis at the end of the programme on the subject they have previously agreed upon with their supervisors in the desired field of research. This requirement is a final step after completing all their supervisors in the desired field of research. This requirement is a final step after completing all the necessary courses in the first semester and elective courses in the second semester. Master's the necessary courses in the first semester and elective courses in the second semester. Master's thesis presentation and completion will show student thesis presentation and completion will show student's ability to apply knowledge acquired through nt's ability to apply knowledge acquired through the programme by creating thematic research project, elaborating case study from industry and food the programme by creating thematic research project, elaborating case study from industry and food markets, creating models, outlining strategic documents, etc. Students will have to show their markets, creating models, outlining strategic documents, etc. Students will have to show their ability to cooperate with different sections in different contexts, and on different subjects operate with different sections in different contexts, and on different subjects.

Lectures will be conducted in fully equipped and spatially adequate classrooms, laboratories, with the support of competent services. Some courses will require practical support of competent services. Some courses will require practical work that will be conducted at the University's laboratories, representative lots and on polygon. Some practical work will be at the University's

laboratories, representative lots and on polygons. Some practical work will be also realised through study visits to farms, food industries, institutions, etc. We need to point out also realised through study visits to farms, food industries, institutions, etc. We need to point out that during the STEPS project that during the STEPS project realisation, the Faculty will also implement important additional realisation, the Faculty will also implement important additional laboratory and computer equipment which will laboratory and computer equipment which will provide better quality of study programme.

5.1.4. Courses content and ECTS credits assigned

Courses content and ECTS credits MSc in Sustainable Food Production Systems at UNBI are detailed in the study "STUDY Second Cycle Study Program SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION SYSTEMS" UNBI in chapter 15 on page 37 ([MSc-SUSTAINABLE-FOOD-PRODUCTION-SYSTEMS-STEPS-Erasmus-eng](#)).

5.1.5. Assessment and examination procedures and grading

Teaching organisation, examination and grading of students are set in the University of Bihać Statute and Second Cycle Study Rules. Overall work and knowledge are graded continuously throughout the semester and on the final exam. On the very first lecture, the teacher is obliged to inform students about the total ECTS credits and grading system for the course taken. ECTS credits are awarded for every individual activity and grade in accordance with the ECTS rules. Activities and testing throughout the semester must be awarded at least 50% of the total ECTS credit points.

Test results and gained knowledge are documented into student's profiles (Student Information System) by the course teacher. Upon completion of the course and final exam, the teacher calculates final grades for students and total ECTS achieved. Exam results and other workload throughout the semester is awarded with ECTS as follows:

- a) 10 (A) (outstanding performance with only minor errors), 95- 100 points;
- b) 9 (B) (above the average standard but with some errors), 85- 94 points;
- c) 8 (C) (average work with a number of notable errors), 75- 84 points;
- d) 7 (D) (fair but with significant shortcomings), 65- 74 points;
- e) 6 (E) (performance meets the minimum criteria), 60- 64 points;
- f) 5 (F, FX) (considerable further work is required), below 60 points.

Final grade is based on the total amount of points for a course. A failing grade is given if a student does not achieve the necessary number of points, and they do not get grade six (6), they do not receive courses worth ECTS credits. If a student achieves grade six (6) or higher, they are given the number of courses worth ECTS credits. Final grade is recorded in their academic record document (index).

5.1.6. Capacity of the UNBI to accommodate students, laboratory exercises and demonstrations, in terms of infrastructures, faculty and administration services

Facilities, Equipment, Furniture, Library and Other Standards

Standards and pedagogical norms also define:

- Optimal facilitation for students' needs,
- Disability Access to Facilities,
- Teaching Aids,
- Sanitary Conditions,
- Libraries,
- Computers and Network.

Facilities and Equipment

First and second cycle studies at the Faculty of Biotechnical Sciences at the University of Bihać are conducted at the Faculty's facilities at "Grmeč" campus. Lectures, auditory exercises and seminars are held in classrooms (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 and Amphitheatre), while practical parts of the study are performed at chemical and biological laboratories for instrumental analysis.

The Faculty stretches on 3612 square metres. Amphitheatres, classrooms and biological laboratories offer multimedia equipment (projector, screen, computers and laptops). Laboratories are fitted with modern instrumental equipment which allows individual or small group practical exercises to be conducted. We offer a bus or microbus for field exercises and study visits.

The Faculty of Biotechnical Sciences at the University of Bihać has six classrooms with modern equipment and capacity for 20 to 60 students, depending on the classroom, with modern video projectors, computers and blackboards. Besides computer equipment available to teachers and administrative staff, the Faculty owns significant laboratory equipment.

Laboratories are located in a special facility at "Grmeč" campus. There are four bigger laboratories for the experimental part of the studies, four smaller facilities with the studies, four smaller facilities with instrumental technology, two foreign service labs, and one laboratory for scientific and research instrumental technology, two foreign service labs, and one laboratory for scientific and research work. There are also two administration and documentation offices, auxiliary facilities for preparation of lab equipment, chemical storage facility and sanitary facilities.

5.1.7 Arrangements that will ensure the sustainability of the STEPS study programme

We accept 10 full-time students in the first admission term. The number of students is determined every year by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports USK, based on the Faculty's and the University of Bihać Senate's proposition. Domestic agri-food sector and their services give regular recommendations to the Bureau of Unemployment of Bosnia and Herzegovina on specific actions in order to lower the unemployment numbers with emphasis on self-employment and employment in the agricultural sector. This highlights the need for competitive and developed agri-food sector academic experts, but with received education that can answer current and realistically anticipated challenges.

It is important to point out that during the implementation of the project “MSc in Sustainable Food Production Systems/STEPS” by the project consortium, an excellent stakeholder analysis was also conducted.

Agriculture and food industry representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina and institutions directly or indirectly connected to agriculture-production, processing and distribution of food, along with students as important interest group, all agreed that such study would be extremely important for agriculture and food production sectors and the inevitable transformation they are facing.

Considering all the reasons for implementation of this study, e.g. the need for educated experts - Masters of Science” – specialized in the sustainability in complex food production systems, as well as the stakeholder analysis and good-practice analysis results, we aim to educate and qualify 50 experts in the next five years. These experts will be able to provide sustainable food production from farm to table, and improve export of the final products, which we believe justify the five-year student number forecast plan as seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Student numbers forecast for the next five years

Year	Number of Students
2020/2021	10
2021/2022	10
2022/2023	10
2023/2024	10
2024/2025	10
Total	50

5.1.8. Preparation of the application of STEPS study programme for accreditation at the University of Bihać

Accreditation of study programs in BiH is carried out according to the criteria of Higher Education and Quality Assurance in BiH (HEA), which are based on the ESG and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The process of accreditation of study programs at the University of Bihać includes the following stages:

- preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report;
- submitting a request for (re)accreditation;
- appointment of the Commission;

- visiting a higher education institution;
- preparation and publication of the external evaluation report with Opinion (Commission Report);
- providing the Agency's Recommendation;
- issuing a decision based on the submitted request for (re)accreditation;
- evaluation of the compliance of the solution and entry in the Register;
- follow-up activities.

Before submitting an application for accreditation, the higher education institution conducts a self-evaluation, which results in the creation of a Self-Evaluation Report. Self-evaluation and accreditation of study programs at UNBI is fully regulated by the regulations of the University of Bihać: [Rulebook on Self-Evaluation Methodology](#) (Ref.No: 06-457/11, dated 07/02/2011), [Rulebook on Reporting Methodology](#) (Ref.No: 06-456/11, dated 13/12/2010), the [Procedure for monitoring students' passing and success rates](#) (Ref.No: 06-4357/10, dated 07/02/2011), the [Procedure for surveying students at UNBI](#) (Ref.No: 06-4358/11, dated 13/12/2010), the Regulations of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Una-Sana Canton (MESCS USK): Rulebook on accreditation of higher education institutions and study programs (Official Gazette of the Una-Sana Canton, Year XXIV - Number 6, Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2020, available on STEPS Google Drive), Criteria and indicators for the accreditation of study programs at B&H universities provided by the [Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance in B&H](#).

Self-evaluation reports are prepared at the level of the higher education institution and/or at the level of the study program. The self-evaluation report of the study program is prepared by a team led by the head of the study program, and it is prepared on the basis of individual self-evaluations, statistical data, reports of teaching subjects/modules, surveys conducted with students and graduates, (form F-02) and business representatives (form F-03).

After the completion of the self-evaluation process (in the form of a draft report), the self-evaluation report is submitted to the Quality Assurance Team of the organizational unit of the University, which validates the formal correctness of the Report. The team of the organizational unit forwards this draft of the report to the Educational and Scientific Council of the organizational unit, which discusses the content of the report and makes possible corrections, and after the adoption of the Report, forwards it, in the form of a proposal, to the Board and the Center.

The Center for Quality Assurance and Internal Evaluation of the University of Bihać carries out an internal evaluation of the report and makes a recommendation to the Board, which considers the proposal and recommendation. After adopting the report, the Committee submits it to the Senate. The Senate considers the report, and after its adoption, the report becomes an official document of the quality assurance system and can be used for external evaluation purposes.

Current status: University of Bihać launched the STEPS study program in the beginning of the 2020/21 academic year by enrolling the first generation of students into the one year master's study program "**Sustainable Food Production Systems**". According to the law and rules of the University of Bihać, the process of accreditation of the study program begins after the end of the initial/ first year of study. Accordingly, UNBI has initiated the accreditation process for MSc STEPS in

October 2021. A commission was formed and the internal self-evaluation process was carried out at the end of 2021 and during 2022. In the final stages and finalization of the Self-evaluation report, [meetings were held](#) between the UNBI MSc STEPS self-evaluation team, representatives of the Quality Assurance team at the Biotechnical Faculty and representatives of the Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HEA). After the self-evaluation report was approved by the Quality Assurance Team at the Biotechnical faculty of UNBI, it was adopted in the regular procedure by the Teaching and Scientific Council ([Decision, number: 03-83/2023, dated: 16.01.2023](#)), which THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS for MSc STEPS at UNBI OFFICIALLY STARTED.

The adopted final self-evaluation report of the MSc STEPS study program was sent through the Center for Quality Assurance for approval to the Senate of UNBI. After adoption by the Senate, the self-evaluation report will be sent to MESCS USC in the procedure described in the chapters below. It is expected that the accreditation of the MSc STEPS program at UNBI will be completed in the first half of 2023.

5.1.9. Preparation and submission of application and self-evaluation report

In accordance with the provisions of the Rulebook on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs (*Official Gazette of the Una-Sana Canton, Year XXIV - Number 6, Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2020*), the UNBI submits an application for accreditation after completing the self-evaluation process of study programs and procedures described above to the relevant Ministry - MESCS USC. After receiving the Request, the MESCS USC assesses its formal correctness and compliance with the provisions of the aforementioned Rulebook. MESCS USC also checks whether the structure of the Self-Evaluation Report is in accordance with the standards and criteria. If the Ministry determines that the submitted request is incomplete or irregular, it will ask the higher education institution to eliminate the deficiencies and set a deadline by which it is obliged to do so. When it determines that the submitted request is in order, MESCS USC initiates the accreditation procedure.

5.1.10 Review of the self-evaluation report by the National Accreditation Agency

Along with the request for accreditation and the self-evaluation report, MESCS USC submits to the Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance the Proposal for the appointment of the Commission and the Proposal for the appointment of reviewers for study programs. The study program accreditation committee is appointed based on the regulations and criteria of the [Instruction on the Appointment of Expert Committees for the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions](#), and consists of four members from the field from which the study program was nominated, namely: one member - a local expert, a representative of the academic communities in B&H, one member - an international expert, one member - an expert from business and practice; one member - student representative.

The Ministry proposes to the Commission only persons who are on the list of experts established by the Agency in accordance with the provisions of the Framework Law on Education in B&H. The

reviewers prepare a report on the study program and submit it to MESCS USK and the Accreditation Commission. The decision on the appointment of a committee of experts who evaluate and conduct a quality audit and make recommendations on the accreditation of the corresponding higher education institution, i.e. the study program, is made by the Director of the Agency, on the proposal of the Quality Assurance Sector, after a preliminary check of the criteria from the mentioned Instruction.

5.1.11. Organisation of a visit of external experts (Commission of Experts) and conduction of the external evaluation report

The formed Commission of experts for the accreditation of the study program checks the situation described in the self-evaluation report and compares it with the factual situation. The Commission, after notifying the Ministry of education, science, culture and sport of Una-Sana Canton (MESCS USK), visits the higher education institution and presents an oral report to the study program without evaluating the fulfilment of the criteria and the outcome of the accreditation. At the end of the accreditation process, the Commission prepares a written report with recommendations for improvements and an opinion on the outcome of the accreditation. This report, without grades, recommendations and opinions on the outcome of accreditation, is submitted to the higher education institution for clarification.

5.1.12 Specification of subsequent activities carried out by HEIs in compliance to the recommendations of the Commission of Experts Report

After receiving the decision on the accreditation of the study program, the higher education institution draws up an action plan for the improvement and advancement of the quality system, which is published on the website of the higher education institution and the Ministry. The action plan contains a list of activities aligned with the recommendations from the Decision, which are contained in the report of the Commission, a time frame for the implementation of those activities, and the specific bearers of the activities. The implementation of the action plan is monitored by the Ministry and the Agency. The Ministry may, ex officio or on the basis of the Agency's recommendation, cancel the Decision on institutional accreditation or study program accreditation if the higher education institution does not prepare an Action Plan in the manner and within 3 months after receiving the Decision on accreditation.

5.2. STEPS application for accreditation at University of Sarajevo (UNSA-P6)

5.2.1. Organisational structure of University of Sarajevo, funding and financial related mechanisms

The headquarters of the University (UNSA) is in Sarajevo, at the address Obala Kulina bana 7/II, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNSA is a licensed and accredited public higher education institution that has the status of a legal entity. UNSA was registered for the first time in 1966 at the District Commercial Court of Sarajevo under number US37/66 dated June 21, 1966. Founded in

1949, UNSA is the oldest, largest and best higher education institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with special responsibility for the growth and development of both Sarajevo Canton and the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNSA is a large and complex organisation whose mission is to educate, through teaching and research, high-quality, capable, creative and internationally competent personnel in all areas of interest to Bosnia and Herzegovina, who will professionally and qualitatively perform the demanding tasks of the modern economy in European and world politics, economic, social and cultural environment.

The organisation and activity of the UNSA, as a public higher education institution in the Canton of Sarajevo, is prescribed by the Framework Law on Higher Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Law on Higher Education of the Canton of Sarajevo and the Statute of the University.

UNSA consists of twenty-five faculties and academies and five institutes, full members of the University, internally organised within six councils of groups of sciences/arts from the fields of: social sciences, humanistic sciences, medical sciences, natural-mathematical and biotechnical sciences, technical sciences and arts. University counts, in addition to the mentioned 30 full members (including the Faculty of Agriculture and Food, which implements the STEPS project), five associate members and five sub-organizational units.

The bodies of UNSA are: the Board of Directors, the Senate, the Rector. The University also has other professional and advisory bodies for the performance of activities, the establishment, composition and jurisdiction of which are regulated by the Statute or other general acts. The professional and advisory bodies of the University are: councils of science/art groups, boards, councils and commissions appointed as permanent bodies by the Senate of the University. If necessary, the Senate of the University can also appoint ad hoc bodies, which is determined more precisely by an individual act.

Studies at the University are organised and conducted as:

- cyclical academic studies through: first study cycle, second study cycle, integrated academic study, third study cycle,
- specialist academic studies;
- professional studies.

The first cycle of academic studies lasts at least three or at most four years and is evaluated with at least 180 or 240 ECTS points. The second cycle of academic studies lasts one or two years and is evaluated with 60 or 120 ECTS points, so that when combined with the ECTS points of the first cycle of studies, it amounts to at least 300 ECTS points in total. The third cycle of academic studies lasts three years and is valued at 180 ECTS points. In the academic year 2005/2006, the UNSA implemented ECTS – the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System as a tool for making studies more uniform and in accordance with the European Higher Education Area.

Funds from the Budget of the Canton of Sarajevo finance part of the salaries and allowances of teachers and associates at higher education institutions, part of the salaries of services whose

activities ensure a complete and necessary standard of higher education, part of material costs, minimal equipment for teaching, artistic and scientific research work, working and living standards of students. Support of scientific research HEIs come from two levels: Federal level - Federal Ministry of Education and Science and at the cantonal level through the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Canton.

5.2.2. Strategy of the University of Sarajevo at institutional level

UNSA has an adopted Development Strategy for the period from 2019-2023 ([https://www.unsa.ba/sites/default/files/dodatak/2017-10/Strategija%20NI UIR UNSA 22 9 17 usvojena.pdf](https://www.unsa.ba/sites/default/files/dodatak/2017-10/Strategija%20NI%20UIR%20UNSA%2022%209%2017%20usvojena.pdf)). At its 30th regular session held on May 6, 2019, the Senate of the University of Sarajevo adopted the Development Strategy of the University of Sarajevo for the period 2019-2023. year, Decision no. 01-12-44/19.

The basic principles that guided UNSA in creating this development strategy are: focus on the developmental role of the University of Sarajevo, inclusive approach, internationalisation of all processes at UNSA, complementarity, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of all business activities of UNSA, and innovation and knowledge management.

In order to ensure consistency, i.e. to stimulate the accelerated transformation of UNSA in terms of adapting and complying with the requirements of the new legislative-institutional framework for higher education in Sarajevo Canton, strategic directions related to the development of the six mentioned areas were determined:

1. in the area of finance, the main strategic priority is computerization and consolidation of financial operations and financial reporting, i.e. stability of financial flows of UNSA in all aspects of work,
2. in the area of teaching and student affairs, the main strategic priority is excellence in the teaching process and continuity in the "rejuvenation" of the academic community and permanent strengthening of the abilities of academic and non-academic staff;
3. In the area of scientific research, the focus is on the promotion and support of scientific excellence and relevance through the improvement of the system of management and strengthening of scientific research work;
4. in the field of international cooperation, the main strategic priority is the institutionalisation of the internationalisation process at UNSA, in order to create the conditions for the delocalization of the education process as well as research, and to provide students and academic and non-academic staff with the opportunity to acquire intercultural, general and transferable skills that will enable them as individuals;
5. in the area of arts, culture and sports, the focus is on encouraging inclusivity, multiculturalism and excellence, and improving the work and development of art, culture and sports at UNSA

6. In the field of quality assurance and management systems, three strategic goals have been defined: strengthening computerization and capacity for internal quality assurance at UNSA, ensuring quality standards of higher education at UNSA that will enable full implementation of the quality management system. The promotion and support of excellence that UNSA strives for is recognized as the third strategic goal.

The Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences, as an organisational unit of UNSA and HEI that implements the STEPS project, also has its own development strategy valid until 2023. The STEPS project achieves one of the five strategic goals - improvement of the teaching process and conditions for teaching.

5.2.3. Structure of the STEPS study programme, the number, the list of courses and the sum of the ECTS offered by the STEPS study programme,

The initiative to open the study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" is largely based on the participation of the University of Sarajevo and its Faculty of Agriculture and Food in the implementation of the Erasmus+ project "MSc in Sustainable Food Production Systems / STEPS". By joining this project, the University and the Faculty, among others, have accepted the obligation to develop, adopt and functionally activate the study program of the second cycle (master) focused on sustainable food production systems before the project completion.

The intention of the study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" is to provide future masters with a broad basic knowledge of the most important common elements of the food production systems, and in particular of the currently dominant challenges such as the sustainability of these systems, their supply and value chains, food safety and quality, combined with specialisation in specific areas according to the student's personal interest. In the final year of study, students will apply the acquired knowledge through the preparation of a thematic research project, elaboration of a case study from the industry or from the food market, drafting a strategic document, etc. Here a student should demonstrate the ability to collaborate with experts of different profiles in different contexts on different topics within the company.

The proposed study program is realised through three semesters of teaching and preparation of the master thesis in its fourth semester. The entire study program is conceived as a combination of two groups of subjects related to sustainable food production systems. In the first group there are subjects related to food engineering, food safety and quality, and in the second there are subjects related to management in food production systems. The first semester consists of six compulsory courses common to all six partner institutions participating in the implementation of the STEPS project. These are three subjects from each of the two groups mentioned above (food engineering, food safety and quality; management in food production systems). The syllabi of these subjects were developed through the cooperation of all six partner institutions of the STEPS project, with auditing by teachers from the EU universities involved in the implementation of the project.

Both the second and the third semester of the proposed study program consists of ten elective courses, of which the student selects and attends six courses in each semester. In each of these two

semesters the ratio of the so-called engineering and management subjects from the two mentioned groups is 50%: 50% (five engineering and five management subjects). According to the proposed curriculum, the student is thus able to profile himself/herself for the one or the other group of disciplines through selection electives either from engineering or management cluster. However, due to the requirement to have at least 30 ECTS credits in each semester and due to the linear crediting of each course with 5 ECTS, the student will still need to take at least two courses during the two semesters from the group which he/she did not choose primarily. It should be emphasized that the syllabi of electives in the second and third semester of the proposed study program were audited at EU universities, partners in the implementation of the STEPS project (engineering disciplines in Athens and Bucharest, and management disciplines in Prague and Athens).

The student can completely round up his/her eventual profiling through the choice of subjects in the second and third semesters and absorb them by choosing the appropriate topic for preparation of his/her master thesis. The proposed study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" is designed to offer a large number of electives through which the student can profile himself/herself in one of two directions (sustainable food engineering or sustainable management in food production systems). Thus, out of a total of 26 courses offered in the first three semesters of the study program, there are as many as 20 elective courses (77%). However, on the basis of an approved application submitted to the head of study program, student may, during the second and third semesters, take electives offered at other graduate programs at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the University of Sarajevo or at other faculties of the University of Sarajevo. The value of the courses so selected may not exceed 10 ECTS per semester.

In accordance with the affirmative attitude of the University and the Faculty towards student mobility, students will be encouraged to attend part or all of the semester classes at other universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina or abroad through general or specially arranged mobility schemes. In doing so, the head of the proposed study program will approve all mobility arrangements, which include attending and completing the courses at other faculties of the University of Sarajevo or at other universities. Those courses in terms of their contents and goals, should at least roughly correspond to the content and objectives of the study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems". Students will be particularly encouraged to spend part or whole fourth semester of the study program intended for research that will result in the preparation of a master thesis at another university, with the obligation to apply and defend his/her master thesis at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, University of Sarajevo.

The syllabi of the largest number of subjects of the study program provide hours for practical classes through laboratory or similar exercises and/or through the implementation of student projects. Although the total share of practical classes may vary somewhat depending on the elective subjects the student chooses, it is certain that the number of practical classes will not be less than one third of the total (at least 30 ECTS) during the first three semesters. In addition, research related to the preparation of the master thesis usually involves the students' practical work. In this way, the proposed study program provides more than the recommended 30 ECTS of practical studying.

In accordance with legal regulations and relevant acts of the University of Sarajevo, all forms of teaching are planned, (syllabus, semester plan of activities), approved (approval by the study leader and the Faculty's Academic and Scientific Council), and verified (records of realized teaching activities and student attendance). It is easy from these records to get a share of practical studying in the total tuition for each student. It should be emphasized that in the diploma supplement of each student are stated the shares of theoretical and practical teaching on the basis of their share in all compulsory and elective subjects which the student has completed during his/her study.

5.2.4. Courses content and ECTS credits assigned

Courses content and ECTS credits MSc in Sustainable Food Production Systems at UNSA are detailed in the UNSA (Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences) document Info Pocket of Diploma Study Program - "Sustainable Food Production Systems" in chapter 4 on page 14.

<https://steps.ppf.unsa.ba/dokumenti/Odrzivi%20sistemi%20proizvodnje%20hrane%20-Info%20paket%20PDF.pdf>

5.2.5. Assessment and examination procedures and grading

Teaching organisation, examination and grading of students are set in the University of Sarajevo Statute and Second Cycle Study Rules.

<https://www.unsa.ba/sites/default/files/dodatak/2018-11/Statut%20Univerziteta%20u%20Sarajevu.pdf>

Overall work and knowledge are graded continuously throughout the semester and on the final exam. On the very first lecture, the teacher is obliged to inform students about the total ECTS credits and grading system for the course taken. ECTS credits are awarded for every individual activity and grade in accordance with the ECTS rules.

Scoring scales at the University of Sarajevo are defined by the university regulations. The final grade is determined and awarded based on the total number of points scored for the activities prescribed by the syllabus of the subject, as follows:

10 – (A) 95 – 100 Outstanding, with minor mistakes

9 – (B) 85 – 94 Above average, with some errors

8 – (C) 75 – 84 Average, with noticeable errors

7 – (D) 65 – 74 Generally good, but with significant drawbacks

6 – (E) 55 - 64 Meets minimum criteria

5 – (F, FX) < 55 Does not meet the minimum criteria (F) and requires significantly more work (FX)

The grade 5 (F, FX) is not a passing grade and does not enter the student index.

The points listed in the table are earned by the student during the semester through semester proficiency tests and at the final exam. The final grade is derived from the total points scored by the student during the semester and at the final exam.

5.2.6. Capacity of the UNSA accommodates students, laboratory exercises and demonstrations, in terms of infrastructures, faculty and administration services.

The Faculty of Agriculture and Food of the University of Sarajevo carries out its activities in two locations - in the Campus of the University of Sarajevo (Zmaja od Bosne 8), where the main and one auxiliary buildings of the Faculty are located, and at the Faculty's experimental training ground Butmir with the capacities of laboratories and workshops for agricultural mechanisation, classrooms, a Gene Bank and about 6.5 ha of land for practical teaching, research and variety field experiments.

The Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences has about 942 m² of classroom space, which can accommodate 630 students at the same time. The Faculty uses 25 laboratories with over 220 workplaces and a total area of about 1,345 m² for teaching. In addition, for the implementation of special types of practical teaching and experiments, the Faculty owns and uses about 500 m² of greenhouse and greenhouse space. The Gene Bank is a special capacity of the Faculty for the preservation of plant genetic material, but also for the realisation of research and some teaching segments. The Faculty's library with about 11,000 library items is located in an area of 80 m².

Taking into account that the Faculty uses over 5,500 m² of total space (including, in addition to the mentioned classroom, laboratory and library spaces, staff offices, student rooms, Faculty offices and common spaces), it can be concluded that its spatial capacities meet the requirements of the standards and norms regarding space required for the performance of higher education activities. The mentioned area is used for the realisation of classes with a total of about 700 students of the Faculty. The standards and norms predict a total of 10 m² of space per student of the group of natural-mathematical and biotechnical sciences as an optimum, with the provision that the minimum area per student cannot be less than 70% of the optimal area.

All classrooms of the Faculty are equipped with at least the presentation equipment (computer, projector, projection surface) necessary for performing visual presentations. The only classroom space of the Faculty with over 100 seats (Amphitheater 1) is equipped with the standards and norms required by the sound system. At the time of writing this document, the Faculty is finishing equipping one classroom for multimedia presentations. The laboratories of the Faculty have all the equipment and instruments necessary for the implementation of active study programs (four undergraduate, 14 graduate and two doctoral studies). In addition to classic laboratory facilities, the Faculty has equipped, and its students actively use, pilot plants in the field of technology of food products of plant origin, technology of fermentation and distillation, and technology of dairy products. Agricultural machines and attachments, as well as mini-irrigation systems, are located and regularly used at the Butmir faculty experimental training ground. Through the implementation of the STEPS project, the Faculty's laboratory capacities were improved through the procurement and commissioning of additional laboratory equipment and instruments (spectrophotometer,

autoclave, ELISA line, NIR hand-held spectrometer and mini lines for processing fruits and vegetables). The acquisition of ArcGIS software should also be added here. The Faculty has a solid IT infrastructure, with a quality external internet connection. The computers of all employees of the Faculty have cable access to the Internet via a central server. In addition, practically the entire area of the main building of the Faculty is covered by a wireless signal. Through the implementation of the STEPS project, the Faculty was additionally equipped with the latest computer equipment, and before the end of the project, the LMS platform will be developed and put into operation at the Faculty.

5.2.7. Arrangements that will ensure the sustainability of the STEPS study programme

In the frame of the STEPS project, the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences of the University of Sarajevo enrolled three generations of students in the "Sustainable Food Production Systems" study program. In the first enrollment term (academic 2020/2021), a competition was announced for the enrollment of 15 students, of which 10 are full-time (regular) students. The same was done for the academic year 2021/2022, while for the academic year 2022/2023 the number of full-time students was 7. The total number of enrolled students of all three generations is 19. The number of students is determined each year by the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Government of Sarajevo Canton, on proposal of the Senate of the Faculty and University of Sarajevo. Namely, on the basis of Articles 78 to 86 of the Law on Higher Education of the Canton of Sarajevo ("Official Gazette of the Canton of Sarajevo", number: 33/17), the prior consent of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Canton of Sarajevo and the Decision of the Government of the Canton of Sarajevo on the number and structure of students who can enroll in the first year of the first cycle of studies, integrated studies and the second cycle of studies at the University of Sarajevo, UNSA, through its services, publicly announces a competition for the enrollment of students in the first year of the second cycle of studies, among which is the STEPS MSc.

It is important to point out that during the implementation of the "MSc in Sustainable Food Production Systems/STEPS" project, the project consortium also conducted an excellent stakeholder analysis. Representatives of agriculture and the food industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina and institutions that are directly or indirectly related to agriculture - production, processing and distribution of food, together with students as an important interest group, agreed that such a study would be extremely important for the agriculture sector and food production and the inevitable transformation they face.

The current legislation on agriculture and food in Bosnia and Herzegovina, sectoral strategic documents and requirements pertaining to the sector with Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession to the European Union insist on the restructuring and modernization of the agriculture and food production sectors. It will not be possible to meet these requirements without university-educated individuals with new knowledge, skills and competencies. Analysis of the labor market in Bosnia and Herzegovina has unfortunately, for a long time, pointed to a considerable number of unemployed agronomists and food technologists, especially in some parts of the country. However, a closer look

at the educational history, as well as the universities, from which newcomers to the agri-food sector (or sector-related jobs) are coming, indicates the confidence employers are more willing to give to their new hires from more reputable, public universities, and especially, those who have completed study programs aligned with research and educational trends in universities in developed countries.

The basic concept of the proposed study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" is presented to a number of responsible persons from the industry, but also from the research, control, and governing-administrative structures through the STEPS stakeholder analysis. The virtually unallocated opinion of all these potential employers is that in each of their business systems, a seventh-level university-educated professional trained and competent in sustainability issues in complex food production systems should and could find a place, especially in planning and development teams. According to the survey's findings, the leading food industries in Bosnia and Herzegovina emphasize that sustainability is an important aspect of these business systems and that demand for employees who understand the concepts of sustainability in the food chain and who are trained in their implementation should be expected accordingly. Larger business systems highlight the growing need for highly educated professionals with more than one narrow specialty competence. These industries are today sought by persons with competencies in both the R&D and production organisation departments, but also in the sales and distribution domains. Besides, agri-food companies request experts in this profile to integrate sustainability principles into all their activities, especially insisting on an international context in which these companies are increasingly operating, increasing regulatory requirements regarding food safety and quality, preserving and improving the natural resources and on increasing corporate and social responsibility. With its structure with functional linking of food engineering and agro-economic and management disciplines, the proposed study program has the assumptions to offer employers a master's degree competent to link different company sectors and to coordinate complex business projects that require the cooperation of different departments of the company. In the end, it should be said that the interest in the mentioned study "Sustainable food production systems" is growing, since in the academic year 2022/2023, 8 or 10.5% of all students enrolled in all master programs of the Faculty were enrolled.

5.2.8 Preparation of the application of STEPS study programme for accreditation at the University of Sarajevo

The University of Sarajevo, i.e., its Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences, launched the STEPS study program at the beginning of the 2020/21 academic year by enrolling the first generation of students in the two-year master's study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems".

Prior to the launch of the STEPS study program, according to provisions of the law (Higher Education Act "Official Gazette of Sarajevo Canton", 33/17) the procedure of prior approval of the study program through university and ministerial procedures was provided.

It is very important to emphasise that, according to the legal provisions in the Sarajevo Canton, the ministerial licensing (prior approval) of the study program must be obtained before its effective implementation, and that the accreditation of the study program is considered as a part of the quality assurance process which could be obtained after achieved the first results of the realisation of the study program.

In accordance with the above, only a study program proposed by an (institutionally) accredited higher education institution can be licensed (the University of Sarajevo is an accredited Bosnia and Herzegovina higher education institution).

The complex procedure of prior approval, with the preparation and submission of a number of elaborates and documents, including external *ex-ante* evaluation by two external experts of the proposed study program was carried out in three phases: a) consideration and approval by the Quality Committee and Teaching-Scientific Council of the Faculty of Agriculture; b) review and approval by the Quality Committee and the Senate of the University of Sarajevo and c) review and approval (licensing) by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science of the Sarajevo Canton (Ministry). As already mentioned in other types of reports on the implementation of the STEPS project at the University of Sarajevo, the licensing procedure of the STEPS study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" was implemented in the period from January to May 2020 and concluded with the approval (licence) of the Ministry of Higher Education and the science of the Sarajevo Canton for the enrolment of the first generation of students in August 2020 and the beginning of the realisation of the study program in October 2020.

The first generation of students joined the study program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" in October 2020 and it is expected that by the end of the academic year 2021/22, successful students of this study program will defend their master's thesis and obtain "Master of Food Technology" diplomas. Since the beginning of the realisation of the STEPS master study program at the University of Sarajevo, preparations have been made for submitting applications for its accreditation. This primarily implies the preparation of elements for the preparation of a self-evaluation report conducted by the structures of the Faculty of Agriculture and Food, University of Sarajevo. The self-evaluation report should be prepared in accordance with the criteria prescribed by the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Agency) and it includes, among other things, student surveys, i.e., regular surveys of student satisfaction with the implementation and results of the study program.

The necessary elements for completing the self-evaluation report was acquired in the first semester of academic year 2022/23, concluding with the survey of the first generation of students who have completed the STEPS study program. The self-evaluation report is in preparation according to the criteria of Higher Education and Quality Assurance in BiH (HEA), which are based on the ESG and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the internal review and adoption at the level of the Faculty (Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences, University of Sarajevo), the self-evaluation report should be sent for consideration and

adoption to the Quality Committee of the University of Sarajevo. However, due to lack of internal University's acts regulating relationships between University management and University organization units regarding accreditation procedures, the Faculties self-evaluation report is on standby. It should be mentioned that in Canton Sarajevo new law of higher education is in power since September 2022, so the University itself is in the process of revising old existing and creating new including aforementioned act on accreditation procedure. Once the Faculty submits its self-evaluation report, the Quality Committee of the University of Sarajevo shall evaluate it. If the evaluation of the self-evaluation report is positive at this stage, it is submitted to the Ministry, together with the request for accreditation. The Ministry then asks the Agency to form a five-member expert team for the external evaluation of the study program. The composition of the commission of experts for external evaluation is proposed by the Agency and approved by the Ministry. After the usual two-day inspection at the institution that implements the study program (here: Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences, University of Sarajevo), the expert commission for external evaluation makes a proposal on accreditation, conditional accreditation or refusal of accreditation of the study program. Based on this report of the expert commission, the Agency, in cooperation with the Ministry, makes the final decision (certificate) on the accreditation of the study program.

6. STEPS APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION IN PARTNER COUNTRIES HEIs - documents

1. All the documents related to the STEPS application for accreditation at the **AUT** can be found on the following link:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/19n0Lz-RkpSrHKj6iDSXyxz5Zat6U9g_o?usp=share_link
2. All the documents related to the STEPS application for accreditation at the **EUT** can be found on the following link:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/19n0Lz-RkpSrHKj6iDSXyxz5Zat6U9g_o?usp=share_link
3. All the documents related to the STEPS application for accreditation at the **UNBI** can be found on the following link:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Wpe_9Ehj8ypABOjJWZek8ImQaOPXWUdY?usp=sharing
4. All the documents related to the STEPS application for accreditation at the **UNSA** can be found on the following link:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1StFVM1wmbw7yPG2YlknEmipkoqqaapYO?usp=share_link
5. All the documents related to the STEPS application for accreditation at the **UC** can be found on the following link:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Jh-tTvDDDXI8U6UzwFMjERmct5NDYzao?usp=share_link
6. All the documents related to STEPS application for accreditation at the **UHZ** can be found on the following link:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Jh-tTvDDDXI8U6UzwFMjERmct5NDYzao?usp=share_link

7. CONCLUSIONS

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering that in all partner countries the accreditation procedure is in different stages, the recommendations for further activities are also different for each partner country.

8.1. Recommendations for Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT-P1) and European University of Tirana (EUT-P2)

As stated in the report, AUT-EUT is recommended for the academic year 2022-2023. started the application procedure for study program accreditation. The procedure will last at least 6 months, during that time the internal evaluation team will evaluate all documentation and prepare a report on self-evaluation according to the requirements of the Agency for Quality Assurance at the Higher Education Institution. When AUT-EUT accredits a study program, the validity of the accreditation of the study program cannot last longer than 6 years (the specific period of validity is decided by the Accreditation Board, based on internal and external reviews). After the expiration of that period, it is recommended that they submit a request for reaccreditation of the study program.

8.2. Recommendations for STEPS application for accreditation at University Haxhi Zeka (UHZ-P3) and Universum College (UC-P4)

As accreditation is valid from October 1, 2021 to October 30, 2024, it is recommended that at least one year in advance (until October 31, 2023) partners from Kosovo submit the application for re-accreditation.

8.3. Recommendations for STEPS application for accreditation at University of Bihać (UNBI-P5)

After the completion of the process of self-evaluation of the study program, it is recommended to the University of Bihać to submit an application for accreditation of the study program to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Una- Sana Canton.

8.4. Recommendations for STEPS application accreditation at University of Sarajevo (UNSA-P6)

The University of Sarajevo is recommended to start the process of self-evaluation of the study program. After completing the self-evaluation process, the University of Sarajevo is recommended to submit an application for accreditation of the study program to the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Youth of Sarajevo Canton.

9. REFERENCES

- Albania Education Law, No.80/2015 (the Guidance No1. date January 14-th, 2020) of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of Albania.
- <https://www.acce.al/en/ministry-education-sport-and-youth>
- <https://www.ascal.al/en/>
- Procedures and Deadlines for Quality Assessments within the accreditation process of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs Manual, 2017; (Albania)
- Law on Higher Education in the Republic Kosovo No.04/L-037
- <https://www.engq.eu/membership-database/kaa-kosovo-accreditation-agency/>
- <https://masht.rks-gov.net/en/home/>
- Rulebook on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs (Official Gazette of the Una-Sana Canton, Year XXIV - Number 6, Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2020),
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- <https://mon.ks.gov.ba/>