

Food-related European Education in the Digital era
to Motivate Innovative New-product Development
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NEWSLETTER

2- MARCH 2021

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1. NEWS OF THE PROJECT

Over the past year, many of the programme's tasks have been completed: Output 1 has been fully completed and its deliverables compiled into a single working document.

At the heart of Output 2, the FEEDTheMIND learning platform has been built and its 4 modules have been selected. A first module, *Creativity*, is already available on the platform. The other modules will be available in March 2021. The first module has been translated and is available in all languages of the FEEDTheMIND project.

Meanwhile, the professors, researchers & staff of the partnering universities have been trained to use the digital platform as a pedagogical material, and the training will continue to provide students with an optimal experience. The testing of the digital pedagogical tool, led by the University of Ljubljana, has begun this month: a questionnaire was created and will be disseminated to the students to gather their feedbacks on the quality of the supports and platform. Regarding the Output 3, the partners begin to reflect on the selection and preparation of the international FEEDTheMIND ECOTROPHELIA team, including digital options.

A seminar on pedagogical practices and acquisition of key competences by the project's partners is also in preparation and will be organized before the summer of 2021. The FEEDTheMIND Special conference is planned during ECOTROPHELIA Europe, in October.

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2. VIRTUAL CHALLENGE DAY

The Virtual Food Challenge Day: a closer ZOOM on culture, culinary sciences and innovation among food engineers from around the world! Organised by L'institut Agro | Montpellier SupAgro with the participation of the FEEDtheMIND institutions.



An annual trip is usually organized for food engineering students at L'institut Agro | Montpellier SupAgro (Montpellier, France) to get in touch with local food enterprises and food industries in order to reinforce operational field skills of future food engineers. This year, due to the sanitary constraints of covid-19, the pedagogical team decided to raise the challenge of preserving this special annual experience by conceiving a new innovative and unique format: the Virtual International Fieldtrip (11th and 12th of January 2021).

The first day allowed virtual meetings and discussions with professionals of the agro-food sector in Lebanon and a look on their industrial and pilot plants via videoconferences. Several entrepreneurs presented their activities in three original fields (beekeeping, local Lebanese wines and grape varieties, recycling of organic wastes). Thanks to the scientific backgrounds of speakers, the future engineers were able to discover and discuss methods as well as approaches specific to this country.

The Virtual Food Challenge Day took place during the second day. This event was created for the 21 students from L'institut Agro | Montpellier SupAgro and widely opened to foreign institutions. The event brought together around fifty students and international food experts to coach them and evaluate the culinary concepts designed. Six countries participated in this event (France, Slovenia, Greece, Spain, Austria, Lebanon). All FEEDtheMIND HEI's institutions were represented (as coaches/experts/jury members or students).

The students, divided into eight mixed teams from different countries, had one common objective of imagining and developing the concept of an innovative food resulting from the fusion of 2 traditional food recipes from their countries, under a main consumption context "street food and food truck". The day was the opportunity to innovate, cowork and communicate in English!

The day was divided into different parts (welcome and introduction, icebreaking, choice of recipes, choice of the food to design, project construction and presentation) and well scheduled. Instructions were given to the participants ahead of the day.

Each team presented its project to an international jury of ten experts (trainers, professors and researchers, business creators) and in presence of all other students. At the end of the video conference pitches, "a student favourite award" and three jury prizes were awarded to the winners selected via an online voting system.

This "out of the box" day, entirely organised in virtual mode by the Montpellier pedagogic team, was a great success according to all participants, who were enthusiastic to step beyond the borders of their country thanks to the intercultural collaboration on food innovation. The original concept of this event was acclaimed by all students in the conducted satisfaction survey . This positive feedback reinforces the organisers' wish to capitalise on this experience and extend it to other projects, especially with the FEEDtheMIND partners.

3.NEWS OF THE PARTNERS

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

Montpellier SupAgro

Because of the COVID 19 crisis, Montpellier SupAgro took measures applicable from 16 March: banning students from the campus, teleworking for staff and setting up a pedagogical continuity plan. The coordinators had to contact students, organise 2-week timetables, set up the procedure for evaluating and awarding ECTS, and fill in a shared online table listing the arrangements put in place. The Moodle platform with online resources and the Zoom videoconferencing tool were prioritized, but other tools were used: Skype, webinars, forums, collaboration on Google Sheet... Evaluation methods have evolved: quizzes, homework to be submitted to the platform, writing a scientific article, method sheets... In addition to virtual classes, teachers have proposed regular meetings with students. To improve the pedagogy, a slide show presenting the distance work support system was produced for managers, teachers also organised "virtual cafés" to exchange on their practices of distance learning, distance evaluation and adaptation of teaching methods by distance project. To help students, a 20% reduction in working time has been achieved in some cases. Exemptions were made also concerning internships (reduction of time or delay, relaxation of the procedures for obtaining ECTS credits, etc.). In addition to academic support, social, psychological and health support was offered to the students. To communicate about the general situation of the institution and updates, a weekly e-mail was sent to the staff.

We want to hear about your experience! Share your feedback with us on our Twitter account @Ecotrophelia !

FOCUS ON FOOD INNOVATION AMONG SLOVENIAN STUDENTS

Slovenia has been a part of Ecotrophelia Europe from the very beginning in 2008. Since then, Slovenian teams have presented their eco-innovative food products to the European jury, many times very successfully.

In June 2020, the 12th competition of Ecotrophelia Slovenia took place at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia - Chamber of Agricultural and Food Enterprises. Despite all the difficulties the teams had to face due to Covid-19, they still managed to create interesting and innovative food products: HEIJUS (unfiltered apple juice with added super herbs), Mibito (a healthy chickpea snack), and Guarasita (energy boost drink, based on black tea) that took first, second and third place respectively. HEIJUS proceeded to compete at the Ecotrophelia Europe web edition where the team won the award for the best communication strategy among 13 competing teams.

In 2021, Ecotrophelia Slovenia is coming back strongly with 8 teams to compete and already cooking up their delicious, innovative, and eco-friendly food products. In a few months, we will be able to see and taste what the new generation of creative young minds has created.

Discover the creations in video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YREtWkPwafs>

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4.ASKFOOD PROJECT: Presentation

ASKFOOD, "Alliance for Skills and Knowledge to Widen Food Sector-related Open Innovation, Optimization and Development"

Introduction



As a consequence of societal, environmental and economic factors, the job market in the food sector requires an increasing number of professionals and practitioners with new and entrepreneurial skills and a wider range of competences in food-related disciplines. In most cases, however, the current offer of higher education (HE) study programmes is unable to properly respond to the job market needs and required knowledge transfer. Even though there is an increase in the availability of modern tools, academically focussed new training methodologies and open

access trainings, they still do not produce synergy between university and industry. This explains the need to update and upgrade the graduates' knowledge and competences in the food science and technology sectors by promoting disruptive approaches and methodologies.

The ASKFOOD project was launched to deal with the matter described above. It involves 12 partners from all over Europe and is coordinated by the University of Teramo within the framework of the ASKFOOD Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance. As an innovative and international educational environment, the ASKFOOD project consortium strives to create a permanent knowledge alliance between businesses and HE Institutions in the food related sectors.

Started in 2018, the project has been focusing on diverse activities and the following products have already been implemented or are currently in progress:

The Forecast Aggregator

To define future trends that influence knowledge skills in the food sector, the ASKFOOD consortium has identified eight ground-breaking forces that will shape the competitive scenario in the next years: Technology, Economics, Market habits, Policy and regulatory framework, Environment, Science,

Transformative industry and Social dynamics (TEMPESTS). These forces will change the current reference points for the sector and the future for the demand of skills and jobs.

The Forecast Aggregator is designed to be an interactive library where these eight “TEMPESTS” are described and analysed. Regarding future developments, the Forecast Aggregator tries to anticipate the resulting new skills and future professional profiles that emerge in the food sector and food related sectors if the trend in question continues.

This link directs you to the Forecast Aggregator: <https://www.askfood.eu/tools/forecast/forecast/>

The ASKFOOD Smart Atlas

In the age of shared knowledge and knowledge sharing, there are many open source resources that meet the emerging need for skills in the food sector. The ASKFOOD Smart Atlas activates and re-uses material from eight different types of resources: 1) massive open online courses (MOOCs); 2) training centres; 3) EU project results; 4) research centres; 5) acceleration programmes; 6) crowd funding/ crowd sourcing platforms; 7) start-ups and 8) innovation marketplaces.

The research, on which this Smart Atlas is based, did not intend it to be used for comparative or ranking purposes.

The Smart Atlas can be used as a source of inspiration or a platform for finding self-training tools to expand personal know-how. At the same time, it is also intended as a way to increase knowledge sharing in the food industry.

The following link directs you to the Smart Atlas: <https://www.askfood.eu/tools/smart-atlas/maps/>

The interactive Training Gap Identifier

The interactive Training Gap Identifier (ITGI) is aimed to provide self-assessment tools to reduce skill mismatch in the labour market and to support personal learning and career paths for present and future food professionals. Visit the ITGI Virtual tool here: <https://www.askfood.eu/tools/itgi/>

Innovative training activities

Within this work package, different target groups, *i.e.* MSc programmes, continuing professional development (CDP) in diverse food related sectors will work with the following approaches: gamification, reverse mentoring and personal learning. Learners and teachers will evaluate the methodology they used in the achieved aspects of competences and skills. As a result, a complete portfolio of innovative training concepts, methods and tools as well as a detailed guidance for renovating and adding value to internal training strategies will be available.

Reversed Incubator

The reversed incubator combines an innovative platform that supports the entrepreneurial spirit and new training models that encourage the participants to rethink how we do business. Here, alternative training methods are integrated. This tool aims to improve the industry-oriented professional skills of the students, teachers and industry professionals. Further, it favours the integration of science and technology skills into the industry by investing in an open ecosystem to connect and harness talents, ideas and entrepreneurial initiatives. As a result, this will enhance the value of the entire value chain of the food-related sectors, by connecting academia and business.

The following link directs you to the Reversed Incubator: <https://www.askfood.eu/reversed-incubator-0>

The ASKFOOD Permanent Observatory

The ASKFOOD Permanent Observatory on Innovative Training will monitor and analyse the latest innovation trends in terms of skills, knowledge and competences needs in the food and food-related sectors. The insights produced by the ASKFOOD Permanent Observatory will help members in a multi-sectorial, multidisciplinary environment, to develop innovative training schemes matching future innovation trends in the food sector and food-related sectors.

The Digital Business and Training Ecosystem

ASKFOOD is committed to set a Digital Business and Training Ecosystem (DBTE), an open and co-created platform to support the aggregation and interaction among partners and the wider community of the ASKFOOD stakeholders. Main interest is given to sector-specific clusters and for them the virtual platform will act as support to their training, innovation and networking needs. The DBTE will include also the Mobility and Talent Marketplace, a virtual permanent desk for collection of ideas and opportunities matchup. Overall, the DBTE is meant to be an information provider in its best possible way, contributing to business plannings of clusters which have a need for education.

In conclusion, the ASKFOOD project is designed to contribute to the creation of a new educational ecosystem by improving the academia-industry and stakeholders interplay in a Quintuple Helix innovation model.

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More info is available at www.askfood.eu