

CUPAGIS coordination meeting 04 May 2022

Zoom meeting

Participants: All partners (except for Technical University Berlin (TUB) and the associated partner – Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Algeria).

Representatives of partners:

Tarmo Soomere, Anu Green, Ebe Pilt (Tallinn University of Technology, coordinator)

Svetlana Jasic (Exolaunch)

Dr Dimo Atanasov (Agricultural University Plovdiv, Bulgaria)

Dr František Kumhala, Dr Jitka Kumhalova, Dr Jan Chyba (Czech University of Life Sciences CULS)

Dr Abdelkader LARIBI (Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie, ENSA)

Prof Maatoug Mhamed (Ibn Khaldoun Tiaret University)

Prof Dellal AEK (Ibn Khaldoun Tiaret University)

Dr Bouacha Islem (Ibn Khaldoun Tiaret University)

Prof Hadjira BENOUDNINE (Université de Mostaganem)

Prof Abdeddaim KADOUN (Djillali Liabes University of Sidi Bel Abbès)

Prof Yahia LEBBAH (Université d'Oran1)

Prof Moulay BELKHODJA (University Oran1)

Dr Milloud DAHANE (University Oran1)

Prof Noureddine BENAÏSSA (University Oran1)

Guest: external expert/advisor Dr Andrei Girenko

Agenda:

1. Remarks and recommendations of the external expert of the project
2. Update on arrival of additional equipment
3. Plans for master classes on scientific writing
4. Training session: can we make it?
5. Plans and possible timing for the final seminar
6. Coordinator's visit to Algeria: timing
7. Any other business

1. Remarks and recommendations of the external expert of the project

Dr Andrei Girenko reminded that the success of the project will be evaluated first of all based on the final report and the information that is available on the project website. It is thus important to provide there as much relevant information as possible. Otherwise the work done may remain unnoticed.

Dr Girenko noted that teaching materials are not available yet on the CUPAGIS **website**. It is very desirable to make open materials that have been developed for all courses and curricula. The syllabus (short description of the courses) should also be targeted to wider public and should include, for example, the contacts of teachers. It is good that the existing syllabi have a common structure.

It is also important that all project deliverables are reflected on the project website, item by item, as they are foreseen in the proposal.

Pilot teaching of courses should be reflected on the website in more detail, such as how many students are attending, how many of them are male/female, how many teachers are involved; show also, if possible, their contacts for those who might be interested.

Quality assurance of the project run involves two sets of documents: plan for quality assurance and overview of quality control. A specific feature of CUPAGIS is that the developed courses are of applied nature. This feature makes it possible to use them for preparation for particular professions. It would be a good idea to adjust the courses, if possible, according to the newest recommendations of the European Commission. The relevant links will be provided to the participants today or tomorrow. The quality control should, ideally, cover the entire life cycle of courses, from planning to implementation.

It is important that they are peer-reviewed at least within the consortium. Peer-review and quality control are fundamental values of this kind of competence transfer. It would be good to extend the review and feedback also to external stakeholders; e.g., using feedback from interships or those who learn these aspects additionally to their existing jobs. Consider also feedback from students during and after the courses. Ask whether also teachers are satisfied with the courses and learning process and which skills or additional competencies the staff needs, and which kind of collaboration efforts might be necessary.

As mentioned, the new courses are of applied nature. This feature opens some room for their use as stand-alone units in other curricula and for modal teaching of people who are already educated in some adjacent fields. The material could also be used as basis for microcredentials or microdegrees as currently used in the European Union policy for higher education.

It would be highly interesting for the evaluators and important for grading of the outcome of the project to describe the lessons of the pilot teaching, to recognise how new curricula are better than the existing ones, which new knowledge and experience the students get from them. This is an important part of the general feedback: what was good in the project and what did not work.

Answering questions from the partners, Dr Girenko noted that even though some core information should be in English (e.g., syllabus), information should be generally in the language in which it is expected to be used. French is of course welcome, or Arabic, if materials will be used in this language. It is important that they can be used by others.

Peer-review by project partners is sufficient for the quality control. However, the general wish is that this kind of quality assurance would become an intrinsic part of educational culture.

2. (Changed sequence as Prof Kumhala had to leave at 1400) Training session

The partners were willing to have one more physical training session as was foreseen in the project proposal. Czech University of Life Sciences is willing to host such a session in mid-July; possibly starting from 18 July. The exact dates will be confirmed within week as visa applications may take a month.

The Algerian partners will compile a set of topics of training. The content will be decided together. As flights over Mediterranean are currently overly expensive, the number of participants would probably be limited by two persons per Algerian partner. The coordinator will seek for alternative options.

3. Arrival of additional equipment

The coordinator provided an overview of purchase of the additional sensor equipment for teaching purposes. From the list of 5 items, agreed in December, four have been purchased and have already arrived Tallinn: spectroradiometers Spectralval 1501NR, LaQuinta professional sensor crop cameras, soil N.P.K testers, and RS485 5Pin soil PH NPK temperature and humidity EC sensors. The coordinator is

preparing delivery of the items to Algeria and University Oran1 team contacts with experts in customs clearing.

The coordinator noted that, after this purchase, it is apparently possible to invest about 2,000 euro per Algerian partner into further purchases, depending on the cost of transport and customs clearance, within the budget agreed in November 2021.

4. Master classes on scientific writing

The coordinator is willing to provide a sequence of classes on scientific writing already this spring. This would be a series of four long lectures, each about 2 astronomic hours. As the schedule is already tight, the lectures would be given once week on some early afternoon time but possibly on different weekdays on each week. The partners agreed with this plan.

With these two changes, the budget for travel and stay costs (originally 80 005 euro for travel costs and 179 160 euro for costs of stay; total 259 165 euro) would be decreased to the level of 189 386.20 euro. Given that only about 40 000 euro has been used in the first two years, this amount still provides safe resource for travel for all partners. Every Algerian partner will still have about 30 000 euro for travel and stay costs.

Similar changes for the European partners will be smaller and will be discussed in a separate meeting.

It was decided that the coordinator provides via e-mail these suggestions to Algerian partners and describes possible scenarios, with and without these changes. The Algerian partners will make a decision and let the partners know.

5. Final seminar

It was agreed that the final seminar should take place in Algeria either at the end of September (around 20–25 September) or at the very beginning of October (within the time interval 30 September – 05 October), to ensure that all financial operations will be finished by the end of the project (15 November).

It should be a two-day event, with one part dedicated on the outcome of the project and several other parts to a wider analysis of the present and future of precise agriculture, its possible links with the Green Deal and other current developments.

It is hoped that at least one professor from each European partner could be there. It is reasonable to organise additional short training events back-to-back this conference, to make maximum use out of the travel of experts. Thus, it might be good to allocate four days for the conference and training.

The dates will be specified within coming weeks, to make it possible to have reasonably priced tickets.

6. Coordinator's visit to Algeria: timing

The coordinator is willing to visit Algerian partners at the beginning of summer, possibly at the beginning of July. This time is still fine with the schedule of academic year as teachers are present in the universities.

Notes taken by Tarmo Soomere and Ebe Pilt

04 May 2022