



Design and testing  
new VET frameworks  
for the transfer and recognition  
of organic livestock  
management skills in Europe



Newsletter No. 4

# LIVORG

## Design and testing new VET frameworks for the transfer and recognition of organic livestock management skills in Europe

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Dear readers,

we are glad to present you the 4<sup>th</sup> LivOrg Newsletter. We would like to use this chance to inform you about the latest news in LivOrg Project such as the results of our 4<sup>th</sup> partnership meeting in Greece or our involvement in the EU Programme Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs. Additionally we would like to present the assessment procedures that were used in the LivOrg Pilot Courses and LABs. Last but not least we would also like to inform and invite you to the upcoming Final Seminar of the LivOrg project held in Estonia at the end of November 2015.

### Fourth project meeting in Chania, Greece - 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015

The third transnational partnership meeting of the project LivOrg was held in Chania, Greece, on 13th and 14th July 2015 and was organized by the Greek partner MAICh - Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (EL). During the



meeting, the second e-brochure was presented. Other dissemination measures were discussed and planned like the next newsletters, upcoming promotion workshops and focus groups meetings in all partner countries as well as the Final Seminar of the project held in Estonia. Additionally the consortium discussed the possibilities of supporting new or aspiring entrepreneurs applying for the EU programme Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, a cross-border exchange programme which gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other Participating Countries.

*LivOrg project partners at the 4th partnership meeting at MAICh, Chania*



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## Assessment procedure of Pilot Courses and LABs as well as concepts of integrating the courses to the European and National Qualification Frameworks:

### *Pilot Course in Greece - Assessment procedures:*

The Greek partner MAICH, carried out the pilot course in Crete, Greece under the framework of integration of the curriculum developed by the project (“practitioner in organic livestock management”) in the National Qualification



Framework of Greece. The experience and main findings of the pilot course has significantly contributed to such a task. In addition, the pilot courses provided input on evaluating the possibility of the LivOrg project’s curriculum integration in the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) by investigating the possibility of transferring and recognising qualifications among EU

countries. Therefore, the pilot courses were formed in a way that the methodology and learning outcomes could be fully adaptable into the methodology of the European

Qualification Framework. It included both theoretical indoor knowledge, and outdoor activities which were finally evaluated through written tests as well as

through the observation of the training staff and the interaction with trainees. We assume that the above approach would allow transparency and transfer of recognition, adaptable also to other cases of informal or non-formal learning, improving in the long-term the quality and credibility of the education in the EU level.



### *Pilot Course in Italy - Assessment procedures:*

During the PILOT experiences carried out in Italy, the Italian partners (ERIFO and ENFAP Toscana) aimed to analyse the possibilities of integrating the LivOrg Curriculum developed for “practitioners in organic livestock management” and the main outcomes gained into Regional Qualification Frameworks (Tuscany and Lazio) considering the alignment to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) with its different levels of knowledge, skills and competencies. Another intention was to evaluate opportunities of integrating the LivOrg Curriculum into the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET); to identify basic units in order to establish a shared credit system for transferring recognized qualifications into vocational and educational (VET) contexts for the different European Countries involved. The third aim was to develop assessment methodologies, which took in account the different learning environments explored (indoor and outdoor) by the Italian learners during the PILOT experiences. The approach we followed was to shift from input to output oriented identification of qualification and professional profile in organic livestock sector. We wanted to create learning outcomes, which would become fully adaptable to EQF methodology. Therefore, we chose a bottom-up approach (oriented towards educational and training activities from



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the work and market sector) in order to ensure the transferability of our project results to other sectors where informal and non-formal knowledge is concerned. We developed a methodology, which enabled us to implement the



LivOrg Curriculum from labour contexts into the European Qualification Framework and the different Regional Qualification Systems. We established a link between LivOrg skills, knowledge and competences and 4 EQF level addressing our assessment activities to factual and theoretical knowledge in organic contexts through tests and peer review process for classroom activities; trainer's observation and supervising of the students 'activities, to assess the cognitive and practical skills required and explored to

generate solutions to specific problems in a field of organic livestock management during the outdoor experiences. Finally, we developed a pilot methodology for the "translation" of LivOrg profile in ECVET units and points in order to establish a common and user-friendly language for transparency, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes. Through the ECVET system we wish to contribute to making recognised mobility an integrated part of individuals' learning pathways. We are expecting that this process, if it will be extended to other educational sectors, makes it easier for employers to understand qualify actions achieved abroad enhancing the opportunities for lifelong learning. It will also improve the credibility of international education and training experience by identifying and documenting what the learner has really achieved.



### ***Pilot Course in Germany - Assessment procedures:***

The German Pilot Course was carried out in Dresden, Germany in Cooperation with the University of Cooperative Education Saxony - Dresden State Academy and the farmers association Gaea e.V.

Formal and non formal parts (indoor and on the farm) were assessed together. The assessment was done through oral presentations and written reports. Students had to independently prepare and present an oral presentation in front of the class. They could choose between several topics specified by the trainer.

The LivOrg Pilot Course consists of 80 hours formal and non formal educational training and aims to teach learners the basic knowledge, skills and competences for practical work in organic livestock production. The recommendation of the European Parliament and European Commission on the establishment of ECVET of June 2009 indicates 60 credits for a year of formal fulltime VET. If one year of fulltime training piles up to 1.600 hours of formal and non formal learning (with 8 hours a day, five days a week excluding 11 weeks of school holidays per year) an 80 hour course such as the LivOrg Pilot Course for "Practitioner in Organic Livestock Management" could count 3 ECVET points.

Germany has a National Framework for the vocational training for the profession "farmer". In this framework 40 hours are planned for alternative agriculture in the second and third year of training. Additionally each federal state has its own curriculum based on the national framework but with slightly different focuses. The vocational educational training for aspiring farmers is organised as a combination of formal lessons, training on the job and corporate vocational programmes. In Saxony organic husbandry is planned to be a topic in the third year of training (appr. 40 h).





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If the curriculum created during this project could be part of the regular training of farmers in VET, training time for organic agriculture has to be increased, in fact at least doubled. We will discuss the future development of organic agriculture in regular VET for farmers during our next Focus Group in October 2015.

#### ***Pilot Course in Estonia - Assessment procedures:***

The Estonian Pilot Course was carried out by the Estonian University of Life Sciences. A range of assessment methods were used, with each assessment focused on demonstrating achievement of learning outcomes by the students. These comprised:

A written report including a portfolio of evidence which included a detailed description of each of the farms visited. This included the collection of data. To ensure that this was not simply an exercise in recording prepared material students were expected to source this data themselves by asking questions of the farmers themselves. This non-formal learning context was overseen by the tutor on-site. Further less formal assessment was carried out by the tutor on-site by recording and recognising student questioning of farmers and also students were questioned orally during each visit to ensure understanding and achievement of the learning outcomes and practical awareness and competence. To ensure learning had taken place at the higher level of this assessment than simply that of understanding, students' critical analysis and evaluation was assessed. Students were instructed to ask questions of producers and workers specifically about existing problems. The written portfolio would incorporate an explanation of these problems identified and also a student-centred proposal of solutions to these problems. Other assessments included completion of an on-line questionnaire, incorporating a self-assessment and analysis of the results from this questionnaire by the students. This assessment identified that outcome-relevant learning had taken place and that the students responded to this learning in a practical context. This comprised an extant on-line questionnaire ([www.aedilemma.net](http://www.aedilemma.net)) illustrating students' individual welfare perceptions. This is a commonly used welfare-learning tool in the teaching of animal welfare science at this level. Students completed this and commented on evaluated their findings. Also, a written practical programme of assessment by students was included to demonstrate student competence and awareness of the welfare assessment of a range of farm animals. Assessment therefore took place: in the classroom, on-farm, through on-line resources and in the students' own time.

Regarding credits, the policy of the university was followed; that the study load determined in the curriculum is calculated in the European Credit Transfer System credit points (ECTS). One credit point corresponds to 26 hours of study by a student, including contact classes (incl. e-learning), practical work (including practical training), independent work and assessment of learning outcomes. As, in the case of this course, student learning hours were 80 hours, the appropriate number of credits awarded would be three. This seems a little low, and should the course be progressed in the future, more hours should be incorporated into the independent learning section, and more credits awarded on completion.

#### ***Laboratories in Poland - Assessment procedures:***

The aim of the Intergeneration LAB led by IPED in Poland was to explore and define innovative methods supporting the intergeneration transfer of experience and know-how "from fathers to sons" and to stimulate the "individual hidden entrepreneurial skills" among farmers (soft skills). LABs were divided into three phases of duration 80h including classroom activities, in the farm learning and enterprise incubator. The new, innovative curriculum includes such teaching methods like lectures, multimedia presentations, exercises, role playing, group discussions and learning on the job. However the key activity, especially in the enterprise incubator, was the project work. During the project works business plans were prepared by small groups of participants. The LAB program was elaborated in accordance to



EQF requirements and will allow for transfer of qualifications within ECVET system in the future. To enable this, the detailed curriculum and learning outcomes validation system was elaborated and tested during the LAB. The LAB was



elaborated at 4 EQF level, while in Poland only levels 6-8 EQF/NQF are mandatory and ready (for higher education). However the Ministry of Education started working on implementation of the NQF system at levels 3-5 EQF, what is planned for years 2014-2020. Therefore it is possible to implement the curriculum of Intergenerational LAB to the ongoing mainstream of changes. The IPED team started working on building a working group of organizations which would support new methodologies of vocational training in ecological agriculture. The first meetings with the chambers of commerce and business organizations took place. Besides, we keep in touch with Vocational Schools in Agriculture which operate at all regions. The LivOrg LAB experience seems to be a valuable tool to start a business by junior farmers and transform their

parents' traditional farms into organic ones. This will facilitate the growth of value added and incomes in our economy with so significant role of agriculture.

### Laboratories in Spain - Assessment procedures

The Spanish partner INFODEF carried out the LivOrg Laboratory B in Valladolid and Palencia. The main feature of this LAB has been the Interethnic approach. The laboratory aims at develop innovative methods to support minority ethnic people to convert their conventional business to



organic area and to reinforce their organic skills in the organic livestock sector. The assessment methodology varies according to the needs of the different Laboratory contexts. In classroom (10 hours), the participants carried out an entrepreneurial skills self assessment through a closed questionnaire, as well as the final assessment of their training process in classroom via a



multiple choice test. In the farm (20 hours), the participants carried out group debates with direct observation/coordination from the trainer, as well as a checklist for the self-evaluation process, guided by trainer, which represents the final assessment of the training process in the farm. In the Enterprises incubator (50 hours), questions and discussion were made after the explanation of each part of the plan, in order to verify the comprehension of the Business Plan. Each group of participants developed a Business Plan, with work assessment from counsellors and trainers. The main findings from the assessment of this laboratory facilitate the ECVET credit calculation, which contributes to the integration of LivOrg curriculum in the ECVET system.





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## European Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme:

### Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange programme which gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other Participating Countries. The exchange of experience takes place during a stay with the experienced entrepreneur, which helps the new entrepreneur acquire the skills needed to run a small firm.

The host benefits from fresh perspectives on his/her business and gets the opportunities to cooperate with foreign partners or learn about new markets.

New entrepreneurs, firmly planning to set up their own business or have already started one within the last three years as well as experienced entrepreneurs who own or manage a Small or Medium-Sized Enterprise in one of the Participating Countries.

More information can be found [here](#).

Each partner of the LivOrg consortium agreed on supporting up to 3 new or aspiring entrepreneurs in the field of organic agriculture during the application process in the program "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs. Each partner will help the young or aspiring entrepreneurs with application documents (CV, business plan), contacting local contact points in the country of origin and assist in finding host companies in the field of organic farming (particularly in the partner countries: Italy, Poland, Spain, Estonia, Greece and Germany).

## Final Seminar of LivOrg project in Estonia - 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015

The Final LivOrg Seminar will take place in Tartu, Estonia on 24th November 2015 and will be organised and hosted by the Estonian University of Life Science. The event will be used to present the project results as well as the current organic farming situation and animal husbandry in Estonia: The programme will also include the presentation of the Pilot Courses and Councelling LABs in the partner countries as well as a presentation about the role and opportunities of VET systems in the organic farming in the partner countries. International expert will discuss the perspectives and challenges of 100 percent organic feed in animal husbandry as well as Transforming Food & Farming: An Organic Vision for Europe in 2030. The Final Seminar addresses farmers, advisors, public authorities in the field of organic agriculture and vocational educational training as well as trainer and teacher working in the field of organic livestock production. The final programme can be downloaded on LivOrg Facebook Site.



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[www.livorg.eu](http://www.livorg.eu)



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