



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

## **Training on European standards for ecological agricultural production - EcoJob-AP**

*Project № BG/06/B/F/PP-166012*

# **EcoJob Pilot on-line Course in Organic Agriculture**

## **Analysis and Evaluation Results**





HIGHER SCHOOL "AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE" - PLOVDIV, BULGARIA

**PROJECT COORDINATOR**  
**Training on European standards for ecological**  
**agricultural production - EcoJob-AP**

*Project № BG/06/B/F/PP-166012*

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## INTRODUCTION

These EcoJob modular courses for EcoFarmers and EcoExperts have been compiled to allow individuals to develop the competences required to produce and market food in accordance to organic standards as laid down in EC Regulation 2092 / 91.

They are primarily intended to add the organic components to an existing course on agriculture. They do not pretend to be a complete course on their own. Entrants to the programme should ideally have a Level 3 or 4 qualifications in agriculture or horticulture with associated underpinning scientific understanding

In the case of the EcoFarmer modules the content is linked to the competences required by organic farmers to produce in line with standards and principles appropriate to their enterprises.

The EcoExpert modules are targeted at extension workers and advisers working to help farmers produce and market organic produce.

The course levels are compatible with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) with the EcoFarmer course pitched at EQF Level 3 and the EcoFarmer course at EQF level 5.

Each course consists of 2 Mandatory Modules (Organic Principles and Organic Standards) which should be studied first , plus a further 5 optional modules (Marketing Organic Produce, Legislation, Soils, Organic Crop Production and Organic Animal and Fodder Crop Production) which can be studied in line with the needs of the individual or the business mix. A summary of the learning outcomes are provided at the start of each module and the participants should use these to decide which modules are most appropriate for your needs.

In all cases the individual modules contain questions which allow you to self-assess your knowledge against the expected standards, once you have completed the module.

The courses have been compiled with funding from the Leonardo da Vinci programme by Partners from 7 EU countries: Bulgaria (BG), Greece (GR), Denmark (DK), Italy (IT), the Netherlands (NL), Slovakia (SK), Spain (ES), and the United Kingdom (UK). In view of the wide range of climatic conditions and enterprises which apply within these countries, modules may therefore require some interpretation for any particular situation.

Each participant had on-line access to assistance during the course and the participants were advised to seek this assistance; particularly in respect of any requirements specific to organic standards or production methods within the particular country.

## ENROLMENT FORM

Ecojob Pilot Training Course

Leonardo Project

### 1. BASIC BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### 1.1 Personal Data

Name: .....

Surname: .....

Email: .....

Occupation/Job position: .....

#### 1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1 English Language knowledge. Please indicate the level of your knowledge of English

Reading

None Basic Intermediate Advanced

Listening

None Basic Intermediate Advanced

Writing

None Basic Intermediate Advanced

**1.2 Could you indicate the ECOJOB level which you are interested in participating in as a tester?**

Ecofarmer (Level 3)

Ecoexpert (Level 5)

Both (Ecofarmer and EcoExpert)

## **2. BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF Information Technology/INTERNET**

**2.1 How comfortable do you feel using the Internet?**

Very comfortable

Somewhat comfortable

Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable

Somewhat uncomfortable

Very uncomfortable

**1.3 What Internet tools do you know and use habitually? Indicate your level of knowledge and use**

**Email**

No knowledge of it   Know how it works but don't use it   Use it a bit   Use it a lot

**Discussion Boards**

No knowledge of it   Know how it works but don't use it   Use it a bit   Use it a lot

**Mailing Lists**

No knowledge of it   Know how it works but don't use it   Use it a bit   Use it a lot

**Chat**

No knowledge of it   Know how it works but don't use it   Use it a bit   Use it a lot

**1.4 Do you often use software programmes? Tick the corresponding options.**

Word Processor (e.g. Word)

Presentations (e.g. Power Point)

Data Base (e.g. Access)

Spread Sheet (e.g. Excel)

Web Page Editor (e.g. Microsoft Front Page, Dreamweaver...)

Other

**1.5 Do you have experience in using any e-learning platform or any other Internet distance learning system?**

Yes

No



1) Go to the following website:

<http://netcampus.comunet.es/ecojob.php>

2) Enter your user name and password and Click on the OK button below:

- User: ????????

- Password: ????????

3) You will access the main screen, where you will see the Ecofarmer Course.

4) Click on the name of the course and you will see a new screen with the course structure.

5) If you click on the + signs or on the names of each branch, the different options these branches contain will open up and you will be able to navigate and access the different elements.

We have assigned you an e-mail account for the course, which you can use in the NETcampus webmail system and which will make it easier to organise and access all communication related to the course. However, we shall continue to communicate via your personal e-mail account regarding the official course communication messages.

You can also contact us and each other directly, by going to the Participants tab of the course, or by going to the My Agenda icon on the blue Toolbar at the bottom of the main screen of the Virtual Campus. In any of these options, if you click on the name of the person you wish to contact, you will find a direct link to their e-mail address.

Finally, we would like to thank you for your participation; we will be at your disposal to resolve any doubt or problem that may arise during the course.

Best regards,

# EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

## EcoJob Pilot Course

Here you are given a series of questions aimed at finding out your opinion about the ECOJOB Testing Course.

The questionnaire aims to cover those aspects of the course related to:

1. The Platform that was used for the course
2. The Course Contents
3. Activities set during the course
4. The Methodology used
5. General support and attention
6. Overall evaluation of the experience

### 1. The Platform that was used for the course

**NETcampus, the platform the course was taught on, seemed to me to be easy to use and move around on:**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**The platform has enough communication tools to make contact between participants easy:**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**My evaluation of the platform in general as a technological resource to support an online course is (Indicate from 1 to 5, where 5 is Excellent and 1 is Poor):**

- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

## **2. The Course Contents**

**I thought the course contents were:**

- Just right
- Not enough
- Too much

**The match between the course objectives and the contents was satisfactory.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**From the point of view of comprehension, the contents seemed to me to be: (You may select as many options as you wish).**

- Just right
- Difficult to understand
- Easy to understand
- Too simple
- Too complex

**The programme of contents seemed to me to be: (You may select as many options as you wish)**

- Interesting
- Useful for my work
- In line with the current needs of teachers
- It lacked some areas
- Too broad
- Too narrow
- Not very practical
- Very practical

### 3. Activities set during the course

#### The course self-assessments in relation to the content:

Reflected the content  
Did not reflect the content they were testing  
Sometimes were satisfactory and at other times not  
I don't know. I didn't do them

#### The questions in the self-assessments:

Were easy to answer  
Were difficult to answer  
Had the right level of difficulty  
I don't know. I didn't do them

#### In relation to the content, the self-assessments given during the course: (You may select as many options as you wish).

Served to put the theory into practice  
Did not reflect what was seen in the content  
Were difficult to understand  
Were easy to do  
It would have been better without a sample solution

### 4. The Methodology used

#### It is enough to have the self-assessment to learn about the subjects shown as part of the course.

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Disagree  
Strongly disagree

#### Do you consider it more interesting to participate in courses attended by a tutor who may give support and assistance where it is needed?

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Disagree  
Strongly disagree

The time given to do the course seemed to me to be ...

- Just right
- Not enough
- Too much

**5.- General support and attention**

All my doubts and questions about using the platform have been well-attended.

- Totally agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Totally disagree

I have felt well-attended at all times:

- Totally agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Totally disagree

**6. Overall evaluation of the experience**

My overall evaluation of the course is that it was:

- Excellent
- Good
- Bad
- Very Bad

Would you be willing to do another course of this type? (You may select as many options as you wish).

- Yes, definitely
- No, I would not repeat the experience
- I would have to think about it
- I would need more free time

I now know more about this subject.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I have achieved the objectives I set myself for the course and therefore my evaluation is (Indicate from 1 to 5, where 5 is Excellent and 1 is Poor):

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

If you have any comments or ideas for improvement of the resources, content or methodology for future EcoJob courses, please add them here.

## RESULTS ON PILOTING THE ON-LINE COURSE

### Objectives

The main objective of the pilot phase of the EcoJob Project was to **validate the program** that had been prepared in the previous phases of the project.

The Pilot Course has been developed with Content for providing an **innovative transnational qualification framework in EcoFarming** – including production, advice/education and enforcement **the development of Europass common framework for transparency of EcoFarmer and EcoExpert qualifications.**

ComuNET's E-Learning Platform NETCampus served as the e-learning resource during the **Eco Job Project.**

- In the **first phase** it was used to carry out the training needs survey.

- In the **second phase** it was acting as a support for developing the **on-line content and practical activities**
- and in the **third phase** it was used to **carry out the tutoring and monitoring of the course** that has been designed.

## Methodology

### Methodology used focused on the **Self-Assessed Model**:

- It **does NOT include teacher support**; instead it is designed for the course to be self-assessed. The participants therefore access the system and as well as reading the content they have to carry out activities for self-assessment set as part of the course.
- In this model, the participants are able to access all the modules, units and activities freely from the start.
- The results of these tests are accessible to them, and they are able to see their own progress in the learning process.

Two levels of training:

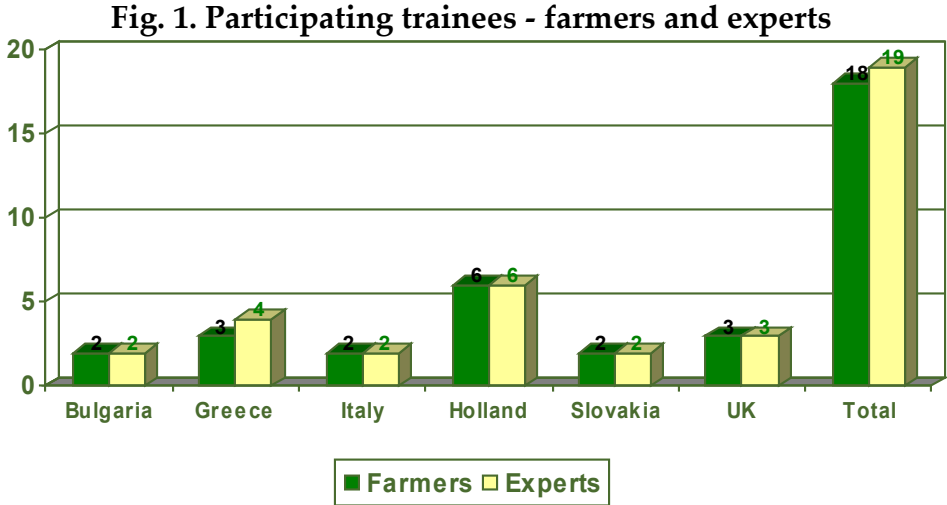
- The Two levels (according to the EQF Levels 3 and 5) were specifically designed to acquaint the farmers (**Level 3**) with the basic knowledge of organic production,
- **Level 5** is intended to assist those in the role of farm advisors to be able to assist producers to farm and market organic produce

## Participation in EcoJob pilot on-line course:

Farmers and Experts from 6 countries participated in the pilot phase (Fig. 1). ComuNET (Spain) was guiding the course. The partners agreed to participate in piloting of the modules as follows:

Partner country	Modules tested
Bulgarian farmers and experts	M1, M2, M6
Greek farmers and experts	M1, M2, M5
Italian farmers and experts	M1, M2, M3
Dutch farmers and experts	M1, M2, M3
Britain farmers and experts	M1, M2, M7

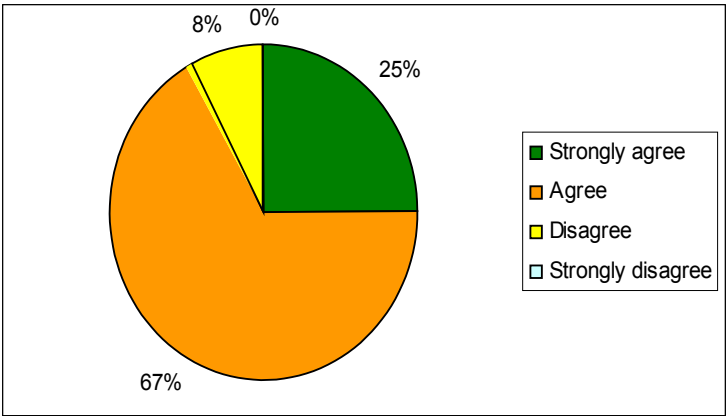
First of all, all partners' countries distinguished their tutors/instructors who took part in an introductory course on the use of the e-learning resources of the platform before starting the pilot EcoJob On-line course. The reason of doing that was because some of the participants had never used an e-learning platform before. The introductory course on the Platform was also used to check the connections and access of the participants in order to prevent any type of technical problems.



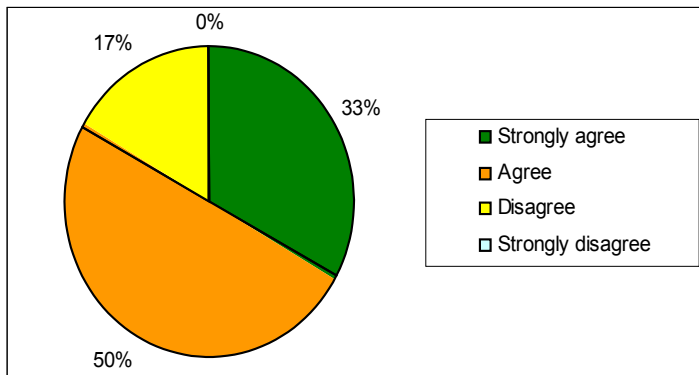
**Evaluation of the platform**

Most of the participants felt very comfortable with the platform and they found it easy to use the different tools and resources presented on it. The results show that more than 90% of the pilot trainees thought that the technological resources proposed for the project was very simple to use, which facilitated the training and they had no technical problems. A small number of participants (8%) disagreed with that.

**NETcampus, the e-learning environment the course was taught on, seemed to me to be easy to use and move around on:**

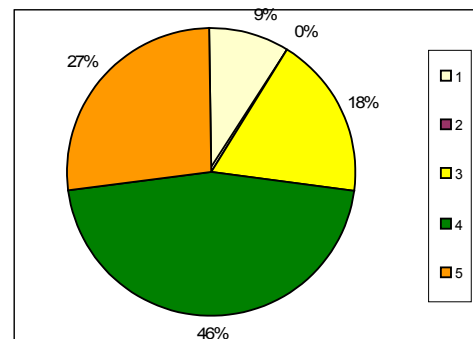


At the same time, 83% of the participants thought that the platform gave them sufficient communication and collaboration tools to make it easy to exchange ideas with other participants against 17% that disagreed with that. This also provided the participants with the opportunity to communicate with the tutors and instructors from ComuNET.



**The e-learning environment has enough communication tools to make contact between participants easy:**

**My evaluation of the e-learning environment in general as a technological resource to support an online course is (Indicate from 1 to 5, where 5 is Excellent and 1 is Poor):**

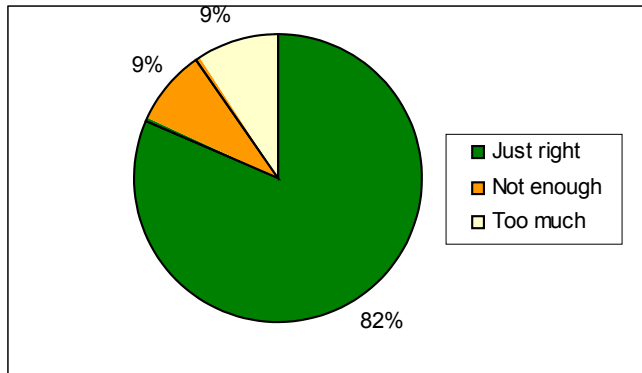


Finally, the overall evaluation of the Platform was very favourable and more than 90% of the participants thought it was a useful tool for carrying out other e-learning training programs.

## Evaluation of the Contents

The contents of the EcoJob Course to the NetCampus Platform were presented in the form of a series of animations and interactions in order to make the learning process easier.

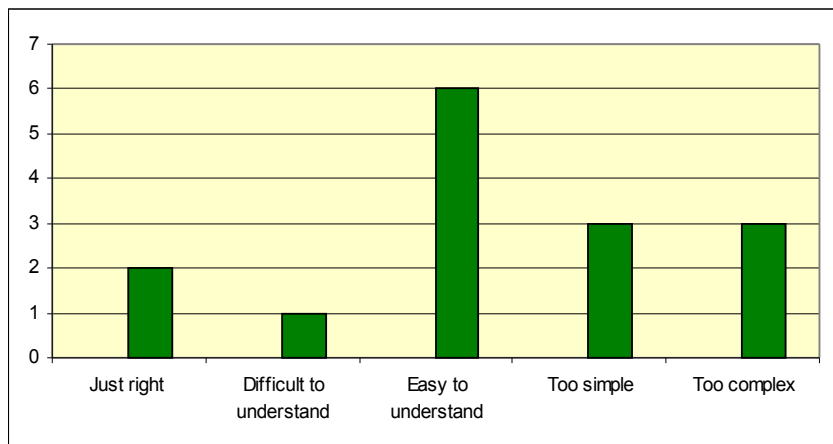
**I thought the course contents were:**



82% of the participants thought that the contents were just right, even though 9% mentioned that there was not enough material and 9% thought there was too much.

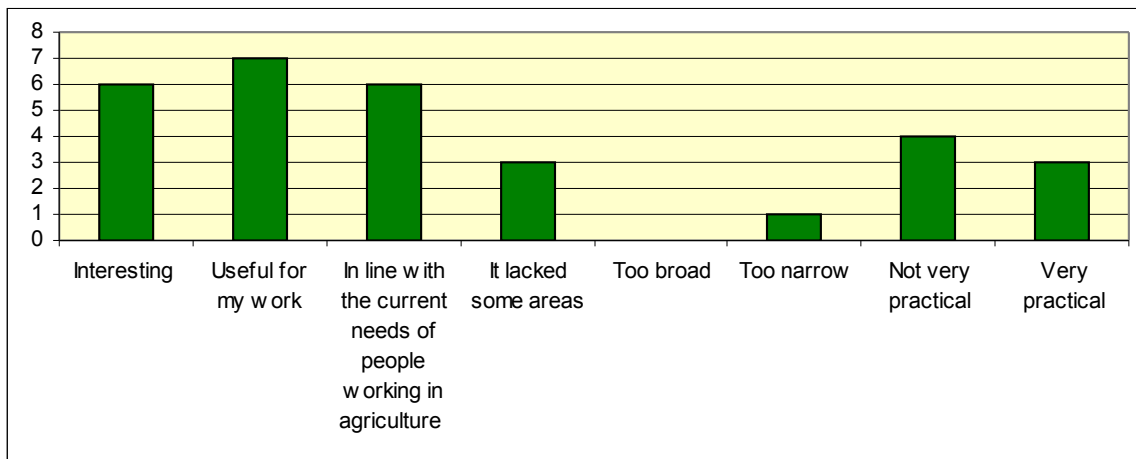
From the point of view of the comprehension of the contents, 37.5% of the participants thought them easy to understand and just right (12.5%). However, there were number of participants who thought they were too simple (18.75%) and too complex (18.75%).

**From the point of view of comprehension, the contents seemed to me to be: (You may select as many options as you wish).**



Most participants (83%) agreed that the match between the course objectives and the contents was satisfactory.

**The program of contents seemed to me to be: (You may select as many options as you wish):**



As it can be seen from the above figure, most of the participants found the program of the contents interesting (20%) useful for their work (24%) and in the line with the current needs of people working in agriculture (20%). Besides some participants thought that the program of the contents lacked some areas (10%), was too narrow (3%), not very practical (13%), very practical (10%). This information was very important for us to make conclusions about the future improvement of the contents.

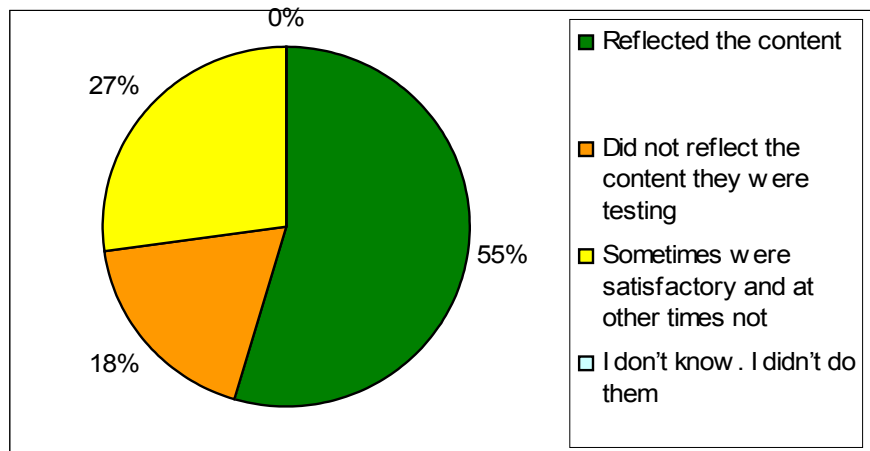
**Evaluation of the activities**

**Methodology used for the EcoJob course focused on the Self-Assessed Model:**

- It **does NOT include teacher support**; instead it is designed for the course to be self-assessed. The participants therefore access the system and as well as reading the content they have to carry out activities for self-assessment set as part of the course.
- In this model, the participants are able to access all the modules, units and activities freely from the start.
- The results of these tests are accessible to them, and they are able to see their own progress in the learning process.

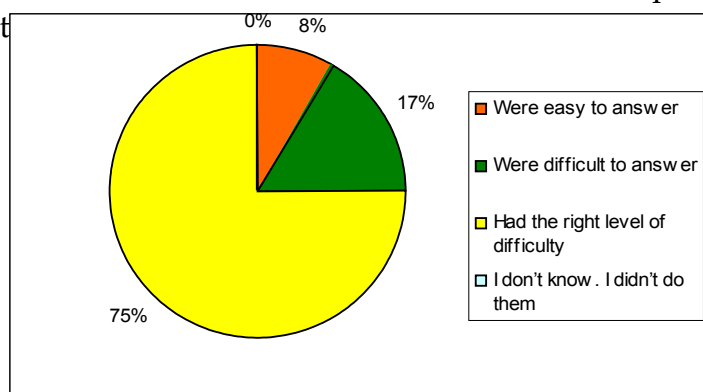
That's why I put special attention to the self-assessment activities giving the opportunity to the participants to evaluate them by answering the following questions:

**The course self-assessments in relation to the content:**



55% of the participants thought that the course self-assessment reflected the content, 18% mentioned that they did not reflect the content they were testing, and 27% thought that they sometimes were satisfactory and at other times not. This evaluation means that the partners developed the modules and self-assessment tests for them should spend some more time and efforts to improve t

**The questions in the self-assessments:**

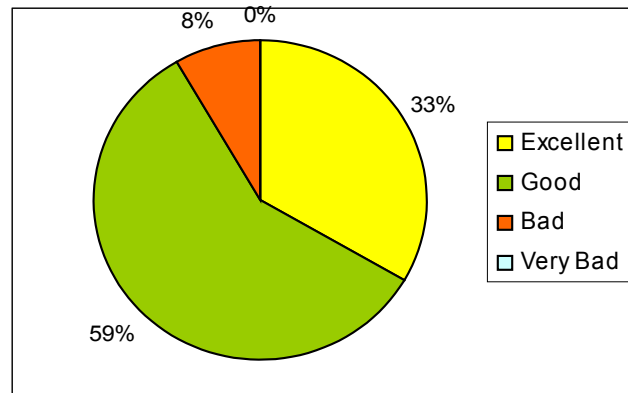


Most of the participants (75%) thought that the questions in the self-assessments had the right level of difficulty and were easy to answer (8%). Besides, 17% found the questions difficult to answer.

### Overall evaluation of the course

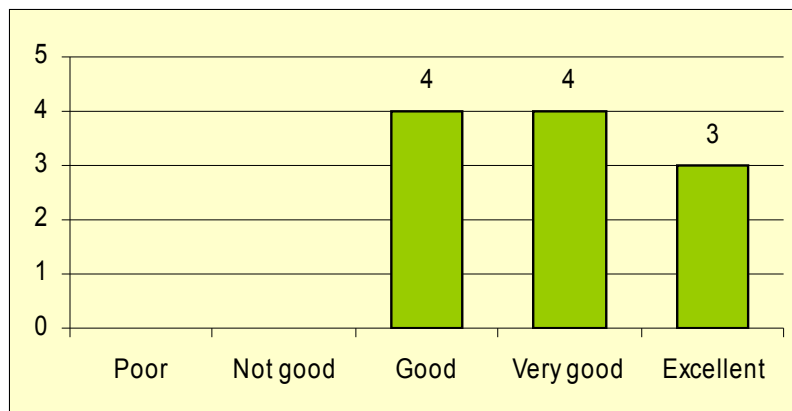
Finally, despite having lacked enough time to do the course, most of the participants gave a positive mark to the course with 59% saying that it was good and 33% saying it was excellent. Only 8% of them considered the course of being bad.

**My overall evaluation of the course is that it was:**



In addition to that 50% of the experts and 62% of the farmers would like to participate to another, similar course, although most of them admitted that they would need to have more free time before consider of doing that.

In conclusion, the good thing of all this feedback gathered from the participants was that all the participants gave a positive mark about their achievements as it is shown bellow:



**I have achieved the objectives I set myself for the course and therefore my evaluation is:  
(Indicate from 1 to 5, where 5 is Excellent and 1 is Poor):**

**Pilot On-line Course in "Training on European standards for ecological agricultural production –  
EcoJob- AP"**

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## **ECOFARMER AND ECOEXPERT COURSE FEEDBACK REPORT /BULGARIA/**

The pilot phase of the EcoJob on-line course within the work program of the Leonardo da Vinci project "Training on European standards for ecological agricultural production - EcoJob-AP" took place in the period of April 21 - May 23, 2008. The following pilot trainees were involved for piloting the course developed by the partners:

Experts:

**Anna Karova** - Lecturer in Agroecology at the Agricultural University in Plovdiv and Manager in a control body for certification of organic agricultural production

**Ivaylo Ivanov** - Agronomist by profession working as an expert in Agrolink - Association which brings together specialists, experts and farmers in a network of partnership with the aim to influence, encourage and assist farmers and rural societies in Bulgaria to develop and support organic farming as the most sustainable **agriculture system**.

Farmers:

**Svilen Nikolov** - Owner of a farm with agricultural production and Manager of BioHotel "Moravsko village" located between the mountains Rila and Pirin.

**Jordan Shikov** - Farmer with 10 dka of orchards and 15 dka of vineyards located in the region of Perushtitza.

Both experts and farmers tested 3 modules as agreed:

- Module 1: "Organic Principles",
- Module 2: "Organic Standards",
- Module 6 "Organic Crops".

The experts tested the modules in both English and Bulgarian languages. The farmers tested the modules in Bulgarian language.

For monitoring and navigating the training process two tutors/instructors were selected: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Ivanova and Assist. Prof. Dr. Vladislav Popov. They passed a preliminary introduction course organized by ComuNET in order to get acquainted with the training platform and to be able to help the trainees.

At the end of the pilot on-line course the trainees evaluated the course by questionnaire and written feedback sent. Outcomes can be summarized as follows:

### **Evaluation Questionnaire**

Evaluation questionnaire was completed by 2 Eco-Farmers and 2 Eco-Experts. Results are summarized as follows:

#### Farmers:

- The farmers involved in the pilot course found NETCampus - the platform the course was taught not easy to use. Besides they responded positively about the communication tools provided by the platform saying that the platform facilitates the contact between participants.
- From the aspect of course content – it has been evaluated as adequate and a correspondence between aims and content has been achieved. Content of the course has been evaluated as useful for their work, interesting but not very practical.
- From the self assessment point of view questions corresponded with Modules' content, the level of questions' has been evaluated as the right level of difficulty and served to put the theory into practice.
- The participated farmers evaluated the training course as Good; some of them would like to participate in future courses but they will need more time for that.

#### Experts:

- The participated experts evaluated the platform NETCampus as easy to use and having enough communication tools to make contacts between the participants easy.
- From the aspect of course content – it has been evaluated as just right.
- From the self assessment point of view – both Experts found the level of questions had the right level of difficulty and the questions reflected the content.
- The overall evaluation of the tested on-line course has been very positive. Both Experts would welcome similar opportunity to take part in course of such structure in related fields.

## **Results of self assessment**

*Self assessments has been completed by both Eco-Farmers and Eco-Experts with following results:*

Eco - Farmers – reached following final marks in Modules 1, 2, 6:

Eco - Farmer 1: 6.50 (Total minutes in the course: 635)

Eco – Farmer 2: 7.50 (Total minutes in the course: 214)

Eco- Experts - reached following final marks in Modules 1, 2, 6:

Eco - Expert 1: 5.63 (Total minutes in the course: 196)

Eco – Expert 2: 1.25 ((Total minutes in the course: 483)

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Pilot On-line Course in “Training on European standards for ecological agricultural production – EcoJob- AP”

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## **ECOFARMER AND ECOEXPERT COURSE FEEDBACK REPORT /GREECE/**

### **I. Evaluation of the testing course from Greek Farmers**

In the programme was participated three Farmers.

All farmers have had young age (30-40 years old).

Their academic profile was: 2/3 have had secondary education while ½ had Universal education. All of them had knowledge on the use of computer and Internet.

They have done all the module and self assessment questions and all of them passed the testing course.

Their opinion about the ECOJOB Testing Course is demonstrated as follow:

#### **A. About the Platform that was used for the course**

1. All Farmers found easy to use and move around on the NETCampus platform.
2. (2/3 - 66.67 %) agreed that the platform has had enough communication tools to make contact between participants easy while (1/3 - 33.33 %) of the farmers strongly agreed about it.
3. Their evaluation of the platform in general as a technological resource to support an online course was:
  - (1/3 - 33.33 %) Excellent

- (1/3 - 33.33 %) Very good
- (1/3 - 33.33 %) Good

## **B. About the Course Contents**

1. All farmers thought that the course contents were just right
2. (2/3 - 66.67 %) agreed that the match between the course objectives and the contents was satisfactory while (1/3 - 33.33 %) consider that it was very satisfactory.
3. From the point of view of comprehension, the contents seemed to them to be:
  - Easy to understand (3/3- 100 %)
  - Too simple (2/3 - 66.67 %) The programme of contents seemed to them to be:
    - (3/3 - 100%) In line with the current needs of teachers
    - (2/3 - 66.67 %) Interesting
    - (1/3 - 33.33 %) Useful for their work
    - (1/3 - 33.33 %) It lacked some areas
    - (1/3 - 33.33 %) Very practical

## **C. About the Activities set during the course**

- (1/3 - 33.33 %) considered that the course self-assessments were reflected to the content while (2/3 - 66.67 %) considered that sometimes were satisfactory and at other times not.
- All farmers considered that the questions in the self-assessments had the right level of difficulty.
- (2/3 - 66.67 %) considered that in relation to the content, the self-assessments given during the course served to put the theory into practice while (1/3 - 33.33 %) consider that they were easy to do.

## **D. About the Methodology used**

1. All farmers strongly agreed that the methodology used was enough to have the self-assessment to learn about the subjects shown as part of the course.
2. (2/3 - 66.67 %) preferred to participate in courses attended by a tutor who may give support and assistance where it is needed.
3. The time given to do the course seemed to all farmers, just right.

## **E. About the General support and attention**

1. All farmers felt well-attended at all times.
2. (2/3 - 66.67 %) agreed that their doubts and questions about using the platform were well-attended.

## **F. About the Overall evaluation of the experience**

1. All farmers considered that their overall evaluation of the course was good and
2. all declared that they are interested to do another course of this type.
3. All agreed that now they know more about this subject.
4. They considered that they have achieved the objectives that they have set for themselves for the course and therefore they evaluated themselves
  - (1/3 - 33.33 %) Excellent
  - (2/3 - 66.67 %) Good

## **G. Comments or ideas for improvement of the resources, content or methodology for future EcoJob courses**

1/3 Farmer noticed that there were a lot of links and sub links which made the reading more boring and sometimes he lost his threads.

1/3 Farmer noticed that in the multiple pick choices questions, sometimes, where there are more than one right answers, without this to have been pointed out in the question.

## **II. Evaluation of the testing course from Greek Experts**

In the programme participated four Experts.

All Experts have had young age (30 to 40 years old).

Their academic profile was: 4/4 have had Universal education in Agriculture (3/4 have been specialised in Zootechnics and 1/4 in Crop production). Also 3/4 hold an MSc degree.

All of them had knowledge on the use of computer and Internet.

They have done all the module and self assessment questions and all of them passed the testing course.

Their opinion about the ECOJOB Testing Course is demonstrated as follows:

## **C. About the Platform that was used for the course**

1. Experts' found the NETcampus platform:
  - (1/4 - 25%) very easy and
  - (3/4 - 75%) easy to use and move around on.
2. All the Experts agreed that the platform has had enough communication tools to make contact between participants easy.
3. Their evaluation of the platform in general as a technological resource to support an online course was:
  - Excellent (2/4 - 50 %)
  - Very good (1/4 - 25%)
  - Good (1/4 - 25%)

## **B. About the Course Contents**

4. (3/4 - 75%) of Experts thought that the course contents were just right while (1/4 - 25%) of Experts noticed that they were not enough.
5. (3/4 - 75%) agreed that the match between the course objectives and the contents was satisfactory while (1/4 - 25%) consider that it was very satisfactory.
6. From the point of view of comprehension, the contents seemed to them to be:
  - Easy to understand (3/4 - 75%)
  - Just right (3/4 - 75%)
7. The programme of contents seemed to them to be:
  - 100% Interesting
  - (2/4 - 50 %) Useful for my work
  - (2/4 - 50 %) In line with the current needs of teachers
  - (1/4 - 25%) It lacked some areas
  - (1/4 - 25%) Very practical

### **C. About the Activities set during the course**

1. (3/4 - 75%) considered that the course self-assessments were reflected to the content while (1/4 - 25%) considered that they did not reflect to the content.
2. All the Experts considered that the questions in the self-assessments had the right level of difficulty.
3. In relation to the content, the self-assessments given during the course:
  - (2/4 - 50 %) of Experts considered that they served to put the theory into practice
  - (1/4 - 25%) considered that they did not reflect what was seen in the content while
  - (1/4 - 25%) considered that they were easy to do.

### **D. About the Methodology used**

4. (1/4 - 25%) of Experts, strongly agreed that the methodology used was enough to have the self-assessment to learn about the subjects shown as part of the course while (3/4 - 75%) just agreed.
5. (2/4 - 50 %) of Experts, strongly agreed while (2/4 - 50 %) just agreed to participate in courses attended by a tutor who may give support and assistance where it is needed.
6. The time given to do the course seemed to all just right.

### **E. About the General support and attention**

3. (2/4 - 50 %) of Experts strongly agreed while (1/4 - 25%) just agreed that their doubts and questions about using the platform have been well-attended.

4. (2/4 - 50 %) of Experts strongly agreed and (1/4 - 25%) just agreed that have felt well-attended at all times

#### **F. About the Overall evaluation of the experience**

5. (2/4 - 50 %) of the Experts considered that their overall evaluation of the course was excellent while 50% good.
6. (2/4 - 50 %) of them are interested to do another course of this type.
7. (1/4 - 25%) strongly agreed that now they known more about this subject and (2/4 - 50 %) just agreed while (1/4 - 25%) disagreed.
8. They considered that they have achieved the objectives that they have set for their selves for the course and therefore they evaluated their selves:
  1. (2/4 - 50 %) of them Very good while
  2. (2/4 - 50 %) Good

#### **G. Comments or ideas for improvement of the resources, content or methodology for future EcoJob courses:**

(1/4 - 25%) of Experts noticed that in the training material should be included more practical applications than general theory on a subject.

Pilot On-line Course in "Training on European standards for ecological agricultural production – EcoJob- AP"

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## **ECOFARMER AND ECOEXPERT COURSE FEEDBACK REPORT /THE NETHERLANDS/**

Below are the assimilated comments from NL testers + 3 teachers from the UK and 1 German student.

Few finished the course (3 Dutch) 1 dropped out after an initial look, 3 looked through the course and gave initial feedback on layout, ease of use and content.

We were only testing modules 1 (principles), 2 (standards) and 3 (marketing)

### **The positive feedback:**

The course I found easy to do.

I found the content interesting

I found that the concept was good, I liked the way that the content had been grouped and presented – the notes and the way the information was progressive.

### **Concerns:**

I am not yet convinced that an E-course can be as popular and useful as an ordinary written course;

I prefer a course with real tutors and student/colleagues. Also I found the time pressure on our side high.

I am not convinced about the concept of E-learning in this way'.

The evaluation questions I found a bit too easy or childish.

Also if I was to use this approach I would like to see some contact time with students, and assignments. 'This is where we will have to take education and I would be interested in adapting it further, tailored to our own students needs'.

'These modules are the contrary of my approach of education... asking Socratic questions, solving dilemmas, letting students do their own discoveries and most important opening my story telling box'.

### **Challenges:**

The use of different web pages for each topic difficult to navigate and was not user friendly and much instruction was in Spanish although this did not present a real problem as most could work it out it nevertheless made it one more aspect that put off individual testers.

Time pressures and other commitments, especially at the end of an academic year, made it difficult for evaluators. For farmers it was lambing, hay/silage spring sowing and so on.

### **Conclusion:**

An interesting course that will need to be further developed and use blended delivery systems to be more attractive to both users and teachers.

All the parts are here, Learning Outcomes, Course descriptors, Assessment Criteria and content and are, generally speaking, adequate. Although it would be improved if the content were edited by one focussed organic group.

# ECOFARMER AND ECOEXPERT COURSE FEEDBACK REPORT /ITALY/

## **Selection criteria for testers:**

- People who is already involved in organic farming
- People who is “willing” to try the course
- Different background and basic knowledge for EcoFarmers (high and low education)
- High level of knowledge for EcoExpert
- Phone interview before and after the course

## **EcoFarmer 1**

### **Celestino Benettazzo**

Age: 50

High school

Farm owner (vegetables)

English language knowledge: None

Use of internet: Comfortable (mainly Email)

No experience about E-learning

- Just few attempt to take the course
- Abandoned the course after 10 minutes
- No respons on the survey

## **EcoFarmer 2**

### **Caterina Roncari**

Age: 26

Bachelor in agriculture

Farm owner (herbs)

English language knowledge: Basic

Use of internet: Very Comfortable (mainly Email and mailing list)

No experience about E-learning

- Around 200 minutes to finish the 3 modules
- Done all the self assessments
- Responded to the survey

## **Most important information:**

- Platform was easy to use and good as a learning tool;
- In general contents meet the needs/objectives of the course
- Program was useful for her job;

- Self –assessment are not enough to complete the course

### **EcoExpert 1**

#### **Andrea Geronazzo**

Age: 40

Master in Agriculture

AIAB – IFOAM manager

English language knowledge: Intermediate

Use of internet: Very Comfortable (mainly Email)

Experience about E-learning

- Around 25 minutes to finish modules 1 and 2
- Done some of the self assessments
- Responded to the survey

#### **Most important information:**

- Platform was easy to use and good as a learning tool;
- In general contents meet the needs/objectives of the course
- Contents were to simple;
- Self –assessment are not enough to complete the course

### **EcoExpert 2**

#### **Cristina Micheloni**

Age: 35

Master in Agriculture

ICEA – technical service

English language knowledge: Advanced

Use of internet: Very Comfortable (mainly Email and mailing list)

Some Experience about E-learning

- Around 700 minutes to finish all modules
- Done all the self assessments
- Responded to the survey

#### **Most important information:**

- Platform was easy to use and good as a learning tool;
- In general contents meet the needs/objectives of the course
- Contents were sometime good and sometime to simple (module 3);
- Self –assessment are not enough to complete the course

### **Conclusions – Italian Environment**

- Need a better choice of the participants

- Need to work on motivation of testers/users
- E-learning is:
  - a new tools that needs to be explained
  - not completely accepted
- Need of a stronger connection among instructor and users

### **Conclusions – Program**

- The platform appeared to be functional to the goal of the project;
- Contents mainly calibrated on people with good knowledge of conventional agriculture and no knowledge on organic;
- The course should be managed within each country to avoid “technical problems”
- Needs of some contents’ extensions, maybe elective for the students

### **Conclusions - Project**

- Useful a possible revision of the contents;
- New project aimed to delivery the program to farmers helping and fostering exchange of information among farmers coming from different nation;
- Maybe involving farmers in research to solve the main problems in each different country.....

June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008

**Prepared by:**

**R. Cavalli, M. Cassandro, L. Gallo, R. Causin, P. Sambo**

**Pilot On-line Course in “Training on European standards for ecological agricultural production – EcoJob- AP”**

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**ECOFARMER AND ECOEXPERT COURSE FEEDBACK REPORT  
/SLOVAKIA/**

Testing of the On-line course in the frame of the ECOJOB project has been realized in Slovakia within the planned period from April 21-May 23, 2008. Tested Modules for both target groups – Eco-Farmers and Eco-Experts were as agreed Module 1 “Organic Principles”, Module 2 “Organic Standards”, Module 4 “Legislation” as an optionally selected Module for testing. Testing of Modules has been realized in Slovak language. For the target group of Eco-Farmers we addressed Mr. Mikulas Bobulsky and Mr. Juraj Nagy. As for Eco-Experts specialists from the field of Organic farming coming from the governmental institute the Central Controlling and Testing Institute in Agriculture, Bratislava, Slovakia and the Slovak inspection body Naturalis SK have been selected and addressed by the invitation letters: Mr. Jaroslav Drobny\_ ( Naturalis SK) and Mrs. Juliana Schlosserova (Central Controlling and Testing institute in Agriculture). Testing the On-line course has been evaluated by target group by evaluation questionnaire and written feedback sent. Outcomes can summarized as follows:

**1. Organization of the testing**

Based on the recommendation of project consortium we selected 2 Eco-Farmers and 2 Eco-Experts to test the on-line course. The organization of the testing taking into account communication and flexibility of solving problems has been evaluated very positively with special focus on the professional level of the tested course. Assistance provided during the overall testing period but even before and after that by Comu-NET, Spain facilitated the testing process significantly.

**2. Content of the Course**

The Content of the tested course has been assessed as a very up to date topic from both the agro-environmental aspect and organic agriculture aspect as well. Thematic units have been worked out properly from the introduction taking into account legislative aspects with very detailed practical use in the final part. Modules were complemented by self assessment which enabled target groups to evaluate their knowledge obtained during their study. Testers found a very positive feature of the system via links and connections to relevant information sources directly from the on-line system.

### **3. Graphic processing**

Has been commented as especially interesting and the overall system and working environment as very “user friendly”. Design of complementary graphic form sources (tables, charts, pictures) has been evaluated as high quality level with motivating design.

### **4. Availability of the system**

The system has been evaluated by all testers positively as very friendly and easy to use. Thematic units were divided reasonably and on appropriate way. The exploitation of the system in the practice is assessed as wide:

- Various types of schools and universities (institution providing education in different levels)
- From the aspect of schools providing secondary education – the opportunity is to exploit the system in both general and professional field. The opportunity is to use the system as an information basis targeted to trends and development of agricultural production in European Community.
- From the aspect of Higher Education Institutions – the opportunity to take advantage of more detailed knowledge such as legal regulations, rules and relevant responsibilities - has been evaluated as very useful ones.
- As a very positive and appreciated feature of the system is the aspect that it can serve as professional and appropriate material for testing the level of knowledge of employees in the field of “Agriculture” (state administration).

### **5. Imperfections of the system**

- The Slovak translation sometimes did not provide the relevant professional terminology that caused troubles especially in the Self-assessment. During the study process testers did not observe problems because they were familiar with the field. The problem sometimes occurred during the Self- assessment.
- Due to not properly translated materials in Module 2 there was a confusion in the self assessment either from the question point of view or the translated answer was not correct.

## 6. Evaluation Questionnaire

Evaluation questionnaire was completed by 2 Eco-Farmers and 2 Eco-Experts. Results are summarized as follows:

a) Farmers

- From the communication tolls, platform aspect and evaluation of platform as technical source of on-line course support have respondents evaluated system as highly positive.
- From the aspect of course content – it has been evaluated as adequate and a correspondence between aims and content has been achieved. Content of the course has been evaluated as useful and very practical.
- From the self assessment point of view questions corresponded with Modules' content, the level of questions' difficulty has been evaluated as difficult to understand for 1 Eco-Expert.
- From the overall evaluation of testing point of view testers obtained sufficient level of knowledge from the relevant field.

b) Experts

- From the communication tolls, platform aspect and evaluation of platform as technical source of on-line course support have respondents evaluated system as highly positive.
- From the aspect of course content – it has been evaluated as adequate.
- From the self assessment point of view – both Experts found the level of questions as difficult to understand specially in Module 2.
- The overall evaluation of the tested on-line course has been very positive. Both Experts would welcome similar opportunity to take part in course of such structure in related fields.

## 7. Results of self assessment

*Self assessments has been completed by both Eco-Farmers and Eco-Experts with following results:*

Eco - Farmers – reached following final marks in Modules 1, 2, 4:

Eco - Farmer 1: 7  
Eco – Farmer 2: 7,33

Eco- Experts - reached following final marks in Modules 1, 2, 4:

Eco - Expert 1: 6,06  
Eco – Expert 2: 4,11

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## **ECOFARMER AND ECOEXPERT COURSE FEEDBACK REPORT /UNITED KINGDOM/**

### **1. COURSE EVALUATION – the student perspective.**

Evaluation of the pilot course was carried out by 2 working farmers and 2 experienced advisers.

#### **Farmer (EcoFarmer) Profiles.**

- a) Owner occupier running a conventional small sheep and cereal farm with diversification into off-farm income. Graduate in agriculture with wide experience as professional trainer.
- b) Part-time conventional beef and poultry farmer. Post graduate qualification in Rural Development and farming family experience

**Feedback.**

With only 2 participants statistical evaluation is impossible and indeed some comments were to some extent contradictory, reflecting the different age and background of the participants.

Without going through each question the following is a summary of the main findings.

**e-learning platform / environment** was found to be easy to use and had sufficient communication tools.

Specific comments commended the clear signage and instruction as well as the attractive presentation. However there was some concern at the number of different layers of information accessed through buttons / arrows / notes / “more information” flags. This provided variation but could lead to confusion or important material being overlooked.

**Course content** was found to be just right by one farmer and too much by another. However both found a good linkage between the course content and its objectives.

Views were conflicting on the ease of understanding and complexity, with one rating as difficult; one as easy and one as too complex.

There was wide variation in the marks for usefulness and practicality of the content; perhaps reflecting the different parts of the course covered by the one survey assessment.

It was specifically mentioned that the content should be made more practical – this would bring it to life for practical farmers.

**Self Assessments**

These were universally found to reflect the content and have the right level of difficulty. They were also found to be easy to do and helped put the theory into practice.

One farmer felt that the self assessment and exams were sufficient to evaluate learning while the other strongly disagreed.

**Tutorial Support.**

One farmer felt that having a Tutor present would make it more interesting, while the other disagreed . This probably reflects the different learning styles of the participants.

**Time.**

Both participants thought the time taken was just about right, although in both cases a simple assignment had been added by Ultimo for UK participants. A typical time to complete the basic course would appear to be around 330 minutes. This included a short assignment, suggesting that there is considerable scope to include more assignment type exercises or case studies within the course modules.

**Support.**

One farmer felt that all his doubts and questions had been well attended (supported) while the other disagreed. In one case some technical difficulties occurred which may have influenced this response. Both felt they had been well attended at all times.

### **Overall.**

One participant summarised the course as excellent and the other as good and both agreed that they now knew more about the subject. One agreed that they would definitely be willing to do another course of this type and would recommend it to other farmers. The other was a bit more cautious stating that he would have to think about it.

In relation to course content the sheep farmer was disappointed at the lack of content relating to this enterprise. In addition there was some concern at the ability of a single course to recognise and cater for regional difference in climate and associated farming practices.

### **Advisor (EcoExpert) Profile.**

c) Experienced adviser and consultant in the agribusiness sector. Limited knowledge or experience of organic farming.

d) Experienced organic lecturer and advisor with many years experience of unit management. Some e learning experience.

Unfortunately Adviser (d) had limited time to devote to the assessment due to pressure from his own student commitments but made up for this through the quality of the feedback provided.

**e-learning platform / environment** was found to be easy to use by both participants. One adviser said it had insufficient communication tools. This may well have been as a result of inadequate training by the local “teacher” as it is not supported by personal experience. The overall evaluation of the e learning environment in general was good (4 out of 5) Specific comments commended the pop-up notes and extra detail provided on screen however there was also some concern at the number of different levels of navigation allowing the student on occasions to become lost or miss material.

There was some doubt about the use of cartoon drawings throughout the course content, but no very strong objections to their use.

The requirement to complete the exam in one sitting was not conducive to completion of the work in small bites, as time permitted, and participants needed to be made aware that they only got one chance at the exam – as opposed to assignments and self assessments which could be revisited.

**Course content** was found to be “not enough” by both advisers. The adviser with limited previous knowledge of organic methods found it frustrating that there were gaps between the information required to answer the self-assessment questions and that provided in the

course material. However both found a good linkage between the course content and its objectives.

Both found the material easy to understand and in line with the needs of the people working in agriculture, although differences in prior knowledge were reflected in additional comments such as “too simple”, and “content lacking in some areas and too narrow”. This perhaps reflects on different parts of the course covered by the one survey assessment.

### **Self Assessments.**

Both participants found the self-assessments to on occasions to not be satisfactory in relation to the course content. The adviser new to organic production commented specifically on this point.

Interestingly it was the experienced organic adviser who found the self-assessment questions difficult to answer and difficult to understand. It may be that the simple questions are more difficult to answer where knowledge of the subject is more extensive and more complex answers are apparent than the short sample answers provided.

The adviser with a teaching background felt the self-assessments and questions were sufficient to evaluate knowledge while the experienced “field” adviser disagreed.

### **Tutorial Support.**

One adviser felt that having a Tutor present would make it more interesting, while the other disagreed . This probably reflects the different learning styles of the participants.

### **Time.**

Both participants thought the time taken was just about right, although in both cases a simple assignment had been added by Ultimo for UK participants. A minimum time to complete the basic course would appear to be around 600 minutes although this included only a minimal attempt at the 4 designated exam questions and a very short UK focused assignment. This suggests that there is considerable scope to include more assignment type exercises and searching open ended exam questions within the course modules, and still stay within the target of 30 hours (1800 minutes) per module .

### **Support**

Both participants felt they had been well attended at all times and questions effectively dealt with.

### **Overall**

Both advisers assessed the overall course as “good” and agreed that they now knew more about the subject. One indicated that they would definitely do another course of this type while the other was less enthusiastic but still said they would think about it.

These experienced advisers appreciated how much effort had gone into preparing the courses and how much material was embedded within the modules.

The differences between terminologies in various countries were recognised as a problem in international programmes of this type, although the Partners were congratulated on what had been achieved so far.

## **2. COURSE EVALUATION – the teachers perspective.**

As an organisation with limited experience of e learning before becoming involved in this programme we would sum up the lessons learnt through participation in the Leonardo da Vinci programme, as follows –

### **Personal Development.**

Our own understanding has significantly developed in relation to e learning in general, including -

- Understanding how e learning can be successfully used for courses to deliver quite high level education programmes (EQF 3 and 5).
- Appreciating the huge amount of work involved in preparing material for modules and how this can be shared out through effective partnerships.
- Discovering the excellent learning platforms now available to support e learning programmes.
- Experiencing how it is possible to support such programmes from a remote location.
- Understanding the importance of effective training in the use of the e-learning platform for participants.

### **EcoFarmer and EcoExpert Course - development and use.**

The course development and pilot trial emphasised --

- Importance of building the course on the real needs of the potential users -- as determined by factual analysis.
- Importance of setting and agreeing learning objectives based closely on this industry needs analysis.
- Course material must be rigorously linked to the learning objectives.
- Linkage of content and assessment to practical applications in participant’s own business or work situation is essential.
- Assessment methods and content must be tightly linked to learning objectives and course material.
- Assignments can be effectively used to cater for national / regional variations.

- Self assessment (closed questions) are not sufficient for complex issues requiring integration of multiple factors (business or enterprise management)
- The learning platforms provide excellent information to tutors on student progress and allow exams and assignments to be marked and corrected by a remote assessor.
- Europass provides a method for international transparency of any qualifications awarded.
- Time taken to train users in the effective use of the learning platform and associated communication tools is essential.

### **Future Action to improve the product.**

The following are suggested actions to improve the products following the completion of the pilot exercise -

- Review and agree learning objectives in the light of feedback.
- Review and adjust module content to better meet regional needs; make any changes required to the learning objectives and take on board pilot evaluation results.
- Add more assignments to cater for local conditions and variations.
- Review and improve self-assessment questions against the agreed learning objectives
- Add open question exams to cater for more discussion and analytical response to questions, especially at EcoExpert ( EQF Level 5 ).
- In the longer term establish external assessor type quality assurance arrangements to validate common standards of any award granted by different organisations.

### **3. Conclusion.**

A great deal has been achieved by the Partners in delivering a complex project in a short period of time. It has been a pleasure and privilege to be a part of the Project Team.

**Ian Duff and Jennifer Fulton**

**Ultimo Consulting**

**1 July 2008**



**Project Partners:**

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## **Project Coordinator**

### **Bulgaria**

- **Higher School “Agricultural college” - Plovdiv**  
(<http://www.agricollege.com>)

## **Partners**

### **Bulgaria**

- **Bulgarian Farmers Association /Bulgaria/**

### **Denmark**

- **Hobro-Aalborg Farmers Union**

### **Greece**

- **University of Thessaly -Faculty of Agriculture/Crop and Animal Production**

### **Spain**

- **ComuNET Education Solution**

### **Italy**

- **University of Padova**

### **The Netherlands**

- **Stichting International Foundation Sustainable Agriculture Training**

### **Slovakia**

- **Slovak University of Agriculture - Nitra**

### **United Kingdom**

- **UltimoConsulting**