Agencia para la Calidad Científica y Universitaria de Andalucía

Decision on the Evaluation Result

Study programme:

"Joint Bachelor's Degree in Smart Farming and Resilient Food Systems" (SFRFS)

offered by **University of Cordoba** (UCO Spain, coordinator) in cooperation with **Slovak University of Agriculture** (SUA, Slovakia), and delivered jointly as teaching partner by **University of Thessaly** (UTH, Greece).

Based on the report of the expert panel issued on 27 July 2026, the Direction[1] of the Agency for Scientific and University Quality of Andalusia decides:

1. The bachelor degree programme "**Joint Bachelor's Degree in Smart Farming and Resilient Food Systems**" offered by University of Cordoba (Spain) in cooperation with Slovak University of Agriculture (Slovakia), and delivered jointly as teaching partner by University of Thessaly (Greece) is accredited according to the criteria and procedures defined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

   The study programme complies with the requirements defined by the European Approach for Quality assurance of Joint Programmes and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in its current version.

2. The accreditation is given for a period of **six years**, valid until 27/27/2032.

3. A follow-up report shall be submitted to ACCUA by the end of the third year of implementation of the joint programme. The consortium shall provide ACCUA with a report detailing how each recommendation for improvement from the panel (section 11.1 of the review report) has been addressed, including supporting evidence. The follow-up report may also include any other relevant changes to the programme in relation to the quality assurance standards defined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

[1]Consultation of the European Approach Reporting Commission has not been necessary as it is a single evaluation report.

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VERIFICACIÓN	Pk2jmP723V7QULNN6ANRY4S7GJ2ZR5	PÁG. 1/3

The following recommendations are given for further improvement of the programme:

STANDARD 1: ELIGIBILITY
1.1. Status
N/A
1.2. Joint Design and Delivery
- Promote changes in Greek legislation to allow UTH to award the Joint Degree.

1.3. Cooperation Agreement
- Include in the cooperation agreement information about: The academic programme, mobility paths and periods of realisation; Public available information on the programme, including the online student guide.
- Include the Financial management provisions in the cooperation agreement.

STANDARD 2: LEARNING OUTCOMES
2.1. Level
N/A
2.2. Disciplinary field
N/A
2.3. Achievement
- List the free choice courses and their relation to the PLO.
- Gather letters of intent from external agri-food enterprises, cooperatives, technology providers, labs, companies in general, etc, committing to host students in order to develop the Living Labs internships and the Final degree project.

2.4. Regulated Professions
N/A.

STANDARD 3: STUDY PROGRAMME
3.1. Curriculum
N/A.
3.2. Credits
N/A.
3.3. Workload
- Strengthen workload monitoring and student wellbeing support, especially during the Living Lab and dissertation periods.

STANDARD 4: ADMISSION AND RECOGNITION
4.1. Admission
- Develop and publish objective scoring rubrics and assessor training guidelines for evaluating the motivation video and interview components in the students admission process.
- Develop a mitigation strategy in case the number of enrolled students with the required academic qualifications does not reach a minimum.
- Take appropriate measures to ensure that all admitted students have an adequate level of English proficiency to fully engage with and follow the course content, providing additional language training when necessary. Consider the accreditation of a B2 level of English proficiency as an admission requirement for future intakes.

4.2. Recognition
N/A.

STANDARD 5: LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT
5.1. Learning and teaching
- Develop a clear co-teaching strategy and communicate it both to students and academic staff.

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- Develop how student diversity and their needs will be attended to, in view of potential different cultural background of students.

5.2. Assessment of students

- Develop procedures to ensure consistency in co-teaching, assessment practices, and feedback quality are maintained across partner institutions throughout programme delivery.

STANDARD 6: STUDENT SUPPORT

- Complete and communicate publicly the Student Handbook before launching the program, defining explicit minimum service standards, local housing pricing, and crisis support protocols across all host campuses.
- Implement operational procedures and minimum service standards for student wellbeing, emergency support, and psychological counselling across all partner institutions.
- Improve the support measures for students with disabilities and students from disadvantaged backgrounds by clarifying accessibility accommodations, financial support mechanisms, and inclusive mobility arrangements.

STANDARD 7: RESOURCES

7.1. Academic, administration and services staff

- Develop a procedure to assign teaching staff to each course prior to each registration period.

7.2. Facilities and material resources

- Make sure that equal access to advanced facilities and specialised infrastructure will be ensured for all students across different mobility pathways and partner institutions.

STANDARD 8: TRANSPARENCY AND DOCUMENTATION

- Finalise and publish the programme website, Student Handbook and Virtual Campus before the start of the programme, ensuring that prospective and enrolled students have access to complete and up-to-date information on admission procedures, scholarships, curriculum, course catalogue, ECTS credits and workload, graduation requirements, assessment regulations, mobility arrangements, student support services, and procedures for appeals, complaints and disputes.

STANDARD 9: QUALITY ASSURANCE

N/A.

With regard to the rationale behind this decision the Direction refers to the attached evaluation report.

In Córdoba, on the date of the electronic signature.

THE DIRECTOR

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VERIFICACIÓN	Pk2jmP723V7QULNN6ANRY4S7GJ2ZR5	PÁG. 3/3	

Agencia para la Calidad Científica y Universitaria de Andalucía

Evaluation Report by the Review Panel

Name of the Programme

Joint Bachelor's Degree in Smart Farming and Resilient Food Systems (SFRFS)

Name of the Coordinating Institution

University of Córdoba, UCO

Evaluation coordinated by ACCUA in accordance with the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Quality Assurance agency coordinating the review:

The review is coordinated by ACCUA.

Name of the universities participating in the consortium:

- University of Cordoba (Spain) UCO
- Slovak University of Agriculture (Slovakia) SUA
- University of Thessaly (Greece) UTH

Joint programme description:

The SFRFS Joint Bachelor is a 180 ECTS programme delivered over six semesters (30 ECTS per semester). The first year contains the "Roots of Knowledge" to be studied at UCO or SUA, the second year the "Branches of choice", with two paths: Smart Farming, which will take place at SUA (third semester) and UCO (fourth semester) and Resilient Food Systems (third semester at UCO, fourth at UTH). The third year "Crown of Application" includes a nearly common fifth semester at any partner followed by a sixth semester containing the Living Labs experience and the Bachelor project, at any location. The students will have to organise their own mobility path with a compulsory 12 month mobility divided into three 4-month periods. The Joint Bachelor points to an interdisciplinary field of study, bringing together knowledge from agriculture, food systems, technology, sustainability, economics and environmental science. The scope of the programme reflects the growing need to transform agricultural production and food systems in response to pressing global challenges, including climate change, resource constraints, digital transformation, and the need for social and economic resilience in rural areas. Instruction is delivered in English using a combination of active learning strategies, integrating case studies, problem-based learning, field visits, simulations and group projects, finalising with internships for the Living Labs and the Final Degree Project.

Strengths of the programme:

- The alignment and integration within the INVEST Alliance, providing a strong international framework for the programme.
- The topic is focused on current challenges of food systems, combining agricultural sciences, technology, biotechnology, sustainability concerns; this is an interdisciplinary field of study.
- A Joint programme among different universities, with evident strengths in the field, that is expected to be attractive for students both from Europe and overseas.
- A compulsory mobility of three 4-month periods, amounting to a total of 12 months.
- Complementarity of topics addressed along the three years and with a wide expertise and complementarity of the teaching staff involved.
- The Living labs strategy and the strong connection with practice, companies and stakeholders.
- A solid internal quality assurance system, developed at the INVEST alliance level, common for all Joint Programmes.

Recommendations for Improvement:

- Promote changes in Greek legislation to allow UTH to award the Joint Degree.
- Include in the cooperation agreement information about: The academic programme, mobility paths and periods of realisation; Public available information on the programme, including the online student guide.
- Include the Financial management provisions in the cooperation agreement.
- List the free choice courses and their relation to the PLO.
- Gather letters of intent from external agrifood enterprises, cooperatives, technology providers, labs, companies in general, etc, committing to host students to develop the Living Labs internships and the Final degree project.
- Strengthen workload monitoring and student wellbeing support, especially during the Living Lab and dissertation periods.
- Develop and publish objective scoring rubrics and assessor training guidelines for evaluating the motivation video and interview components in the student admissions process.
- Evaluate the English level required to enter the programme once the programme is implemented.
- Develop a mitigation strategy in case the number of enrolled students with the required academic qualifications does not reach a minimum.
- Develop a clear coteaching strategy and communicate it both to students and academic staff.
- Develop how student diversity and their needs will be attended to, in view of potential different cultural background of students.
- Develop procedures to ensure consistency in coteaching, assessment practices, and feedback quality are maintained across partner institutions throughout programme delivery.
- Complete and communicate publicly the Student Handbook before launching the program, defining explicit minimum service standards, local housing pricing, and crisis support protocols across all host campuses.
- Implement operational procedures and minimum service standards for student wellbeing, emergency support, and psychological counselling across all partner institutions.
- Improve the support measures for students with disabilities and students from disadvantaged backgrounds by clarifying accessibility accommodations, financial support mechanisms, and inclusive mobility arrangements.
- Develop a procedure to assign teaching staff to each course prior to each registration period.
- Assure that equal access to advanced facilities and specialised infrastructure will be secured for all students across different mobility pathways and partner institutions.
- Develop the website for the programme before the programme starts.
- Make publicly available the relevant information in the cooperation agreement and annexes upon program accreditation.

INTRODUCTION

A) The procedure conducted for the review process.

UCO requested ACCUA the ex-ante evaluation of the joint bachelor programme according to the European Approach, providing the self-evaluation report (SER) according to the proposed format and annexes as additional evidence. ACCUA nominated the expert panel. ACCUA provided an online training session for the panel. Each member of the panel analysed the self-evaluation report and provided an individual assessment. In a meeting of the panel, these individual reports were discussed and additional information was requested to the Consortium. The additional information was sent to the panel members before the visit. The external visit was held online and took place on June 19th, 2026. With all the information provided by the Consortium and the external visit, the panel issues this final report.

B) Information on the review panel and its activity:

Composition of the review panel.

President: M. Paula Baptista Da Costa Antunes
Secretary: Alberto Oleaga Páramo
Academic: Georgios Manganaris
Professional: Ján Durec
Student: Olga Koziol

Coordination of the review process.

The review process and the internal procedures to nominate the expert panel have been coordinated by ACCUA and developed according to the European Approach.

Description of the panel visit.

The visit took place online, on June 19th, 2026. The agenda was agreed with the coordinating university and the expert panel. The coordinating university provided a list of participants who attended the different sessions via Webex platform. ACCUA organised the online visit and provided technical assistance. The visit took place without any remarkable incidence. All planned meetings were held and most of participants attended.

Coordination for the review report writing.

This final report has been elaborated by the secretary of the review panel taking into consideration the individual reports of all members of the panel and the findings during the visit.

INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME

Name of the program: Joint Bachelor´s Degree in Smart Farming and Resilient Food Systems

EQF level: 6

Degree awarded: Bachelor

Number of ECTS points: 180

Program duration: 3 years

ISCED field(s) of study:

- primary field: 0811 – Crop and livestock production;
- secondary fields: 0721 – Food processing, 0613 – Software and applications development and analysis;
- complementary fields: 0711 – Chemical engineering / biotechnology-related, 0521 – Environmental sciences, 0413 – Management and administration.

Institutions delivering the programme

Name of the higher education institution	Degree awarding	Role
University of Córdoba	Yes	Coordinator
Slovak University of Agriculture	Yes	Partner
University of Thessaly	No	Teaching partner

ASSESSMENT OF EACH STANDARD

STANDARD 1: ELIGIBILITY

1.1. Status

Guideline

The Institutions offering a joint programme should be recognised as Higher Education institutions by the relevant authorities of their countries. Their respective national legal frameworks should enable them to participate in a joint programme, and, if applicable, to award a joint degree. The institutions awarding the degree/s should ensure that the degree/s belong to the higher education degree system at the countries in which they are based.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The SFRFS programme is a joint degree co-created and jointly implemented by the University of Córdoba (UCO), the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra (SUA) and the University of Thessaly (UTH). The SER clearly outlines the motivation and the rationale underlying the proposal of this program.

The three consortium partners are members of the INVEST European University Alliance and are recognised higher education institutions in their respective countries (SER Annex 13) (Note that information for UTH is written only in Greek).

In Spain (UCO), the European Approach is available. In Andalusia, regional procedures clarify the recognition of EQAR-registered agency reviews and confirm ACCUA's coordinating role in the evaluation and recognition process. In Slovakia (SUA), a legal amendment adopted in February 2025 recognises decisions issued by EQAR-registered agencies. The EA is currently not available to higher education institutions in Greece (UTH).

The degree is awarded jointly by UCO and SUA, while UTH participates as a teaching institution, after their national legal framework. During the online visit it was explained that the secondary role played by UTH is because of Greek laws but that UTH expects to be able to upgrade her contribution in future, with the aim of becoming full partner and also award the degree.

The final Joint Diploma and Diploma Supplement will be issued centrally by UCO under Spanish Royal Decree 822/2021.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 4. Joint degree and Diploma Supplement
-Annex 13
-Annex 15. Cooperation Agreement

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-None.

1.2. Joint Design and Delivery

Guideline

Joint programmes should be offered jointly, involving all the cooperating institutions in the design and delivery of the programme.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

According to the SER the programme's joint design and delivery is reflected in: (i) the curriculum structure and teaching model developed by inter-university academic teams; (ii) structured and compulsory student mobility across partner institutions; (iii) a harmonised assessment framework based on ECTS and shared evaluation criteria; and (iv) the joint issuance of academic documentation, including an ECTS-based transcript of records and a Diploma Supplement with national grade equivalences, ensuring comparability and international recognition of the degree.

However, the documentation does not describe in detail the collaborative process between the partner universities that led to the current design of the programme and joint procedures. This also applies to the regulation for examination, procedures for admission and selection. During the online visit this was fully explained and the involvement and commitment of the three universities in the joint design was evidenced.

The proposal includes a financial agreement (Annex 1) that has been agreed by all partner institutions. This agreement covers the allocation of tuition fees and explicitly details how tuition fees will be distributed to cover joint teaching costs, shared digital platforms, administrative infrastructure, and the maintenance of joint quality assurance operations. The distribution is appropriate and clearly described. The governance structure, embedded in the INVEST network, ensures joint management of admissions, evaluations and quality assurance procedures, though the composition of the Boards is unclear.

The compulsory mobility included in the program's design ensures joint delivery and the involvement of the three institutions in teaching and students' assessment tasks. It would be desirable that UTH could upgrade its status within the programme to jointly award the Bachelor degree, not simply being a teaching partner.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 1 Financial Agreement
-Annex 16. Quality Assurance Strategy
-Annex 17. Internal Quality Assurance System Handbook

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-Promote changes in Greek legislation to allow UTH to award the Joint Degree.

1.3. Cooperation Agreement

Guideline

The terms and conditions on the joint programme should be laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement should cover in particular the following issues:

- Denomination of the degree/s awarded in the programme.
- Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved with regard to management and financial organisation, (including funding, sharing of costs and income, etc.).
- Admission and selection procedures for students.
- Mobility of students and teachers.
- Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The cooperation agreement is signed by UCO and SUA, while there is a non-binding letter of intent from UTH. Nonetheless, UTH appears in the Diploma Supplement as a teaching university, without awarding the degree. During the visit it was explained that, due to the Greek university system, the only role that UTH can have is as teaching partner, though its commitment to the programme has been made clear. It is expected than, in future, legal changes in Greece will allow UTH to become a full partner and also award the degree, which would be desirable for the programme.

The cooperation agreement includes information on the legal framework including the cooperating institutions´ rights and obligations, as well as on admission and selection procedures but without details. It also includes information about the Internal Quality Assurance System and several provisions about assessments and recognition of studies. Completion of courses and of the joint degree are also considered, as well as who takes care of mobility services.

On the other hand, there are several aspects missing: there is nothing about the academic programme, mobility paths, student guide or financial management, though the latter is contained in a separate Annex 1, which is very complete and includes the 3 partners. Nevertheless, it is not signed.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 1. Financial Agreement
-Annex 4. Joint Degree and Diploma Supplement Template
-Annex 15 Cooperation agreement

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
	X	

Recommendations

-Include in the cooperation agreement information about: The academic programme, mobility paths and periods of realisation; Public available information on the programme, including the online student guide.

-Include the Financial management provisions in the cooperation agreement.

STANDARD 2: LEARNING OUTCOMES

2.1. Level

Guideline

The intended learning outcomes should align with the corresponding level in the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA), as well as the applicable national qualification framework(s).

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

Both SER and Annex 3 describe 13 Programme Learning Outcomes and their alignment with the five Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area at bachelor level, in a clear Table. Other tables are provided to make visible the connections between the Course Learning Outcomes of each course included in the syllabus, the programme learning outcomes and the QF-EHEA. They also illustrate how knowledge, skills and competencies are developed in a coherent and integrated way across the curriculum at both programme and course level. The proposal demonstrates a good balance between theoretical knowledge, practical application, analytical capacity, communication skills, and autonomous learning, which is crucial for a modern-day student. Therefore, the programme is suitable as a Bachelor-level qualification. It demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are genuinely constructed around the intersection of agriculture, food systems, sustainability, biotechnology, and digital technologies, using QF-EHEA first-cycle descriptors

Annex 12 shows the correspondence of PLOs with Courses and Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) in detail. These annexes show that the learning outcomes are in line with the European framework.

It should be noted however that no interactions are noted for SFF 305 and 306 (Living Lab Internship and Dissertation), which are course units that contribute significantly to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (Table 5, Annex 3).

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 3. Programme description.
-Annex 12. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-None

2.2. Disciplinary field

Guideline

The intended learning outcomes should comprise knowledge, skills and competencies in the respective disciplinary field(s).

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The Joint Bachelor points to an interdisciplinary field of study, bringing together knowledge from agriculture, food systems, technology, sustainability, economics and environmental science. The scope of the programme reflects the growing need to transform agricultural production and food systems in response to pressing global challenges, including climate change, resource constraints, digital transformation, and the need for social and economic resilience in rural areas. Deep technologies (sensors, robotics, AI, IoT, data analytics, biotechnology, traceability) form the disciplinary backbone supported by foundation disciplines (biochemistry, physiology, ecology, genetics, soil science). Their applications and integration in food systems incorporate disciplines of food technology and safety, and loss and waste management, within the current regulatory and ethical framework, and the entrepreneurial landscape. The intended Learning Outcomes are fully aligned with this field, providing corresponding knowledge, skills and competencies, as described in the course syllabi.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 3. Programme description.
-Annex 12. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-None

2.3. Achievement

Guideline

The programme should provide the necessary procedures to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The structure of the programme is well designed to achieve the intended learning outcomes, with a first year ("Roots of knowledge") that can be followed at two locations (UCO or SUA); a second year ("Branches of choice") with two specialisations: Smart Farming and Resilient Food Systems (in each case, changing the university between the third and the fourth semester), and a third year ("Crown of application") where the students will still study some common courses but where they will choose their own path by means of the free choice courses, the Living Lab and the Final degree Project. The Living Labs concept is particularly attractive because it connects students with external actors and allows learning outcomes to be demonstrated in a professional context. Nonetheless, some of the free choice courses are not listed, so it is not possible to evaluate their link to the learning outcomes.

The degree of detail provided in the course guides included in annex 12 are an asset and a good support about the viability of the programme, proving a thoughtful approach lies behind the proposal. The guidebooks per course include the workload, the learning results, the contents, the teaching and learning methodology, the evaluation criteria and methods, study materials/bibliography … Teaching is based on Active Learning and Challenge-Based Learning methodologies. The Assessment Methods based on Challenge-Based Learning (CBL) adopt a diversity of approaches to assessing students' achievements, including written and oral assessments, project presentations; written reports detailing research and proposed solutions and case studies; peer reviews and simulations; fieldwork reports and direct engagement with stakeholders. These approaches foster the students' skills development, while measuring achievement of learning objectives.

What is not clear from the documents is how the same courses followed at different locations (first and third year) will be developed so that achievement will not depend on the chosen location. During the online visit this subject was raised with different audiences and the coordination to this end was satisfactorily explained.
Both the Living Lab and the Final degree project are proposed to be carried out at companies, stakeholders, municipalities and research teams but there is neither a list of them nor letters of support from them showing their willingness to participate in this programme; the contents of the Living Labs were not clear. Before the online visit the consortium provided additional documentation about the Living Labs and this matter was further clarified during the online visit, though the letters of intent are still missing.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 3. Programme description.
-Annex 10. Monitoring and assessment of students' internships in living labs.
-Annex 12. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
-Additional Information provided before the online visit.

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-List the free choice courses and their relation to the PLO.

-Gather letters of intent from external agri-food enterprises, cooperatives, technology providers, labs, companies in general, etc, committing to host students in order to develop the Living Labs internships and the Final degree project.

2.4. Regulated Professions

Guideline

If relevant for the specific joint programme, the minimum agreed training conditions specified in the European Union Directive 2005/36/CE, or relevant common training frameworks established under the Directive, should be taken into account.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	Not applicable
			X

STANDARD 3: STUDY PROGRAMME

3.1. Curriculum

Guideline

The curriculum structure and content should be adequate to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The curriculum is very well structured to achieve the intended learning outcomes; it is divided into 3 years, with each year comprising 2 semesters. The first year contains the "Roots of Knowledge" to be studied at UCO or SUA, the second year the "Branches of choice", with two paths: Smart Farming, which will take place at SUA (third semester) and UCO (fourth semester) and Resilient Food Systems (third semester at UCO, fourth at UTH). The third year "Crown of Application" includes a nearly common fifth semester at any partner followed by a sixth semester containing the Living Labs experience and the Bachelor project, at any location. The students will have to organise their own mobility path with a compulsory 12 month mobility divided into three 4-month periods.

- Year 1. Roots of Knowledge –UCO or SUA -60 ECTS – All 10 courses are compulsory
- Year 2. Branches of choice–

  Path1 Smart Farming: SUA + UCO - 60 ECTS – All 11 courses are compulsory

  Path2 Resilient Food Systems: UCO +UTH - 60 ECTS – All 12 courses are compulsory
- Year 3. Crown of Application –60 ECTS – Fifth semester: 20 compulsory ECTS plus 10 elective ECTS at UCO or SUA or UTH. Sixth semester: 20 ECTS for the Living Lab and 10 ECTS for the Final Degree Project at UCO or SUA or UTH.

The guidebooks for all courses are deployed in full detail in Annex 12, proving that the contents, teaching modalities, assessments, etc, are well designed to go from the basic, foundational courses in Year 1 to the more specialised subjects in Year 2, finishing with transversal modules + internship + thesis in Year 3.

This overall organization ensures a logical pathway towards the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. However, it is not clear from the documents how to ensure coherence in teaching and evaluation among the courses taught in two Universities at the same time. The coordination established among the universities was explained along the online visit, in a satisfactory way.

A very innovative component of the programme is the Living Lab model. This aspect of the curriculum has the potential to become the defining feature of the degree. The Living Lab concept moves far beyond traditional internships or placement models commonly found in higher education. Instead of simply observing professional environments or performing routine tasks, students are positioned as active participants within real innovation ecosystems involving universities, farmers, SMEs, NGOs, regional authorities and industry stakeholders. It is crucial to underline that this is an extremely powerful approach. The Living Labs create conditions where students must operate in situations characterised by uncertainty, complexity and competing stakeholder interests. This allows students to experience the realities of applied innovation and systems transformation in a way that traditional teaching formats rarely achieve.

The educational value of this experience for students can prove to be enormous. Students are likely to develop not only technical competencies but also highly transferable professional skills that are increasingly critical in contemporary labour markets. Through participation in Living Labs, students can learn how to communicate across disciplines, negotiate between stakeholders with different priorities, translate scientific knowledge into operational solutions, work within multicultural teams and adapt theoretical frameworks to imperfect real-

world conditions. This aligns strongly with current European approaches to challenge-based learning, open innovation and engaged higher education. The integration of collaboration gives the programme a particularly contemporary educational character. The international and comparative dimension of the Living Labs further strengthens their value. Because the programme operates across Spain, Slovakia and Greece, students are exposed to different agricultural systems, climatic realities, institutional frameworks and socio-economic contexts.

The dissertation component itself is generally well designed and academically robust. The structure of the dissertation requirements demonstrates a strong commitment to research literacy and scientific methodology at bachelor level. The possibility of co-supervision across institutions is particularly valuable because it reinforces the genuinely joint nature of the programme and encourages academic integration between universities. The inclusion of alternative dissertation formats also reflects openness to innovation and interdisciplinary forms of knowledge production, which fits well with the broader philosophy of the programme.

Lecturers and administrative staff mobility is also contemplated, which will give an added value to the students training and the programme in general.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 3. Programme description.
-Annex 9. Mobility planning.
-Annex 10. Monitoring and assessment of students' internships in living labs.
-Annex 12. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-None

3.2. Credits

Guideline

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be applied properly and the distribution of credits should be clear.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The Joint Bachelor's degree comprises 180 ECTS divided in 6 semesters, each with 30 ECTS. The compulsory courses, depending on their design, correspond to 4, 5 or 6 ECTS. The elective courses in Year 3 are smaller, while the Living Lab has 20 ECTS and the Final Degre Project 10 ECTS. Each ECTS is consistently composed of 10 hours of teaching contact hours and 15 hours of self-study time, as decided by the INVEST Academic Board. The courses are well developed for the allocated number of credits, with adequate contents in each case. Nevertheless, the fact there are courses with different number of credits may be somewhat confusing for students and generate problems of coordination.

Documentary evidence

-SER.

-Annex 3. Programme description.

-Annex 10. Monitoring and assessment of students' internships in living labs.

-Annex 12. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-None

3.3. Workload

Guideline

A joint bachelor programme will typically amount to a total student workload of 180-240 ECTS-credits; a joint master programme will typically amount to 90-120 ECTS-credits and should not be less than 60 ECTS-credits at second cycle level (credits ranges according to the FQ-EHEA); for joint doctorates no credit range is specified.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The Joint Bachelor's Degree comprises 180 ECTS, 4500 hours of study along 3 academic years (6 semesters, 30 ECTS each), a standard structure. This workload includes lectures, seminars, field trips, independent study, research projects, internships, and assessments. The workload is well distributed, as no one has to take more than 30 ECTS per semester. Within each course, the workload (in contents and assessments) seems to be, in general, well weighed for the number of ECTS credits, as far as the information in the Course description is concerned. The Consortium has made a great effort in developing the guidebooks with such detail.

Nevertheless, there is some concern regarding the depth at which some competencies can realistically be achieved within the available timeframe. This concern is particularly visible within the Smart Farming track. Courses covering sensors, automation, cloud computing, remote sensing, GIS systems and spatial data analysis suggest a relatively high technical intensity. Although the first year provides foundations in mathematics and statistics, it remains unclear whether students from more biologically or environmentally oriented backgrounds will be adequately prepared for the rapid transition toward technologically advanced material. The programme would benefit from a more explicit explanation of academic support mechanisms, or bridging resources, such as online materials, intended to support students through this steep learning progression.

Another example is the course *Fundamentals of Physics and Mathematics* – it will be a huge challenge to teach all the listed subjects in a 6 ECTS course

Finally, the programme strongly emphasises autonomy, adaptability and self-directed learning, which are valuable educational principles, but there is relatively limited discussion of wellbeing support, workload monitoring or mechanisms for identifying students who may struggle within such a demanding learning ecosystem.

The consortium is also aware that, as an "ex ante" evaluation, the workload will have to be reviewed and, if required, modified. The Internal Quality Assurance system contemplates this task.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 3. Programme description.
-Annex 10. Monitoring and assessment of students' internships in living labs.
-Annex 12. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
-Annex 17. Internal Quality Assurance System Handbook

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-Strengthen workload monitoring and student wellbeing support, especially during the Living Lab and dissertation periods.

STANDARD 4: ADMISSION AND RECOGNITION

4.1. Admission

Guideline

Admission requirements and selection procedures should be appropriate in light of the programme´s level and discipline.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

Admission to the INVEST Joint Bachelor's Degree is regulated through a jointly agreed, transparent and harmonised admissions framework, applicable to all partner universities and centrally coordinated at alliance level, in line with national regulations and European recognition frameworks. The SER makes specific reference to the recognition, legalisation and authentication of qualifications for eligibility and admission. The framework is designed to ensure that the profile of admitted students is fully aligned with the academic demands, learning outcomes and interdisciplinary nature of the programme, while guaranteeing fairness, equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

The SFRFS programme applies a single joint application and admission system, implemented through a dedicated digital platform developed and managed under the responsibility of the INVEST Academic Board and the SFRFS Joint Bachelor Committee. This is especially important as it does not force the applicants to navigate multiple institutional procedures, administrative cultures and documentation systems. It is important to undernote that the programme offers a unified process that potentially reduces confusion and creates a more coherent applicant experience. From a student perspective, this is highly valuable and contributes significantly to the perception of the programme as one integrated European degree.

The admission requirements and procedures for selection are clearly established. A quota for EU/non EU students will be implemented (deadlines are split into separate phases for EU and non-EU students to facilitate visa processing), though it will not be easy to have applicants from non EU countries which will be fulfilling the requirements for the national regulations to access to Bachelor studies. B1 English level will be another requirement for admission, though maybe it is low to follow a Bachelor programme. Applicants will be ranked using a weighted scoring model in which each criterion is awarded points and combined into an overall score, as follows:

• Academic performance, including university entrance examination results where applicable: 80%

• Motivation video: 20%

Shortlisted applicants may be invited to an interview where this is considered appropriate, in order to gain additional insight into their interests, motivation, and overall suitability for the programme. If an interview is conducted, its score replaces the motivation video score and retains the same weight in the overall assessment.

The merit-based selection structure is a very positive feature. The emphasis on prior academic performance as the primary criterion is fair, while the inclusion of motivational assessment through video submissions introduces a more holistic dimension to selection. However, the SER provides relatively limited detail regarding how motivation videos and interviews will actually be assessed. While the existence of these elements is positive, there is little explanation of the evaluation rubrics, assessor training or mechanisms to ensure consistency and minimise subjectivity in decision-making.

Another important factor is the programme's clear commitment to equal treatment and procedural fairness. The use of anonymised publication of selection lists, formal appeal mechanisms and documented recognition procedures reflects good alignment with ESG principles and contributes to institutional accountability. The right to appeal is especially important in joint programmes, where applicants may otherwise struggle to understand which institution holds responsibility for decisions.

Diversity, equality, and inclusion are said to be considered in order to ensure a fair, balanced, and equitable selection process, but there is no information about how this will be done.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 5. Application, Submission and Admission.

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-Develop and publish objective scoring rubrics and assessor training guidelines for evaluating the motivation video and interview components in the students admission process.

-Develop a mitigation strategy in case the number of enrolled students with the required academic qualifications does not reach a minimum.

-Take appropriate measures to ensure that all admitted students have an adequate level of English proficiency to fully engage with and follow the course content, providing additional language training when necessary. Consider the accreditation of a B2 level of English proficiency as an admission requirement for future intakes.

4.2. Recognition

Guideline

Recognition of qualifications and periods of studies, (included recognition of prior learning) should be applied in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The recognition of qualifications and of periods of study outside the consortium universities, including recognition of prior learning, is stated in the SER to be in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention, where the procedure to obtain it is described. Annex 7 gives the full details of this procedure, which is well designed, especially considering the expected diversity of international applicants and educational backgrounds. Recognition decisions are taken collectively and documented within the joint admissions system, ensuring traceability, consistency and institutional alignment across the consortium.

Annex 6 presents a detailed assessment of recognition of studies among partner universities, which is ensured by

- a jointly approved Mobility Plan embedded in each curriculum;
- a shared approach to ECTS, learning outcomes and assessment criteria; and
- a common operational set-up supported by INVEST joint services, including the alliance digital environment (Virtual Campus) and coordinated academic governance.

Table 2 in the SER contains a clear Grading Equivalence Table among partners, necessary for recognition.

Overall, the recognition framework is well structured and appropriately aligned with European standards, ensuring fair and coherent treatment of applicants and students across the consortium.

Documentary evidence

-SER.

-Annex 6. Qualification Recognition Documents.

-Annex 7. Procedure for Prior Qualifications Recognition.

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-None

STANDARD 5: LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

5.1. Learning and teaching

Guideline

The joint programme should be designed to correspond with the intended learning outcomes, and the learning and teaching approaches applied should be adequate to achieve them. Student diversity and their needs should be respected and attended to, especially in view of potential different cultural backgrounds of students.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The Joint Bachelor is built on a co-teaching model that permeates the entire curriculum. This model means each module is designed and taught by teams of academics from at least two partner universities who share responsibility for defining the learning outcomes, selecting materials, planning the teaching schedule, and establishing the assessment criteria.

This is a very strong point that can promote interdisciplinarity and creates a rich learning environment for students. Students are exposed to different scientific traditions, regional agricultural realities and cultures throughout their studies, which substantially broadens their academic perspective. This model also promotes interaction between teachers from different universities, which is a benefit.

However, this strategy can face some challenges, due to the need to coordinate professors, teaching modes and assessment methods from different universities and to combine onsite and online teaching activities. The SER mentions that the co-teaching arrangement is formalised at the beginning of each academic year and revised regularly to ensure a balanced distribution of responsibilities and an equitable workload for staff across the consortium, which should help teaching the same courses at different locations under similar conditions. During the online visit it was seen that there were differences in the understanding of the coteaching concept between teaching staff and consortium coordinators, which still has to be fully developed.

The integration of stationary, virtual and blended learning formats is another strong feature of the programme. The programme uses digital infrastructure strategically to support collaboration, continuity and accessibility across the consortium. The usage of shared platforms, synchronised teaching contributions, remote expert participation and common datasets is especially useful in the modern approach to teaching.

Annex 12 contains the sillabi and a complete deployment of all courses, including the workload, intended learning outcomes, and aligned contents, teaching and learning methodology, assessment methods and criteria. The ensemble has a great potentiality for success and it seems that each course has been carefully designed to achieve the learning outcomes.

The program will employ active learning strategies, integrating case studies, problem-based learning, field visits, simulations and group projects to immerse students in the practical application of smart farming and resilient food system principles, which is also a strong point. Most courses combine several of these activities. In addition, students are encouraged to participate in internships, research projects, and experiential learning activities with agri-tech companies, and food system stakeholders to gain valuable hands-on experience in the field.

Another learning approach that will be used in the program is Challenge-Based Learning (CBL), in which the joint course development teams guide students in tackling real-world problems or tasks, called “challenges” to promote learning and skill development. By engaging with real world problems faced by food systems students develop background knowledge and problem-solving competences.

The Living Lab ecosystem is a very innovative and distinctive feature of the entire programme. The Living Labs transform the degree from a traditional academic programme into a dynamic innovation environment where students become active participants in ongoing territorial, technological and societal transformation processes. This approach is remarkably forward-looking and aligns strongly with current European priorities concerning innovation ecosystems. What makes the Living Lab concept particularly powerful is its combination of experimentation, co-creation and real-world immersion. Students are not confined to simulated case studies or hypothetical exercises; instead, they work directly with farmers, SMEs, public authorities, NGOs and technology providers on authentic challenges. Nevertheless, it is not clear if the Living Labs are already developed or just an idea at this point. Through the Additional Documentation provided before the online visit and the Audiences along it, the network of collaborators who will take part in the Living Labs has been clearly shown.

The consortium offers inclusive support services which take into consideration different learning difficulties of students with special needs and the programme proposes flexible routines for assignment and assessment. Regarding diversity in terms of potential different cultural background of students, it is mentioned in relation to the Challenge-Based Learning (section 5.3 in SER) but it is not really developed.

INVEST Virtual Campus (based on Moodle) will be used as a tool for learning, teaching and assessment, which is a positive asset for the programme.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 3. Programme description.
-Annex 9. Mobility planning.
-Annex 12. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
-Additional Information

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-Develop a clear co-teaching strategy and communicate it both to students and academic staff.

-Develop how student diversity and their needs will be attended to, in view of potential different cultural background of students.

5.2. Assessment of students

Guideline

The examination regulations and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes should correspond with the intended learning outcomes. They should be applied consistently among partner institutions.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The programme aligns intended learning outcomes, teaching methodologies and assessment approaches. The programme promotes a variety of assessment methodologies of learning outcomes, described in detail in the SER and Annex 8 and assigned to each course in Annex 12, after the specificity of each of them. They combine continuous assessment, practical assignments, fieldwork, presentations, collaborative projects and prototype development, which is in line with current trends in university education. There is a clear alignment of these assessment methods with the intended Learning Outcomes. Annex 8 also includes a complete regulation for assessments of all kinds (including the resit possibilities), which will be very helpful for students. This Annex also contains the assessment procedure for the internships (Living Labs), which is further developed in Annex 10, as well as the Final degree project, which will be evaluated before a joint panel with members from at least two partner universities, which is a clear strength. The procedures both for the internship and the degree project are very well designed.

By developing and applying a unified grading system across the consortium (contained in the SER), the model ensures consistent standards of assessment, irrespective of the institution or the teacher delivering a course.

Templates for dissertation and Living Labs reports have been developed to ensure harmonization of criteria.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 3. Programme description.
-Annex 8. Student Assessment Regulations
-Annex 10. Monitoring and Assessment of Students' Internships in Living Labs
-Annex 12. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-Develop procedures to ensure consistency in co-teaching, assessment practices, and feedback quality are maintained across partner institutions throughout programme delivery.

STANDARD 6: STUDENT SUPPORT

Guideline

The student support services should contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. They should take into account specific challenges of mobile students.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

Student support for the SFRFS program is embedded in the support system that has been developed for all INVEST joint bachelor programmes, designed as a holistic, multi-layered framework that accompanies students throughout the full joint pathway, including compulsory mobility periods. The SFRFS Joint Bachelor Committee ensures coordinated and responsive support at programme level, complemented by designated local administrative and pedagogical contacts at each partner institution. This dual-tier structure ensures students can rapidly access the appropriate support channel, whether their needs are academic (study planning, progression) or administrative (enrolment, documentation, mobility logistics) (SER). The idea that students should experience the programme as one coherent pathway instead of three separate institutional experiences is crucial for the intent of a joint programme. This can prove to be a good practice within European University alliances.

One of the strongest aspects of the student support strategy is the emphasis placed on mobility guidance. Given that mobility constitutes a structural component of the programme rather than an optional add-on, the creation of the INVEST Mobility Service Point is a particularly important innovation. It is important to create a centralised support mechanism for enrolment, mobility coordination and administrative guidance, which will have considerable potential to reduce fragmentation and student confusion through central coordination and harmonisation of processes. This is especially valuable for bachelor-level students, who are less experienced in administrative procedures than master's students. By offering coordinated support before, during and after mobility, the programme demonstrates awareness of the emotional, logistical and academic complexity associated with international transitions. The inclusion of orientation activities, buddy systems and integration support also reflects good practice in fostering social inclusion and reducing mobility-related stress.

Annex 11 corresponds to the Student Handbook, which will serve as the main point of reference for students enrolled in the SFRFS. This document will bring together clear and user-friendly guidance on the academic framework, key regulations and the support available to students, helping them navigate the programme and supporting both academic progress and personal development. However, the version that is included in Annex 11 is only a table of contents, lacking the contents for students and therefore it is not possible to evaluate its adequacy, though it is positively appreciated that the SER describes available services and procedures for aspects such as academic guidance and onboarding, mobility support, wellbeing and counselling, inclusion, accessibility and language support, accommodation and day-to-day integration during mobility, career development, employability and counselling services, digital student support, which indicate a clear concern with student support. It would be desirable to have a greater operational specificity regarding emergency support procedures for students experiencing accommodation difficulties, mental health crises, financial hardship or visa complications during mobility periods.

While inclusiveness is strongly emphasised conceptually, there is limited discussion of support for students with disabilities or students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. More explicit information regarding financial support, accessibility coordination and inclusive mobility pathways would strengthen the framework considerably.

Career development and employability support are also thoughtfully planned and embedded into the student support system. The four-layer structure combining self-study materials, workshops, courses and counselling services appears comprehensive and flexible. Importantly, the programme recognises that employability in smart farming and resilient food systems requires not only technical knowledge but also career management skills, adaptability and international professional competencies.

Finally, no evidences (links, documents) have been provided on how the support systems work right now, whether they cover all the services mentioned or if they are indeed in place at the three partner universities or at consortium level. During the online visit, the representatives of all universities assured that they will be cooperating when it comes to mobility students. For instance, they will have a shared website for SFRFS students; however, no evidences were provided.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 11. Student Handbook

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
	X	

Recommendations

- Complete and communicate publicly the Student Handbook before launching the program, defining explicit minimum service standards, local housing pricing, and crisis support protocols across all host campuses.

-Implement operational procedures and minimum service standards for student wellbeing, emergency support, and psychological counselling across all partner institutions.

-Improve the support measures for students with disabilities and students from disadvantaged backgrounds by clarifying accessibility accommodations, financial support mechanisms, and inclusive mobility arrangements.

STANDARD 7: RESOURCES

7.1. Academic, administration and services staff

Guideline

The staff should be sufficient and adequate (qualifications, professional and international experience) to implement the study programme.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

Teaching staff and researchers from relevant faculties, departments, and research centres of the partner universities will be involved in the program. Annex 14 provides the CVs of participating teaching staff, clearly demonstrating their expertise and different disciplinary backgrounds to ensure the envisaged multidisciplinarity. Their expertise covers interdisciplinary fields central to the programme, including smart and precision farming, digital and data-driven agriculture, agricultural engineering, crop and soil sciences, environmental sustainability, and resilient food systems.

The programme is supported by a network of associated partners representing key stakeholders.

Invited experts from academia, research institutions, and the public and private sectors complement the core teaching staff through guest lectures, seminars, workshops, and mentoring activities.

Each module clearly indicates the coordinating and/or participating Academic Units, though it would have been desirable to know who will tutorize the Living Labs and the Final Degree projects to make a full assessment.

The number of teaching staff from UCO is overwhelming, compared to the ensemble from SUA or UTH. Maybe it is due to the fact that the UCO acts as the coordinator for 18 courses (99 ECTS), while SUA handles 10 courses (54 ECTS) and UTH handles only 8 courses (42 ECTS). UCO dominates over 55% of the total ECTS workload. During the online visit it was explained that, at UCO, many courses are taught among different professors. SUA and UTH explained that they only listed the CV of the coordinators, not those of everyone who will be teaching. At this point, it is still early to know exactly who will be teaching all courses.

As for administration and services staff, there is no information available about them. The success of a mobility-intensive joint programme depends not only on academic quality but also on highly efficient administrative support. Although structures such as Local Technical Offices and the Mobility Service Point are promising, the evidence regarding staffing levels, administrative training and operational readiness presents itself as somewhat limited. The consortium would therefore benefit from providing more detailed evidence regarding the adequacy and sustainability of administrative staff resources, especially during the initial programme implementation phase. Before the online visit, the consortium provided additional and satisfactory information about this matter.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 12. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
-Annex 14. Teaching Staff CVs.
-Additional Information

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-Develop a procedure to assign teaching staff to each course prior to each registration period.

7.2. Facilities and material resources

Guideline

The facilities provided should be sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

Regarding Facilities and Materials resources, section 7.2 of the SER contains the information about the particular facilities and materials resources which will be at the disposal of this programme at each of the individual partner universities. Students have access to Precision Agriculture Labs and GNSS machinery at SUA Nitra, molecular biology platforms and NGS systems at UTH, and extensive pilot processing plants, sensory tasting rooms, and high-containment biosafety laboratories (BSL2/BSL3) at UCO Rabanales. The infrastructure described across the three universities is not only extensive and technologically advanced, but also exceptionally well aligned with the challenge-based learning, experimentation, digitalisation and Living Lab methodologies. A particularly strong aspect of the programme is the extent to which infrastructure supports research-oriented learning. The consortium provides access to highly specialised environments where students can engage directly with real technologies, datasets, production systems and experimental workflows. Although there is no specific assignment of facilities to courses in the programme, the amount and quality of the facilities seem to be very appropriate for the development of the programme. The Living Lab facilities are also described in some detail in section 5.2 but it is not clear where they are and, therefore, if all students will benefit equally. The additional information provided by the consortium before the online visit filled this gap, with extensive information about the Living Labs fields and the collaborators network.

Documentary evidence

-SER
-Annex 3. Programme description.
-Annex 12. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
-Additional Information.

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

- Make sure that equal access to advanced facilities and specialised infrastructure will be ensured for all students across different mobility pathways and partner institutions.

STANDARD 8: TRANSPARENCY AND DOCUMENTATION

Guideline

Relevant information about the programme like admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures etc., should be well documented and published by taking into account specific needs of mobile students.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The consortium has developed a transparent, accessible and well-structured information ecosystem that supports informed decision-making before admission and continuity of information throughout the entire student lifecycle. The consortium has adopted an integrated approach in which students are expected to experience the programme as a single coherent European pathway and not a fragmented institutional experiences. It is shown by the existence of centralised information channels, coordinated communication strategies and common documentation which significantly reduces these risks. The usage of the INVEST website and the Virtual Campus as central reference points for programme-related information is especially relevant. The unified digital environment increases the transparency and enhances the student support system. Especially the integration of academic calendars, mobility guidance, support services, official documentation and course materials into one shared environment is a student-friendly practice.

The SER affirms that there will be a complete web, at INVEST alliance level, and at local level, with all the relevant information about the programme. A student Handbook will also be developed, aligned with the needs of mobile and international students. Additionally, the inclusiveness in communication is also visible through the programme. The multi-channel dissemination strategy, combining alliance-level communication with local institutional channels and local-language dissemination where appropriate, is likely to increase accessibility for diverse applicant groups. The public information is also transparent, the information which will be given about admission procedures, appeal routes, tuition fees, mobility pathways and assessment arrangements will constitute a major strength of the programme.

Nevertheless, at this stage, the Student Handbook is only an index without contents and the web page for the programme is not deployed yet. A communication campaign will also be established to inform target students, again yet to be developed. The digital Virtual Campus features (e.g., central payments, digital signatures, certificate issuing) are still explicitly labeled as "in deployment" or "under development", hence public transparency cannot be considered fully achieved at this stage.

The consortium has developed a common framework for data protection and data sharing, presented in Annex 2.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 2. Data protection and sharing regulations
-Annex 11. Student Handbook

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
	X	

Recommendations

-Finalise and publish the programme website, Student Handbook and Virtual Campus before the start of the programme, ensuring that prospective and enrolled students have access to complete and up-to-date information on admission procedures, scholarships, curriculum, course catalogue, ECTS credits and workload, graduation requirements, assessment regulations, mobility arrangements, student support services, and procedures for appeals, complaints and disputes.

STANDARD 9: QUALITY ASSURANCE

Guideline

The cooperating institutions should apply joint internal quality assurance processes in accordance with part one of the ESG2015.

Analysis of the documentary evidence provided

The quality assurance system of the joint programme is embedded in the common quality framework of the INVEST European University Alliance and is fully aligned with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. The joint programme applies a shared and integrated quality assurance framework, ensuring transparency, consistency, and continuous improvement across all partner institutions.

The INVEST Alliance has adopted a joint Quality Assurance Strategy (Annex 16) that establishes common principles, objectives, and responsibilities for quality assurance in all educational activities, including joint degree programmes. This strategic framework is operationalised through the INVEST Internal Quality Assurance System Handbook (Annex 17), which provides particular procedures, indicators, checklists, and evidence requirements for the implementation, monitoring, and enhancement of quality at programme level.

However, it is not clear how the INVEST Alliance Quality Assurance System interacts with each institution's own Quality Assurance System. There is a risk of duplication of efforts and overburden of the involved teachers and administrative staff with the need to respond to different QAS. During the online visit, the Quality Assurance representatives explained that the INVEST system will be the one followed in the Joint programmes, without any duplicity with local systems.

Besides, the role of students could be presented in a more participatory and decision-oriented way. At present, students appear in the documents mainly as respondents in surveys and feedback exercises. It would strengthen the submission to clarify whether students are formally represented in quality assurance bodies, programme committees, or the QAB itself, and whether they actively participate in decision-making regarding improvement actions. During the online visit it was explained that students have an active role and that they take part in different Boards.

Documentary evidence

-SER.
-Annex 16. Quality Assurance Strategy
-Annex 17. Internal Quality Assurance System Handbook

Assessment

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
X		

Recommendations

-None

CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION PROPOSAL

11.1. Recommendations Summary

STANDARD 1: ELIGIBILITY
1.1. Status
N/A
1.2. Joint Design and Delivery
-Promote changes in Greek legislation to allow UTH to award the Joint Degree.
1.3. Cooperation Agreement
-Include in the cooperation agreement information about: The academic programme, mobility paths and periods of realisation; Public available information on the programme, including the online student guide.
-Include the Financial management provisions in the cooperation agreement.

STANDARD 2: LEARNING OUTCOMES
2.1. Level
N/A
2.2. Disciplinary field
N/A
2.3. Achievement
-List the free choice courses and their relation to the PLO.
-Gather letters of intent from external agri-food enterprises, cooperatives, technology providers, labs, companies in general, etc, committing to host students in order to develop the Living Labs internships and the Final degree project.
2.4. Regulated Professions
N/A.

STANDARD 3: STUDY PROGRAMME
3.1. Curriculum
N/A.
3.2. Credits
N/A.
3.3. Workload
-Strengthen workload monitoring and student wellbeing support, especially during the Living Lab and dissertation periods.

STANDARD 4: ADMISSION AND RECOGNITION
4.1. Admission
-Develop and publish objective scoring rubrics and assessor training guidelines for evaluating the motivation video and interview components in the students admission process.
-Develop a mitigation strategy in case the number of enrolled students with the required academic qualifications does not reach a minimum.
-Take appropriate measures to ensure that all admitted students have an adequate level of English proficiency to fully engage with and follow the course content, providing additional language training when necessary. Consider the accreditation of a B2 level of English proficiency as an admission requirement for future intakes.

4.2. Recognition
N/A.

STANDARD 5: LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT
5.1. Learning and teaching

-Develop a clear co-teaching strategy and communicate it both to students and academic staff.
-Develop how student diversity and their needs will be attended to, in view of potential different cultural background of students.
5.2. Assessment of students
-Develop procedures to ensure consistency in co-teaching, assessment practices, and feedback quality are maintained across partner institutions throughout programme delivery.

STANDARD 6: STUDENT SUPPORT
- Complete and communicate publicly the Student Handbook before launching the program, defining explicit minimum service standards, local housing pricing, and crisis support protocols across all host campuses.
-Implement operational procedures and minimum service standards for student wellbeing, emergency support, and psychological counselling across all partner institutions.
-Improve the support measures for students with disabilities and students from disadvantaged backgrounds by clarifying accessibility accommodations, financial support mechanisms, and inclusive mobility arrangements.

STANDARD 7: RESOURCES
7.1. Academic, administration and services staff
-Develop a procedure to assign teaching staff to each course prior to each registration period.
7.2. Facilities and material resources
- Make sure that equal access to advanced facilities and specialised infrastructure will be ensured for all students across different mobility pathways and partner institutions.

STANDARD 8: TRANSPARENCY AND DOCUMENTATION
-Finalise and publish the programme website, Student Handbook and Virtual Campus before the start of the programme, ensuring that prospective and enrolled students have access to complete and up-to-date information on admission procedures, scholarships, curriculum, course catalogue, ECTS credits and workload, graduation requirements, assessment regulations, mobility arrangements, student support services, and procedures for appeals, complaints and disputes.

STANDARD 9: QUALITY ASSURANCE
N/A.

11.2. The Review Panel Assessment per Standard

In this section, a summary table including assessment per standard is provided and, just in final reports, an evaluation proposal in terms of favourable or unfavourable.

STANDARD		ACHIEVED	PARTIALLY ACHIEVED	NOT ACHIEVED
STANDARD 1. ELIGIBILITY	Status	X		
	Joint Design and Delivery	X		
	Cooperation Agreement		X	
STANDARD 2. LEARNING OUTCOMES	Level	X		
	Disciplinary field	X		
	Achievement	X		
	Regulated Professions (if applicable)			
STANDARD 3. STUDY PROGRAMME	Curriculum	X		
	Credits	X		
	Workload	X		
STANDARD 4. ADMISSION AND RECOGNITION	Admission	X		
	Recognition	X		
STANDARD 5. LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT	Learning and Teaching	X		
	Assessment of Students	X		
STANDARD 6. STUDENT SUPPORT			X	
STANDARD 7. RESOURCES	Academic, Administration and Services Staff	X		
	Facilities and material resources	X		
STANDARD 8. TRANSPARENCY AND DOCUMENTATION			X	
STANDARD 9. QUALITY ASSURANCE		X		

Final evaluation proposal: FAVOURABLE

The panel proposes that a follow-up report shall be submitted to ACCUA by the end of the third year of implementation of the joint programme.

ANNEXES

REVIEW PANEL

Paula Antunes is Full Professor at the Nova School of Sciences and Technology, Nova University Lisbon (NOVA FCT, Lisbon, Portugal). Her interests focus on interdisciplinary research in ecological economics, in particular in sustainability assessment, biodiversity and ecosystem services, participatory system dynamics modelling and sustainable food systems. She teaches several courses in undergraduate and graduate degrees and has supervised a considerable number of MSc and PhD students. She has served as Head of the Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering of NOVA FCT, as Director of CENSE – Center for Environmental and Sustainability Research and as coordinator of the PhD in Environment and Sustainability of NOVA University. Authored a significant number of publications in peer-reviewed journals and collaborated in several national and international expert panels. Former Associate Editor of Ecological Economics, Vice-President of the European Society for Ecological Economics (ESEE) (2006-2009) and member of the board of the International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE) (2002-2004).

Alberto Oleaga is Full Professor of Applied Physics at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU, Bilbao, Spain) as well as Vicedean for Relations with Companies at Bilbao School of Engineering (UPV/EHU). His research interests fall on Applied Physics and Condensed Matter, dealing with thermal, magnetic and magnetocaloric properties of materials of technological interest, mainly for energy applications. He has published about 100 papers in peer reviewed international journals, most of them in collaboration with research groups from all over the world. He has trained many young scientists and engineers, regularly supervising Master and PhD thesis, being the Head of the doctoral programme “Physics” at UPV/EHU. He has experience in university management as former Vicedean for International Relations, coordinator of 4 Erasmus Mundus programmes and Head of the Applied Physics Department, as well as in Quality and Accreditation programmes, both as proposer of Degrees and evaluator in different agencies.

George Manganaris is founder of the Fruit Sciences & Postharvest Group at Cyprus University of Technology. His main scientific interests include the quality evaluation of fleshy fruits through the employment of physiological, biochemical and molecular approaches, the elucidation of fruit ripening syndrome with emphasis in the development of disorders and overall the postharvest maintenance of fresh produce. Additionally, he is involved in projects and synergies dealing with the application of preharvest treatments and/or novel technologies for maintaining quality of fruit crops and their responsiveness to abiotic stress conditions. To date, Dr. Manganaris is the author of 74 Tier I scientific papers in refereed journals [https://www.fruitsciences.eu/research-papers.html] with overall 114 contributions, 5600 citations and 36 h-index according to Scopus Database. He is the Editor in Chief in ‘Scientia Horticulturae’ and a member of the Editorial board in ‘Postharvest Biology & Technology’ and ‘BMC Plant Biology’ journals. He has been assigned to evaluate/monitor competitive research proposals/projects for EU [Horizon 2020, European Commission Executive Agency for Small & Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME), Eurostars] and for National agencies, (Italy, France, Belgium, Denmark, Poland, Chile, Greece, Slovenia, Serbia, Israel, Latvia, Qatar, Canada). He has been appointed by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education to participate as Committee member for the accreditation of 20 undergraduate and postgraduate study programs. He has/is acted/acting as (co-)PI of [5] accomplished and [3] on going PhD programs, while he has acted as an external examiner of MSc theses/PhD dissertations in Italy, Spain, United

Kingdom, Greece, Australia. He is currently Council Member of the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS), elected Vice Chair of the ISHS (Division Temperate Fruit Crops) for the periods 2022-2026, 2026-2030 and Board member of European Fruit Research Institute Network. In the past, he has organized three ISHS symposiums and has acted as editor of the Proceedings of the X ISHS Peach Symposium (Acta Horticulturae 1352), the V International Postharvest Unlimited Symposium (Acta Horticulturae 1079) and the III International Horticulture in Europe Symposium (Acta Horticulturae 1242).

Ján Durec, is an internationally recognized expert in the field of applied food research, beverage production and technology, aseptic processes. He has been a visiting professor at the Faculty of Chemical and Food Technology in Bratislava for 12 years and an evaluator of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for 4 years. He was the first to implement the technology of cold aseptic filling in the beverage industry in Central Europe for filling aseptic large pieces of food in a beverage. His scientific work to date is documented in more than 60 scientific and professional publications. He was the responsible lead investigator in 12 European research projects. He holds one patent and one industrial design and represented Slovakia in Brussels at the EIT FOOD Council. He was the first to implement a clinical study on liquid probiotics in cooperation with the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the Biomedical Center, with the granting of a patent.

Olga Kozioł is a Master's student in Biology at Jagiellonian University, actively engaged in initiatives related to higher education quality assurance, student representation, and the internationalization of academic programmes. Since 2025, she has served as a Student Expert of the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA), participating in accreditation processes and study programme evaluations At Jagiellonian University, she is involved in committees and bodies focused on teaching and learning quality, where she represents the student perspective in discussions on curriculum development, educational policies, and quality enhancement. She is also engaged in internationalization activities, supporting Erasmus and international students and promoting intercultural cooperation. Additionally, she represents the Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland (PSRP) in international initiatives, including the V4+ Student Group, contributing to discussions on higher education policy, student mobility, quality assurance, and student participation in university governance.

VISIT PROGRAMME

Type of visit: Online

1st Session online site visit. Friday, 19 June 2026

Time	Duration	Activity
09:00-09:30	30 minutes	Internal meeting of the panel.
09:30-10:15	45 minutes	Meeting with programme coordinators
10:15-10:30	15 minutes	Internal meeting of the panel
10:30-11:15	45 minutes	Meeting with teaching staff
11:15-11:30	15 minutes	Internal meeting of the panel.
11:30-12:15	45 minutes	Meeting with students.
12:15-12:30	15 minutes	Internal meeting of the panel.
12:30-13:00	30 minutes	Meeting with employers/external stakeholders
13:00-13:15	15 minutes	Internal meeting of the panel. End of 1st session.

2nd Session online site visit. Friday, 19 June 2026

Time	Duration	Activity
15:00-15:15	15 minutes	Internal meeting of the panel.
15:15-15:45	30 minutes	Meeting with consortium coordinators
15:45-16:00	15 minutes	Internal meeting of the panel.
16:00-16:30	30 minutes	Meeting with students support services
16:30-16:45	15 minutes	Internal meeting of the panel
16:45-17:15	30 minutes	Meeting with quality assurance representatives
17:15-18:45	90 minutes	Internal meeting of the panel.
18:45-19:15	30 minutes	Final meeting visit conclusions. End of the visit.

All times are Central European Summer Time, (GMT+2)

LIST OF EVALUATED DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE AND OTHER ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

-SER. (Autoinforme)
-Annex 1. Financial Agreement.
-Annex 2. Data protection and Sharing regulations.
-Annex 3. Programme description.
-Annex 4. Joint Degre and Diploma Supplement.
-Annex 5. Application, Selection.
-Annex 6. Qualification Recognition.
-Annex 7. Procedure for Prior Qualifications Recognition.
-Annex 8. Student Assessment Regulations.
-Annex 9. Mobility Plan.
-Annex 10. Monitoring and Assessment of Students' Internships in Living Labs.
-Annex 11. Student Handbook.
-Annex 12. Course syllabi and Structure of the curriculum
-Annex13. Information regarding Partner universities.
-Annex 14. Teaching Staff CVs.
-Annex 15. Cooperation Agreement.
-Annex 16. INVEST Quality Assurance Strategy.
-Annex 17. INVEST Internal Quality Assurance System Handbook.
-Additional Information.

THE PRESIDENCY´S SIGNATURE

Assinado por: **Maria Paula Baptista da Costa Antunes**
Num. de Identificação: 05032503
Data: 2026.07.27 15:39:55 +0100

CHAVE MÓVEL

DA

THE SECRETARY´S SIGNATURE

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