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The project
“Open Food Innovation University” - OFINU
No.101128855

THE PROJECT RESULTS’ SUSTAINABILITY PLAN
(D.5.2)

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THE DOCUMENT PROPERTIES

Deliverable No.	D5.2
Deliverable Title	Sustainability plan
Language	English
Lead beneficiary	P1 Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU)
Due date of deliverable	Mo.14
Actual submission date	16.07.2025
Dissemination level	Public

DOCUMENT HISTORY

The table provides the actual version number, the author implementing the updated version, the date of the version, the name of the person approving the version, the date that version was approved, and a brief description of the reason for revision.

<i>Version No</i>	<i>Issued by</i>	<i>Revision date</i>	<i>Approved by</i>	<i>Approval date</i>	<i>Short description, reason for updating</i>
1.0	Irīna Kulitāne, project manager, P1 LBTU	x	Approved by the partners.	14/07/2025	x

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The document has been elaborated within the project "Open Food Innovation University" – OFINU, No.101128855, being in implementation of the consortium of Uzbekistan's, Tajikistan's and European Union universities, as well private sector partners from involved Central Asia countries. The project is in implementation with financial support of the European Union Erasmus+ Programme. The period of the Grant agreement covers time period from 1st February 2024 till 31st January 2027.

The sustainability plan is developed for the time period till 2033. It is aimed to define:

- a) the results to be sustained,
- b) the actions and resources required to ensure sustainability,
- c) the responsible organisations or persons as well as external stakeholders, which should be involved, such as higher education institutions (HEIs), teaching staff, public sector institutions, business organisations, etc.,
- d) the timeframe and deadlines for realisation of the predefined measures.

Short-term and long-term measures to ensure the sustainability of the project outcomes are defined.

The sustainability plan provides an overview of the accomplished results and the indicators, used to measure the achievements. The plan includes conclusions on how the results meet the identified needs of the involved Uzbekistan's and Tajikistan's higher education institutions. These needs were assessed in 2023, and in in-depth analysis carried and completed in 2024-2025.

The consortium partners, as well as the associated partners have been actively participating in the elaboration of the sustainability plan, which ensures the ownership and accountability for the results.

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1. OFINU PROJECT SUMMARY

Overall objective - to modernise food innovation and technology related higher education in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, thereby increasing the quality and ensuring relevance of the higher education to the needs of the socio-economic growth of the countries concerned and especially of their regions.

Specific objectives:

1. Improve the quality of food processing related higher education in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, enhance its relevance for the needs and interests of sustainable national economies, labour market and societies.
2. Create and implement innovative study form for increase of level of knowledge, skills and competencies of students and external learners, thus increasing their competitiveness in the labour market and employability potential of students.
3. Promote inclusive education, create learning opportunities for the external learners of different age, social background and geographic locations.
4. Ensure professional development for academic and administrative staff in order to impact the quality of higher education provided by the involved HEIs in the longer term.
5. Stimulate cooperation of universities and business, exchange of good practice, develop and test the study modules with and within enterprises, thus enhancing relevance of higher education to the respective business sector.
6. Enhance internationalisation of Central Asia higher education institutions and capacity to network effectively.

Partners of the project:

- **Lead partner/Coordinator:** Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (P1 LBTU)
- **In Uzbekistan:** Samarkand Agro-innovations and Research University (P2 SAMARU), Andijan Institute of Agriculture and Agro-technologies (P3 AIAA)
- **In Tajikistan:** Technological University of Tajikistan (P4 TUT), University of Innovation and Digital Technologies of Tajikistan (former title - Kulob Institute of Technology and Innovation Management) (P5 KITIM), Isfara Branch of the Technological University of Tajikistan (P6 BTUTI)
- **In Slovakia:** Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra (P7 SUA).

Associated partners:

There are six associated partners – five food production companies and one food processors' organization involved in the project. They are:

- **In Uzbekistan:** Fruit and vegetable processing sector - a group of companies "AGROMIR", Fruit and vegetable processing sector - the company "Navigul" MCHJ QK, Cereal processing sector - "Samarqand don mahsulotlari" JC (Samarkand grain products).
- **In Tajikistan:** Dairy processing sector - CJSC "Combinati Shiri Dushanbe", Meat processing sector - limited liability company "Orion Rustam", Association of Entrepreneurs of Khatlon.

Work packages (main groups of measures) and expected results of the project:

<i>Work packages and main activities</i>	<i>Expected results</i>
WP1 Creation of the environment for the Open Food Innovation University.	15 administrative staff trained and upskilled. Open university integrated (developed and adopted) at 5 Central Asia higher education institutions.
WP2 Design of the Open Food Innovation University study modules, tools and process.	7 study modules and workbooks elaborated and adopted. Digital platform created and functions well.
WP3 Central Asia universities' capacity building.	50 teachers trained and upskilled. Pilot production or quality evaluation equipment acquired for Central Asia higher education institutions.
WP4 Open Food Innovation University study process piloting.	Study modules piloted. At least 100 students and at least 60 external learners have participated.
WP5 Quality and sustainability measures.	Quality assurance methodology and Sustainability plan adopted.
WP6 Dissemination and promotion.	The project and its results promoted among internal and external stakeholders. Joint forum held.
WP7 Management and coordination.	Qualitative implementation of the project and achievement of all planned results ensured.

2. ENVIRONMENT AND EXISTING LEGAL BASE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF AN OPEN UNIVERSITY

2.1. IN UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan's development strategic targets and priorities are defined in the "Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026". The OFINU project implementation supports making progress in two strategic priorities: (1) To pursue just and fair public policies & human capital development, what in its turn helps (2) To develop a robust national economy that ensures rapid growth. A range of measures, set in the Strategy for achievement of these priorities, and supporting instruments, provided by the Government via public authorities

The OFINU project implementation is relevant to the targets of the Education Sectoral Plan of Uzbekistan, elaborated and adopted to promote positive change of the education sector. Specially to overcome challenges referring to the higher education: disconnection between HEIs and employers, insufficient relevance of knowledge and skills of new professionals after graduation of universities, graduates lack of cognitive skills and ability to take knowledge and practice-based decisions. An Open University contains elements and approaches needed to develop and successfully implement curriculum focusing on the latest scientifically justified knowledge, to increase capacity of courses graduates to apply the knowledge and to develop critical thinking skills.

Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on education, adopted by the Legislative Chamber and approved by the Senate in 2020, clearly states role and responsibility of universities to provide retraining and advanced training of specialists, ensuring deepening and updating of professional knowledge, skills and abilities, and serving to improve the categories, degrees, ranking and titles of specialists.

Uzbekistan's universities, involved in the OFINU project, have a delegated responsibility and task assigned by the State President and the Ministry of Education, to develop new forms of teaching and to introduce innovative methods to encourage training of specialists who have capacity to respond effectively in a forward-looking manner to the objectives and needs of economic development. The establishment and implementation of the open university, and the accompanying measures, lead to creation of such an education offer.

2.2. IN TAJIKISTAN

The development of human capital is defined as the priority in the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030. The Government has set up a vision to develop profile universities, recognized within the global scientific - educational space, having capacity and being able to promote development of knowledge - driven economy.

To achieve progress significant improvements are foreseen for the higher education sector. Development of teaching staff academic and research capacities; flexibility of educational programs, including through the introduction of module-based programs and ensuring the link between professional knowledge and practical skills are encouraged. Development of educational standards for professions in various fields, inter alia food processing, with the involvement of enterprises and organizations and implementation of education system on the basis of enterprises, as well establishment of production-based learning platforms are planned.

The OFINU project implementation is relevant to the targets of the Strategy, and an Open University study form is relevant to and supported by national level legal documents: (1) Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on additional education (adopted in 2021), aimed to promote obtaining a new profession, retraining, improvement of qualifications, in general educational and professional institutions outside the main educational programs or in educational institutions of additional education without restriction. (2) Concept for the development of productive employment in the Republic of Tajikistan up to 2040 (adopted in 2022), which, among other measures, includes adaptation of the labour force knowledge, skills and competencies to the needs of the labour market.

3. INVOLVED UZBEKISTAN'S AND TAJIKISTAN'S UNIVERSITIES

3.1. SAMARKAND AGROINNOVATION AND RESEARCH UNIVERSITY (SAMARU)

SAMARU was founded in accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministries of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2020 and is located in Samarkand city (Uzbekistan). The main task of the University is to provide comprehensive knowledge and skills for implementation of innovative resource-saving technologies in all areas of the agricultural sector and food processing.

SAMARU has two faculties: Faculty of agrobiology and the Faculty of Economics and Management. There are 5 departments under the structure of faculties: Department of Plant science, Department of Agrotechnology, Department of digital technologies, tourism and Humanities, Department of Economics and accounting, Department of Medicinal Plants and Food technology.

The study and scientific profile of SAMARU includes total of 18 undergraduate programmes, 16 graduate programmes and 6 PhD programmes. SAMARU has made a major contribution to the development of education standards, model curricula, model training modules, improving "Classification of areas and specialties of higher education".

More information: <http://samaguni.uz/>

3.2. ANDIJAN INSTITUTE AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-TECHNOLOGIES (AIAA)

AIAA is the main university in the Ferghana valley, Uzbekistan. It delivers bachelor, master and PhD level education. The main objectives of the University include the sustainable development of agriculture, resource saving, environmentally friendly agricultural technologies and protection of farm animals from different diseases.

There are five faculties at the University: Agrobiology; Storage and processing of agricultural products; Agribusiness and digital economy; Crop protection, Agrochemistry and soil sciences; Agroengineering and hydro melioration.

AIAA has well established research laboratories and experimental farms where didactic and research activities are implemented. A number of projects in processing of agricultural products have been implemented in cooperation with the region's farms and processors.

More information: www.andqxai.uz

3.3. TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY OF TAJIKISTAN (TUT)

TUT is a higher education institution working under supervision of **the Ministry of Industry and new technologies of the Republic of Tajikistan**. It is located in Dushanbe city (Tajikistan). The mission of the University is to provide qualitative, affordable education transformed through the development of scientific and educational technologies to educate highly qualified, competitive, creative specialists having capacity to contribute to the modernization of the national economy, technological development and the formation of an innovative economy of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The University prepares highly qualified specialists in diverse specialization areas: Information and Communication Technologies, Food and Light Industrial Technologies, Management, Economics and Design. TUT has eight faculties and 23 graduation departments, providing 41 study programmes. The Faculty of Food Technology is preparing specialists in area of food for food processing industry.

Having launched the credit system of education, there is freedom for elaboration of curriculum considering legislative requirements.

More information: <https://tut.tj/>

3.4. KULOB INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION MANAGEMENT (KITIM)

The founder and supervisor of the KITIM is the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of the Republic of Tajikistan. By the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated May 29, 2025, No.319 State Educational Establishment "Kulob Institute of Technology and Innovation Management" renamed to "University of Innovation and Digital Technologies of Tajikistan". By this new Decision founder and supervisor will be Agency of Innovation and Digital Technologies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Within four faculties 37 study programmes are provided (all levels: bachelor, master and doctoral). The Institute has two hectares large educational training base for tourism and hospitality, four hectares of land plots for fruits and vegetables and two hectares of fish-ponds used for training and practice of students.

KITIM is maintaining Innovation and innovation-technology park, Educational-training centre and other study and research units supporting acquisition of knowledge, development of technologies and innovation. Specialized study and research departments have been opened in region's food processing enterprises, therefore allowing to conduct practical, experimental and experimental classes for students, to carry research and to transfer scientific results to the business.

More information: www.dtmik.tj

3.5. BRANCH OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY OF TAJIKISTAN (BTUTI)

BTUTI provides higher education to the students within two faculties: the Faculty of Industrial and Information Technology and the Faculty of Economics and Management. The University offers 28 undergraduate programmes and 3 graduate programmes in 28 specialities. BTUTI strengths are tied to the field of Information technologies and Food technologies. Other fields of specialization are related to natural, engineering and social sciences.

Website: www.iftut.tj

4. SHORT TERM (IMMEDIATE) RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

The sustainability plan is aiming to ensure sustainability of the results created and achieved within the project for at least 5 years period (till 31 January 2032).

In the table below is provided information on deliverables/outcomes as short-term results already produced and still to be produced according to the OFINU project plan. They are grouped by Work Packages, according to the project, which makes integral part of the Grant Agreement, signed among the consortium and the EACEA. The long-term results to be sustained have been defined based on the immediate results, achieved during the project implementation period.

Work packages (WP)	Deliverables/outcomes (D)	Indicators of progress (IP)
WP1. <i>Creation of the environment for the Open Food Innovation University</i>	D1.1. Set of OFINU legal documents.	IP1.1. Number of the OFINUs established, legally and practically integrated in the involved Central Asia universities.
	D1.3. Decision on approval of the OFINU.	
	D1.2. At least 15 administrative staff trained and upskilled.	IP1.2. Administrative staff are trained.
WP2. <i>Design of the Open Food Innovation University study modules, tools and process</i>	D2.1. 7 innovative study modules (74 ECTS in total).	IP2.1. Innovative study modules prepared; workbooks elaborated.
	D2.2. Set of teaching/learning materials (7 workbooks).	
	D2.3. Digital OFINU – online platform.	IP2.2. Availability and recognition of the Digital OFINU. At least 4000 users registered (2000 per involved CA country).
WP3. <i>Central Asia's Universities' capacity building</i>	D3.1. Training of the academic staff done (10 teachers per involved Central Asia Higher education institution).	IP3.1. Number of academic staff capacity building measures (training and upskilling) held. IP3.2. Number of academic staff trained and upskilled. IP3.3. Satisfaction of trained academic staff with knowledge and skills obtained (at least 90 % fully satisfied), knowledge and skills obtained is applicable at teaching process and ensure high quality of academic performance. IP3.4. Performance of trained teachers has been valued by students and external learners as “highly professional and knowledgeable”.
	D3.2. Five sets of pilot food production and quality evaluation equipment.	IP3.5. Equipment and licenses necessary for ensuring its functionality delivered, equipment installed, registered in the inventory of each respective partner university. IP3.6. Academic staff, students and external learners are satisfied with technical facilities. Functionality of the acquired equipment has been upgraded regularly.

WP 4. Open Innovation University study process piloting Food study	D4.1. Study modules piloted (at least 100 students (20 per involved Ca HEI) and at least 60 external learners (12 per involved CA HEI) participated).	IP4.1. Number of students participated, their satisfaction with contents, teaching methods. IP4.2. Number of external learners participated, their satisfaction with contents, teaching methods.
WP 5. Quality and sustainability measures	D5.1. OFINU Quality assurance methodology.	IP5.1. Quality assurance methodology elaborated and integrated in the involved Uzbekistan's universities quality assurance systems. IP5.2. Regular QAM application helps to assess and ensure Open University quality.
	D5.2. OFINU Sustainability plan.	IP5.3. Sustainability plan elaborated, results to be sustained defined, appropriate actions with regard to sustainability have been taken by respective partners.
	D5.3. Project Quality assurance plan.	IP5.4. Quality assurance plan elaborated, appropriate actions with regard to the quality jointly by the consortium and by each partner.
	D5.4., D5.5. Report on the implementation of the project Quality assurance plan.	IP 5.5. Quality of the OFINU implementation process and results produced/achieved ensured.
WP 6. Dissemination and promotion	D6.1. Dissemination strategy.	IP6.1. Dissemination strategy elaborated, dissemination and communication of the project done.
	D6.2., D6.3. Report on implementation of the Dissemination strategy.	IP6.2. Dissemination and communication have been done appropriately to the strategy. IP6.3. strategy elaborated, dissemination and communication of the project done.
Results associated to all WPs	D7.1. Progress report. D7.2. Documentation of the kick off meeting. D7.3. Project management plan.	IP7.1. New joint initiatives in the field of education and research started and ongoing among Uzbekistan's, Tajikistan's and EU universities (mobility of students and academic staff, new projects, inter alias innovation projects). IP7.2. Number of EU partners' academic staff involved in provision of training within the Open University and in a frame of other initiatives.

5. LONG-TERM RESULTS, OUTPUTS AND MEASURES TO ENSURE THEIR SUSTAINABILITY

Main long-term project results and outputs are as following:

- An Open University – new study form, legally adopted in five involved Central Asia universities:
 - **In Uzbekistan:** Samarkand Agro-innovations and Research University (P2 SAMARU), Andijan Institute of Agriculture and Agro-technologies (P3 AIAA)
 - **In Tajikistan:** Technological University of Tajikistan (P4 TUT), University of Innovation and Digital Technologies of Tajikistan (former title - Kulob Institute of Technology and Innovation Management) (P5 KITIM), Isfara Branch of the Technological University of Tajikistan (P6 BTUTI)
- Awareness and support of administrative staff to maintain an Open University successfully and qualitatively and to ensure its further development, thus responding to the needs and expectations of target groups.
- Competences, knowledge and skills of the academic staff of five Uzbekistan's and Tajikistan's higher education institutions.
- Food production and quality evaluation equipment.
- Digital online learning platform.

To ensure sustainability of the long-term project results and outputs, the following **main measures** are planned:

1. Promotion and provision of studies in an Open University format:

- ongoing strategic marketing of an Open University, attracting external learners and gradually increasing their number;
- development and safeguarding effective support services, promoting Open University as a desired and valuable form of studies;
- monitoring and continuous development of the Open University content required by respective groups of stakeholders;
- building and Open University recognition and reputation.

2. Raising and keeping at high level administrative staff' awareness:

- continuous increase of administrative staff awareness on the value and impact of the Open University (especially in situation of rather frequent change of the management staff);
- mobilities among involved Uzbekistan's and Tajikistan's universities and among Central Asia and EU universities.

3. Raising and keeping at high level academic staff' performing capacity:

- trainings and increase of competence level of the academic staff in the respective fields of science;
- trainings and increase of skills in the latest, innovative teaching methodologies;
- mobilities among involved Uzbekistan's and Tajikistan's universities and among Central Asia and EU universities.

4. Maintaining created technical capacity of the involved universities in order to ensure diverse learning options, thus potentially increasing:

- well organised maintenance and ongoing improvement of the equipment acquired with the support of the project;

- acquisition of new and additional equipment;
- partnership with companies and their organisations, aiming to establish companies-based training sites.

5. Maintenance and regular upgrading of the digital learning platform:

- taking the digital learning platform over from the LBTU (P2 SAMARU in Uzbekistan, P4 TUT in Tajikistan);
- adaption of the digital learning platform and integration into universities and broader learning systems;
- provision funding sources for efficient management and modernisation of the digital learning platform.

6. ACTION PLAN

The sustainability plan spans over a period up to the end of 2032 (for 5 years counting from the end date of the OFINU project). Main results and measures needed to sustain them are described in the table below.

No.	Results to be sustained and measures planned	Acting parties and organisations involved	Period of completion
R.1	An Open University – new study form, legally adopted in five involved Central Asia universities		
M1.1	Fulfilment of regulatory requirements, set by the Ministry of Higher Education of each respective country	Involved UZ and TJ universities	Annually
M1.2	Annual, timely planned and organised marketing activities of the Open University and study courses offered	Involved UZ and TJ universities	Annually
M1.3	Promotion of the Open University among food industry stakeholders	Involved UZ and TJ universities	Annually
M1.4	Regular review and assessment of the Open University activity, performance and results, updating contents and adoption of new teaching methods, development and implementation of guides for all types of activities, e.g., classes, workshops, companies-based practice and training	Involved UZ and TJ universities	Annually
M1.5	To ensure funding for regular annual maintenance and upgrading of the equipment purchased for the teaching/learning needs	Involved UZ and TJ universities	Annually
R.2	Developed competences, knowledge and skills of the involved Central Asia universities academic staff to ensure successful operation of an Open University		
M2.1	Short training courses, workshops for exchange of knowledge and experience of involved universities teachers in order to continue regular improvement of their professional competence, knowledge and skills	Involved UZ and TJ universities academic staff, administrative staff	Regularly, at least 1-2 times per year

M2.2	Long-term courses and trainings for exchange of the knowledge and experience among the involved universities and among universities and food industry	Involved UZ and TJ universities academic staff, administrative staff, associated partners and other stakeholders	Regularly, at least 1-2 times per year
M2.3	National level and cross-country mobilities of the academic staff	Involved UZ and TJ universities	Each person at least once per year
M2.4	Participation of academic staff in trainings, courses, seminars organized by food industry stakeholders	Involved UZ and TJ universities academic staff, administrative staff, associated partners and other industry-based stakeholders	Regularly, at least 1-2 times per year
M2.5	Training of the academic staff in English, in order to promote teaching staff capacity to acquire the latest knowledge, available outside their countries	Involved UZ and TJ universities administration	Regularly
M2.6	Involvement of food industry experts in provision of study courses provided within and Open University	Involved UZ and TJ universities academic staff, administrative staff, associated partners and other industry-based stakeholders	Regularly
R.3	Innovation capacity of the involved Central Asia universities		
M3.1	International practice and mobility of UZ and TJ universities' academic staff and students	Involved UZ and TJ universities	Each teacher at least once per year
M3.2	Encourage participation of the academic staff in courses, seminars organized by other appropriate universities and food industry stakeholders around the world by using public funding	Involved UZ and TJ universities administration, academic staff	Regularly
M3.3	Elaborate new projects to be implemented in international partnerships	Involved UZ and TJ universities administration, academic staff	Regularly
R.4	Sustaining digital online learning platform, its continuous development		
M4.1	Technical transition of the digital online learning platform on servers of the respective OFINU project partners, taking it over (P2 SAMARU, P4 TUT)	Involved UZ and TJ universities administration	Starting from end of 2026 and ongoing
M4.2	Translation of the digital online learning content into national languages (Uzbek and Tajik)	Involved UZ and TJ universities administration	2027
M4.3	Linking the of the digital online learning platform to and with stakeholders	Involved UZ and TJ universities administration	Starting from 2027 and further regularly
M4.4	Regular maintenance of the platform	Involved UZ and TJ universities administration	Annually

7. AMENDMENTS OF THE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The sustainability plan is a document which can be modified during and after the project, in accordance with the conditions in the university framework and external environment, which may affect the implementation of the planned measures and the effective implementation of the established new form of studies. Additions, changes integrated during the project, can be proposed by any of partners, and will be appropriately documented.