

The project "Open Food Innovation University" – OFINU, No.101128855

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY VISIT

The study visit to Latvia was held on June 28 – July 5, 2024. All Uzbekistan and Tajikistan partner universities were represented (see the table below and a list of participants attached). Besides universities' participants, a representative from the Uzbekistan Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan and staff of P7 Slovak University of Agriculture took part in the study visit. Total number of participants was 18, where 15 were intended target group - Central Asia partner universities administrative staff, assigned to develop an open university in their institutions. Number of participants per each CA partner is provided in the table below.

| Month, year | Venue of the study visit | P2 SAMARU | P3 AIAA | P4 TUT | P5 KITIM | P6 BTUTI | TOTAL |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|---------|--------|----------|----------|-------|
| 28 June – 5 July 2024 | LBTU, Latvia | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 15 |

The study visit included:

- 1) acquaintance with experience of food processing companies to outline the possibilities of staff capacity building within the open university format
- 2) meetings with Latvia's public stakeholders and social partners to understand the role of lifelong learning in higher education system and to explore experience of Latvia's industries in lifelong learning and adoption and usage of new forms of studies
- 3) three training days to understand how open university functions in Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU) and one of its national partners in open university actions – Riga Technical University.

Detailed agenda is provided.

Impact of the study visit on the capacity of the involved Central Asia universities

The study visit helped to increase capacity of particular staff persons and CA universities in order to empower them with knowledge and skills to develop, sustain and effectively maintain open university as novel study form. **Measures mentioned as those the most significant** to extend understanding and increase knowledge level are:

- Visits to the food processing enterprises and acquaintance with their experience;
- Visit to the LBTU Faculty of Food Technology and its labs;
- Visits to the governmental institutions and social partners, acquaintance with their approaches and best practices in organisation and provision novel learning forms in cooperation with universities.

Main benefits mentioned by the participants:

- Understanding the concept and operation of Open University;
- Understanding the learning process and organizational management in Open University;
- Knowledge how Open University is related with career path;
- Experience from those people who have graduated the Open University;



- Knowledge on marketing activities to attract clients;
- Qualified academic staff and well-equipped labs provide best opportunities to develop Open University.

Individual evaluations, provided by participants, are provided.

Challenges faced

Some teachers have limited English knowledge to understand to full extent activities, where contents were explained in English. Where possible, Russian was used and interpretation was provided at sites where English was used by hosts. As Open University is a new concept in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the most challenging is adoption of all necessary documentation on the state and university level.

Recommendations for follow-up activities

- High quality courses on bread, vegetable, meat, milk processing, and visits to relevant companies;
- Possibility to participate in piloting classes as a listener.