



“Valorisation of thistle-curdled CHEESES in MEDiterranean marginal areas” Acronym VEGGIE-MED-CHEESES

Deliverable title	D1.9 General Project meeting 6 report
Deliverable Lead:	Università Politecnica delle Marche
Related Work Package:	WP1 Project coordination and overall management
Related Task:	Task 1.1 Organization of general Project meetings
Author(s)	Lucia Aquilanti
Dissemination level	Public
Due Submission Date:	28.02.2022
Actual submission:	18.05.2022
Start date of project	1.05.2019
Duration	36 months (after project end extension: 48 months)
Abstract	The Report corresponds to the minutes of the General project meeting 6

Versioning and Contribution History

Version	Date	Modified by	Modification reason
V1.0	3/05/2022	Lucia Aquilanti	First version
V2.0	18/05/2022	Lucia Aquilanti	Comments after peer review process

Table of contents

Minutes of the General project meeting 6

2

GENERAL PROJECT MEETING 6
PRIMA FUNDED PROJECT UNDER THE 2018 CALL
“Valorisation of thistle-curdled CHEESES in MEDiterranean marginal areas”
Acronym VEGGIE-MED-CHEESES

13 MAY 2022, web conference

1. LOCATION

TEAMS web conference

On MAY 13rd 2022, at 10.00 am (Rome time), the Principal Investigators (PI) and the research Team Members of the Partners of the VEGGIE-MED-CHEESES Consortium met via TEAMS, regularly convened by the Coordinator of the Project, Prof. Lucia Aquilanti, with an email dated 27.04.21.

2. PARTICIPANTS

The attendance situation at the beginning of the meeting is shown in the following table:

Partner No.	Organisation	Participant (Permanent Staff)	Role	Attendance
Coordinator (Partner 1)	Dipartimento di Scienze Agrarie, Alimentari e Ambientali, Università Politecnica delle Marche, Italy (short name: D3A-UNIVPM)	Lucia Aquilanti	Project Coordinator PI of UNIVPM	P
		Andrea Osimani	Team member	A
		Cristiana Garofalo	Team member	A
		Nadia Raffaelli	Team member	A
		Massimo Mozzon	Team member	A
		Simona Casavecchia	Team member	P
		Fabio Taffetani	Team member	A
		Roberto Orsini	Team member	A
		Raffaele Zanolì	Team member	P
		Simona Naspètti	Team member	P
		Cinzia Mannozi	Team member	P
		Roberta Foligni	Team member	A
		Stefano Zenobi	Team member	A
		Vesna Milanovic	Team member	A
		Giorgia Rampanti	Team member	A
Federica Cardinali	Team member	A		
Serena Mandolesi	Team member	P		
Partner 2 (P2)	Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura e l'analisi dell'economia agraria - Centro di ricerca Alimenti e	Pamela Manzi	PI of CREA-AN	P
		Flavio Paoletti	Team member	A
		Antonio Raffo	Team member	P
		Fiorella Sinesio	Team member	A

	Nutrizione (short name: CREA-AN)	Mena Ritota Maria Gabriella Di Costanzo Elisabetta Moneta Nicoletta Nardo Marina Peparao	Team member Team member Team member Team member Team member	P P A A A
Partner 3 (P3)	Departamento de Tecnología de Alimentos y Nutrición, Universidad Católica San Antonio De Murcia (short name: UCAM)	Luis Tejada Portero Jose María Cayuela Eva Salazar Serna Adela Abellán Estefania Bueno Gavila Cindy Maria Bande de Leon	PI of UCAM Team member Team member Team member Team member Team member	P A A P P P
Partner 4 (P4)	Department of Food Hygiene and Technology, Veterinary Research Institute, Hellenic Agricultural Organization, DEMETER (short name: DEMETER)	Akis Psomas Georgios Samouris Loukia Ekateriniadou Evidiki Boukouvala Maria Ioannidou George Vafeas Virginia Giantzi	PI of DEMETER Team member Team member Team member Team member Team member Team member	A A A A A A A
Partner 5 (P5)	High Institute of Agronomy of Chott-Mariem, Sousse University (ISA-CM)	Bouthaina Al Mohandes Dridi Rabiaa Haouala Ismahen Essaidi Najla Dhen Rania Kouki	PI of ISA-CM Team member Team member Team member Team member	P A A P P

Legend: P Present; A Absent

3. AGENDA FOR THE MEETING

10 h 00 – 10 h 05 (Rome time)

1. Connection and Greetings

10 h 05 – 10 h 05 (Rome time)

2. Communications from the Project Coordinator

10 15 – 10 h 30 (Rome time)

3. Up to date of the WP1 activities by the Coordinator

(The Coordinator)

10h 15– 10h 45 (Rome time)

4. Up to date of the activities carried out by the Research partners involved in WP 2 and WP3

- Italy (UNIVPM)
- Tunisia (ISA-CM)

10h 45 - 11h 15 (Rome time)

5. Up to date of the activities carried out by the Research partners involved in WP 4

- Italy (CREA-AN and UNIVPM)
- Spain (UCAM)
- Greece (DEMETER)

11h 15 - 12h 00 (Rome time)

6. Up to date of the activities carried out by the Research partners involved in WP 5

- Italy (CREA-AN and UNIVPM)
- Spain (UCAM)
- Greece (DEMETER)

12h 00 - 12h 30 (Rome time)

7. Up to date of the activities carried out by the Research partners involved in WP 6

- Italy (UNIVPM)

12h 30 – 12h 45 (Rome time)

8. Up to date of the WP1 activities carried out by the Research partners involved in WP 7

13h 00 (Rome time)

Closure of the meeting

1. Connection and greetings

The Project Coordinator, Prof. Lucia Aquilanti, welcomes the participants and opens the meeting with the following communications.

2. Communications from the Project Coordinator

- The Coordinator reminds that now, UNIVPM is hosting a PhD Student from ISA-CM, Tunisia, **Dr Rania Kouki** and a senior researcher, from UCAM, Spain **Dr Estefania Bueno**. This represents a great opportunity for the whole Consortium, in terms of knowledge exchange and professional as well as cultural “contamination” between our research institutions; moreover, an Italian PhD student, Dr Giorgia Rampanti, has just come back from Murcia where she has spent a couple of months, collaborating with UCAM in the cheese making trials of QUESO DE MURCIA and Torta del Casar; in September Giorgia will be hosted at DEMETER, Greece to take part to the cheese-making trials for the manufacture of Feta. Prof Lucia Aquilanti is grateful to the Consortium partners for their hospitality.
- Regarding the following remarks reported in the Report drafted by the designed external Expert:
 - ✓ *“It is recommended to consider if the interaction with relevant stakeholders could become more interactive to ensure technology transfer and exploitation of innovation capacity. The project team is encouraged to emphasize exploitation activities higher than what currently appears to be the case.”*
 - ✓ *“The project website appears professional and structured. Information on scientific papers are available on the project website. Currently no data are available on the project website, and it is unclear when these will be made available. It is recommended to consider adding information on dissemination in public media on the project website.”*the following actions have been carried out:
 - i) a Stakeholder Questionnaire has been drafted (in English) by the project Coordinator and sent to PIs for translation in the official languages of the VEGGIE-MED-CHEESES Consortium (Spanish,

French, Italian, Greek, Arabic); PIs were hence requested to send the Questionnaire to their national stakeholders included in the Stakeholder platform; as soon as all the results have been collected, they will be analysed and discussed.

ii) the project website has been implemented by adding new posts describing Press initiatives and dissemination events (es. Interview to the project Coordinator by the Italian Television); at this regard, PIs are kindly requested to keep the Coordinator informed about any video/conference proceeding/published paper and any other dissemination event that might be publicized on the VEGGIE MED CHEESES web site.

- As the Consortium agreed in the last meeting, the Coordinator has drafted and shared with PIs, guidelines with established standards, criteria and general rules for defining authorship in shared papers; the guidelines have been approved by all PIs
- VEGGIE-MED-CHEESES is included among the 30 sampled successful PRIMA PROJECT for its involvement into a pilot study for (new supportive service) aiming at identifying the innovation potential of the funded projects (micro-level), to see how research and science can be translated into "actionable" results, disseminated, and finally exploited and/or put in use for the benefit of society at large and the environment.

Below, the original email received by the Coordinator on 13rd May:

Dear Coordinator,

We trust this email finds you well.

In order to assess the capacity of the PRIMA programme (macro-level) to generate impact and address effectively its main objectives, we are launching a pilot study (new supportive service) aiming at identifying the innovation potential of the funded projects (micro-level), to see how research and science can be translated into "actionable" results, disseminated, and finally exploited and/or put in use for the benefit of society at large and the environment.

The new service targets a sample of 30 PRIMA successful projects, and yours (successful, pass the midterm assessment, promise potential) is among them. In the future, it could be replicated and involve a larger number of PRIMA projects.

The service will involve the following steps, in which we kindly ask you to participate.

*· complete the attached questionnaire (in Word format) and send it back to me by **Tuesday 24 May 2022 midnight**.*

*· participate in a 1.5-hr interview with experienced mentors who will focus more in detail on the topics addressed by the questionnaire; **the date** will be defined later on according to your availability.*

*I would really appreciate it if you could confirm at your earliest convenience that **you are willing and available to participate in the service and return the questionnaire** duly completed by the deadline.*

The answers you provide in the questionnaire and interview will only be accessible to the PRIMA project officer and the independent experts entrusted by PRIMA for supporting the study. All information you provide will be solely used for the purpose of conducting this pilot study, and will not be divulged externally.

After the interview, you will receive recommendations on how to maximise the innovation potential and impact of your project as well as the exploitability of your project results.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Please confirm receiving this email with a single attachment.

Thanks in advance and best regards,

--

Mohamed Wageih
Project Officer

3. Up to date of the WP1 activities by the Coordinator

The Coordinator shows the list of deliverables related to WP1; most of them have been successfully delivered; she clarifies that the present meeting corresponds to general meeting n.6; indeed, due to the project end extension, the 3rd year final meeting should be postponed to april 2023. At this regards, prof. Aquilanti propose to schedule an in presence meeting, so she kindly asks to all PIs if there are any applications for the possibility of physically hosting the final meeting, where local Stakeholders might be involved and inviated. It could be useful to start planning it as soon as possible. Both DEMETER and ISA-CM are willing to host the 3rd year final meeting; the Consortium agrees to ask to the PRIMA project which location might be more suitable for such an event, even considering our willingness to invite him and as much stakeholders as possible (especially dairy farms).

List of WP2 deliverables with delivery date (in green, delivered Deliverables; in red: Deliverables under progress)

D1.1	Kick off meeting report	30.06.2019 (2)	X
D1.2	Quality Assurance Plan	31.07.2019 (month 3)	X
D1.3	General project meeting 2 report	30.04.2020 (month 12)	X
D1.4	1 st year (progress) scientific report	30.04.2020 (month 12)	X
D1.5	General project meeting 3 report	30.11.2020 (month 18)	X
D1.6	General project meeting 4 report	30.04.2021 (month 24)	X
D1.7	2 st year (progress) report	30.04.2021 (month 24)	X
D1.8	General Project meeting 5 report	31.10.2021 (month 30)	X
D1.9	General Project meeting 6 report	28.02.2022 (month 34)	X
D1.10	3 rd year (final) report	30.04.2022 (month 36)	

4. Up to date of the WP2 and WP3 activities: flash presentations/speech by involved PIs/Team members

The Coordinator shares with the consortium the last up-to-dates received from **Prof. Simona Casavecchia** dealing with the on progress molecular characterization of different populations of *Onopordum tauricum* sampled from various Italian regions. Similarly, as neither **Dr. Stefano Zenobi** nor **Dr Roberto Orsini** (both D3A-UNIVPM team members) could attend the meeting, the Coordinator shows their ppt presentation with the main results for WP3, dealing with the cultivation of *O. tauricum*, *Cynara humilis* and *C. cardunculus* at the Didactic/Experimental

farm Pasquale Rosati (AN, Italy). Concerning the Italian site, Dr Zenobi confirms that 72 plants are cultivated for the three species listed above whereas neither seeds nor young plants were available for *Onopordum platylepis*, hence for this species, the cultivation trial was stopped in Summer 2021. As a rule, the monitoring of the phenological state and yield confirms the results previously collected at the same experimental site and published in the peer reviewed journal AGRONOMY (MDPI).

Hence, the Coordinator leaves to floor to **Dr Rania Kouchi** for an up to date about the extraction and purification at UNIVPM (under the guidance of Prof. Simona Casavecchia) of DNA from dried leaves of *Onopordum platylepis* (5 populations from 2 Tunisian regions); these DNA extracts will be soon sent to a specialized company for NGS, aimed at identifying different ecotypes (in analogy to what done for *Onopordum tauricum*).

List of WP2 deliverables with delivery date (in green, delivered Deliverables; in red: Deliverables under progress)

D2.1	Lyophilized biomass from spontaneous thistle populations	30.11.2019 (month 7)	X
D2.2	Catalogued and stored seeds from Mediterranean spontaneous thistle populations	31.12.2019 (month 8)	X
D2.3	Report with elaborated data overall collected within WP2	31.05.2020 (month 13)	

As soon as the molecular analyses are completed, D2.3 should be completed by botanists working at UNIVPM in collaboration with ISA-CM; as the leader of WP2, prof. Bouthaina Dridi Al Mohandes is in charge to critically review and correct/complete these three deliverables and send them to the Coordinator, once available.

List of WP3 deliverables with delivery date (in green, delivered Deliverables; in red: Deliverables under progress)

D3.1	Experimental plan design of cultivation trials	31.08.2019 (month 3)	X
D3.2	Lyophilized biomass from cultivated thistles	30.09.2020 (month 17)	X
D3.3	Report with elaborated data overall collected within WP3	30.09.2021 (month 29)	
D3.4	Recommendations and guidelines on the sustainable production of thistle crops in the Mediterranean basin (Month 32)	31.10.2021 (month 30)	

Regarding D3.3 and D3.4 it is time to draft these two deliverables; as Leader of WP3, prof. Bouthaina Dridi Almohandes is kindly requested by the Coordinator to be in charge to prepare a preliminary draft of both these two deliverables, being actively supported by the team of agronomists working at UNIVPM.

4. Up to date of the WP4 activities: flash presentations/speech by involved PIs/Team members

The Coordinator leaves the floor to the following attendants:

- Dr Akis Psomas (UCAM team member) who elucidates the last outcomes collected at DEMETER for the microbiological analyses of the extracts.

List of WP4 deliverables with delivery date (in green delivered Deliverables; in red: Deliverables under progress)

D4.1	Crude extracts from spontaneous thistles (CE_st) endowed with milk coagulant activity and bioactive compounds	30.05.2020 (month 13)	X
D4.2	Crude extracts from cultivated thistles (CE_ct), endowed with milk coagulant activity and bioactive compounds	31.10.2020 (month 18)	X
D4.3	Pure and enzymatically active proteases	31.01.2022 (month 33)	
D4.4	Scientific report with data overall collected within WP4	31.01.2022 (month 33)	

Since all research activities aimed at fully characterizing the crude extracts obtained from both spontaneous and cultivated thistles have been completed, the Coordinator stresses the need to review/complete the drafting of D 4.1, D4.2, D4.3 and D4.4; since UCAM is the leader of WP4, Luis Tejada Portero might oversee the critical revision of these documents, in tight collaboration with prof. Nadia Raffaelli from UNIVPM.

5. Up to date of the WP5 activities: flash presentations/speech by involved PIs/Team members

The Coordinator leaves the floor to the following attendants:

- Dr Estefania Bueno (Team member of UCAM), who reports about the results of SDS page carried out onto Caciofiore, Queso de Murcia and Torta del Casar.
- Dr Cindy Maria Bande de Leon (UCAM team member), who elucidates the last outcomes collected at UCAM about the cheese-making trials with *Onopordum platylepis*, *Cynara humilis*, and *Cynara cardunculus*.
- Dr Antonio Raffo, who shows the results on sensory and textural traits of Caciofiore;
- Dr Pamela Manzi, who shows the results on determination of vitamins and minerals in the cheese-prototypes.

Since the UNIVPM team member in charge of the WP5 activities (Dr Giorgia Rampanti) could not attend the meeting, prof. Lucia Aquilanti shows some slides prepared by Dr Rampanti, describing the data collected from the microbiological analyses carried out on the prototypes of Caciofiore cheese manufactured with spontaneous and cultivated *Onopordum tauricum*;

List of WP5 deliverables with delivery date (in green delivered Deliverables; in red: Deliverables under progress)

D5.1	Control and experimental cheeses made with CE_st	28.02.2021 (month 22)	
D5.2	Report with data on physico-chemical, chemical, microbiological, and sensory characterization of control and experimental cheeses made with CE_st	31.03.2021 (month 23)	
D5.3	Control and experimental cheeses made with CE_ct	31.05.2021 (month 25)	
D5.4	Report with data on physico-chemical, chemical, microbiological, and sensory characterization of "second round" cheeses	30.06.2021 (month 26)	
D5.5	Report with statistical elaboration of data overall collected in WP5 and identified biomarkers for demonstration of quality/authenticity of Mediterranean thistle-curdled cheese	30.08.2021 (month 28)	
D5.6	Recommendations and guidelines on manufacturing and authentication of high-value and safe Mediterranean thistle-curdled cheeses	30.09.2021 (month 29)	

As the Leader of WP6, Dr Antonio Raffo from CREA-AN is in charge of the critical revision of WP5 deliverables, in tight collaboration with all PIs involved in WP5.

6. Up to date of the WP6 activities: flash presentations/speech by involved PIs/Team members

The Coordinator leaves the floor to Prof. Simona Naspetti (UNIVPM), who shows the preliminary results dealing with the focus groups carried out in Italy, Spain and Tunisia; in the next days, even the focus planned for Greece will be carried out.

The Coordinator reminds the need to start planning the CONSUMER TESTS. Regarding consumer tests, the Coordinator kindly reminds what Prof. Zanolini proposed at the last meeting, about the possibility to assess the consumer acceptance towards Feta in 4 Mediterranean countries (IT, SP, TN, GR), as originally planned and to test the consumer acceptance towards Queso de Murcia just in Spain. In addition, she reminds that no more than 2 - 3 kg for each experimental and control cheese will be needed for the consumer tests with at least 100 consumers per country.

Prof Zanolini proposes to schedule the consumers tests in late July- maximum September; UCAM suggests to plan consumer tests for Queso de Murcia even in Italy (or at least another Consortium partner if feasible). Prof Zanolini will consider such a proposal, even based on budget issues.

List of WP6 deliverables with delivery date (in green delivered Deliverables; in red: Deliverables actually under progress)

D6.1	Report on consumer analyses	31.01.2022 (month 33)	
D6.2	Report on value-chain and business model analysis	31.03.2022 (month 35)	

The Coordinator kindly asks to Prof. Zanolini of being in charge to start the drafting of both these two deliverables, using the template that she soon will share with his team.

7. Up to date of the WP7 activities: flash presentations/speech by involved PIs/Team members

The Coordinator presents the list of delivered products for WP7 (in green delivered Deliverables; in red: Deliverables under progress)

D7.1	Project logo, fonts, and communication templates	31.05.2019 (month 1)	X
D7.2	Public VEGGIE-MED-CHEESES website	30.06.2019 (month 2)	X
D7.3	VEGGIE-MED-CHEESES intranet	30.06.2019 (month 2)	X
D7.4	Press release at Project launch for the wide public	31.07.2019 (month 3)	X
D7.5	Establishment of a stakeholder-platform as a tool for industry level observatory and knowledge exchange network	31.10.2019 (month 6)	X
D7.6	VEGGIE-MED-CHEESES Data management plan	31.10.2019 (month 6)	X
D7.7	Collection of newsletters	30.04.2022 (month 36)	
D7.8	At least 4 articles published in crop producers/dairy industries journals	30.04.2022 (month 36)	

D7.9	At least 4 open-access papers published in international peer-reviewed journals	30.04.2022 (month 36)	
D7.10	At least 4 contributions to conference proceedings	30.04.2022 (month 36)	
D7.11	At least 1 downloadable project leaflet	30.04.2022 (month 36)	
D7.12	Final Workshop	30.04.2022 (month 36)	
D7.13	Press release at Final Workshop for the wide public	30.04.2022 (month 36)	
D7.14	Attendance at (at least) 1 event/exhibition aimed at promoting traditional local dairy products	30.04.2022 (month 36)	

Regarding the deliverable 7.14, the Coordinator reminds that once the pandemic is over it will be crucial to attend at an event/exhibition aimed at promoting traditional dairy products. Prof. Luis Tejada Portero from UCAM reminds that on 14th October 2020 he attended an on-line divulgative event on Torta del Casar [26 Semana de la Torta del Casar - Jornada Tecnica Divulgativa de la Universidad del Queso], where he presented the VEGGIE-MED-CHEESES project, its Consortium, objectives, and preliminary encouraging outcomes. The title of the presentation was: “*Cynara cardunculus*: science and technology in a millennial tradition; vegetable rennet in the preparation of cheeses and Torta del Casar” (on-line event using the Zoom platform, <https://tagus.online/jornada-divulgativa/>). In addition to this UCAM propose the attendance at a further even in Spain specifically dedicated to local cheeses.

8. Closure of the meeting

As there is nothing else to discuss, the project Coordinator declares the session closed at 13.45.

VEGGIE-MED-CHEESES Project Coordinator

Prof. Lucia Aquilanti PhD

