



Reference: ARISTOIL – EXTERNAL EVALUATION

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1. METHODOLOGY

Once the monitoring form was made last year in order to approve the change of module in the project architecture, a follow up has been made through communications with the lead partner mainly, the Work Packages LP occasionally and through the steering group minutes' and progress reports follow up.

ARISTOIL, due to its specificity is a project highly dependent on external factors such as the meteorology that affects directly the olive harvest and therefore, some key activities of the project. The capacity of project partners to adapt and react to this circumstances is being crucial in the fulfilment of deadlines and commitments.

In order to finalize this report, the last update has been made after the 5th steering Committee in Split and the last certification of expenses made, (expenses paid until June 30th).

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2. SUMMARY

WP 1 Management:

The project is currently at a 67,18% of execution (latest data available of expenditures certified). Some of the partners are under a 50% of implementation due in some cases because of the delate in the initial payments by the paying authority, which affect smaller institutions with less credit options. Expectations might bring it to minimum of a 80% of execution which could be an acceptable level considering the specificities of the project explain in the introduction.



Partner	Amount forecasted	Total of eligible expenditure	%
EGTC Efxini Poli	250.000	179.993	72,00
Svi.Med	173.000	68.850	39,80
UoA	365.000	298.828	81,87
ANETEL	149.000	85.406	57,32
ARISTOLEO	118.450	87.123	73,55
UNIST	180.000	121.250	67,36
UOC	283.250	228.346	80,62
Ragusa	157.000	65.736	41,87
Reg.Pel	172.000	119.760	69,63
Dip. Malaga	138.899	79.371	57,14
TOTAL	1.986.599	1.334.663	67,18

The low spending of some partners can be solved by increasing the actions on WP5 (cluster), increase the impact of remaining international networking events, increase the staff dedicated to the project to close it with a higher dedication on the last months, and some readjustments among partners with over execution possibilities and partners who are not being able to spend the budget.

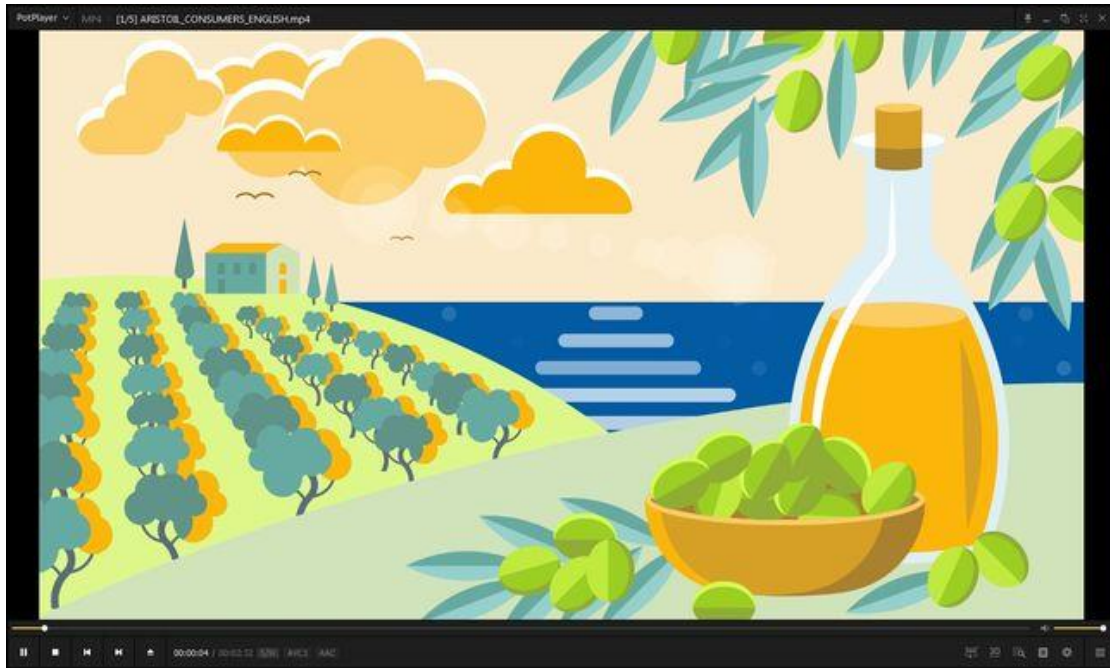
ARISTOIL has asked for a 3 months extension which will take the project to the end of January 2020, in order to increase the number of training seminars for beneficiaries, test the Aristoil cluster eHub and carry out transferring and networking activities, preparing the ground for the delivery of a functional network of olive oil sector key actors. It is a very coherent argument for the extension, which is actually being asked by a large group of projects who were ending at the end of Oct. 2019.

WP2 COMMUNICATION

One of the aspects where Aristoil is being more active and strong not only organizing strategic events like the networking, national or info days, but also being quite active supporting the Green Growth community.

ARISTOIL has been selected as finalist for the Interreg Programme Slam 2019 edition representing the Interreg Med Programme. In parallel and within the project activities, some videos have been produced and translated in different languages which is considered as a key dissemination tool for producers and consumers.





Some of the ongoing activities considered more interesting are the business plan for the Aristoil Med Health Cluster in order to give a realistic path for sustainability, and the Aristoil Family integration into the e-Hub.

WP 4 TESTING

Led by the University of Cordoba, has developed 18 training courses for producers and olive millers, reaching 607 participants including 374 olive producers. New samples from the 2018-2019 campaign were sent to the certification centres in Athens using NMR method and to Cordoba using HPLC-MS methods in order to calibrate both.

One of the aspects coming out during the initial evaluation was based on the fact of certifying the laboratories being used which has finally not succeeded due to the high costs.

Once the project finishes the possibility of a small amount covering costs to be paid by the interested companies in order to get the sample analysis has come out as a possibility which would give durability to the process. In general terms, the testing phase is fulfilling the key objectives foreseen.

WP5 TRANSFERRING

Main activities from our point of view go from the signature of the protocol to the creation of the Cluster which needs to have national coordinators in the olive oil sector.



This point might be difficult for partners who do not have the right competences to access the national level and need to involve an organization linked to the sector that could be interested in following the project and leading the cluster from 2020 at national level.

The surveillance of the cluster needs a business plan to make it affordable probably through membership fees. The project is proposing to concentrate these fees in the mayor beneficiaries of the cluster services, such as the analysis carried out by the certified laboratories.

It should be understandable that the cluster could act to force the use of olive oil as a healthy product considering the Mediterranean one as the reference for the highest quality.

Another key output from the project that we consider of specific value, is the mayor data base of the olive oil sector coming out of the project which will bring out production data, typology of oils, analysis results, etc. which will be called the e-HUB.

3. CONCLUSION

Although with a high dependence on the harvest seasons, which is affected by external factors to the project such as meteorological conditions, ARISTOIL has proved to be effective in all outputs and deliverables committed. Considering this key aspect, in the expert opinion, the level of execution by the extended deadline of the project could be between the 80% & 90% which is adequate for such a complex project. Its specificity directly related to a product so representative from the Mediterranean culture such as the olive oil, and the direct relation with health gives an added value on innovation to the standard projects in the Med. The selection as finalist for the Interreg Slam 2019 shows the general acceptance and interest of such a thematic. Although some partners are going through problems to reach the levels of expenditures committed, in most cases like with Svimed, is not related to the effectiveness of their work and fulfilment of their operational commitments, but to the need of a refund rhythm that not always depends on the partner institution.

In general terms, the project has been able to overcome the initial bottlenecks with the withdraw of a partner and is fulfilling operational outputs as committed with a real impact in the targeted sector and groups.



4. SUGESTIONS TO THE PROGRAMME

The recruitment of an external evaluator has been compulsory for projects with more than 2 modules. It is a new figure with wide possibilities and so far we know, is the first time it is done in a ETC programme. As the first time this is done in the Programme, it can be used as a pilot experience and therefore we have found possibilities to improve it.

- The period of deliverable of the Monitoring Form might be close or similar to the deadline of a certification period and procedure. Therefore, partners are deeply involved in the payment demands together with their daily work and the operational activities of their project. It is hard to get all the feedback from them since more questionnaires' are not always welcome. One possible solution could be the access of the external evaluator to Synergie. This could be done through a request of the LP to the JS of a profile for the External Evaluator. We would then have access to the financial updated information, progress reports, etc.
- The Monitoring Form should change format simplifying questions (some of them are similar and answers are repeated). Section 1 could cover the whole form in an adapted scheme. Maybe a dash board format could be more useful. In any case, to include text information in a narrow column reminds the format of Presage or Synergie for the Application Forms (workplans) which is not especially friendly to fill and even worse to read.
- To follow up a project, it should be necessary to have the external evaluator participating in the SCs, as recommended by the programme. At least those before the change of modules. But the budget allocated by the projects to the External Evaluation are normally not covering that (not in working days, nor in travel expenses). A solution could be to allocate a fixed budget directly by the programme for the External Evaluation. It would be added automatically in Synergie to projects, with more than 1 module and adapted to the needs (2 or 3 modules). The role could be more as an external evaluator-adviser in the line with URBACT, not as a thematic expert but as an expert in the programme. And obviously with a budget adapted to the specific needs.

