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DELIVERABLE 6.2

Title: Report on the sustainability of the OLEUM Network

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Executive summary

In this report, the sustainability of the OLEUM Network has been discussed. Two key factors were given attention: motivation of the OLEUM Network participants and the involvement of organisations that can host/sustain the network.

It is important to understand that the OLEUM Network serves two types of purposes:

- 1) Serving the OLEUM project goals as explained in Deliverable 6.1: a) Enlarge the international body of expertise in the analysis of olive oils and b) Carry out and quantitatively evaluate technology transfer to the wider user community.
- 2) Serving the goals of the OLEUM participants themselves such as networking and activities among stakeholders in the olive oil production chain. The latter one is important for the motivation of the participants and thus for the sustainability of the network.

To build an active network that can sustain itself after the OLEUM project ends, participants need to be motivated and be able to pursue their own goals. Furthermore, it is important that organisations support their employees to be active within this network, so they are allowed to spend time on it. Finally, depending on the actual activities, financial means are needed to support the network (e.g. host a webpage, travel expenses to meet).

Three steps were taken to find out what OLEUM Network members would like to achieve by being part of the OLEUM Network. First, the OLEUM partners actively involved in setting-up and sustaining the network brainstormed about the potential activities of the network and the sustainability (Annex 1). This information was used to guide 10 open interviews with OLEUM Network participants outside the OLEUM consortium (Annex 2). Finally, OLEUM partners were asked similar questions in an online survey (Annex 3).

In general, many OLEUM Network participants and OLEUM partners are interested to play an active role within the Network. Only few are open to leading roles and financial contributions. Among them, UNIBO is available to take the Network forward when the OLEUM project finishes. OLEUM Network participants and OLEUM partners are most motivated to improve analytical methods, participate in small working groups on different topics of interest, networking and sharing updates and news.

Since there was a large interest to meet in person, a first OLEUM Network meeting has been scheduled in conjunction with the first training workshop in Sevilla in October



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2019. Furthermore, several organisations have been shortlisted that potentially are interested in hosting or supporting the OLEUM Network after the OLEUM project ends. A discussion has been planned with them in November. Results will be reported in Deliverable 6.5.



Introduction

The initial idea for the OLEUM Network was to transfer knowledge on new and/or improved OLEUM methods to the wider user community to enlarge the international body of expertise in the analysis of olive oils. Many labs are not aligned and there is a need for trustworthy information and know-how among stakeholders.

In Deliverable 6.1, the initial steps of setting-up the OLEUM Network have been explained. In the present report, possibilities for sustaining the OLEUM Network after the end of the OLEUM project were investigated. Two key factors were given attention: motivation of the OLEUM Network participants and the involvement of organisations that can host/sustain the network.

The current OLEUM Network

It is important to understand that the OLEUM Network serves two types of purposes:

- 1) Serving the OLEUM project goals as explained in Deliverable 6.1: a) Enlarge the international body of expertise in the analysis of olive oils and b) Carry out and quantitatively evaluate technology transfer to the wider user community.
- 2) Serving the goals of the OLEUM participants themselves such as networking and activities among stakeholders in the olive oil production chain. The latter one is important for the motivation of the participants and thus for the sustainability of the network.

In the past half year, around 55 stakeholders in the olive oil sector registered for the OLEUM Network on Basecamp, which is currently the home base for the expert network. These stakeholders vary from small olive oil producers, lab technicians, companies producing analytical equipment, olive oil distributors to R&D centres and Universities.

To generate interaction with consumers and other people interested in olive oils, the OLEUM Network also has a LinkedIn page. Showing how to determine olive oil quality and authenticity may help consumers to understand what they are buying and keep the olive oil quality standard high. So far, mainly 'Questions of the Month' and answer have been posted, as well as information on the validation tests to promote participation. At present, 99 participants are part of this LinkedIN group.

What motivates the OLEUM Network participants?

To build an active network that can sustain itself after the OLEUM project ends, participants need to be motivated and be able to pursue their own goals. Furthermore, it is important that organisations support their employees to be active within this network, so they are allowed to spend time on it. Finally, depending on the actual activities, financial means are needed to support the network (e.g. host a webpage, travel expenses to meet).

Three steps were taken to find out what OLEUM Network members would like to achieve by being part of the OLEUM Network. First, the OLEUM partners actively involved in setting-up and sustaining the network brainstormed about the potential activities of the network and the sustainability (Annex 1). This information was used to guide 10 open interviews with OLEUM Network participants outside the OLEUM consortium (Annex 2). Finally, OLEUM partners were asked similar questions in an online survey (Annex 3).

Participants of the OLEUM Network outside OLEUM consortium

We recently interviewed 10 stakeholders to learn more about their reasons for joining the OLEUM Network. Common wishes that were mentioned (see also Annex 2):

- Getting to know other stakeholders in the olive oil sector
- Yearly OLEUM Network meetings
- Exchange of knowledge and news
- Participation in validation of new methods – ring tests, including sharing of samples
- Exchange information on analytical methods to learn from each other
- Solve problems together arising in the olive oil field

Interviewed stakeholders varied from small olive oil producers, lab technicians, companies producing analytical equipment, olive oil distributors to R&D centers and Universities. Most of them were open to collaborations and willing to participate in a matching request/offer process within the Network in order to find partners for their activities. Additionally, most of the participants are open to travel for a yearly Network meeting given a convenient location (not so far/only in Europe) and timing.

Participants were hesitant regarding financial contribution. Stakeholders believed that it may be difficult for their organizations to give a direct financial contribution, but it

would be possible to pay a membership fee if the network provides active benefits to their work. Another given option to which they seemed open was in kind contribution such as for example sharing equipment or open premises for trainings/workshops.

Other thoughts on how the network could be a value for them are:

- Communication to the outside world: promotion of high quality olive oil and its health benefits
- Technical and technological transfer
- Information/Updates on new methods for evaluating quality and genuineness of olive oil
- Collaborations leading to new method development
- Collaborations to develop standard operating procedures
- Contact with labs performing several analytical methods
- Meet people involved in olive oil research – contact with Universities

The communication language for the network is English. Nine out of ten persons did not experience a language barrier, whereas one person's proficiency in English is limited.

OLEUM partners

Additionally, 18 OLEUM partners filled out a survey to map their intentions to be involved in the OLEUM Network, see Annex 2. Overall, there is interest amongst OLEUM partners to play an active role in the OLEUM Network. Most of the partners are willing and supported by their organizations to invest time on the Network activities. Partners are more hesitant regarding a potential financial contribution: besides UNIBO, one company and one other university showed intention to support the network financially depending on the conditions.

In conclusion

In general, many OLEUM Network participants and OLEUM partners are interested to play an active role within the Network. Only few are open to leading roles and financial contributions. OLEUM Network participants and OLEUM partners are most motivated to improve analytical methods (set-up of new analytical procedures, validation, exchange of information on analytical methods, exchange of samples), participate in small working groups on different topics of interest, networking and sharing updates and news.

Next steps

In order to build a successful network, more input and actions are needed from the OLEUM partners. The next steps are planned for the coming half year, to create bonding between OLEUM Network participants, to grow the network and its impact and to secure the sustainability.

Involvement of organisations to host and/or (financially) support the OLEUM Network

In addition to exploring what motivates the OLEUM Network participants, several organisations have been shortlisted that potentially are interested in hosting or supporting the OLEUM Network after the OLEUM project ends. This includes financial support for e.g. online knowledge exchange via a platform (the annual fee for the currently used Basecamp is \$499.00 for non-profit organizations and \$999.00 for commercial organizations), sample sharing and yearly meetings. A first discussion has been planned with them at the EFFoST conference in November 2019, in conjunction with the OLEUM session at that conference and more will follow after that.

Detailed sustainability plan

It will be discussed whether the OLEUM Network should become a Special Interest Group (SIG) within EFFoST. Based on the discussions with the above-mentioned organisations, together with input from the OLEUM Network participants, a more detailed sustainability plan will be developed. This plan will include an estimation of annual costs and expected income (from e.g. membership fees). The costs will depend heavily on the activities that will be undertaken. Results will be reported in Deliverable 6.5.

Discussion within the network

The OLEUM partners together with the other OLEUM Network participants are currently setting first steps in becoming an active network. They need to discuss with each other (bottom-up approach) what goals to pursue and what activities to exploit within the network. These could include extending the network and communication channels.



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First OLEUM Network meeting

At present, we are organizing the first OLEUM Network meeting in Sevilla, right after the Euro Fed Lipid Conference 2019. First there will be an informal get-together on Wednesday 23th of October in the afternoon, which will be open to anyone interested and promoted among participants of the conference. Hopefully, this will attract new people to the network. On the early morning of the 24th of October, there will be time to discuss together on how to achieve the goals for the network and how to use the Basecamp platform.

Method validation studies

Members of the OLEUM Network also have the opportunity to participate in the OLEUM International method validation studies which will be conducted between Autumn 2019 and Spring 2020.



Annex 1 – First brainstorm on future goals, structure and activities for the OLEUM Network

Goals

- Networking
- Exchange of information – methods
- To align labs and methods
- Influence policy making/decisions?
- Validation of new methods
 - Ring tests
 - Sharing samples
- Solve new problems arising

For whom?

- Find out who values it
- Experts – access to a limited number of people
- Everyone interested? LinkedIn

Platforms that can be used to host the Network

- Basecamp
- LinkedIn
- EFFoST website
- other

Potential information on the platform(s)

- Information on (the newest) analytical OO methods
- Competent laboratories
- Networking area to know each other
- Forum - Possibility to post questions - to get in touch with an expert
- General information in the olive oil field (perhaps fits better to IOC?)

Potential activities

- Yearly workshops, conferences or meetings (physical or online).
- Equipment trainings? Maybe that way we can also get some sponsorships. Companies will pay a fee for organizing a training with their equipment.

Focus of the network

- On olive oil!

Finances

Needed: time and financial means.

Potential costs

- Hosting the platform
- Time to keep network active
 - Administration
 - Update information
 - Organize workshops

Potential income

- Small membership fee
- Sponsoring
- From conference/workshop?

Potential dissemination channels

- Food Authenticity – a virtual network for food authenticity analysis
<http://www.foodauthenticity.uk/>
- EU-China-Safe
- Other EU projects?
- All users of the OLEUM Network
- All Oleum partners

Potential organisations to sustain OLEUM Network

OLEUM partners

- UNIBO - Coordination role
 - New proposals
 - Activities to support knowledge
 - Sharing of OO samples
- Queens University Belfast – in some way involved
 - validation as many methods need screening
- EFFoST
 - Support with network and conference

Organisations to be explored for their interest in sustaining the network:

- International Olive Oil Council
- DG Sante / JRC
- DG Agri
- AOCS

Annex 2 - Outcomes of interviews with participants of the OLEUM Network

For privacy reasons, the information in Table 1 has been made anonymous.

TABLE 1: INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS FROM THE OLEUM NETWORK (PART 1 OF 2)

Participants	Country	organisation type	Networking (knowing who is who and who is doing what)		Collaborations			
			Online overview of participants and what they do	Yearly meetings in person	Online requests and offers	Validating new methods - Ring tests	Sharing samples	Solving new problems arising in the olive oil field
Participant 1	Denmark	Laboratory	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Participant 2	Marocco	R&D Technological Centre & network of participating institutions and individuals	yes	yes	?	yes	yes	yes
Participant 3	Turkey	Olive oil producer	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Participant 4	Spain	Production, industrialization and distribution of OO, sell oils with quality labels	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Participant 5	Albania	University	yes	yes, when low cost its possible	yes	no	yes	
Participant 6	Austria	Laboratory	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Participant 7	Spain	Analytical equipment provider	yes, overview who is doing which analyses	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Participant 8	Italy	University	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Participant 9	United Kingdom	Analytical equipment provider			yes			
Participant 10	Germany	inspection, verification, testing and certification company	yes	yes		yes		

TABLE 2: INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS FROM THE OLEUM NETWORK (PART 2 OF 2)

	Knowledge exchange				Role					English ok?	Share info?	How else can we be of value to you?
	Sharing updates and news, with possibilities to discuss	Exchange info on analytical methods to learn from each other and to align methods	Organizing / attending training on analytical methods	Question and Answer	Passive (stay updated but not contribute)	Active	Leading the ON with other active participants	In kind support, sharing equipment, samples and/or experts	Financial support			
Participant 1	yes	yes		yes		yes			perhaps	yes		nothing
Participant 2	yes	yes	yes	?		yes		yes		oral preference for French		1. Communication to the outside world: promotion of quality olive oil and its health benefits; 2. Technical and technological transfer.
Participant 3	yes	yes		yes		yes		not possible		yes		Information on new methods on OO quality. Contact with labs performing them
Participant 4	yes	yes	depending on situation would help organizing	yes		yes		yes		yes		Client complaints, fruity bitterness, better standards
Participant 5	yes			yes	yes, lack experience to be active					yes		Updates on methods, involved in training programs, meet people, analytical: interested to meet people in research-university
Participant 6	yes	Already experts so only interested in developing new methods	No leading role. Open on discussion to help	Nice but they are already experts so they to not expect to learn		yes	No	Under discussion		yes		Development on new OO validation methods. Interested also in authenticity and fraud detection methods. Main focus on collaborations leading to new method development

	Knowledge exchange				Role					English ok?	Share info?	How else can we be of value to you?
	Sharing updates and news, with possibilities to discuss	Exchange info on analytical methods to learn from each other and to align methods	Organizing / attending training on analytical methods	Question and Answer	Passive (stay updated but not contribute)	Active	Leading the ON with other active participants	In kind support, sharing equipment, samples and/or experts	Financial support			
Participant 7	yes	yes	need approval	yes, need guidelines for such q&a		yes		yes		yes		Develop standard operating procedures? Eg sample pre-treatment
Participant 8	yes	Only focus on economical point of view	No practical knowledge	Nice	Passive	active role on an economical working group		Not possible		yes		
Participant 9												
Participant 10	yes	yes	yes			yes	Maybe	Maybe			yes	develop new projects together, providing reference materials, info databases of origin or authenticity

Annex 3 – OLEUM NETWORK Sustainability Questionnaire for OLEUM Partners – Questions and Answers

Eighteen persons or organisations filled out the OLEUM NETWORK Sustainability Questionnaire for OLEUM Partners. The questions and answers are given below:

Question 1: Please fill in your name and organization

For privacy reasons, this information has been made anonymous. Seven respondents are working at a University, two are working at a research institute, three are from non-profit organisations related to food or olive oil, two are working at a laboratory, 2 at a company and one did not fill out this question.

Question 2: What role would fit you and your organisation in the OLEUM Network?

Option 1

(Co-) leading role: run the network together with others. This could mean: support discussions and knowledge exchange on Basecamp, discuss future activities of the network, organise meetings, recruit new members, communicate to external world about the network etc.

Chosen 3 times.

Option 2

Active participant. This could mean: share information, post questions and answers, participate in meetings and discussions e.g on method validation etc

Chosen 13 times.

Option 3

Passive participant. This is an observatory role, no active contribution, perhaps attend a meeting every now and then.

Chosen 2 times.

We asked the partners to tell us by email if they had no interest at all to be part of this network. Nobody did.

Question 3: Would your organisation support an active contribution to this network (allow you to spend some time on the network)?

Option 1: Yes

Option 2: No

15 partners responded with yes and 3 with no.

Question 4: Would your organisation be able and willing to support the network financially?

Option 1: Yes

Option 2: No

3 partners responded with yes and 15 with no.

Question 5: In what activities would you like to participate (pick those that would be of interest for you/your organisation):

Organise trainings on analytical methods

Option 1: Organise trainings on analytical methods

Chosen 8 times.

Option 2: Collection/Exchange of samples

Chosen 10 times.

Option 3: Participate in validation of new methods - ring tests

Chosen 13 times.

Option 4: Participate in small working groups on different topics of interest (e.g fraud cases, economic perspective of fraud, specific methods, validation etc.)

Chosen 13 times.

Option 5: Share updates and news, with possibilities to discuss (thematic workshops)

Chosen 9 times.

Option 6: Exchange information on analytical methods to learn from each other and to align methods (proficiency)

Chosen 12 times.

Option 7: Match offers/requests for possible new partnerships

Chosen 7 times.

Option 8: Collaborations to set up new analytical procedures (e.g. new instruments)

Chosen 11 times.

Option 9: Other, please specify

Chosen 2 times.

1. Facilitate the network with EFFoST means - communication or providing time during EFFoST conference
2. Advertising the network via social media

Question 6: Is there anything else that you would like to achieve through the OLEUM Network in the future?

The following responses were given:

1. OLEUM Project is new gate which is opened to world of quality for us. Thank you so much....
2. Participation in the submission of joint funded research proposals
3. Recognition of OLEUM network as a THINK TANK of independent scientists.