***Assegno di ricerca***

**Innovazione e formazione per la competitività e la sostenibilità del settore agro-alimentare**

**Innovation and education processes for competitiveness and sustainability in the agri-food sector**

**Research project and activity plan**

**Research project**

The grant si funded by the project H2020 NEXTFOOD GA nr. 771738 - "Educating the next generation of professionals in the agrifood system". In particular, the activities will concern the task 4.2 and 4.3 of the project. The detailed contents are described below.

**Objectives of WP4**

We will suggest new policies on regional, national and EU-level for education and training systems for farmers, forest professionals, advisers and others, that will support action and help address challenges in the improvement of sustainability of agrifood systems. This will be achieved through the following secondary objectives:

• To provide an assessment of existing policy and their role in EU research and education;

• To identify strategies for policy improvement;

• To identify new and improved policy design and implementation options

• To collect a catalogue of good practices

• To provide a gender-balanced assessment of policy recommendations

**Description of work**:

The **NEXTFOOD** project will analyse existing policies and identify of potential improvements. WP4 will answer to the objective 3 of the project through a flow of highly participatory activities following a path from diagnostics of existing policies to the identification of potential improvements. The WP4 will consider policy in the context of interactions among different actors in the innovation process, hence having as a reference the composition and functioning of AKIS. The analysis will be carried out on multiple scales and levels, from EU to local, considering different roles in education policy. Relevant education policies will be covered, as well as their interaction with sector innovation and training programs, e.g. those included in the CAP. Several levels of education, from high school to PhD and life-long learning will be considered in a consistent way.

In this work package, will deliver policy recommendations based on research activities through which we aimed to explore what impact the present education and training systems have on the learners’ knowledge on sustainability and related subjects, and skills needed to solve problems in an action-oriented and collaborative manner. The policy recommendation is for all stakeholders affected by education and life-long learning programs for sustainable agrifood systems. In particular for decision-makers who are working with education governance and for those who are dealing with education management at regional, national, EU-level education. The policy development will tie into the EU objectives to address challenges in education and training systems by 2020:

• Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality

• Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training

• Promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship

• Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training

**Task 4.2. Identification of strategies for improvements (M16-M24). Leader: UNIBO Involved partners:**

**CIHEAM, LU, SKOGFORSK, WHH**

In this task we will identify strategies for policy improvement of research and education in the field of agrifood and forestry, by identifying options for improved policy instruments in different context scenarios. Changing education means (e.g. action learning) and use of perspective technology (e.g. digital instruments) and forms of organisation (e.g. communities) will be specifically targeted.

The task will be performed through a round of workshops in connected to the NEXTFOOD cases to capture local education governance perspectives. Another workshop will be held at the EU-level involving selected stakeholders from the consortium and other relevant organisations. This workshop will be organised at the yearly NEXTFOOD partner conference and led by UNIBO. For this task we will particularly involve the /regional/national/EU-level authorities responsible for policies in the research and education sector.

**Task 4.3. New instruments design and implementation options. (M25-M36). Leader: UNIBO Involved partners: CIHEAM, LU, SKOGFORSK, WHH**

In this task we will develop guidelines for policy-makers and education managers at regional/national/EU level for improvements of policies in research and education in the field of agrifood and forestry. We will develop and specify the new policy instruments (to improve life-long skills development programs that match the needs of the food and agriculture sector and to strengthen the role of science/technological innovation in EU education and training system). The strategies for improvements identified will be formalised into a conceptual framework and specific design options. This more academic activity will yield general models of pathway and options for policy improvement and recommendation for future policy developments in the EU. The task will be mainly performed through a desk based activity considering organizations of education, training programs for school teachers, developing training material (e.g., infographics, audio-visuals, leaflets etc.), handbooks, interactive tools, organization of discussion groups for students at schools. Website containing E-learning training modules for different user groups will be performed.

Based on 4.1 to 4.3 (and partially in parallel to 4.3) a catalogue of good practices will be identified developed. This will be based on a range of cases identified in 4.1 and matching perspective needs and options. Selected cases will be further described and collected in a special section of the catalogue. The catalogue will be tailored for different stakeholder groups based on results of the task 4.2. It will be made available on line, including a searchable format with different entry points. Each case will have a factsheet and link to external material.

**Activity plan**

The activities of the beneficiary will go through the following stages:

**Stage 1** Update of the state of the art and identification of the main innovations about the instruments studied by the project.

**Stage 2** Analysis of policy mechanisms used for education and training in the agri-food and forestry sectors.

**Stage 3** Collection of information for supporting the analysis and participation to workshops and meetings.

**Stage 4** Reporting and publication.

The listed activities will be developed under the supervision of prof. Davide Viaggi and according to the decisions taken in the implementation of the project NEXTFOOD.