



NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 | December 2025

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING & STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

June 2025 | Tirana, Albania



The INSIST-VAT project reached a major milestone with the successful organisation of its first Steering Committee Meeting, held on 23–24 June 2025, and the high-level stakeholder workshop “New challenges for agriculture – new knowledge needs”,

organised on 25 June 2025, hosted by the Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT). The events brought together consortium partners and key stakeholders from Albania, France, Spain, Kosovo, Italy, and international organisations,

reinforcing the project's strategic direction and its commitment to strengthening agricultural vocational education and training (VET) in the Western Balkans.

PROGRESS UPDATES

WP1 – Project Coordination and Governance

The Steering Committee confirmed strong progress in project coordination, administration, and financial management under WP1, led by CIHEAM-IAMM. Key deliverables and milestones have been approved, and partners agreed

on reinforced coordination mechanisms through regular updates, cloud-based documentation, and a consolidated monitoring dashboard. This approach ensures transparency, consistency, and timely reporting across all work packages, supporting effective decision-making throughout project implementation.

In addition to the Steering Committee meetings, coordination has been strengthened through the organisation of four Work Package Leaders' meetings and one Operational Committee meeting, ensuring close follow-up of technical, administrative, and quality-related issues.

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PROGRESS UPDATES

WP2 – Training Needs and Benchmarking

Significant progress has been achieved under WP2, led by the Agricultural University of Tirana in close collaboration with the Agricultural Technology Transfer Centres of Fushë Krujë and Korçë. All planned WP2 milestones and deliverables have already been completed and submitted to the coordinator and are available on the INSIST-VAT cloud platform.



WP2 completed outputs include:

MS4 – Identification of target groups: producers

MS5 – Design of the data collection methodology and tools

MS6 – Identification of target groups: trainers

MS7 – Design of data collection instruments for producers

Completion of the interview process with producers

Ongoing interviews with trainers

D2.2 – National benchmark report on existing VET training practices in Albania

D2.3 – Training needs identification and benchmarking report

Through close engagement with farmers and trainers, WP2 has mapped skills gaps and contributed to strengthening Albania's Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS). This work lays the foundation for the establishment of a new Vocational Education and Training programme at AUT, aimed at equipping farmers and agri-professionals with practical competencies that foster innovation, sustainability, and competitiveness. The initiative directly supports Albania's EU integration pathway under Chapter 11 on Agriculture and Rural Development by aligning national training systems with European standards. Consolidated results will be presented at an international conference in November 2025.

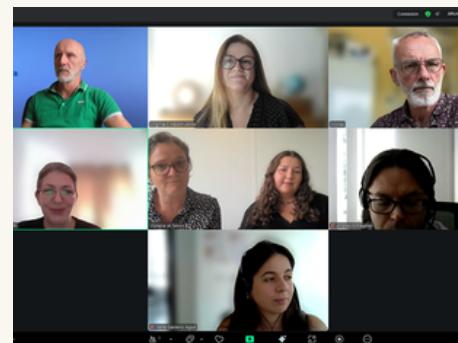
Under WP3, ACTA delivered key analytical outputs supporting evidence-based training design.

Deliverable 3.1 provides a comparative analysis of Continuing Vocational Education and Training governance and institutional frameworks across France, Spain, Italy, Ireland, and Romania, examining policy alignment, governance models, funding mechanisms, and organisational structures, with particular focus on climate change, sustainability, and digitalisation. Deliverable 3.2 builds on this analysis by mapping 409 agricultural CVET curricula across the same five countries.

IAMZ-CIHEAM provided support to this task by facilitating the mapping and outreach to Spanish VET centers. The results highlight the effectiveness of short, practice-oriented programmes combining theory and hands-on learning, with increasing use of blended formats and digital tools. A SWOT analysis identifies transferable best practices and remaining gaps, providing concrete guidance for the design of inclusive and future-oriented curricula at the Agricultural University of Tirana. In parallel, Milestone 10 established a European VET research framework guiding WP3 analysis, while Milestone 11 launched data collection through a harmonised benchmarking methodology.

WP4 – Design of Training Programmes and Learning Pathways

WP4 focuses on translating the evidence generated under WP2 and WP3 into structured training programmes and learning pathways tailored to farmers, trainers, and advisory services. The work ensures coherence with European quality standards while remaining responsive to local agricultural realities and farmers' needs.



PICTURE FROM WP LEADERS MEETING IN SEPTEMBER 2025

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PROGRESS UPDATES

WP5 – Establishment of the Training Centre

Under WP5, the consortium is progressing towards the establishment of a dedicated training centre at the Agricultural University of Tirana. The centre will become a cornerstone of Albania's Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System, ensuring the long-term sustainability of training provision. This package will start in 2026.

WP6 – Quality Assurance and Monitoring

Under WP6, led by QUARES, a project-wide monitoring dashboard with key performance indicators has been successfully developed and completed by all partners. The dashboard integrates mandatory indicators from the Grant Agreement with work-package-specific qualitative and quantitative measures, providing a shared and up-to-date overview of progress, milestones, and achievements. This tool underpins continuous quality monitoring and supports preparation for the project's mid-term evaluation and EU reporting.

WP7 – Communication, Dissemination, and Visibility

Under WP7, Deliverable D7.4 (Social Media) has been completed, documenting the creation and launch of INSIST-VAT's official social media channels in line with t

he Communication and Dissemination Plan and the Visual Identity Toolkit. As part of outreach activities, three video interviews have already been produced and shared on the project's social media platforms.



The interviews feature Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku, Rector of the Agricultural University of Tirana; Prof. Elena Kokthi, Lecturer at AUT



WP2 Leader; Evelina Hazizaj, National Coordinator of the Albanian Network for Rural Development. Additional interviews are ongoing QTTB of Fushë Krujë, CIHEAM Montpellier, CIHEAM Zaragoza, ACTA France, QUARES, and the University of Prishtina.



INSIST-VAT also strengthened its visibility through participation in major events, including the 5th International Conference on Agriculture and Life Sciences (ICOALS V 2025) in Tirana.



Beyond dissemination, INSIST-VAT engaged in institutional dialogue at European level. On 4 December 2025, the project was represented at the European Education and Culture Executive Agency monitoring meeting in Tirana, organised in cooperation with the National Erasmus+ Office Albania. The meeting brought together around twenty Erasmus+ Capacity Building in VET projects to review implementation progress, exchange experiences, and strengthen collaboration. INSIST-VAT was represented by Prof. Elena Kokthi, who contributed to discussions on good practices and the role of CB-VET initiatives in skills development and Albania's EU integration pathway.

