ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Εθνική Αρχή
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece
T. +30 210 9220 944 • **F.** +30 210 9220 143 • **E.** secretariat@ethaae.gr • www.ethaae.gr

Accreditation Report

for the New Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change

Department of Agriculture
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
28 January 2025

NOTES

- *Please do not modify styles, fonts, and language in this template.*
- *If you wish to paste text, please use the **'paste text only'** option.*
- *For text input, please use the 'normal' style.*

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Postgraduate Study Programme of **Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part A: Background and Context of the Review 4

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel 4

II. Review Procedure and Documentation 5

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile 7

Part B: Compliance with the Principles 8

Principle 1: Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes 9

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New Postgraduate Study Programmes 15

Principle 3: Regulations for Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and certification 19

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New Postgraduate Study Programmes 23

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support 26

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes 29

Part C: Conclusions 31

I. Features of Good Practice 31

II. Areas of Weakness 31

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions 31

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment 33

PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new postgraduate study programme of **Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. **Prof. Emeritus Spyros G. Pavlostathis (Chair)**
   Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

2. **Prof. Athanasios Alexandrou**
   California State University-Fresno, Fresno, California, USA

3. **Prof. Emeritus Nikolaos Katopodes**
   University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

4. **Prof. Emeritus Ioannis Vlahos**
   Hellenic Mediterranean University, Heraklion, Greece

5. **Mr. Ioannis Dimitrios Kamperos**
   PhD Candidate, Agricultural University of Athens, Athens, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In preparation for the review and assessment of the new PSP **Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEA Panel) reviewed a multitude of materials provided by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE), which included background information and guidance on the review and accreditation process, as well as detailed material and data related to the programme under evaluation, such as the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices provided by the new PSP through the HAHE.

The programme review was conducted via teleconference, organized, and coordinated by HAHE and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh). The schedule and agenda of the review were as stated below.

Monday 20/01/2025:

Preliminary private meeting of the EEA Panel. Discussion of the programme under review; assignment of writing parts of the draft accreditation report to the members of the EEA Panel.

Tuesday 21/01/2025:

a) Welcome meeting and brief overview of the new PSP with the Vice Rector and President of MODIP Prof. G. Tzetzis, the Head of the Department Prof. Th. Kotsopoulos, and the PSP Director Prof. A. Mamolos. Brief presentation of the Department history and accomplishments; presentation of the structure, quality assurance, and other futures of the new PSP.
b) Meeting with PSP teaching staff members, Profs. Ch. Dordas, G. Menexes, A. Molasiotis, S. Koundouras, I. Tsialtas, S. Chatzilazarou, M. Michailidis, and V. Kati: Discussion of teaching involvement, learning resources and other futures of the new PSP, professional development, research activities, as well as link between teaching and research.
c) On-line (video) tour of facilities, discussion of facilities, equipment, and learning resources by PSP administrative, technical laboratory, and teaching staff members.
d) Meeting and discussion with employers and PSP social partners: Mr. Ch. Dagitsis, Agris S.A.; Mr. D. Kouvas, Scientact; Mr. P. Zioutas, ZIKO S.A.; Dr. D. Vafiadis, General Organization of Land Reclamation of Thessaloniki-Lagadas Plains; Dr. A. Saropoulos, GEOTEE; Mr. A. Parianos, GMCert and ANTIOXCert; Dr. P. Ralli, ELGO-DEMETRA; Dr. Z. Hilioti, Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH); Mr. S. Stefanidis, Euroagro; Ms. I. Nikou, Municipality of Thessaloniki; and Dr. M. Gidarakou, Agricultural and Landscape Services.
e) Private debriefing meeting (EEA Panel members only): Discussion of the outcomes and findings of the PSP virtual visit; preparation of oral report.
f) Closure meeting with the Vice Rector and President of MODIP, the Department Head and PSP Director, MODIP Committee member Prof. A. Mavromatis, MODIP Committee secretary Ms. A. Tzaneraki, and MODIP staff Ms. E. Bitsiadou: Informal, oral presentation of the EEA Panel PSP key findings, discussion, and clarifications.

Wednesday 22/01/2025 to Saturday 25/01/2025:

Draft report writing. EEA Panel virtual meeting. Review and finalization of draft report.

Throughout the review and evaluation process, the EEA Panel was in close communication with the Department, PSP administration, and MODIP staff, which were very accommodating in providing additional information requested by the EEA Panel. The EEA Panel found that the Department, PSP administration, and MODIP staff, as well as the faculty, staff, and stakeholders interviewed were eager and helpful in our discussions, providing valuable additional information.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The establishment of the new postgraduate study programme (PSP) "Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change" was approved by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh) Senate (document number B2642/16-07-2024) based on the provisions of Public Law 4957/2022 (Official Gazette 141/section A/21-7-2022) as well as other pertinent laws and regulations. The new PSP is organized and will be offered by the Department of Agriculture, AUTh. The proposed PSP replaces a previous PSP "Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems and Climate Change" which ran for six cycles.

The goal of the new PSP is the interdisciplinary training of high-level scientists on the effects of climate change on ecosystem services and on the sustainable management of agroecosystems. The PSP aims to help in providing basic knowledge that will enable the design of optimal, efficient, and environmentally friendly food production processes, but also in the design of foods with new and improved properties.

Teaching in the PSP is provided by twenty one (21) faculty and teaching staff members of the Department of Agriculture (AUTh), two (2) faculty members of the Department of Geology (Meteorology and Climatology Section; AUTh), one (1) faculty member of the Department of Law (AUTh), one (1) faculty member of the Democritus University of Thrace, as well as external specialized scientists from Greek organizations (Greek Agricultural Insurance Agency-ELGA; Hellenic Statistical Authority-ELSTAT; Greek Biotope-Wetland Centre-EKBY). Specialized technical staff and administrative staff assist the PSP.

The programme has set at twenty (20) the maximum number of admitted students per academic year, while six (6) admitted students per academic year is the minimum for the financial viability of the PSP. Admitted students hold first cycle degrees in Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Environment, Biology, as well as graduates of University departments related to the thematic scientific areas of the new PSP. The admission criteria and selection process are specified in the proposed PSP Internal Regulation posted on the PSP website (https://www.saps.agro.auth.gr/index.php/en/). Tuition fees are €1200 or €2400 for EU or non-EU citizens, respectively.

The PSP consists of three (3) academic semesters study resulting in level 7 Diploma of Postgraduate Studies. To graduate, the student must have successfully completed a total of at least 105 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits (75 ECTS for coursework – 4 mandatory and at least 10 elective courses – and 30 ECTS for the preparation and successful completion of the mandatory postgraduate thesis). A very large number of elective courses are included in the PSP curriculum, grouped as either required or free electives. Lectures are given exclusively in-person and lecture attendance is mandatory.

The PSP graduates will be trained in interdisciplinary research on topical and critical areas for the country, such as environmental protection and food production as they relate to climate change. Graduates will be prepared for careers in both the private and public sector of the economy, capable of staffing national or international research, production or administrative organizations. There are strong links to the society, which is key priority of the PSP Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change, the Department of Agriculture, and the Institution.

The Department of Agriculture offers five postgraduate study programmes, participates in one interdepartmental postgraduate study programme, and supports doctoral studies.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD INCLUDE IN THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT THE DEVELOPMENT, ORGANISATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES (PSP) IN SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC FIELDS AFTER INVESTIGATING THEIR FEASIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY.
INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY FOR THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT.
THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT THE PSP OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.

By decision/s of the Institutional Senate, the Institutions should adapt their strategy to allow for the provision of postgraduate study programmes, in addition to attending to the profile, vision, mission and strategic objectives of the Institution. In this strategy, the Institutions should anticipate the potential benefits, difficulties or risks from the implementation of new postgraduate study programmes and plan all the necessary actions to achieve their goals. The Institution's strategic choices should be documented through specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new postgraduate study programmes.

In the case of PSP delivered by distance methods, the Institution prepares and applies an e-learning strategy. The Institution's e-learning strategy is integrated into its overall strategy and identifies educational goals while keeping up to the rapid technological changes and to the developments in pedagogical models. The Institution should include in its strategy the justification and feasibility as to why e-learning has been selected as the appropriate learning strategy for the particular programmes of study where it is applied.

In the context of e-learning, innovation strategies, the possibility of programme revision, the linking between learning and research (requiring knowledge of the latest innovations in order to select the most appropriate means to achieve the learning outcomes) should be taken into account.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit for postgraduate study programmes should be in line with the Institution's strategy and must be formulated in the form of a public statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the postgraduate study programmes offered by the academic unit. Indicatively, the quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the postgraduate study programme (PSP), its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's continuous improvement.

In particular, in order to implement this policy, the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:

a. *the suitability of the structure and organisation of postgraduate study programmes*
b. *the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education - level 7*
c. *the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP*

d. *the appropriateness of the qualifications and the availability of the teaching staff for the PSP*

e. *the drafting, implementation, and review of specific annual quality goals for the improvement of the PSP*

f. *the level of demand for the graduates' qualifications in the labour market*

g. *the quality of support services, such as administrative services, the libraries, and the student welfare office for the PSP*

h. *the efficient utilisation of the financial resources of the PSP that may be drawn from tuition fees*

i. *the conduct of an annual internal review and audit of the quality assurance system for the PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)*

Documentation

- *The Institutional strategy for postgraduate studies, which includes a special strategy for e-learning, as long as it is applied to the Institution's PSP*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the new PSP*
- *Quality Policy of the academic unit for the development and improvement of PSP*
- *Quality Targeting of the academic unit for the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department of Agriculture follows and implements the quality policy of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh). It has also developed and implements a quality assurance policy for the new PSP "Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change".

The PSP "Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change" was established following a series of successive meetings of staff and the coordinating committee that lasted for two years (20022-24) during which it was decided to replace a previous PSP "Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems and Climate Change" which ran for 6 cycles, with a new PSP, enhancing the curriculum and learning outcomes in relation to the challenges of climate change and according to the European Green Deal policy.

The proposed PSP under accreditation was designed after a series of carefully taken decisions considering the strong and weak points of the previous PSP, constructive discussions with alumni and stakeholders, as well as based on the interests of the Department graduates. The goal of the proposed new PSP is to educate graduates that will be able to face the challenges caused by climate changes which influence ecosystem services and the sustainable management of agroecosystems.

The final decision for the direction of the PSP was also based on the fact that there is no similar PSP offered in other Universities in Greece with emphasis on the European Green Deal

and friendly to the environment food production (Food to Fork); similar programmes however are offered in several universities in Europe and in the US.

The Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP is harmonized with the strategic objectives of the Department and adheres to the standards set by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE). The quality policy of the Department is aimed at the improvement of the quality of education and research and is supported actively by all parties involved in the educational process. The Quality Policy of the proposed PSP as presented in the submitted proposal for accreditation clearly defines the goals and objectives set for the academic character and orientation of the programme.

The implemented quality policy defines the actions and the methods to be employed for achieving continuous improvements, promoting communication and cooperation among members of staff, students, and external stakeholders. The PSP will closely collaborate with the University's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) thus effectively ensuring the achievement of the set goals and enhancing the overall quality process of the programme.

The commitments set by the PSP define the processes and procedures to be used for monitoring the quality and continuous improvement of the PSP. These procedures include:
-- Periodic review and revision of the programme incorporating feedback from students, graduates and stakeholders.
-- Adhering to regulations regarding Postgraduate Study Programmes set by AUTh and MODIP.
-- Evaluation of courses and instructors by the students.
-- Monitoring of PSP graduates regarding their progress and professional outcomes.
-- Allocation and management of resources, infrastructure, and equipment.
-- Collection and analysis of quality data for maintaining and improving the quality of the PSP.
-- Disseminating information related to the PSP by updating the website in both Greek and English and making it publicly accessible.
-- Supporting and conducting annual internal evaluations following guidelines from MODIP and periodic external evaluation and accreditation by HAHE.
The new PSP submitted Proposal for Accreditation includes a series of Quality Objectives that will ensure the identity, visibility, and dissemination of its achievements to the academic community and society at large.

PSP courses are to be taught in person in Greek and English if and when foreign or Erasmus students will attend. Courses and PSP thesis project are completed in 3 semesters allocating 30 ECTS for each semester plus 15 during a two-month summer period between the second and third semester, totaling 105 ECTS required for graduation.

The Quality Policy of the proposed new PSP is disseminated to all interested parties, academic and administrative staff, students and stakeholders and is made available in the PSP website (https://www.saps.agro.auth.gr/indexphp/en) and that of the Department (http://www.agro.auth.gr).

II. Analysis

The Quality Assurance policy of the PSP follows the quality assurance policy of the Department in accordance with that of the University which is accessible on the website and in compliance with the standards set by the HAHE.

The proposal for accreditation submitted to HAHE is complete and thorough, covering all aspects of the six principles. The implementation of quality policy by the PSP and the Department is very clearly documented.

There is clear evidence and planning for the realization of the goals set by the PSP which aim at a continuous improvement during its lifecycle.

There is commitment from the Department and the PSP for annual internal evaluations and auditing of the quality assurance system with the close cooperation and support of the Internal Evaluation Unit (OMEA) of the Department and the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) of the University.

The curriculum of the PSP, the learning outcomes, duration of study periods and ECTS allocation are all aligned with the quality assurance policy and the strategic goals of the University.

The PSP administration should reconsider the allocation of ECTS to comply strictly with the required 30 credits per semester and any additional ECTS (as in the case of the present PSP where 15 ECTS are allocated during the summer period between the 2nd and 3rd semester) should be distinctly presented in the Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement, given both in Greek and English, could be less wordy eliminating unnecessary information, especially in Section 4 (content and results) complying with the sample of the Europass/EU links.
https://ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixIV_952782.pdf
https://europass.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/dsupplementexamples-el.pdf
https://europass.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/dsupplementexamples-en_1.pdf

The EEA Panel held an interview with eleven stakeholders who all expressed their approval and satisfaction with the curriculum of the proposed PSP and stressed the need of such a post graduate programme in the job market in view of the challenges presented by the climate change. All stakeholders interviewed were affiliated in some ways with the Department and staff and informed the EEA Panel of their active role in the development of the new PSP and had a positive opinion about the necessity of the proposed PSP; however, their active participation in the drafting of the programme was not verified and several stakeholders were not clearly aware of the proposed curriculum.

It is worth mentioning the Memorandum of Understanding signed between both the Department Head and PSP Director and the Director of ELGA affirming a formalized and steady cooperation in a broad area of activities. However, the contacts of the interviewed stakeholders with the Department were based on an individual and personal basis. The EEA Panel recommends that a formalized way of communication should be established between stakeholders and the PSP/Department.

The PSP will provide students with sufficient resources, specialized teaching staff along with teaching and laboratory facilities and to be self-sustainable for the foreseeable future. The EEA Panel considers that the tuition fees for the programme, with appropriate distribution of resources, will be sufficient to support students with scholarships, contribute to laboratory consumables and maintenance of infrastructure. However, efforts should be made to ensure an adequate number of candidates so that a steady income of resources will ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme.

Furthermore, the provision of delivering the PSP in English, provided there will be registration of foreign students or lecturing by invited foreign experts, is considered a goal in the right direction enhancing the overall quality of the programme.

The strategic key performance indicators (KPIs) presented in the Proposal of the PSP are not considered fully satisfactory. The PSP has to set more specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely goals regarding KPIs that can be monitored annually such as percentage of graduates to all registered students; dropout rate; grade point average of graduates; participation of postgraduate students in research; number of publications with postgraduate students as co-authors; number of conferences in which postgraduate students participate; percentage of postgraduate students who continued for doctoral studies, etc.
It is concluded that maintaining and promoting the quality of teaching and services offered in the PSP would require continuous efforts, evaluations, and development of processes to achieve a well-organized PSP with academic excellence and sustainability.

III. Conclusions

The EEA Panel concludes that the PSP "Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change" is substantially compliant with the commitments and requirements for the implementation of an adequate quality policy in accordance with the regulations of the HAHE and of the AUTh.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	**X**
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R1-1. Reconsider the allocation of ECTS and revision of the Diploma Supplement.

R1-2. The number of targets (KPIs) set and monitored by the PSP should be significantly increased, especially those related to students' performance.

R1-3. Develop a formal mechanism of communication with social and industrial partners and other stakeholders to support continuous PSP review, curriculum development, and programme enhancement.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New Postgraduate Study Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES FOLLOWING A DEFINED WRITTEN PROCESS WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPANTS, INFORMATION SOURCES AND THE APPROVAL COMMITTEES FOR THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. THE OBJECTIVES, THE SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC SUBJECT AND THE STREAMS OR SPECIALISATIONS, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS ARE SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN. DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES, THE DEGREE OF ACHIEVEMENT OF THE LEARNING OUTCOMES SHOULD BE ASSESSED. THE ABOVE DETAILS, AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME'S STRUCTURE ARE PUBLISHED IN THE STUDENT GUIDE.

The academic units develop their postgraduate study programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the research character, the scientific objectives, the specific subject areas, the specialisations, the expected learning outcomes, the structure, the courses, the teaching and assessment modes, the teaching staff and the necessary resources are described at this stage.

The structure, content and organisation of courses and teaching methods should be oriented towards deepening knowledge and acquiring the corresponding skills to apply the said knowledge (e.g. course on research methodology, participation in research projects, thesis with a research component).

The expected learning outcomes must be determined based on the European and National Qualifications Framework (EQF, NQF), and the Dublin Descriptors for level 7. During the implementation of the programme, the degree of achievement of the expected learning outcomes and the feedback of the learning process must be assessed with the appropriate tools. In particular, for each expected learning outcome that is designed and made public, it is necessary that its evaluation criteria are also designed and made public.

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

- *the Institutional strategy*
- *the active involvement of students*
- *the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market*
- *the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for level 7*
- *the option of providing work experience to students*
- *the linking of teaching and research*
- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the PSP by the Institution*

The procedure for the approval or revision of the programmes provides for the verification of compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

Documentation

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP*
- *PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the NQF, internship, mobility opportunities*

- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a relevant scientific field*
- *PSP Student Guide*
- *Course and thesis outlines*
- *Teaching staff: teaching assignments per subject area and per course*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The new PSP "Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change" was approved by the University's Academic Senate on July 16, 2024, based on the positive recommendations of the Assembly of the School of Agriculture and the University's Graduate Studies Committee.

The EEA Panel found the design of the new PSP to be satisfactory and aligned with the strategic plan of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Input from external bodies—national organizations such as the Agricultural Insurance Organization (ELGA) and international entities like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)—was incorporated into the PSP's formulation. Additionally, the Department is committed to fostering a climate of communication and collaboration among all its members, including staff, students, and other stakeholders.

The teaching staff of the PSP comprises twenty-four (24) members: ten (10) Professors, six (6) Associate Professors, three (3) Assistant Professors, and five (5) laboratory teaching staff (EDIP) members. For specific courses, collaboration with external contributors is planned. All faculty members teach courses that align with their areas of expertise. Their dedication, commitment, service, and research productivity are duly recognized.

Annual admissions are limited to a minimum of six (6) and a maximum of twenty (20) postgraduate students. The duration of study in the PSP is three (3) semesters, including the time required for preparing and evaluating the PSP Thesis, with a total of 105 ECTS. Each semester corresponds to 30 ECTS.

Students begin defining their PSP Thesis topics at the start of the first semester. Work on the thesis is carried out during the summer (15 ECTS) between the second and third semesters and continues on the third semester.

Through the preparation of their PSP Thesis, students will have the opportunity to actively engage in the research process. This experience will help them develop abilities and skills that are valuable for their future careers.

The PSP offers a wide range of courses, primarily electives, particularly in the area of Sustainable Agricultural Systems. All course syllabi indicate that students will acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies corresponding to level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). However, while this statement appears in all syllabi, the learning outcomes

for individual courses do not consistently reflect the knowledge, skills, and competencies expected at level 7 (Master's Degree). Furthermore, most course descriptions lack sufficient emphasis on climate change topics.

II. Analysis

Students in the new PSP have a plethora of courses to choose from in the area of Sustainable Agricultural Systems. However, this is not the case in the Climate Change area of expertise. During discussions with the programme leadership and faculty, it was emphasized that individual courses will reflect the influence of climate change on their respective subjects. While this approach is legitimate, it is not adequately supported by the course syllabi

The learning objectives and outcomes presented for each course, in some cases, use language that emphasizes understanding or the acquisition of knowledge. While this approach underscores comprehension and application, the EEA Panel recommends that postgraduate courses equip students with skills to analyze, synthesize, and apply knowledge, as outlined in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and Dublin Descriptors for Level 7.

The anticipated student workload is considered satisfactory.

III. Conclusions

The programme is substantially compliant with Principle 2. Below are several recommendations that may enhance adherence of the new PSP to Principle 2.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	**X**
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R2-1. Redraft the learning outcomes to align with the postgraduate level of courses, as specified by the EQF/NQF and the Dublin Descriptors for Level 7.

R2-2. Increase the number of course offerings in the area of Climate Change.

R2-3. Redraft the course syllabi to reflect the influence of climate change on the subject of the course, where appropriate.

Principle 3: Regulations for Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and certification

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, THESIS DRAFTING, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).

The Institution should develop and publish the internal regulations prescribed by law which, among other things, should regulate all issues of postgraduate studies from the beginning to the end of the studies.

Indicatively:

- *The students' admission procedures and the required supporting documents*
- *Student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- *Internship issues, if applicable, and granting of scholarships*
- *The procedures and terms for the drafting of assignments and the thesis*
- *The procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and for the assurance of the progress of students in their studies*
- *The terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

In case that the PSP is offered through distance learning methods, the Institution should have in place a regulation for e-learning, including in particular the following issues:

- *Services of the Institution to support e-learning*
- *Methodology for the development and implementation of courses*
- *Ways of providing teaching and variety of teaching and assessment modes*
- *General standard of course structure*
- *Student support system*
- *Support of faculty/teachers with mandatory e-learning training for new staff members*
- *Technological infrastructures made available by the Institution*
- *Student identity confirmation system (student identity check, assignment and exam writing process, security and certification issues).*
- *The Institution should establish rules for the provision of appropriate access and for the assurance of the participation of students affected by disability, illness, and other special circumstances.*
- *Ethical issues, such as those concerning data protection, intellectual property rights and rules for protection against fraud are governed by the e-learning regulation.*

All the above must be made public within the context of the Student Guide.

Documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the postgraduate study programme*
- *Special regulation for the implementation of e-learning if the PSP is delivered through distance methods*
- *Research Ethics Regulation*

- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Degree certificate template and Diploma Supplement template*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The proposed PSP, Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh), follows closely the framework for student-centered teaching and active learning of the Department of Agriculture at AUTh. The students of the new PSP will have access to the complete system of support services of AUTh, as described in the web page of the PSP (http://www.saps.agro.auth.gr/index.php/el/) and the web page of the Department (http://www.agro.auth.gr/). Additionally, the graduate students will be given details on course content and programme requirements during an information session at the beginning of each semester. Finally, the students will have access to the following documents for the regulation of: 1) Internal operations; 2) Studies, practical training, mobility, and thesis writing; 3) Complaints and appeals; 4) Academic adviser; 5) Research ethics.

All classes will be offered in person, and attendance of lectures will be mandatory. This, in combination with meetings with the academic adviser will ensure the successful monitoring of student progress. Once a thesis supervisor is assigned, he or she will assume the role of the academic adviser. The PSP plans to admit a maximum of twenty (20) students per academic year. A minimum of six (6) students will be required; otherwise, the programme will not be offered. The resulting student to teacher ratio is very low, which will further ensure the close monitoring of student progress.

The admission criteria to the PSP are clearly articulated and are based on the following criteria: 1) Undergraduate degree grade; 2) Professional experience, publications, and conference presentations; 3) Written examination in English; 4) Candidate's curriculum vitae; 5) Letters of recommendation.

The duration of the PSP is set at three semesters, during which students will earn 105 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits. The coursework in the first two semesters will correspond to 60 ECTS. Thesis work will begin in the summer following the second semester, thus 15 ECTS will be earned in that period. Finally, the thesis will be completed in the third semester while the students will receive additional credit for attending specialized seminars, thus the third semester will also be awarded with 30 ECTS credits.

The PSP has established a robust network of research institutes and commercial units that will offer the students opportunities for practical training. It became clear during the meeting with the stakeholders of the PSP that very strong ties exist between the teaching faculty and these institutes and units.

Student mobility is expected to be a crucial element of the PSP; however, there are no data available for the success of such efforts. This is also true for all aforementioned practices, as the EEA Panel could not meet with either current or previous students and therefore could not judge the effectiveness of these practices. Although the PSP operated for six cycles in the recent past under a very similar name, its designation as a new programme did not permit any assessment of its past performance.

II. Analysis

The proposed PSP in Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change aims to provide its graduates with expertise in various methods of sustainable agriculture and to mitigate the threat to the food supply posed by climate change. The new PSP will be unique for Greece, and one of a handful of similar programmes in the European Union. Therefore, the potential of the PSP for making an impact in both theory and applied national needs is very high. Graduates of the new PSP will be equipped with skills that will enable them to inform and advise the agricultural production sector and the government on issues related to sustainability and climate change. They will be prepared to work in research institutes and commercial outfits aiming at producing resilient plant varieties and introducing alternative agricultural methods.

The distribution of ECTS credits during the programme duration is atypical and deviates from common standards of practice. It may be useful to clarify the motivation behind the adopted distribution pattern and to justify the use of resources and time by both students and faculty for the additional ECTS credits.

The admissions process is merit based, transparent, and fair. The support system for the PSP students is good, and the monitoring of student progress is planned with detail. The student to teacher ratio is very low, which is great. However, this may also be a problem for the sustainability of the programme. The minimum limit of six (6) students for the programme to operate is risky when the standard for Greece and the EU is more than twice this number. Combined with the high number of elective courses planned by the programme, this may lead to a very inefficient use of resources. Engaging twenty-one (21) faculty and teaching staff members of the Department of Agriculture for six (6) students is not a sustainable practice by any academic unit.

III. Conclusions

The new programme is substantially compliant with Principle 3, as it plans to follow the practices set forth by HAHE, the Department of Agriculture, and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. If the PSP attracts a number of students that is close to the maximum limit set in its goals, the graduates will be served well. Otherwise, the new programme will have to monitor its efficiency of operation carefully to ensure that public funds are expended prudently.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Regulations for Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and certification	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	**X**
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R3-1. Clarify the distribution of ECTS in the programme and consider adopting the standard practice followed by most postgraduate study programmes in Greece and abroad.

R3-2. Reconsider the maximum and minimum limits proposed for the number of students admitted annually. Alternatively, consider a reduction in the number of elective courses and the number of faculty, teaching staff members, and external instructors participating in the proposed PSP.

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New Postgraduate Study Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF THEIR TEACHING STAFF, AND APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THEIR RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

The Institution should attend to the adequacy and scientific competence of the teaching staff at the PSP, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the proper staff categories, the appropriate subject areas, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences, and educational leaves-as mandated by law).

More specifically, the academic unit should set up and follow clear, transparent, and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff for the PSP and offer them conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching and research; offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff; encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies; promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit; follow quality assurance processes for all staff (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training, etc.); develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.

Documentation

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment, policy for attracting highly qualified staff, and PSP Obligation Regulation*
- *List of the intended for recruitment teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin and relevant individual achievements*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The regulations for recruiting faculty members and laboratory teaching staff (EDIP) are established by the Greek Parliament. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh), as a public university, follows strictly these regulations. The EEA Panel found that the teaching faculty of the PSP on Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change have sufficient experience on the topics of the PSP, and overall strong qualifications to teach the courses of the programme. Furthermore, some senior members of the faculty have an outstanding record of research accomplishments. During the meeting with the EEA Panel, the faculty expressed their devotion to the PSP, and the Department in general. The EAA Panel was also fortunate to meet one of the EDIP members during the evaluation process and was very impressed by the member's qualifications and enthusiasm for this programme.

The teaching responsibilities of the faculty consist of two courses per semester, which allows for adequate time in research engagement. Faculty also co-teach courses and involve external lecturers in their courses, which frees additional time for research. The low targets set for student admission into the PSP further reduce the time devoted to teaching by the faculty

and allow them to pursue other professional endeavours. However, there is no evidence of a mentoring process for junior faculty, and there is no mention of established special support for them in terms of travel funds, equipment, or teaching allowances to accelerate career development.

There is a system in place for evaluation of the courses and instructors; however, there is no specific mechanism for systematic assessment and continuous improvement.

Overall, the research activities, publications, and funding of the Department are good and commensurate with similar graduate programmes in Greek universities. There are strong links between teaching and research in the PSP, and the graduate theses of the students often lead to journal publications.

II. Analysis

The PSP considers mobility to be of importance to the faculty, staff, and students. This is achieved by participation in conferences, sabbatical leaves abroad, and participating in Erasmus+ exchanges. There is no evidence for any additional support for mobility of junior faculty members.

The linking of teaching to research seems natural, as most students complete their theses on topics covered by the required and elective courses. Most of the instructors conduct research on the subjects taught in the PSP, thus it is very easy to transfer their new results to the classroom.

The PSP focuses on the impact of Climate Change to agricultural production, which requires significant interdisciplinary efforts. The main strength of the PSP is in sustainable agricultural systems; thus, it is important to increase a deeper involvement of other disciplines in the course offerings regarding Climate Change. Currently, such courses are offered at a reconnaissance (undergraduate) level, thus the programme will highly benefit by engaging experts in Climate Change to cover advanced material in this area.

III. Conclusions

The EEA Panel believes that the PSP is substantially compliant with Principle 4. The faculty members of the PSP Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Climate Change are well qualified to teach the courses of the programme, with the exception of Climate Change itself, which is not covered with at an advanced level. The linking of teaching to research is good, with the exception again for Climate Change. A number of opportunities for faculty mobility exist, and teaching responsibilities are low to moderate. This allows for career development of junior faculty; however, there is no established systematic mentoring or special processes for their support.

Panel Judgement

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	**X**
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R4-1. Introduce a mentoring process for junior faculty and other teaching staff to accelerate their career development and promotion.

R4-2. Engage faculty from other divisions of the Department or other Schools with an expertise in Climate Change to elevate the course material in this area to the graduate level.

R4-3. Increase research activities and publications related specifically to the impact of Climate Change on agricultural systems.

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. THEY SHOULD -ON THE ONE HAND- PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT, AND- ON THE OTHER HAND- FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).

Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources and means, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, so as to offer PSP students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as the necessary general and more specialised libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, IT and communication services, support, and counselling services.

When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g., whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed and foreign students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centered learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the Institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance proves -on the one hand- the quantity and quality of the available facilities and services, and -on the other hand- that students are aware of all available services.

In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.

Documentation

- *Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the academic unit for the PSP, to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the corresponding firm commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure-services from state or other resources*
- *Administrative support staff of the PSP (job descriptions, qualifications, and responsibilities)*
- *Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services*
- *Tuition utilisation plan (if applicable)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The University ensures the availability of robust IT infrastructure and modern classroom facilities to support the achievement of programme learning objectives. Additionally, well-equipped laboratories facilitate advanced research and experimental activities. These resources are complemented by an extensive library collection and subscriptions to leading research databases, enabling the effective delivery of postgraduate programmes.

All PSP students have access to a comprehensive range of student support and welfare services, including psychological counseling, career coaching, and assistance with financial

and accommodation needs. The University also offers access to gym facilities, sports and cultural clubs, and a daycare center for students with preschool-aged children.

Information regarding student welfare services is disseminated effectively through systematic email communications and website updates. A comprehensive overview of these services is available on the University's main website, with additional details provided on the PSP programme website.

Student welfare services are managed by qualified professionals supported by adequate staffing levels. In certain cases, University students are engaged in these operations as part of their hands-on training and experiential learning opportunities.

The PSP adheres to a comprehensive and well-structured plan for the efficient utilization of tuition fees.

II. Analysis

The University exhibits a strong commitment to providing the necessary infrastructure and resources to support its academic programmes and student success. The investment in advanced IT systems, modern classrooms, and well-equipped laboratories underpins the achievement of programme learning objectives and facilitates high-quality research and experimental activities.

The range of student support services offered by the institution is both comprehensive and inclusive. Psychological counselling, career coaching, financial assistance, and accommodation support address the diverse needs of the student population. Additional provisions, such as gym facilities, sports and cultural clubs, and daycare services, foster a holistic environment conducive to both academic and personal development.

The University employs effective communication strategies to ensure students are informed about the available welfare services. Systematic email updates and website announcements provide accessible and timely information, while detailed descriptions on both the main University website and the PSP programme-specific site cater to the diverse information needs of students. Student welfare services are delivered by qualified professionals supported by appropriate staffing levels, ensuring high standards of service quality. Additionally, the integration of University students into these operations as part of their experiential learning not only enhances service delivery but also supports practical education and skill development.

The PSP demonstrates a clear focus on financial accountability and operational efficiency through its structured approach to the utilization of tuition fees. This comprehensive planning ensures that resources are effectively allocated to support academic objectives and student welfare.

III. Conclusions

The University showcases a strong commitment to academic excellence and holistic student development through advanced infrastructure, comprehensive support services, and efficient resource management. By providing modern classrooms, well-equipped laboratories, and inclusive welfare provisions such as counselling, financial aid, and childcare, it addresses diverse student needs effectively. Clear communication and the involvement of qualified personnel further enhance service quality and accessibility. These efforts establish the University as a model Institution, fostering both academic success and student personal growth.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R5-1. The tuition fees utilization plan can be improved by establishing clear performance metrics and conducting periodic evaluations to ensure that resource allocation remains aligned with the changing needs of the PSP and student support services.

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM, FOR THE AUDIT, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE NEW POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES, THUS ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PRESENT STANDARDS. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

The internal evaluation of the new PSP includes the assessment of the accreditation proposal, as well as the documentation in accordance with the Principles of the present Standards and the quality procedures of the Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). The internal evaluation of new postgraduate study programmes also aims at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The Institution, through its Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) and the corresponding academic units, organise and support the external evaluation procedures of the new PSP, according to the specific guidelines and directions provided by HAHE.

The above comprise the assessment of:

- *the objectives, content, and structure of the curriculum, the knowledge offered and the level of science and technology in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date, according to the relevant documentation listed in the decisions of the pertinent bodies*
- *the entailed students' workload for the progression and completion of postgraduate studies*
- *the satisfaction of the students' expectations and needs in relation to the programme*
- *the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*

Postgraduate study programmes are designed and established in accordance with the provisions of the Institution's internal regulations, involving students and other stakeholders.

Documentation

- *The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) procedure for verifying whether the requirements of the Standards for Quality Accreditation of New PSP are met, as well as the procedure for organising and supporting their external evaluation procedures*
- *Assessment and feedback mechanisms of the PSP strategy and quality targeting, and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The administration and academic staff of the PSP demonstrated a clear understanding of the importance of external evaluation and accreditation processes in contributing to programme development and continuous improvement. As a newly proposed PSP, it has not yet undergone any external evaluation.

The initial internal evaluation of the programme indicates that the Department of Agriculture at AUTh has followed a Development Strategy and Quality Policy for its PSP, which is aligned with the strategy and vision of the University. The PSP has carefully investigated and studied the needs of the labour market and society, while considering recent developments and trends in the international scientific community. It has also incorporated feedback from cooperating agencies, students, and alumni in its design.

The PSP has ensured that all necessary regulations are posted on the programme's website. Planned annual internal evaluations and operational information systems will support the achievement of goals and ensure continuous improvement of the programme.

II. Analysis

The institution demonstrates a foundational understanding of the value of evaluation, as reflected in the teaching staff's recognition of external evaluation and accreditation as essential tools for enhancing programme quality. This recognition represents a critical step in fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

While the stakeholders interviewed by the EEA Panel expressed enthusiasm about their collaboration with the department, most were unaware of the new PSP's curriculum. Furthermore, no evidence was provided to document their involvement in the design and development of the programme's curriculum.

III. Conclusions

The PSP administration, faculty, and staff show fundamental awareness of the importance of evaluation and accreditation.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R6.1 The PSP should develop a mechanism for feedback from its external stakeholders, the participation of its graduates in surveys, and the engagement of students, graduates, and external stakeholders in its annual internal assessment, as well as in the PSP's further development and continuous improvement.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

-- The PSP has the necessary procedures for monitoring quality assurance and continuous improvement which align with the strategic objectives of the Department and the University.

-- Infrastructure and other resources are adequate for the successful operation of the new PSP.

-- Faculty and staff are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and dedicated to the PSP's mission.

-- Employment potential of the new PSP graduates in public and/or private positions is high.

-- The PSP and the Department maintain a large network of potential employers and stakeholders.

-- Stakeholders and social partners praised the PSP and believe there is a clear need for such graduates.

-- The programme is addressing an area of need in the Greek economy, both at local and national level.

II. Areas of Weakness

-- Limited number of specific and clearly defined key performance indicators (KPIs) relative to students' performance.

-- Course content and learning outcomes lack the necessary emphasis on Climate Change.

-- Modest research output for some faculty involved in the PSP.

-- Procedures and a mechanism for mentoring and professional development of junior PSP teaching staff were not documented.

-- There was no formal, organized involvement of external stakeholders, alumni, etc. in the design of the new PSP.

-- The proposed minimum number of admitted students is low.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

-- Update the specific course learning outcomes in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework level 7.

-- Increase the proposed minimum number of admitted students.

-- Document the findings of annual evaluation audits and strive to continuously improve the programme.

-- Increase the number and refine KPIs to set measurable goals, track outcomes, and identify areas for improvement, strengthening the overall quality and impact of the PSP.

-- Enhance research activity related to the impact of Climate Change on Agriculture.

-- Implement mentorship and grantsmanship training programmes for junior faculty.

-- Encourage outgoing and incoming mobility of PSP students, faculty, and staff.

-- Track the employment and career paths of PSP graduates.

-- Update the PSP website with current and uniform teaching and research staff CVs, as well as research output indicators.

-- Develop a formal mechanism of communication with social and industrial partners and other stakeholders to support continuous PSP review, curriculum development, and programme enhancement.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: 5, 6

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: 1, 2, 3, 4

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: None

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	**X**
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname **Signature**

1. **Prof. Emeritus Spyros G. Pavlostathis (Chair)**
   Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

2. **Prof. Athanasios Alexandrou**
   California State University-Fresno, Fresno, California, USA

3. **Prof. Emeritus Nikolaos Katopodes**
   University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

4. **Prof. Emeritus Ioannis Vlahos**
   Hellenic Mediterranean University, Heraklion, Greece

5. **Mr. Ioannis Dimitrios Kamperos**
   PhD Candidate, Agricultural University of Athens, Athens, Greece