

ERASMUS POLICY STATEMENT (EPS) – OUR STRATEGY

Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse is a **Higher Technical Education Institute (ITS)** part of the Italian system of Higher Education. Located in the Lombardy Region in the provinces of Lodi and Brescia, it is a short-cycle tertiary level education pathways provider.

ITS Agrorisorse Diploma (corresponding to the EQF level 5, recognized by the Ministry of Education) is awarded at the end of a 2-year course after attending a total of 2000 learning hours and after passing a final assessment of competencies and skills.

ITS Agrorisorse represents the non-academic tertiary education and training segment in the field of **agri-food and tourism**, meeting the business demand of technicians who possess new and higher technological skills and are able to promote innovation, to manage and control organization and production processes typical of these sectors.

The training offer of ITS Agrorisorse is composed by 2 different 2-year courses; the first one called **“Processes of Transformation, Management and Enhancement of the Dairy Supply Chain”** and the second one called **“Agricultural, Agri-food and agro-industrial production and processing – Eno-Tourism Smart Manager”**.

Founded in March 2014, Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse promotes the dissemination of technical and scientific culture in the agri-food sector throughout the Lombardy Region (Northern Italy), in particular, in the Po Valley and Franciacorta Territory, where there are some of the most productive firms of the sector.

After having consolidated its training offer in these 7 years and having recently extended its proposal to the tourism sector, ITS Agrorisorse intends to implement a further step of quality to its courses by adding an increasingly European and international perspective. Therefore, ITS Agrorisorse is willing to participate in European and international cooperation projects – in particular **KA1** Learning Mobility and **KA2** cooperation among organisations and institutions. The aim is to enhance professional, social and intercultural skills and employability of its students. The participation to European and international projects is also

considered a key element for the professional development of its staff (teachers, tutors and coordinators) and it will provide the institute with an international network of contacts with other similar institutions as well as other Higher Education structures. Strategic partnerships, that Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse is willing to establish in the framework of European and international cooperation projects, aim at fostering intense, structured, and long-term cooperation with not only other Higher Education Institutions, but also enterprises (in particular SMEs, with which Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse has already established a very fruitful local cooperation), local/regional authorities as well as other education and research institutions.

So far, experience designed without the support of European programmes aimed at the development of linguistic and intercultural skills which are considered crucial elements for enhancing the development of competencies which are effectively requested by the labour market and contributing to the reduction of skill shortage.

Unfortunately, the first project designed and approved in that way (a 4-week short mobility programme for students implemented in cooperation with host institution Emerald Culture Institute of Dublin - English Language School for Students and Professionals <http://www.eci.ie/>) was suspended few days before the students' departure because of COVID-19 state of emergency.

Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse intends to further enlarge the network to other Higher Education Institutions and to include staff in the mobility programmes for their own professional development, which is considered a crucial success factor.

All the courses delivered by Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse have a **strong connotation on practical application to real business environment**, where linguistic and professional skills play a fundamental role in an enlarged international network; in the courses offered by Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse, proficiency in English is a key competence for its application in real work experiences, considering also the fact that it will allow students to promote local

typical productions abroad. Preferable partners are short-cycle Higher Education Institutions specialized in the domains of agriculture, agri-food, food and wine, tourism and commerce.

Potential destination countries will be Anglo-Saxon countries or Institutions where English is commonly used (e.g. UK, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Ireland, Malta) for English language purpose and other countries like Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Austria for specific professional training purpose.

Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse agrees about the goal of building a European Education Area promoting the idea that spending time abroad to study and learn should become the norm for the new generation, encouraging the knowledge of two languages in addition to the mother tongue. It is also aware of its role to promote, thanks to the Programme, a strong sense of students' identity as European, of European cultural heritage and its diversity, intending to be able to offer a set of common values and inclusive education.

Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse has not yet participated in international cooperation projects under the Erasmus+ Programme; however, it has already established relationships with other European Institutes.

For the first time, the Foundation has acquired the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education. Participating in Erasmus+ Programme represents an important **internationalization opportunity**, allowing students to go abroad for training reasons and allowing the exchange of good practice and innovation between the academic and administrative staff in the sector covered by the Foundation (agri-food and tourism). During the 7-year Erasmus+ new Programme, Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse foresees to apply for **KA1** Learning Mobilities (dedicated to its higher education students) and to be at least partner in others 2 **KA2** Projects about Cooperation among organizations and institutions (both Partnership for Cooperation and exchanges of practices, and Partnership for Innovation). In addition, another goal is to be able to jointly develop an application for the **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees**. Therefore, Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse is willing to enlarge its strategic partnership to other Higher Education Institutions specialized in agriculture, agri-food, food

and wine, tourism and commerce in order to exchange skills and experiences in a modern European dimension open to all the Member states and beyond.

In order to increase the internationalization of Fondazione ITS Agrorisorse, mobility will acquire an increasing central role. ITS Agrorisorse considers that the implementation of mobility activities under the Erasmus+ Programme increases not only employment opportunities for its students, but also, the quality of the training offer.

For all the reasons mentioned above, the participation in the Programme will have a strong and positive impact on the modernisation process of Fondazione ITS because it will:

- 1) produce an enrichment of training offer and will be able to attract new students through mobility and international cooperation (more than 10% students in total after 2 years of the Programme implementation);
- 2) strengthen and expand cooperation and exchanges of good practices with EU and extra-EU HEIs and other strategic partners (more than 50 new European and international partners after 5 year);
- 3) improve the cultural background of students and teachers and will allow them to develop their own career, to be more competitive and responsive to the needs of labour market (35% of students will participate in mobility's programme after 2 years of its implementation);
- 4) promote the innovative development of research and educational methods, since mobility will allow a comparison between different teaching methods;
- 5) create additional links between education, research and business to promote excellence and regional development, improving the efficient of the Knowledge Triangle;
- 6) improve and upgrade skills of teachers and staff;
- 7) introduce the culture of excellence and merit;
- 8) improve governance and funding system;
- 9) develop and strengthen a European mentality and citizenship in students and staff.