

VitaGLOBAL

Sustainability Strategy

November 2022

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About the project VitaGlobal

The General Objective of this E+ Capacity Building in Higher Education project is to develop a global university network, connecting diverse geographic regions with limited pre-existing cooperation, in order to enhance study programmes that contribute to local development, specifically in food science and vitiviculture, foci these universities share.

The Specific Objectives are :

- To consolidate a diverse international network of higher education institutions (HEIs) with a common interest to contribute to local development and a shared commitment to food science, viticulture and oenology, as a basis for academic cooperation and industry partnerships.
- To build the capacity of HEIs to sharpen their impact on local development in the vitiviculture sector, via multi-lateral knowledge transfer and in conjunction with industry and other socio-economic partners.
- To build capacity to develop joint programmes and collaborative study modules in viticulture and oenology at the masters and doctoral level, so as to internationalise and integrate curricula, widen mobility opportunities for students and staff and ultimately internationalise the university contribution to local development.

The project created a unique consortium that brings together universities from diverse and mostly non-urban regions in South America, Georgia, Europe and South Africa and allowed these

universities to embed the development of **study modules** in a specific discipline – viticulture and the wine sector (of relevance to all partners) - into wider staff training exercises, so as to foster deeper ‘North-South-emerging country’ strategic partnerships in higher education. It responds equally to Europe policy priorities for higher education internationalisation and regional development, as it does to partner country priorities for internationalizing and modernizing study programmes and generating local impact and local development in regions such as la Rioja and Salta, Argentina and the north of Chile, as well as Telavi Georgia.

Reflections on the project

Vita Global has been a project with high aspirations: cocreating study modules in the field of viticulture and enology with universities from different countries and with diverse capacities, and piloting those modules and inserting them into existing study programs or building new ones. This was intended to draw important lessons as regards internationalisation and the flexibilisation of such programmes.

Yet the project had its limitations, both in terms of design and in execution. For example, while the project *worked primarily with academics in the viticulture and wine sector*, it could have benefited from further and deeper support from *vice rectors for academic affairs*, who oversee study programme design and strategic issues linked to curricula innovation. Efforts have been made to achieve these objectives in the development stages of this white paper, a major project output and policy message, and this was the focus of the final Vita Global event (November 8–10, 2022, Tarragona, Spain). That said, a number of *faculty members*, who are leaders in their respective faculties and departments, have been important advocates of the higher purpose of the project (flexibilisation/modularisation/internationalisation) or sharpened interest in this purpose as the project progressed.

The project also involved the participation of *staff from international relations offices*, whose job was to accompany academic staff, look at matters related to the internationalisation of curricula, mobility, and recognition, and support the more transversal components like this white paper.

The project had a third axis—the role of universities in the local development of the wine sector. As a result, the *project aspired to adequately articulate three levels*:

- International academic partnerships in wine-related studies;
- Flexibilisation and internationalization of curricula;
- The role of universities in local development and the role of the wine sector.

The Vita Global Study Modules

Six international study modules were developed on subjects of high priority to the academic and economic sectors of the countries and regions involved in the project: wine tourism (module 1), wine economy and marketing (module 4), viticulture and sustainability (module 3), microbiology and wine safety (module 2), sensory analysis (module 5), and production of sparkling wines (module 6). Each partner university in Latin America, South Africa, and Georgia subsequently elected a module or several modules, introducing them into an existing study programme or, in some cases, strove to build a new study programme. The module content was adapted accordingly and the staff of the partner universities received coaching and training on the new academic content. Transversal workshops were held on the concepts and practice of modularisation, internationalisation of the curricula, and teaching for local development. The following table indicates the achievements of the project.

Table: The Vita Global Modules and their Implementation in Partner Universities

Module	Coordinator	Implementing partners	Outcomes
1. Wine Tourism Innovation	URV	TeSaU GTU UChile UTalca UNDeC UNJu	TeSaU: The module became a part of the already existing MA study program on viticulture and winemaking. First piloting in the 2021–2022 academic year. GTU: The module became a part of the already existing MA study program. UNJu: The module will be built into a new masters aimed at regional projection of the wine sector in Jujuy and the Quebrada de Humahuaca UChile has integrated the module into an existing masters program as an elective that is taught collaboratively with URV.
2. New Tendencies in Microbiology, Wine Ageing, and Wine Safety	UBx	TeSaU GTU Udelar	TeSaU: The module became a part of the already existing MA study program on viticulture and winemaking. First piloting in the 2021–2022 academic year. GTU: The module piloted in the 2021–2022 academic year in the context of an existing bachelor’s degree in viticulture and winemaking.

			<p>Udelar: The module was offered as elective to postgraduate students in the courses of enology and fermentation biotechnology. There are plans to develop a bachelor's degree in viticulture and viniculture.</p>
3. Sustainability and Viticulture	UBx/UPorto	Udelar UNCuyo SU CPUT	<p>UNCuyo: A master's degree in viticulture and enology is being reaccredited, and this module is being integrated into it.</p> <p>CPUT: The original plan was to incorporate the module content into the new postgraduate diploma in agriculture during the 2022 academic year. But, owing to national accreditation processes and delays experienced, this qualification only received accreditation during 2022 for implementation in 2023.</p> <p>Udelar: The module is to be offered as elective to postgraduate students. Plans to develop a bachelor's degree in viticulture and viniculture.</p> <p>SU: A short programme will be offered and the module will be the basis of a MOOC developed with UBx and UNCuyo.</p>
4. Wine Marketing and Economy	UNCuyo	UNCuyo UChile UNDeC UNJu	<p>UNCuyo: A new postgraduate course was developed simultaneously with the Vita Global project "Wine Law and Economics," which included modules 3 and 4.</p>
5. Sensory Analysis	UNIBO	UTalca UNDeC UNJu	<p>Piloted in 2021, the module is an elective course for agricultural science undergraduates at UTalca and part of the coursework for the "minor" in grape and wine growing.</p>
6. Sparkling Wines	URV	SU UNDeC UNJu UNCuyo UTalca	<p>Online and physical coaching has taken place, and plans have been made to incorporate it in SU and UNCuyo study programs.</p> <p>UNDec piloted the module in the context of the existing masters in agricultural science programme.</p>

A Project Constantly Adapting and Evolving

The Vita Global project of the initial proposal is not necessarily the one it has become. This reflects the project's growing ambition to go beyond more static approaches to international cooperation, such as joint degree development, and push boundaries. The project has also had to adjust to the pandemic situation.

The project began in 2018 with a (thematic) needs analysis / analysis of strengths of specific partner universities, subsequently agreeing to the modules to be developed and assigning coordinators to them (as discussed in the meeting in Porto in May 2018).

The project progressed to a further discussion on the definition of "module" and to the election by partner universities of the modules they would in fact pilot/implement (formation of module groups or teams, as discussed in the meeting in Santiago de Chile in October 2019).

The discussion around the definition of module and the expectations of the programme was arduous. Many faculty members preferred a more prescriptive approach linked to a defined credit range or teaching workload. Given the diverse nature of the HEI systems, the varying definitions of program length and the potentially diverse usages of the module, it was agreed to leave this for each module group to decide. Once agreed, the module content could be then customized by the university implementing it, which was usually the case.

The project attempted to foster the "cocreation" of modules—that is, all partners would in some way contribute to content development. In practice, this was hard to implement for a number of reasons. In some cases, with more technical disciplines, such as microbiology, those partners that would be piloting the module (GTU, TeSaU, and Udelar) were keener to receive the module content "prepackaged" to some extent, and then assess how to adapt and implement it in their own course frameworks, languages, etc. Modules 1, 2, and 6, were not coconstructed in the classical sense (each university bringing content and expertise), though partner universities were active in adapting and shaping them once the initial module syllabus was proposed by the coordinator.

In some instances, the approach was more transactional. In the case of module 1, URV proposed the content and then provided catered coaching sessions to the partners involved. This is not to say that some coconstruction and collaboration did not emerge later in the process. UVR, in designing a coaching programme for Latin American partners in Chile in March 2022 on the topic of Wine Tourism, has learned extensively from Latin American partners and UChile in particular, and is launching a number of follow-up activities related to the module, especially in the area of collaborative teaching. Module 4 was developed by UNCuyo, but the coaching process was a much more collaborative one: input and case studies were asked from partners across the consortium and from industry in different world regions. This module came the closest to the essence of the project, notably integrating content and examples from diverse winemaking

regions. The focus of the module (wine marketing) was also more conducive to this approach than that of microbiology, for instance, which is more technical.

Modules 3 and 5 were the only truly cocreated modules. Module 3 adopted a heuristic approach, engaging all partners in a series of online planning meetings. This also rendered the process more complex: the module ended up having three segments and was essentially a compilation of three minimodules. Partners could pick which of the parts they wished to implement, depending on their needs. Module 3 is still in process and, in this sense, has been more complicated in terms of the overall project delivery. Nevertheless, the way partners approached the module was more in line with the spirit of coconstruction and the spirit of Vita Global.

The project adapted to new needs, showed flexibility regarding the implementation process, and accommodated partners with less capacity that aspire to build new programs from scratch (UNJu, UNDeC).

Of note is the South-South dimension, which grew organically throughout the project: UNCuyo offered to coordinate Module 4, and the internal Latin American knowledge transfer on this and other modules has been noteworthy.

Modularisation and Flexibilization: Contribution of the Project

There has been a clear progression in the understanding of modularisation and its link to flexibilization, yet some confusion has also arisen in the process. The project partners started with a more fixed concept of joint programmes (this was framed as an initial objective), and hence a conceptual shift was required to better understand that the underlying purpose of the Vita Global project was related to modules.

The project had to work within existing legislative frameworks to be able to integrate the modules into partner universities. In many ways, curricula were not flexibilised, given that modules were introduced as a core part of new programs (students, though, still had little freedom of choice in the courses that comprised their program). In some cases, they were (or will be) offered as electives. What is important, though, is that the *discussion on flexibilisation has accompanied and shadowed the project* and awareness has been raised. The project also introduced a discussion on microcredentials and their relation to modularization, and MOOCs are being developed as part of a sustainability strategy. This white paper is making an important contribution to this issue, calling for more flexibility and permeable study programs, more internationalization of study content and teaching, and a transformation in the mindset of teaching staff and administrators.

The project could have benefited from more attention to the topic of collaborative teaching, and not just collaborative development of the modules. This is an area for follow-up, though, and a core piece of the sustainability strategy. Several partners are already designing

collaborative teaching projects and COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) approaches (module 1, for example).

Vita Global Sustainability

Project sustainability is a very important concept to break down and understand. In essence, a project is not sustained, but processes and relationships can be sustained, as can certain outputs, which may be further used and exploited.

Sustainability for Vita Global be considered for:

1. Sustainability of the modules themselves, as many have been integrated into permanent study programmes in the partner universities
2. Collaboration at the level of teaching and research between partner universities, an offshoot of academic co-development of modules and coaching activities
3. Sustained investments in promoting the major policy messages encapsulated by the White Paper, to impact university and national legislation.

The Vita Global Sustainability Strategy has been a process of co-development of the partners, based on:

- The experience of coachings and piloting modules (assessed through partner meetings, coaching reports and a survey conducted in June 2022)
- Bi-lateral agreements and strategic investments in spin-offs, based on the project
- Feedback from the external evaluation
- Feedback from focus groups organized for the White Paper
- A survey to partners on collaborations that have resulted from the project (June-July 2022)

The Strategy, based on this, has three core focus areas:

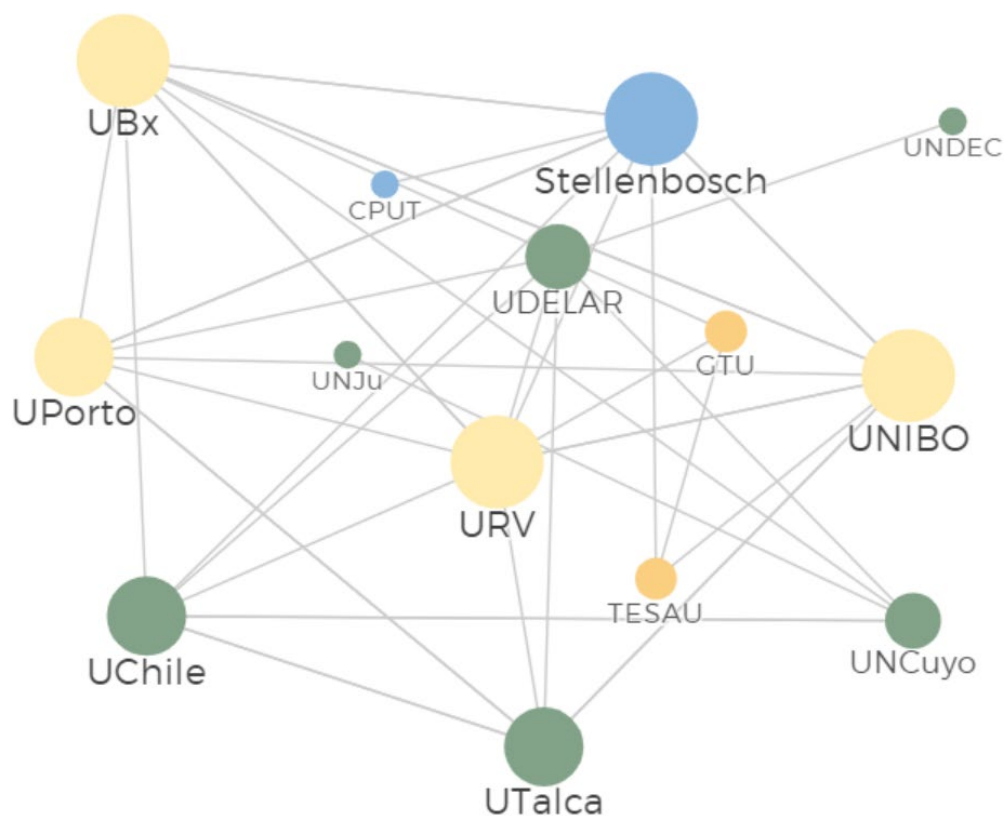
- 1) Scanning spin-off partnerships and collaborations and their nature (academic and institutional)
- 2) From Vita modules to Vita MOOCs? (online integrated learning offers, targeted at upskilling and training)
- 3) Follow-up projects/proposals

Scanning spin-off partnerships and collaborations and their nature

In June-July 2022, as part of the development of the Sustainability Strategy, the University of Chile, let by the primary contact point for international relations, conducted a survey of partners related to their collaborations within the project, with the idea to mapping how these collaborations evolved and how they would continue after the project. The following are the findings:

Relationships before the project

By reading the survey answers, it is possible to see that there was already a significant relationship between partners. The graph below connects all partners. The soft yellow circles are the European universities, stronger yellow is the Georgian universities, blue is the South African universities, and green is the South American universities.



Collaboration between institutions

Many universities acknowledge having pre-project cooperation links through joint postgraduate programs (like the WinTour), teaching cooperation, research collaboration, and joint publications.

With the project, all the institutions have expanded their contacts, and developed emerging initiatives such as: (this excludes the collaboration related to the modules that was part of the project work plan)

- Collaboration in teaching (intention to develop COIL programmes)
- Application for new international projects
- Participation in talks and webinars
- Linkage with industries of partner countries (E.g., Bodega Bracco Bosca and Creation Wines – UNCuyo)
- New pre, postgraduate, and diploma programs (e.g., Bachelor of Enology and Viticulture UDELAR, Postgraduate Diploma in Agriculture CPUT)
- New research centers (Ex: Center for Wine Development - UNJu)

Number of academics involved

It is possible to identify that the number of professors/academics involved in the project has increased during its implementation. Some answers mention an increase from 2 professors when applying to the project to 17 academics involved in the different activities.

MOUs

Currently, only one university mentions having signed a collaboration agreement (UndeC and UDELAR). However, there is a general disposition to formalize the collaborative relationships that are taking place with the different partners of the project. Once the project is finished, partners must move forward with bilateral agreements so as not to lose this closer relationship between universities.

Networks

Partners intended to join or collaborate within the following networks

- OENOVITI
- International Organisation of Vine and Wine
- Great Wine Capitals
- AUGM
- OBREAL Global

Funding Opportunities

The following was mentioned as funding sources for continues collaborations

- National Agencies and Ministries
- University funds
- Erasmus+

Other future collaboration activities

The following specific types of collaborations were mentioned:

- Possible Summer School
- Blended Intensive Program
- Joint qualifications and co-tutelage
- Exchange of students, academics, and staff

In conclusion, it is possible to recognize the project's institutional benefit in both students and academics and the link between universities and industry. In addition, Vita Global came to reinforce the importance of internationalisation as an urgent mission for all universities. The internationalisation of the curriculum and internationalisation at home are some of the points that several institutions mention that the project helped to discuss within their institutions.

From Vita modules to Vita MOOCs? (online integrated learning offers, targeted at upskilling and training)

The Vita Global project, as a result of the pandemic and the increasing pressure to digitalise strategically, has explored several important concepts related to flexibilization and modulization of curricula. This includes MOOCs, online open learning offers and micro-credentials that are co-developed. Several partners have identified the a concrete path for collaboration on these approaches are the project ends. This is tied to OBREAL Global's strategy for supporting upskilling through online learning platforms' for example.

The Module 3 academic team has agreed to develop a MOOC on Viticulture and Sustainability, which will be housed on the *OBREAL Global Train Platform* and be offered to professionals and graduate students globally in the second half of 2023. The SU online learning team is providing pedagogical support and training for the academic team related to their experience with EDx. This MOOC will have the logos of the participating universities and will inspire further MOOCs in this field.

The MOOC approach and course plan was already presented at the Vita Global final event in Tarragona in 2018. MOOC development and pedagogical support meetings are planned January through April 2023, after which the MOOC production will start. After this pilot experience with module 3, the opportunity will be offered to other MOOC module groups.

OBREAL Global will absorb the development costs and host the MOOCs on its OBREAL Global Training Platform.

Follow-up projects

One aspect of Vita that still requires further exploration between the partners in collaborative online teaching. This would be a direct extension of the work done to co-develop modules: Several partners have already committed to work together in designing COIL approaches to teaching the modules in the future. URV will spearhead the application for a Blended Intensive Programme under Erasmus+, based on the Vita modules. In addition, OBREAL Global, URV, UPO and UBx have applied for and just won an Erasmus+ Innovation Partnership (KA2) that will develop an interactive training and industry needs assessment platform for regional development related to the wine sector (ENOTOUR). Further project applications are being planned which utilize and exploit the Vita results and underpin the partnerships that have been created.