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INNSENS (TRAINING IN INNOVATION THROUGH THE CONSUMER AND SENSORY SCIENCES)

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1- Background of the Project

Innovation and new product development is vital for the Food & Drink companies. But new's product launching has a high level of uncertainty.

The use of Sensory analysis and Consumer Research is a powerfull discipline that helps companies to obtain and handle useful information that minimize this risk.

Process of Development of New Products

CONCEPT IDENTIFICATION → **PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT** → **CONSUMER VALIDATION**

- **Usage and habits exploration**
- **Market trends studies**
- **Ideas creation and concept test**
- **Sensory analysis as a guide for selection and development of product prototypes**
- **Acceptability and preferences test**
- **Focus Group: communication, packaging, pricing**

But there is a lack of skills and competences related with Sensory Analysis and Consumer Research in the Small and Medium Size Companies. This is mainly due to:

- The complexity of the scientific area (involves psychology, physiology, statistics and food technology).
- A too theoric point of view of courses
- The lack of oficial degrees
- The lack of resources in the Small and Medium Size Companies

with the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union

Lifelong Learning Programme

www.innsens.eu

Creation of an innovative and efficient e-learning training program for the small and medium size companies (SMEs) of the Food & Drink sector, related with Sensory Analysis and Consumer Research Sciences

innsens
Innovation through the Consumer

Consortium

Collaboration of 5 European partners, ainia (Spain), IBA Bucuresti (from Rumania), SP (Sweden), SSICA (Italy) and UCPH (Denmark).

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

IBA

SSICA

ainia centro tecnológico

SP Science Partner

2- Project development

Following with the schedule of development of new products, the INNSENS project involves three phases. In February 2015, 1st phase of the project has been finished and 2nd phase is on going.

01 1st phase Training needs analysis

100 professionals of the Small and Medium Size companies from all food sectors have been explored by means of online **enquiries and interviews** among the five countries.

Results confirm the lack of European Small and Medium Size Companies of the Food and Drink sector on Sensory and Consumer's methods and standardized techniques.

Main demands and preferences expressed by the professionals have been:

✓**Flexibility**: Flexibility in the schedule time of the course and in the learning material to follow and duration of the course.

✓**Local Language**: Most of the professionals prefer to have the course in their local language.

✓**Relationships**:

- Interest in having the possibility of relationship between other **local participants** of the course **and** between other **European** participants of the course
- Interest in having **tutors** to follow-up participants and to dynamic the learning process
- Interest in following the course with **someone else from their company**

02 2nd phase Development of the course

The **design of the course** will have the specific target to focus and expand affordable basic sensory methods in the form of step by step guide covering theoretical aspects, advanced techniques and the applications of sensory analysis and consumer research.

5 versions of the course will be developed corresponding with the 5 languages of the members of the consortium.

The course will contain 9 modules.

Modules will include the following **learning elements**:

- lessons in the form of **narrated power points**,
- **practical exercises** and their answers (assignments),
- one **tests** for self-evaluation,
- other complementary but not compulsory material,
- simple and **illustrative videos** for practical aspects,
- a **forum** in each **local language and a European one**, for participants to share opinions, experiences, make networking
- **permanent support of tutors** during all the training process.

Only free software will be used.

Key concepts and processes of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training will be considered.

03 3rd phase Piloting of the training programme

The designed and developed course will be validated by means of a **pilot experience** that will consist in a first edition of each local language course.

At least **10 participants will follow each local course**.

Before the piloting of the course, a pre-pilot will be carried out with 5 participants from one country. The objective will be to identify possible problems and solve them.

The pilot experience will include a forum for tutors of each local language course, to share possible doubts, problems, improvement aspects…

During and after the piloting of each local language course at least two **evaluation actions** will be carried out:

✓**Interviews** to some of the participants and tutors

✓**Questionnaires to value the satisfaction** of participants related to the different aspects of the training course:

- training materials
- e-learning platform (based on Moodle) and
- tutors

A certification of participation in the "***Innovation through the Consumer and Sensory Science***" Course will be delivered.