

STRATUS

Advisor network for optimal fertilizers use

Press release #2: First Annual consortium meeting and general assembly meeting.

It has been one year since the launch of STRATUS in Pamplona, Spain, and the partners are meeting again for the project's first Annual Consortium Meeting and General Assembly. Members from all 14 partner institutions, as well as associate partners met in Athens, Greece to discuss the status of the project, looking back at what has been done over the last year and laying out the path for the next period. The Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) hosted the meeting at its emblematic Athens campus. The two-day event combined presentations from the different work packages with workshops and working sessions to advance the project goals while developing the skills of the STRATUS team.

The meeting started at 9am on January 14th with the welcoming of the partners at the university. During the first day, the group was updated on the progress of work packages one through four. Each of the package leaders gave an overview of the status of the WP activities including work progress, deviations, and the work plan for the year ahead. On top of these informative sessions, two working sessions took place.

The first working session related to work package three and it focused on performing a quick scan of some of the 52 good practices (GP) and research innovations (RI) already identified. This exercise allowed partners to get a better understanding of the systemic feasibility analysis developed by STRATUS partner ILVO, which has the objective of analyzing the farm-economics effects of the GPs and RIs, as well as other aspects such as farm-applicability, legal aspects, or effects on the value chain. The second work session of the day related to work package four, and it focused on the organization and monitoring of advisor's training. Members of ZLTO, who organized the training, wanted to know the groups opinions and ideas on how to maximize the effectiveness of the trainings to ensure an optimal impact on the advice on fertilization.

The second day of the meeting wasn't any less packed than the first one. The morning started with two working sessions. The first one, organized by STRATUS coordinator INTIA, had the goal of identifying challenges in the creation of the Communities of Practice and Fertilization Innovation Networks. Partners also discussed potential activities to overcome these challenges. During the second work session of the day members of AUA asked the partner for their opinions on the platform's inventory component's functionality. During the rest of the morning, the group heard from work package leaders about the status of work package five, related to the communication of the project as well as the dissemination and exploitation of results, and about work package eight which focuses on the management and coordination of the project. After all informative and working sessions of the day were done, the STRATUS General Assembly members held their annual meeting.

That afternoon and the next day, some of the members of the team stayed in Athens to participate in the first training session organized by ZLTO and ILVO in the context of WP4. This training focused on the development of soft skills, going over some ideas to help advisors engage more effectively with farmers.

Thanks to these meetings workshops, and work sessions, the STRATUS team members reflected on the status of the project and continued advancing its goals through collaborative work, all while developing a strong working relationship that will be essential to tackle the tasks planned for the year ahead.

STRATUS is an EU funded 60-month project that aims to connect advisors across Europe for accelerating knowledge creation and sharing on Integrated Fertilization Management, supporting farmers to bring this knowledge into practice to achieve the ambition of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies, thus reducing nutrient losses to the environment while maintaining soil fertility.