Doc. 300.1.2

# Higher Education Institution's Response

**Date: 27/11/2025**

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  **Public School of Higher Vocational Education and training-MIEEK**
- **Town: Paphos**
- **Programme of study**
  **Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  **In Greek:**

  Βιολογικές Κηπευτικές Καλλιέργειες (2 έτη / 120 ECTS)

  **In English:**

  Organic Horticultural Crops (2 years / 120 ECTS)
- **Language(s) of instruction: Greek**
- **Programme's status:** Currently operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

  **In Greek:** Concentrations
  **In English:** Concentrations

**The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the "Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws" of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].**

## A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*

    - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
    - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

## 1. Study programme and study programme's design and development
*(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)*

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| 1. The College needs to review the course descriptions to clearly separate the theoretical and practical components of each course with their corresponding lessons. The references for each course must be updated to include recent and relevant academic sources. | A thorough review has been made to all course analytical outlines, based on the recommendations of the Committee. Among these changes are the clear distinction between theoretical and practical parts of each course and also an update of the references of the courses (Annex 1). | Choose level of compliance: |
| 2. The space for field practicals is limited. The College must expand these facilities to meet the practical training requirements of the programme. | For the needs of practical training, an outdoor field (approximately 350 sq.m.) is available and students use it to install horticultural crops. They are thus able to carry out the necessary soil preparation, the installation of the irrigation system, the planting, but also all the necessary cultivation care and harvesting procedures of the products. Moreover, there is an experimental vineyard for the practical training of students in the viticulture course (CROP0203), as well as an aromatic & medical plants field (CROP 0403).<br>In addition, other than the experimental field, a greenhouse unit (350 sq.m.) of modified arched shape with polyethylene sheet as covering material has been provided at the premises of Agricultural Research Institute (A.R.I.) of Achelia. The greenhouse has the basic technical equipment (dynamic ventilation, cooling system, automatic irrigation, etc.) and is used in the context of the students' practical training. All the areas mentioned cover adequately the practical needs of the programme, as described in the objectives and learning outcomes. | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | Apart from all the above, in consultation with the management of A.R.I., one more outdoor field **(20mx7m=140 sq.m.)** next to the greenhouse will be allocated, which can be used for additional practical training of students (Annex 2). Also, in consultation with the Ministry of Education, actions have been initiated to secure funding for the technological upgrade of the existing greenhouse unit. To be more specific, economic and technical specifications have been created for this upgrade and letters have been sent to the Ministry of Education to investigate the possibility of securing relevant funding (Annexes 3,4). | |
| 3.There are no teaching laboratories for subjects such as entomology and soil chemistry, which restricts practical learning for students. This gap must be addressed promptly to provide proper laboratory training. | The students of CROP already use all the necessary equipment within the framework of the laboratory and practical part of the programme, either in the experimental field or in the classroom. Regarding the laboratory facility, it has been agreed that the chemical laboratory of the Technical School of Paphos will be provided. In this way, the students of the programme will immediately have the opportunity to use all the existing specialized equipment, such as pH meters, hygrometers, conductivity meters, refractometers, microscopes, stereoscopes etc. in a proper environment (Annex 5). In addition, the MIEEK Paphos Branch has already contacted the Ministry of Education in order to secure funding for ordering additional equipment, which will fully cover the needs of the programme. Specific economic and technical specifications have also been created for the extra equipment (Annexes 4, 6). | Choose level of compliance: |
| 4.Library facilities require improvement to better support | The MIEEK Regulations Manual (Section 4.1, 4.2 – Premises, Library, | Choose level of compliance: |

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| student learning and research. This includes expanding the physical collection, improving study spaces, and increasing access to electronic resources and databases. | pages 3-4, Annex 7) explicitly requires that each Branch ensures access to adequate physical and digital learning resources. In accordance with this framework, the MIEEK Paphos Branch already provides dedicated library facilities in Technical School premises, where the "Organic Horticultural- Crops" books are. There is a structured and updated Book List (Annex 8), which includes recent Greek and English-language titles in the fields of organic horticulture, crop production, and sustainable agriculture. Moreover, students of CROP have access to digital materials via the MIEEK e-learning platform (Moodle) and the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute e-Library portal. | |
| 5.More teaching staff should be encouraged to participate in research activities. This would strengthen the academic quality of the programme and ensure that teaching reflects recent developments in the field. | The Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training - MIEEK fully acknowledges the importance of linking teaching with research activities. Given the vocational orientation of the Organic Horticultural Crops programme, teaching is primarily based on applied knowledge and close collaboration with the agricultural industry. However, MIEEK actively encourages and facilitates the participation of teaching staff in research and innovation projects, mainly through the Erasmus+ framework and collaborations with the Cyprus University of Technology and the Agricultural Research Institute. Moreover, several instructors already possess significant research experience and publications in peer-reviewed journals, while new initiatives are being promoted to integrate applied research and innovation practices directly into the curriculum. The institution's Quality Assurance System ensures that new scientific and technological | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | developments in the field are continuously incorporated into teaching, thus maintaining strong synergies between current research and vocational education. | |
| 6.The composition and membership of the Local Committees lack clarity and should be clearly defined and made accessible on the programme's website. | At MIEEK there is full transparency regarding the composition and membership of the Local Committees.<br>According to the MIEEK Quality Assurance Manual (pages 09–13, Annex 9), each Branch operates several Local Committees with specific composition. For instance, the Local Internal Quality Committee is chaired by the Quality Assurance Officer, with members including the District Director, Assistant District Director, Academic Coordinators of selected programmes, and a student representative. The composition of these committees is formally approved by the MIEEK Council and functions under the framework of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Law of the Republic of Cyprus (L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021). This structure ensures the representation of both management and academic staff, as well as the student body, in accordance with the MIEEK Quality Assurance framework.<br>To further address the Evaluation Committee's recommendation, steps have been taken in order to publish the composition of not only the Central Committees, which are already uploaded on the official MIEEK website (www.mieek.ac.cy) but also of the Local ones. In this way, permanent public access and alignment with the principle of transparency stipulated in the MIEEK Study Regulations (2025-2026) will be ensured. | |

## 2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment
*(ESG 1.3)*

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| 1. Learning Outcomes (ILOs) Rewrite current learning outcomes as intended learning outcomes (ILOs) that are clear and can be measured. Match ILOs with Bloom's Taxonomy, choosing verbs that suit the qualification level. Set the number of ILOs per course at 3–6 focused outcomes. Make sure course content and assessments are directly linked to ILOs, showing how each outcome is taught and tested. | As part of the in-depth review of course outlines, all the necessary modifications were made to all courses intended learning outcomes, based on the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee (Annex 1). | Choose level of compliance: |
| 2. Course Content Structure Create a week-by-week teaching plan in each course specification that shows: Theory sessions, practical sessions, main learning activities Use the same format for course content across all specifications for consistency. | As part of the in-depth review of course structure, all the necessary modifications were made to all course content, in order to introduce a week-by-week teaching plan, defining theoretical and practical sessions in a clear and consistent way (Annex 1). | Choose level of compliance: |
| 3. Student Assessment Design and Transparency Check the weighting and distribution of marks to keep things fair, balanced, and connected to ILOs. Give clear information about the number, type, and format of assessments (such as written assignments, reports, tests, projects). Provide an assessment timetable (preferably in table format) with deadlines and submission dates so students can organise their time. Review assessment briefs and marked work before release. | As part of the revision of CROP course outlines, the student grading process was reviewed. Particular emphasis was placed on the way students are assessed through the assignment of theoretical and practical assignments. For this purpose, a special directive was issued with all the necessary details (deadlines, submission dates, etc.) which was communicated by the instructor to the students at the beginning of the semester (Annexes 1, 11). | Choose level of compliance: |
| 4. Learning Resources and Bibliography There are currently no laboratory facilities available to the students and just 2 microscopes. The students would benefit from enhanced laboratory facilities to further investigate crop growth and development. Refresh and broaden | The students of CROP already use all the necessary equipment within the framework of the laboratory and practical part of the programme, either in the experimental field or in the classroom. Regarding the laboratory facility, it has been agreed that the chemical laboratory | Choose level of compliance: |

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| the reading lists with more up-to-date credible sources. Building up the organic horticulture/farming section of the library would help students access new books, articles and reports. | of the Technical School of Paphos will be provided. In this way, the students of the programme will immediately have the opportunity to use all the existing specialized equipment, such as pH meters, hygrometers, conductivity meters, refractometers, microscopes, stereoscopes etc. in a proper environment (Annex 5).<br>In addition, the MIEEK Paphos Branch has already contacted the Ministry of Education in order to secure funding for ordering additional equipment, which will fully cover the needs of the programme. Specific economic and technical specifications have also been created for the extra equipment (Annexes 4, 6).<br><br>The reading list of the programme has been recently reviewed and updated with recent bibliography that covers a wide range of organic agriculture and sustainable farming. All these books are available in the library of the Technical School of Paphos (Annex 8). | |
| 5. Resubmission/retake procedures<br>The resubmission process should be explained more clearly, making sure it treats students facing difficulties reasonably. | The resubmission and re-examination process at MIEEK is clearly defined in the Regulations of Studies, uploaded on the MIEEK website, thus ensuring fairness and equal treatment for students who face difficulties. Specifically:<br>Re-examinations are decided by the Programme Council within fifteen (15) days after the publication of results and are permitted for up to two courses per semester for students who did not achieve a grade of 50/100. (MIEEK Regulations, pp. 14–15, Annex 7)<br>In exceptional cases, where failure is not due to negligence or where mitigating circumstances (e.g. medical reasons) exist, a student may be granted one additional re- | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | examination upon decision of the Programme Council, provided that all supporting documents are submitted within one week (MIEEK Regulations, p. 15).<br>The Regulations also make provision for justified absences from examinations, allowing students to be examined on another date in cases of serious illness or other documented reasons, upon approval by the Programme Council (MIEEK Regulations, p. 12).<br>Moreover, reasonable accommodations (such as additional time or alternative examination formats) are provided for students with documented learning or health difficulties, upon submission of medical or expert evidence (MIEEK Regulations, p. 12).<br>Therefore, the existing MIEEK framework already ensures clarity, transparency, and fairness, while allowing reasonable flexibility and a student-centred approach for those facing documented challenges. | |
| 6 Consider renaming some of the courses studied to make them more attractive to students. | As part of the review of courses structure, all the necessary modifications on the names were made in order to increase interest among students. In addition, in the context of the continuous upgrading of the CROP programme and taking into account students' suggestions through their programme evaluation process (MIEEK Regulations, pp. 26-27), the coordination team decided to add the new course of "Arboriculture" instead of "Introduction to Agricultural Chemistry" and increase by one period the practical courses (CROP0106, 0206, 0306, 0406).<br>These changes will make the programme even more attractive and enhance its practical nature (Annex 1 ). | |

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| A training session or workshop should be arranged for all teaching staff covering improvements to student assessment, resubmission/retake procedures and course specifications. | Moreover, based on the MIEEK Regulations of Studies (2025–2026), staff training and continuous professional development are already an integral and regulated part of the institution's quality assurance system:<br>The Regulations explicitly state (p. 5) that the training and upskilling of teaching staff are carried out through training programmes offered by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, as well as through special seminars organized by the Academic Coordinators of each Programme, according to its specific needs. For instance, a two days webinar had been organized recently in collaboration with the Cyprus University of Technology on agricultural technology issues (Annex 11).<br>Furthermore, through participation in Erasmus+ programmes, members of the teaching staff receive specialized training on topics directly related to student assessment and programme implementation, and are obliged to disseminate the acquired knowledge to their colleagues (MIEEK Regulations, p. 5). Finally, after the completion of all changes and upgrades to the programme, a special briefing session will be delivered to all teaching staff with guidance on improving these aspects of student assessment, resubmission/retake and course specifications. | |

## 3. Teaching staff
*(ESG 1.5)*

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| 1.Increase the number of staff members with doctoral qualifications to strengthen research capacity, improve research-informed teaching, and give students access to advanced expertise and current developments in organic agricultural production. | At MIEEK, the existing framework already ensures that teaching staff possess academic and professional qualifications fully aligned with the level and orientation of CyQF Level 5B programmes:<br>As stipulated in MIEEK Regulations (2025-26), at least 70% of the teaching staff holds an academic qualification one level higher than the level of the programme they teach (MIEEK Regulations, p. 5, Annex 7). This criterion fully complies with the requirements for Level 5B vocational programmes, where a PhD degree is not a prerequisite.<br>Moreover, one instructor of the CROP programme of studies already holds a PhD, further enhancing the academic depth and research-informed character of the teaching team.<br>In addition, MIEEK employs experienced professionals from the industry, ensuring that students benefit from applied expertise and current developments in the professional field, in line with the institution's applied, vocational mission (MIEEK Regulations, p. 5).<br>Continuous training and pedagogical development for teaching staff are secured through programmes of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and Erasmus+ mobility, supporting the enhancement of teaching quality and innovation (MIEEK Regulations, p. 5).<br>Therefore, given the applied vocational character of MIEEK programmes (CyQF 5B), the existing staff qualifications — including the presence of a PhD holder — are | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | fully adequate and consistent with the academic and professional standards defined by the institutional framework and level of study. | |
| 2.Expand and vary training provision for new and existing staff to develop their knowledge and skills, keep them informed of current pedagogical methods, and build their academic capabilities in line with developments in organic agriculture and educational practice. | Structured and ongoing staff development is already embedded in the institutional framework, ensuring continuous enhancement of pedagogical and subject-specific competence:<br>MIEEK Regulations 2025-2026 explicitly provide that the training and professional development of teaching staff are systematically implemented through programmes of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and also through specialized seminars organized by the Academic Coordinators of each programme, according to identified needs. Furthermore, participation in Erasmus+ programmes offers both new and existing staff opportunities for training, mobility, and exposure to European best practices, with an obligation to disseminate acquired knowledge to the rest of the teaching team upon return (MIEEK Regulations, p. 5). Typical examples of participation in seminars, workshops and conferences are attached (Annex 12).<br>Therefore, the existing MIEEK framework already ensures structured, diversified, and continuous professional development for teaching staff, keeping them aligned with modern pedagogical methodologies, sectoral innovations, and the evolving needs of vocational education. | Choose level of compliance: |

## 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
*(ESG 1.4)*

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| 1.The institution should introduce recognition schemes for students who perform well. This would motivate students to work harder, engage more deeply with their studies, and improve overall performance. Recognition could include certificates, awards, scholarships, or public acknowledgement at ceremonies or adding categories of achievement e.g. pass, merit and distinction. Recognising students' hard work and success creates a culture where excellence is valued and expected. | Mechanisms for recognizing and rewarding student excellence are already established within the institutional framework. According to MIEEK Regulations 2025-2026 (p. 21, Annex 7) honorable mentions are awarded to students who have completed their studies and achieved an overall average of "Excellent" (90-100). To be more specific, students who achieve outstanding academic performance upon graduation are formally awarded prizes of significant value, which may include monetary awards, scholarships, or professional equipment related to their field of study. These awards are presented during the official graduation ceremonies, in the presence of institutional representatives and stakeholders, thereby giving public recognition to student achievement. The recognition of top-performing students thus serves a dual purpose: it rewards commitment and excellence, while also enhancing the overall academic standards and institutional ethos of MIEEK. | Choose level of compliance: |
| 2.The institution should also allow students to retake selected modules to improve their grades. Letting students choose two or three courses at the end of the spring semester for re-examination would give them a chance to obtain better results. This shows faith in students' potential and promotes a culture of continuous improvement and success. | The existing MIEEK framework already provides structured opportunities for students to retake modules and improve their academic performance. According to MIEEK Regulations (pp. 14–15, Annex 7), students who fail to achieve a passing grade may select up to two courses per semester for re-examination, with additional opportunities granted in exceptional circumstances. Also, in the next review of MIEEK Regulations, the | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | possibility of offering students the opportunity to retake certain modules to enhance their results will be examined. The Quality Assurance Manual further ensures that these procedures are transparent, equitable, and supportive of student progress, fully aligning with the spirit of the Evaluation Committee's recommendation. | |

## 5. Learning resources and student support
*(ESG 1.6)*

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| 1.Build up the library's collection of books and materials, especially in agricultural sciences, with recent textbooks, reference works, and new publications | The MIEEK Paphos Branch has already updated its library's physical collection of "Organic Horticultural Crops" books. All the books are in the Paphos Technical School library. There is a structured and updated Book List (Annex 8), which includes recent Greek and English-language titles in the fields of organic horticulture, crop production, and sustainable agriculture. | Choose level of compliance: |
| 2.Set up subscriptions to key scientific databases like Elsevier, Wiley, Springer, and specialist agricultural databases in addition to EBSCO | MIEEK students and teaching staff already have free access to a wide range of scientific and educational databases that support research, learning, and teaching across all programmes:<br>According to MIEEK Regulations of Studies (p. 4), students have direct access to electronic libraries and databases through the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, which provides digital access to international scientific resources via its online platform (http://www.pi.ac.cy).<br>This access includes a broad collection of academic journals, e-books, and research materials across disciplines, including those relevant to agriculture and environmental sciences.<br>Therefore, the institution already provides structured and institutional access to international academic databases, fulfilling the educational and research needs of its programmes within the framework defined by national and institutional policies. | Choose level of compliance: |
| 3.Set up a proper Botany/Chemistry laboratory with enough space, specimens, and equipment for plant | The students of CROP already use all the necessary equipment within the framework of the laboratory and practical part of the programme, | Choose level of compliance: |

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| identification, herbarium work, and practical sessions | either in the experimental field or in the classroom. Regarding the laboratory facility, it has been agreed that the chemical laboratory of the Technical School of Paphos will be provided. In this way, the students of the programme will immediately have the opportunity to use all the existing specialized equipment, such as pH meters, hygrometers, conductivity meters, refractometers, microscopes, stereoscopes etc. in a proper environment (Annex 5). In addition, the MIEEK Paphos Branch has already contacted the Ministry of Education in order to secure funding for ordering additional equipment, which will fully cover the needs of the programme. Specific economic and technical specifications have also been created for the extra equipment (Annexes 4, 6). | |
| 4.Increase the space for practical farming and field work beyond the current greenhouse facilities and experimental plots | For the needs of practical training, an outdoor field (approximately 350 sq.m.) is available and students use it to install horticultural crops. They are thus able to carry out the necessary soil preparation, the installation of the irrigation system, the planting, but also all the necessary cultivation care and harvesting procedures of the products. Moreover, there is an experimental vineyard for the practical training of students in the viticulture course (CROP0203), as well as an aromatic & medical plants field (CROP 0403).<br>All the areas mentioned adequately cover the practical needs of the programme, as described in the objectives and learning outcomes. Apart from all the above, in consultation with the management of A.R.I., one more outdoor field (20mx7m=140 sq.m.) next to the greenhouse will be allocated which | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | can be used for additional practical training of students (Annex 2). | |
| 5.Add more greenhouse facilities and make them bigger for controlled-environment horticulture training | According to MIEEK Regulations of Studies (p. 3), MIEEK programmes are conducted within the facilities of Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training (ΤΕΣΕΚ), which include laboratories, workshops, classrooms, and specialized spaces for applied training. These facilities are designed to support hands-on and industry-relevant learning experiences. In this context, a greenhouse unit **(350 sq.m.)** of modified arched shape with polyethylene sheet as covering material has been provided at the premises of the Agricultural Research Institute of Achelia. The greenhouse has the basic technical equipment (dynamic ventilation, cooling system, automatic irrigation, etc.) and is used in the context of the students' practical training. The size of the specific greenhouse is considered to be satisfying and fully covers the demands of the programme's practical courses. Moreover, discussions have already begun with the management of the Agricultural Research Institute of Achelia in order for an additional greenhouse to be allocated to CROP students of the MIEEK Paphos Branch (Annex 14 ). | Choose level of compliance: |
| 6.Integrate higher tech solutions into the greenhouse and agricultural equipment. | In consultation with the Ministry of Education, actions have been initiated to secure funding for the technological upgrade of the existing greenhouse unit. To be more specific, economic and technical specifications have been created for this upgrade and letters have been sent to the Ministry of Education to investigate the possibility of securing relevant funding (Annexes 3,4). | |

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| 7.Human Support Resources: The establishment and formation of a proper, formally structured External Stakeholder Committee is required and necessary, and should be implemented, put into place, and made operational as soon as possible in the near future. It is strongly advised and recommended that the institution establish, formalise, and sign comprehensive Memoranda of Collaboration, Understanding, and Cooperation with relevant private companies, agricultural enterprises, industry partners, and universities, both domestic and international, for the purpose of further interaction, ongoing dialogue, knowledge exchange, student placement opportunities, collaborative research initiatives, and mutually beneficial partnerships. | The Quality Assurance Manual of MIEEK (p. 35-36, Annex 9) explicitly describes the "Social and Entrepreneurial Dimension of the Programme", outlining that each programme develops cooperation with other institutions and enterprises to promote knowledge exchange, applied learning, and connection with the labour market. Additionally, MIEEK Regulations of Studies (pp. 4–5) confirm that MIEEK programmes operate in close cooperation with the productive sector and social partners, aligning training content with labour market needs.<br>Moreover, within the specific context of the CROP programme, formal Memoranda of Cooperation have already been signed with:<br>- Pangrotikos Farmers' Association of Limassol, and<br>- Cyprus Organic Farmers' Association,<br>establishing a solid foundation for continuous dialogue, student placements, and collaboration with the agricultural industry.<br>Moreover, the CROP programme of studies is in the process of formalizing its existing collaboration with both the Agricultural Research Institute and the Cyprus University of Technology.<br>Therefore, the existing MIEEK institutional framework already embeds structured collaboration with external stakeholders, while the CROP programme has actively implemented partnerships in line with the Evaluation Committee's recommendation (Annex 13). | |

## 6. Additional for doctoral programmes

*(ALL ESG)*

| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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## 7. Eligibility (Joint programme)

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| Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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## B. Conclusions and final remarks

| Conclusions and final remarks **by EEC** | Actions Taken by the Institution | For Official Use ONLY |
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| **Knowledge Component:** While the curriculum covers comprehensive specialized knowledge in organic horticulture, the limited library resources, restricted database access (only EBSCO), and outdated course references hinder students' ability to engage with current theoretical and factual knowledge in the field. The absence of key scientific databases (Elsevier, Wiley, Springer) prevents students from accessing contemporary research essential at this qualification level. | The MIEEK Regulations Manual (Section 4.1, 4.2 – Premises, Library, pages 3-4, annex 7) explicitly requires that each MIEEK Branch ensures access to adequate physical and digital learning resources. In accordance with this framework, the MIEEK Paphos Branch already provides dedicated library facilities in the Paphos Technical School premises, where the "Organic Horticultural Crops" books are. There is a structured and updated Book List (Annex 8), which includes recent Greek and English-language titles in the fields of organic horticulture, crop production, and sustainable agriculture. Moreover, students of the CROP programme have access to digital materials via the MIEEK e-learning platform (Moodle) and the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute e-Library portal. This access includes a broad collection of academic journals, e-books, and research materials across disciplines, including those relevant to agriculture and environmental sciences.<br>Therefore, the institution already provides structured and institutional access to international academic databases, fulfilling the educational and research needs of its programmes within the framework defined by national and institutional policies. | Choose level of compliance: |
| **Skills Component**: EQF Level 5 requires "a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems." The programme's critical deficiency in physical resources—specifically the absence of teaching laboratories | For the needs of practical training, an outdoor field (approximately 350 sq.m.) is available and students use it to install horticultural crops. They are thus able to carry out the necessary soil preparation, the installation of the irrigation system, the planting, but also all the | Choose level of compliance: |

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| (Microscopy-Botany, Plant Physiology-Soil Science, Chemistry), limited field space, low tech greenhouse facilities, and only 2 microscopes—fundamentally undermines students' ability to develop the comprehensive practical skills expected at this level. | necessary cultivation care and harvesting procedures of the products. Moreover, there is an experimental vineyard for the practical training of students in the viticulture course (CROP0203) as well as an aromatic & medical plants field (CROP 0403).<br>In addition, other than the experimental field, a greenhouse unit (350 sq.m.) of modified arched shape with polyethylene sheet as covering material has been provided at the premises of Agricultural Research Institute of Achelia. The greenhouse has the basic technical equipment (dynamic ventilation, cooling system, automatic irrigation, etc.) and is used in the context of the students' practical training. All the areas mentioned adequately cover the practical needs of the programme, as described in the objectives and learning outcomes.<br>Apart from all the above, in consultation with the management of A.R.I., one more outdoor field (20mx7m=140 sq.m.) next to the greenhouse will be allocated, which can be used for additional practical training of students (Annex 2). Also, in consultation with the Ministry of Education, actions have been initiated to secure funding for the technological upgrade of the existing greenhouse unit. To be more specific, economic and technical specifications have been created for this upgrade and letters have been sent to the Ministry of Education to investigate the possibility of securing relevant funding (Annexes 3,4).<br>In addition, students of the CROP programme already use all the necessary equipment within the framework of the laboratory and practical part of the programme, either in the experimental field or in the classroom. Regarding the | |

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| | laboratory facility, it has been agreed that the chemical laboratory of the Technical School of Paphos will be provided. In this way, the students of the programme will immediately have the opportunity to use all the existing specialized equipment, such as pH meters, hygrometers, conductivity meters, refractometers, microscopes, stereoscopes etc. in a proper environment (Annex 5). In addition, the MIEEK Paphos Branch has already contacted the Ministry of Education in order to secure funding for ordering additional equipment, which will fully cover the needs of the programme. Specific economic and technical specifications have also been created for the extra equipment (Annexes 4, 6). | |
| **Responsibility and Autonomy Component**: The programme's absence of research activities (except for one research-active PhD holder) limits students' exposure to independent inquiry and critical evaluation expected at this level. The lack of a Research Committee and formal research structures restricts opportunities for students to "review and develop performance" through research-informed learning. | The Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training - MIEEK fully acknowledges the importance of linking teaching with research activities. Given the vocational orientation of the Organic Horticultural Crops programme, teaching is primarily based on applied knowledge and close collaboration with the agricultural industry. However, MIEEK actively encourages and facilitates the participation of teaching staff in research and innovation projects, mainly through the Erasmus+ framework and collaborations with the Cyprus University of Technology and the Agricultural Research Institute. Moreover, several instructors already possess significant research experience and publications in peer-reviewed journals, while new initiatives are being promoted to integrate applied research and innovation practices directly into the curriculum. The institution's Quality Assurance System ensures | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | that new scientific and technological developments in the field are continuously incorporated into teaching, thus maintaining strong synergies between current research and vocational education. | |
| **Laboratory Facilities:** The complete absence of specialized teaching laboratories for entomology, plant physiology, soil science, and chemistry is unacceptable for a diploma programme within the frame of agricultural sciences. This deficiency must be addressed as a matter of urgency. | As mentioned above, the students of the CROP programme already use all the necessary equipment within the framework of the laboratory and practical part of the programme, either in the experimental field or in the classroom. Regarding the laboratory facility, it has been agreed that the chemical laboratory of the Technical School of Paphos will be provided. In this way, the students of the programme will immediately have the opportunity to use all the existing specialized equipment, such as pH meters, hygrometers, conductivity meters, refractometers, microscopes, stereoscopes etc. in a proper environment (Annex 5). In addition, the MIEEK Paphos Branch has already contacted the Ministry of Education in order to secure funding for ordering additional equipment, which will fully cover the needs of the programme. Specific economic and technical specifications have also been created for the extra equipment (Annexes 4, 6). | Choose level of compliance: |
| **Practical Training Spaces:** There is only access to one dedicated low tech greenhouse which should be the cornerstone of vocational education at this level. | According to MIEEK Regulations of Studies (p. 3), MIEEK programmes are conducted within the facilities of Technical and Vocational Schools of Education and Training (ΤΕΣΕΚ), which include laboratories, workshops, classrooms, and specialized spaces for applied training. These facilities are designed to support hands-on and industry-relevant learning experiences. In this context, a greenhouse unit (350 sq.m.) of modified arched shape with | Choose level of compliance: |

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| | polyethylene sheet as covering material has been provided at the premises of the Agricultural Research Institute of Achelia. The greenhouse has the basic technical equipment (dynamic ventilation, cooling system, automatic irrigation, etc.) and is used in the context of the students' practical training. The size of the specific greenhouse is considered to be satisfying and fully covers the demands of the programme's practical courses. Moreover, discussions have already begun with the management of the Agricultural Research Institute of Achelia in order for an additional greenhouse to be allocated to the CROP students of the MIEEK Paphos Branch (Annex 14).<br>Apart from the above, in consultation with the Ministry of Education, actions have been initiated to secure funding for the technological upgrade of the existing greenhouse unit. To be more specific, economic and technical specifications have been created for this upgrade and letters have been sent to the Ministry of Education to investigate the possibility of securing relevant funding (Annexes 3,4). | |
| **Library and Information Resources:** The shared library with limited holdings and restricted electronic database access falls short of supporting diploma-level independent study and research skills development. | The MIEEK Paphos Branch has already updated its library's physical collection of "Organic Horticultural Crops" books. All the books are in the Paphos Technical School library. There is a structured and updated Book List (Annex 8), which includes recent Greek and English language titles in the fields of organic horticulture, crop production, and sustainable agriculture.<br>Moreover, MIEEK students and teaching staff have also free access to a wide range of scientific and educational databases that support research, learning, and teaching | |

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| | across all programmes: according to MIEEK Regulations of Studies (p. 4), students have direct access to electronic libraries and databases through the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, which provides digital access to international scientific resources via its online platform (http://www.pi.ac.cy).<br>This access includes a broad collection of academic journals, e-books, and research materials across disciplines, including those relevant to agriculture and environmental sciences.<br>Therefore, the institution already provides structured and institutional access to international academic databases, fulfilling the educational and research needs of its programmes within the framework defined by national and institutional policies. | |
| **Governance and Quality Assurance Enhancement**<br>The programme lacks essential governance structures required for comprehensive quality assurance:<br>•Student Affairs Committee – needed for proper student support<br>•Disciplinary Committee – required for procedural fairness<br>•Research Committee – essential for developing research culture<br>Establishing these committees will strengthen institutional capacity to deliver quality assurance aligned with European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). | According to the MIEEK Quality Assurance Manual (pages 09–13, Annex 9), besides Central Committees which are already published on the MIEEK website, each Branch operates Local Committees. The composition of these Committees is formally approved by the MIEEK Council and functions under the framework of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Law of the Republic of Cyprus (L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021).<br><br>-The current composition of **the Central Student Affairs Committee** is available on the MIEEK website.<br>-President: The Head of Student Affairs, Ministry of Education.<br>-Members:<br>• Alexis Kosteas, District Director of MIEEK<br>• Michalis Anastasiou, Academic Coordinator of Bakery and Pastry programme | |

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| | • Sophocles Sophocleous, Academic Coordinator of Design & CNC Technology – Woodworking Industry programme<br>• Lina Ellina, Academic Coordinator of Supply Chain Management and Maritime Studies programme<br>• A Student Representative, Philippos Philippou - Limassol MIEEK Branch.<br><br>As far as **the Local Student Affair Committee** is concerned, it is clearly defined in the MIEEK Quality Assurance Manual (page 12) that at District level, issues relating to students are managed by the Academic or Local Coordinator of the Programme, who, among other things, undertakes to guide, even on an individual basis, the students, taking into account their interests and their scientific and academic development.<br><br>-The current composition of **the Central Disciplinary Committee** is available on the MIEEK website.<br>-President: Dr. Elias Margadjis, General Director of MIEEK<br>-Secretary: Head of Student Affairs, Ministry of Education<br>-Members:<br>• Michalis Anastasiou, Academic Coordinator of Bakery and Pastry programme<br>• Sophocles Sophocleous, Academic Coordinator of Design & CNC Technology – Woodworking Industry programme<br>• Lina Ellina, Academic Coordinator of Supply Chain Management and Maritime Studies programme<br>• Two Student Representatives: Pavlos Georgiou- Limassol MIEEK Branch, George Kounnas - Limassol MIEEK Branch.<br>As far as **the Local Disciplinary Committee** is concerned, it is clearly defined in the MIEEK Quality | |

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| | Assurance Manual (page 12) that it consists of:<br>• The Assistant District Director, who also acts as Secretary of the Committee<br>• 2 Academic or Local Coordinators of Study Programmes<br>• 2 Student Representatives.<br>Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, the District Director or Officer designated by the President of the MIEEK Council may also be summoned.<br><br>Finally, given the vocational orientation of the Organic Horticultural Crops programme, teaching is primarily based on applied knowledge and close collaboration with the agricultural industry. However, MIEEK actively encourages and facilitates the participation of teaching staff in research and innovation projects, mainly through the Erasmus+ framework and collaborations with the Cyprus University of Technology and the Agricultural Research Institute of Achelia.<br>The institution's Quality Assurance System ensures that new scientific and technological developments in the field are continuously incorporated into teaching, thus maintaining strong synergies between current research and vocational education.<br>In this context, the formation **of a Research Committee** could be considered, adapted to the specificities of level CyQF 5B, focusing mainly on:<br>• practical, small-scale projects linked to industry<br>• the promotion of "research-informed teaching" through continuous training of trainers<br>• the dissemination of good learning practices through applied technical investigation. | |

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| | In this way, the Committee's suggestion can be implemented without altering the main professional purpose of the programme, but on the contrary, strengthening it. | |
| **Course specifications require substantial revision:**<br>**1.Learning Outcomes:** Current learning outcomes must be rewritten as measurable Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy, using appropriate action verbs for EQF Level 5 (e.g., analyze, evaluate, create, design). | As part of the in-depth review of courses outlines, all the necessary modifications were made to all courses intended learning outcomes, based on the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee (Annex 1). | |
| **2.Assessment Alignment:** Assessment methods must explicitly demonstrate how each ILO is measured, with transparent weighting that reflects the complexity and importance of different learning objectives. | As part of the revision of CROP course outlines, the student grading process was reviewed. Particular emphasis was placed on the way students are assessed through the assignment of theoretical and practical assignments. For this purpose, a special directive was issued with all the necessary details (deadlines, submission dates, etc.) which was communicated by the instructor to the students at the beginning of the semester (Annexes 1, 11). | |
| **3.Theoretical vs. Practical Distinction:** Course descriptions must clearly separate theoretical and practical components with corresponding contact hours, ensuring ECTS credits accurately reflect actual student workload. | A thorough review has been made to all course analytical outlines, based on the recommendations of the Committee. Among these changes are the clear distinction between theoretical and practical parts of each course and also an update of the references of the courses (Annex 1). | |
| **4.Bibliography Updates:** All course reading lists must be updated with current, relevant academic sources (within the last 5-10 years where possible). | As part of the in-depth review of course structure, all the necessary modifications were made to all courses content in order to include more recent bibliographies and academic sources where available (Annex 1). | |

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| **Teaching Staff Development**<br>1.Increased PhD Holders: Recruiting additional staff with doctoral qualifications will enhance research-informed teaching and academic rigor. | At MIEEK, the existing framework already ensures that teaching staff possess academic and professional qualifications fully aligned with the level and orientation of CyQF Level 5B programmes:<br>As stipulated in the MIEEK Regulations (2025-26), at least 70% of the teaching staff holds an academic qualification one level higher than the level of the programme they teach (MIEEK Regulations, p. 5, Annex 7). This criterion fully complies with the requirements for Level 5B vocational programmes, where a PhD degree is not a prerequisite. Moreover, one instructor of the CROP programme of studies already holds a PhD, further enhancing the academic depth and research-informed character of the teaching team.<br>In addition, MIEEK employs experienced professionals from the industry, ensuring that students benefit from applied expertise and current developments in the professional field, in line with the institution's applied, vocational mission (MIEEK Regulations, p. 5). Continuous training and pedagogical development for teaching staff are secured through programmes of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and Erasmus+ mobility, supporting the enhancement of teaching quality and innovation (MIEEK Regulations, p. 5).<br>Therefore, given the applied vocational character of MIEEK programmes (CyQF 5B), the existing staff qualifications — including the presence of a PhD holder — are fully adequate and consistent with the academic and professional standards defined by the institutional framework and level of study. | |

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| 2.Research Engagement: Encouraging all staff to engage in scholarly activities, publications, and research will ensure teaching reflects current developments in organic agriculture. | The Public School of Higher Vocational Education and Training - MIEEK fully acknowledges the importance of linking teaching with research activities. Given the vocational orientation of the Organic Horticultural Crops programme, teaching is primarily based on applied knowledge and close collaboration with the agricultural industry. However, MIEEK actively encourages and facilitates the participation of teaching staff in research and innovation projects, mainly through the Erasmus+ framework and collaborations with the Cyprus University of Technology and the Agricultural Research Institute of Achelia.<br>Moreover, several instructors already possess significant research experience and publications in peer-reviewed journals, while new initiatives are being promoted to integrate applied research and innovation practices directly into the curriculum. The institution's Quality Assurance System ensures that new scientific and technological developments in the field are continuously incorporated into teaching, thus maintaining strong synergies between current research and vocational education. | |
| 3.Professional Development: Systematic training in pedagogical approaches, assessment design, and curriculum development aligned with EQF descriptors. | Structured and ongoing staff development is already embedded in the institutional framework, ensuring continuous enhancement of pedagogical and subject-specific competence:<br>MIEEK Regulations 2025-2026 explicitly provide that the training and professional development of teaching staff are systematically implemented through programmes of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and through specialized seminars organized by the Academic | |

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| | Coordinators of each programme, according to identified needs. Furthermore, participation in Erasmus+ programmes offers both new and existing staff opportunities for training, mobility, and exposure to European best practices, with an obligation to disseminate acquired knowledge to the rest of the teaching team upon return (MIEEK Regulations, p. 5). Typical examples of participation in seminars, workshops and conferences are attached (Annex 12).<br>Therefore, the existing MIEEK framework already ensures structured, diversified, and continuous professional development for teaching staff, keeping them aligned with modern pedagogical methodologies, sectoral innovations, and the evolving needs of vocational education. | |
| **Student Support Enhancement**<br>1.Recognition Schemes: Establish awards, scholarships, and public acknowledgment for high-performing students to foster a culture of excellence. | Mechanisms for recognizing and rewarding student excellence are already established within the institutional framework. According to MIEEK Regulations 2025-2026 (p. 21, Annex 7) honorable mentions are awarded to students who have completed their studies and achieved an overall average of "Excellent" (90-100). To be more specific, students who achieve outstanding academic performance upon graduation are formally awarded prizes of significant value, which may include monetary awards, scholarships, or professional equipment related to their field of study. These awards are presented during the official graduation ceremonies, in the presence of institutional representatives and stakeholders, thereby giving public recognition to student achievement. The recognition of top-performing | |

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| | students thus serves a dual purpose: it rewards commitment and excellence, while also enhancing the overall academic standards and institutional ethos of MIEEK. | |
| 2.Flexible Reassessment: Allow students to retake selected modules (2-3 courses) at the end of spring semester to improve grades, supporting continuous improvement and student success. | The existing MIEEK framework already provides structured opportunities for students to retake modules and improve their academic performance. According to MIEEK Regulations (pp. 14–15, Annex 7), students who fail to achieve a passing grade may select up to two courses per semester for re-examination, with additional opportunities granted in exceptional circumstances. Also, in the next review of MIEEK Regulations, the possibility of offering students the opportunity to retake certain modules to enhance their results will be examined. The Quality Assurance Manual further ensures that these procedures are transparent, equitable, and supportive of student progress, fully aligning with the spirit of the Evaluation Committee's recommendation. | |
| 3.Transparent Mitigating Circumstances: Clarify procedures for students experiencing difficulties, ensuring fair treatment and adequate time for retakes (current 2-week period may be insufficient). | According to MIEEK Regulations (pp. 14–15, Annex 7), a student is referred for re-examination if he/she has not secured a score of 50/100 (or above) in a specific course. The maximum number of courses for which a student is entitled to re-examination is two (2) courses per semester. Re-examinations are conducted within fifteen (15) days of the announcement of the semester results. Moreover, in exceptional cases in which his/her failure is not due to inexcusable negligence or there are mitigating factors, he/she may be allowed to sit for another re-examination, by decision of the CROP Local Programme Council. | |

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| **Human Support Resources**<br>The establishment and formation of a proper, formally structured External Stakeholder Committee is strongly recommended and should be implemented as soon as possible in the near future. | The Quality Assurance Manual of MIEEK (p. 35-36, Annex 9) explicitly describes the "Social and Entrepreneurial Dimension of the Programme", outlining that each programme develops cooperation with other institutions and enterprises to promote knowledge exchange, applied learning, and connection with the labour market. Additionally, MIEEK Regulations of Studies (pp. 4–5) confirm that MIEEK programmes operate in close cooperation with the productive sector and social partners, aligning training content with market needs. Moreover, within the specific context of the CROP programme, formal Memoranda of Cooperation have already been signed with:<br>- Pangrotikos Farmers' Association of Limassol, and<br>- Cyprus Organic Farmers' Association,<br>establishing a solid foundation for continuous dialogue, student placements, and collaboration with the agricultural industry.<br>Moreover, the CROP programme of studies is in the process of formalizing its existing collaboration with both the Agricultural Research Institute of Achelia and the Cyprus University of Technology.<br>Therefore, the existing MIEEK institutional framework already embeds structured collaboration with external stakeholders, while the CROP programme has actively implemented partnerships in line with the Evaluation Committee's recommendation (Annex 13 ). | |
| The EEC recognizes that many recommendations require significant institutional investment and may depend on Ministry of Agriculture support. However, without substantial enhancement of physical facilities and learning | Regarding physical facilities, as mentioned above, actions have been already initiated in consultation with the Ministry of Education to secure funding for the technological upgrade of the existing greenhouse unit, as well as | |

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| resources, the programme will not be able in the near future deliver the quality education students deserve to deliver the comprehensive practical skills demanded by the organic agriculture sector. | for ordering additional laboratory equipment. To be more specific, economic and technical specifications have been created and letters have been sent to the Ministry of Education to investigate the possibility of securing relevant funding (Annexes 3,4,6).<br>We believe that all the actions as described above demonstrate the level of dedication of MIEEK regarding the upgrade of the CROP programme and the quality knowledge that students deserve. | |
| The Committee strongly encourages MIEEK to prioritize infrastructure development and academic standards enhancement to ensure this valuable programme achieves full compliance with European standards and prepares graduates for successful professional careers in organic horticulture. | The CROP programme team of the MIEEK Paphos Branch welcomes the Committee's remarks and fully acknowledges the importance of strengthening both infrastructure and academic standards. Significant steps are already under way, including the upgrade of laboratory and field-based facilities, the enhancement of course design and ILO alignment across the curriculum, and the expansion of collaborations with higher-education and research institutions such as the Cyprus University of Technology and the Agriculture Research Institute of Achelia. These actions are fully aligned with European quality frameworks and aim to ensure that the CROP programme continues to provide high-level, practice-oriented training that prepares graduates for successful careers in organic horticulture. We remain committed to continuous improvement and to meeting the requirements outlined by the Committee. | |

## C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

| *Name* | *Position* | *Signature* |
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| **Dr. Elias Margadjis** | Director General of MIEEK |  |
| **Mr. Pantelis Zacharoplastis** | Quality Assurance Officer | |
| **Mr. Michalis Spanos** | Academic Coordinator of the Programme “Organic Horticultural Crops” | |

**Date:** 27/11/2025

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