

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Cyprus Forestry College
- **Town:** Prodromos / Limassol
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** N/A
- **Department/ Sector:** Forestry
- **Programme of study- Name (3 years, 180 ECTS)**

In Greek:

Ανώτερο Δίπλωμα στη Δασοπονία

In English:

Higher Diploma in Forestry

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):** N/A



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. Introduction

On Thursday 21th of March 2024 (the International Day of the Forest), the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) met with first the principal of the Cyprus Forestry College Mr Andreas Mavrogiakoumos and the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee: Mr. Antonis Horattas, Mr. Erodotos Kakouris, Mr. Nikolas Eliades and Mr. Kyriakos Athanasiou, and later with members of the teaching staff, members of the administration staff, graduates of the previous program in forestry of the Cyprus Forestry College, and representatives of the Cyprus Forestry Association. During the meeting, the EEC had the opportunity to attend relevant presentations by the Principal of the College Mr Mavrogiakoumos, concerning the purpose of the proposed study program, the profile and content of the program, the quality assurance mechanisms, and the administration and the proposed teaching program by the Cyprus Forestry College. Details on the program itself were included in the presentations, and more in detail in the extended proposal submitted by the Cyprus College of Forestry, and of which copies were provided to the member of the EEC. During the presentations by the Principal, questions were asked by the EEC, and content and organization were discussed. Following the presentations, an open and extensive discussion took place among the representatives of the Cyprus Forestry College and the EEC members. After this, the EEC met with a group of teachers and discussed their involvement in the program. The EEC noted the high commitment of the teachers to the program, despite their regular working load at the Department of Forestry or other Departments within the Ministry. From the discussion with the teachers, most of whom had attended the previous training program prior to 2015, the relevance of the new program was underlined. This was confirmed in the meeting with the earlier graduates from the program. The on-site visit included a short look at the premises of the institution, but this was very short because of time constraints and because a more extensive visit and review of the premises had been done in a previous evaluation in 2022 by the same EEC. During the meetings with staff, lecturers and graduates, the history of the Cyprus Forestry College was reviewed and the link with the Cyprus Department of Forestry clarified. The proposed program reviewed in this document is a much needed successor to the 3-yr Forestry program provided by the Forestry College prior to 2015, and the importance of the program for forest management in Cyprus in general, and the capacity building for the Cyprus Department of Forestry in particular, was emphasized. The Cyprus Forestry College (CFC) is a Public School of Tertiary Education and In addition to the proposed 3-yr higher diploma program, the CFC provides vocational training in range of subjects, and interdepartmental training for new forestry officers.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Frits MOHREN	Professor of Forest Ecology and Forest Management	Wageningen University and Research, Wageningen (NL)
Hubert HASENAUER	Professor of Forest Ecosystem Management	BOKU University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (AT)
Filippos ARAVANOPOULOS	Professor of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding	Aristotle University, Thessaloniki (GR)
Michaella PIERI	Student	Technological University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) sub-areas*
 - (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

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

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance**
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
- 1.3 Public information**
- 1.4 Information management**

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

- Detailed description of quality assurance and monitoring procedures are in place and under supervision of Internal Quality Assessment Committee of the Cyprus Forestry College and described in detail in Annex 7 of the application.
- The Quality Policy is part of the CFC strategy, and is described in detail in the CFC Quality Manual of the Internal Quality Assurance System; in the manual procedures and ways of operating are described

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

- The program of study is based on the required assessment through the CFC and the Cyprus Department of Forestry by means of a SWOT analysis, formulated around general objectives and specific objectives in line with the institute's strategy as well as the strategy of the Cyprus Department of Forestry (CDF). Through the CDF the main stakeholders have been involved. As most of the forestry officers in Cyprus are graduates of the CFC in the past, their student experiences have been taken into account. Clear learning outcomes have been formulated.
- The program is focused on providing higher education and training for new forestry officers employed by the Cyprus Forestry Department, and consider the need for new qualified foresters. Through this link, the sustainability of employment is high. The program also provides for personal development of the students, enabling their further career development. Through the program, the knowledge base for sustainable management and use of forest resources in Cyprus is supported and further developed.
- The program is constructed around 30 ECTS per semester with a total of 180 ECTS for the 3-year program. The course structure follows a logical structure and appropriate exams and assignments within the individual courses
- The program leads to an acknowledged Higher Diploma in Forestry, in line with the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Cyprus

- As this is a new program, there will be intensive monitoring and review by the Internal Quality Assessment Committee of the CFC, and the possibility for adjustments at the end of each year.
- In addition, an advisory panel consisting of internal and external members is suggested. This panel should consist of not more than 5 to 6 people (external members, 1 student and 1 to 2 lecturers), meet annually and assess the strategic issues of the program in meeting the forestry demands in Cyprus. The idea is to advice the program coordinator and the principle and therefore they should not be part of this panel.
- Through the involvement of senior forestry officers of the Department of Forestry as teachers and tutors, the latest developments in forest management can be taken into account. Links to ongoing research are limited to practical research
- A call for external scientific associates will be published with the start of the program

1.3 Public information

- The study program is described in the study guide as requested, including details on individual courses, selection criteria, intended learning outcomes, etc.

1.4 Information management

- Key planning and performance indicators are included in the program. The student profile is linked to the entrance criteria, and will be monitored during the course of the program.
- Key performance indicators, other than student numbers, pass and drop-out rates, may need to be further developed. Learning outcome for the program and for the individual courses are formulated, and student satisfaction inquiries are foreseen.
- Career paths of graduates are mostly linked to employment by the Cyprus Department of Forestry, but may go beyond this as well. As such this is exceptional as students in principle have a career path laid out already at the beginning of their study.
- Staff involvement in providing and analyzing information and in planning follow-up activities is self-evident. The student involvement should be developed after the start of the program.

Findings

The proposal concerns a strongly needed diploma program for a higher education in forestry that provides the next generation of qualified forestry officers for the Department of Forestry in Cyprus. The program is set up in close collaboration with the Cyprus Department of Forestry, and builds onto earlier programmes at the CFC that were discontinued in 2015. The need for such a program is evident, and the graduates will directly find their way into the Department of Forestry

Strengths

- Urgent demand for a professional forestry education in Cyprus which was stopped in 2015
- Strong support by the stake holders represented by the Department of Forestry and the Cyprus Forestry Association
- The job market is very good because already right now positions cannot be filled due to the lack of qualified candidates. This is expected to be solved with this program
- The students have a clear career path and job opportunities
- Highly motivated teaching staff and facilities which need to be renewed but in principle available
- The program meets the requirements of sustainable forest management in Cyprus.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Involvement of external stakeholders
- More external expertise to be included in the formulation of the programme
- SMART formulation of quality targets (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-constraint)
- Improvement in teaching methods.
- Student involvement in monitoring and review of the program, other than through course evaluation should be more clearly specified and developed.
- Links to research are weak and should be complemented by international networking



Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	Partially compliant
1.4	Information management	Partially compliant

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

Sub-areas

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

- The program clearly supports the process of teaching and learning of the students including the individual and social development. With an expected inflow of up to 15 students the ratio of teachers to students is very good and should ensure an excellent supervision.
- The combination of theory and practical excises in the field will insure that the “problem solving know-how”, which includes the required flexibility of the teaching methods but also the training of students in learning flexibility, is covered. Although it is not explicitly addressed in the program outline, one can clearly see that the program is based on three important pillars: (i) ecological issues relevant for the forest situation in Cyprus, (ii) technical issues important for proper and low impact management of forests, and (iii) socioeconomic issues which are important for managing forests to address the required ecosystem services (e.g. water supply, fire suppression, etc.) relevant in Cyprus.
- The pedagogical methods and facilitates: Some lecturers have a lot of experience in teaching, but it may be helpful for all of them to get a short introduction in didactical state of the art methods and support lecturers in teacher - student relationships etc. The teaching facility issues are still open although it was confirmed that the budget for buying teaching equipment is foreseen once the course is approved.
- The program clearly focusses on the active role of students which is documented by the practical and field work they have to do and will encourage the autonomy and flexibility of the students. In addition to the practical field work, assignments etc. are planned as part of the assessment and didactical training so all this is covered in the program. A minor limitation may be that the students need to work with the most up to date instruments and facilities (see previous comment) and this will require new equipment.
- The mutual respect, the student diversity, the equal importunity options especially for women is covered. A minor, even legal issue, is how to deal with student applications of disabled people - do they have to be accepted? Also how to deal with the minimum performance standards of athletics for men and women.
- Appropriate procedures for dealing with students’ complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.

2.2 Practical training

- The program clearly addresses the theoretical and practical needs expected from such a forestry program. The variety of topics and teachers with their individual background and professional experiences will be an excellent opportunity for students to learn. An important fact is also that several of the teachers have gained experience outside the country and this will be very beneficial for the students.
- A major stake holder, the Cyprus Forestry Association, strongly supports the program and are convinced that it is beneficial for the forestry sector in Cyprus. Thus, we can assume that stake holder expectations are addressed and measures and reviews are foreseen as the program evolves for any necessary adaptations of the program.

2.3 Student assessment

- In general, the student assessment rules and procedures are well outlined with a lot of details, one may even argue that they are too detailed. The combination of the different measures to assess the achievements of the students is well received and appreciated.
- The assessment is appropriate. However, it is important that at the beginning of each course the responsible lecturer outlines the course specific assessment procedures to ensure a fair and competitive evaluation.
- Examination committee is foreseen to deal with problems, such as a formal appeal of students and student failures. The concept also outlines the procedure if students fail and have to quit the course.
- No information is provided on regulations for accounting mitigating circumstances such as maternity leaves or illnesses.

Findings

The relaunch of a re-shaped forestry education program in Cyprus based on the history of the education which was stopped in 2015 is well received and acknowledged. It is clear that Cyprus needs targeted forestry education to ensure the next generation of foresters and this is strongly supported by the sector and also required by the challenges of the future for forest management in Cyprus.

Even it is not explicitly addressed in the program outline, one can clearly see that the program is based on three important pillars: (i) ecological issues relevant for the forest situation in Cyprus, (ii) technical issues important for proper and low impact management of forests, and (iii) socioeconomic issues which are important for managing forests to address the required ecosystem services (e.g. water supply, fire suppression, etc.) relevant in Cyprus.

Strengths

- The foreseen classes and topics are highly relevant and it is expected that they address the stakeholder needs
- Highly motivated lectures with teaching experiences and a strong commitment.

- Strong support by the stakeholder represented by the Cyprus forestry association which requests a forestry program to ensure the next generation of foresters in Cyprus.
- The basic infrastructure, even if it is not up to date, is in place and the location of the campus provides an excellent surrounding for training and research.
- Job opportunities for the graduates seem to be excellent.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Didactical short courses for lectures should be offered to ensure that a common teaching and learning culture will be developed.
- Activities for “training the trainer” may be foreseen to initiate collaboration.
- The enrolment opportunities for disabled applicants should be clarified.
- Investment in the housing facilities and the technical equipment needed for teaching have to be secured.
- A review panel (such as an External Advisory Board) may be installed which will assess on an annual basis the strategic direction of the program in serving the forestry sector in Cyprus. The group should consist of external experts with the inclusion of Forestry College community representatives (i.e. a student rep., a teacher rep., and a stake holder rep.) to discuss the general direction and if topics are missing. The group should not assess individual courses but should focus on (i) does the program address the expected needs in Cyprus, and (ii) are the students properly trained in the requested competences, and finally (iii) is the interaction with national and international universities and higher education facilities working

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

- 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**
- 3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
- 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

- The Institution takes the necessary steps to ensure the competence of the teaching staff, which are nevertheless confined to the recruitment of about 70% of the teaching staff from within the Department of Forests.
- The recruitment of the teaching staff is described both regarding the internally and externally required staff. These processes must be specifically detailed in a relevant Departmental Regulations document. The absence of a specific / detailed staff recruitment procedure in the application is noted.
- The professional development of the teaching staff needs to be addressed and specific means to this effect must be taken by the Forestry College and the Department of Forests (the latter with respect to the teaching staff from within the Department).
- The teaching staff qualifications are very good to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the HDI programme as >70% have a degree higher than the degree taught. The persons who possess a doctorate form 15% of the currently proposed staff, but this value will rise to 44% given that all external scientific associates will have a doctorate, which is a satisfactory level for a starting higher diploma level.
- Mechanisms for feedback to teaching staff regarding the quality of teaching and teaching performance in general, are foreseen.
- Activities regarding the professional and teaching-skills training and development, as well as innovation in teaching methods and use of new technologies, are not detailed in the application.
- Promotion of teaching staff is not addressed; teaching is seen as an additional obligation of the Department of Forests and other Departments of the State staff. Hence, conditions of employment do not appear to explicitly recognise the importance of teaching.
- It is clear from the application that recognised visiting teaching staff will participate in the teaching of the study programme.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

- The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.
- Teaching is seen as an additional obligation of the Department of Forests and other Departments of the State staff, nevertheless, the teaching staff status is appropriate to offer a quality program of study.

- Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

- The teaching staff of the Department of Forests is not engaged in research within the HEI or with partners outside, but it is expected that other staff, especially the external scientific associates do. The Staff is engaged in teaching an in-house 1-year Training Program.
- Means to strengthen the link between education and research are not adequate visible.

Findings

The professors, teachers and lecturers selected, show a very strong commitment and ambition to contribute to this program. Internal staff were selected within their organizations (different Departments of the State, mostly from within the Department of Forest), according to their expertise and this is important - their willingness to take over this obligation. Some of them taught already in the previous program which ceased to exist in 2015. Additionally, several of them have received their initial forestry education in this environment and are eager to contribute to a successful establishment of forestry education in Cyprus. Therefore the basic elements are in place for a successful application of the programme. Some areas than need improvement, include the training and professional development of the teaching staff, the need for specific time allocation for their teaching activities, the need for explicit staff recruitment procedures, the allocation of a specific to the College budget and administrative / technical support staff. A clear need is the development of string links between teaching and research.

Strengths

- The teaching staff is very well acquainted with the subject of the study Programme and has very extensive practical experience from working in the area.
- A notable percentage of the teaching staff has experience from teaching in the previous 2-year programme that ended in 2015.
- Program funding will be covered by the Department of Forests annual budget.
- Most of the instructors possess a degree higher than the degree taught

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- A specific time allocation for teaching preparation is recommended to be set for the teaching staff employed by different Departments of the State. The overall workload should not interfere with ensuring a high teaching quality.

- It is recommended that a specific Annual Budget is foreseen as a separate category under the budget of the Department of Forests.
- Effective links must be developed between the teaching curriculum and applied research.
- Due to its other obligations in the Department of Forests, most of the teaching staff will be commuting to the College just to give their lectures. The student body would benefit if some permanent teaching staff were to be situated in the College.
- Teaching-skills development and training in teaching should be foreseen for the staff involved, and developed in a structured and timely manner. Professional development in terms of teaching qualifications should be ensured.
- The program would benefit from the presence of a highly qualified Studies (Academic) Coordinator and from a corresponding External Advisory Board.
- Staff recruitment should be sufficiently detailed in the Application.
- Some technical / administrative staff for supporting the teaching activities (lectures, laboratories, practicums during the summer should be assigned to the Forestry College

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Partially compliant

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

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria**
- 4.2 Student progression**
- 4.3 Student recognition**
- 4.4 Student certification**

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

- The published regulation regarding students' admission is clear and appropriate and the criteria are well-defined.
- The EEC raised the question on the entrance exams, notably the physical/athletic fitness of the incoming students, as it was explained that this related specifically to the fire-fighting parts of the program the eleventh criterion and be more specific about the athletic gymnastic test.

4.2 Student progression

- There are adequate means for review and monitoring of individual student progress.
- Since the program is expected to develop and improve with the re-evaluations, student progression will be evaluated as well.

4.3 Student recognition

- The regulation regarding the number of admitted students is largely based on relevant anticipated vacancies of the Department of Forests. This needs to be further clarified with thresholds (minimum and maximum numbers of students required for running the program).
- The presence of advisors at the campus will help to build up links between students and lecturers which will facilitate the smooth progress of their studies.
- The time the students will spend on the practical work should be consider as taught hours. Therefore, the practical work (8 weeks during two consultive summer periods) should be given separate ECTS units.
- Alumni emphasized their high respect for the previous 2-year program of the Forestry College. They recognized the quality of this program including the practical training for their future professional career. They would like to see a similar updated program to ensure sustainable forest management in Cyprus.
- The teaching staff clearly showed their commitment to the new program and the willingness to educate the next generation of foresters.
- Appropriate pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place and in line with generally accepted principles.

4.4 Student certification

- There is a maximum percentage of absence at 20%, which is appropriate as attendance is an important aspect especially in laboratories and at field training due to the character of the program and the anticipated learning outcomes. The distribution of assessment criteria as a percentage of the final mark is congruent of general marking schemes. On the other hand, it would be good that the teachers have more flexibility on how they to evaluate, based on the content of each course.
- Adequate information is provided on students receiving certification explaining the qualification gained, benchmarks of learning outcomes, the level, content, and status of the studies pursued and successfully completed.
- A Higher Diploma is issued after completing the 180 ECTS, which is recognized as a diploma of an educational institution of higher education at the national and European level. The diploma does not provide a job guarantee at the Department of Forestry but will be a precondition.

Findings.

The student admission procedures are clear, reasonable, and well described. An issue here is to adhere to equal opportunity. Student progress is well monitored and student certification at the end of the Programme is well described. The issue of ECTS linked to the practicums, needs to be resolved. Future employment prospects are very good. The program would benefit from the presence of a Studies (Academic) Advisor and from internationalization (e.g. participation in Erasmus+ programs

Strengths

- General recruitment criteria are well described.
- Sufficient means to review student progress are in place.
- Very good prospects for future employment of the graduates in the Department of Forests.
- Clear commitment of the teaching staff to the Programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Equal opportunity issues are not adequately dealt with in the recruitment process. It is suggested to include some flexibility there to ensure compliance with equal opportunity provisions and review the Criterion on athletics / gymnastic test.

- Minimum and maximum numbers of students are required for running the program, need to be explicitly indicated. Note that a critical mass of students is required to ensure the quality and the “team building” environment.

It is important that to apply for involvement in Erasmus+ and other European Training Program. With these, the students will have the opportunity to extend their knowledge and learn the differences of the forestry in Cyprus to that of other countries. This part is not well detailed in the Application.

The presence of a dedicated Studies (Academic) Advisor will help the students get closer with the teachers and will facilitate the smooth progress of their studies. This person could be the same as the Studies (Academic) Coordinator.

There is a need to incorporate the time of the two practicums (8 weeks in total) within the ECTS structure of the program.



Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Partially compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

- 5.1 Teaching and Learning resources
- 5.2 Physical resources
- 5.3 Human support resources
- 5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

- The teaching and learning environment at the campus in Prodromos in the mountains of Cyprus has a long-lasting tradition and provides in principle a good infrastructure because it is surrounded by forests. However, the facilities (rooms for the students, sanitary facilities, kitchen, housing facilities for lecturers, etc. as well as the class rooms need to be renewed and are not up to date. This will require some major investment which is actually the main limitation in starting this program.
- The same is evident for the teaching material and labs, which need to be updated.
- The current situation of the campus does not fit the purpose but with the investments foreseen it will fit in the near future and will then provide an excellent place for forestry education.
- The student-centered learning seems to be taken into account for the planning and investments but no details were provided.

5.2 Physical resources

- The infrastructure is only partly adequate for the teaching. For example, the class rooms are there but need to be renewed and equipped with the common technical facilities for teaching (beamer etc.), The “field infrastructure” (fire-fighting equipment etc.) seems to be in place, while labs etc. are also missing.
- Computer facilities are missing and the library etc. needs to be updated
- Currently the resources do not fit the purpose but funding for renovation and investment is foreseen.

5.3 Human support resources

- The human support or human resources in terms of the lecturers is in place and it is very well received that they are highly motivated and ready to get started.
- Additional technical support or tutors for the lab and field classes may be required and has to be clarified as the program evolves.

- The program needs a program coordinator

5.4 Student support

- The student support in terms of housing etc. is foreseen even if the rooms are not renewed yet. Since the program is taught in Greek language the potential enrolment of international students is very limited.
- Support for a diverse student population, which may require special needs is not foreseen.
- The key support for the student is essentially the job opportunities within the Cyprus forestry system but so far, no mobility to other higher education institutions is foreseen but may develop after the program has successfully started

Findings

- The campus at Prodromos is a perfect location for establishing this program, but needs investments in the infrastructure to be attractive for lecturers and students.
- The need for the program is clear and well accepted within the forestry community.
- The motivation of the teaching staff is high and this is a very strong
- The job opportunities are very good

Strengths

- Highly motivated and supportive teaching staff
- Excellent job opportunities for the students
- Basic facilities at campus in Brodromos are there
- The palace surrounded by forests is excellent for establishing forestry education

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- All the facilities need to be renewed to bring them to an up to date state of the art housing and working/studying environment.
- Rooms, sanitary infrastructure etc. needs to be renewed
- Housing for lecturers is needed
- Investment in the labs, library, and the class room infrastructure is required
- Small incentives for lecturers should be foreseen

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Non-compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Partially compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Partially compliant
5.4	Student support	Partially compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (*not applicable*)

Sub-areas

- 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
- 6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
- 6.3 Supervision and committees**

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
 - *the stages of completion*
 - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
 - *the examinations*
 - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
 - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
 - *the chapters that are contained*
 - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
 - *the minimum word limit*
 - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
 - *regular meetings*

- reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
- support for writing research papers
- participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

D. Conclusions and final remarks

- This is an important program and will fill a significant need for forestry operations and sustainable forest management in Cyprus.
- The envisaged lecturers are qualified, highly committed to the program and to student education.
- The link to the Cyprus Department of Forestry is a strength, but it is imperative to include additional high-quality external experts, for teaching, quality assessment and for strategic adjustments of the program.
- The institute needs to place this program in a broader regional/international context, to establish further links with ongoing research and relevant developments in the field. This is important both for the lecturers and for the career perspectives of the future graduates.
- It is suggested to establish an external Advisory Board, consisting of international experts, stakeholders, local experts and graduates (e.g. from the Cyprus Forestry Association. A representative from the students and from the teachers could be included.
- The facilities have good potential but need renovation and extension, e.g. with appropriate laboratory facilities to support the teaching. Notably the information services (library) need upgrading, and use should be made of available information services through the internet
- The campus in Prodromos with its long lasting history and reputation is a perfect place to do all this investment for starting this program



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Frits MOHREN	
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