



Dietitians ensuring education, teaching and professional quality

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Executive Summary

The Network has proved to be a fruitful opportunity for Partners across Europe to work together to promote excellence in the education of dietitians. The DIETS2 Thematic Network is a partnership of 101 European National Dietetic Associations (NDAs), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), private enterprises and six Associates, two of whom are internationally based.

The DIETS2 Network has at its heart the aim to make a difference to a dietitian's preparedness to meet challenges of improving the nutritional health of Europe. Through facilitating partnerships between HEIs, practicing professional dietitians and NGOs, the Network can use European expertise to encourage change. HEIs teaching new student dietitians and practicing dietetic professionals are engaged within the Network to improve educational standards and prepare for Lifelong Learning (LLL). To do this, our Partners present a model of collaboration and interdependence that brings successful innovation. For example, a major Partner in the DIETS2 Network is the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) and it is estimated that in partnership, over 30,000 dietitians and over 60,000 student dietitians can access information and engage in activities of the Network.

Over the past 39 months the Network has held 4 conferences, and regularly sees student dietitians attend, and it has published six Newsletters about its activities. A consultation on second cycle and third cycle competences for dietitians working in Europe led to European Dietetic Advanced Competences, which has been unanimously adopted by all 31 National Dietetic Associations of EFAD. A *Lifelong Learning Strategy for European Dietitians* together with pedagogic standards for dietetic teachers were also adopted by EFAD and the Lifelong Learning Toolkit published by the Network will provide support. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a major theme of the Network and surveys have been undertaken to assess barriers to its use. A Facebook page, YouTube presence and Twitter have all been established and populated together with interactive information on our website to encourage more widespread use of ICT. An e-journal for student research has released its first issue and a second is imminent; four e-courses on methods used for enquiry-based learning have been devised. The Network has used eSeminars or webinars to promote its products using synchronous and asynchronous access, which has demonstrated the versatility of this medium. By making use of ICT at every level, the Network is setting itself as a model for the future education and interactivity of dietitians in Europe.

Such is the interest in the activities of the DIETS2 Network that a symposium specifically on the Network was held at the International Dietetic Congress in Sydney in 2012 (attendance >2000). The Network is seen as a model for other countries at international level in terms of its vision, coordination, achievements and attention to quality.

We hope that you enjoy reading through this report, which provides a summary of all our activity (please look at the website for more details). The future of DIETS2 activities are also secure as EFAD assumes responsibility for all outcomes and is committed to organising future partnerships between higher education and the profession; please visit www.efad.org. We look forward to a future of networking.

Table of Contents

1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES.....	5
2. PROJECT APPROACH.....	7
3. PROJECT OUTCOMES & RESULTS.....	9
4. PARTNERSHIPS	22
5. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE	25
6. CONTRIBUTION TO EU POLICIES	27
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1. Project Objectives

The aim of the second DIETS2 Thematic Network (DIETS2) is to promote excellence in the education of dietitians across Europe at undergraduate and post-qualifying level, which will impact on professional quality. Dietetic education is a partnership between the dietetic profession and academia. The Network reflects and builds on this partnership across its 101 ps in 31 countries, plus its associated Partners internationally. The Partnership also includes non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and as such represents a key cohesive resource for the development of dietetics and nutrition in Europe. Dietitians have a fundamental role to play in promoting nutritional health through life in sickness or health and increasingly in preventative nutrition. But to enhance the impact of European dietitians, they need to maintain their competence in the rapidly evolving areas of nutritional science, social and demographic change. In order to meet these future challenges, dietitians need increasingly to embrace their own lifelong learning (LLL) using the full power of information communication technology (ICT). DIETS2 therefore has promoted the use of ICT not only as a communication tool, but also in demonstrating its potential as an educational and professional development tool. To this end DIETS2 has had four major objectives:

- To promote, encourage and support dietitians to use, exploit and create new ways of communication and learning between themselves, academia, the people they serve and dietitians who are innovative users of ICT (**WP4 WP9**)
- To emphasise the centrality of workplace (placement) learning, the need for evidence-based practice and produce guidance for effective learning (**WP1 and WP5**)
- To define the competences required for post-qualification dietitians and provide support and encouragement for dietitians to engage in LLL once qualified (**WP2, WP3**)
- To ensure that investment in the DIETS2 project has value, impact and is sustainable (**WP8, WP6 WP7**)

Any Network engaged in the objectives of providing new opportunities and promotion of new concepts can be effective only if it maintains the engagement of its key stakeholders. To this end the DIETS2 Network uses a number of strategies through its working groups, its website and Facebook pages, its conferences, publications and Key Contacts to open and extend its reach. The Key Contacts in each Partner institution provide a direct dissemination and exploitation link and foster a culture of sharing and engagement. Further they become a direct beacon for dietitians in their own country.

However, the ultimate target group must be the individuals in Europe who will enjoy a better quality of life through improved nutrition and food choice/provision. This noble ambition must start with a highly informed and proactive group of experts in the field of nutrition and dietetics. Therefore our primary target group has been the future and current dietetic workforce. By increasing educational standards and providing dietitians with the tools, know-how and encouragement, a multiplier effect is already in place and increasingly being seen. Engaging the expertise of the DIETS2 Network Partners through innovative use of ICT (eg Facebook) has attracted dietitians interested in contemporary issues. HEIs have cooperated to produce new ways of learning, enabling dietetic students to learn about enquiry-based learning, LLL and how experience enterprising environments to support better nutrition. The full multiplier effect will not be realised directly in future target groups during the lifetime of the DIETS2 Network. Sustainability is essential and through the close affiliation of the Network with EFAD and its established networks in Europe, this goal is becoming a reality.

For example through EFAD's membership of the EU Platform on Nutrition, Physical Activity and Health (DG SANCO) the commitment by EFAD to share information about DIETS2 Network continues to reach all the members of the Platform including policy makers (eg WHO Europe), the food industry, academia and NGOs.

Also, as EFAD assumes responsibility for the work, strategies and partnerships created through the DIETS2 Network, a sustainable partnership of higher education, professional dietetic associations and NGOs will continue. They will continue to work together to ensure that the dietetic workforce now and into the future is able to provide a healthful nutrition service. Further, the dietitians will engage demonstrably in LLL to extend their competence, increasingly become ICT-literate dietitians who are fully informed through enquiry-led learning. In this way, dietitians can respond to the needs of a changing Europe.

2. Project Approach

The Network has 101 EU Partners of whom a third are professional associations and two-thirds Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) representing 31 countries in Europe. The Network also has six Associate Partners, two of whom are International Partners, including the International Confederation of Dietetic Associations. The particular expertise of each Partner was used to initially populate the five DEV work packages (**WP**). As the project has progressed, there has been some movement between work packages, which has allowed individuals and their institutions to be engaged in areas that will benefit them as well as the DIETS2 project.

Coordination of the project rests with the work package leads, the project coordinator and the project manager. Together they form the Network Management Group, encouraging upward and downward dialogue, engagement and flexing where necessary. A particular feature of this approach has been the combination of clear guidance from the *Assuring Project Quality* WP, external reviewers (User Advisory Group - UAG and Quality Advisory Group - QAG) and others who have continued to focus on the needs of the stakeholders and therefore guided the outputs of the project. A Management Strategy together with the quality plans of each work package supported the maintenance, active coherence and function of the Network. The Quality Assurance Work Package (**WP7**) not only actively sought the views of the stakeholders but also produced regular reports on achievement of project milestones using the regular audits of the WPs. The Management team used all the feedback to inform any deviations and risk so that approaches could be altered as required. Dialogue among the Partners, our primary target group, was actively promoted as they teach, engage and represent over 50% of the dietitians in Europe. DIETS2 achieved this primarily through regular targeted briefings of Key Contacts (each Partner nominated one person to be this direct link with the project), but also through:

- Regular newsletters
- Conferences
- Website/Facebook/YouTube
- e-seminars
- Questionnaires

The project website is a key tool for communication, repository of information and management. The Extranet area of the website promotes the work of DIETS2 to visitors and over the past year has recorded visits from 12500 people in 149 countries. The Intranet is password protected for all Partners and has over 1200 subscribers. All WPs post information about their meetings and ongoing work, but also Partners can find other postings of products and outcomes from DIETS2 and also DIETS1, for example Re-useable Learning Objects (RLOs). A combination of 'products', postings and discussion is a deliberate management policy to encourage users to find elements of the project with which they can engage. Posting information is easily accomplished and open to all users. Alerts and 'notifications' of all new posting of materials was sent to all subscribers on a weekly basis. A particular feature is that all subscribers have had access to Go-to-Meeting (GTM) a VOIP facility that enables easy and reliable virtual meetings to take place, with the added advantage of simultaneous document viewing by all participants.

A Network with the size and reach of DIETS2 requires accessible and coherent communication channels and the GTM option allows all work packages to have frequent virtual meetings that encourage networking and cohesion (as well as enhancing English language skills). Section 3 provides details of the outcomes of the project arranged by each

work package. The approaches adopted by the work packages are a reflection of the overall approach of the Network, which can be summarised as:

- Coordination through partnership
- Development through engagement
- Quality through awareness

Regular meetings of Partners through coordinated working groups built a strong sense of trust and cohesion. Some Partners even chose to send more than one representative to meetings to build partnerships. This was also reflected in some countries where Key Contacts come together for more effective partnership working. A particular feature has been the engagement of students at the conference where latterly, specific workshops have been included to meet their particular needs. A quote from one such student is shown below.

As a student, this conference has been such a wonderful, informative and exciting experience for me, where I got to meet very interesting people from all around Europe. I have had many interesting conversations with professors, clinical dietitians with numerous years of experience as well as students and have learned how similar, yet very different the education system and work environment can be within the European Union, so I can only imagine how it must be in the rest of the world. This conference also marks the beginning of my Lifelong Learning journey, which I look forward to continuing with great anticipation. I would like to thank everyone involved for this amazing opportunity and I definitely hope to see you again next year. Thank you once again for everything and hope to see you again soon!

Garda 2013

Project teams have learned to use interactive media to gather information, eg electronic/online surveys. Partners and members of the Network, or those attending conference or visiting the website, are asked for information, their opinions and views. This has ensured meaningful engagement of our Partners and others, supported their learning and provided feedback so the project team itself engaged in LLL.

The outcomes of a Network need to be seen to be of value to the stakeholders. This is an inherent principle of a quality service or product. On a regular basis, the Network seeks to be informed and to inform our Partners and stakeholders of our activities. Feedback from users of our products has made us aware of their views. The impact on working practices, outputs and approaches has ensured, as far as possible, a quality approach to the project.

- ✓ *The webinar was very informative and useful. I hope this is just the beginning of this wonderful practice, we really need this type of information sessions. How can we, as students and professionals all over Europe, help DIETS2 to improve and grow this e-learning approach?*
- ✓ *Being connected to colleagues in so many different countries at the same time. It was really simple and easy to join the eSeminar*
- ✓ *Understanding how to use the tool of self-assessment. I discovered it on the DIETS2 website, in the LLL recording toolkit but found it hard to use. Now I understand it better. It's inspiring and motivating to see what is already applied / done in other countries, it helps to imagine how to apply it to oneself or to one's country / school / practice*

Feedback after an e-seminar (webinar)

3. Project Outcomes & Results

This section reports on the achievements of the Network in the context of its objectives and those of the Network, stakeholders and the work packages (WPs). Detailed information is available on the Network website (www.thematicnetworkdietetics.eu) using reference numbers to the deliverables (Del) given in brackets within this report. For example there is a report on Del 9.3 which gives more information about the DIETS2 website.

3.1 The first objective was *'to promote, encourage and support dietitians to use, exploit and create new ways of communication and learning between themselves, academia, the people they serve and dietitians who are innovative users of ICT'*. Two work packages were primarily concerned with this objective - **WP4** and **WP9**:

WP4 Dietitians Engagement with ICT to Improve Learning

Over this period of reporting, the objectives were:

- Describe, analyse and identify barriers/innovations to use of ICT in higher education and the profession in Europe
- Undertake a scoping exercise of innovative use of ICT by international dietetic Partners
- Make recommendations, drawing on Partner specialist expertise, on the introduction/future use of ICT to enhance learning and improve quality
- Develop case studies on the process that key innovators employ to enhance use of ICT
- Promote use of ICT within the Network, especially using social networks

WP9 Alerting, Networking and Sharing

Over this period of reporting, the objectives were:

- To use dissemination tools such as print products, e-zines, websites, targeted mailing lists, conferences, press releases etc to ensure a wide reach of information and engagement
- To craft information suiting the end-user/audience; encourage active promotion and publicity to promote a multiplier effect
- To devise tools to monitor the dissemination activities in a structured way, provide feedback, review user needs and make changes as required to ensure effective activity
- To respect the principles of equality, diversity and ethics in dissemination activities

And more specifically:

Building a distinctive and useful DIETS2 Website (Del 9.3)

A website was built to allow easy communication (primarily using the VIOP technology GoToMeeting), dissemination and easy uploading and downloading of information for visitors and the Partners who had their own password-protected area (intranet). Using the intranet also allowed users to take part in discussion boards, use the address book and do searches for materials. Google analytics revealed a constant increase of visitors and page views, eg there were 8,716 visits (between January and June of 2013) from 127 countries. This also provided evidence of how a wide range of stakeholders were being made aware of the purpose and work of the EU-funded Network and dietitians across Europe. The steady promotion and support work of **WP4** contributed to the increase in page views through, for example, our Facebook Page promoting our conferences and the workshops held at the international dietetic conference in 2012. In 2013 more than 76% of questionnaire responders found the website easy to navigate and around 80% thought that there is enough information on the intranet and public pages. Further, 12% of people who responded to this

question thought the website was accessible for people with disability. Sustainability of the website is well advanced as EFAD has agreed to host significant pages and materials.

Using Social Networking sites (Del 4.2)

The DIETS Facebook page was launched in July 2011. The page is open access to dietitians and academics even if they are not members of the Network. There are clear guidelines and instructions for postings, and content is moderated through a DIETS Facebook Page Manager.

Some people visit the DIETS Page more than once a day and the most viewed tabs are the Timeline and Events section. The most important external referrer was the DIETS website (thematicnetworks.eu). By the end of 2013, DIETS Facebook had over 2500 Likes. Most of the Likes come from female Facebook users (87%); aged 18-24 and 25-34, although some from older age groups too. Most Likes come from (in descending order) Portugal, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Greece, Spain and UK and remarkably from outside Europe: from the USA, Australia, Africa (eg South Africa), Latin America (eg Brazil), Asia (eg India) and Canada. Most Likes are in English (US and UK), Portuguese and Dutch. DIETS2 is also on Twitter (53 Followers) and YouTube. Twitter was used intensively during the fourth (7th) DIETS-EFAD Conference in Garda. We used the hashtags #DietsEfad7 and @DIETS_Network. The number of Followers may seem low in comparison to Facebook followers but this follows a general trend. DIETS accounts on Facebook and Twitter are matched (posts appear on both platforms), Twitter is just another complementary platform to increase our reach as different media reach different audiences.

Innovative use of ICT (Del 4.3) and survey on barriers to innovative use of ICT (Del 4.4)

WP4 was particularly concerned to understand how ICT could be further promoted amongst dietitians in Europe and designed an online questionnaire to survey the use of ICT, especially in the education of dietitians. The aim was to identify innovative educational /instructional use of ICT, to identify the successes (examples) of innovative use of ICT and identify the barriers and strategies behind the successes (and how to overcome the barriers). In the report, examples of good practice are included together with an analysis of the barriers which were mainly time (20%), lack of hardware (19%) and suitable training/expertise (19%). The results of the survey have been written up in a scientific report and submitted for publication.

Guide to e-learning (Del 4.5) and Case Studies using ICT (Del 4.6)

In order to encourage greater use and understanding of ICT, **WP4** undertook to write a guide to e-learning. This guide has eight chapters plus information on webinars and runs to over 100 pages, available in both hard and electronic media. A USB was distributed at two conferences. To support innovation, there are also case studies provided of successful applications.

DIETS2 learning episodes and social networks (Del 9.7)

A good example of the use of innovative ICT was the series of e-seminars or webinars held in 2013. All work packages had the opportunity to present one of their main themes; and Partners were able to meet interactively in these learning episodes, which have now been posted on YouTube. For example, **WP9** gave a webinar on the Deliverables of the Network and how Partners can find and disseminate these materials. Webinars could be seen both synchronously and asynchronously and the ratio of views was 1:188 or 1:20, making this a very time-effective medium for learning. Two podcasts were also created for the promotion of the 3rd DIETS2 Conference.

Networking through Key Contacts (Del 9.2)

Effective networking begins by effective communication and Partners were asked to provide the name of one Key Contact (KC) within their organisation who would be responsible for

disseminating and relaying information between and within the Network, WPs and Partners. At conferences, specific workshops were held in order to brief and boost commitment through exchanging experience with other Partners (56 Key and 52 KCs met at the 2nd and 3rd DIETS2 Conferences respectfully). A webinar was also specifically aimed at those KCs who could not attend. KCs reported their dissemination activities on many outcomes/deliverables – including newsletters, briefing papers, website links, social media sites, conference proceedings and alerts, as well as the deliverables of work packages 1-5. But they also respond regularly to such questions as ‘How can the DIETS Network contribute to improve or support the use of information, eg on the methods to teach enquiry/systematic investigation and research to students at first, second and third cycle?’ Or ‘How can the Network contribute to improve or support you in the promotion of ideas on future dietetic research?’ KCs have proved to be a critical means for collection of data on dissemination and exploitation of DIETS2 outcomes

Newsletters and briefing papers (9.4)

Six DIETS2 newsletters were published online and distributed widely across the Network and also cascaded among Partners, for example EFAD has 65 delegates and reaches potentially 30,000 dietitians. Another Partner - European Food Information Council (EUFIC) - posts on their website, which has over 500,000 visits per month. The EFAD newsletter, published in March 2013 had a separate DIETS2 section and EFAD agreed that their future newsletters will have a section updating on DIETS2 deliverables and the sustainability of the Network. DIETS2 newsletters included briefings of the Conferences, the outputs of the work packages, lifelong learning opportunities, short briefing papers and interviews.

DIETS2 Conferences & workshops (Del 9.5, 9.10 and 9.12)

Four conferences were held, which exceeded the three that were originally planned. The themes were “Improving The Nutrition Of Europe Through A Fully Evidenced-Based Profession Of Dietetics”; “Building A Strong Evidence-Based Approach To Nutrition And Dietetics”; “Life Long Learning For A Secure Nutrition Future” and “Non-Communicable Diseases - The Dietitian’s Response To Health 2020”. The conferences were noteworthy for several reasons. At the first conference, professional dietitians providing specialist services such as in diabetes, obesity, paediatrics and renal disease agreed to meet regularly at conferences to create networks of specialist dietitians in Europe. The management of these European Specialist Dietetic Networks (ESDNs) has now passed to EFAD. The inception of ESDNs is unique and forms the basis for “a demonstrable worldwide quality of practice”. Kellogg’s has supported a prize for the best student poster at both the 3rd and 4th conferences and will continue to do so as EFAD commits to sustaining these conferences once the Network finishes in 2013. The proceedings of the conferences and all the presentations are available on the DIETS2 website, for example at the 3rd conference, the Network launched the Lifelong Learning Strategy and Competences for Advanced and Specialist practice and at the 4th conference, the LLL Toolkit.

Keeping ‘in touch’ with DIETS2 activities (Del 9.8)

As the main dissemination medium used, the DIETS2 website has a separate ready-to-use ‘deliverables section’, where DIETS2 activities and deliverables are found in a table form and where hyperlinks provide briefing papers and help sheets for Partners and website visitors on dissemination and use. A CD for the 3rd DIETS2 Conference included the LLL database, the European Dietetic Advanced Competences, the Proceedings of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd DIETS2 Conferences, an e-course sample presentation, the DIETS2 interim report and a narrated presentation on reflective learning. Also, the Lead of **WP2** published another narrated presentation on the website (on the achievements of this WP within the Network) for Partners who were unable to attend the 3rd DIETS2 Conference.

DIETS2 briefing series (Del 9.9)

Briefing papers were made by all work packages as a guide to their ready-to-use deliverables to encourage Partners to gain a deeper insight and readiness for dissemination

and exploitation. Briefing papers were sent to all DIETS2 Partners as well as the delegates of EFAD for them to publish in their journals, newsletters or websites, thus reaching a potential audience of over 30,000 European dietitians and others. Briefing papers were sent out together with activity tables; and feedback received from HEIs/dietitians and others on dissemination, fitness for purpose and the benefits of deliverables.

In summary, the Network has provided the tools and inspiration for European dietitians to become more engaged with ICT. Through its own use of ICT, it has modelled dissemination media and shown how diverse and productive technology can be used for the purpose of innovative learning. In addition to the outcomes listed above, the WPs also produced audits and quality evaluations of their outcomes that are available in their WP reports. For example:

Quality plan for creating effective dissemination (Del 9.1)

16 contacts of 14 DIETS2 Partners, identified as members of **WP9**, were surveyed to determine the dissemination policy of DIETS2. A report on dissemination strategy (especially on what information should be distributed; how should this information be distributed; and which stakeholders groups should be targeted) was written on the basis of the feedback of those who replied. A quality plan for effective dissemination was created by **WP9**. This plan included the use of a diversity of media to disseminate information from other WPs. The quality criteria, quality method, evidence of compliance and quality responsibilities were identified and recorded in the report, as well as Partner roles and responsibilities.

3.2 A second objective for the Network was *'to emphasise the centrality of workplace (placement) learning, the need for evidence-based practice and produce guidance for effective learning'*. If dietitians are to work with others to embed good and diverse practice in order to meet the nutritional needs of the European population, they will have to experience working across a diversity of workplaces, ideally at the pre-qualifying stage. Further, dietetic students and others should learn (and then put into practice) an evidence-based approach. This will strengthen their research capacity and can lead to the development of a knowledge triangle in dietetics. Two work packages were primarily concerned with these important aspects of learning: **WP1** and **WP5**.

WP1 Work-based and Placement Learning

Over this period of reporting the objectives were:

- To map current diversity of practice placement/work-based learning opportunities and supporting infrastructure (eg guidelines, teacher preparation) used by dietetic higher education
- To analyse practice placement/work-based learning data and prepare pedagogic standards/ guidelines, also drawing on best practice from other professions
- To propose/develop support materials to inform practice placement/work-based teachers to improve quality of learning experiences in public and private enterprises
- To make a database of courses/modules that will be used or developed to support a high quality learning experience

WP5 Teaching Enquiry-based Learning

Over this period of reporting the objectives were:

- To describe and analyse methods used by Partners to teach enquiry/systematic investigation and research methods to students at first, second and third cycle
- Make recommendations about tools for teaching and sharing of research methodologies
- To encourage sharing of research and research expertise in the student dietetic profession through the website, conferences and pilot of an e-journal

And more specifically:

Database of materials used to teach enquiry (Del 5.2)

In 2011, a database structure, layout and design was agreed and for easy searching, key fields (eg author name, title, key words, etc) defined so that resources could be uploaded to aid the teaching of enquiry-based learning. After the pilot phase, DIETS2 key contacts and WP leaders were asked to upload relevant materials, contribute to the list of key words and provide feedback to the database functionality, user friendliness and overall look and feel. A guide on how to use the database is part of the DIETS2 e-learning guide (Del 4.5). The materials available so far are in topics such as “Teaching Statistics”, “Using Electronic Resources To Enhance Dietetic Practice”, “Guidelines For Critical Review Form - Quantitative Studies” and “Weight Management”.

Make a database of courses/modules that will be used or developed to support a high quality learning experience (Del 1.4)

After a call was made for Partners to post information, a database was constructed containing supporting documents for practice placements. Some materials are in their original language and some translated to English. All the materials concern practice placements and therefore offer opportunities for users to search for best practice and contact points for sharing expertise. An analysis has been produced to show which documents support the EFAD Practice placement guidelines.

Guide to best practice for student placements (Del 1.5)

The information on the database has been analysed and best practice extracted and placed into a guide for use across Europe. The guide contains real examples of how the European Standards for Practice Placements can be met and will be an invaluable tool for those HEIs reviewing and revising the quality control for their student placements. The Guide is now available as a printed document and on the DIETS2 website.

Pilot e-courses on teaching enquiry (Del 5.5)

To support enquiry-based learning, three draft e-courses were been prepared in late 2012 – on Sample Size, Questionnaire Design and Reflective Learning/Practice. The Sample Size course was designed as an interactive word document, while Questionnaire Design and Reflective Learning/Practice were developed as narrated PowerPoint presentations. Additionally an evidence-based practice e-course is available. Using an online questionnaire, students and dietitians evaluated the courses and a small questionnaire on the website allows future participants to provide their evaluations. Additionally, four workshops were held to support research methodologies (including one on funding) and an evidence-based approach to practice. These workshops, the presentation and feedback data, are posted on the DIETS2 website as part of the materials from the DIETS2 2nd Conference (or 5th DIETS Conference) and offer additional learning resources.

Monitoring enquiry learning (Del 5.9)

To evaluate the information and resources provided by the Network an online questionnaire was designed and distributed to HEIs and Dietetic Associations to evaluate the use of enquiry-based learning materials (following the publication of the database and the e-courses). Although the number of responders to the questionnaire was small, it appears that responders value the database and e-courses. Both have proved to be useful in improving knowledge and skills in research or evidence-based practice by dietitians, teaching staff and students, but can be further improved to become more effective. A report about the current teaching of research in HEIs across Europe is also available in the Report by **WP5** together with the presentation given at the 2nd DIETS2 Conference.

Map current diversity of practice placement/work based learning opportunities and supporting infrastructure (eg guidelines, teacher preparation) used by dietetic higher education (Del 1.2)

In order to share best practice and innovative student practice placements, an online questionnaire was devised to map the placements currently used in Europe. A response rate of 58% (39 out of 67) was achieved and showed the diversity of placements used for example in public health, education and social care (28%), clinical (27%), catering (20%) and others (25%) including the food industry. Median number of weeks in the location was 12 for clinical settings, 5 for health, education and social care, 4.5 for catering and up to 7 weeks in other locations. A paper has been accepted for publication.

Consultation on pedagogic standards for dietetic placement teachers (Del 1.6), development of EFAD policy on pedagogic standards for work based/practice placement teachers and Publish pedagogic standards (Del 1.7)

The quality of any learning environment is strongly influenced by the capabilities and understanding of the teacher. A survey of available literature revealed best practice and currently available pedagogic standards and competences for teachers of health professionals and others. A draft set of pedagogic standards was produced and a short consultation undertaken including international dietitians. A final proposed set of competences was drawn together and placed before the EFAD Annual General Meeting in November 2013 and unanimously accepted as EFAD Standards for all European dietitians and those who teach students during their practice placement.

Discussion paper on new placement learning (Del 1.9)

Preparing students for new roles as dietitians in Europe requires commitment and innovative thinking by all parties involved, namely the HEI, practice placement and student. The map of placements for dietitians in Europe (Del 1.2) revealed a variety of practice placements, suggested by and in practice at 39 HEIs. The database for placement teachers (Del 1.4) contains supporting documents and the guide to best practice (del1.5), presents information on best practice for 13 out of 18 standards (EDPPS, 2010). The pedagogic standards, adopted by EFAD, will ensure that wherever student dietitians find themselves on placement, a quality learning environment is possible. These products can be seen as tools and strategies to inspire HEIs and the professional field towards innovation and high quality practice placements.

Establish editorial panel for e-journal (Del 5.4), call for abstract (Del 5.7) and launch of the DIETS2 student e-journal (Del 5.8)

To encourage sharing of best practice and research, an e-journal for students has been established. An editorial board with 9 members from 6 HEIs in Austria, Greece, Spain and UK reviewed abstracts for publication following a call made through e-mails and social networks (eg Facebook). Authors were invited to find all relevant information on the DIETS2 website, including the quality criteria for evaluation and publication. The first issue contains 21 abstracts (chosen from 29 submitted abstracts) from 8 different countries and covered a wide range of topics, eg nutritional habits of certain population groups, nutritional status in health and disease, clinical nutrition, disease prevention, gene-nutrient interactions. The e-journal went to all Network members and is freely available on the extranet of the DIETS2 website. Evaluation was invited using questionnaires and a discussion area on the website and Facebook. This site also allows students and dietitians in Europe to exchange information about their current research interests. A second volume is planned.

In summary, across the Network and into practice, the products of **WP2** and **WP5** will raise awareness and quality of practice for dietitians by making them more aware of opportunities (placements) beyond the traditional workplaces and provide them with the tools to ensure an evidenced approach. Further standards adopted by EFAD provide HEIs with strong guidance concerning a high quality learning experience.

3.3 The third objective of the Network was *'to define the competences required for post qualification dietitians and provide support and encouragement for dietitians to engage in*

Lifelong Learning once qualified'. The two work packages most involved in meeting this objective were **WP2** and **WP3**.

WP2 Second and Third Cycle Specific Dietetic Competences

Over this period of reporting, the objectives were:

- To map working patterns of dietitians in key areas of dietetic practice throughout Europe in order to identify LLL requirements and associated competences
- Using Tuning methodology to develop specific second and third cycle competences for dietitians
- Develop a Charter on LLL competences for dietitians

WP3 Lifelong Learning for Dietitians in Europe

Over this period of reporting, the objectives were:

- Describe, analyse and compare the courses, modules and programmes available in Europe for dietitians (and other nutrition experts) and make recommendations regarding omissions and development
- Promote understanding of ECTS and its use in LLL with particular respect to career development or 'portfolio careers'
- Develop a prototype tool kit (portfolio) for information and collection of LLL for dietitians
- To raise awareness of LLP calls for programme development within the HEI consortium

And more specifically:

Lifelong learning needs analysis of dietitians (Del 2.2)

To map the LLL needs of dietitians in Europe, a questionnaire was developed. A total of 2030 dietitians from 35 countries completed the questionnaire, providing information on their age, gender and education; work experience and further education after qualification; competences they expect from a specialist working as an advanced dietetic practitioner and how they viewed their own level of practice. The results were presented at the 2nd DIETS2 Conference, is in draft form ready for publication and in the report from **WP2**.

Consultation 2nd and 3rd cycle specific competence (Del 2.4)

Using the results from the survey, together with an analysis of worldwide literature, a proposed set of competences was developed. A consultation phase with HEIs, students and service users (eg doctors/nurses) was conducted, which resulted in a glossary of definitions and the first published set of European Advanced Dietetic Competences providing a world reference standard.

Policy on Lifelong Learning and 2nd/3rd cycle dietetic competence (Del 2.5)

The survey previously conducted gave insight into LLL needs for European dietitians. Working with **WP3** a proposed strategy for LLL was developed and discussed at the General Meeting of EFAD in 2012. The European Dietetic Advanced Competences were adopted by EFAD for European dietitians in 2012 and the Strategy for Lifelong Learning for Dietitians was formally adopted by EFAD in 2013. The strategy made recommendations for NDAs and dietitians. It also contained recommendations for HEIs. Papers were delivered at the 2nd and 3rd DIETS2/EFAD conferences and are available on the DIETS2 and EFAD websites.

Database of courses for Lifelong Learning in Europe (Del3.2)

NDAs and HEIs provide LLL courses suitable for dietitians yet many are local and not publicised across Europe. They remain an untapped source of LLL for dietitians. Equally, as the profession is relatively small, those attending these courses could be increased in number through a central information source. A spreadsheet investigating units of learning (using ECTS), topics and mode of delivery and questionnaire was sent to all members of

DIETS2 in June 2012. The response rate was 22%, of which 64% were from HEIs, 27% from NDAs and 9% from other providers; and identified 172 learning opportunities in six categories of learning (topics): Dietetics; Counselling and Communication; Management; Public Health Nutrition; Nutrition of Population Groups, and Miscellaneous. Courses in reasoning, leadership and management professional reflection and autonomy were under-represented. Blended learning featured (25%) and some courses were in English. An interactive database was constructed so that Partners could both upload information about LLL courses on offer and search for courses. The database is promoted on the public pages of DIETS2 website.

Learning more about ECTS and LLL as a webinar synchronous and asynchronous (Del 3.3)

The consultation and database for LLL revealed little support for dietitians wanting to develop their professional skills through informal learning and reflection as opposed to formal knowledge taught in an HEI. The value of informal learning needs to be stressed: learning through publications, structured reflection, membership and affiliations, discussions with expert's needs documentation and recognition that can come through Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). A paper was developed explaining the award of ECTS (which provides value and recognition) using APEL of informal learning undertaken as part of everyday dietetic professional practice. Three webinars presented the information. Also see *Del 9.7* for more detail.

Draft 'toolkit' to record LLL (Del 3.4); Consultation on the 'toolkit' (Del 3.5); LLL accessing and recording the evidence (Del 3.6)

Dietitians in Europe need support for their LLL and maintenance of competence for safe and professional practice. The competences they achieved upon entering the profession and the advanced competences (Del 2.5) were considered alongside the LLL needs of dietitians (Del 2.2) in formulating a toolkit to record evidence of LLL. A wiki (picture opposite) was used to collate information currently available in Britain, Austria, Ireland and the US together with other examples of good practice. Partners were invited to review and add to the wiki or sample documents during the development phase. Progress was also discussed at meetings in Germany and Austria and with three independent reviewers.

Accordingly, the "Guide to Lifelong Learning for Dietitians in Europe; How to develop your professional competence" was printed as a 'toolkit' with many ideas about setting

goals/methods of recording together with a CD containing the tools for guidance in 4 parts self-assessment, plan, action and evaluation. The guide will be available on the DIETS2 /EFAD homepage and can be printed on demand. The tools are currently translated into French and Spanish and all NDAs will be encouraged to translate it into their native languages and to adapt it to the needs of their own dietitians.

In summary, the work of **WP2** and **WP3** has provided guidance and resource materials for dietitians in Europe and beyond to improve their professional practice and the quality of this practice through LLL. HEIs have also an important role in this by becoming more flexible in their approach to professional education.

3.4 The final objective of the project was '*to ensure that investment in the DIETS2 project has value, impact and is sustainable*'. Three work packages worked together primarily to monitor, evaluate, coordinate and plan progress and outcomes of the DIETS2 project.



During this time the work packages **WP6**, **WP7** and **WP8** liaised closely with Partners, stakeholders, WPs and others to realise the aims as stated in the project application;

To support the Lisbon Strategy the project aims to:

- work with higher education to create, define and embed LLL, thereby raising the expertise of dietitians in Europe and become a world quality reference
- work with NDAs to ensure a demonstrable worldwide quality of practice
- strengthen research capability and capacity in new graduates, ensuring development of a knowledge triangle in dietetics
- develop, in partnership with enterprise and others, work-based learning/placements to embed good and diverse practice

WP6 Network Management Group

Over this period of reporting the objectives were:

- a) to develop a robust system for monitoring the progress of each of the work packages.
- b) establish a risk management process and monitor performance indicators
- c) to receive a quarterly budget review to ascertain that accounts are being timeously and accurately kept and are being used effectively
- d) to report regularly to EACEA, the Coordinating Institution, all Partners and other stakeholders
- e) to receive and act upon quality assurance reports

Assuring Project Quality (QPLN or WP7)

The objectives of this work package were:

- To define the quality expectations of the Partners and undertake audits of the quality of the deliverables to check that they are meeting the needs of the users, Partners and beneficiaries of the Network
- To produce a quality methodology establishing quality criteria, defining quality standards and establish quality tools
- To identify and then establish quality assurance activities
- To make quality reports transparent and responsive

WP8 Embedding and Driving Change

Over this period of reporting the objectives were:

- To ensure synergy between project, local & national policy so outcomes are transferred to new policies, commercial products at regional, national & European level
- To tailor products to make relevant beyond life of the project
- To use mechanisms to understand target groups, develop flexibility in response to meet any changing need
- To add value by exploiting results through developing and submitting applications for additional funding/commercialisation
- To appoint a Users Advisory Group (UAG)

and more specifically:

A management strategy for DIETS2 Network (Del 6.1)

The Management Strategy was drawn together by the Network Management Group (NMG) and focussed on the Work Packages and their relationship to the achievement of the Network deliverables. The EACEA Handbook provided specific day-to-day information about financial management and reporting process. A Risk Management Strategy and Publications Policy were developed. The Management strategy, the EACEA Handbook, the Quality Assurance Process (Del 7.1) and valorisation strategy (Del 8.1) were seen to complete a quality management process for the Network.

Establishing DIETS2 quality assurance process (Del 7.1)

To collect, monitor and appraise network progress, quality and performance indicators, three documents plus guidance were developed for auditing purposes

1. Quality Assurance monitoring system (published 12/10)
2. Quality assurance reporting guidelines (published 3/11)
3. Activity log template (published 11/11)

WP7 collected audit data on six occasions and these were written as reports for Partners, stakeholders and NMG.

Valorisation a quality strategy for DIETS2 & DEV8 (Del 8.1)

Mainstreaming, multiplying and generally exploiting the outcomes (deliverables) are essential if the aims of the project are to be realised. It was therefore critical that a valorisation strategy was developed for the WPs, the Partners and Key Contacts. The strategy was widely distributed and used to increase understanding and application. A UAG was also appointed, its terms of reference agreed and the members invited to the 2nd DIETS2 conference (DIETS V).

Quality Assurance and Monitoring Reports (DEV 7.2 – DEV 7.7)

Every six months an audit was undertaken by the WPs with respect to their deliverable progress, support from Partner representatives in WPs and expected impact. These audits were appraised by **WP7**. A Quality Advisory Group (QAG) of three people (a member of The International Diabetes Federation (Europe), an expert in quality assured working from Hague University in the Netherlands and a member of the Hellenic Food Authority, Nutrition Policy & Research Directorate) reviewed the audits and their feedback was included in the final versions of each report and fed back to the NMG and WPs for action.

Guide to Stakeholders views of deliverables (Del 8.2)

Stakeholders will only exploit outcomes if they are meaningful, useable, of good quality and fit for purpose. A briefing guide was produced, which clearly stated who our stakeholders were likely to be and how they could be approached to ensure a positive and successful outcome. A diagram was also devised for WPs to use when putting together plans for exploitation. **WP7** worked with **WP8 & 9** to regularly gather information about exploitation of the deliverables and progress of the Network in general, mainly through the Key Contacts (Del 9.2), conference delegates or email to other stakeholders. This information was feedback to WPs informally and through the quality reports DEV 7.2 – DEV 7.7. A questionnaire was developed and repeated each year to track changes to find the level of “stakeholder satisfaction” with the quality of the DIETS2 project. Monitoring change indicated that Network process was improving, for example the number visiting the Facebook page increased from 23% to 59% during the life of the project.

Other notable feedback (mean of three years):

- ✓ About 76% had read a DIETS2 newsletter and by the third year 74% claimed to regularly inform others of the work of DIETS2.
- ✓ The webinars produced in 2013 were viewed as a good way of obtaining information by 71% of respondents.
- ✓ About 95% of respondents said they would attend another DIETS2 conference and would recommend DIETS2 conferences to students as well as colleagues.
- ✓ About 88% said they had informed others about the project and 67% had passed on materials from DIETS2 to someone else, including colleagues and students
- ✓ About 65% % claimed to have used materials produced by DIETS2.
- ✓ Participation in DIETS2 had resulted in benefits such as Erasmus placements, exchanges, international activities, networking and increased knowledge about the profession of dietetics in other countries and improved English skills plus the creation of a Masters degree in Belgium, development of national transcripts and good class materials. Respondents said that they also anticipated more benefits, further projects and publications in the future.

- ✓ Over 86% reported that the DIETS2 network was meeting their needs and expectations.
- ✓ And 94% thought the Network operated in a non-discriminatory and ethical manner.

Focus paper 'Driving change through knowledge' (Del 8.3)

To assist in feedback to the WPs on progress with exploitation (mainstreaming and multiplication) a focus paper was distributed to Presidents of the NDAs (a key dietetic stakeholder) and HEIs informing them of some deliverables from the WPs 1-5 and asking how or if they had been used and also how could the Network assist them further. Twenty-eight responses (30%) showed how the Network had stimulated actions at national level and provided helpful information, which was shared with Partners to encourage further/future developments. Stakeholders were asked to rank all 68 deliverables, from 1 (less important) to 5 (major importance). Some of the most popular deliverables of the project (ranking >4.5) were: "Guide To Best Practice For Student Placements", "Pedagogic Standards For Dietetics Teachers", "Policies On LLL And Advanced Competences", "Database Of LLL Courses", "Conferences" and "Guide To E-Learning". Only 13 were ranked below 4.0.

Management and quality reports (Del 6.2 and 6.6)

The management and quality reports signalled delays to some deliverables and the rationale for these delays. They also reported on the financial status of the Network, which generally reflected underspends due to the delays in WPs meeting their own performance indicators. Quality audits were very valuable for informing decisions, especially as QAG (**WP7**) feedback confirmed the Network was meeting quality guidelines as far as monitoring of deliverables was concerned and that deliverables were meeting stakeholders' expectations. MNG took necessary actions such as more frequent meetings and greater assistance to WPs who were falling behind.

Progress Report to EACEA and Partners (Del 6.4)

This report was dispatched as required. It was disappointing that the reports (both private and public) could not provide a more compliant snapshot of activity of the Network, which was highlighted in the review feedback. However, both reports gave both positive and improving situations with respect to Network activity. The feedback from the review was very useful and helpful for future actions in the Network.

Exploiting diversity of placement; opportunism (Del 8.4)

To exploit the work of **WP1** and promote opportunities through student placements for dietitians to find employment and support a better nutritional future for the workforce in Europe a short PowerPoint presentation was made to get the attention of, for example, industry, media, enterprise and NGOs. Using this presentation, together with information in Del 1.2 and 1.5 will provide NDAs and HEIs with information needed to support diversity of placement opportunities.

DIETS2 meeting needs/exploiting outcomes? (Del 8.5)

In 2012 34% conference delegates (over 100) stated that participation in DIETS2 had resulted in projects and 28% said publications had resulted. Changes in academic curricula (31%), methods of teaching (25%), methods of assessment (19%), and practice placement training (31%) were also noted. The Key Contacts reported that the most significant change from 2011 was contact with other dietitians in Europe recorded by 84%. Ranking of the importance of deliverables was also undertaken and results circulated to WPs and Partners.

Embedding LLL Policy (Del 8.6)

To track some of the deliverables and the state of play in European countries with respect to LLL policies and implementation, focus groups were drawn from both NDAs and HEIs across 7 European countries. A report of the discussion is published as a separate report and shows that of the countries engaged in the focus groups, only two had LLL policies in place

together with LLL programmes. This demonstrates the value of the LLL policy (Del 2.5), the LLL database (Del 3.2) and the LLL Toolkit (Del 3.6) to European dietetics.

Using LLL dietitians maintain quality of practice (Del 8.7)

A discussion paper was prepared that summarised the policies in Europe, the findings of Del 8.6 concerning maintaining professional quality and the use of ECTS (Del 3.3), all of which contribute to a professional quality of service by European dietitians. A version was prepared for NDAs to send to their ministries and other key stakeholders such as HEIs.

DIETS2 Annual Report 2010-11 (Del 6.3) and 2011-12 (Del 6.5)

The annual reports kept Partners informed of progress with the project and also to alert them to any areas that needed to be improved. During the life of the project, three WP Leads stood down due to the pressures of their full-time employment. WP activity was often slow because of this and because of inactivity in the remaining membership. NMG took action by alerting Partners to their obligations and in August 2013 asking for an extension to the project of three months to enable the completion of deliverables that had been delayed. The NMG also extended deadlines when it was anticipated that a more fruitful responses could be obtained (eg **WP2 & WP8**). The financial balance continued to lag behind anticipated expenditure, but this was largely due to the delayed deliverables. The quality reports continued to confirm that stakeholders found the outcomes/deliverables met their expectations and were able to use them.

Using a 'toolkit' for Lifelong Learning (Del8.8)

This guide for the LLL Toolkit offers a summary of key information about LLL and appraisal of the 'toolkit'. To support further exploitation, the guide provides information on the first six months following publication on the DIETS2 website. There have been 1157 views of the home page while chapters about developing a CV and how to undertake reflection were the most visited. Chapters 11, 12 & 14 were least visited and may need further evaluation. Visitors from European countries made up 70 % of the views, with Germany and Spain leading, while 28 % came from the USA.

Exploiting the enquiring dietitian (Del 8.9)

Four outcomes from the DIETS2 Network project specifically engaged Partners to identify, demonstrate and explore how they (and their students) approach enquiry-based learning both in the HEI and in practice. The four areas were: teaching received in their HEI (Del 5.9); The enquiry database (Del 5.2); use of e-learning courses (Del 5.5) piloted through the DIETS2 project; sharing of research projects through a student e-journal (Del 5.8) and reflection as a method of evidence-based practice. The evaluation showed there is an increasing need and enthusiasm for practice-based and interactive/problem-solving engagement with research due to the work of the Network.

Review of the exploitation of a Network (Del 8.10)

The state of play with respect to exploitation of five key outcomes was collected and demonstrated from a survey of Partners. New programmes had been developed and advanced competences embedded. Technologies had been refreshed and numerous other outcomes of the DIETS2 project were shown to have influenced both NDAs as well as HEIs. A webinar was also held to inform the Network about the importance of exploitation in general for dietitians and specifically to provide feedback to the Partners and those attending. **WP8** has served as a model for professional associations on valorisation and has fully utilised EVE to share and promote its work.

Exploiting the DIETS2 quality plan (DEV 7.8)

Another of the WPs of this Network that has modelled best practice in quality assurance is **WP7** (Quality Control & Monitoring). Two electronic presentations (one narrated) explaining the whole quality assurance process were prepared and published on the public part of the

DIETS2 web site in August 2013 together with a narrated PowerPoint published in September 2013.

Overall, through the constant attention of the NMG (all WP Leads), **WP7 & 8** the Network has achieved its aims and objectives. Close working with EFAD and all its Partners ensures that the major achievements of DIETS2 will be sustained especially as the Federation has now approved a new category of membership for HEIs. The best practice demonstrated in close working across traditional boundaries will therefore be sustained.

4. Partnerships

The DIETS2 Partnership began with 95 Partners in 31 countries across Europe and 3 Associated Partners (based in Israel, Switzerland and Australia). During 2011, a further 6 Partners joined the Network and 3 further Associated Partners (based in Switzerland, Macedonia and Pakistan). The Network now has 62 HEIs, 31 NDAs and 8 other Partners such as NGOs, Enterprise and Public Bodies. It is estimated that with EFAD as a key networking Partner, a total of 30,000 dietitians and about 60,000 student dietitians are in partnership with the DIETS2 Network. Networking through Facebook, the website and at our successful conferences shows an increasing confidence and competence. ps meet each other regularly in WP meetings and at conferences. These partnerships have encouraged ERASMUS exchange visits and in particular P50 has recently reported three visits in 2013. Within countries Key Contacts report that they are meeting each other more frequently (see **WP8** report).

The practice and education of dietitians varies widely across Europe. In Finland, dietitians qualify with a Masters degree while in Germany it is at Diploma (120 ECTS) level. Iceland, Estonia, Malta and Lichtenstein do not have academic programmes that lead to dietetic qualifications, while some countries, for example Germany, have over 100 HEIs. The opportunity to share information and learn from each other is therefore greatly enhanced by partnership with DIETS2. Whereas the importance of nutrition for a healthy Europe cannot be denied, the ability of dietitians to work at all levels of society and in a diversity of situations from tertiary healthcare to local schools and health promotion is highly differentiated across Europe. Specialist groups of dietitians in ageing and malnutrition, administrative dietetics, diabetes, obesity, renal and public health came together for the first time as a result of meetings initiated at the 1st and 2nd DIETS2 conferences. These groups will now be taken over and promoted through EFAD (P2). These key networks have played an important role in setting competence standards at second and third cycle (**WP2**).

Dietetic Students in Europe came together for the first time (>70 students) at the 2nd DIETS2 conference (2012) and at each conference since then providing a forum for new dietitians in

Thinking about collaboration and networking I find that students` team formed at the conference is capable enough for performing an international project. We should certainly continue communicate with each other.
Student at Garda 2013

Europe. The Dietetic Student in Europe Group will continue to meet at conferences. This enthusiastic group have provided materials for the DIETS2 Facebook pages and are encouraging others to use the student e-journal (**WP5**), to learn more about each other and projects going on in Europe. On the left is a quote from a student about the partnership opportunities (perhaps somewhat unrealistic at this point) at the 4th DIETS2 Conference in 2013.

Recognition of dietitians within Europe is also varied and the Network is able to provide valuable insights across the whole of Europe to support Partners to develop successful strategies for strengthening the expertise and education of dietitians. HEIs and NDAs have shown willingness to work together to standardise and enhance the quality of dietetic education. For example, through the work of the first DIETS2 Network the Ministries of Health and of Education in France agreed that French dietitians should be educated to degree level and this will start during the life of DIETS2. The work of Partners will lead to a better-educated and competent workforce of dietitians across Europe and because of the geographical coverage, this workforce will have a better understanding of cultural and linguistic issues through membership of DIETS2. Further, EFAD has committed the DIETS2 Network (Action 282) to the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (DG SANCO), which demonstrates how partnerships can also lead to wider promotion of best practice. The action description is: "DIETS2 established a network and described first cycle

dietetic competences. To contribute to policies and practices that will avert the European health crisis (WHO, 2007) dietitians now also need to make effective use of *lifelong learning*.”

The Work Packages draw on member expertise across the Network and are led by experienced and well qualified academics and dietitians who ensure a quality outcome which is also relevant to needs of the Partners and others. A key effect of the strong partnerships is innovation and formation of new partnerships. The following are examples of some of these developments.

Applications and Engagement by Partners in New Projects

Partners have come together to undertake applications for funding and also to progress national projects. One example of a national project is the work of HEIs and practising dietitians in Belgium who have come together to agree on national placement standards. The use of the EFAD practice placement standards, DIETS2 Guide to Best Practice for Student Placements and DIETS2/EFAD Pedagogic Standards have supported and informed the project.

Examples of applications for funded projects that have arisen within the Network are as follows:-

“InGREEDients project- development of ICT tools for dietitians” education (International Healthcare and Health Insurance Institute-Bulgaria) including Partners; Plymouth University (P1) and Alicante University (P39) with others. Submitted to EACEA; Leonardo (unsuccessful)

“DIETALK” Dietetic language and social innovation for active and healthy ageing through nutrition and food” including Partners Plymouth University (P1), EFAD (P2), Ulster (P85) and Thessaloniki (P44) to FP7 (unsuccessful)

DEBATE (Dietitians’ energy balance tools for engagement) e-tools with EFAD (P2), EUFIC (P12) and members of VDD (P18), Portuguese Dietetic Association (P67) and National Association of Hungarian Dietitians (P46) funded through Brunel University, England

MyPace project builds on the outcomes of DEBATE by developing an interactive e-platform (APP) for dietitians to engage in continual dialogue with their clients providing a truly client centred approach with EFAD (P2), EUFIC (P12) and members of VDD (P18), Portuguese Dietetic Association (P67) and National Association of Hungarian Dietitians (P46) funded by Coca Cola Foundation

Dietitians Improving Education and Training Standards: European Masters (DIETSEM) Application to develop an MSc in European Dietetics to the EACEA in 2013 Partners; Plymouth (P1); EFAD (P2); Umea (P71); HAN (P59); Semmelweis (P48); Navarra (P97) and Bern (Associate Partner) (unsuccessful)

Dietitians Improving Education and Training Standards: a framework for Lifelong Learning for European Dietitians (DIETSLLL). Application currently being developed for submission to EACEA as part of ERASMUS+ with Plymouth (P1); EFAD (P2); Umea (P71); HAN (P59); Semmelweis (P48); Navarra (P97); EUFIC (P12) and Bern (Associate Partner) to be submitted in 2014

New initiatives with EFAD

The relationship between DIETS2 and EFAD was consolidated further over the 36 months of DIETS2. This is significant, as EFAD (the Federation representing all dietitians in Europe) will engage in sustaining the work of the Network when DIETS2 comes to the end of its funding period. EFAD has received applications for membership from dietetic associations in Latvia, Romania and Czech Republic, who came to know EFAD through DIETS2

The close cooperation of DIETS2 with EFAD was further consolidated when EFAD voted in 2011 to merge their Annual General Meeting with future DIETS2 conferences to enhance collaboration between practising dietitians and the academics that teach and train future dietitians. The 2nd DIETS2 Conference was advertised as EFAD/DIETS2.

Additionally the Leads for the Work Packages on second cycle competences (**WP2**) and evidence-based dietetics (**WP5**) have been elected to lead the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee and the Research Committee of EFAD respectively and now sit on the Executive Committee of EFAD. In 2014, EFAD will introduce a new category of membership 'Education Associates' which will be available to all HEIs teaching dietetic students in Europe. This close cooperation ensures the sustainability of the work of DIETS2 through the professional Federation for European dietetic associations.

Finally the DIETS2 project was showcased at the International Congress of Dietetics in Sydney, Australia with EFAD in September 2012. The two Symposia were presented under the banner of '*Investing in a Dietetic Network of Excellence to advance dietetics throughout Europe*'. The Network and its achievements are seen as a model for international dietetics.

5. Plans for the Future

The DIETS2 Network will be formally sustained through a lasting presence with EFAD (P2) where HEIs can apply in 2014 to become EFAD Education Associates; where the DIETS2 website key information will be retained (including databases) and where networking can still occur through regular newsletters, social media and conferences. The EFAD Education and Lifelong Learning Committee (ELLLC) and the EFAD Research and Evidence-based Practice Committee (REBPC) are led by former leads of key DIETS2 WPs; and committee membership has been drawn from committed and experienced DIETS2 Partners. The legacy of DIETS2 is therefore proactively ensured, treasured and valued by the dietitians of Europe.

Work-based and Placement Learning (WP1), Advanced Practice (WP2) and Lifelong Learning (WP3)

The plans for the future concern embedding and building on the work started around education and professional practice. The Lifelong Learning Strategy adoption across the NDAs and its implementation will be proactively encouraged and monitored, especially as it affects safety of practice and registration/recognition of by Ministries of Health and Employment. Working across Europe with HEIs and NDAs to use the LLL Toolkit and especially to recognise APEL for dietitians will be a longer term vision but one that needs to be coordinated through the EFAD Education and Lifelong Learning Committee. Approaches have already been made for the Toolkit to be modified for the use of other stakeholders and translation into more national languages will facilitate its adoption. The DIETS2 Network have also produced a collaborative group of five Partner institutions who are actively working on an application to EACEA for 2014 proposing a LLL Framework for European Dietetics and it is anticipated that future applications will also result from the work begun through the Network.

Information, Communication and Technology (WP4) and Dissemination (WP9/DISS)

Whereas regular DIETS2 newsletters will not be produced, EFAD has already agreed to include information about activities that aim to improve, evaluate or further embed the Network outcomes. It is important to keep the outcomes refreshed and fit for purpose and this can only happen if communication channels are accessible and maintained. The DIETS2 website is already in the process of being merged with EFAD to retain key documents. Interactive databases will remain refreshed and reviewed, attracting visitors and also former Partner dietitians who are used to using the website. The Facebook page will continue to be available through the voluntary work of **WP4** members and used for alerts, especially for students who again are used to interacting on this site. Twitter will also continue to be used at conferences in the future so that momentum is maintained and built upon. European dietitians use EFAD LinkedIn widely and this will be introduced to Partners of the Network through the DIETS2 email distribution list, which is being merged with EFAD. Given the success of the e-seminars, NDAs and EFAD Education Associates will be encouraged to try the technology and make it freely available to European dietitians. Finally, conferences are already being planned, EFAD has adopted a Key Contact Network for its own Association members and continued briefing and exchange of information is envisaged.

Enquiry Learning (WP5)

The Research and Evidence-based Practice Committee (REBP) will take forward the development of the e-journal. It has proved to be very successful and plans are now advanced to extend the content to students and dietitians. This will be the prototype for the first European Journal of Dietetics and contact has been made with e-journal publishers. The use of e-courses will be monitored and other courses will be called for from former Partners. A network of professionals involved proactively in evidence-based practice needs

to be established and actively encouraged to populate the database. This will involve members of the new EFAD Committee in having a clear vision for development that is likely to draw upon the European Specialist Dietetic Networks (ESDNs) as a major resource. The ESDNs are expert practitioners and will contribute to engaging not only less experienced practitioners, but also spearhead best practice at advanced level. As such, they publish and encourage and inspire. They will become key groups for REBP.

Management (WP6/MAN); Quality Assurance (WP7/QPLN) and Embedding and Driving Change (WP8/EXP)

The work of these three WPs have produced models of good practice that can be used across the Network to strengthen existing process and procedures for HEIs, NDAs and other enterprises. What is required is for this good practice (now available in papers/reports, narrated PowerPoints, and as e-seminars on YouTube) to be more widely disseminated.

Transparency of process is important and through the networks of former Partners, EFAD will seek to alert them to the potential of re-visiting these helpful tools. Indeed new dietetic associations joining EFAD have requested a 'Best Practice' handbook on structure, function and *modus operandi* of associations. This handbook will draw on and contain much best practice from the Network and be widely available on the public page of the EFAD website. It is anticipated that this type of book will be invaluable to a wide range of organisations planning to be more formally constituted. Evidence shows that the DIETS2 website was accessed from around the world and it is likely that such a handbook would therefore receive international recognition and be another world quality leader and model for health professionals.

Partners have also reported that the best practice used in the Network, for example 'valorisation' and establishing and monitoring 'deliverables' have been adopted in their own workplaces. It is a tribute to the embedding of these practices during the lifetime of the project and its success that individuals have seen fit to take them back into their own environments to use and develop.

EFAD has established its own Advisory Group based on the good practice of having independent and expert advisors. Other Partners have also seen the advantage of this.

As mentioned above, a network of Key Contacts in dietetics will continue to function and they will be used to monitor progress on a regular basis of the profession and its development. This will feedback into Associations, the Platform for Diet, Physical Activity and Health and other agencies who are actively implementing Health 2020 and the Food and Nutrition Action Plan for Europe (WHO, Vienna Declaration 2013). Thus HEIs and NDAs will be better prepared across Europe to respond to these calls for action as a result of the work of the DIETS2 Network

6. Contribution to EU policies

The DIETS2 Network is able to contribute to three of the five strategic areas published by DG EAC in 2011 to support the Europe 2020 policy agenda (http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/agenda_en.htm#doc) and they are:

Firstly *“to improve the quality and relevance of teaching and researcher training, to equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences they need to succeed in high-skill occupations”* **WPs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5** all address the knowledge and skills required by the dietitian working in an innovative and challenging Europe. **WP2** especially addresses the competence needs of specialist dietitians working at second and third cycle levels. The formation of specialist dietetic networks sustains this initiative. **WP 3** and **WP4** particularly support LLL, providing a Europe-wide strategy (now adopted formally by EFAD), a Toolkit for implementation, an interactive database for promoting LLL and IT literacy, all key for the future workforce. Whereas **WP5** provides core transferable skill training in research, **WP1** promotes the diversity of exposure to new occupation opportunities.

Secondly *“to provide more opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study or training abroad, and to encourage cross-border co-operation to boost higher education performance”* **WP9** promotes understanding across the Network. In particular, the DIETS2 website, social media and resource databases (developed in **WP1, WP3** and **WP5**) are established, promoting borderless cooperation between NDAs, HEIs and other enterprises. Special emphasis on student dietitians at the conferences and the e-journal mean dietitians at all stages of their careers are sharing more about each other and the opportunities available to them across Europe.

Thirdly *“to strengthen the “knowledge triangle”, linking education, research and business”* the proactive partnerships developed in the DIETS2 Network through conferences, social media and work packages can already in new partnerships, such as relevant EFAD Committees using experienced DIETS2 Partners to take forward key work streams in education and research thereby creating more opportunities for innovation (see Section 4 and 7 for examples). The student e-journal, e-courses, use of YouTube and introduction by the Network of e-seminars (Webinars) will be particularly important in this respect (**WP5** and **WP9**). **WP1** has emphasised and provided tools to open new employment opportunities for dietitians and also introduce enterprise to dietetic skill sets.

Policies on Lifelong Learning

The DIETS2 Network contributes to other EU policy initiatives through its work packages and their deliverables. In particular the *EUA (2008) European Universities’ Charter on Life Long Learning* is addressed.

The deliverables from **WP2** (dietetic competences at second and third cycle, ie high level competences) will enable HEIs across Europe to develop, in a more systematic way, learning pathways to support lifelong learning as well as to increase the *sharing of good practice and encourage Network Partners to work together towards a common understanding of the role of higher education in lifelong learning* (London Communiqué, 2007 and EUA, 2008). **WP3** complements the work of **WP2** by establishing an interactive database of LLL opportunities for dietitians within HEIs as well as a Toolkit for collecting personal LLL data. Both WPs meet LLL policy agendas through challenging our HEI Partners to *embed concepts of LLL, embrace a lifelong learning culture, the full use of ECTS and develop partnerships*. Through **WP4 & 5** higher education has been challenged to *promote flexible and creative learning environments* with greater understanding of the use of ICT by dietitians and innovative use of existing ICT resources as e-learning opportunities (e-journal, e-courses, webinars and YouTube).

Policies in Information Communication Technology

The Network is very conscious of the need to encourage dietitians throughout Europe to use ICT more widely as Reports 1 & 3 demonstrated from the first DIETS Network in 2009. Other studies have shown that there are skill divides between older and younger teachers as, for example, 80% of younger teachers but only 56% of older teachers feel very competent in using word processors (Empirica, 2006 cited by Ala-Mutka et al, 2008). The following policy initiatives are being contributed to as stated by *ISTAG (2009) ICT in Europe for the decade 2010 to 2020 and IPTS (2008) ICT for Learning, Innovation and Creativity*;

- a) Support pedagogical innovation with new tools (**WP4, WP5**)
- b) Develop and support favourable culture for ICT innovation and learning (**WP4, WP9**)
- c) Build a strong vision of ICT and innovation for LLL in Europe (**WP3, WP4**)
- d) Co-development of tools for learning and teaching (**WP3, WP4, WP5, WP9**)
- e) Open and networked institutions (DIETS2)

WP4 identified barriers to the use of ICT and has now published an e-Learning Guide to encourage use of ICT in teaching and learning. **WP4** has demonstrated how social networking (eg Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) can be used to draw in different generations of dietitians and provide models for new ways to promote learning. Internet users are using social computing for learning purposes and **WP5** has incorporated resources found freely on the worldwide web in contributing to '*Encouraging experimentation*' to encourage teachers to use these resources for teaching. Networking and best practise exchanges will also '*develop and support favourable culture for ICT innovation and learning and contribute to policy*' and the use of Go-to-Meeting and SKYPE for the majority of Work Package meetings and for some conference presentations has encouraged the Network to use ICT in a creative way. Online surveys (Lime Survey Tool) **WP1, 2, 4, 5** and **9** have attracted over 3000 responses even from international dietitians. These communication and survey tools are freely available on the website to all registered users (>1200) and with accessible databases, USBs, Wiki (**WP3**) and the distribution of electronic newsletters, the website resource has contributed to the '*culture for ICT*'.

Additionally, through its development and promotion of e-learning DIETS2 is contributing to the '*Innovation Union*'. E-resources can be developed into e-learning for patients and the 'MyPace' project is doing just that. Many innovations can come from end-users developing tools for themselves (von Hippel, 2005 cited by Ala-Mutka et al, 2008). The Network can model best practice in this area for its Partners and this will involve learners and teachers and support personalization and scaffolding in new ways.

Health Policies

The second health strategy (2007)

(http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/public_health/european_health_strategy/c11503c_en.htm) and

Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC) at

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/policy_developments/legislation_en.htm)

requires all healthcare to be provided safely and at a high quality. The DIETS2 Network contributes to health policies primarily through the development of second and third level competences by **WP2**. The DIETS conferences (**WP9**) strengthened the position of the European Specialist Dietetic Networks (Obesity, Administrative, Public Health, Ageing & Malnutrition, and Diabetes – all now adopted by EFAD), which can develop EU nutrition care standards in critical areas of nutrition for vulnerable groups. Further, the deliverables of competence and a framework for LLL for dietitians in Europe will result in a highly competent workforce, which is essential to reduce the risk of misleading nutritional information. A direct benefit will be *improved client/patient safety*.

7. Value added of DIETS2 partnership; examples of impact

Examples of Partnership and exploitation/impact/value added of being in the partnership of DIETS2; during 2012 and 2013 when a Survey of Partners was undertaken (n=52 or 50% response):

Partner number	Specific Activities and valorization What they had to say:
P42	I send you a copy of EFAD LLL Strategy in Greek. Also I would like to inform you that we are in discussion with our Technological Institutes (HEI of Thessoloniki and HEI of Crete in Siteia) how we can organize and implement the LLL Strategy. Catherine Karakike The Hellenic Association of Dietitians -Technologists of Nutrition
P26	We have not yet translated it into Spanish, but I plan to do it in the coming weeks. Regarding the use of the LLL, I explained the strategy in the board of the council. The idea is to implement gradually the necessary actions. In Spain we have national and regional commissions that accredit training/courses to health professionals, and this is currently being used by associations and regional professional bodies. Moreover, the Spanish Foundation of Dietitians is setting the LLL commission to promote continuing training courses for dietitians. MANUEL MOÑINO GÓMEZ <u>Dietista-Nutricionista</u> Palma de Mallorca
P76	The Turkish Dietetics Association, we have not yet translated the strategy for LLL, but we plan to translate and then share it with our members on the website of TDA. We believe this strategy will support us to improve our activities on LLL. Therefore, TDA plans to use strategy for LLL developed by EFAD. Zehra Buyuktuncer-Demirel, PhD Hacettepe University Turkey
P63	In our Association, we translated the LLL document to Portuguese and we will upload on our website so our members can download it. Miguel Yeep, ASSOCIAÇÃO PORTUGUESA DOS NUTRICIONISTAS
Associate Partner	We haven't translated the LLL-Strategy in any of our languages. In our association we develop a new education-strategy. In this context the responsible committee will discuss about the LLL-Strategy from EFAD and decide how to implement. Gabi Fontana Deinikerstrasse 6a, 6340 Baar - Schweiz
P1	The Coordinator of DIETS2 was invited to lead workshops on 'Quality assurance and evaluation mechanisms' in 2011 and "Contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of Networks" in 2012 at the EACEA Network Coordinators' meetings (23/24 January 2012). This enabled her to disseminate information about the DIETS2 network to all other EACEA funded projects attending those meetings. Anne de Looy, University of Plymouth, UK
P2	The DIETS2 Thematic Network is one of EFAD's commitments to the EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. By improving education and training standards of dietitians throughout Europe, from first cycle to life-long learning, DIETS2 contributes by assuring a dietetic work force that is trained and able to help combat obesity. EFAD officers are regularly asked to speak about DIETS2 at National Dietetic Association (who are also partners in DIETS2) conferences, including The

	<p>Netherlands, Greece, Italy, Germany, Turkey. The EFAD Secretary General has been invited to attend the 2012 European Nutrition Leader's Programme Advanced Seminar. It is believed that membership of the DIETS2 network contributed to securing this invitation. Among EFAD members they have said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - concrete outcomes included the creation of a master degree in Belgium, the development of national transcripts and high quality teaching materials. Some claimed that new ideas for education and for modifying concepts had been introduced as a result of DIETS2. It had also inspired some to improve education, to make quality improvements and had caused others to share ideas and information. <p>Judith Liddell, European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians</p>
P58	<p>Participation in DIETS2 has developed more opportunities to hold virtual meetings using different techniques (Skype, Go to meeting, video conference, MSN). It has also created the possibility to develop a network of administrative dietitians and in this also to transfer knowledge from the Scandinavian countries who have been working in this area for a long time to partners in other countries who are interested in this area.</p> <p>Through DIETS2 conferences individuals with specialised dietetic interests (for example public health) have the opportunity to meet individuals from other countries with the same interest. Multi-country partnerships frame an overall understanding of different cultures and similarities and how dietitians work all over Europe and the world. Cooperation between EFAD and DIETS2 has also lead to development of EFAD. In addition every individual who belongs to a partner organisation has a great opportunity to develop their skills in English. In a research application I stated DIETS2 as an important network for dissemination of research results.</p> <p>Ylva Mattsson Sydner, Uppsala University, Sweden</p>
P89	<p>In France, we are changing our curricula and DIETS2 has supported us in this change, which is necessary in order to obtain the expected education and learning outcomes in Europe. DIETS2 representatives (Anne de Looy, Judith Liddell) were in Paris for a meeting with the representatives of the Ministry of health, medical nutrition teachers and HEIs.</p> <p>Practitioners who are not partners of DIETS2 also participated to DIETS2 conferences. We received students from other European countries (including Slovenia and Germany) who wanted to compare the practices.</p> <p>Anne Marie Favreau, French Association of Nutritionist Dietitians</p>
P91	<p>EuroFIR AISBL did investigate and suggest the use of the "Open Platform", which was developed from the Josef Stefan Institute, Slovenia, in the project. The information on the composition of foods (nutrients, energy values) is available for single foods, recipes and sometimes branded foods and can be used for dietary assessment, menu and recipe calculation, advising patients and their families on nutritional principles and any consultation during the daily work.</p> <p>Simone Bell, EuroFIR AIBL</p>
P97	<p>An important feature of DIETS2 is that it helps us to promote the importance of international studies within the University (lecturers, students, etc). We have increased the number of international agreements for students. For example two summer internships for University of Navarra students will go to Charite Hospital in Berlin for their practical placements. Partner 20 gave us the contact of the Head of the School of Nutrition. The agreement with Berlin is for undergraduates students as well. Member of DIETS2 have been invited to University of Navarra for an E-MENU Master Conference (next academic year)</p> <p>Ana Artal, University of Navarra, Spain</p>

