



## Special Session

### Sustainable and Resilient Regional Ecosystems

#### **Description:**

Sustainable and Resilient Regional Ecosystems aims to provide insights in preserving and enhancing the sustainability and resilience of ecosystems at regional scales. This field focuses on maintaining the health, biodiversity, and functionality of ecosystems while ensuring their ability to withstand and recover from environmental stresses and anthropogenic impacts. We integrate ecology, environmental science, sociology, and policy to develop holistic approaches that support both environmental sustainability and human well-being, ensuring that regional ecosystems remain robust and capable of providing essential services now and for future generations. We concentrate on:

- Biodiversity Conservation: Protecting and promoting diverse species and genetic variability to enhance ecosystem resilience and adaptability to changes.
- Ecosystem Services: Studying and preserving the benefits that ecosystems provide to humans, such as clean water, air, food, and recreational opportunities, while ensuring these services can endure over the long term.
- Climate Change Adaptation: Developing strategies to help ecosystems adapt to changing climate conditions, including rising temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events.
- Habitat Restoration and Management: Restoring degraded habitats and managing land use to support healthy ecosystems and connectivity between habitats, enabling species movement and genetic exchange.
- Sustainable Resource Use: Promoting practices that balance human needs with ecological health, ensuring that natural resources are used in a way that does not compromise ecosystem integrity.
- Community Involvement and Policy: Engaging local communities in conservation efforts and influencing policy to support sustainable and resilient ecosystem practices.
- Monitoring and Data Analysis: Implementing long-term monitoring programs and using data analysis to track ecosystem changes, assess impacts, and inform management decisions.

#### **Session Moderator:**

- Dr. Konstantinos Kokkinos, Senior Lecture and Researcher, Energy Systems Dept., University of Thessaly, Greece.
- Prof. Dr.-Ing. Nicholas Samaras, Digital Systems Dept., University of Thessaly, Greece.

#### **Topics and Presenters:**

*The first mentioned person will be the presenter*

#### **Opportunities for development of alternative food networks in Bulgaria**

- Ekaterina Arabska, University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, UARD, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
- Svetla Dimitrova, University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, UARD, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
- Dimitar Yakimov, University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, UARD, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
- Aleksandar Davchev, University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, UARD, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
- Plamen Lakov, University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, UARD, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

#### **Navigating the Green Wave: Assessing the Adoption of Eco-friendly Marketing in Egypt**

- Amr Aly, Department of Statistics, Econometrics, Operations Research, Business Organization and Applied Economics, University of Cordoba, Spain



- Luna Santos-Roldán, Department of Statistics, Econometrics, Operations Research, Business Organization and Applied Economics, University of Cordoba, Spain

### **Advancing Sustainability: The Role of Green Economy in Environmental Conservation and Resource Management**

- Delyan Plachkov, University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, UARD, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

### **Community of Practice for Sustainable Regions and Supply Chains**

- Liisa Timonen, Karelia University of Applied Sciences, Joensuu, Finland
- Kristiina Väänänen, Karelia University of Applied Sciences, Joensuu, Finland
- Tiina Muhonen, Karelia University of Applied Sciences, Joensuu, Finland
- Chijioke Okoro, Karelia University of Applied Sciences, Joensuu, Finland

### **Sustainable Agriculture through Integrated Pest Management: Strategies for Effective Implementation**

- Teodora Ilieva, University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, UARD, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
- Anna Karova, University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, UARD, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
- Mariyana Ivanova, University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, UARD, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

### **Enhancing Landscape Infrastructure: Mapping Windbreaks for Agricultural Resilience and Environmental Conservation**

- Lenka Lackóová, Faculty of Horticulture and Landscape Engineering, Slovak University of Agriculture, Nitra, Slovakia
- Mária Tárníková, Faculty of Horticulture and Landscape Engineering, Slovak University of Agriculture, Nitra, Slovakia

### **Cultural tourism and transport innovations - trends, opportunities and sustainability through the prism of tourist destination Plovdiv**

- Zlatka Grigorova, University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, UARD, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
- Alexander Davchev, University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, UARD, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

**Moderators.....**



**Dr. Konstantinos Kokkinos**

Dr. Kokkinos holds a B.Sc. in Physics, from Univ. of Thessaloniki, Greece, a M.Sc. & PhD in Computer Science from UoM, WMU, U.S.A. (1995 and 2002 respectively). He is an IEEE member, an OpenMI-Assoc. member, and currently an Assistant Professor of the Digital Systems Dept. at Univ. of Thessaly, Greece. His major research interests include Decision Support Systems, Fuzzy Logic and Soft Computing, Integrated Modelling and Simulation, Artificial Intelligence, and Environmental Software. Dr. Kokkinos has participated in 12 NSF, FP7, Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ funded projects and has published over 65 papers.



**Dr. Nicholas S. Samaras**

Nicholas S. Samaras (IEEE SM) is a Professor at the Department of Digital Systems, at the University of Thessaly, in Larissa, Greece. Dr. Samaras received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Pittsburgh, in Pittsburgh, PA, USA, in electrical engineering. His current research interests include IoT Systems and Applications, Networked Control Systems and Industrial Automation. He has served in several organizing, Steering and/or Program Committees, for several international conferences and he is Associate Editor and paper reviewer for various International Journals. He was a corecipient of the IEEE Industry Applications Society Prize Paper Award in 1998.

***Opportunities for development of alternative food networks in Bulgaria***



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ekaterina Arabska**

Rector of University of agribusiness and rural development (UARD). Main research and educational work is focused on approaches and instruments for sustainable development and digital transformation in education, as well as business communications and corporate social responsibility, social economy and social entrepreneurship, etc. She contributed to many national and international educational and research projects. Member of editorial boards of scientific journals and conference proceedings, scientific and organizing committees of conferences, seminars, trainings and other events, advisor in non-profit organizations, mentor of students, etc.



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetla Dimitrova**

President of University of agribusiness and rural development (UARD). Expert in plant technology and food production. She has worked successfully on scientific research and development projects in the sphere of agriculture, plant technologies and food production, having publications on food quality and safety, management in organic sector on different levels and sustainable agriculture development. Specializations in the Netherlands, Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Greece, Turkey, etc. Co-author of an original variety Galatea rice. Member of Bulgarian Scientific Breeding and Technical Union, Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, etc.



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitar Yakimov**

Director of the Institute of regional studies at the University of agribusiness and rural development (UARD). The research and educational activities focused on the creation and application of various types of organic fertilizers and the management of agroecological agriculture. A large part of the professional activities is also aimed at new ways of processing food raw materials for human consumption and waste-free technologies. A close connection is made with production companies with a view to the joint creation of new food products and fertilizers.



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Davchev**

Vice-rector of university of agribusiness and rural development (UARD). His work experience began in the National Commodity Exchange in 2003, and today he is the administrative director in the organisation. Since 2011 he has been working at university of agribusiness and rural development (UARD) and has been teaching Exchanges and Exchange Operations, Sales Management, Marketing, Labor Market, Economics of Tourism. His scientific publications include studies, articles and reports in various specialized editions, author and co-author of three textbooks, participant in international and regional conferences, round tables, etc. Mainly, his interests are in the field of marketing and sales management, the labor market as well as in some areas of tourism.



**Prof. Dr. Plamen Lakov**

Chairman of the Department of regional development, agribusiness and tourism at the University of agribusiness and rural development (UARD). Scientific interests in the field of: Tourism, Tourist Resources, Climatology and Environmental Protection, Regional Economy, Regional Policy and Sustainable Development. Author and co-author of more than 85 scientific works, and more than 15 textbooks and teaching aids for higher and secondary education. Realize a number of mobilities under the Erasmus+ program at universities in Stip, Ohrid, Canakkale, Klaipeda, etc. Member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria. In 2011 awarded the honorary award "Neofit Rilski" of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science for long-term and comprehensive work in the education system.

***Navigating the Green Wave: Assessing the Adoption of Eco-friendly Marketing in Egypt***



**Dr. Amr Aly**

Dr. Amr Aly holds a Doctorate of Business Administration from Swiss Business School and working as an assistant professor in the American college of the Middle East in Kuwait. Meanwhile, he is a PhD candidate in Cordoba University, Spain. Concurrently, he maintains an active role in training and consulting with different companies, alongside his ongoing entrepreneurial pursuits. His main research lines are the topics of Sustainability, Green marketing, and using AI in education.



**Prof. Luna Santos**

Prof. Luna Santos holds a Ph.D. in Business and she currently works at the University of Córdoba as Vice-Chancellor for Internationalization and professor at the Department of Business Organization. Her main research lines are the topics of consumer behavior, internationalization, tourism sector and others (which would include topics such as Entrepreneurship, CSR, etc.). She has been visiting several Universities in Europe, Latin America and US. Several collaborations in marketing departments of local and international companies. In recent years, her research and thesis direction have been directed towards a greater social commitment, with the aim of providing companies with fewer resources, such as SMEs and micro-SMEs with relevant information for decision making in their subsistence in the market and in relation to consumer behavior.

**Advancing Sustainability: The Role of Green Economy in Environmental Conservation and Resource Management**



**Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Delyan Plachkov**

Director of distance learning center in University of agribusiness and rural development, Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Actively participates in four of the five packages under the INVEST project in the first phase, takes part in the INVEST4EXCELLECE project, coordinator of the 7th package of UARD in the second phase of the INVEST project. Main research and educational work are focused on approaches and instruments for sustainable development and digital transformation in education, as well as green economy and finances, agricultural business and rural development, etc. Participant and contributor to national and international educational and research projects. Member of organizational boards of scientific journals and conference proceedings, scientific and organizing committees of conferences, seminars, trainings and other events, advisor in non-profit organizations, mentor of students, etc.

***Community of Practice for Sustainable Regions and Supply Chains***



**Dr. Liisa Timonen**

Dr. Liisa Timonen has a doctoral degree in education and master's degree in social geography. She holds the position of Head of Internationalisation and INVEST Local Leader at Karelia UAS, and is responsible for the internationalisation processes, policy making, partnership development and global education. She also contributes extensively into the international research, development and innovation processes, and her portfolio includes international and national projects covering actions in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Northern America. Dr. Timonen has in-depth research expertise in international higher education discussing competence development processes, multicultural learning, diversity and inclusion management and teachers' expertise in multicultural education.





**Tiina Muhonen M.A.**

Tiina Muhonen has M.A. in linguistics with specialisations in language pedagogy, special education and psychology. She holds a position of a Project Specialist and Junior Researcher at Karelia UAS in INVEST4EXCELLENCE project. The main competence areas involve capacity building of research, development and innovation actions in sustainability, stakeholder collaboration, open science and research and strategy development.



**Dr. Kristiina Väänänen**

Dr. Kristiina Väänänen is a senior project researcher at Karelia University of Applied Sciences, focusing on innovative educational and research activities in higher education. Dr. Väänänen is experienced in building curricula to fit the needs of working life, and in building new partnerships with local organizations. Dr. Väänänen has a doctoral degree in biology and she has dedicated her career for solving environmental challenges.

***Sustainable Agriculture through Integrated Pest Management: Strategies for Effective Implementation***



**Head Assist. Prof. Teodora Ilieva, PhD**

Teodora Ilieva is a Lecturer at the Department of Regional Development, Agribusiness and Tourism at the University of Agribusiness and Rural Development - Plovdiv. She graduated with a Master's degree in Ecology and Environmental Protection (1999) and in 2006 has completed her PhD at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv (Bulgaria) on the plant protection. Research activity is related to pests and diseases of vegetable crops, problems with pests, diseases and weeds in organic farming and alternative methods and means of control. She actively participates in research projects, and in national and international scientific forums.



**Assoc. Prof. Anna Karova, PhD**

Anna Karova holds a Master degree in Agroecology (1998) and in 2007 has completed her PhD at the Agricultural University in Plovdiv (Bulgaria) on the classical biological control (use of bioagents for control of invasive plants). Currently she is Associate Professor at the Department of Agroecology and Environmental Protection at the Agricultural University. She teaches courses in Agroecology, Organic farming and Environmental law in different Bachelor and Master degree programs. Her main research interests are in the field of agroecology, IPM, biological control and organic farming.



**Prof. Mariyana Ivanova, PhD**

Mariyana Ivanova is a Professor at the Department of Regional Development, Agribusiness and Tourism at the University of Agribusiness and Rural Development in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Rector of the same university in the period of 2019 – 2023, and Vice Rector of Academic Affairs and International Cooperation in the period of 2008 - 2019. Research interests are in the field of plant protection, entomology, agroecology, organic farming, environmental management. Author of more than 100 scientific publications, more than 30 of which are abroad from participation in international forums in Germany, Greece, Italy, Slovakia, Romania, Turkey, etc. M. Ivanova is the UARD's Local Coordinator in the INVEST project.

***Enhancing Landscape Infrastructure: Mapping Windbreaks for Agricultural Resilience and Environmental Conservation***



**Assoc. Prof. Lenka Lackóová**

Assoc. Prof. Lenka Lackóová, PhD., INVEST Local Coordinator, is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Horticulture and Landscape Engineering, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Slovakia and one of the co-guarantors of the Master's Degree in Landscape Engineering. She is also the main guarantor within the qualification verification system in the national economy sector - water, waste, environment. She has also worked as an expert for the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency and as a consultant for higher education. In her educational and scientific field, she is an experienced expert in environmental issues related to environmental management, environmental impact assessment and landscape modelling and analysis. She has been leader, co-leader and team member of many national and international research and educational projects. In her current scientific research activity, she is active in the publications mainly focusing on adaptation measures to climate change, aiming to improve environmental quality through innovative landscape solutions.



**Assist. Prof. Mária Tárníková, PhD**

Assist. Prof. Mária Tárníková, PhD., is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Horticulture and Landscape Engineering, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Slovakia. In her educational and scientific field, she is an experienced expert in landscape issues related to landscape planning, land consolidation a geographic information systems. She has been team member of many national and international research and educational projects. In her current scientific research activity, she is active in the publications mainly focusing on adaptation measures to climate change, aiming to improve environmental quality through innovative landscape solutions.

***Cultural tourism and transport innovations - trends, opportunities and sustainability through the prism of tourist destination Plovdiv***



**Prof. Dr. Zlatka Grigorova**

Professor in the Department of Regional Development, Agribusiness and Tourism and the director of the Department of Language Training, Specializations and Qualifications of University of agribusiness and rural development - Plovdiv. She is a national and regional expert on tourism and landscape diversity. Her research interests are in the field of regional development, circular economy and sustainable tourism. She participates in the work of a number of projects and scientific research tasks.



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Davchev**

Vice-rector of University of agribusiness and rural development (UARD). His work experience began in the National Commodity Exchange in 2003, and today he is the administrative director in the organisation. Since 2011 he has been working at University of agribusiness and rural development (UARD) and has been teaching Exchanges and Exchange Operations, Sales Management, Marketing, Labor Market, Economics of Tourism. His scientific publications include studies, articles and reports in various specialized editions, author and co-author of three textbooks, participant in international and regional conferences, round tables, etc. Mainly, his interests are in the field of marketing and sales management, the labor market as well as in some areas of tourism.