



VIDA
value-added innovation
in food chains

Report of results from cross-sectoral and cross- border working groups

VIDA – D3.3 Version 1.0 / March



The VIDA project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement n° 777795.

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1. Introduction

This document includes the information and results about the work developed on *Task 3.3 Organisation of cross-sectoral and cross-border online working groups*, led by ZINNAE. This task's overall goal is to emphasise cross-border and cross-sectoral networking and collaboration to address the VIDA project's innovation challenges.

2. Cross-sectoral and cross-border working groups methodology

Based on the requirements of the project, the VIDA consortium decided to develop two different types of working groups. The first one was the VIDA challenges working group, whose purpose was to promote the establishment of new alliances within the VIDA network to develop new ideas that could be materialised through the VIDA Demonstration Vouchers. The second type was the Demonstration Vouchers working groups, whose purpose was to facilitate the internal communication within the consortium and their sponsor and the successful development of reporting activities.

2.1. VIDA challenges working group

This Working Groups (WG) were established based on the development of the VIDA challenges, where the main objective was to create a space where SMEs could connect and meet other partners to support them develop new consortia and boost the collaboration between innovation actors (mainly SMEs) to develop innovative products, processes, and services that meet the VIDA scope and could be funded by VIDA vouchers or other funding opportunities. The VIDA consortium uses the platform CLOU5 to create the Working Groups using one “blog” page to gather the potential applicants (SMEs), end users, and other stakeholders (among VIDA partners) to share areas of interest in the frame of the VIDA Nexus. The VIDA Demonstration Voucher applicants list was invited to join this group and benefit from cross-border and cross-sectoral stakeholders' interaction. Thus, the VIDA challenges working group is a closed group that only participants with access to CLOU5 could join.

The VIDA WG page had the following settings (see example in Figure 1 and Figure 2):

- **Group calendar** to share relevant dates for the VIDA project and also for the VIDA nexus.
- **Group discussion**, all participants could open a discussion topic to share experiences and knowledge.
- **Group files**, which was split into 11 folders gathering the VIDA challenges and also other general information:
 - Sustainable livestock.

- Resource-efficient beverages production (other non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages).
- Resource-efficient food processing.
- Alternative food production.
- Sustainable wineries.
- Efficient meat processing.
- Sustainable agriculture and efficient greenhouse management.
- Sustainable breweries.
- Sustainable milk processing.
- Sustainable aquaculture.
- Topic of general interest.

The purpose of these folders was to facilitate the participants to share publications about the challenges, so all the working group members can read them and interact by leaving comments about the publication.

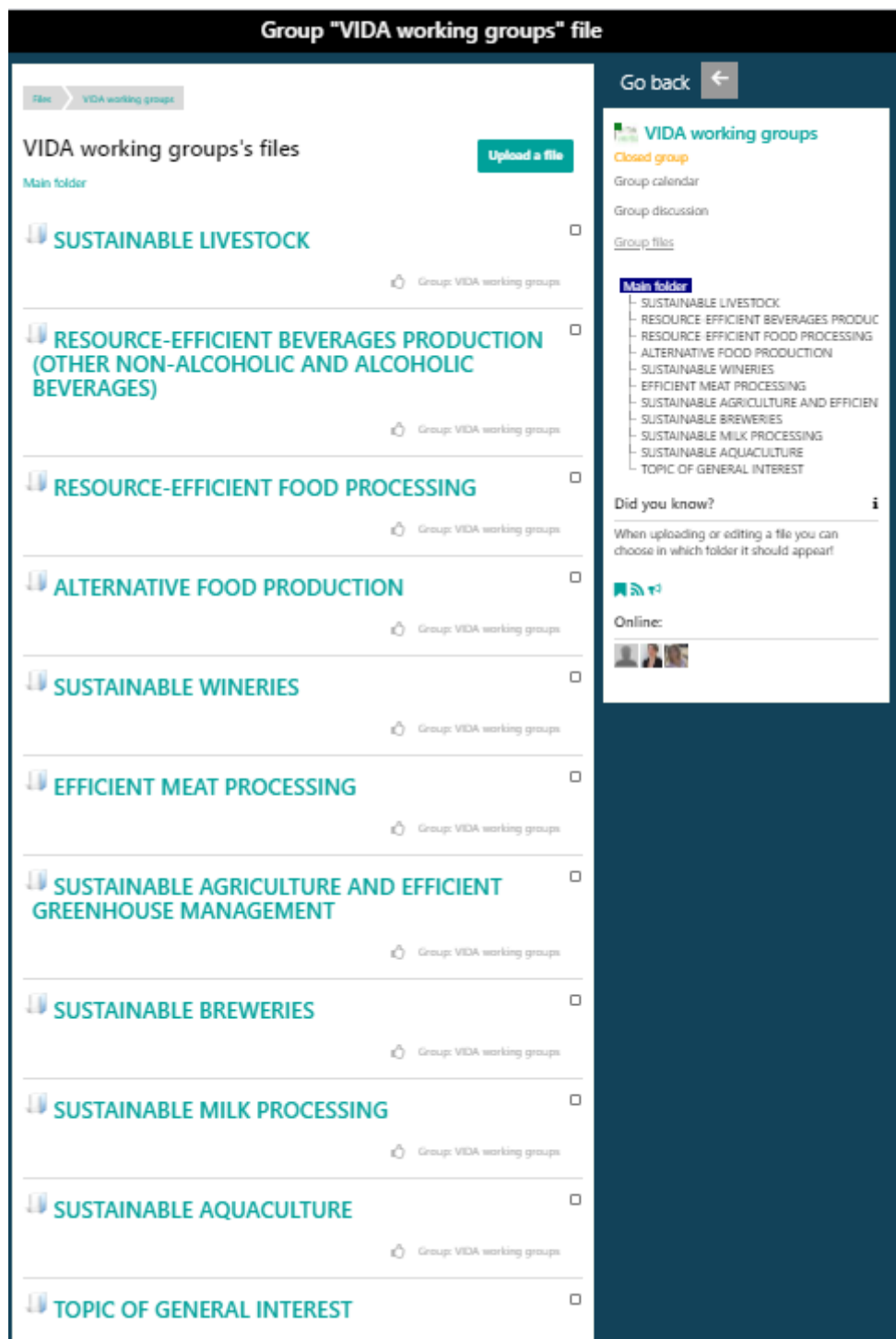


Figure 1.- Discussion topics on the VIDA Challenges working group.

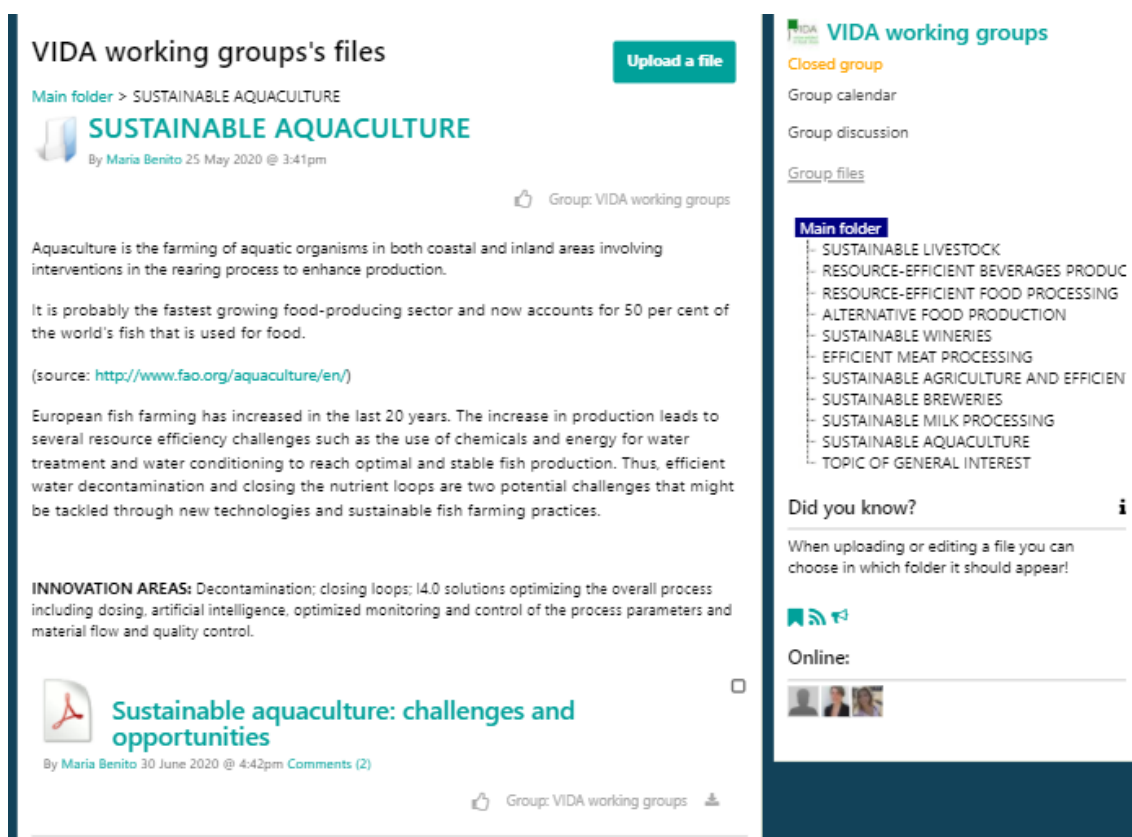


Figure 2.- Example of a discussion topic in the VIDA challenges WG.

The VIDA consortium gathered expression of interest of SMEs, also linked to the Webinars, and shared them in a common space (WG) to promote interaction between innovation and actors before the 2nd Call of Demonstration Vouchers.

Besides, out of the DV VIDA 2nd Call period, the strategy was focused on promoting the publication of articles around the VIDA challenges to foster the discussion. The VIDA team was also involved in this activity by preparing several articles to trigger knowledge sharing between members (Enhance your seed germination and you plant growth with plasma; Brewing 4.0; Sustainable wineries; Control of invasive alien species; Sustainable aquaculture: challenges and opportunities). Besides, an updated document with funding opportunities in Europe and VIDA partners' countries was shared to provide the group members with information about funding tools available to develop their innovative ideas.

2.2. Demonstration vouchers working groups

These working groups provided tools where the Demonstration Vouchers members and VIDA sponsor could share experiences during the project development in a private space. In addition, they represent a relevant tool to facilitate reporting activities and easily track by the VIDA consortium the reporting documents.

All the Demonstration Vouchers funded by the VIDA project had their own closed working group, and at least one person from each beneficiary entity had to join it.

The tools available in these working groups are (Figure 3):

- **Group activity** to track the actions within the working groups and its author.
- **Group calendar** with relevant dates of each project, such as milestones and reporting deadlines.
- **Group discussion** to facilitate the interaction between members.
- **Group files** to upload templates by the sponsor and reporting documents by the beneficiaries.
- **Video conference room**.

The screenshot displays a web interface for a working group titled "VIDA_DV001_project-group_dummy". The interface is divided into several sections:

- Group Header:** Includes the group name, a "Leave group" button, a group icon, the sponsor "Food-Processing Initiative e.V.", the owner "Sabine Höfel", and "Group members: 4".
- Event calendar:** A section titled "Event calendar" with a dropdown arrow and the text "No events found."
- Group files:** A section titled "Group files" with a dropdown arrow, containing four file entries:
 - "VIDA_DV000_Technical_report_test" (Word document) by VIDA application coordinator, 19 February 2020 @ 11:22am.
 - "VIDA_DV_Report instructions" (PDF) by Sabine Höfel, 26 November 2019 @ 9:18am.
 - "VIDA_DV_Questionnaire" (PDF) by VIDA application coordinator, 26 November 2019 @ 9:07am.
 - "VIDA_DV_Financial_Template" (Excel spreadsheet) by VIDA application coordinator, 26 November 2019 @ 9:05am.
- Sidebar:** A vertical navigation menu on the right with the group name and "Closed group" status. It lists navigation options: "Group activity", "Group calendar", "Group discussion", "Group files", and "Video Conference". Below this is a search box "Search in this group" with a "Go" button. Further down are sections for "Group admins" (two profiles), "Group members" (four profiles) with a "View all members" link, "My status" (notifications on), and "Online:" (three profiles).

Figure 3.- Example of a Demonstration vouchers working groups.

3. Main results achieved

Table 1 shows the main indicators related to the VIDA cross-sectoral and cross-border working groups.

Table 1.- VIDA working groups indicators.

	Number of working groups	Number of participants	Number of females
Challenges WG	1 *	59	24 (40.6%)
DV WG	19	69	10 (14.5%)
TOTAL	20	128	34 (26.6%)

**divided into 11 folders containing the description of the challenges and space to interact.*

By month 36 of the VIDA project, 128 participants had joined the VIDA working groups, so the KPI defined in the proposal, 125 participants, was successfully achieved.

The females involved in the VIDA challenges working group represents 40.6% of the participants. However, only 14.5% are females for the DV working groups, so the average is 26.6% in all the working groups. This is below the target of 30% female in the proposal. However, the results show that VIDA could achieve a higher representation of female in the networking working group (Challenges WG). Unfortunately, female representation was lower than expected for the VIDA beneficiaries involved in internal communication and reporting.

Regarding the participants involved in each working group, the target was >5 participants/group, which was greatly exceeded in the challenges working group. Some DV working groups' participation was below 5 participants since some DV consortia had less than 5 beneficiaries.

4. Lessons learned and recommendations

The main lessons learned with the VIDA cross-sectoral and cross-border working groups are:

- It has been challenging to foster the networking and knowledge sharing within VIDA challenges working group, and we find just a few interactions between group members. We consider that this interaction could be more easily promoted by using other tools, such as LinkedIn.
- Working groups are a very useful tool for DV projects follow-up by sponsors and also for reporting and monitoring of the innovation projects.

- VIDA working groups were useful to share with the VIDA network relevant materials created during the project lifetime, such as funding opportunities documents or online training materials.
- The VIDA project partners and VIDA webinars were a powerful resource for networking and enabling cross-border and cross-sectoral collaboration, and build new alliances across VIDA countries.

Therefore, the main recommendations for future cascade funding projects or other initiatives that boosts the collaboration between innovation stakeholders are:

- Continue fostering the webinars to facilitate networking and collaboration.
- Build a solid strategy to promote networking within the project consortium as a valuable tool for generating synergies between innovation stakeholders.
- Use other tools such as LinkedIn Groups to promote the collaboration, so the members do not need to connect to an additional tool for this purpose. The pandemic has increased the number of tools available for networking. We consider that it would be more productive to centralise it in the most extended tool for professional communication, such as LinkedIn.
- Consider matchmaking tools since B2B meetings are becoming a useful alternative to build new cross-border and cross-sectoral connections.