



May 2023

Jury report

Academic Consultancy Training Award (ACT Award)

'The Tiny van Boekel Prize'

The Academic Consultancy Training (ACT) award is an annual celebration that recognises the student team that was best able to create science-based value for society in a joint effort. This is the fifth time that this celebration is organised by Society Based Education, which is part of Education Support Centre, Wageningen UR. Society Based Education supports WU teachers integrating 'real-life', authentic challenges in their education. The ACT award is a prize named after Tiny van Boekel, the previous Dean of Education (2012-2017) as a farewell gift.

Hereby a short summary of the procedure that was used to select the ACT team that is awarded with the ACT award this year. This team was selected out of the 195 ACT projects that were executed in the year 2022. At first, a shortlist was compiled of seven ACT project teams. This shortlist was based on:

- The highest grades: Pre-condition is that the final grade is ≥ 8.0
- The average grade of the client and the academic advisor is ≥ 8.5
- The coach's advice (academic quality, consultancy quality and the value for client, transdisciplinary quality), to make a certain ACT project team eligible for the ACT award
Each period, the ACT coordination asks the coaches to send their recommendation for eligible teams)
- All projects are executed from period 3 2021-2022 till period 2 2022-2023 (calendar year 2022).

In the following step the awarding committee analysed the work of the ACT project teams on the shortlist. This includes the final report and written input given by the client and coach. The awarding committee used the following criteria to evaluate the input:

- Collaborative process and professional attitude of the students
- Creativity or innovativeness in terms of approach and output
- Boundary crossing competence: Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary
- Added value of the academic consultancy advice from both a scientific and societal perspective

The members of the ACT awarding committee are:

- Arnold Bregt – Dean of Education
- Perry den Brok – Chair holder Education and Learning Sciences
- Rio Pals – Manager Student Challenges
- Gitte Schober – Coordinator Center of Entrepreneurship

The ACT awarding committee was greatly impressed by all seven nominated projects, each of which demonstrated high-quality work. Following a thorough discussion where perspectives and impressions were shared, the committee ultimately decided that the ACT award goes to :

'TROFI: The Future Of Good Food'.

Below you find a description and the jury results of the seven nominated projects.



TROFI: The Future Of Good Food (2810)

(January - March 2022)

ACT student team:

- Alex van der Walt (MES-B - Environmental Policy and Economics)
- Anouk van den Boomen (MNH-E - System Approach for Sustainable and Healthy Diets)
- Diederick Trampe (MME-A - Business Studies)
- Guoda Bubnyte (MOA-B- Sustainable Food Systems)
- Nina Oskam (MPS-C- Natural Resource Management)
- Victoria Gomez (MFN-B - Management)

Commissioner: Bart Drenth (MKB Amsterdam) - Coach: Frans Duurland - Academic Advisor: Ayalew Kassahun

The project

MKB Amsterdam and their partners have set the goal to put Amsterdam on the map as the World Food Capital by 2025. With the use of the good food-oriented pillars – sustainable, tasty, healthy and affordable – the students have developed a fresh and innovative solution aiming at connecting entrepreneurs on the topic of good foods. To come to this solution the students combined different strategies. They performed multiple interviews with stakeholders to find out what solutions are wanted and needed, observed the current food environment in Amsterdam, researched the social science behind food behaviour and held panel meetings to incorporate feedback from the focus group. The outcome was a final concept called TROFI that consists of three different solutions: (1) TROFI guidelines allowing assessment of and providing education on the tastiness, health, affordability and sustainability of foods; (2) TROFI website providing a service that brings stakeholders together to discuss everything about good food, share knowledge and form collaborations; (3) a TROFI hub, a biannual physical event allowing entrepreneurs to promote their entrepreneurial projects and showcase their achievements to sustain inspiration and motivation.

TROFI is a project brought to life to make sure that the entrepreneurs of Amsterdam are connected again with the positive side of food. The commissioner was extremely happy with the useful outcome: he shared them with the board and used it for follow up assignments. He was impressed by the eagerness of the team to collaborate and come up with fresh, creative and innovative ideas.

Jury results

The ACT award committee was thoroughly impressed by the flexibility, creativity, and excellent collaboration skills demonstrated by the ACT student team. They utilized a wide range of disciplines and effectively bridged connections between them. Through the use of various research methods, the team conducted extensive research and analysis resulting in a visually appealing and engaging report that inspired enthusiasm in the reader. The committee was particularly impressed by the report's comprehensive recommendations, each aspect thoughtfully and thoroughly detailed. What truly stood out for the committee was the unique and creative design of the report, incorporating captivating artwork that brought an extra layer of interest and innovation. Despite changes in the project's requirements, the team remained adaptable and resilient, maximizing their expertise and skills to provide an exceptional result that aligned with the ambitions of various stakeholders. The team's dedication and professionalism were evident throughout the entire project, and their creative and practical solution was both impressive and impactful.



Learning from the intentional management of wild food plants by living cultures (2824)

(January- March 2022)

ACT student team:

- Mariam Aleem (MPS-D- Plant Breeding and Genetic Resources)
- Maryse Barends (MPS-E- Plant Pathology and Entomology)
- Francesca Campacci (MPS-E- Plant Pathology and Entomology)
- Magali Gendebien (MNH-C - Molecular Nutrition and Toxicology)
- Andreas Kraamwinkel (MPS-D- Plant Breeding and Genetic Resources)
- Maarten van Haeff (MOA-A- Agroecology)

Commissioner: Lisa Price (Local Food Plants for Nutrition, Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security) – Coach: Femma Roschar – Academic Advisor: Guusje Bonnema

The project

Wild food plants (WFPs) represent a largely untapped resource for human consumption, with over 16,000 plant species identified as potential sources of food. However, the existence of these plants is threatened by ecological and societal factors, making it essential to conserve them and their cultural heritage. To better understand the management of WFPs and support local communities, students conducted a literature study to identify patterns and best practices. They developed a tool that allows for the analysis of global management patterns and provided a report and presentation for the commissioners. The tool allows the commissioners to gain a complete overview of how wild food plants are managed globally by providing the mechanics for future analysis of patterns in novel papers. The commissioners can use this information to eventually help local farmers living in rural areas to improve their management practices of the wild food plants species. The student where as a team curious, open-minded and respectful on personal growth, backgrounds, culture, knowledge, norms and values. What stood out for the commissioners was way that the students worked so much back and forth with them to come to an agreement on how to approach the work. They think the students did an excellent job on the final output: "We are very, very happy with this and the process they used to come to this point and in particular the way they worked with us throughout the process of delivering something worthwhile and on-time."

Jury results

The ACT award committee was impressed by the extensive literature research of the team, showcasing their commitment to a thorough process. They persevered for four weeks in negotiating with the commissioner, highlighting their resilience and determination. Process management was essential for this team, and they demonstrated its importance throughout the project. The report produced by the team is easy to read and understand. The advice provided in the report is highly practical and beneficial for the client. Team's dedication and hard work were evident, and they remained committed to delivering an excellent result despite any challenges they faced. Overall, the team demonstrated their ability to conduct thorough research and manage the project effectively, showcasing their professionalism, resilience and perseverance.



A Fresh Approach: Creating a healthy and Sustainable External Food Environment in a High School Setting (2944a)

(May – July 2022)

ACT student team:

- Jonna Brantjes (MME-C –MFS-B – Food Law and Regulatory Affairs)
- Saskia Colombant (MOA-B – Sustainable Food Systems)
- Mara Hendriks (MCH-B – Health and Society)
- Sanne Huijgen (MCH-B – Health and Society)
- Claudia van Pijkeren (MNH-B – Nutritional Physiology and Health Status)
- Suzanne Prins (MCH-B – Health and Society)
- Lieke Verhoeven (MCH-B – Health and Society)

Commissioner: Charlotte Maas (Pantarijn Wageningen) and Wieke Bonthuis (GGD/VGGM en Jong Leren eten Gelderland) - Coach: Suzane Tju - Academic Advisor: Melina Czymoniewicz-klippel

The project

Compliance with dietary guidelines among 12-18-year-olds in the Netherlands is low and the prevalence of overweight in this age group is increasing. The school food environment is recognized as a significant driver of unhealthy dietary behavior. Pantarijn, a high school in Wageningen, is struggling with this problem as well and wants to improve its internal and external food environment regarding health and sustainability. Students addressed the problem by providing an overview of the current external food environment around Pantarijn in Wageningen, including perspectives of different involved key stakeholders and offering recommendations to improve the current situation. The methodology they used includes scientific and grey literature search, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, a focus group interview with pupils, and foodscape mapping. The main outputs are a report that analyzes the external food environment and a collaborative board game aimed at increasing awareness about the situation among Pantarijn pupils.

The commissioners appreciated the creativity of the team and the quality of the deliverables and results, and think the board game is illustrative, helpful, professional, and beautiful.

Jury results

The jury was amazed by the exceptional creativity of the team and they value the team's effort that went above and beyond what was required. Their creativity was evident in the development of a game. The team was both professional and innovative, and they reflected deeply on their approach and outcomes. They were not afraid to step outside their discipline, utilizing different research methods to provide a well-rounded result.

The resulting report was well-written, clear, and visually appealing, showcasing the team's excellent communication skills. The recommendations were well-structured and valuable for the client, who could apply them directly. Additionally, the recommendations were useful for other stakeholders. Overall, the team's work was of great value, and they demonstrated their ability to provide creative solutions and deliver exceptional results.



Participating with U: An ACT final report on the perceptions of the Blue Mountains using a participatory process (2955)

(May – July 2022)

ACT student team:

- Katrin Diano (MUE - Land Use Planning)
- Tina Egberts (MCH-B - Health and Society)
- Miro Jokinen (MTO - Tourism & Global Change)
- Lotte van de Langerijt (MCH-B - Health and Society)
- Yudithya Yanuaria Marey (MCH-B - Health and Society)
- Anna Hettinga (MCH-B - Health and Society)
- Elke Koenraad (MNH-D - Sensory Science)

Commissioner: Peter Muller (Gelderland) – Coach: Gerda Wink – Academic Advisor: Laura Bouwman

The project

The Blue Mountains park is located in Wageningen, and the Gelderland province has been working on the Beter Bereikbaar Wageningen project to improve accessibility and economic opportunities. As part of this project, a new bicycle path will be added near the Blue Mountains park, which presents an opportunity to revise the park to address safety concerns and maintain biodiversity. The students' objective was to understand how Wageningen residents perceive the park and identify contributing and restraining factors that affect its use. The students created and distributed a questionnaire, held three participatory research sessions, and found that most people visit the park at least once a week and identified cleanliness, maintenance, and protection of biodiversity as critical factors. The participants wished for more clarity on the off and on leash dog issue and wanted to maintain the park's current size. The students recommended applying the participatory approach more often and keeping residents involved, as the residents expressed a willingness to contribute and be taken seriously.

The commissioners were impressed by the teams ambitious participatory research as well as by their collaboration with and the collaboration within the team: "A very good approach, report and presentation, showing you did a lot of work. We wish bureaus could do this."

Jury results

The team's innovative approach was noteworthy to the jury, because the team developed their own research methodology and executed it exceptionally well. It was particularly courageous of them to utilize this methodology given that emotions run high in this area. The methodology was found to be highly suitable for the project. The team demonstrated a high level of professionalism, working collaboratively and efficiently to deliver outstanding results. They reflected thoughtfully on their interdisciplinary approach, highlighting the benefits and challenges of working across disciplines.

The resulting report was well-structured and easy to navigate, and the team's creative approach, incorporating elements of art, was particularly noteworthy. The team employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, demonstrating a sensitivity to the needs and perspectives of different stakeholders. The methodology developed by the team is not only valuable for the current project, but also has potential for future use by the client. Overall, the team's work was exceptional, and they have demonstrated their ability to deliver original and valuable research outcomes while working collaboratively and professionally.



Increasing the visibility of the Business Unit Greenhouse Horticulture and Flower Bulbs (2962: CONFIDENTIAL)

(September – October 2022)

ACT student team:

- Dimitris Kotopoullis (MME-D - Management in Life Sciences)
- Aron Moehn (MPS-B- Greenhouse Horticulture)
- Eveline Bosman (MPS-B- Greenhouse Horticulture)
- Garam Han (MPS-E- Plant Pathology and Entomology)
- Inge van der Wal (MPS-F- Plant Breeding)

Commissioner: Rick de Jong (WUR) – Coach: Beatrix Horvath - Academic Advisor: Nastassia Vilfan

The project

The Business Unit - Greenhouse Horticulture and Flower Bulbs (BU) is one of the main Dutch agricultural applied research institutes focusing on developing and providing new sustainable concepts and technologies for crop production and greenhouse construction. To boost its presence as frontrunners in the greenhouse research, both nationally and internationally, the BU aims to maximize the impact of their research and strengthen and extend their current partnerships. To support this objective, the BU commissioned the Academic Consultancy Training (ACT) team to provide advice on the following question: *Which communication strategy can the BU adopt to increase their visibility to their different target groups?*

To formulate their advice, the students narrowed this question down into three topics. Due to the concrete and to the point formulated questions, the final report has a logical, clear structure, explaining the methodology, answering the question with results, giving recommendation and summarising the conclusion. The reader can easily follow the report, as each chapter gives a short introduction for the following paragraph.

Upon their in-depth analysis, they made 7 following recommendations to BU. In these recommendations, a clear step by step strategy for the short and long-term is described; while in the conclusion, related to each research question in a good balance, the group highlights the current difficulties and their reasons but also draws the potentials for the future. Immediately after the presentation, the relevant BU members in a closed-circle organized and further discussed the recommendations to implement them in order to set BU's identity and its visibility. They used it as a starting point to further improve their communication strategy.

Jury results

The high-quality results of this team left a strong impression on the jury. The team went above and beyond in their execution of the project. They stepped out of their comfort zone, demonstrating personal growth, and exhibited excellent teamwork throughout. The report is well-designed, with clear writing and effective visuals. The team applied various research methods, resulting in scientifically sound recommendations that are valuable for the client. Overall, the project provides useful insights that the client can immediately apply to their work.



Nitrogen effects on nature in the Binnenveld: investigating the effects and giving communication and citizen science advice (2986)

(September - October 2022)

ACT project team:

- Meike van den Boom (MBI-B - Adaptation and Development)
- Flora van Eupen (MFN-B - Management)
- Carlijn Fransen (MBF - Bioinformatics)
- Minke Mulder (MBI-D - Ecology)
- Nadja Warth (MFN-B - Management)
- Luc Wasser (MML-A - Biomedical Research)

Commissioner: Rob Janmaat & Willem Hendriks (Foundation Mooi Binnenveld) - Coach: Josette Jacobs - Academic Advisor: Fons van der Plas

The project

In today's world, it has become increasingly important to restore, develop, and conserve valuable natural areas. Two such areas are Trilveen and Blauwgrasland, both of which are high diversity plant communities with significant conservation values. These communities are being developed in the Binnenveldse Hooilanden, a nature reserve in the valley of the Binnenveld in the Netherlands. However, the long-term effects of excess nitrogen entering the area, primarily through atmospheric deposition, remain unclear. To address this issue, students undertook a project to investigate the nitrogen fluxes and potential future soil concentrations in the area to evaluate the possible effects on the vegetation in the future.

The students developed a model to quantify nitrogen fluxes and concentrations and evaluate the effects on local vegetation and conservation values. They proposed citizen science projects to measure nitrogen levels and recommended the use of nitrate test strips, Nitrachek, dry deposition Gradko test tubes, and wet deposition rain catchers with ion exchange resin to test nitrogen concentrations. The commissioners were pleased with the students' recommendations and used their results to conduct a discussion on nitrogen in the Binnenveld based on "measurement and knowledge" rather than emotion. The students made an important contribution to help the commissioners develop a sound nitrogen approach in the Binnenveld.

Jury results

The project's potential substantial impact caught the attention of the jury. The combination of science and social impact scored particularly well, especially given its timeliness. The team exhibited a professional work ethic and demonstrated a clear understanding of the subject matter. The report was well-structured, effectively balancing scientific rigor and practical application. The team showed understanding of the sensitivity of the topic in their communication. The potential for significant impact was evident, and the project has great promise for making a difference in the field.



How to stay connected - obtaining insight in rainwater disconnection projects (3011)

(November - December 2022)

ACT project team:

- Anna Lith (MEE-A - Hydrology and Water Resources)
- Yvet Renkema (MBE - Information Technology)
- Sabine de Rijk (MUE - Urban Systems Engineering)
- Anne van der Wilk (MEE-A - Hydrology and Water Resources)
- Eline Zweers (MCL-A - The Physical Climate System)

Commissioner: Sandy Hofland (Waterschap Vallei en Veluwe) - Coach: Josette Jacobs - Academic Advisor: Lukasz Grus

The project

This student project was commissioned by the waterboard 'Vallei en Veluwe' in the Netherlands in response to the increasing pressures faced by sewage treatment plants due to climate change and growing urbanization. The project aimed to aid the waterboard in gaining more clarity on rainwater disconnection data by interviewing six municipalities and sending questionnaires to other waterboards in the Netherlands. The data was used to develop a disconnection-rating and an ArcGIS map to aid in disconnection projects. The students found that municipalities did not automatically share their data with the waterboard, and advised the waterboard to offer their time and contributions to help standardize data and provide direct analysis and feedback on data. The students also concluded that the disclosure of data relating to rainwater disconnection is viable as long as the data cannot be tied to an individual or group of individuals.

The commissioner was pleased with the students' recommendations and presented them widely to colleagues from the water board and municipalities. The recommendations were broken down into small, achievable actions and follow-up steps, making the topic of sewer more accessible to a wider audience. Ultimately, the students' project offered valuable insights into how to gather, analyze, and utilize data to aid rainwater disconnection projects, promoting sustainable and efficient water management in the face of increasing urbanization and climate change.

Jury results

The jury was impressed by the diversity of methods applied by the team and the extensive implications thereof. The added value of the project was exceptionally high. The team invested a great deal of effort in the topic and quickly made it their own. As a result, they grew in their collaboration and showed good group progress. The reflection on the process was clear and well-thought-out. The team applied various research methods, which led to diverse advice on different levels. The report was written in a clear manner and the presentation of the results was creative, appealing to a broad audience. The jury finds the advice to be highly usable for the client.

In summary, the jury is very impressed with the work of this team and considers it a valuable contribution. The team has shown that they are highly professional and creative, and their results are of high quality and exceptionally useful for the client.