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TERAMO

# Lifelong education at the time of COVID-19 pandemic: an analysis of participants' perception

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## Who we are: the IZS Teramo



IZS Teramo is part of a national network of 10 veterinary research institutes, each supported by several local diagnostic units. Our headquarters are in Teramo, and we have six diagnostic units in Abruzzo and Molise Regions.



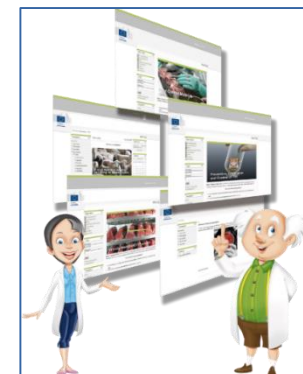


# COVID-19 pandemic: the IZS Teramo lifelong learning experience

This presentation concerns the lifelong learning experience carried out by the Training and Project Management Unit of IZS-Teramo - ([www.izs.it](http://www.izs.it)) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The IZS offers high added-value services in the areas of animal health and welfare, veterinary public health and environmental protection, adopting a One Health approach.

Since nineties', the Unit has planned and delivered residential and e-learning courses (mainly asynchronous) in compliance with the UNI EN ISO 9001:2015 Standard.





## COVID-19 pandemic and the re-organisation of IZS Teramo learning asset

The physical distancing imposed by the pandemic forced the Institute to introduce a complete re-organisation of the working asset. Residential events have been transformed into synchronous and asynchronous at distance courses.

During COVID-19 pandemic, distance learning represented the only opportunity for adults to gain training experiences and responding to the constant need of life-long learning.

On-line learning systems are web-based solutions able to plan and manage courses on Internet.





## **CISCO® Webex System: Scalable and large-scale training events**

The CISCO® Webex System has been selected as the most appropriate technological platform for on-line meetings, videoconferences, webinars to satisfy the new emerged needs.

CISCO® offers engaging three tools to host customised, interactive, scalable and large-scale training events.

It has really represented the privileged way to reach our main group of beneficiaries (veterinarians, biologists, lab technicians, chemicals, pharmacists, medical doctors and others) across Italy, providing them several training events.





## The IZS Survey and its tools

From June 2020 to August 2021 (18 months) the Training and Project Management Unit of IZS delivered 83 on-line courses reaching nearly 9000 participants.

Through SurveyMonkey® ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)), a multiple-choice questionnaire was delivered to almost 3000 participants in national on-line initiatives promoted by the Institute in the mentioned period.





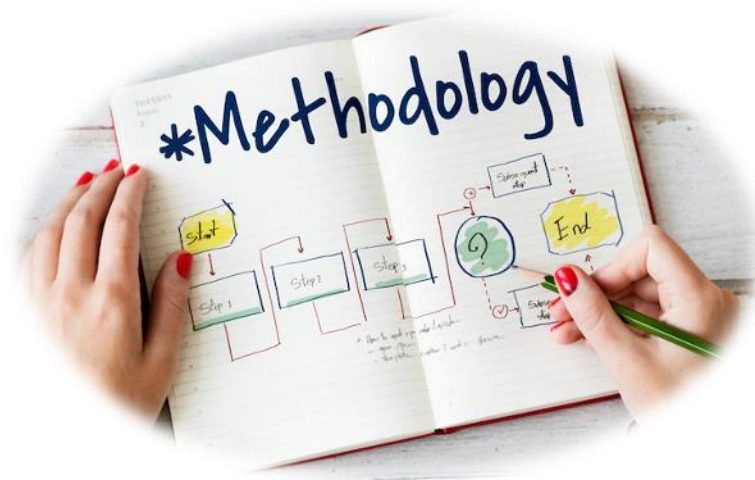


## Research methodology, objectives and results

The IZS has been launched the survey on December 6, 2021 till January 15, 2022.

A total of approximately 20% of the sample (574 out of 3000) has successfully completed the survey.

The analysis of the results is useful to better address the future educational offer of the Institute and better calibrate the various technical solutions for distance learning.

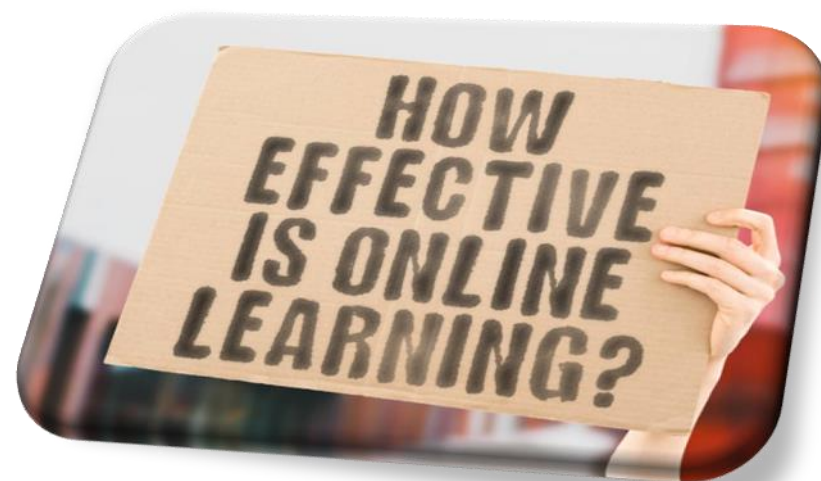




## The questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed with the aim of exploring the attendees' perception and point of view in terms of advantages, limitations, tips, suggestions and recommendations on synchronous learning.

The survey form, consisting of 13 questions, has been organised into three sections.





## The questionnaire: three sections

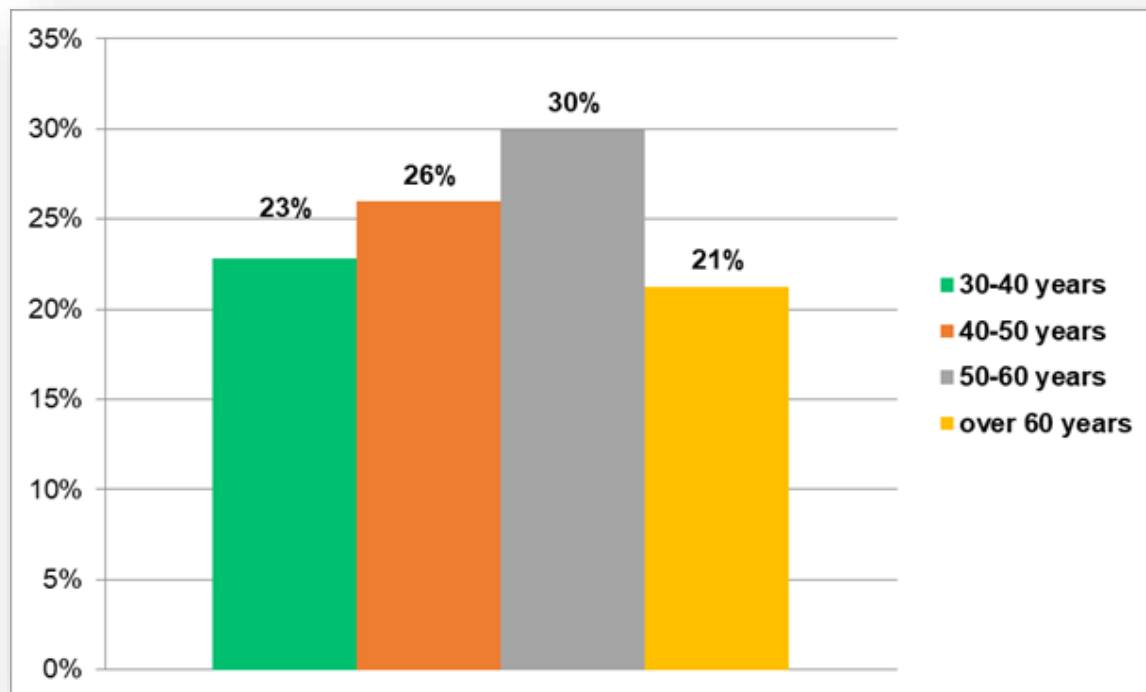


- ❖ **Questions from 1 to 5:** general information useful to outline the respondent's profile (age, gender, profession, number of webinars attended during the considered time period, participants' affiliation)
- ❖ **Questions from 6 to 13:** participants' level of satisfaction concerning IZS-Teramo synchronous distance training, expectations for the future comparing in-presence and at distance training approaches
- ❖ **Open space** for additional comments and suggestions on the training framework provided in the pandemic context.

## Results: Participants' profile and data analysis

Women and men answered on an almost equal basis (50% and 50%), 30% between 50 and 60 years old, and 26% between 40 and 50 years old (Figure 1).

**Fig. 1 Age Range**

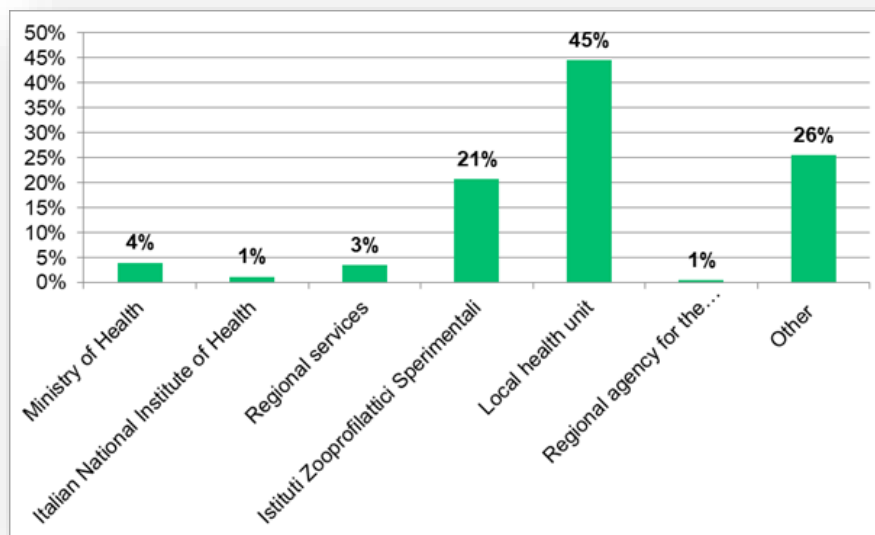


## Results: Participants' profile and data analysis

Veterinarians represent the main group of respondents (69%), followed by biologists (8%).

Figure 2 shows the Local Health Units as the main respondents' affiliation (45%), followed by Istituti Zooprofilattici Sperimentali (21%) and by "others" including universities, trade associations, food industries, farms, public administrations and so on.

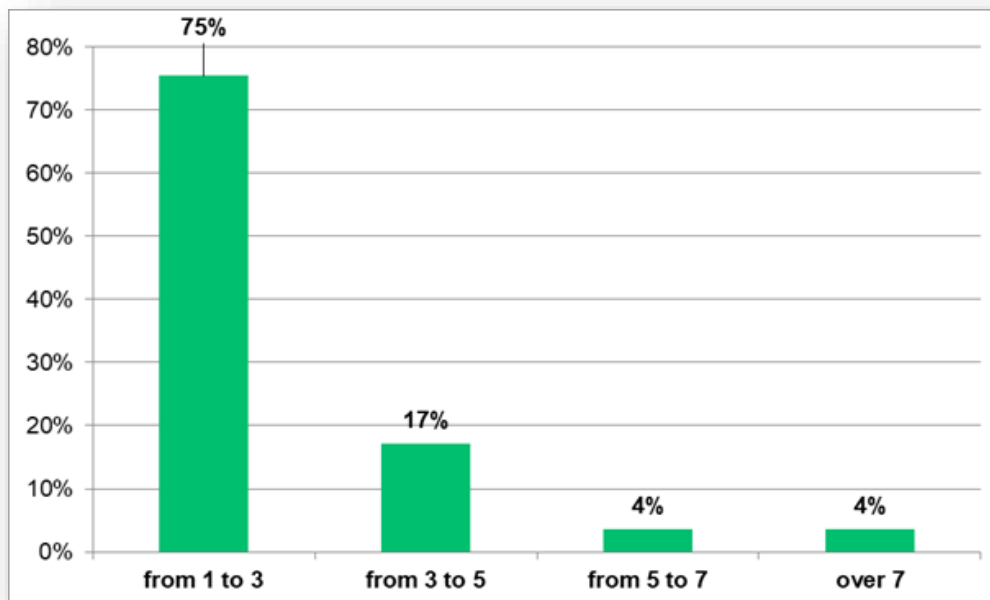
**Fig. 2 Affiliations**



## Results: Participants' profile and data analysis

Most of the respondents (434 equal to 75%) attended from 1 to 3 webinars, while 17% declared they attended from 3 to 5 webinars.

**Fig. 3 Number of Participation in the webinars organised by IZS-Teramo in the last 18 months**





## Results: Participants' satisfaction and SWOT Analysis

Participants' appreciation and their satisfaction level concerning the webinars' quality: 97% of the respondents expressed a positive evaluation, indicating scores from 3 (fair) to 5 (excellent) along a Likert scale from 1 to 5 being 1 equal to "rare".

The majority of respondents (52%) expressed their appreciation choosing value 4 (good).

The satisfaction of learning needs allowed us to adopt the SWOT Analysis model for a general evaluation of the answers: positive aspects have a prevalence on the negative ones.

**Tab. 1 Swot Analysis**

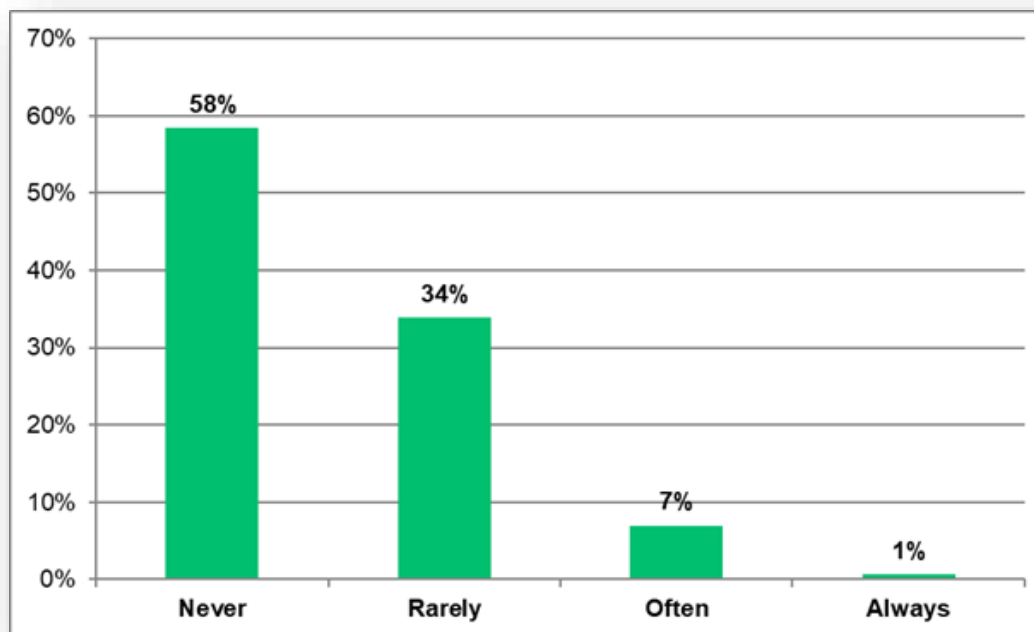
STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES	WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible</li> <li>• Comfortable</li> <li>• Convenient</li> <li>• Practical</li> <li>• Safe</li> <li>• Easy to use</li> <li>• More respect of the scheduled time</li> <li>• Direct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scalable</li> <li>• More autonomous and customised learning choice</li> <li>• Improvement of digital skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ineffective, passive learning tool</li> <li>• Frequent failures and technical problem issues</li> <li>• Lack of interaction and communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synchronous learning discloses digital incompetence and other skill lacks</li> </ul>



## Results: Technical difficulties during webinars

The figure 4 shows the 58% of interviewees declared they never had technical troubles in webinars held by IZS-Teramo, while 34% rarely met technical difficulties. A small percentage stated to have often or always technical difficulties during webinars.

**Fig. 4 Technical difficulties met**



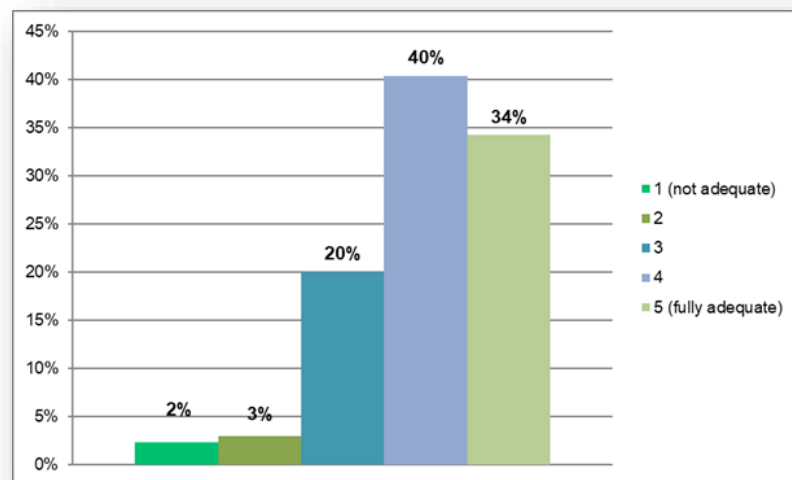
## Results: participants' appreciation

The last 4 multiple-choice questions of the questionnaire have been focused on the participants' appreciation towards the return to residential courses or the preference to use mainly synchronous training in the post pandemic period a balanced use of both the options.

The coming back to face to face activities was considered inadequate, anachronistic and expensive, even if interpersonal relations and networking still remain the most relevant advantages of residential training.

The main use of synchronous training in the near post pandemic future was considered adequate by the 40% and fully adequate by the 34% of the respondents.

**Fig. 5 Preferences of synchronous training in the near post pandemic future**



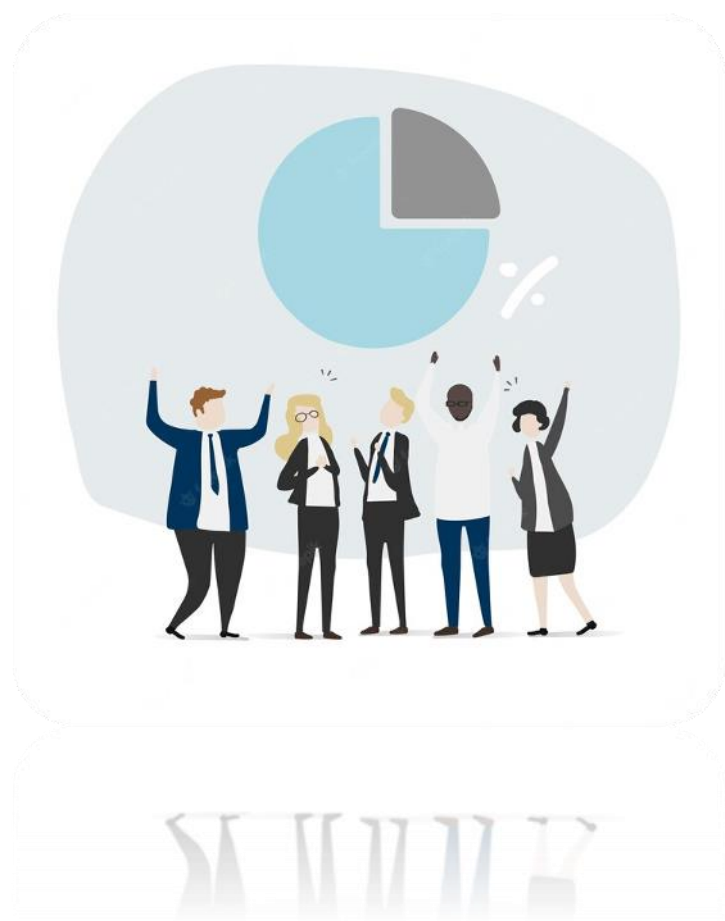


## Results: participants' approach towards synchronous training

A balanced mix of residential and synchronous training activities is fully adequate for 32% of respondents, not adequate for the 6% of them.

Among them, 313 respondents would prefer participating in 30% residential courses and 70% at distance on annual basis.

The last open question confirmed the general positive approach towards synchronous training activities (just one person out of 70 expressed a negative attitude towards this methodology).





## Conclusions

IZS Training and Project Management Unit exploring the satisfaction perception of the respondents on web based training methodologies, would better define the near future training offer.

**Remote learning** started as emergency, represents a “**new normality**”.

It can be extended as a routine process as long as it improves and facilitates the interactive aspect for an effective learning, encouraging new adult-centred learning approaches.





## Conclusions

A significant investment should be done on virtual methodologies. An increase of immersive learning is suitable for customised learning experiences or the use of artificial intelligence is convenient to analyse individual learning needs.

The so-called digital transition for public administrations represents a precious lever to enhance the technological background of the target group of beneficiaries and limiting the technical difficulties sometime encountered.

The new web based learning models also guarantee scalable learning procedures for a wider and prompt knowledge sharing, appropriately planned and carried out involving skilled personnel able to combine appropriate learning methodologies and advanced technical competencies.





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**Thanks for your attention!**

