



# EU CAP Network Seminar 'Skills and lifelong learning for agricultural advisory and training service providers'

Vienna, Austria  
21 – 22 February 2024

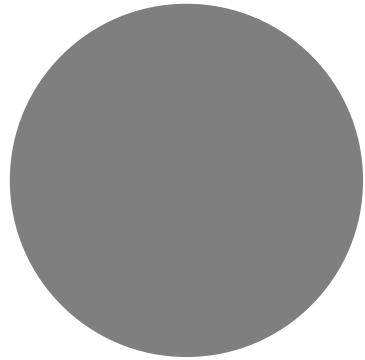


Funded by  
the European Union



# Inspiring examples from Member States

Donald Aquilina  
Agrinnova Malta Ltd, Malta



**EUROPEAN CAP NETWORK SEMINAR**  
'SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING FOR  
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY AND  
TRAINING SERVICE PROVIDERS'

Interactive Session 1: Existing and new  
methods and tools for effective training  
and provision of skills



**The experience of  
setting up advisory  
services from  
scratch**

Donald Aquilina  
Director, Agrinnova Malta



# Background: starting from scratch

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- An EU funded Technical Assistance project for “*Implementation of Farm Advisory Services*”
- No past history of FAS
- No active public or private advisors
- No training courses for advisors or farmers
- An agricultural sector in fast decline





# Defining the learning needs

*How was this conducted?*

- Series of **focus group** meetings with advisors, farmers, training institutions, food business operators and other bodies active in agriculture and rural development
  - **Field and farm days**
    - **Surveys** amongst farmers, advisors, training institutions
    - **Mapping** of training facilities (labs, equipment, testing options...



# Why this approach?



**KNOW REAL  
FARMER AND  
INDUSTRY  
REQUIREMENTS**



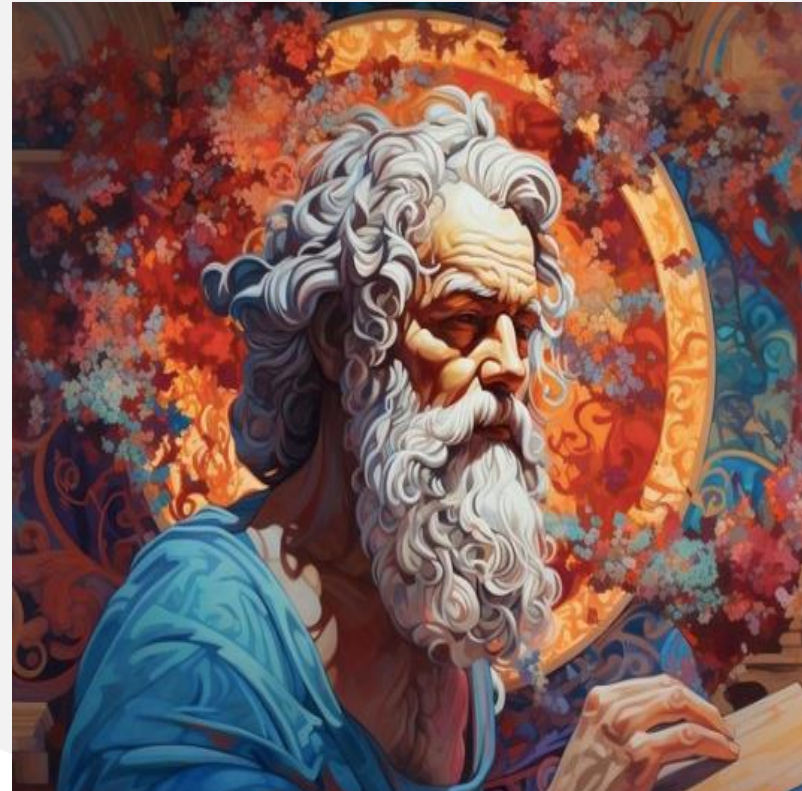
**A "REALITY  
CHECK" FOR THE  
ADVISORS**



**OPPORTUNITY TO  
CHALLENGE  
INTERESTING VS  
USEFUL**



**A TOOL TO MAP  
INFO AND SKILL  
SET GAPS**



***You don't know what you  
don't know - Socrates***

# Designing the Training Programme

Factors affecting the form and features of this programme:

- **1<sup>st</sup> training** of its kind
- A menu of **anticipated advisory services** linked to execution of EU grants for the sector
- A **competitive environment** leading to engagement of successfully trained experts as advisors with the project
- **Recognised programme** for acquisition of apprenticeship or mastership levels valid for a future occupational standard



# How was it conducted?

- Started with 75 trainees and **54 finishing** the training
- **Compulsory** modules on soft skills
- **Selective technical modules** based on relevance to higher qualification
- Delivered by international specialists in the topics to **nurture further networking, exchange of practices**
- Designed with the intent for **advisors to engage** in research, report writing, presentation preparation, handbook development, use of audio-visuals, etc
- **Assessment** conducted – written, practical





# Embracing a continuous learning process

**Empowering advisors** to develop, use, tools and products to enable exchange of knowledge and improved advice on pertinent topics leading to research, networking and eventually **self-development**



Test Kits

GUIDELINES FOR PROPER USE OF  
TREATED SEWAGE SLUDGE AND TREATED WASTEWATER  
IN AGRICULTURE



Manuals

Regular Magazine



Educational videos

**Moving from an obligation to a desire to learn**

# Maintaining Motivation



Ensuring advisors stay **highly motivated** to keep **pursuit of learning** through:

- Establishment of **thematic networks** led by advisors to seek ways how to address sectoral challenges or tap into new opportunities
- **Tackling novel topics** (*use of treated sludge in agriculture, introduction of new forage crops, medicinal and aromatic plants, etc*)
- Finding **enthusiastic farmers** and organisations to drive forth activities
- Organisation of **study trips**



# Some Observations...

- **Initial resistance** by advisors
- **Mixing** of young and less experienced with those having higher qualifications and more years of experience led to initial reservations by the latter
- Lack of **occupational standards** for advisors posed a big challenge to use Vocational Standards as a basis for designing curricula and for recognition of certification

- **Entrusting and empowering advisors** proved to be an effective learning process
- **Involving farmers** from the onset allowed advisors to develop stronger confidence in their abilities
- This led to **broader appreciation** of the services offered which motivated advisors to learn and do more

# Any Questions?

For more info on the  
project



**Project Webpage**



# EU CAP Network seminar

## ‘Skills and lifelong learning for agricultural advisory and training service providers’

21-22 February 2024

Vienna, Austria

All information on the seminar is available on the event webpage:

<https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/eu-cap-network-seminar-skills-and-lifelong-learning-agricultural-advisory-and-training>

