

Good practices in nurturing agricultural skills

**Collected by the Thematic Group on
Nurturing Agricultural Skills for a
Thriving and Sustainable Agricultural Sector**

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Introduction

This document presents relevant initiatives collected in the frame of the EU CAP Network's Thematic Group (TG) on [Nurturing skills for a thriving and sustainable agricultural sector](#). These initiatives were collected through an online survey, which was accessible on the EU CAP Network website from October to December 2023. Answers were collected from the TG members, their networks and other EU CAP Network's stakeholders. These practices are examples of working in partnership at all levels – from national to EU – with a special attention to EAFRD, Erasmus+ and Horizon funding.

The TG had clear and comprehensive objectives. First, the TG aimed to delve into the needs and opportunities associated with agricultural skills development and their continuous updating. The focus was on the agricultural workforce (both employees and self-employed workers), emphasising the acquisition of (new) skills crucial for strengthening farmers within the food-supply chain. This mission was inspired by the [European Year of Skills](#), and intended to raise awareness about the skills-related requirements in agriculture. Furthermore, the TG aimed to underscore the significance and benefits of investing in the development and update of agricultural skills, including upskilling and reskilling.

An equally important objective of the TG was to identify specific skill gaps and explore the potential of measures within the CAP Strategic Plans and other EU, national, and regional funding sources to support agricultural skills development. These measures aim to foster collaboration, promoting sustainable development and economic growth in rural communities, whilst also including a focus on the opportunities offered by producer organisations.

All the outputs produced by this Thematic Group, including a set of action-oriented recommendations and an overview of possible approaches for skills development, are available on the [EU CAP Network website](#).

Disclaimer

This document has been developed as part of the work carried out by the CAP Implementation Contact Point under the EU CAP Network to support the activities of the Thematic Group (TG) on Nurturing Skills for a Thriving and Sustainable Agricultural Sector. The information and views set out in this document do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.



Table of contents

EAFRD funding	3
1. Finland	3
2. Italy	4
3. Poland	5
National and regional funds	7
1. Ireland	7
2. Italy	8
Erasmus+	10
HORIZON EUROPE / HORIZON 2020	20
Other support	25
1. Belgium	25
2. Denmark	25
3. Germany	26
4. Ireland	27
4. Italy	28



EAFRD funding

1. Finland

Good for cattle – quality silage by temperature monitoring and antimicrobial peptides in agriculture (EIP-AGRI Operational Group)

Organisation: University of Oulu, Kajaani University Consortium, Unit of Measurement Technology

Website: https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/projects/good-cattle-quality-silage-temperature-monitoring-and-antimicrobial-peptides-agriculture_en

<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/hyv%C3%A4%C3%A4-karjalle-%E2%80%93-laatus-%C3%A4il%C3%B6rehuun.html>

Funding: EAFRD

Duration: 01/08/2019 – 31/03/2023

Description: The project worked with two novel topics: monitoring silage stacks with sensor rods, and new antimicrobial peptides (Teat dip / wound care).

Results in both topics were good, and the project was invited to join a Horizon proposal (eventually not funded), successfully participated in hackathons, and was involved in a privately funded project.

As part of the project, a bilingual webinar was organised for Finnish and Estonian farmers. This was a successful experience in involving people who do not master foreign languages (even English) in international collaboration, easily and without high additional costs. The webinar allowed the participants to interact with their international peers and to learn new practices and methods.

The webinar was held via Zoom. Presentations were recorded in advance and translated, then shown in two virtual rooms of the Zoom meeting – one in Estonian and the other in Finnish. Presentations were fully translated into both languages and presented by native speakers. For discussion purposes, participants could present written questions during presentations using Padlet, then could ask questions orally in the virtual discussion rooms. All questions were translated into both languages simultaneously (Finnish veterinarian students studying in Estonia are fluent in both



languages and helped as interpreters). Written questions could receive written replies, but were also discussed orally.

The webinar attracted over 100 participants, and numbers did not decrease during the 2.5 hours the webinar lasted.

See this EIP-Agri newsletter article about the webinar: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news/collaboration-between-estonian-and-finnish.html>

Beneficiaries: Farmers, advisors and experts.

2. Italy

FarmLab

Organisation: Ismea

Website: <https://www.ismeamercati.it/osservatori-rrn/farmlab>

Funding: EAFRD

Duration: April 2018 - December 2020

Description: The FarmLab project fostered farmers' participation in training activities through direct experience in 'successful' and innovative farms. It aimed to encourage knowledge transmission between farmers through:

- mentoring and/or on-farm assisted traineeships for young farmers to prepare a business plan and/or to introduce technical, organisational, productive and commercial innovations that might enhance the sustainability of their own farms;
- the organisation of training workshops and on-farm demonstrations on specific topics; and
- short-term farm visits and exchanges between farmers.

The project, managed by Ismea within the activities of the Italian Rural Network, led to the creation of a list of host farms, to be found at the following link: <https://www.ismeamercati.it/osservatori-rrn/farmlab>. The list contains detailed information on the host farms, such as location, type of farming, type of training activity, etc. Ismea opened a selection procedure for host farms through a call for interest, with applicants required to fill in a form with the requested information.



Host farms can provide 'on the field' training to programme beneficiaries, encouraging the start up of new businesses and/or the introduction of innovations, improvements in production techniques or business organisation, etc. Furthermore, the time dedicated to training represents an important opportunity for exchange and mutual enrichment and encourages the creation of rural stakeholders' networks.

Beneficiaries were identified through calls for proposals by Regional Authorities that activated Measure 1 - 'Transfer of knowledge and information actions' within their 2014-2020 Rural Development Programmes (RDP). The beneficiaries could consult the FarmLab list to identify farms in line with their needs. Currently, the Italian Rural Network is exploring with Regional Authorities the opportunity to extend the project to the 2023-2027 period.

Beneficiaries: Farmers and Regional Authorities

3. Poland

Young, innovative, professional – new opportunities for young farmers

Organisation: Związek Młodzieży Wiejskiej (ZMW)

Website: <https://www.zmw.pl/2023/11/06/mlodzi-innowacyjni-profesjonalni-nowe-mozliwosci-dla-mlodych-rolnikow/>

Funding: EAFRD; National Fund; Other

Duration: 04.05.2022 - 31.10.2023

Description: Young participants had the opportunity to acquire knowledge in the field of processing, shortened supply chains, agricultural retail trade and farmer cooperation, which allowed them to expand their horizons in terms of innovation and entrepreneurship in rural areas. Five training trips took place. Trips consisted of a training element as well as meetings on farms.

Beneficiaries: Students at agricultural schools, farmers and farmers' households, and members of non-governmental organisations living in rural areas.

Country: Poland

Organisation: Centrum Doradztwa Rolniczego (CDR)

Title: Local Water Partnerships



Website: <https://woda.cdr.gov.pl/index.php/lokalne-partnerstwa-ds-wody/aktualnosci/kraj/podlaskie/lpw-czyli-lokalne-partnerstwo-wodne>

Funding: EAFRD; National fund

Duration: 2021

Description: Local Water Partnerships (LWPs) is an effective cooperation network between key partners for the management of water resources in agriculture and rural areas at the local level. The aim of the project is for all water managers in a given area and those using water to cooperate in order to diagnose the state of water management and to be able to take action to develop methods of rational water management.

A total of 18 pilot LWPs were established throughout the country.

Beneficiaries: The final beneficiaries will be farmers and residents of rural areas who use water resources in a given area.

Demonstrations - ecology

Organisation: Centrum Doradztwa Rolniczego (CDR)

Website: <https://www.cdr.gov.pl/projekty-i-wspolpraca/demonstracje-ekologia?start=20>

Funding: EAFRD; National fund

Duration: 06/2022 – 12/2024

Description: 235 demonstration facilities will be built throughout the country. They will be established on farms or entities preparing organic farming products which currently have certificates of compliance with the requirements of organic farming in the scope covered by the topic of the demonstration. The initiative consists of:

- establishing demonstration facilities;
- conducting demonstrations in demonstration facilities; and
- organising thematic seminars and conferences.

The initiative is carried out as part of a consortium with scientific units and agricultural advisory centres throughout the country.

Beneficiaries: farmers, advisors.



National and regional funds

1. Ireland

Signpost Programme

Organisation: Teagasc

Website: <https://www.teagasc.ie/environment/climate-change--air-quality/signpost-programme/>

Funding: National fund

Duration: since 2021

Description: The Signpost programme is a multi-annual campaign to lead climate action by all Irish farmers. The programme aims to achieve early progress in reducing gaseous emissions from Irish agriculture, as well as to:

- improve water quality;
- maintain, and, in some cases, improve biodiversity; and
- reduce costs and create more profitable and sustainable farming enterprises.

It will also act as a testbed for on-farm carbon sequestration measurements. It is a collaborative programme, led by Teagasc, and includes all relevant industry partners and state bodies, such as Bord Bia.

Programme Objectives are:

- to lead and support the transition of Irish farming towards more sustainable farming systems;
- contribute to the agricultural sector efforts to reduce agricultural emissions in line with national policy objectives, and specifically support the transition of Irish farming towards more sustainable farming systems;
- to reduce GHG emissions by 22 - 30% to the range 16 – 18 MtCO₂e by 2030, in line with Climate Action Plan (2021) objectives;



- to reduce ammonia emissions by 1% below 2005 levels in the 2020 to 2029 period, and by 5% from 2030 onwards;
- ensure that there are no unintended consequences of attempts to reduce agricultural emissions;
- promote farming practices and systems which can improve margins and the overall sustainability of farming systems;
- build national capability and capacity (both of Irish farmers and those supporting them) to undertake the changes required; and
- be a trusted knowledge source and broker, facilitating the alignment of programme partners and the strengthening of existing and new programme collaborations.

A network of Signpost Farms, including agricultural colleges, will act as demonstration farms for carbon sequestration measurements. These will point the way forward towards climate-smart farming and are central to the second element.

The Signpost Advisory campaign will engage with all farmers and support them to move towards more sustainable farming systems.

Teagasc have a dedicated team of staff for the Signpost Programme:

<https://www.teagasc.ie/environment/climate-change--air-quality/signpost-programme/meet-the-team/>

Beneficiaries: Irish farmers; learners participating in Teagasc programmes in agricultural and horticultural colleges.

2. Italy

Cheesemaker's School

Organisation: CREA PB sede di Potenza

Website: <http://www.crea.gov.it/>; <https://www.facebook.com/scuoladelcasaro>

Funding: EU Regional / National fund

Duration: 14/11/2022 - 26/06/2023



Description: The Cheesemakers School was established in October 2022 by two CREA Research Centres: Animal Production and Aquaculture, and Agricultural Policies and Bioeconomy, both in the Basilicata region. The initiative is carried out in Bella (Potenza). The school, a unique institution in southern Italy, is a public school organised in modules, of medium to long term duration, offering a variety of options to train young people (farmers, breeders, students, etc.).

The course 'Technician in traditional sustainable dairy production' includes a theoretical and practical course of 540 hours, of which 300 take place at CREA (classroom, texts and study visit), and 240 hours at cheese factories. Lectures are given by researchers, economists and national and international experts in cheese production. In addition, the course offers training activities spread over several days to learn about traditions, ways of transforming milk (such as 'Shape and Transform'), reusing the surplus of dairy production ('Leftovers with flavour: experiences of smart cooking') and traditions from other Italian regions.

The exchange of experiences creates useful relationships to transfer traditional methods and products from different regions, strengthening networking among students and companies.

The Cheesemaker's Course trained 15 cheesemakers, of whom twelve work on farms, and three at regional dairies. Numerous job opportunities were offered to them by dairy production companies in and beyond Basilicata. The second edition of the Cheesemaker's Course will run from December 2023 to June 2024.

Beneficiaries: Young people (under 40 years of age) with a technical or vocational diploma, professional qualification or experience acquired by operating in the dairy production sector.

MEdicinal PLAnts in a SUustainable Supply chain - MEPLASUS

Organisation: CREA - Council for Agricultural Research and Economics

Website: <https://meplasmus.crea.gov.it/>

Funding: EU, Regional

Duration: 18/11/2021 - 06/12/2023

Description: MEPLASUS aims at strengthening the local medicinal plants micro-sectors of the Pollino-Lagonegrese rural district. It does so through historical, landscape and socio-economic analyses and the exchange of good practices and knowledge.



This local micro-sector has been active for more than a decade and aims to meet increasing consumer demand for high-quality products. The project envisages the planting and studying of several experimental fields of medicinal plants at the ALSIA Rotonda Farm, and at the Hellenic Agriculture Organisation DEMETER Research and Experimentation Centre in Athens.

A training activity in May/October 2023 used mixed mode (e-learning and demonstration days for the fieldwork element). The methodology adopted reinforced learning and facilitated access to information by the farmers and advisors working with medicinal plants.

Beneficiaries: Farmers, advisors, professionals and technical assistance providers.

Erasmus+

REWARD

Website: <https://reward-erasmus.eu/>

Funding: Erasmus +

Duration: 11/2018 – 04/2021

Description: The overall objective of this project was to provide the necessary training to women living in rural areas to be able to manage in a professional manner multi-functional activities related to agriculture and rural culture, and supporting the development, commercialisation and promotion of rural tourism and traditional agricultural products through direct sales or short supply chains. In particular, the focus was on increasing the employability of women, and supporting the development of social competences.

Beneficiaries: Women living in rural areas.

YouWeen

Website: <https://www.youween.eu/>

Funding: Erasmus +



Duration: 02/2021 – 01/2023

Description: The aim of the project is to give effective tools to young women living in rural areas to improve their lives thanks to specific entrepreneurial training in sustainable development, to foster their employability, socio-educational and personal development. Through the promotion of green thinking, raising awareness of sustainability, promoting development in rural and/or isolated areas, exchanging good practices, providing expertise and knowledge for women from rural areas, the project will considerably promote entrepreneurship education and activities amongst young women.

Beneficiaries: Young women living in rural areas.

EU Young Farmers Leadership Programme (European Council of Young Farmers – CEJA)

Website: www.ceja.eu

Funding: Erasmus +

Duration: Since March 2023 (one edition per year, at least until March 2025)

Description: The EU Young Farmers Leadership Programme is a flagship initiative organised by CEJA in which, during three days of capacity-building, leaders of young farmers' organisations will be trained, with the objectives of empowering their organisations through the empowerment of individuals, showcasing CEJA's work to national leaders and, ultimately, facilitating the visibility of the organisation.

The programme will have training modules for both organisational and individual skills (e.g. public speaking, being more outspoken and self-confident); incorporation of networking elements; and spaces for participants to discuss pre-identified topics together.

Each edition is designed around a cross-cutting theme. The first (pilot) edition in March 2023 was 'Driving towards sustainability with a leader mindset'. The second edition will be structured around the theme 'Driving the health and wellbeing agenda'.

The first edition was a success, according to the assessment of the participants themselves and the experiences shared by speakers in the different sessions. In addition, the level of involvement of young farmers was high in subsequent activities, such as at 'The road to sustainability' conference or in internal meetings. All of this is



set out in the evaluation report drawn up at the time, as part of an action funded by Erasmus+.

Finally, it is important to mention that all participants received a Youthpass certificate at the end of the programme.

Beneficiaries: Participants have few criteria for selection: they must be young farmers and not have participated in previous editions. In addition, the selection of participants is guided by rules of geographical, organisational and gender diversity.

CEJA Member Organisations internally select the participants, of which there will be a total of 50 in the programme. In addition, potential future CEJA members, especially from EU Member States and candidate countries, will be invited to send a participant to the programme.

Networking activities will involve young farmers with EU institutional actors. In this way, each year the programme has a Patron; last year it was Isabel Carvalhais, MEP (INI Report on Generational Renewal).

Training A New Generation Of farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs to implement the concept of Circular economy in agriculture- TANGO-Circular

Website: <https://tango-circularproject.eu/>

Funding: Erasmus +

Duration: 01/07/2022 - 30/06/2025

Description: The project aims is to provide specific training to agricultural workers and relevant stakeholders, to enable solutions for a sustainable agricultural waste management and footprint reduction. Through the development and implementation of proper end-of-life materials management approaches based on good practices, technical references and collection schemes, this project aspires to foster the development of regional eco-systems directly providing a valuable input to the economy. At the core of the project will be the modelling, implementation, and validation of 'Rural Labs', in which new ways of training will be explored, starting from an on-site training, and implementing new ICT tools.

The objectives of the project are to:

- boost innovation through the development and implementation of new multidisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning in the agricultural sector;



- develop a sense of initiative and encourage an entrepreneurial mind-set, opening up new learning opportunities for farmers and stakeholders playing a key role in the waste management chain;
- identify resilience-related, market needs and emerging professions, including via the cooperation of HEIs and VET providers with national, regional and local authorities, as well as the private sector, to contribute to the designing and implementation of Smart Sustainable Specialisation Strategies in regions.

The training modules are based on skill needs analysis and tackle topics such as: classification of agricultural biomass; valorisation of agricultural biomass; classification of agricultural plastic waste; collection, transportation and recycling of agricultural plastic waste; waste & biomass legislation; environmental, territorial and economic planning associated with each form of valorisation, and others.

Beneficiaries: Agricultural workers and relevant stakeholders.

Skills Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture

Website: <https://www.sagriproject.eu/>

Funding: Erasmus +

Duration: 01/11/2016 - 29/02/2020

Description: The aim of the project was to provide agricultural workers (mainly farmers), and other agricultural stakeholders with knowledge, skills and competences in the field of agro-environmental technology for sustainable agriculture.

The main project results, focusing on the sectorial skills issues, were:

- identification of specific skills (with a focus on 'green skills' and 'digital skills') that agricultural workers require;
- development of an innovative curriculum, with six training modules developed to target a max EQF (European Qualification Framework) level 4: precision agriculture; integrated pest management in plant protection; agricultural reuse of organic residuals; drip irrigation and water conserving technologies; renewable energy and its application as a green agriculture energy source; and bioenergy and energy crops;
- development of a virtual learning platform which makes all training resources widely available as Open Educational Resources (OER);



- organisation of training workshops and delivery of the SAGRI training programme to 219 agriculture engineers, agricultural researchers, and extension staff in three partner countries;
- organisation of training workshops and delivery of the SAGRI curriculum in 855 agricultural workers/farmers in all partner countries;
- development of a certification scheme where the trained agricultural workers can be assessed and awarded certification as ‘sustainable farmer’ according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17024 for personnel certification; and
- dissemination activities bringing together major stakeholders of the agricultural sector, including farmers, extension staff and agriculturists, Higher Education Institutions, VET providers and social partners.

Beneficiaries: Agricultural workers (mainly farmers), as well as other agricultural stakeholders (agriculture engineers, agricultural researchers, and extension staff).

TRANSFARM. Vocational education and training for transhumance practitioners

Website: <https://transfarm-erasmus.eu/>

Funding: Erasmus +

Duration: 01/12/2021 – 01/06/2024

Description: The three main objectives of the TRANSFARM project are:

- to summarise the status of transhumance in the partners’ countries of origin and in some other nations, such as Hungary, Italy, or France;
- to collect and compile case studies of successful transhumance practitioners; and
- to launch an online training platform, open to rural entrepreneurs and farmers willing to engage in transhumance, or to any stakeholder interested to learn about this farming practice.

The project also strives to inform the general public of the existence of transhumance and the solutions it brings to certain difficulties related to land use and the rural sector.

It provides farmers with working opportunities in a territory which is usually threatened by a lack of job alternatives. It gives access to locally-produced food, which is increasingly in demand. This, in turn, lowers the carbon footprint caused by the



transport of agricultural products. Finally, transhumance showcases the value of the rural world, thus attracting cultural tourism.

The three main expected results of the projects are:

- National Reports and the Summary Report;
- case studies of the best practices of transhumance practitioners all across Europe; and
- a training platform, open and free for everyone, containing a set of high-quality materials that help farmers and rural entrepreneurs develop their transhumance skills, including content on marketing and business.

Beneficiaries: The primary target groups are young farmers and rural entrepreneurs practising transhumance or intending to start with this practice. The secondary target group includes farming and landowners' organisations, Local Action Groups, local and regional lawmakers and even EU officials.

Easy4Digit

Website: <https://easy4digit.com/>

Funding: Erasmus +

Duration: 31/12/2022 - 30/12/2024

Description: The EASY4DIGIT project aims to facilitate the adoption of digital technologies such as precision farming, data analytics, and automation in the European agriculture sector; to promote sustainable agriculture practices by leveraging digital technologies; and to enhance the competitiveness of the European agriculture sector by providing farmers with access to cutting-edge digital technologies.

Expected results

The EASY4DIGIT training course is designed to improve the knowledge of digital solutions among agricultural professionals and eventually improve the overall sustainability and competitiveness of the European agricultural sector. The course consists of three modules, focusing on:

- Module 1: 'Communication Support to Decision Process for Digital Agriculture': introduction and basic knowledge on all available data and tools linked to use and planning on field good practices depending on kind of



- crops, land suitability, weather forecast data, treatment calendar and information to be used.
- Module 2: ‘Smart solutions for innovative, sustainable and safe agri-food supply chains. This training module aims to i) highlight sustainable development of rural areas and agri-food supply chains, ii) increase a circular economy by a) saving available energy, b) improving the quality of soils, c) enhance safety in territories at risk of hydrogeological instability, and iii) reduce waste in the agri-food sector.
- Module 3: ‘Dissemination model of good practices for digital education, low impact and circular economy in the agricultural and food sector’: general knowledge on user-friendly transfer of digital farming knowledge, competences and skills to farmers (EQF Level 5) and a specialist and detailed knowledge on use of precision farming technologies to reduce agricultural footprint on ecosystems and contribute to Circular Economy and Green Deal objectives.

Beneficiaries: Farmers experienced in precision farming solutions, higher and vocational education students, agricultural advisory services, policy makers at local/regional level.

STAY

Website: <https://stay-erasmus.eu>

Funding: Erasmus +

Duration: 01/11/2022 - 31/12/2025

Description: The STAY project aims to provide farmers, livestock breeders, owners of rural tourist accommodations, and any other interested stakeholder with a free online platform that contains a high-quality set of training materials on agrotourism and how to successfully run an accommodation offering agritourist activities.

The project strives to tackle the lack of statistically consistent and comparable data by providing an overview of the situation in the partners’ countries of origin, and in some other selected nations (Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands...), as well as at a European level.

STAY objectives are to:

- provide farmers and livestock breeders with training tools to set up successful tourist activities (agritourism) through an online training platform;



- raise awareness about the cultural and natural value of the area where the accommodation is located;
- promote entrepreneurship in rural territories by committing to economic activities that are complementary to agriculture;
- offer working opportunities to people living in rural areas, thus stopping rural depopulation; and
- stimulate the exchange of experiences and good practices among participants from and across Europe.

Beneficiaries: Farmers, livestock breeders, rural touristic establishments, and any other interested stakeholders.

InnoCSA

Website: <https://innocsa.eu>

Funding: Erasmus +

Duration: 31/12/2022 - 30/12/2024

Description: Dry summers, warm winters, heavy rainfall patterns – the effects of climate change are already present. Food production has to become resilient to climate change.

The aim of the ‘Innovations for Climate Smart Agriculture’ (InnoCSA) project is to support the transformation of the agricultural sector towards climate resilient and climate change mitigating practices. Climate smart agriculture is a new approach, combining different technics and methods, in order to transform the food system from a greenhouse gas emitting sector to a climate neutral or even climate negative sector.

The project aims to promote sustainable agricultural practices that help farmers adapt to the changing climate. The project will produce three outputs:

- learning modules on climate smart agricultural production that cover topics such as crop selection, water management, and soil;
- case studies that highlight real-life examples of farmers successfully implementing climate smart solutions on their farms; and
- learning modules on innovation management that focus on how farmers can identify, adopt and implement new technologies and practices.



Beneficiaries: Farmers, farmers advisors, VET providers.

MILIMAT

Website: <https://milimat.eu>

Funding: Erasmus +

Duration: 01/11/2022 - 31/10/2024

Description: MILIMAT is a project for rural entrepreneurs, farmers and migrant workers in the farming sector, which seeks to help these groups to create multicultural work teams, based on mutual understanding, respect for other cultures and the firm conviction that diversity can enrich working environments in the agricultural sector.

MILIMAT objectives are to:

- promote the recruitment and inclusion of migrant workers in rural areas by increasing the training and knowledge of employers and workers, favouring fair and equal labour relations;
- foster knowledge of European labour rights and social values among rural migrant workers, encouraging their commitment and social participation in the defence of these rights;
- encourage a business ethic for agricultural entrepreneurs based on the management of multicultural teams, understanding the relationship between values, culture, work and labour rights; and
- create channels of communication and mutual support between agricultural entrepreneurs and workers, to increase their capacity for commitment against labour exploitation and discrimination based on race or gender.

The project's expected results are:

- a report on the possibilities of integrating migrant workers into rural communities through agriculture as an economic and social development resource;
- a Best Practices Manual for integrating migrant workers into rural communities through socially sustainable agriculture (including case studies);



- training modules and introductory videos on building, participating in, and managing multicultural teams in the agricultural sector, as well as on migration, labour, and values; and
- a collaborative training platform based on the MILIMAT Code of Good Conduct.

Beneficiaries: Rural entrepreneurs, farmers and migrant workers in the farming sector.

AGRINEXT

Website: <https://www.agrinext-project.eu>

Funding: Erasmus +

Duration: 01/06/2022 - 31/05/2026

Description: AgriNext - Agricultural and rural excellence Incubator and Platform for the Exchange of competencies is an Erasmus+ project that aims to create a learning environment that responds to the demand for skills on the job market in the field of agriculture.

Objectives of AgriNext are the following:

- development of a Guidance service model (GSM) that continuously responds to the rapidly changing needs on the job market;
- integration of systematic changes on national levels for flexible and responsive school systems;
- empowerment of teachers for a fast response to job market demand;
- establishment of a collaboration system for continuous exchange between employers, teachers, trainers (skills ecosystem);
- creating a physical and virtual environment for interaction, demonstration, development, and individualisation;
- promoting rural development and vitality, presenting opportunities of multifunctional agriculture; and
- increasing digital competences amongst students and teachers.

Beneficiaries: VET students, staff and schools; present and future farmers.



Growing Green

Website: <https://growing-green.eu/>

Funding: Erasmus +

Duration: 01/02/2022 – 31/07/2024

Description: Growing Green aims at developing skills in vocational education teachers, students and local enterprises to foster circularity and develop green mindsets.

The project has developed a handbook for teachers and a board game to achieve this aim in a creative and playful way, empowering the participants to think creatively and design and roll out green business plans to contribute to a healthy environment, including soil, nature, products, people, animals and plants. The game and materials are scalable and easy to adapt to rural citizens and different levels of play.

The project team is now elaborating a compendium of best practices in each partner country and across the EU. There are strong synergies with another project, <http://easygardening.eu>, which targets students with intellectual disabilities, fostering green mindsets, health and empathy when working in agriculture. Game-based learning and digital skills are supported in both projects.

Beneficiaries: Growing-Green targets teachers in vocational education; in Denmark, it focuses on rural regions and the inclusion of students with disabilities. Partner organisations are located in Spain, Italy, Slovenia and Denmark.

HORIZON EUROPE / HORIZON 2020

SCALE-UP Concepts, tools and applications for community-driven bioeconomy development in European rural areas

Website: <https://www.scaleup-bioeconomy.eu/en/home/>

Funding: Horizon Europe

Duration: 01/09/2022 - 31/08/2025



Description: The overall aim of the SCALE-UP project is to adapt, implement and evaluate tools to help regional actors to overcome the apparent bottlenecks towards fully exploiting bioeconomy potentials in their region.

More specifically, the objectives of the SCALE-UP project are to:

- increase capacity and knowledge of multi-actor partnerships to accelerate the development of marketable products and services and to improve the market penetration of bio-based solutions;
- improve knowledge about the potential of nutrient recycling in the regions;
- successfully deploy existing practical and scientific knowledge;
- achieve high level of awareness and understanding of the bioeconomy and its potential and impacts among local communities;
- strengthen collaboration between primary producers, SMEs, clusters, social actors and policymakers; and
- promote regional, rural, local/urban and consumer-based transitions towards a sustainable, regenerative, inclusive and just circular economy and bioeconomy across all regions of Europe.

Beneficiaries: All members of the quintuple helix: SMEs, startups, academia, researchers, policymakers, investors, environmental actors; with a focus on primary producers, cooperatives and farmers/rural networks.

i2connect - Connecting advisors to boost interactive innovation in agriculture & forestry

Website: <https://i2connect-h2020.eu/>

Funding: Horizon 2020

Duration: 01/11/2019 - 30/10/2024

Description: i2connect aims to fuel the competencies of advisors who will support and facilitate interactive innovation processes. i2connect's strategy is to use existing advisor networks and successful experiences to create a broader network and momentum of change enabling a new culture of bottom-up led innovation support. This resource of over 40 000 advisors is critical to support agriculture and forestry on the ground and must be targeted in this project to support innovation with emphasis on EIP-Agri.



The project will produce an inventory of best practices from across Europe that will be analysed in an interactive way to guide the development of approaches and tools.

A pool of trainers will be trained to work with these materials to better coach advisors. Attention will also be given to the 'enabling environment': ways in which managers of advisory services, research actors, policy makers and others can create conditions that are conducive for interactive innovation processes.

The project will support learning through courses in the main European languages. Training courses will include a period of moderated peer coaching on the job for advisors. Some advisors may join cross-visit teams for studying interesting cases abroad. These activities feed into a professional network with many local branches, supported by the project through a moderated online platform for mutual coaching and sharing experiences on themes that will emerge.

i2connect brings together 42 organisations, most of them directly involved in stimulating innovation in rural areas and food systems in all corners of Europe, especially in CEE countries. The major European farm and forestry advisory services are partners. They are committed to contributing to continuous learning and improvement of advisory support, making better use of the opportunities that the EIP-Agri programme has created for bridging the gap between research and practice.

Beneficiaries: farm and forestry advisory services providers; network of advisors; policy makers.

ATTRACTISS – AcTivate and TRigger ACTors to deepen the function of Innovation Support Services

Website: <https://attractiss.eu/about-attractiss/>

Funding: Horizon Europe

Duration: 31/10/2022 - 30/09/2028

Description: The ATTRACTISS project aims to improve & embed competencies, approaches, instruments and governance models for Member States AKIS and specifically for Innovation Support Services (ISS) as a crucial AKIS actor. The ISS enable the acceleration of individual grassroots innovative ideas to generate solutions for the transition to more sustainable agriculture and forestry sectors.

With a consortium of 17 partners representing 13 European countries, ATTRACTISS intends to set up an EU wide network for ISS that would allow them to connect, develop



a common understanding, vision and capacities about their roles and functions within the AKIS.

The project has three specific objectives:

- empowering ISS & all AKIS actors, through capacity building and the provision of effective methods and supportive tools, to discover innovative ideas and enable uptake in a co-creative way (e.g. AKIS ecosystem building to support the transition to sustainable and circular agriculture and forestry);
- supporting Managing Authorities in all EU Member States to organise and monitor efficient support for ISS; and
- providing support for new actors in AKIS processes to better facilitate cocreation approaches involving farming, practitioners and research centres. To this aim, the project will organise capacity building activities and actions for ISS key actors across all Member States ('training the trainers') and promote cross-organisational learning on ISS through good practices exchange and peer to peer review.

Beneficiaries: Innovation support services providers; farming and forestry advisory services providers; policy makers.

Agromix

Website: <https://agromixproject.eu/>

Funding: Horizon Europe

Duration: 2020 - 2024

Description: Conventional agriculture is a leading cause of climate change and land degradation, creating some of the greatest challenges of our time. However, regenerative practices such as agroforestry offer an opportunity for land use to become part of the solution.

To lead this change, AGROMIX brings together farmers, researchers and policymakers to explore solutions and develop tools for more resilient land use in Europe.

The project applies:

- innovative co-design practices to research and field projects;



- sustainable business models and tools (capitalisation of mixed farming and agroforestry for farmers and stakeholders across the production chain); and
- immersive learning tools: virtual interactive tools (serious games) that apply agroecological principles, allowing land managers to design their own agroforestry projects.

It will develop policy recommendations/guidelines for decision makers to prioritise environmental resilience strategies and stable farming value chains.

Beneficiaries: farmers, researchers and policymakers.

Regenerative Agriculture Innovation Portfolio

Organisation: EIT Food

Website: <https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/regenag-revolution/regenerative-innovation-portfolio>

Funding: Horizon Europe; Other

Duration: 2024 - 2027

Description: The Regenerative Innovation Portfolio is a collaboration platform bringing together a wide array of actors within Europe to action the critical systemic shifts needed to fix food systems.

Beneficiaries: corporates, local governments, farmers and cooperatives.



Other support

1. Belgium

Terres Vivantes

Organisation : Terres Vivantes

Website: <https://www.terres-vivantes.net/>

Funding: Patronage

Duration: September 2021

Description: At Terres vivantes (Living Lands), we are speeding up the transition of Walloon (Belgium) agriculture to agroecology.

Our vision: farming that is more respectful of nature, farms that are more profitable and more resilient, food with high added value that is used locally.

Our strengths: a high-performance, comprehensive diagnostic tool, personalised global monitoring and working groups made up of farmers.

Beneficiaries: We are open to all farms established in Wallonia, whatever their farming system, whether conventional, organic or conservation farming, as long as they occupy an area of more than 20 hectares. They may be involved in livestock farming, arable farming or mixed farming. The only prerequisite is that they want to get involved in the agro-ecological transition and take part in our group activities.

2. Denmark

The organisation of the Danish advisory services

Organisation: DAA - The Danish Agricultural Agency



Website: <https://www.dlbr.dk/>

Funding: *note – this is not a project*

Duration: ongoing

Description: In Denmark around 85% of all farmers make use of an agricultural advisor. The great majority of the advisors are employed at an advisors' centre. Those centres are organised in a cooperation called DLBR (Dansk LandbrugsRådgivning - Danish Agricultural Counselling). The centres are owned and funded by the local farmers' organisations – no public funding is granted.

The advisors' centres offer counselling on, e.g., economy, law, environment, strategic development, management and production of plants, animals and energy. Furthermore, the advisors hold an important role as a gatekeeper towards the managing authority, for example ensuring compliance and applying for funding schemes. Thus, it is important to keep up the smooth and fruitful cooperation between farmer-advisor-managing authority.

Danish farmers are busy - like other European farmers! Asked about the main reasons for choosing to use an advisor, most farmers highlight their insecurity about the rules, lack of time, unfamiliar application schemes, the advisors' insurance and lack of interest for administrative work.

A plan to shortcut the advisors' role in the Danish structure would probably not be successful. On the other hand, continuous support and enhancement of the role of the advisors is key to upskilling and reskilling of the Danish agricultural workforce.

By accepting the premise that advisors are already working in a successful way, there is a great opportunity to enhance, support and educate Danish farmers, in order to meet future expectations. 'Green' skills of farmers seems to be a topic where an enhanced effort could prove to be beneficial.

Beneficiaries: Farmers, advisors (Managing Authority).

3. Germany

Muldentaler Ausbildungsverbund

Organisation: b&s Unternehmensberatung und Schulung für den ländlichen Raum GmbH

Website: <https://www.muldentaler-ausbildungsverbund.de/>

Funding: EU Social fund / National fund



Duration: 01/11/2021 – 31/10/2024

Description: The aim of this pilot project is to set up and operate a training association made up of organic and conventional agricultural companies. The in-network training enables the transfer of a wide range of specialist knowledge to the trainees and thus promotes a deeper understanding of the connections between organic and conventional farming.

Not only do the trainees benefit from this training network, but so do the participating conventional companies, which can send their trainees to organic companies in exchange.

The joint training achieves a significant increase in the quality of training. In addition, all available training positions can be better filled through concentrated recruiting activities, e.g. by exhibiting at training fairs. The increased public relations work should lead to a significantly greater awareness of the training opportunities offered by the training network, compared to the current offer by individual companies.

Beneficiaries: Trainees, trainers, managers, farmers.

4. Ireland

Use of simulators to support student learning

Organisation: Teagasc

Website: <https://www.teagasc.ie/news--events/news/2022/-farm-machinery-simulator.php>

Funding: Funded by Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland

Duration: since 2022

Description: In December 2022, agriculture and horticulture colleges delivering Teagasc programmes received 18 machinery simulators costing €1.2 million. The simulators are funded by the Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).

The "Tenstar" simulator units will enable learners to learn and practice on tractors, telescopic loaders, 360-degree diggers and forestry machinery in a safe virtual environment. In addition, equine students have the opportunity of practicing on specialised simulators.

In 2023, DAFM provided funding of a further €500 000 for bovine injecting simulators and bovine calving simulators to support the teaching of animal husbandry skills. Use



of simulators to support practical skills training on farms is particularly beneficial for less experienced students. Students will have the opportunity to practice their skills and develop competencies by using the simulators in advance of training sessions with farm machinery or live animals.

Beneficiaries: Full-time, part-time and distance education students on Teagasc programmes studying for QQI Level 5 and Level 6 qualifications in agriculture, equine, forestry and horticulture.

5. Italy

Rural Social ACT

Organisation: CREA Politiche e bioeconomia

Website: <https://www.crea.gov.it/en/web/politiche-e-bioeconomia/-/progetto-rural-social-act>

Funding: Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund AMIF

Duration: 01/06/2021 - 30/06/2023

Description: The project aimed to promote the role of social agriculture as an agent of sustainable, inclusive, high quality territorial development, capable of countering illegal hiring.

With the aim of improving workers' skills, the projects provided a total amount of 1 090 hours of professional training activities to 188 beneficiaries in nine regions in Italy. Training was offered through the so-called 'Employability Laboratories', including both theoretical lessons and practical on-farm work experiences. The training was also an opportunity to share basic information about the legal protection of workers. Beneficiaries showed great interest about these issues since they are often completely unaware of their rights.

A qualitative survey was run among 16 employers to collect their opinions on the role of foreign workers and information on their policies for workers' recruitment and professional development. The survey highlighted the key role of foreign workers due to the shortage of domestic workforce, especially for seasonal and low skills duties. Nevertheless, the farmers seemed reluctant to invest in professional training for foreign workers. Farmers are often not very confident that foreign workers intend to stay in agriculture, so they fear that the investment in training for foreign workers would be a waste of time and money. Also, the lack of proficiency in Italian represents an



additional barrier which implies additional cost for farmers. Therefore, foreign labourers mainly execute basic manual work without professional development perspectives, and this contributes to their actual low affection for the sector.

Beneficiaries: Regular foreigners employed in agriculture at risk of exploitation.

ENAPRA

Organisation: Confagricoltura

Website: www.enapra.it

Funding: National fund / Funded through Confagricoltura

Duration: since 1959

Description: ENAPRA is a specific and separate body created within Confagricoltura in 1959. It aims to train and develop the competences and knowledge of farm workers and agrifood workers.

By building training models, training systems, training programs and specific classes, it cooperates in the promotion of successful business models. Improving the core competences of both farm managers and farm workers, ENAPRA aims to create a positive environment that can increase the competitiveness of the farm itself through innovation and lifelong learning.

Through time, ENAPRA has developed a broad catalogue of different training programs and classes that farms can request and use to train their staff. The catalogue includes 10 different categories: a) Environment, energy, quality; b) digital and technological innovation; c) productions (looking in depth at single value chains, their necessities and specific objectives); d) skills for wine; e) farm management; f) export and internationalization; g) agritourism; h) socially inclusive farming; and i) soft skills.

The catalogue delivers tailored education for farm workers operating in a specific sector, therefore updating their skills in pest control, pruning methods, soil management and integrated agriculture. In addition, it looks at the more managerial aspects of running a farm, proposing specific courses on budget management, market approach, cooperation between farms, and many others.

The cost of the classes is co-financed through the Foragri Fund, which the farm employer contributes to through part of the social security contributions s/he pays with the salary.



Beneficiaries: Farm workers; Agrifood workers; Farm Managers



Grains

Organisation: Diesis Network

Website: <https://www.diesis.coop/grains/>

Funding: COSME, DSM (DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET)

Duration: 01/10/2023 - 30/09/2025

Description: The GRAINS project is an initiative aimed at enhancing the capabilities of social economy SMEs operating in the agrifood sector. The project focuses on promoting sustainability and reducing the environmental impact of these businesses. To achieve these objectives, the project adopts a holistic approach that leverages training sessions and workshops as key instruments.

Phase one of the project aims to build capacity, address business needs, and foster innovation. In phase two, specific aspects of the agri-food supply chain are targeted to promote sustainability, integrate eco-tech, and improve SMEs' competitiveness. This is achieved through knowledge sharing, skills development, and facilitation of cooperation.

Integral to the project are mechanisms for knowledge transfer such as mentorship and coaching programs, advisory support, additional training initiatives, and counselling services. The training content focuses on two main axes. The first axis addresses business needs and innovation, covering topics such as financial tools for green transitions, access to technology, digitalisation, branding, and green labelling. The second axis focuses on the technical aspects of reducing environmental impact and greening agrifood markets, including eco-packaging, food loss, biodiversity, and local markets.

Beneficiaries: social economy SMEs in agrifood sector

