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Agrifood
Ecosystem

Newsletter 2025 No.1

Advancing Skills for the Agri-Food Ecosystem Partnership

NEWS

Pact for Skills Annual Survey: launch on 28 January



The **Pact for Skills Annual Survey** is set to launch on 28 January 2025. This survey provides an opportunity to highlight achievements from 2024, share feedback on support services, and suggest improvements for the future.

All registered members will receive a personalized link to participate. Your valuable insights will help shape the future direction of the Pact for Skills, ensuring it continues to meet the needs of its members.

Make your voice count!

Council conclusions on Tackling Labour and Skills Shortages in the EU



The EU Council has approved conclusions on addressing labour and skills shortages across member states. These conclusions highlight the need for targeted strategies to tackle gaps in critical sectors, including agri-food, and emphasize the importance of upskilling and reskilling the workforce to support economic growth and competitiveness.

The Council calls for stronger cooperation between governments, industries, and education providers to develop innovative solutions for attracting and retaining talent, with a focus on digital and green skills.

For more details, read the full press release [here](#) and the official document [here](#).

Education and Training Monitor 2024: Insights into EU Learning Trends



The **Education and Training Monitor 2024** is now available! This comprehensive report by the European Commission explores key questions shaping education across the EU, including:

- How sustainability is taught in schools
- The impact of socio-economic backgrounds on learning
- Work-based learning benefits in vocational education
- Women's participation in STEM fields
- Trends in learning mobility across the EU

The Monitor includes an EU comparative report, 27 country-specific reports on policy developments, and a toolbox of essential indicators and data.

[Explore the Education and Training Monitor 2024 here.](#)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Forward Looking Projects Topic 4: Adult Learning: Support to the Pact for Skills

The Erasmus+ call for projects supporting the Pact for Skills is open from 18 December 2024 to 27 May 2025, offering up to EUR 4,000,000 in funding. The initiative focuses on improving guidance and counselling services for adults, particularly workers in small and micro-enterprises, and fostering governance structures and cooperation among Pact for Skills members. Eligible applicants include public or private entities in education, training, or related fields, established in Erasmus+ Programme countries and registered as members of the Pact for Skills. Projects aim to enhance upskilling, reskilling, and training provision along value chains, with an emphasis on SMEs.

Information [here](#).

Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) call

This Erasmus+ (2021/2027) funding program aims to enhance the relevance, quality, and capacity of higher education institutions, promote inclusive education, and improve teaching mechanisms and skill levels. The action supports activities such as improving management and administrative capacity, ensuring high-quality education, increasing accessibility, developing curricula and learning methods, and introducing Bologna-type reforms. Applicants must be public or private legal entities in the fields of higher education or labour markets, and established in eligible countries. Only higher education institutions or organizations of HEIs can be coordinators of a CBHE application. Open until the 6th of February 2025.

Details available [here](#).

Alliances for Innovation - Lot 1: Alliances for Education and Enterprises

The Erasmus+ Alliances for Education and Enterprises call, managed by EACEA, is open for applications from 5 December 2024 until 6 March 2025. This initiative aims to foster innovation and collaboration between higher education, vocational education, enterprises, and research. Key objectives include promoting multidisciplinary teaching approaches, deep tech skills development, entrepreneurial mindsets, and enhanced knowledge exchange across sectors. Funding of up to EUR 1,000,000 is available for 2-year projects, and up to EUR 1,500,000 for 3-year projects.

More information [here](#).

Alliances for Innovation - Lot 2: Alliances for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills (implementing the 'Blueprint')

The Erasmus+ call for Alliances for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills, under the Pact for Skills, is open from 5 December 2024 to 6 March 2025. This initiative aims to support Large-scale Skills Partnerships (LSPs) in developing sector skills strategies, revising occupational profiles, and creating related training programmes to address urgent skills needs in the digital and green transitions. Focused on one of 14 industrial ecosystems, projects may address uncovered areas or expand existing Blueprints. Funding of up to EUR 4,000,000 is available for 4-year projects. Note that there are already 2 ongoing blueprint projects for agri-food.

More information [here](#).

Centres of Vocational Excellence

The Erasmus+ call for Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) is open from 5 December 2024 to 11 June 2025, with a total budget of EUR 60,000,000 and a maximum of EUR 4,000,000 per project. The initiative supports projects fostering high-quality, flexible, and learner-centred vocational education and training (VET) to drive local and regional development, social inclusion, and innovation in the twin transition. Eligible applicants include public or private entities established in Erasmus+ Programme countries, active in VET or the world of work, with opportunities for collaboration with international CoVEs to enhance outreach, quality, and impact.

Details [here](#).

Other funding opportunities

There are relevant funding opportunities for skills under current programmes running from 2021 until 2027. Those include the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the Just Transition Fund (JTF), and Recovery and Resilience Facility funds.

Further information is easily accessible through the [Pact for Skills funding opportunities website](#).

KEY PROJECTS



DIGIFARM2ALL is revolutionising crop management by introducing low-cost, open-access digital solutions tailored to farmers' needs. Running from October 2022 to September 2025 and led by [CONFAGRI](#) and SMART FARM CoLAB, the project unites 20 partners, including cooperatives, farmer associations, and tech companies, to support digital transformation in agriculture.

With 17 pilot projects, DIGIFARM2ALL integrates cutting-edge technology such as weather stations, soil sensors, and remote data systems powered by solar energy. These innovations cover a range of crops, including vineyards, olive groves, and avocados.

Since its launch, 25 training and capacity-building sessions have been held, with more planned for February 2025, ensuring farmers and stakeholders are equipped for the digital age. DIGIFARM2ALL is paving the way for a sustainable, inclusive agricultural future.

AGRIFOODSKILLS

The highly anticipated **AGRIFOODSKILLS Erasmus+ project** is set to launch with its kick-off meeting on **23–24 January 2025** in Rome. This innovative initiative aims to create a strategic community of practice within the AgriFood Pact for Skills to address skill gaps and promote upskilling and reskilling across the agrifood sector.

Through cutting-edge curricula, mobility programs, and innovative training approaches, AGRIFOODSKILLS will strengthen education and training pathways in plant and animal production, agrifood, and veterinary sectors.

Stay tuned for more updates on this transformative project!



The **VIRTUALITY Project** was co-financed by the European Erasmus+ programme and aimed for developing professional training in Virtual Reality dedicated to the food industry.

During the project lifetime VIRTUALITY developed a fully **virtual training platform** with different missions for correct handling of food processing. In addition, a VR guideline and training concept was elaborated. For the moment the training is accessible via Meta Quest VR glasses.

The target groups of VIRTUALITY are employees in the food sector and the companies that employ them to offer a new way of accelerating of personnel training and developing employability in different positions.

It is also aimed at training centres specialised in the food industry offering new training methods to be integrated in their services.

[VIRTUALITY free Download](#)

SOCIAL DIALOGUE *for* **SKILLS**



Following last year's policy seminar in Rome and the online forum, the Social Dialogue for Skills project will be organizing two additional in-person events.

From **April 23 to 25**, project participants will gather in Latvia. This event will focus on the initial findings of the project's research on social dialogue in agriculture. It will also explore the functioning of social dialogue in Latvia and the Baltic states, with in-depth discussions and exchanges on the sector's evolving skills needs.

From **September 8 to 10**, the project's final conference will take place in Portugal. This conference will showcase the project's final outcomes, including an analysis of skills needs, key performance indicators (KPIs) for the sector, and the Sectoral Pact for Skills.

The Social Dialogue for Skills is fully managed by Geopa with the support of EFFAT, FoodDrinkEurope and CEJA.



The [AGRIFOOD4FUTURE](#) project is advancing training and innovation in the agri-food sector:

- **New training courses:** Four VET curricula on digital transition, green transition, bioeconomy, and soft skills will launch in 2024 in Italy, Spain, and Greece.
- **Semester exchange program:** Undergraduate and graduate students from Italy, Portugal, France, and Belgium can earn 30 ECTS credits abroad through Erasmus-supported mobility, focusing on sustainable agriculture and resource valorization.
- **Internship platform:** Our mobility platform is now live, offering placements in seven EU countries. Hosting companies are encouraged to join!
- **Innovators programs:** Apply for the Entrepreneurship and Acceleration Program or the Open-Innovation Challenge to drive agri-food innovation.
- **Capacity building:** Launching January 2025, this program will strengthen VET through cooperation in the education-research-industry triangle.

Learn more and join us in shaping the future of agri-food! Visit our website for details.

MEET OUR MEMBERS



[ISEKI-Food](#) is a global network organisation dedicated to advancing education, training, and research in the food sector. By uniting universities, research institutes, companies, and associations, ISEKI-Food supports the development and delivery of high-quality training tailored to the agri-food industry's evolving needs.

Key initiatives and contributions

ISEKI-Food is actively involved in Erasmus+ and Horizon projects, such as FIELDS, I-Restart, EQVegan, and Askfood. These initiatives focus on addressing skill gaps in the agri-food sector by creating innovative tools and strategies, including:

- Databases mapping the EU agri-food education landscape.
- E-learning platforms and training materials, freely accessible to professionals worldwide.
- An EU strategy to address skills shortages in agriculture and food systems.

The network also provides certifications and quality assurance for food science and technology education, ensuring that professionals are equipped with up-to-date skills and knowledge.

Objectives and goals

ISEKI-Food aims to foster rapid development and deployment of training programmes that align with industry needs. By focusing on future skills, the organisation contributes to enhancing the global competitiveness of the agri-food sector while fostering greater participation and interest in the field.

Challenges and success factors

Despite challenges like diverse cultural contexts and budget constraints, ISEKI-Food has excelled by maintaining strong partnerships within its project consortia. This collaboration enables efficient knowledge sharing and the creation of impactful solutions.

Explore their resources

ISEKI-Food offers a rich library of free and member-exclusive resources, including training materials developed through EU-funded projects. These tools empower professionals across the food industry to stay ahead in a rapidly changing landscape.

To learn more about ISEKI-Food's initiatives and explore their resources, visit their website!

NEXT EVENTS

Explore Erasmus+ Funding opportunities: Webinar for Pact for Skills Members



Mark your calendars for **28 January 2025, 14:30–16:00 CET**, and gain valuable insights into how Erasmus+ funding can support your upskilling and reskilling initiatives.

This webinar, hosted under the Pact for Skills framework, will provide detailed information on new Erasmus+ opportunities for 2025, focusing on initiatives that foster skills development, strengthen sectoral and regional cooperation, and promote innovative approaches to education and training.

Key highlights:

- Discover funding opportunities relevant to Pact for Skills members.
- Learn directly from European Commission representatives about accessing Erasmus+ resources.
- Enhance your understanding of tools available to support skills development across Europe.

For more details and to register, visit [Event Registration](#).

European Employment & Social Rights Forum 2025

EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT & SOCIAL RIGHTS FORUM

SKILLS FOR A COMPETITIVE EUROPE

20
25
5-6
MARCH
BRUSSELS
& ONLINE

Mark your calendars for the **European Employment and Social Rights Forum 2025**, taking place on **5-6 March** at The EGG in Brussels.

This year's edition will tackle one of Europe's most pressing challenges: **labour and skills shortages amidst declining productivity**. With rapid technological changes, demographic shifts, and evolving working conditions, how can Europe empower its workforce for a sustainable and competitive future?

Join policymakers, businesses, social partners, academics, and civil society to explore innovative solutions at the intersection of skills, employment, and social policies.

Don't miss this opportunity to contribute your ideas, connect with key stakeholders, and help shape the future of Europe's workforce. [Register now](#)

Save the Date: Agri-Food Pact for Skills Annual Event



The **Agri-Food Pact for Skills Annual Event** will take place on **14-15 May 2025** in **Brussels**. This exciting gathering will focus on skills development, innovation, and collaboration across the agri-food ecosystem, featuring keynote speeches, project presentations, and interactive workshops.

Pre-registration is now open – reserve your spot [here](#).
More information on the program and venue will follow soon.

Join us in shaping the future of skills in the agri-food sector!

HOW TO JOIN THE PACT

It is important to quote the Agri-food LSP registration number on the application. The number to quote is **916**.

[Download the guidelines.](#)

SHARE WITH US

[Please complete this form](#) to share your events, news, or project outcomes with the Pact for Skills members.
