

FIELDS: Addressing the current and Future skill needs for sustainability, digitalization, and the bio-Economy in Agriculture: European skills agenda Newsletter #4

FIELDS Train the Trainer Session: Preparing for the Agricultural Skills Revolution

In early May, an essential chapter unfolded in the FIELDS project: the **Train the Trainer session**. Expertly organized by AgarPlus, it took place at the Food Industries Association Austria in Vienna, at Palais Fanto. This event marked a pivotal step in addressing the pressing skill needs in sustainability, digitalization, and the bio-economy within agriculture, food industry and forestry across Europe.

The primary objective of this session was to conduct a training experiment for dedicated trainers under AgarPlus coordination and to equip trainers with the essential elements needed to effectively monitor training sessions for the trainees.

This was no small task, given the multifaceted nature of modern agriculture. From precision farming techniques that rely on cutting-edge digital technologies to sustainable practices aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of agriculture, today's farmers and agricultural professionals must be well-versed in a wide range of skills.

The process began with trainers immersing themselves in online content, examining content utilization and in-class activities.

The digital realm plays a pivotal role in modern agriculture. From data-driven decision-making to remote monitoring of crops and livestock, the ability to harness the power of technology is essential.

The modern training landscape is a blend of traditional classroom learning and digital resources. Trainers needed to be proficient in both arenas to prepare the agricultural workforce of tomorrow effectively. Throughout this phase, content providers offered invaluable support, addressing any issues that arose.

In the rapidly evolving world of agriculture, staying up to date with the latest advancements is crucial. Trainers had the opportunity to engage directly with experts, ensuring they were well-versed in the most recent developments in sustainable and digital agriculture.



Following the online component, trainers transitioned to an intensive three-day, in-class training. It was during these three days that the trainers gained valuable insights into the day-to-day challenges that agricultural professionals face.

Additionally, the in-class training provided an opportunity for trainers to refine their communication skills. Effective communication is a cornerstone of successful teaching, and trainers were given the tools and guidance needed to ensure they could convey complex concepts in a clear and understandable manner.

A crucial element of this event was the collection of feedback through a satisfaction survey thoughtfully prepared in collaboration with the training centers. This feedback served as a foundation for potential adjustments to the training

content, ensuring that the program aligns seamlessly with the needs and expectations of both trainers and trainees.



Training the trainers is a critical aspect of the project, as these individuals will serve as the catalysts for change in the agricultural sector. They will be responsible for passing on their knowledge and expertise to the next generation of agricultural professionals.

FIELDS 6th Project Meeting: Paving the Way Forward

Directly following the Train the Trainer session on May 11th and 12th, the FIELDS project convened its **6th project meeting**. This key gathering, organized by LVA and UNITO at the same venue, served as a platform to revisit the progress made across all project work packages. It also offered an opportunity to gain a comprehensive update on the status of every part of the project, setting the stage for discussions on the project's upcoming milestones.

One of the main topics of discussion during the project meeting was the forthcoming training pilots. These initiatives will be expertly overseen by AERES to ensure seamless execution and delivery. A key feature is the involvement of trainers who previously participated in previous tasks,

stepping into roles as instructors to impart their expertise and knowledge.



At least 15 trainees per country (Italy, Spain, France, Ireland, Austria, the Netherlands, and Finland) will be chosen, encompassing both initial students and continuing training for farmers, foresters, and advisors.

For those in initial training, the program will

be followed by a practical stage or apprenticeship. This hands-on experience is vital to fulfil the occupational profile requirement, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application.

In contrast, the training for farmers, farm advisors, and foresters will be modular in nature.



This modular approach empowers trainees to tailor their learning journey, focusing on the specific content they require.

Additionally, they have the flexibility to opt-out of the work-based period, further customizing their educational experience. This modularity is a key feature of the FIELDS project and underscores the commitment to providing flexible and adaptable training options.

Agriculture is a diverse field, with professionals ranging from those just starting their journey to seasoned experts looking to expand their skill set. The training pilots are designed to meet the unique needs of each of these groups.

The flexibility and modularity of this approach open the door to multiple curricula, enabling trainees to select the path that best aligns with their individual needs and career aspirations. Whether a trainee is focused on sustainable farming practices, digital agriculture, or bio-economy initiatives, the training pilots can be tailored to meet their specific goals.



Looking Ahead: Transforming Agriculture Through Education

As the FIELDS project continues to gather momentum, these recent events have demonstrated the unwavering commitment to addressing the current and future skill needs for sustainability, digitalization, and the bio-economy in agriculture across Europe.

The trainers are now better equipped than ever to guide the next generation of agricultural professionals. The forthcoming training pilots promise to be a game-changer, offering tailored, localized training that empowers learners to thrive in the rapidly evolving agricultural landscape.



The FIELDS project is not just about education; it's about empowerment. It's about equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills they need to not only survive but thrive in an agricultural sector that is constantly evolving and adapting to new challenges and opportunities.

In the end, the success of the FIELDS project will be measured not just by the number of trainees who complete the program but by the positive impact they have on the sustainability, digitalization, and bio-economy of European agriculture.



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