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**GAEA**



**Granting Access  
to Employment &  
entrepreneurship  
in Agriculture  
for women**

# Newsletter

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# GAEA: Training Needs Mapping Report

The GAEA Training Needs Mapping Report offers a comprehensive analysis of the training needs in the field of agri-preneurship and particular the training needs of women in NEETs and migrant women. GAEA training needs analysis was carried out following a comprehensive methodological framework to identify potential gaps between current and required states in knowledge, skills and competencies of women in agri-preneurship.

The need analysis included the identification of the characteristics and needs of the target groups, the current provision of training in the areas of agri-preneurship at HE and VET level, the skills on demand in the current market, the current trends in agri-preneurship education, and the business profiles and priorities in the sector. Inputs from EntreComp, DigComp and ESCO were integrated in the analysis. The quantitative and qualitative data were gathered through systematic literature review, online desktop research, surveys, interviews, and interpretation of relevant qualifications and frameworks, followed with appropriate data analysis procedures.



The report underpins several key findings on the current state of qualifications, knowledge, and skills in agri-preneurship. To begin with, it documents gender disparity in the sector, with men dominating in management roles, while women left to overcome challenges to access resources, and bypass stereotypes and discrimination. Although agri-preneurship is crucial for food security and environmental sustainability, it confronts a series of challenges including aging farming population, labor shortages, new consumer demands and climate changes. Most importantly, the training provision in agri-preneurship is insufficient, and narrow-sighted in topics and practical skills.

The GAEA studies revealed that the required qualifications, knowledge, and skills in agri-preneurship are many and diverse. The professionals in this field need a range of skills, including technical, management, financial, marketing, strategic, cooperation/networking, entrepreneurial, and digital. The GAEA sampled respondents asked also for access to knowledge on EU subsidies, agricultural policy, international markets, and sustainability practices. In specific, women reported the need for training in various areas in order to fulfill their aspirations in agri-business. For example, they valued as priority the updated knowledge on legislation, the systematic understanding of the target market, and how to effectively engage with customers. They also considered as essential skills the setting of short-term goals, the building of networks, and the mastering of technical machines. Moreover, women inquired for competences to study the trends in agribusiness sector and EU policies, and estimate production expenses, while ensuring financial health. Interestingly, the development of life skills, (i.e., time management, communication) is highly valued by the women in the agri-business along with the computer skills. Finally, while overseeing day-to-day activities and implementing environmental policies are ranked as relatively less important, still hold significance.

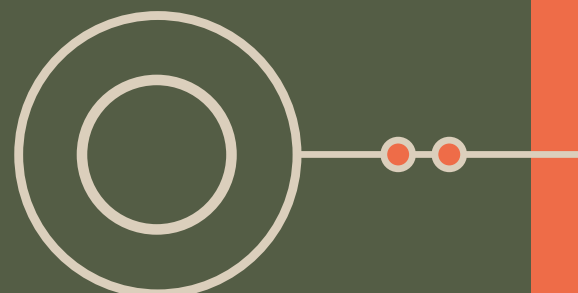
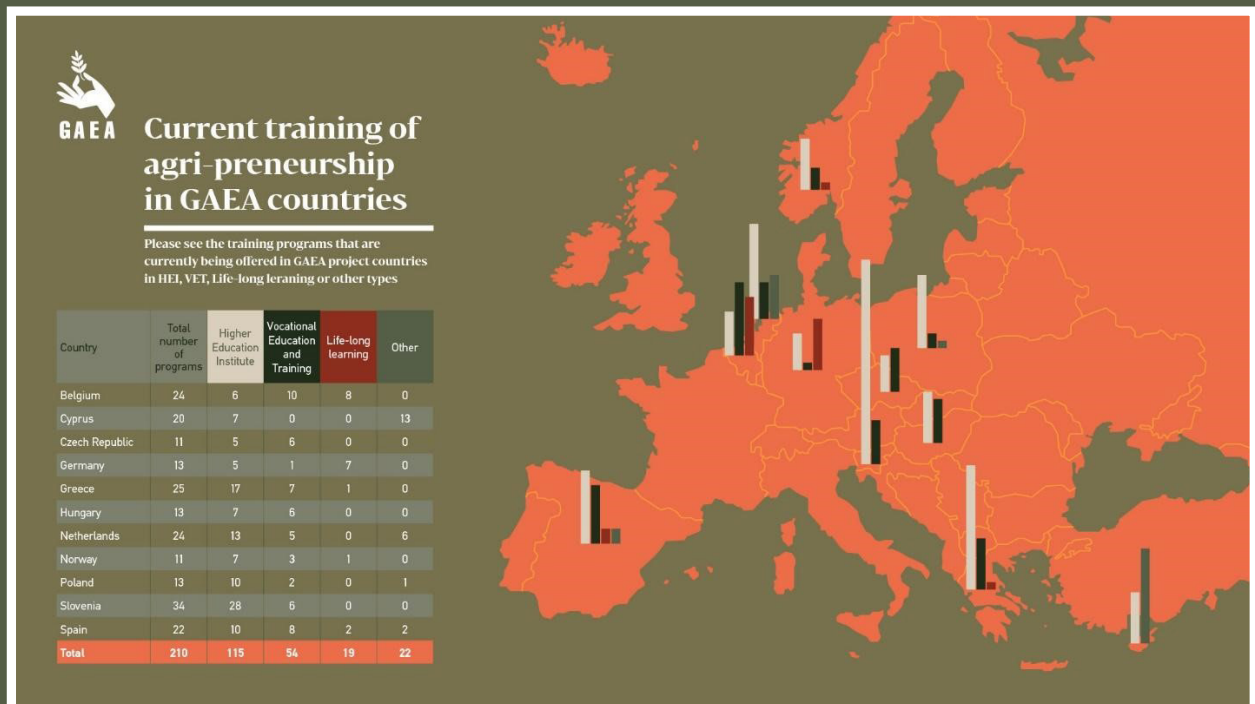
Looking towards the future, the report highlights the need to prioritize environmental, social, and governance skills and competence in agribusiness to support sustainability and profitability. Yet, its content emphasizes the need for sustainable farming practices, innovation through technology, and creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurship.

Overall, the report identifies several knowledge, skills, and qualification gaps in agri-preneurship. These include agribusiness knowledge, opportunities identification and ideation, business planning, financial management, networking and collaboration, management and organizational capabilities, personal and professional development, digital skills and digital agribusiness transformation, new technologies in agriculture, strategic planning sustainability and growth, marketing, EU policies and legislation, green agribusiness, and inclusion of women in the labor market.

The full report can be found here, and is available in the nice GAEA languages: Spanish, Greek, German, Czech, Norwegian, Hungarian, Dutch, Polish and Slovenian.

The findings of this report will inform the development of training curricula and content in the GAEA project, with the aim of addressing clearly identified gaps and supporting the growth and success of women agri-preneurs.

### CURRENT TRAINING OFFER OF AGRI-PRENEURSHIP IN GAEA COUNTRIES



# GAEA Training Programme Structure

The GAEA project follows a holistic approach and focuses on empowering women in the agricultural sector. The project aims to train women as agri-preneurs and agribusiness professionals while also upskilling trainers and professionals working with and supporting women in agriculture.

The GAEA Training Programme Structure report presents the structure of the training provided by the GAEA project. The development of the training structure is based on the results of a thorough training needs analysis which has shown that most women, and particularly NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and migrant ones, have specific training needs and face numerous challenges in accessing resources and opportunities to participate in agri-preneurship. The analysis has also highlighted the necessity of proper education not only for the women themselves but also for the professionals, trainers, career consultants and advisors who are involved in the sector. These professionals play a critical role in designing and delivering training programs and providing consulting activities that are gender-responsive and address the unique training needs, characteristics and challenges faced by women

## The proposed training structure provided by GAEA includes four curricula:

- One for women higher education (HE) students (EQF level 6),
- One for women at vocational education and training (VET) level (EQF level 5)
- One for the upskilling VET trainers and career counsellors, and
- One in the form of micro-credentials for agribusiness knowledge angels.

For each curriculum are clearly defined the objectives, learning outcomes, content, EQF level, duration, ECTS credits, and prerequisite knowledge. The development of the curricula follows the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) to ensure transparency and comparability. The constructive alignment approach is applied to maximize quality learning by aligning the development of learning outcomes with training and assessment methods.

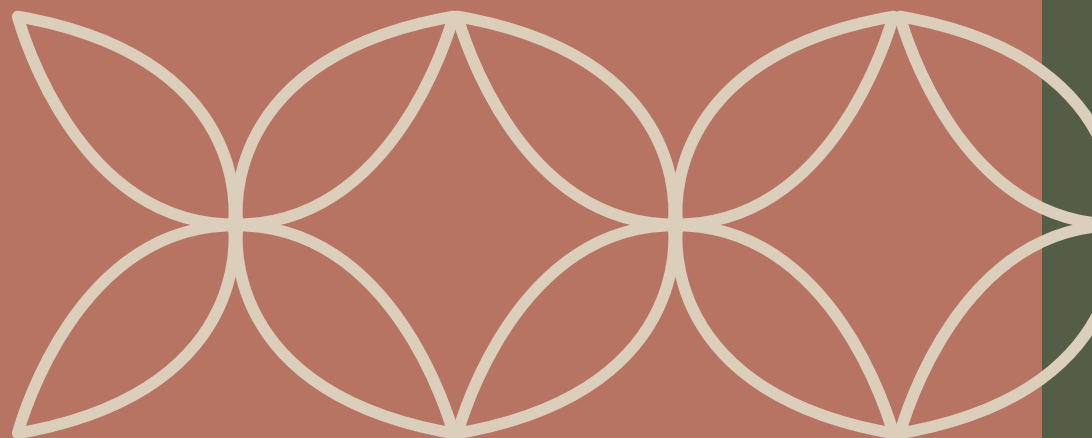


**The curricula for HE women students and VET level women follows a modular approach, allowing learners to select and build their own learning paths. Each of these curricula includes 10 modules with total duration of 350 hours which are subdivided in learning units. The themes of these two curricula are:**

- Introduction to the entrepreneurship aspects of Agribusiness
- Agribusiness models and planning
- Agribusiness management
- Networking and collaborations
- Strategic planning in agribusiness, green and sustainable development
- The fundamentals of agribusiness finances
- Agricultural marketing and value creation
- Digital skills and agribusiness technological transformation
- Soft skills and personal development
- Special issues of women inclusion into the labour market

The curriculum for VET trainers and career counsellors is a short training scheme of 25 hours and aiming at upskilling for better services to women in the agribusiness sector, including those in NEET and migrant women. It covers topics related to the specific characteristics of the targeted groups, including gender equality issues, intercultural communication, and the application of gender – responsive/inclusive training and consulting methods and techniques. The micro-credential training curriculum targets HE students, graduates, and professionals in business consulting and agronomy. The priority here is at the training of knowledge angels in the agribusiness sector, and the duration is 75 hours. This training scheme assumes that knowledge angles, besides “making things happen” play a significant role for innovation by installing knowledge and develop vision in agribusiness. This group will be trained in converting the existing knowledge (internal and external) for agripreneurs to new solutions for small business. The curriculum includes modules on agri-business development, sustainability, growth, digitalization, personal and professional development of knowledge angels, and agribusiness consulting principles and tools.

The training methodology of GAEA follows a blended scheme integrating face-to-face training, online learning, work-based learning and self-study. The proposed methodology is based among others on problem-based learning, research-based learning, project-based learning, practice-based, learning and follows the principles of adult education. Training methods and techniques are described for each type of training. The GAEA assessment methodology supplements the training methodology with formative, summative approaches, self-assessment and peer-assessment. The trainees will have access to authentic assessment activities, applied in all types of training. The report also provides suggestions for the accreditation and validation of the HE and VET training in the 11 GAEA countries. The full report can be found [here](#) and it is also available in 10 languages including Spanish, Greek, German, Czech, Norwegian, Hungarian, Dutch, Polish and Slovenian.



# Title: GAEA Learning Resources Development

We are thrilled to provide you with an update on the progress of the GAEA project. Today, we will focus on Work Package 3 (WP3, GAEA learning resources development). Aligned with the latest priorities of the European Union, GAEA wholeheartedly embraces the principles of sustainable development and green transition. Several aspects of the project, including its deliverables and activities, are designed to support these priorities. WP3 specifically aims to contribute to the development of innovative and multidisciplinary training resources, catering to the needs identified and researched during Work Package 2 (WP2, Needs Mapping and GAEA Training Approach Structure Design). The training materials developed in WP3 will be diverse and comprehensive, providing a range of resources for two curricula, one at the level of Higher Education (HE) and one at the level of Vocational Education and Training (VET); materials for a short-term training of professionals involved in agri-preneurship training and career support, as well as for micro-credentials training materials for HE students, HE graduates, and other stakeholders. These resources will include materials such as short presentations, engaging videos, informative notes, presentations of good practices, an online resource library, practical toolkits, case studies, role-playing simulations, training activities, assignments, peer exercises, and assessment tasks.



To ensure that the training materials are effective and impactful, they will be created by project partners according to their respective areas of expertise. Additionally, all the materials will be subject to peer assessments of GAEA's partners and external stakeholders, guaranteeing their relevance and quality. These resources will then be utilized in face-to-face training sessions and uploaded onto a dedicated digital platform, which will be developed as part of Work Package 5 later in the project. Furthermore, these materials will be made available in English as well as in all project partners' languages, promoting accessibility of the materials for several European countries.

In the coming months, WP3 will undertake several crucial tasks. First, we will focus on developing training materials for the two curricula at the VET and HE levels. These materials will be tailored to the characteristics of the target groups and aligned with the curricula developed in WP2. They will be suitable for face-to-face training sessions, bootcamps, and subsequent upload onto the digital platform. Following the principles of distance learning and e-learning, the materials will encompass various formats, including presentations, videos, notes, good practice examples, online resource libraries, toolkits, case studies, role-playing simulations, training activities, assignments, peer exercises, and assessment tasks.

In the next step, will focus on creating learning materials for professionals' training. These materials will be developed based on the characteristics of the target groups and the training curriculum outlined and developed as part of WP2. Similarly to the first task, they will take the form of short presentations, notes, good practices, online resource libraries, case studies, training activities, peer exercises, and peer and self-assessment tasks. In addition, a concise handbook, designed specifically for VET trainers, will be developed in the final stages of this task.



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Afterwards, training materials will be developed for micro-credentials training. These materials will leverage the training resources developed in the first part of WP3 and will also include all the abovementioned formats. The aim is to equip individuals, especially HE students, HE graduates, professionals in business consulting, agronomists, and other stakeholders, with the necessary knowledge and skills to act as knowledge angels in the agribusiness sector.

Following that, the validation of the peer-reviewed learning resources will be carried out. Experts from knowledge committees and academic institutions will assess the ultimate versions of the two curricula resources and the short professionals' training materials. They will evaluate the quality, relevance, and alignment of the contents with the intended learning outcomes. Their feedback will guide the refinement and improvement of these resources in the final stage, where we will focus on implementing the modifications based on the received feedback. The content creators will enhance the materials, while the University of Maribor, the project coordinator for WP3, will oversee the release of the final versions. Additionally, all project partners will undertake the essential task of translating all core training materials into their respective national languages, ensuring that the resources are accessible to a wider audience.

As WP3 progresses, the GAEA project moves closer to realizing its goal – improving the quality of entrepreneurship education in the agriculture sector for young women. By creating innovative training resources that align with the latest EU priorities and embracing the principles of sustainable development and green transition, GAEA aims to bridge the gender gap and foster inclusive economic growth. Stay tuned for more updates as the GAEA project continues to pave the way for a brighter future in agriculture and entrepreneurship.

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**Article by Copa Cogeca**

## **Empowering Women in Agriculture: Promoting Equality and Sustainable Rural Development**

Women, often referred to as the backbone of rural economies, make significant contributions to agriculture and rural development, despite their efforts frequently going unnoticed. They play diverse roles as farmers, forest owners, innovators, entrepreneurs, and agents of change. Empowering women in agriculture is not only a matter of gender equality; it is an investment in sustainable development, our future, and food security for all.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) remains one of the key policy areas of the European Union. It was initiated in 1962 by the founding members of the European Economic Committee as a means of fostering a peaceful and united future among countries that had previously experienced the devastation of war. The CAP established goals such as increasing agricultural productivity, ensuring a decent standard of living for farmers, stabilizing markets, and harmonizing competition rules across countries. Over the years, the CAP has undergone several reforms, beginning with the Mansholt plan in 1970 and culminating in the MacSharry reform of 1994. With the Treaty of Lisbon, subsequent CAP reforms, implemented since 2013, came under the ordinary legislative procedure, introducing new changes and obligations for farmers. Some of these changes included the introduction of greening payments, equal distribution of support, and incentives for young people. The most recent CAP reform post-2020 granted Member States the autonomy to develop their own strategic plans, incorporating "gender equality, including the participation of women in farming," as a clear objective within the CAP.





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This new approach provided Member States with the opportunity to design interventions that could enhance gender equality in the agriculture sector and offer support to women farmers. For instance, Spain's CAP Strategic plan, following a SWOT analysis, addressed the issue of women receiving less CAP support overall and facing disadvantages in terms of access to land, resources, and credit. To tackle these challenges, the Spanish plan allocates a 15% increase in support for women and young farmers under Pillar 1. This increased support is expected to assist women farmers in expanding their agricultural businesses, investing in new technologies or equipment, and improving productivity. In addition to the CAP, the Spanish Strategy towards the Equality of Rural Women includes measures such as supporting national rural women's organizations in promoting the role of women in rural development, facilitating farm share ownership, and implementing training programs to raise awareness of gender equality and the need for women in managerial positions in rural areas.

In Ireland, women under the age of 60, along with young people, have access to a higher rate of aid for farm investments. Knowledge transfer groups specifically for women can be established, and support for early-stage female entrepreneurship is provided through programs like ACORNS.

Slovakia addresses the importance of gender equality through business and social activities within the rural economy. Educational initiatives aimed at initiating and developing women's businesses in agriculture are offered, along with support for their re-entry into the workforce. The Slovakia program for 2021-2027 focuses on three key areas to support women in agriculture: improved access to employment, enhanced access to education, and access to services providing childcare.

Although agriculture has traditionally been a male-dominated field, it has undergone significant transformation in recent years. Women have emerged in increasingly prominent roles, making substantial contributions to the sector. While the CAP can play a crucial role in promoting equality and supporting women farmers and rural communities, it is important to note that it is not the only instrument available. Other initiatives such as the European Social Fund Plus, which focuses on social inclusion, employment, and skills development, as well as Horizon Europe and various employment and social policies, contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable agricultural sector. By working together, we can strive for a future where inclusivity is the norm, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of a thriving and equitable rural economy.



# News from our Sister Projects

## Boost



BOOSTing agribusiness acceleration and digital hub networking by an advanced training program on sustainable Precision Agriculture (BOOST), is an ambitious EU project financed within the framework of ERASMUS+. BOOST is coordinated by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The duration of BOOST is 36 months (until September 2025). The consortium consists of 13 partners from 7 EU countries. The main aim of BOOST is to foster agribusiness acceleration and digital hub networking by providing a sophisticated business training program for the application of sustainable Precision Agriculture (PA) methodologies on management, entrepreneurship & marketing, and networking.

On June 6-7, 2023, the 2nd General BOOST Meeting took place in Malaga (Spain). During this meeting, the partners discussed the results of the WP1 "Training needs assessment" which has been completed. Moreover, the course content of the educational platform of the WP2 "Set up of BOOST theoretical and practical educational modules", was organized. Finally, there was a discussion about possible common actions with the ERASMUS+ sister projects, like Project GAEA.



# Demetra: Developing Entrepreneurial Skills & Tools for woMEn in Agricultural Rural Areas



Demetra partners visited Maribor on 24th to 25th of May for attending a short-term intensive course, organized by the University of Maribor, on how to use the developed curriculum and platform in the upcoming pilot trainings. DEMETRA partners had the opportunity to visit farms managed and run by women agriprenuers, to hear their experiences, and to see in practice some sustainable methods of agricultural business.



## New Sister projects in GAEA Family



RE-START is an Erasmus+ project that encourages and guides students in Higher Education Institutes, recent graduates and potential start-up entrepreneurs to develop a circular startup, and transform their business idea into a circular one based on the circular economy strategies of Ellen MacArthur that are underpinned by the 5R-framework: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover and Regenerate.

### The RE-START project aims to:

- develop a circular start-up training programme that enhances the entrepreneurial mindset considering circular economy principles and competences of HEIs students, recent graduates and potential start-up entrepreneurs;
- provide them with real-life examples of successful circular entrepreneurs;
- encourage them to support and commercialise their circular start-up.

The RE-START Project Outcomes include a Circular Business Plan Toolkit, an eTraining Programme, a Guidebook for Trainers and Academics & Industry Cooperations.

*For more information on the project, visit the RE-START website: <https://project-restart.eu/>*



Fighting climate change is of utmost importance nowadays, particularly in the tourism sector, whose numbers of tourism influxes cause great environmental burden in local communities, such as overuse of plastic, excess of waste, etc. However, tourism industry professionals still lack environmental skills and knowledge ("green skills") to develop a more sustainable and ecofriendly business.

TOUCAN is an Erasmus+ Project that aims to minimise the carbon footprint in the tourism sector through environmental learning for tourism SMEs, as well as Vocational Education and Training providers and teachers in this area.

### This aim will be achieved through the development of the following results:

- The TOUCAN mobile-based environmental learning solution aims to deliver training courses on circular economy and sustainability with a specific focus on SMEs from the tourism industry to develop their vocational skills and become pioneers of green tourism in their countries.
- The TOUCAN online self-assessment tools for SMEs aims to evaluate their environmental-friendly competences before and after taking the training courses.

*For more information on the project, visit the TOUCAN website: <https://toucan.erasmus.site/>*

# News

IMH and GrantXpert Consulting participated with GAEA European project in the 6th Cyprus Dairy and Agriculture Conference on 27th of June in Nicosia Cyprus.

The 6th Cyprus Dairy and Agriculture Conference is the leading gathering of professionals in the primary sector in Cyprus. It is a key pillar of the Cypriot economy with great scope for growth and improvement, which in combination with the specialized manufacturing activity can contribute even more to the Sustainable and Sustainable Development of the Cypriot economy.

The Conference was addressed to all those involved in the field of agriculture, cattle breeding, sheep and goat breeding, milk production and cheese making, as well as to professionals from other related sectors. It is also addressed to representatives from state and semi-state bodies.



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