Partner Search

**Programme**

Erasmus+ 2021 expected call for Centres of Vocational Excellence in Key Action 2.

**Deadline**

To be confirmed.

**Deadline for expression of interest**

October 5th.

**Contact persons**

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**Project idea**

Institutions within agricultural vocational education and training (agro-VET) educate the future farm workers, farm managers and farm owners. In these years the nature of jobs in farming is evolving rapidly alongside technological progress in machinery and equipment, and better decision-support tools. In Denmark, precision technology is already used on 57 per cent of the total agricultural area (DST 2018)[[1]](#footnote-1). At European level “it is expected that ‘Farming 4.0’ – the combination of digital and precision agriculture – will continue to provide farmers with increasingly targeted information and tools, which could at the same time improve the environmental efficiency of agriculture” (EC, 2019a)[[2]](#footnote-2). In the coming decades the agricultural sector and workforce will be challenged not only by this ongoing technological progress, but also by the goals recently set out in the European Green Deal (EGD). The EDG sets out on how to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, boosting the economy, improving people's health and quality of life, caring for nature, and leaving no one behind (EC, 2019b)[[3]](#footnote-3). This transition into sustainable, carbon neutral and resource efficient agriculture will be partly driven by innovative companies and knowledge institutions. Farmers all over Europe will therefore have to be dealing with complex changes as well as implementing solutions at a high pace. They must be able to interact with a range of stakeholders on these matters.

This calls for new initiatives to ensure that agro-VET institutions can provide the agricultural sector with an adequately educated workforce. VET schools should be capable of acting as hubs to introduce technological and digital innovations, boosting creativity and taking the lead on the way new curricula should be designed and delivered.

Therefore, this project will:

* Establish strong cooperation between agro-VET, knowledge institutions and companies in order to strengthen the relevance, adequacy and quality of future agricultural VET.
* Explore and create innovative ways to link agro-industry with agro-VET, in order to fill gaps in skills-level and mindset when it comes to regional development.
* Establish close ties to companies and knowledge institutions to co-create new educational content and activities related to the future of agriculture.
* Build competences, capacity and awareness within the agro-VET sector for further international cooperation while strengthening the transfer of ideas and methods for improvement of agricultural VET across Europe

A fundamental part of the projects’ innovative potential is to empower agro-VET institutions via cooperation with partners not currently cooperating on shaping the future of agricultural VET. Such empowerment of agro-VET institutions will allow them to contribute much stronger for the European green development at local, regional and European level.

**Partners we are hoping to hear from**

We are looking to develop a consortium that can address the various challenges in agriculture: digitalisation and technology, the green transition and secure skills match.

The partners needed for this project to become successful can be described in four categories.

1. First, we would like to hear from agro-VET institutions or regional groups of them from four to five EU countries that are actively involved in local skills ecosystems with agro-business partners or looking to develop it.
2. Secondly, we would like to invite relevant agro-business partners or knowledge institutions (or networks of such partners) who have already engaged in cooperation with agro-VET institutions or where such cooperation could be initiated. This second category of partners would ideally respond to this call in cooperation with or via their local agro-VET partner.
3. Thirdly, partners representing the authorities regulating agro-VET institutions may be relevant to include, but they are not necessarily needed in each country.
4. Fourth category are research partners (e.g. universities) able to provide parallel research and development related to the core purpose(s) of the project.

We are ideally looking to establish a consortium involving 4-5 EU-countries with the following competences:

1. staff and students at agro-VET institutions
2. staff in agro-business companies and knowledge institutions engaged in developing and implementing new solutions for farmers
3. employers of graduates from agro-VET institutions, within the primary farming sector as well as within agro-business in general.

Ad1) Staff will be involved in developing cooperation with agro-business companies and transferring the outcome of this cooperation into their pedagogy and didactics. Students will be involved in testing new approaches and/or materials.

Ad2) staff in agro-business companies and knowledge institutions will be involved in identifying possible areas of cooperation with agro-VET institutions and cooperating with teachers.

Ad 3) employers of graduates from agro-VET institutions will be involved in identifying skills need and skills gaps

The partnership will take on a systemic whole-school approach through which agricultural VET institutions actively can contribute to co-create skills ecosystems. They will do this together with a wide range of other local, regional and international partners. Thereby they will become hubs to introduce technological and digital innovations into both education and in the various sector jobs. They will also be capable of acting as catalysts for local development, by ensuring supply of high-quality skilled workers through flexible and timely offer of training for the skills needs of companies. This is to be achieved by adopting a bottom-up approach to vocational excellence where VET institutions are capable of rapidly adapting skills provision to evolving local needs.

**Project duration**

3 years (autumn 2021-2024)

**Other information**

We are currently four agro-VET institutions located in Business Region Aarhus in the region of Central Denmark that share the vision to create an international reference point for such future agricultural VET. This vision builds on the 2020 call for ‘Centres of Vocational Excellence’ and ‘Sector-Skills Alliances’ that we expect to be fully launched in the new Erasmus programme under Key Action 2 in 2021.

The partners actively involved are:

* Bygholm Agricultural School
* Asmildkloster Agricultural School
* Green Academy
* Kalø Organic Agriculture College
* Business Region Aarhus

1. DST 2018: Advanced technology conquers the Danish fields. Nyt fra Danmarks Statistik, nr. 380, 8 October 2018, <https://www.dst.dk/ext/formid/agriculture-2018--pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. EC 2019a: EU agricultural outlook for markets and income, 2019-2030. European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/agricultural-outlook-2019-report_en.pdf) [fisheries/farming/documents/agricultural-outlook-2019-report\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/agricultural-outlook-2019-report_en.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. EC 2019b: European Commission - Press release, Brussels, 11 December 2019; <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_6691> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)