



UPINFOOD

Training for upskill key innovation
related competences in VET
for the micro and small businesses of the food sector



Co-funded by
the European Union

The Official Newsletter of UPINFOOD EU Project.

A preliminary assessment from the launch of the project

Adam Patkowski, UPINFOOD Project Leader - AGREGO



UPINFOOD is an innovative project that seeks to **drive the necessary transformation of the food supply chain** towards more sustainable and innovative models through the provision of quality vocational education and training (VET). In its initial stages, the project has made significant progress, particularly in its careful selection of partners based on their professionalism and expertise, as well as the strategic choice of countries involved, including Poland, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, and Greece. The primary objective of **UPINFOOD**, labeled as Priority 1 (P1), is to **adapt VET programs** to align with the current needs of the labor market. This initiative stems from a shared concern among stakeholders regarding the prevailing business models within the food sector. There is a widespread acknowledgment that immediate support is required for food companies to transition towards sustainable practices, thereby enhancing their competitiveness and resilience. Micro and small businesses recognize this need and understand that embracing innovation and sustainability can lead to improved performance, certifications, and enhanced brand reputation. However, many businesses face challenges in fulfilling this duty due to a lack of strategic direction and knowledge.

In **UPINFOOD**, the food community actively engages in a series of joint activities that revolve around real-life cases and promote the use of VET. These activities aim to provide valuable recommendations for fostering better collaboration among various actors within local communities, with a specific focus on meeting the requirements of sustainable development. Sustainable development is at the core of UPINFOOD's mission, aiming to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The partnership focuses on providing **tailored resources for sustainable business practices**, helping micro-businesses reduce their environmental impact through the adoption of innovative and green strategies. Overall, UPINFOOD demonstrates a strong commitment to transforming the food supply chain by integrating VET, fostering collaboration, and promoting sustainability. With its strategic partnerships and focus on addressing market needs, the project has laid a solid foundation for achieving its objectives and driving positive change in the food sector.

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Getting to know... LIOFYLLO

Alexandra Makrygeorgou - LIOFYLLO

Liofyllo is a Social Cooperative Enterprise founded in 2018, in Patras. Liofyllo, in harmony with the principles of circular economy, creates a novel eco-friendly material (International evaluation from WIPO) from the untapped olive leaves and bio-based and biodegradable adhesives. Liofyllo's main pillars are green, social and female entrepreneurship. Through its actions, Liofyllo wants to strengthen these areas of entrepreneurship, to inspire more people to engage in these areas and to have a low social and environmental impact, thus helping the local society and economy, by training executives and founders on the principles of the circular economy.



The leading team consists of six women with different work and academic experience, while it is framed by nineteen volunteers, who contribute at the development of startup and increase its impact, on the environment, in society and in women's empowerment. Liofyllo's startup team has participated both as a "trainee" and as a "trainer" (Mentoring - Coaching) in several Incubators - Accelerators. The main pillars were **green innovation**, the **fight against climate change**, as well as the field of **waste management**. Therefore, it has extensive experience in planning, organizing and implementing startup Bootcamps, along with the potential to train youths and adults in green and social skills, including technical and vocational skills, for social and environmental sustainability and entrepreneurship.

Through **UPINFOOD** project, we eager to share our concerns, expertise and best-practice examples. We hope to inspire other organisations to address food insecurity, protect natural resources and mitigate climate change – and it requires a holistic approach. Besides, these objectives are included in the core European Green Deal policy priorities, in particular the farm to fork strategy, the EU biodiversity strategy 2030, zero pollution ambition and climate action, and their follow up initiatives.

Greece launched a national «Alliance for the Reduction of Food Waste» in 2020, an initiative of the Boroume organisation and AB Vassilopoulos. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment and Energy, it brings together key stakeholders and the academic and research community.



First round of National focus group successfully run

Giorgia Sabbatini – FEDERALIMENTARE SERVIZI SRL



The first round of **national focus groups** was successfully concluded. They were conceived as local working groups of local stakeholders, to draw the main guidance for the creation of a framework of competences for food small businesses innovation. Thus, the aim of focus groups is to collect information about the trainers and business perspective on the new competences needed by workforce for future business model. In order to reach more attendees as possible, **UPINFOOD** focus groups could be set both in presence and online or in hybrid way, according to the convenience of each organizing partner.

Participants, that is to say professionals from the food sector, were representatives of the main sections of the **agrifood supply chain**: farmers, middle trader, buyers of agricultural raw materials, food producers and manufacturers, wholesales distributors and retailers (traditional channels and e-commerce, ho.re.ca.).

UPINFOOD partners have previously identified subjects to be deepened during each initiative, corresponding to main issues of interest for the agrifood supply chain and workforce of the future:

- Food Security and food Safety.
- Structure of Food Supply Chain.
- Relationships and communication in the food production chain.
- Horizontal and vertical integration.
- Food traceability.
- Sustainability in food production.
- Food fraud and related risks.
- Role of certificates and quality marks.

- Innovations in food production - technologies and organization.

UPINFOOD partners from Poland, Greece, Lithuania, Spain and Italy organized interesting and informative events, in which many agrifood stakeholders participated (around 100 people).

VESK (Lithuania) held the national focus group on 21st March 2023 in a hybrid mode, putting together about 10 people from agrifood supply chains and academia. The debate was useful for highlighting that the Lithuanian food supply chain has greater chances to be increased and become more innovative and sustainable. At local level, for instance, collaboration with universities and Research Institutions are crucial, as well as boosting a fruitful network of professionals to ease best practices sharing. At EU level, the establishment of innovation hubs could really drive the improvement, giving resources and supports to individuals; in addition, the promotion of cross-border collaboration is identified as pivotal to find new approaches.

MEUS (Spain) organized online the focus group on 27th and 30th March 2023, involving about 10 people who participated actively to draw the outlook about above mentioned topics at national level. In brief, a number of areas emerged from the discussion that need to be further explored and enhanced nationally:

- An increased control in education, and support for small producers.
- Boosting training in risk assessment, to enhance food safety, which has already high level in Spain.
- Further exploring digitalization and transparency.

- Farmers must be given a leading role and economic support.
- The imbalance in bargaining power and vertical integration in the production chain.

IDFS (Poland) set the national focus group on 29th March 2023 onsite, gathering about 10 people from the agrifood supply chain and academia. Drawing conclusions, participants led by Moderator and Facilitator, identified competences that will play a key role in the transformation of the supply chain: effective an common education are the driving forces to adjust and improve the food supply chain. The most important competences selected during the working session, such as: horizontal and vertical integration capability, teamwork ability, self-presentation abilities, time management, openness to innovative, flexibility of thinking, negotiation skills, stress management, project management, analytic skills.

FEDERALIMENTARE SERVIZI srl (Italy) hosted the focus group on 30th March 2023, during the leading food exhibition, CIBUS, in Parma, in the heart of the Italian Food Valley. The event gathered together more that 30 people, representatives of the agrifood supply chain, that is to say farmers, entrepreneurs, academia, VET provider, national federations, order of food technologists. Moderator and facilitator, respectively Mr. Daniele Rossi (Confagricoltura) and Maurizio Notarfonso (Federalimentare), led the debate and defining the main enhancements for each matter of interest. To sum up, the most emphasis is placed on aspects related to food safety, from a OneHealth perspective; digitalization is even more important nowadays, to prevent and face

crisis period, such as pandemic and conflicts; an increased dialogue among actors of the supply chain; logistics, labelling and consumers information aspects are critical to ensure also traceability of products, ensuring informed consumers choices and preventing Italian Sounding phenomenon; finding ways to prevent waste and valorize by-products; greening agrifood supply chain, finding more innovative packaging and identifying more sustainability production ways; certifications, concerning PDO/PGI/TSG products and on Green Claims are going to be increasingly widespread. In addition, R&D strategies are vital to boost innovation and looking new opportunities: at this regards, AI is an area to be further investigated to prevent crisis and/or anticipate wrong behavior in a company.

IED (Greece) set the Focus Group on 30th March 2023 in an online mode with about 10 people, in collaboration with Liofyllo. National outlook is offering many opportunities and challenges: to face all of them, education for both consumers and supply chain professionals is considered vital, as well as easy-to-understand communication. Certifications, control points, and traceability are again identified as topic of major interest. Again, traceability is felt to be important to build trust between consumer and producer, reducing counterfeiting risks and improving supplier relations. An interesting feature is a sort of resistance to innovation, due to a high investment costs and a lack of government support, including limited access to tools.



Discovering UPINFOOD brochure

Giorgia Sabbatini - FEDERALIMENTARE SERVIZI SRL



UPINFOOD brochure is designed to make it a user-friendly and intuitive format, allowing the reader and interested stakeholder to easily gather basic information about the project.

In fact, in a straightforward and clear style, the objectives of the project, the context in which the consortium intends to operate, the partners who will cooperate together (with interactive links referring to their respective websites), project numbers (total budget, partners and countries, duration), main social channels of the project, and contacts are explained from the start.

Not only the format of the brochure, but also the **Project logo** is conceived to be smart: as the goal of UPINFOOD is designing a training for UPskill key innovation related competences in VET for micro and small business of the food sector, the "U" embraces both the sector involved (the agrifood one) and the arrow pointing up means the aim to improve the current training programmes.

It will soon be available on UPINFOOD website!



**TRAINING FOR UPSKILL KEY INNOVATION RELATED
COMPETENCES IN VET FOR THE MICRO AND SMALL
BUSINESSES OF THE FOOD SECTOR**



UPINFOOD is a European project, funded by Erasmus Plus Programme, aiming at boosting the transition of the Food supply chain toward more innovative and sustainable models, through quality VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET), meeting market needs.

UPINFOOD intends to increase the flexibility of opportunities in VET, so as to develop innovative and sustainable strategies, with the final aim of fighting against climate change.

OUR GOALS



- Tailoring VET to labour market needs, in order to foster sustainable strategies within food companies.
- Increasing the flexibility of opportunities with VET: the method proposed intends to promote practical and peer learning.
- In line with the EU Green Deal, UPINFOOD will focus on sustainable approaches, so as to play its role in the fight against climate change.

UPINFOOD Partnership



AGREGO - Poland | www.agrego.pl



VERSLO IR SVETINGIMO PROFESINES KARJEROS
CENTRAS - Lithuania | www.vesk.lt



CENTRUM WSPIERANIA EDUKACJI I
PRZEDSIĘWZIĘCZOSCI - Poland | www.cwp.pl



LIFOYLO SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE -
Greece | www.lifoilo.com



MARKET SKILLS - Spain |
www.mouskills.eu



INSTITUTE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP
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