



UPINFOOD

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



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Towards innovation and sustainability: VET and the improvement of key competencies in the food industry

The food industry is undergoing a significant transformation as it adapts to sustainability and innovation challenges. Vocational Education and Training (VET) plays a crucial role in equipping the workforce with the necessary skills to drive this change. As we look towards the future, it's clear that VET must evolve to meet the changing demands of the agri-food sector and support the goals of the European Green Deal (EGD).

The Changing Landscape of Agri-Food

The agri-food sector is facing radical changes due to EU regulations, innovative high-tech farming approaches, shifting consumer preferences, and the adoption of more circular business models[1]. These changes are transforming skill needs across the industry, requiring a proactive approach from VET institutions to prepare the workforce for future challenges.

Key Competences for a Sustainable Food Industry

To address the evolving needs of the sector, VET programs are focusing on developing several critical competences:

1. Digital and ICT Skills: As technology becomes increasingly integrated into food production and distribution, proficiency in data analysis and ICT tools is essential [1].
2. Sustainability Practices: Skills in water and soil management are crucial for implementing environmentally friendly production methods [1].
3. Entrepreneurship and Management: With farms expected to increase in size and number, business acumen is becoming more important than ever [1].
4. Energy Management: Reducing resource consumption and carbon footprint is a priority, making energy management skills highly valuable [1].
5. Marketing and Communication: Promoting new, sustainable food products and educating consumers about their benefits requires strong communication skills [1].

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VET's Role in Driving Innovation

VET institutions are at the forefront of fostering innovation in the food industry. The GREENOVET project, for example, is an international initiative that supports the development of VET excellence in green innovation across Europe [2]. This project aims to connect actors at regional, national, and transnational levels with key stakeholders in local innovation and skills ecosystems.

Addressing Food Waste Through VET

One area where VET is making significant strides is in food waste reduction. The VET Loves FOOD project is directly oriented towards VET students, teachers, and trainers, focusing on food waste prevention in the hospitality sector and VET centres [3]. This initiative includes:

1. Identifying green skills curricula required by the market
2. Creating a hands-on manual for preventing food waste and valorizing traditional recipes and local products
3. Designing an e-learning course on Food Waste Management and Prevention [3]

Technological Solutions in VET

To keep pace with industry advancements, VET programs are incorporating cutting-edge technologies into their curricula. For instance, some hotels are using AI-powered systems like Winnow to reduce food waste in buffets, achieving significant reductions in discarded food[5]. VET institutions are training students to use such technologies, preparing them for the digitalized future of the food industry.

Challenges and Opportunities

While VET is making progress, there are still challenges to overcome. Experts have questioned the current readiness of VET to meet future skill needs and its capacity to adjust flexibly to change[4]. To address these concerns, VET institutions are:

1. Updating curricula to keep pace with technological and industry developments
2. Focusing on both initial VET (IVET) for young workers and continuing VET (CVET) for adults
3. Strengthening cooperation with employers and other stakeholders to better align with emerging skill needs [4]

Conclusion

As the food industry continues to evolve, VET plays a pivotal role in developing a skilled workforce capable of driving innovation and sustainability. By focusing on key competences such as digital skills, sustainability practices, and entrepreneurship, VET institutions are preparing the next generation of food industry professionals to meet the challenges of the future. Through initiatives like GREENOVET and VET Loves FOOD, and by incorporating cutting-edge technologies, VET is not just keeping pace with change but actively shaping a more sustainable and innovative food industry.

Citations:

- [1] <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/9181>
[2] <https://www.greentech.at/en/greenovet-conference/>
[3] <https://vetlovesfood.eu>
[4] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/9181_en.pdf
[5] <https://www.alimentaria.com/en/the-food-waste-revolution/>

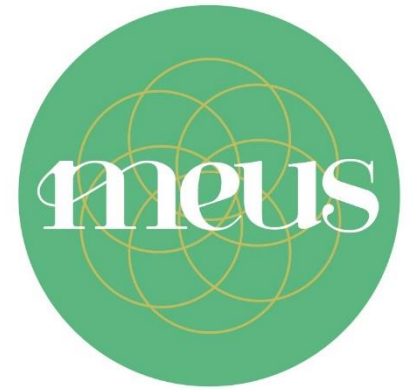


Getting to know... MEUS

Julio Hernández – MEUS SKILLS



Created in 2016, **MEUS** is a private organisation based in Valencia, Spain. It is aimed at improving the capacities of people in their environment, both professionally and privately, as well as at all stages of their lives, from school to adult education. We work on the development of new materials and training methodologies adapted to the different objectives and needs of the economic market, in order to improve integration in the workplace.



We are focused on training

- Training in business management
- Soft skills or finances for startups
- Entrepreneurs or wannabe entrepreneurs
- Training for the development of cultural and creative industries in university students
- Improving soft or sustainable skills in young people, among others many

We are focused on sustainability

Our main activity is to explore new ways of operation, based on corporate social responsibility and the sustainable development goals principles applied to all areas of life, especially, we support SMES in the improvement of their business models.

We are focused on innovation

Each and every one of the projects developed in meus is carried out under the premise of innovation, understood beyond the technological innovation, based on the development of new methodologies for learning, management, personal development or local development.

We are focused on entrepreneurship

We offer advice and training to entrepreneurs, promoting technological innovation, social purposes and sustainable processes. We accompany the birth of new projects, the launch of sustainable companies/associations/initiatives and the development of territories.

We are focused on social inclusion

To support the personal development of people, we are also dedicated to the development of initiatives in the field of active participation in society, well-being, equality (gender equality) and solidarity, integration and non-discrimination.

Website: <https://meuskills.eu/>

Getting to know... CWEP

Łukasz Fedycki – CWEP



**Centrum Wspierania
Edukacji
i Przedsiębiorczości**

**CWEP: Promoting Education,
Entrepreneurship, and Innovation**

Founded on 30th June 2004, CWEP (Centre
for Education and Entrepreneurship Support)

has been actively involved in promoting modern education and entrepreneurship. As an association, its mission revolves around fostering growth through educational initiatives, research, training, and consultancy services. CWEP's activities are multifaceted, targeting young people, entrepreneurs, and companies with a focus on enhancing skills, knowledge, and business practices in Poland's Subcarpathian and Lesser Poland regions.

One of CWEP's primary goals is to support the educational sector through the implementation of transnational projects. These projects are aimed at equipping young people with the necessary skills to succeed in an increasingly globalised world. CWEP is particularly invested in providing innovative educational solutions that are responsive to the ever-evolving demands of the labour market.

The association not only participates in national and international research projects but also conducts its own analyses of social trends and business practices. This commitment to research enables CWEP to stay at the forefront of educational and entrepreneurial innovation. One area where CWEP has been particularly active is the promotion of renewable energy sources.

A key strength of CWEP is its extensive network of partnerships across Europe. The association has established cooperative relationships with organizations in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, and Italy. Through these partnerships, CWEP engages in collaborative projects that promote knowledge exchange and the sharing of best practices.

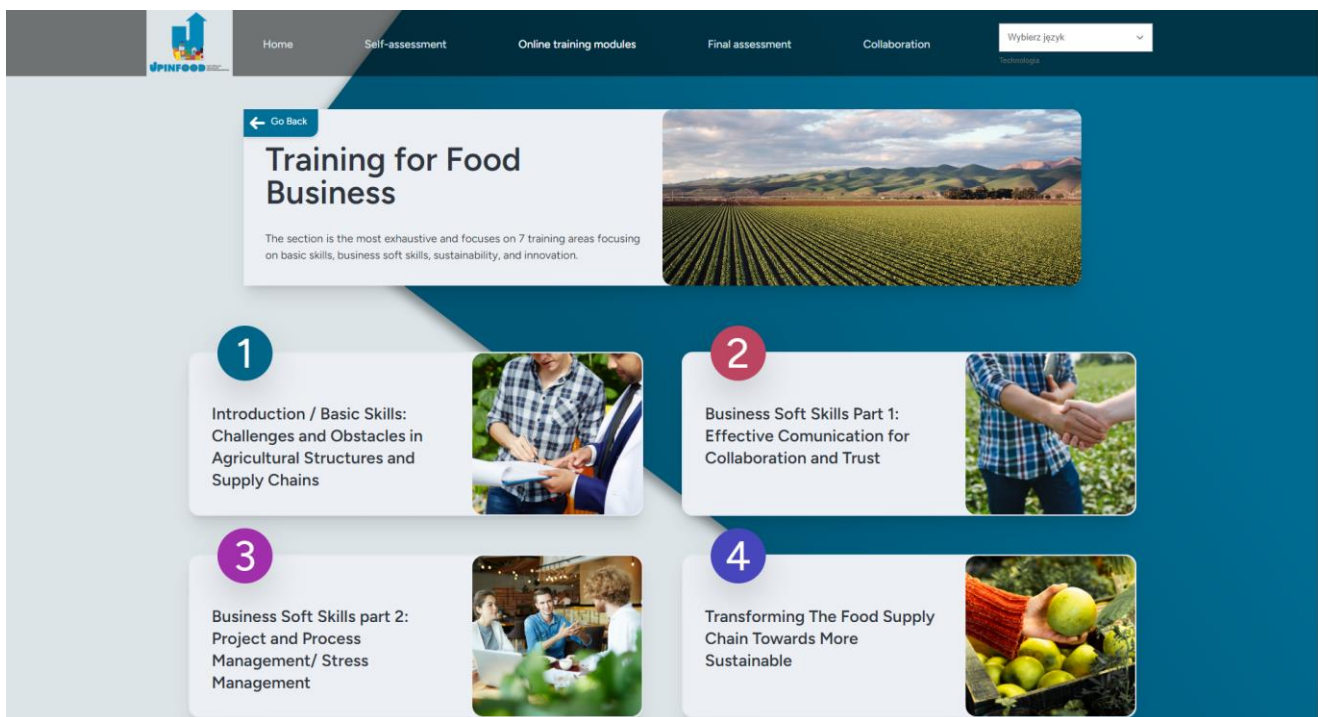
At the local level, CWEP maintains close ties with government entities, ensuring that its projects align with regional development strategies. By fostering these partnerships, the association plays a crucial role in facilitating cooperation between public institutions, businesses, and educational entities. This approach ensures that CWEP's projects are not only effective but also sustainable, as they are grounded in the needs and priorities of the local community.

Website: <https://cwep.eu/>

Discovering UPINFOOD platform

Joanna Bac – CWEP

- The UPINFOOD platform is designed to support food business professionals in their growth and development through a structured learning experience. It begins with Self-assessment, allowing users to evaluate their knowledge across seven key areas before advancing to the next step.
- The Online Training Modules provide comprehensive lessons in basic business skills, soft skills, sustainability, and innovation, tailored to the food industry. These modules are the core of the learning experience, equipping participants with vital knowledge for success.
- To validate their learning, users can take the Final Assessment. Those who pass will receive the prestigious UPINFOOD Training for Food Businesses Certificate, marking their achievement.
- Finally, the Collaboration section offers tools like an e-meeting app and handouts to facilitate networking and continued professional development. Through sharing experiences and insights, users can foster new collaborations and further refine their skills.
- Embark on your professional journey with UPINFOOD and unlock new opportunities in the dynamic world of food businesses!



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