

**BEATLES provides feedback to the consultation about “Co-creation of a transition pathway for a more resilient, sustainable and digital agri-food ecosystem”**

## Consultation Questions

You are invited to reflect on the different issues presented in the [Staff Working Document](#) for the key dimensions of Resilience, Sustainability and Digitalisation. Please note that it is highly relevant to review the Staff Working Document for the Agri-food Transition Pathway before filling in the survey.

You may choose which questions you answer and leave others empty. Where possible, please make reference to specific issues and actions.

Please note that some dimensions are addressed more thoroughly throughout the survey than others. This is the case for those dimensions the Commission will organise a workshop on.

Please remember to reflect on the questions from the point of view of the organisation or network you are giving this contribution for.

## Sustainable Competitiveness

Please provide your answers based on the analysis of the issues set out in **section 2** of the Staff Working Document.



### [personal data protection provisions](#)

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The EU agri-food ecosystem performs well in comparison to other non-EU countries when it comes to sustainable competitiveness.

1. Disagree
2. Rather disagree
3. Neutral
4. Rather agree
5. Agree

*If possible, please explain your choice.*

*1000 character(s) maximum*

Sustainable competitiveness of the agri-food system is understood as the ability to generate and sustain inclusive wealth for all, without diminishing the future capacity to sustain or increase current levels of wealth. At this level of wealth, economic aspects (to which the CAP contributes to the sustainability of the sector) as well as social and environmental aspects have to be considered.

**2. Which are the main challenges that the agri-food ecosystem faces in terms of sustainable competitiveness? *Please name a maximum of five and explain.***

*1000 character(s) maximum*

- Disruption in climate (modification of cropping and rainfall patterns, water availability) and other environmental problems such as soil degradation or loss of biodiversity.
- Availability of inputs (feed, cereals, fuels/energy, fertilisers, etc.).
- Lack of knowledge in sustainable management, transition to holistic sustainable models and adaption of new technologies/smart solutions to improve farm/landscape management.
- Price volatility and low profit margins for the different actors in the chain.
- Loss of small producers (resilient and adapted crops) and lack of generational renewal.
- Lack of disruptive innovation.

3. What are the enablers needed to help increase the sustainable competitiveness and resilience of the agri-food ecosystem? *Please name a maximum of five.*

2000 character(s) maximum

- Adoption of a food system thinking.
- Incentives and support by governments and regulating agencies.
- Cost effectiveness and improvements in overall performance.
- Taxation system in case unsustainable practices.
- Tax incentives for sustainable practices.
- Effective use and consumption of natural resources as food production is embedded in the natural environment.
- Maintenance of agricultural landscapes.
- Investments in smallholders and family farms.
- Understanding customer, and other value chain stakeholders, choices and requirements.
- Education of consumers about the environmental and health benefits of environmentally friendly products.
- Promotion of environmentally friendly food options.
- Implementation of labelling system with transparent information about the products, their ingredients and their environmental and health impact.
- Improvement of the social sustainability and inclusivity of agrifood systems through gender- and age-balanced approaches in order to ensure sustainable and equitable agrifood livelihoods.
- Information sharing within the food system actors and joint efforts for delivering sustainability focused products.
- Share experiences on effective actions and best practices.
- Coherence among policies: CAP, new regulation for sustainable food systems within the Farm to Fork, EU Industrial Strategy, Sustainable Development Goals, etc.
- Adoption of smart solutions and digital tools.
- Develop risk management strategies – including multi-risk assessments, timely forecasts, early warning systems and early action plans – complement absorptive capacity by helping all agrifood systems' actors prevent and anticipate major disruptions.

4. What synergies between the agri-food ecosystem and other industrial ecosystems can contribute to improving resilience and increasing EU strategic autonomy (from third countries)? *Please name a maximum of five.*

2000 character(s) maximum

The resilience of the agri-food ecosystem related to other industrial ecosystems such as digital, energy intensive industries, energy-renewables, health, transport, proximity, social economy, retail and tourism. There are strong synergies with bio-based industries.

In particular, the retail ecosystem accounts for 11,5% of EU value added. The retail ecosystem covers grocery and non-grocery retail, relevant wholesale and online platforms. At the end of the supply chain, the retail ecosystem is in a direct contact with consumers. While many retailers have already made progress in exploiting the opportunities of the green and digital transition, SMEs find it often difficult to keep pace with the changes.

Also worth noting, the relation with tourism ecosystem activities such as food tasting and the need for promotion of green public procurement, green consumption for destinations and SMEs, including consumption of local products (in particular food).

More information about retail and tourism ecosystems:

SWD\_2023\_283\_F1\_STAFF\_WORKING\_PAPER\_EN\_V4\_P1\_2864349.PDF (europa.eu)

<https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/45977>

## 5. What are the main challenges the agri-food ecosystem has to overcome during (potential) crises? *Please name a maximum of five and explain.*

*2000 character(s) maximum*

Enhancing the resilience of agrifood systems means strengthening their capacities and those of their actors to prevent, anticipate, absorb, adapt and transform when struck by shocks and stresses.

Agrifood systems are increasingly threatened by long-term stresses, such as climate change, deforestation, natural resource degradation and other protracted crises.

6. What solutions are necessary to foster a more resilient agri-food ecosystem to external shocks and address the above-named challenges? *Please name a maximum of five.*

*2000 character(s) maximum*

- Preservation of the natural capital and restoration to ensure healthy and resilient ecosystems and support their adaptation to climate.
- Protection and enhancement of the environment (management of natural resources, especially soil and water), human health and animal welfare.
- Support and reward the provision of public goods, sustainable practices and positive externalities
- Co-create behavioural change towards climate-smart food systems.
- Decrease GHG emissions, the carbon footprint of food and energy use in the food system.
- Build shorter supply chains, with fair and transparent payment conditions and trading relationships and extend means for access to collective catering.
- Coupling of producer prices with production costs and prohibition of prices that do not cover full production costs within the UTP directive on EU level.
- Reduce the use of containers and packaging, and reward their reuse and recycling.
- Support farm/landscape managements systems less demanding of inputs, for instance organic models.
- Support small producers (resilient and adapted crops) and incentivise generational renewal.
- Harmonise sustainability labelling of food to facilitate healthier and more sustainable choices for consumers.
- Stop food loss and waste along the food chain.
- Support circular and sustainable economy.
- Provide training, information and support to all actors in the chain based on scientific evidence for the food transition.
- Recover and promote sustainable traditional knowledge and culture.
- Align digital innovation with the principles of the green transition. Support adoption of advanced technologies.
- Establish knowledge and innovation systems for food system transition.
- Foster capacity building on sustainable management, transition to holistic sustainable models and adoption of new technologies/smart solutions to improve farm/landscape management.
- Compensate meaningful public participation of civil society.

## 7. What can be done to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to be more competitive and sustainable?

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Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of Europe's economy. They represent 99% of all businesses in the EU. SMEs struggle with the transition towards more sustainable business models. SMEs face complex administrative and legal procedures when trying to make their business more resource efficient. Yet, as awareness of risks related to climate and other environmental pressures increases and consumer preferences change, this transition to sustainable business practices and conduct is key for SMEs' continued competitiveness and growth. It is essential to support SMEs in this process and equip them with instruments to understand environmental risks and mitigate those covering specific sectors, including agri-food. SMEs of food processing and retail could:

- Establish partnerships among border regions to jointly improve, align or coordinate the rules and procedures on cross-border provision of services, for example, using digital tools.
- Develop data-driven business models to make the most out of the green and digital transitions.
- Apply circular business models.
- Establish agreements with research.
- Reduce nutrient profiles.
- Demand the development of an EU code and monitoring framework for responsible business and marketing conduct in the food supply chain.

## 8. Are you aware of any activities (legislative initiatives, industrial projects, etc.) taking place in your region/country that contribute to the green and digital transition of the agri-food ecosystem? *If so, please name a maximum of ten.*

2000 character(s) maximum

In Slovenia, Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023–2027 incorporates many interventions relative to green and digital transition. For example: improvement of broadband infrastructure or use 12 million euros to start up aid to young farmers with the aim of improving the age structure of farm managers

The Government of the Republic Slovenia has adopted an Action Plan for the Development of Organic Farming until 2027. It sets out measures to accelerate the development of organic farming by 2027. The document provides an analysis of the situation, a SWOT analysis, a presentation of needs, objectives and measures (70 actions) per 8 priority areas (production, processing, knowledge transfer, seed, integration, eco-food in the public procurement system, promotion and marketing, research and development of new technologies, and organic farming in the context of climate change) that will contribute to the further development of organic farming. The document is also one of the important orientations in the preparation of measures under the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027 for Slovenia.

In December 2021, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the Strategy for less food loss and food waste in the food supply chain with the name: " Spoštujmo hrano, spoštujmo planet ". The strategy places the greatest emphasis on the necessary activities to reduce food losses and the amount of food waste in the entire food supply chain. The strategy emphasizes ten activities, which will be described in more detail, quantified and evaluated in terms of time and money in the action plan, which will be adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia.

## Public Governance

### 9. How can governance at all levels improve the situation of food SMEs and facilitate their green and digital transition?

2000 character(s) maximum

Regions are considered to be better equipped to design strategic approaches to SME and entrepreneurship policy because of their understanding of the needs of SMEs, as they are more in touch with the enterprises.

There is a need to promote new forms of governance and to promote new innovative concepts. This should not be linked to more administrative burdens, but through the use of the regions' multiple networks and integration in the public relations strategies of the EU. Creation and promotion of a common vision that will require regular coordination, reporting and adjustments of the initiatives and measures. Given the differences of the regions and Member States in Europe, there certainly is no "standard" solution for "the" effective governance structure or "the" most effective tool. Some actions could be:

- Foster capacity building on sustainable management, transition to holistic sustainable models and adoption of new technologies/smart solutions to improve farm/landscape management for all value chain stakeholders.
- Compensate meaningful public participation of civil society in the processes of designing, implementing and monitoring food systems policies.
- Develop the open data strategy, in particular, the Common European Agriculture Data Space.
- Elaboration of a cluster-based economic development strategy together with the underlying governance mechanisms depending on the maturity of the ecosystem.

### 10. Are there unmet needs for business operators in relation to the green and digital transition of the ecosystem? What standardisation or other actions could accommodate these needs? *Please name a maximum of ten.*

2000 character(s) maximum

Food business operators faced challenges such as changes in demand, cut-off of key outlets, provision of necessary inputs, etc. Market management measures can be improved. The Single Market Enforcement Task Force (SMET) was set up by the Action plan for better implementation and enforcement of single market rules. It highlights:

- more political backing and visibility through the Competitiveness Council (COMPET)
- administrative requirements for cross-border service providers
- length of administrative procedures
- internal coordination issues, such as lack of guidance for regional and national authorities, lack of digitalisation
- predictability and transparency of permitting procedures
- barriers for small-scale installations

In addition, other important needs are the decarbonisation of the value chain and a more efficient use of water, improvements in packaging for a circular model of production and consumption. Also to demonstrate the importance of food in health.

Standardisation of procedures, transparency in data availability, availability of open data, digitisation and standards for energy use and water resources can promote an improvement for business operators.

11. What other exercises similar to this agri-food transition pathway exercise have or are taking place at a national or regional level with a focus on the green and digital transition? *Name a maximum of five.*

2000 character(s) maximum

Slovenija declared Slovene no food waste day as 24 of april three years ago and promoted the day in 2023 as in : (<https://www.boljsi-svet.si/hrana-ni-za-tjavendan/dan-brez-zavrzene-hrane/>)

## Social Dimension

Please provide your answers based on the analysis of the issues set out in **section 4** of the Staff Working Document.

12. What are the main social challenges of the agri-food ecosystem (e.g., precarious employment, safe working conditions, access to the labour market for young people, migrants, people with disabilities, gender balance, gender pay gap, etc.)? *Please name a maximum of five and explain.*

2000 character(s) maximum

- Vulnerable workforce: low salaries, poor working conditions, poorly trained staff and low qualification, short-term contracts. Included undeclared work.
- Unrecognised women's work. Women are vital for the sustainability of the agri-food ecosystem, bringing added value to local communities. They are frequently the driving force behind innovation, diversification, and the development of new opportunities. In relation to rural women's work and income, although women's participation in paid work has greatly improved over the last decades, employment rates are lower and unemployment rates higher among women compared to men. Women's labour market position is also more precarious due to a larger part being part-time work or based on contracts with limited duration. Many women combine off-farm and on-farm activities.
- Productive location in rural areas with lack of services, fewer public support resources, poor internet connection, etc.
- Ageing population, immigration, lack of generational replacement and skilled labour.

13. What enablers are needed to strengthen these social factors in relation to the agri-food industrial ecosystem? *Name a maximum of ten and explain.*

2000 character(s) maximum

- Combating rural depopulation.
- Guarantee globally a fair price for labour.
- Strengthen the social recognition of the importance of primary activity.
- Measuring the contribution of the food system beyond GDP.
- Recognition of the role of women in the food chain and in rural areas, promoting their access to the sector and closing the pay gap.
- Encourage young people to enter the sector, promote generational change and new entrants to the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sector.
- Ensure social conditionality in the Common Agricultural Policy
- Boost social innovation. Diverse social innovations are proliferating across the food chain, opening up



opportunities for change. They include the development and testing of new foods, products, services, and business and governance models. The innovations vary in maturity and novelty and are usually enabled by new technologies and partnerships.

14. What actions can be taken to support the workforce and increase the attractiveness of the ecosystem for young talent? *Name a maximum of five.*

Encouraging young people to enter the sector, promote generational change and new entrants to the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sector is crucial for the resilience of the agri-food system. Actions are needed to: improve the social perception of work in the primary sector and the image of agri-food sector, the satisfaction of young people or new entry, the level of employment and conditions, access to education, training and knowledge sharing, offer business opportunities, provision of public transport and services, foster holistic models with off-farm activities, ensure the use of ICT and digital tools, increase women participation in agri-business, to improve added value to agricultural produce, address productivity, efficiency gaps, competitiveness and fair incomes.

15. How can social partners be involved successfully in the sustainability and digital transition and help overcome possible social barriers?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

Social partners could:

- Actively participate in the inclusion of freely accessible data.
- Facilitate knowledge transfer activities and practical experience.
- Open the decision processes of agrarian management.

## Research and Innovation

*Please provide your answers based on the analysis of the issues set out in section 5 of the Staff Working Document.*

16. What existing solutions could help improve the sustainability and digitalisation of the ecosystem? *Please name a maximum of ten and explain.*

*2000 character(s) maximum*

Real interoperability of digital systems remains a challenge across Europe, both within and among Member States. Similarly, entities outside of Europe can provide applications and supporting digital infrastructures (data storage, servers, etc.), adding another level of complexity. This is particularly relevant for digital applications for farm management and farm operations.

Digital strategies should tackle all three components of the digital divide -infrastructure, skills, and uptake- while considering the specific needs of each actor in the agri-food value chains. The new CAP presents an exceptional opportunity to support the development of digital skills. Advanced digital skills should enable users to understand the solutions proposed by the technology as well as to identify potential faults.

There are numerous technologies available for Farming 4.0 that support decision-making based on data-driven, including Artificial Intelligence (AI). Context-specific data would allow solutions proposed by technologies that suit the local needs.

17. Which are the most promising and scalable technologies for the agri-food ecosystem that could also be deployed by SMEs? *Please name a maximum of ten and explain.*

*2000 character(s) maximum*

1. social media and social networks: social tools for interaction or access to services
2. web sites and online platforms: web tools for interaction or to access/ offer services in a coordinated manner
3. cloud/edge services and applications: services available through mobile applications, web platforms, or other interfaces
4. remote sensing/sensors, drone and/ or satellite imagery (data sources): use of sensors in the field, drone (UAV) and satellite imagery to collect data
5. blockchain or other certification / traceability services: services to certify products, processes, etc. or to trace products
6. data analysis: techniques to extract information from data
7. Artificial Intelligence (AI): use of AI to analyse data or to suggest actions / decisions
8. Internet of Things (IoT)
9. autonomous systems and robotics: robots (like milking robots) or other systems performing actions autonomously

18. What actions are needed to stimulate R&I at national level? *Please name a maximum of ten and explain.*

*2000 character(s) maximum*

- Long-term planning to stimulate R&I at national level, establishing targets at country level.
- Support for Partnerships such as the 'Sustainable Food Systems for People, Planet and Climate' partnership in Horizon Europe.
- Promotion of participation in AKIS.
- Development of guides and briefings for participation in R&I activities empowering higher national educational institutions.
- Support research careers.
- Bring science closer to society, increasing alignment of strategic research with society needs, expectations and values.
- Establish synergies between R&I and higher national education policies and programmes.

19. What techniques, best practices or business models could accelerate the sustainability and digitalisation of the ecosystem? *Please name a maximum of ten and explain.*

The Horizon Europe project BEATLES (Co-creating Behavioural Change Towards Climate-Smart Food Systems) aspires to change the way agri-food systems currently operate and accelerate the systemic and systematic behavioural shift to climate-smart agriculture.

Climate-smart agriculture is an integrated approach for developing agricultural strategies to address the interlinked challenges of economic viability, food security, accelerating climate change aiming to achieve three objectives: sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes; adapting and building resilience to climate change and reducing and/or removing greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate-smart agriculture encompass various practices and digital technologies, including agro-ecology, such as nutrient balancing, manure management, conservation tillage, organic farming, green manures, biological pest control, and crops/livestock production to store carbon. Smartfarming technologies play a key role in global food security, climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts since technologies such as robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), and precision agriculture (e.g., remote sensing) optimise farm productivity and increase the quality, yield, and profitability, while reducing the environmental footprint.

## Single Market and Infrastructure

Please provide your answers based on the analysis of the issues set out in **section 6** of the Staff Working Document.

20. What events or issues could put at risk the development, maintenance or expansion of the Single Market for food and drinks? *Please name a maximum of five.*

2000 character(s) maximum

The dual responsibility between the EU and the Member States (at national, regional or local levels of governance) – it does not lend itself to a single, simple solution. Member States understandably seek to ensure that national objectives are met in terms of, for instance, consumer protection, safety, public health and the environment. In these sensitive areas, risk preferences of Member States can differ, and there may be objectively valid grounds for divergence among Member States.

Some risks for the Single Market for foods and drinks are unfair trade practices linked to payments, cancellations of perishable agricultural and food products at short notice and spoilage or loss of agricultural and food products.

There are numerous instances of national rules and measures that restrict trade within the EU Single Market, such as:

- National labelling requirements for food and beverage products.
- A lack of transparency of new national rules for service provision and establishment.
- Authorisations and local content requirements in the retail sector.
- The EU framework for public procurement is now well-developed, but there is substantial room for improvement on the ground – the Single Market Scoreboard for public procurement reveals that 140 of 324 Member State entries are “unsatisfactory”.

21. What initiatives related to market barriers could improve the ability to adapt to such issues to strengthen the agri-food ecosystem particularly for SMEs? *Please name a maximum of five.*

2000 character(s) maximum

- New trends like digitalisation, personalised nutrition and sustainability are increasingly shaping the food industry and demand innovation. Standardisation processes for business operators in relation to digitisation systems, use of open data, etc are needed. In addition, set up frameworks, conditions and platforms to make the system more transparent and fairer.
- Promotion of cooperation culture.
- Creation of favourable conditions for collaboration along the value chain, i.e., among farmers, food SMEs, retailers and wholesalers.

- Acceleration and other training programmes. Cooperation with universities provides opportunities for training and upskilling.
- Ensure effective governance and policy environment able to generate adequate incentives and taxation mechanisms, would remove barriers to entry for SMEs and small-scale producers, fully valorising their social, economic and environmental contribution.

22. What actions can be taken at national and local level to ensure the proper functioning of the Single Market for the agri-food ecosystem? *Please name a maximum of five.*

2000 character(s) maximum

- Clear definition of responsibility between the EU and the Member States (at national, regional or local governance level).
- Harmonisation of national labelling requirements for food and drink products.
- Transparency of new national rules on service provision and establishment.
- Consistency in authorisations and local content requirements in the retail sector.
- Harmonising environmental labelling practices and informing consumers at both the national and local levels can empower consumers to make informed, environmentally responsible choices while fostering trust in the agri-food ecosystem. These efforts contribute to the overall sustainability and competitiveness of the Single Market for agri-food products.
- Farm-to-Fork Initiatives with the goal to support farm-to-table initiatives that connect consumers directly with local producers. This promotes transparency and trust in the sourcing of agri-food products.
- Promote Regional Eco-Labels with the goal to develop regional eco-labels that highlight unique environmental characteristics and practices specific to the local agri-food ecosystem.
- Incentives for sustainable agri food practices, for example as tax breaks or subsidies, to agri-food producers who adopt environmentally sustainable practices, as well to use eco-friendly packaging.
- Regular and strict market Surveillance to prevent misleading or false environmental claims on product labels to establish/ grow maintain consumer trust.
- Info campaign for consumers to raise awareness about the significance of environmental friendly food habits and also to educate them to understand and how to interpret labels and make environmentally conscious choices.

23. What infrastructural improvements can be proposed to ensure a stable and efficient infrastructure for the agri-food ecosystem in the current economic and geopolitical situation? *Please name a maximum of five.*

2000 character(s) maximum

It is important to keep in mind the infrastructures that are needed at the level: food production, food processing, food business and trade, food governance, etc. It is therefore important to keep improving key areas such as:

- Technology and infrastructure to ensure traceability at all stages.
- Promotion of packaging infrastructures
- Promotion of recycling infrastructures
- Broadband coverage
- Ensure resource efficiency and energy security promoting renewal energy infrastructures

## Skills

Please provide your answers based on the analysis of the issues set out in **section 7** of the Staff Working Document.

24. What are the skills needed for the agri-food ecosystem to achieve sustainability and remain resilient? *Please name a maximum of ten.*

2000 character(s) maximum

A crucial challenge for the agri-food ecosystem is to increase its attractiveness and master its ability to motivate people, in particular the young, to be part of this ecosystem, especially in rural areas, where SMEs are the mainstay of the economic and industrial fabric.

Some degree of skill mismatches is inevitable in the economy, and in the sector, as rapid technological change requires constant skill development that can only be achieved with some time lags.

The agri-food ecosystem needs a skilled workforce including trainers and training for trainers for up-skilling and re-skilling workers.

It is necessary to ensure the generational handover as well as the transfer of knowledge between generations, especially at the level of traditional and sustainable farm management.

At the same time, there is a need for skilled labor/advisors in areas such as engineering, biology, veterinary, biochemistry, markets, technology, marketing, digital farming, etc.

Some concrete skills needs in agriculture and livestock would be:

- Management of natural resources
- Quality control analysis
- Operation/system analysis
- Equipment selection, installation and maintenance
- programming
- Negotiation
- Service orientation
- Market orientatoin
- Finance skills
- Management of personnel resources

In addition, improving gender balance in agriculture and the food sector is a high priority, as the number of women officially employed in the sector is relatively low compared to other sectors in the economy.

25. Are you aware of such initiatives on national or regional level? *If so, please name a maximum of ten.*

2000 character(s) maximum

Vocational and peer-to-peer training as well as best practices exchange and dissemination through the creation of a professional network would be the most suitable ways to increase the attractiveness of the ecosystem and the number of food engineers, food scientists and workers.

EU initiatives:

- Erasmus Fields: <https://www.erasmus-fields.eu/home-2/>

- Erasmus I-Restart: <https://www.wur.nl/en/project/i-restart-.htm>
- The EU CAP Network Thematic Group, facilitated by the CAP Implementation Contact Point, took a holistic approach in exploring the mechanisms to support employment of young rural people, considering developments on the rural job market, ongoing global trends, but also relevant policies and available tools, initiatives and funds.

[https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/thematic-group-rural-youth-employment-voice-rural-youth\\_en](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/thematic-group-rural-youth-employment-voice-rural-youth_en)

National initiatives:

- Spain

The CULTIVA Programme or Programme of Training for Young Farmers on Model Farms is an initiative developed and financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, in collaboration with entities representing the agricultural and livestock sectors in Spain, as well as with model farms linked to them, which aims to facilitate access to training and practical knowledge for young Spanish farmers, responding to their training needs.

<https://www.mapa.gob.es/va/desarrollo-rural/temas/jovenes-rurales/visitas-formativas/default.aspx>

- Italy

A School for Young Shepherds - Training and co-design of innovative ideas Daniela Storti, Council for Agriculture Research and Economics (CREA)

## 26. How can Social Dialogue (employers' and workers' negotiations) be used in the development of skills strategies relating to sustainability and resilience?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

Developing and fostering social dialogue is an essential element of the European and national social models, as it plays a crucial role in promoting competitiveness and fairness and enhancing economic prosperity and social well-being. Among other things, it is very important to link it with social conditionality in the Common Agricultural Policy.

Social Dialogue facilitates sectoral agreements as well as other agreements linked to inclusive labour markets, risks at work, boost economic growth, create jobs and ensure fairness in the workplace.

The social partners know the reality of European/national workplaces. They understand the needs of workers and enterprises and defend their interests. Their involvement helps to ensure that initiatives take account of their concerns.

They therefore play a key role in the development of social policy and the definition of social standards.

At European level a new start for social dialogue is foreseen for:

- stronger emphasis on capacity building of national social partners,
- increased involvement of social partners in EU policy and law-making,
- a clearer relation between social partners' agreements and the Better Regulation Agenda.

## Investments and Funding

*Please reflect on the issues and scenarios proposed in **section 8** of the Staff Working Document.*

## 27. What are the main investment needs of the ecosystem? *Please name a maximum of five.*

*2000 character(s) maximum*

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- Investments to up-skilling and re-skilling workers, trainers and advisors.
- Investments in disruptive innovation, in particular social, digital and technological. It includes bioeconomy, circular economy and smart specialisation.
- Investment for the transition of SMEs.
- Investments for scaling up and modernising operations. It would include the adoption of sustainable production methods and management systems in agricultura/livestock.
- Investments contributing to climate objectives, including taxonomy changes.
- Investments for better governance of the Single Market.

28. Which new investment needs have emerged in the agri-food ecosystem to mitigate the effects of the current economic and geopolitical situation?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

- Investments to up-skilling and re-skilling workers, trainers and advisors.
- Investments linked to the energy market, with a special focus on investments in renewable energies.
- Investments to avoid trade disruption.
- Investment in monitoring systems at national level for agricultural prospects, commodities, etc.
- Investments in innovation, in particular in processing and packaging.
- Investments in science-based decision tool.

29. Are there any systemic barriers specifically for the agri-food ecosystem to access to funding or investments, both private and public (particularly for SMEs)? Please name a maximum of five.

*2000 character(s) maximum*

- Access to land and water.
- Access to productive resources, services and markets.
- Lack of suitable training, extension and advisory services.
- Tariff barriers affecting transatlantic trade have been significantly reduced over the last few decades, but are still present, especially in agriculture.
- Negative perception of the agrifood sector and employment.
- Unpredictable agro-ecological risks.

30. What actions could help overcome these barriers? Please name a maximum of five.

*2000 character(s) maximum*

- Empower the research and development sector through systemic approaches.
- Support training programmes.
- Collect improved information to support risk assessment.
- Improve identification of sustainability outcomes of agricultural and landscape management options, food supply and consumption.
- Improve use of indicators and other decision support tools to monitor progress and assess trade-offs.
- Improve regulatory frameworks for land access and tariff barriers.
- Infrastructure development.
- Improve government capacity to negotiate contracts and to help to understand the legal provisions embedded in domestic law and the country's rights and obligations under international agreements.

31. What are the most relevant funding schemes (in terms of impact) at EU and national/regional level for the agri-food ecosystem? *Please name a maximum of ten.*

*2000 character(s) maximum*

- Invest EU Fund
- European agricultural guarantee fund (EAGF)
- European agricultural fund for rural development fund (EAFRD)
- European maritime, fisheries and aquaculture fund (EMFAF)
- Recovery and Resilience Facility programme
- Horizon Europe programme

32. What actions are needed to make those schemes more accessible? *Please name a maximum of five.*

*2000 character(s) maximum*

- Harmonise and provide coherence to the European funding landscape to reduce fragmentation and complexity.
- Training advisors.
- Publication of guides and guidelines.
- Identification and publication of practices and cases of application.
- Facilitate exchanges among Member States.

33. What actions can the private sector take to make the agri-food ecosystem particularly attractive for investors? *Please name a maximum of five.*

*2000 character(s) maximum*

- Create new narratives to change the perception of the agrifood sector and employment.
- Facilitate and participate in the social and investor-state dialogue.
- Improving transparency of processes and foresight analysis.
- Improve business models.
- Facilitate the adoption of new farming techniques, technologies and digital transformation.
- Allow Intellectual Property Rights Innovation.

34. What measures could be proposed to incentivize public and private investments in agri-food SMEs?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

Measures related to:

- Improve co-financing and public-private partnerships.
- Changes in the applicable tax systems.
- Access to data.
- Improve transparency of processes and foresight analysis.



### 35. What information and advice on funding and investment opportunities are needed by stakeholders?

*2000 character(s) maximum*

- Guideline on the European funding landscape.
- Guideline on investment opportunities on the agri-food system.
- Advisors programme on funding and investment opportunities in agri-food systems.
- Identification and publication of practices and cases of application.
- Publication of lessons learnt of the exchanges among Member States experiences.

There are three **workshops** planned to explore further some of the actions envisaged in the agri-food transition pathway. Please mark below the ones in which your organisation might wish to participate. Please be aware that in case that many participants show interest, we might ask you for internal consultation to have a collective opinion of your organisation or network on the topic.

- Investments and funding in the agri-food industrial ecosystem
- Uptake of technologies in the agri-food industrial ecosystem – sustainability and digitalisation
- New Business models and support to SMEs for a resilient agri-food industrial ecosystem

Please feel free to add any relevant information of interest for the Agri-food Transition Pathway:

*2000 character(s) maximum*

The Horizon Europe project BEATLES (Co-creating Behavioural Change Towards Climate-Smart Food Systems) aspires to change the way agri-food systems currently operate and accelerate the systemic and systematic behavioural shift to climate-smart agriculture. The project started in July 2022, it is led by the Agricultural University of Athens. The consortium consists of 18 partners across 10 European countries. The European Association for Innovation in Local Development (AEIDL) is one of the partners of this project and will be the responsible of the work package on provision of policy recommendations and tools.

BEATLES has started to produce important research in the form of a systematic mapping on existing “lock-ins” and “levers” that influence the adoption of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) in the European Union. For this research exercise, AEIDL conducted a systematic mapping of 100 publications to identify the role of the EU Common Agricultural Policy in the adoption of CSA and how it influences behaviour towards sustainable food systems. The exercise has resulted in the deliverable 1.1 on Integrated framework of decision-making factors which will soon be published on the website.

BEATLES contribution focused on recommendations to encourage long-term and large-scale transitions to sustainable, productive, and climate-smart agri-food systems. As such, BEATLES believes it is necessary to:

- a) Recognise that all actors are important for the transition to sustainability from the perspective of a food systems approach.
- b) Ensure that authorities at national, regional and local level are responsible to guarantee that the

objectives set at EU level are consistently applied.

- c) Address the main obstacles in the transition to facilitate more sustainable practices.
- d) Provide effective incentives to encourage sustainable production/processing/distribution/consumption methods and techniques.