



# D1.3 REPORT ON NATIONAL FOCUS GROUPS – RESULTS FROM FOUR COUNTRIES – SUMMARY BY DLG- AKADEMIE

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## Introduction

### SCOPE

This document reports on the workshops organized within the framework of ACT project in the countries Germany, Greece, Italy and The Netherlands. Under this perspective there are presented the stages that were followed, describing in detail the workflow of each stage, Germany as the first example taken for granted.

### AUDIENCE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Project partners

### TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

ACRONYMS	DEFINITION
<b>ACT</b>	Agricultural Alliance for Competence and Skills based Training
<b>AIAB</b>	Italian Association for Organic Farming
<b>AK</b>	Agro-Know Technologies
<b>BIBB</b>	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung
<b>DLG</b>	DLG-Akademie
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ECVET</b>	European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training
<b>ENAPRA</b>	Ente Nazionale per la Ricerca e la Formazione in Agricoltura
<b>EQF</b>	European Qualifications Framework
<b>FG</b>	Focus Group
<b>IFSAT</b>	International Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture Training
<b>PACT</b>	Pathways for Agricultural Competence and skills based Training
<b>TEIA</b>	Technical Educational Institute of Athens
<b>UDE</b>	University of Duisburg-Essen
<b>VET</b>	Vocational Education and Training

## WORKSHOPS: PRESENTATION OF STAGES AND WORKFLOW

Within the framework of ACT project it was organized three workshops in May 2014:

1. at DLG in Frankfurt a.M., Germany, with 10 participants on May, 14<sup>th</sup>
2. at AIAB in Rome, Italy, with 8 participants on May 23<sup>rd</sup>
3. in Greece: apart from ACT workshop in Lamia City with 25 participants in May 2014, six interviews were in parallel conducted; it follows a summary of their main points, related to professional competencies, training opportunities, access to training / certification programs, job openings and participants' attitude towards their professional development.

Workshop participants invited covered all target groups within scope, i.e. agricultural VET providers, agricultural businesses and membership organisations, representatives of the agricultural labour market, VET policy makers, farmers, farmer coalition representatives, local authorities, farming workers, reaching approximately an estimated number of people.

The aim of the focus groups was to:

- 1. Get answers on the current developments and tasks in agriculture as a warm up
- 2. Illustrate competences and skills of vocational education and training (VET) in agriculture, Define competences on agricultural innovations and management
- 3. Find solutions for the aims of the ACT-project

The focus groups were organized in the following stages with the view to:

- disseminate ACT rationale at national, regional and local level
- create a “interest group in Agriculture” (including practitioners, stakeholders, policy makers, etc.), that will be informed about project activities, follow up on updates, pilot and use project materials during and after the funding period of the project, building thus upon the establishment of ACT community in a sustainable manner

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### STAGE 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PURPOSES OF THE WORKSHOP.

- Present ACT project and workshop agenda
- State the general purposes of the session; explain to all participants the aim of the discussion, what it is expected, the process that will follow, how they can contribute, how their input will be collected and analysed, how and where the conclusions of the workshop will be used and published.
- Establish ground rules: everyone will be asked to talk; each person's opinion counts; participants should not interrupt each other.

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### STAGE 2: GATHER DATA ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS.

- Participants were asked to provide brief information on demographic and socio-cultural characteristics (profession, role, experience, age group, current status/situation, etc.).



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### STAGE 3: MOTIVATION/EXPECTATIONS TO TAKE PART IN THE Focus Group

- What made attractive to participate?
- What were the expectations about getting involved?

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### STAGE 4: COLLECTION OF FEEDBACK TO THE TOPICS

During this stage a series of “focused” questions and statements were posed.

The process that followed could be described as follows:

- The facilitator explained and wrote down the question/questions on a white board/flip chart with meta-cards;
- The participants were given a few moments to write down responses to the question on meta-cards;
- The facilitator asked each participant to present their opinion; then, he/she put on his/her meta-card onto the flip chart and the responses were qualified/structured by noting major similarities and differences in questions;
- The facilitator led group discussion about responses;
- The facilitator summarised the workshop conclusions, highlighting group agreements and disagreements;
- Discussion among workshop participants revealed in details the major agreements and disagreements.

Topics of discussion

Workshop facilitator asked participants to express their opinion on the following subject areas:

1. Is there a demand for lifelong learning in agriculture? Please explain!
2. Does the a) education and b) training system provide farmers with the necessary competences to perform well? Is there a gap between what is offered and what is needed?
3. Please define the competences that a farmer needs to have
  - a) To perform well in his/her job;
  - b) To manage a growing enterprise or a group of employees;
  - c) To integrate innovations (technical, legal, etc.) into the daily business.
4. Which are the driving forces that shape agriculture today? Are there new developments, and if yes: which ones?
5. Do new tendencies (see question 4) require new competences? If yes: which ones?
6. How can we cope with the challenges of mobility – physical immigration/emigration (work force entering “our” system/ we entering foreign systems), job immigration/emigration (non-farmers entering the agricultural sector/farmers changing into non-agricultural jobs)?

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### STAGE 5: WRAPPING UP AND FAREWELL

The facilitator summarised the main results of the workshop (see CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS), invited the participants to further participate in ACT and closed the event.

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION, GERMANY– REPORT ACCORDING ON TOPICS WHICH ARE INTERESTING FOR THE CONCLUSION IN TOTAL

### I: DEVELOPMENTS AND TASKS IN AGRICULTURE

The following topics were defined in the German focus group:

- Specially in South-West-Germany more and more family leded farms change to work with external personnel (“Fremd-AK”) which is a new situation for the farmer who suddenly has to lead people
- Next generation change: young followers would like to work in the industry and not to stay on the family farm
- East/West-conflict is still there: differences in farm structures; East German farms are searching for farm managers
- Farm Structures: small ones stop existing, big ones are specializing their production, next generation often missing
- Documentation: question which one is most efficient?
- Communication with the end-consumer is more and more necessary, the “transparent” farm; pressure from the end consumer on the one side and from the trader of the other side (prices, quality)
- Technical development: software is available, but farmer sometimes even does not have a documentation system
- structural change: family farms change to juridical forms or other company types
- number of working inhabitants sinks
- technical change: smart farming
- demographic change: workers, young followers/next generation
- social change: Sustainable production, requirements of the consumers
- Change in Learning culture and behavior: learning with digital media
- climate change
- VET: German qualification frame, which model is doing best?
- sales and international competition
- risk analysis
- efficient usage of water/products

Groups to be formed out of this statements:



- A) Quality
- B) Required Competences
- C) Farm structures
- D) Overall questions

Especially the structural changes in agriculture move down into every field. To work out solutions competences on farmer sides are required.

The farmer needs practical and realisable solutions for his current requirements whereas longer lasting tasks such as climate change and communication/PR to the end consumer is of 2<sup>nd</sup> priority.

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## II: REQUIREMENTS ON COMPETENCES AND SKILLS

The following competences and skills in management&innovation were listed as to be required in nowadays farming:

1. Overall competences:

-how to learn from others: it is necessary in many fields to reflect the own praxis, to think globally; not every farmer has this in mind

2. Social competences: today the situation in family farms differs from the past

-personnel criterias

-self organisation

-own behaviour

-communicative skills

-leadership

-entrepreneurship

3. Technical-methodic competences:

-Information and Communication technology

-to manage and use data, eLearning

-smart farming

-sales of farm products

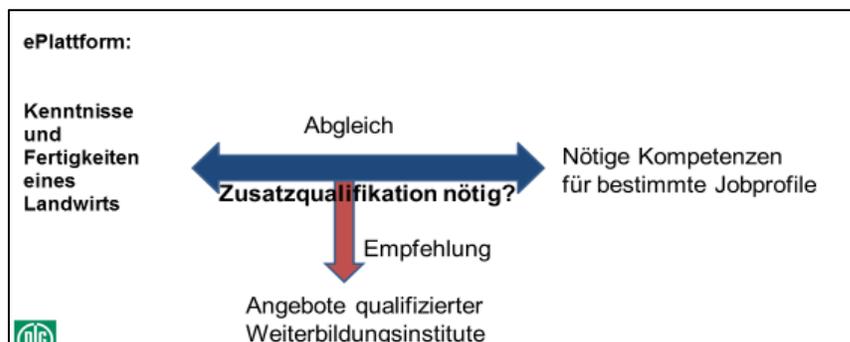
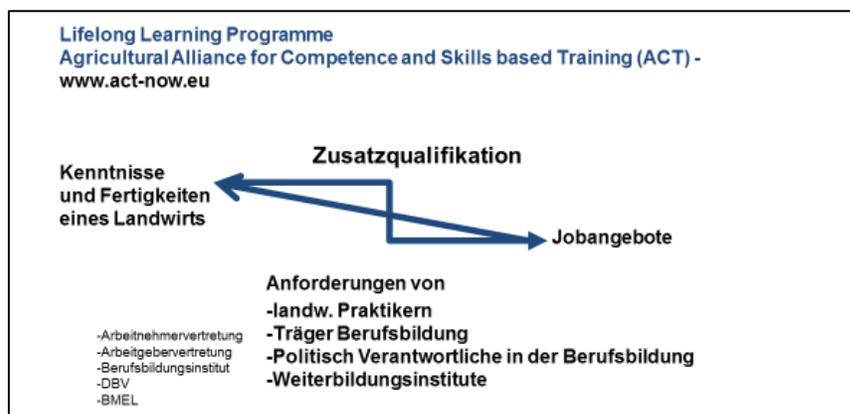
On this behalf Englert presented a research result by the University of Gießen which was done in 2013: the farms asked in this study wanted to get workers with skills like self organisation and strong personality. They asked for a good education in this fields for job beginners both for qualified workers and managers.

Zimmer argued that the “Arbeitsagentur” gives bad descriptions of the agricultural job fields, but that the VET in general always is good and not to change. Different required competences could be added in special further education programmes. Because of the “Qualifikation per Tarifvertrag” further education is not captured which is a political problem.

Bretschneider points on the diversity of possibilities to describe competences. The specification of competence fields should be done according to different target groups, regions and to define certain points in between these. A source could be the “Qualinet” and the BIBB-modell on competences and skills.

### III: SOLUTIONS FOR THE ACT-PROJECT

The idea of ACT was presented as a platform which matches job profiles and the knowhow of a person to work out missing links which could be covered by special further education. For this purpose the required seminar of an education partner could be offered on the platform as well. A common defined frame work which describes both sides is required for this purpose. Flip chart picture:



Bretschneider pointed out that the matching process is classical, that ACT and the main thought is a good idea. Instruments for the acceptance of informal learning is necessary, but self assessment is a hard task. To define the competence fields and job profiles is a big task. A focus on some topics would be helpful.



Zimmer agreed but pointed out not to touch the formal VET and to localize on qualitative good educational institutions. For this institutions a kind of certification catalogue (or quality sign) should be developed which they should fulfill to be listed on the platform. IG Agrar would support this if it is well done and in a common sense.

Solutions for the ACT-platform:

1. Doubts:

- Does the farmer really use this platform?
- Who has the real advantage out of it?
- No extracts from the very first VET into further qualification-fields!

2. Wishes:

- No unqualified educational institutions on the platform
- Overview on all technical schools, universities and educational institutions in Germany
- Independent advice (not by the educational institution) for the further required education
- No advertising of educational institutions

3. Contents:

- self assessment and 3rd-view assessment
- how to define competences?
- knottable competence model
- platform for training and further education on EU-level (list)

4. Realisation:

- data usage, protection and privacy
- EU-mobility
- Agrar-Erasmus?

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#### IV: CONCLUSION/FEEDBACK BY THE PARTICIPANTS

##### OPEN QUESTIONS:

1. How will the competence fields be defined and flow into ACT?
2. How will the usage of the platform be?
3. EU-project with national focus?
4. How to get structure into the chaos of competences?

The participants had in common that the project is difficult to realise but interesting for all target groups.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS Germany

After the focus group the ACT-members participating concluded the result in a meeting.

1. The people from the list who could not participate will get a questionnaire to answer to the questions and will possibly be involved in the project in later steps if still required.
2. Definition of **competence fields** for Germany: according to the mentioned fields in this focus group, the ACT Team worked out the following list of competences. The ACT Team recommends to focus on this competences in the further project. Meanwhile it is to say that this competence fields were already mentioned in the German Desktop Research report:
  - A. Quality
  - B. Change of farm structures
  - C. Entrepreneurship
  - D. Sales and communication
  - E. Technical Change

Or/and

  - F. Social Competences / overall competences
    - Both for employees (workers, managers) and employers (entrepreneurs)
3. **Solutions for the ACT-portal (Topic III)** will be presented in the next ACT-meeting in Athens:

ACT portal			
Questions and considerations	Wishes	Content	Gestaltung
How to reach the end user ??	No education offers from non-accredited providers	Objectivity of assessments {self assessment vs. external assessment}	If positive, networking possible
Who does really benefit from the platform:	Complete overview of Agricultural VET providers??	How is competency defined? How is competence identified?	Reliability of provided data
0 the project (partners) 0 the employer 0 the employee	Could it be a portal for accredited agricultural education in EU?	Use appropriate competency model for the definition of content	Mobility in EU versus National mobility
Who is responsible for updating?		Assessment of competence as a means of consultation	Inpartial offers for education
How to generate enough traffic??		Training?	"Agricultural Erasmus"
No parts of dual VET in qualification packages			



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS The Netherlands

In the Netherlands telephone calls/interviews were made, but people were not interested in a focus group. The interviewees saw no additional value in ACT for their work, as the Netherlands have an elaborated system. That's why IFSAT joined the focus group in Germany and got along to the results mentioned in the German conclusion above, considering the new plan to create an international expert group to validate the ACT outputs with the following result:

### **Skills needs in [organic/sustainable] farming.**

[with help of many IFSAT associates]

#### **Introduction**

Although based in the Netherlands the I for IFSAT stands for International. During the ACT national survey and speaking with some international partners the feeling came up that the situations in agriculture are very much the same, at least for NW European countries. After consultation with national and international associates of the foundation we came to the following report.

#### **Content.**

The report lists the main factors affecting agriculture in general as we see it and how these can be reflected in terms of competences needed for farming. Also we looked at what kind of development we would like to observe and finally these were translated in areas which we would like to address for the education and training of future [organic] farmers.

#### **Organic or sustainable agriculture.**

There is no doubt that in the present difficult situation of the agricultural industry, organic agriculture is seen by many as an option out, as a survival strategy. With the environment getting higher up on the global agenda and an ever increasing public concern about health issues the market for these products is steadily growing.

The effect can be illustrated in developments in organic farming and production as well as developments in agriculture leading to a future change in skills needs.

It is often believed that organic agriculture was developed in the 70's and 80's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in response to a demonstrated need to be careful in using our global natural resources. That may be so, but this was not the first time this happened. The biodynamic agricultural movement was developed as of 1924 in response to the introduction of potassium and phosphorus in agricultural production at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Justus von Liebig.

#### **1. Aspects of development.**

The following aspects [of development] have a serious impact on the future of the profession and the related skills needs.

##### **A. Conversion**

- B. Globalisation
- C. Technical developments
- D. Developments in Agriculture.

#### A. Conversion.

A substantial increase of organic production can only be the result of conventional farmers converting to organic production.

In courses we organise (in NL) for these farmers we find that they are very well prepared for the changes in their enterprise, but less so in their personal attitude towards the new way of farming they are going to apply. What conventional farming did not teach them (most of them anyway) are observation skills; the ability to make day to day observations on plant development, on pests and diseases interfering with the production, not just recognising but trying to understand where it comes from, what causes the influx of this particular pest, estimate the damage that will be done, estimate the effect of possible allowed measures and understand the relationship with soils.

For example: the study of the life cycles of the carrot fly, together with understanding their typical behaviour and finding simple ways of detecting their presence in the carrots allows farmers to take the right decisions with respect to soil tillage, sowing and mechanical weed control which will not expose the carrots to flies and reduces the damage done by the carrot fly larvae to an absolute minimum.

Observation skills are not just important when growing plants, they are also essential for a farmer to relate to his animals. A dairy farmer of 150 cows from just north of Amsterdam was the first organic farmer to buy a milking robot in 1998. He sold the robot in 2000 and when asked why he would say: “I didn’t see my cows, I didn’t know them anymore” .

#### B. Globalisation.

Conventional agriculture is seriously affected by the effects of globalisation, many studies and report has pointed this out. But it is worth noting that these effects do not bypass the organic agricultural world at all. Just 2 examples as illustration.

- When during the 1990’s after the restructuring Hungarian production got better organised, organic sunflower seeds for oil pressing were a well exported product for some years. But around 2000 this was already over because the Hungarian farmers were beaten on price by the Chinese producers, even despite the much higher transport costs.
- The European union has a shortage on organic wheat for baking our daily organic bread. The main supplier for organic wheat for a number of years is the Ukraine.

#### C. Technical developments.

Although it is evident that investments in agriculture have decreased over the past decade, there still is research on new technology done. A major development is precision agriculture, where new technologies allows for new machines to be developed which solves problems that could never be solved before. This development also supports a more industrial approach to agriculture production.

For instance: when a machine can identify production plants and weeds by their particular colour and/or the intensity of a particular kind of green, it is possible to build a precision weeding machine that can also cut weeds growing in the row of cultivated plants.

Another example: GPS controlled machines can plant lettuce plants in dead straight rows for 400 meters making the crop maintenance with other equipment much easier (Illustration 1).



*Illustration1*

Other important technological developments are the ever increasing capacities of machines and the tractors needed to power them and the ongoing search for new products. This search for new products takes various shapes: new products not for human or animal consumption but as industrial raw materials, new species of plants for consumption with special properties, either in production (not being recognised by the carrot fly as a carrot) or in consumption (the latest colour for carrots is purple).

#### D. Developments in Agriculture.

There are a number of developments that, more or less pronounced, affect agriculture in all European countries and are well worth to be mentioned here:

- The structure of agricultural production is changing: the number of farms is decreasing everywhere [thus farms are getting bigger] and many farms have no successor (from within the family) because young people are leaving the countryside for economic and social reasons.
- The social fabric of rural life is changing rapidly as well: where farming was a social activity not too long ago, it is now often a job for a single person and his machines; rural villages lose their supporting functions when schools, post offices and libraries close and when finally the greengrocer closes up all services have to come from somewhere else.

All these developments affect the future of the agricultural professions, be it conventional or organic. Again, these developments allow for an industrial agriculture approach.

## 2. Changes needed.

### The ENSA project.

During the conference and last partners meeting (October, 2006) of the Leonardo da Vinci project 'European Network Sustainable Agriculture education and training' (ENSA) which was implemented by the Warmonderhof Training Centre of Groenhorst College from 2003 to 2006, a survey was organised.

One of the questions in the survey to evaluate the project, asks the representatives of 24 partners (education organisations and a couple of organic farmers associations) of 14 European countries, was: "In future projects I would like to see the following elements....."

The range of answers provided identified 4 groups of 'project needs' from these partners:

- I. Market support
- II. Education development
- III. Social actions
- IV. Self-sufficiency

#### I. Market support

These suggestions were based on the assumption that an increase in the market for organic products would eventually lead to the conversion of more farms. The kind of projects mentioned were:

- I.a. Consumer awareness: educate consumers by publicity campaigns on the advantages of organic food.
- I.b. Environmental impact: help build public awareness on the environmental effects of organic production.
- I.c. Food quality: another property of organic food that could be pushed to increase the markets.
- I.d. Involving top-chefs: as to increase the use of organic products in hotels and catering.
- I.e. Training super market managers: to present organic products with the appropriate advertising and to enable correct consumer information by shop attendants.

#### II. Education development

As most respondents work in agricultural education, mostly related to organic agriculture, they are very much aware of the needs of the education and it's clients, the future farmers.

Also, as all these respondents have been involved for the past 3 years in the ENSA projects, some partners also in European project from longer ago, the international awareness is reflected in some responses.

- II.a. Transparency of education standards: still transparency of education levels is very much needed; progress is being made, information is shared in European projects, but full transparency is far from realised.



- II.b. Sharing of knowledge: there is a lot of knowledge and information that is, sometimes deliberately, not shared with peers. Even in European Leonardo da Vinci projects for vocational education development, exchange is often limited.
- II.c. Deepening OA knowledge: still more fundamental research towards a better understanding of soils, plants and animals and their relationship is needed for the development of organic production.
- II.d. Teachers exchange: as to open personal horizons and increase professional exchange.

### III. Social actions.

There were many suggestions made for projects to improve or enhance the social conditions and functions of the farming community. Often these were supporting further development of changes already initiated.

- III.a. CSA, Community Supported Agriculture: Communities from towns take initiatives to relate directly to a particular farm for some of their needs like food or a walk in the countryside. In turn they provide support to (like credits) or share responsibility with the farmer (like co-ownership).
- III.b. Eco-Villages: in many countries small villages have declared themselves to be an Eco-Village, promoting organic production and various environmentally friendly activities related to economic activities, often energy, transportation, sometimes even an alternative currency (like: the equivalent of 1 hour of labour). Proposals were made to develop projects for environmental assessment for these villages (how ECO are these villages really?) and to share their ways of solving some problems.
- III.c. Agriculture & Care: over 800 farms in the Netherlands provide CARE to people with needs; people with a handicap either physical or mental, sometimes even both, are offered a protected and well organised environment where they can develop their often limited abilities. Projects need to be developed for the exchange of experience and the training of farmers and other staff supporting these people in need.
- III.d. Social (re-)integration: farming in many countries have become an isolated job. Projects have been proposed to improve the social fabric of rural societies and to boost the social capacities and self confidence of the farming community.
- III.e. Farm succession: there was support for projects that would develop new ways to support farm succession. When there are no family members interested in taking over the farm, selling up (to your next door neighbour most likely) should not be the only option.

### IV. Self sufficiency.

Although it was felt to be slightly outside the scope of the survey and the ENSA project, there were some suggestions made to support projects enhancing independence with respect to food.

- IV.a. Permaculture: a concept of sustainable self sufficiency, in scale ranging from growing herbs on your windowsill till complete independence for small communities, should be more promoted by international projects.
- IV.b. Self growing on allotments: increasing independency should be promoted; as one respondent commented: about 60-70% of Moscow's food is usually grown on dacha's, wouldn't it be great when this was grown organically?

- IV.c. Young people, start at school gardens: start young with teaching the basics and getting the satisfaction of growing your own food.

The above results of 2006 were discussed and presented to the IFSAT associates during the ATC survey and, surprisingly, most were still strongly endorsed. As this group was some 20 persons strong and from many European countries

we see this as a re-validation of the ENSA outcomes and feel free to present these to the ACT project again.

### **3. Conclusions: Development in skills needs in organic farming.**

There are some strong tendencies visible in the general picture presented, but there are even more uncertainties, so it is not really possible to come to detailed conclusions on how to change and adapt vocational education as to prepare for future needs.

It seems to be clear that the traditional and very static way of agriculture where family farms are taken over by the oldest son is rapidly changing in a dynamic industry where businesses are taken over and staff is being replaced as quick as in other sectors. This leads to the clear suggestion that agricultural education should prepare learners for this more dynamic way of life which allows graduates to move between sectors.

The more general suggestions that can be drawn would be the following.

On vocational and production levels (2 and 3) more attention should be given to:

- Observation skills -allowing future farmers to relate directly and personally to the production of their enterprises.
- New technologies - deal with technological developments as to enable operation with new technologies and making decisions on buying in or contracting out.

On management levels (4 and 5) it would be advisable to increase the training and teaching in:

- Management skills -increasing the management and entrepreneurial skills will improve first of all the ability of the farmers to deal with globalisation and other external developments affecting agriculture and will also allow the mobility of the students towards or between sectors.
- Social skills - relate to society. It seems sometimes that agricultural education is something exclusive: only for persons from within the industry. A reversed approach, opting to including the agricultural sector within the mainstream of society would be a better basis for the organisation of education. It would grant respect to the producers of our food, it would open up other functions of farming and rural life and it would provide a place in society to the farmers to which they feel entitled, but which they feel for a long time have been refused to them.



The point of view from the IFSAT Foundation for this analysis of future needs was organic farming first of all; looking at the conclusions they seem to be valid for the whole of agriculture and rural industries.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS Greece



Figure 1: ACT workshop in Lamia, Greece

all VET providers could present training solutions and opportunities targeted towards skills gaps. Additionally they illustrated the need of a communication tool that would enhance dialogue with trainees and at the same time provide constant feedback on the quality of the existing training programs and on the trainees' changing learning needs.

On the other hand farmers and farming workers focused on the lack of information how to get involved and participate in such programs and asked for a common entry point, where all training opportunities would be available.

All target groups- both VET providers and field practitioners- raised the issue of communication and collaboration at national, regional, local and European level. They stressed the importance of setting up an online tool that will enable dialogue; for instance a forum, where all training providers could discuss the difficulties they face during the courses, how they manage to handle them in a successful manner, share their experiences, exchange educational materials, update, enrich them and follow a “best practice” scheme, so as to adapt existing solutions to current problems and do not reinvent the wheel.

The issues of certified training programs was highly prioritized during workshop discussions; although there is an abundance of training programs, there is no clear framework of the quality criteria, the training curriculum/ a, the credits for learning outcomes, i.e. a common reference framework which will assist in comparing the national qualifications systems, frameworks and their levels so as promote transnational mobility and access to lifelong

Workshop minutes and interviews' analysis concluded that there is a major gap in lifelong learning for the target groups within the project scope;

Participants expressed their difficulty to identify the emerging job profiles along with the skills and competences in the workforce related to Agronomy and Agriculture; as such they are neither able to realize the spectrum of professions related to Agriculture nor identify the existing gaps of skills and competences in the current work force.

Agricultural VET providers, representatives of labour market and VET policy makers stressed the gap of certified training programs. They stated the necessity of setting up a common online service, where



Figure 2: Hands- on activities during ACT workshop



learning. VET providers pointed out the need of setting up a training program according to certain criteria, which will equip field practitioners with qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe, and thus promote lifelong and life-wide learning, and the mobility of European citizens whether for studying or working abroad.

Finally field practitioners highlighted the need to contact other practitioners not only of their area, but also across Greece and Europe, with the view to identifying job opportunities as mobile workers, participate in training activities and gain valuable work experience.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS Italy

The results of the focus group in Italy are described in the following charts:



### AGRICULTURAL ALLIANCE FOR COMPETENCES AND SKILLS BASED TRAINING - ACT

**Tab. 1 – Problem validation**

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I cannot find the competencies which are related to my job profile		10%	60%	30%	
I cannot find training providers		10%	60%	30%	
I cannot find certification / acceleration programs				40%	60%
I cannot assess the quality of proposed training programs			10%	40%	50%

4



### AGRICULTURAL ALLIANCE FOR COMPETENCES AND SKILLS BASED TRAINING - ACT

**Table 2. Table of comments:**

There is a lack on the quality control of training courses concerning emerging sectors, such as sustainable agriculture and responsible tourism

Needs of sharp rules and controls related to the supplying of formative “products” in the sector of emerging economic sectors ( i.e., organic agriculture)

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## AGRICULTURAL ALLIANCE FOR COMPETENCES AND SKILLS BASED TRAINING - ACT

### Solution - ACT:

“We propose a platform, which will connect the job profiles with the competencies needed for this job. Subsequently, these competencies will be connect to the VET training programs, designed to enhance these competencies, and the VET certifications, designed to validate these competences. From the user’s perspective, when he / she chooses his / her job profile (e.g. Farmer), the platform will automatically present the required competencies, and will drive him / her to the appropriate VET training, or certification programs available”.

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## AGRICULTURAL ALLIANCE FOR COMPETENCES AND SKILLS BASED TRAINING - ACT

Tab. 3 – Solution validation

Number of statement	Statement “It is very important to me to...”	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Find trainings related to my job profile				70%	30%
2	Find certification / acceleration programs related to my job profile			10%	90%	
3	See ratings / comments / reviews for training providers / certification providers			20%	80%	
4	Access the service from multiple devices (web, mobile, tablet)				60%	40%
5	Rate trainings which I chose to attend				90%	10%
6	Get personalized recommendations when I access the service			20%	80%	
7	Get personalized information through newsletters		20%	80%		
8	Have access to support (FAQ, etc.)				90%	10%

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**AGRICULTURAL ALLIANCE FOR COMPETENCES AND SKILLS BASED TRAINING - ACT**

**Tab. 4. Rank of Statements**

Rank	Number of statement
1 <sup>st</sup>	4 Access the service from multiple devices (web, mobile, tablet)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 Find trainings related to my job profile
3 <sup>rd</sup>	5 Rate trainings which I chose to attend
4 <sup>th</sup>	8 Have access to support (FAQ, etc.)
5 <sup>th</sup>	2 Find certification / acceleration programs related to my job profile

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**AGRICULTURAL ALLIANCE FOR COMPETENCES AND SKILLS BASED TRAINING - ACT**

**Table 5. Table of comments:**

Interest in one or more structured platforms, devoted to underline (online) the more relevant professional competences in the area of eco-agriculture

Interest in multitasking environmental friendly professional figures to be trained

Interest in effective links between demand and offer of specialised professional figures, in sustainable agriculture and environmental sector.

Interest in multidisciplinary skills devoted to the self-employment

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## OVERALL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

All focus groups participants show a main interest in an online platform like ACT is focused on except in the Netherlands. In Greece and Italy though, the main emphasis is on getting information on training / the training system in total, which means the platform should offer information on the different training possibilities in the country or even europeanwide and also list the different degrees/standard certifications.

In Germany a platform with information on further trainings and VET possibilities already exists. Here a further added value would be to describe a competence model for lifelong learning (further education) which could be compared with occuring job profiles to help farmers find the right education for their purposes online and also to find the right institution. Training institutions named on the platform therefore should be certified by ACT e.g. on basis of certification criteria developd in the project. This also could be an interesting point for the Netherlands as there is existing a good network for this task (“the contact who everybody knows in the country”). An online solution here may be interesting for following generations and for European wide information flow.

## ABOUT ACT

*ACT aims at establishing and sustaining an Alliance for competences and skills based vocational education and training (VET) in agriculture. This alliance will include all relevant stakeholder groups in the agricultural sector, namely the farmers, industry, VET providers and policy makers as well as the labour services within the European agriculture. In such close cooperation, ACT develops a framework, the "Pathways for Agricultural Competence and skills based Training (PACT)" and related training and tools for its implementation and usage. Thus, ACT clearly contributes to the ET 2020's key objective and priority for the continuous development and management of knowledge, skills and competences at the individual and organizational levels. In summary the mission of ACT is to support and improve farming business by tools defining competences on agricultural innovations and management - to finally making lifelong learning and mobility a reality in Europe!*



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