



Cultivating Entrepreneurship in the Agrifood Sector through VET\* is a strategic initiative aimed at addressing the gap between VET and the labor market needs in the agrifood sector in the Western Balkans. The project builds on the previous commitments of its partners and focuses on creating an enabling environment for vocational clusters. These clusters are designed to boost local socio-economic development through social entrepreneurship, providing accessible, inclusive, and high-quality TVET-business and entrepreneurship-based provisions that are responsive to the emerging local labor markets.

The project adopts a systemic approach, conducting thorough assessments at the system level to understand the functions, services, rules, key issues, and bottlenecks that hinder socio-economic development in the target areas, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized groups. By identifying these challenges, the project aims to develop targeted interventions that can significantly improve the VET landscape and its alignment with labor market demands.



The initial phase of the project has been focused on understanding the current skills of VET students and identifying the practical skills applied by entrepreneurs in the agrifood sector. During this phase, assessments have been conducted to gauge the existing competencies in professors, students and entrepreneurs and the specific needs of the market, ensuring that the project's training and educational initiatives are well-targeted and impactful



## Strengthening International Collaboration in Liguria

The first study visit of the project was held in Italy: FILSE SpA - Finanziaria Ligure per lo Sviluppo Economico recently welcomed partners from Albania and Kosovo as part of the project. Representatives from Qendra Don Bosko Tirane, Albanian Network for Rural Development, Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo, and Shmat Abdyl Frasheri visited Liguria to explore best practices and innovations in the agro-food sector.



During a workshop at Liguria Ricerche, attendees learned about active policies, associations, and cooperatives in the agro-food sector. The visit started with tours of the #OSA project in Genoa, featuring Arena Albaro and SIIT PMI labs, and ended with a visit to the Biosfera in Porto Antico

On the next day, visitors saw examples of excellence like La Fattoria di Pol, specializing in aeroponic cultivation of basil and other plants, and I Formaggi del Boschetto, a farm with the largest herd of the local "Bergasca" breed of sheep, producing cheese traditionally. The day concluded with a visit to the IRF - Istituto Regionale per la Floricoltura (Regional Institute for Floriculture) of Sanremo, where participants gathered insights into cultivation and protection techniques for Ligurian Riviera flowers.



The last day started at Purø Yogurt farm, specializing in high-standard cow's yoghurt and other dairy products. The final stops were Interra Agricola Bio e Natura (The Ligurian Farmer) and CORNUS dairy farm and agritourism, both promoting the richness of their cultivated land.







The three-day study visit organized by AKMI SA in Athens was the second one for the project. Representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture of Albania (Ministria e Bujqësisë dhe Zhvillimit Rural), APPK - Agjensioni i Përkrahjes së Punësimit Kosovë, and SHMP "Bahri Haxha" Vushtrri gathered in the Greek capital to share knowledge.

**AKMI International Hosts Insightful Study Visit in Athens as Part of CultivETing!**

The visit kicked off with a presentation at Markou Vineyards, one of Athens' oldest artisanal wineries. Mr. Stefanidis, President of the Academy of Entrepreneurship, led a session on business development services and local development processes, sparking discussions and giving insights.



Day 2 featured an inspiring presentation on the Smart Agro Hub, a competence center in smart agriculture initiated by the Agricultural University of Athens. Mr. George Karipidis, beekeeper and CEO of Bear's Honey, shared strategies behind his successful business, emphasizing the importance of training and skills enhancement for business growth. Discussions highlighted the agrifood sector's significance to Greece's economy.



The day concluded with a visit to the Queen's Tower Estate (Pirgos Vasilissis), known for its high-quality wine grape varieties, organic cultivation practices, and commitment to sustainability.



On the final day, participants visited the Agricultural University of Athens, the third oldest university in Greece, established in 1920. The visit included a tour of the campus, the Agricultural Museum, and an exhibition of minerals and rocks.



Stay connected with us on social media for the latest updates and information about our upcoming round tables, scheduled for September and October 2024.

Join us to know more about the project and the evolving landscape of the agrifood sector in the Western Balkans

