

Agreement

Regional Skills Partnership

for the Agri-Food Sector in Piemonte

The challenge

The European agrifood labor market faces several challenges as it adapts to evolving economic, environmental, and social demands. Sustainability is a major concern, as the sector must transition to greener practices, such as regenerative agriculture and reduced carbon emissions, while ensuring that workers are trained to implement these changes. However, investing in sustainable skills and technologies requires financial support and long-term planning, which is often difficult for small producers. Bottom-up efforts—initiatives driven by local farmers, cooperatives, and regional networks—are crucial for fostering innovation, but they frequently struggle with fragmented policies, lack of coordination, and limited access to funding for education and training programs.

Additionally, new consumer profiles are reshaping the labor market, as demand for organic, locally sourced, and ethically produced food increases. This shift requires workers to develop expertise in areas like short supply chains, digital marketing, and sustainable certifications, which are not always part of traditional agricultural training. Competition is another challenge, as European producers face pressure from large-scale global agribusinesses, making efficiency and innovation in workforce skills essential for maintaining competitiveness. Lastly, the need for flexibility in the agrifood labor market is growing, with seasonal employment, digitalization, and automation transforming job roles. However, ensuring decent working conditions, fair wages, and continuous learning opportunities remains a significant challenge, particularly for migrant and temporary workers who form a critical part of the sector's workforce.

In Piemonte, the agrifood sector employed around 63,000 people in 2022, a slight decline of 1.1% compared to the previous year. Although this figure accounts for 3.5% of total regional employment, aligning with the EU average, it is slightly below the Italian average of 3.8% ([CREA, 2024](#)). Skills mismatches are evident: highly specialised sectors such as wine and dairy production require expertise that is often non-transferable and difficult to match with existing training provision. Despite the region's strong agricultural institutions and research centres, there remains a disconnect between academic qualifications and the practical needs of the labour market. For instance, only 1.9% of farm managers hold a university degree in agriculture, though 10.5% hold an agricultural high school diploma, above the national average. More generally, the largest share of farm heads in Piemonte hold only a middle school diploma (around 40%), above the national figure of 35%, limiting the region's capacity to upskill its workforce effectively ([CREA, 2024](#)). The sector is also ageing: just 17% of farms are managed by individuals under 45, although this is above the national average of 13.5%. At the same time, migrant workers represent around 53% of the employed agricultural workforce, with a strong presence from Romania, Macedonia, Albania, Morocco, India, Senegal, and Nigeria, highlighting the need for tailored approaches to training and working conditions ([CREA, 2024](#)).

The ambition

The aim of the Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) Piemonte is to set a joint strategy to design and implement a sectorial upskilling and reskilling framework, maximising competitiveness of all the actors involved, job retention and job attractiveness for the agri-food system in Piemonte. The ambition of the partnership is to enable the upskilling and reskilling of the workforce to increase the attractiveness of the sector to the young people, but also to provide life-long learning opportunities in the region. The partnership should develop the means to monitor the specific Key Performance Indicators to achieve these goals and overcome the challenges.

Piemonte Agrifood sector performance

With 4.2 million inhabitants, Piemonte boasts a strong historical legacy shaped by the House of Savoy and French influences, which have contributed to its agri-food excellence.

- **Turnover (2023):** €19.1 billion (highest among Italian regions)
- **Export Share:** 36% of turnover
- **Key Products:** Wine, dairy, cured meats, cereals, truffles, and premium horticultural goods.

The partnership will develop a roadmap towards this ambition. To achieve this goal, it will use resources from finalised Erasmus+ projects such as Food-STA and ASKFOOD, from projects such as the EC Erasmus+ project FIELDS, I-Restart and AGRIFOODSKILLS, and current initiatives such as EIT-Food, and possibly from further dedicated resources if granted (Food4All, the Institutionalized Partnership proposal on Agrifood R&I). The aim is to reach all the relevant stakeholders in the agri-food system from farmers, agri-food cooperatives, food processors, and relevant associations, to education and training organisations. This RSP shall provide actions, accompanied by KPIs to assess its impact.

Commitments

This chapter outlines the strategic commitments of the partnership to address evolving skill needs in Piemonte's agri-food sector. Partners pledge to continuously update knowledge on sector developments and monitor skill demands, guiding education and training providers more effectively. Piemonte will adopt relevant skills and job profiles from EU-wide frameworks, such as FIELDS, I-Restart, and AgrifoodSkills, contributing actively to the exchange of experiences, good practices, and policy recommendations from these initiatives.

The initiative aims to strengthen cooperation between training providers and business operators to reduce the skills gap. It promotes the mobility of students and trainees across the EU to enhance access to quality learning opportunities in Piemonte. Emphasis will be

placed on vocational education and training (VET), apprenticeships, and lifelong learning, aligned with the sector's transformation.

To attract young talent and qualified professionals, the partnership will improve communication strategies tailored to the agri-food sector's needs. Special attention will be given to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), ensuring training offers are adapted to their specific requirements. Finally, the initiative supports enhanced coordination between employers, workers through social dialogue, and education providers to build a coherent and responsive skills system.

Activities

Building on these strategic commitments, this chapter describes the concrete actions planned to implement the proposal and upskill the workforce in Piemonte's agri-food sector.

The partnership will strengthen the agri-food sector in Piemonte by ensuring:

- Sectoral cooperation and monitoring, supported by the commitment of all stakeholders.
- Competences categorised by targeted working profiles.

Companies will be selected in collaboration with regional professional organisations, applying criteria that ensure a representative and impactful sample. Selection parameters will include enterprise size (with particular emphasis on SMEs), prior experience in organising or participating in training activities, and levels of investment in innovation and digitalisation over the past three years (as defined by CREA's methodology, which draws on ISTAT indicators).

Once the sample is established, the following activities will advance worker upskilling across the agrifood sector:

- Conduct interviews, focus groups, or targeted surveys to collect data on individual companies within the selected sample.
- Examine companies' internal organisation, production processes, logistics, marketing strategies, and human resources management.
- Identify key actors within the agribusiness supply chain, including producers, suppliers, processors, and distributors.
- Analyse interactions between supply chain actors, collaboration dynamics, and critical factors impacting efficiency.
- Assess new occupational profiles identified at the European level through interviews or targeted surveys to determine the skills and knowledge required for each company in the supply chain in Piemonte.
- Identify skill gaps or training needs that could negatively impact productivity and effectiveness, taking into account both European and national contexts.

Based on the information gathered through these actions, develop customised training plans for each company and for the supply chain as a whole:

- Define clear and measurable training objectives, identify the required training content, and determine the most suitable mode of course delivery (e.g., classroom training, online learning, field training courses).
- Develop a model for certifying skills acquired by participants in training programmes, ensuring simplicity and transparency. This can be achieved through official certificates issued by competent bodies or a dedicated committee evaluating the results.
- Implement training plans with the involvement of specialised personnel and experienced trainers in the agribusiness sector.
- Continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training programmes, making adjustments where necessary.
- Assess the impact of training plans on the efficiency, productivity, and quality of companies within the agribusiness supply chain.
- Measure progress against the objectives set in the study.
- Prepare a detailed report outlining the organisational analysis, identified agricultural, industrial and professional needs, and proposed training plans.
- Present the report to participating companies and relevant institutions, sharing recommendations and suggested actions.
- Promote ongoing monitoring of companies beyond the training phase to evaluate organisational outcomes such as efficiency, workplace climate, customer satisfaction, and economic return.
- Ensure that positive changes in organisational outcomes are sustained over time and introduce further improvements or updates as needed.

Tracking impact

Task	Outcome / Process Indicator	KPIs	Target	Deadline
Sectoral cooperation and monitoring	Strengthened collaboration among stakeholders in the agri-food sector	Number of stakeholders involved and their coverage of the agri-food system	50	2026
	Establish a structured routine for funding training programmes	Number of training agreements signed between funding entities and enterprises	Foragri: 60 Fondimpresa: 110	2027
	Promote ongoing monitoring of companies in the agribusiness chain after the implementation of training plans	Number of companies actively engaged in monitoring and follow-up activities	30	2028
Definition of skills and job roles	Building and delivering training courses for agri-food companies	Number of training programmes delivered	Foragri: 2 Fondimpresa: 2	2027
Upskilling and reskilling initiatives	Increased opportunities for workforce development in the sector	Number of people trained	Primary sector: 7,600 Processing industry: 9,100	2027

Partnership arrangements

The current signatories align with the partnership's objectives and support its ambition to strengthen the agri-food ecosystem.

Key regional and local partners, as well as supporters of the regional partnership:

Coordinating organisation/steering group:

- **Confagricoltura** (Primary Sector Trade Association)
- **Federalimentare** (Food & Drink Industry Federation)
- **Foragri** (Training Funder)
- **Enapra** (Training Agency)
- **Fondimpresa** (Training Funder)
- **FormaMentis** (Training Agency)

Supported by:



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