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Building a Lasting Legacy: Empowering Rural Communities for the Future **Newsletter 6**



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1. WELCOME

*Celebrating 30
Months of
Innovation &
Collaboration!*

Welcome to the final edition of the Smart Skills newsletter! As we conclude our 30-month European journey, we want to reflect on an incredible period of collaboration, digital innovation, and community empowerment.

Over the past two and a half years, the Smart Skills consortium has worked hand-in-hand with farmers, agricultural advisors, VET educators, and rural development professionals across

Europe. Together, we have built, tested, and rolled out a comprehensive, free open-source digital learning platform and a suite of tools designed to bridge the digital divide in agriculture. Thank you for being a part of this transformative journey!

Let's dive into our final round of updates, workshop milestones, and project achievements!

We hope you enjoy reading this edition, and we encourage you to share it with your colleagues, friends, and partners.

The Smart Skills Team



2. Ground Control in Foggia:

Meridaunia's Italian Implementation

Workshop

Sharing the Knowledge and Tools

As part of our final implementation phase, Italian project partner **Meridaunia** successfully hosted a capacity-building workshop in Foggia, Italy. Bringing together 10 agricultural advisors, trainers, and local professionals, the half-day session focused on the practical application of the Smart Skills Digital Learning Platform, including its recently developed Train-the-Trainer Toolkit and its six core training courses.

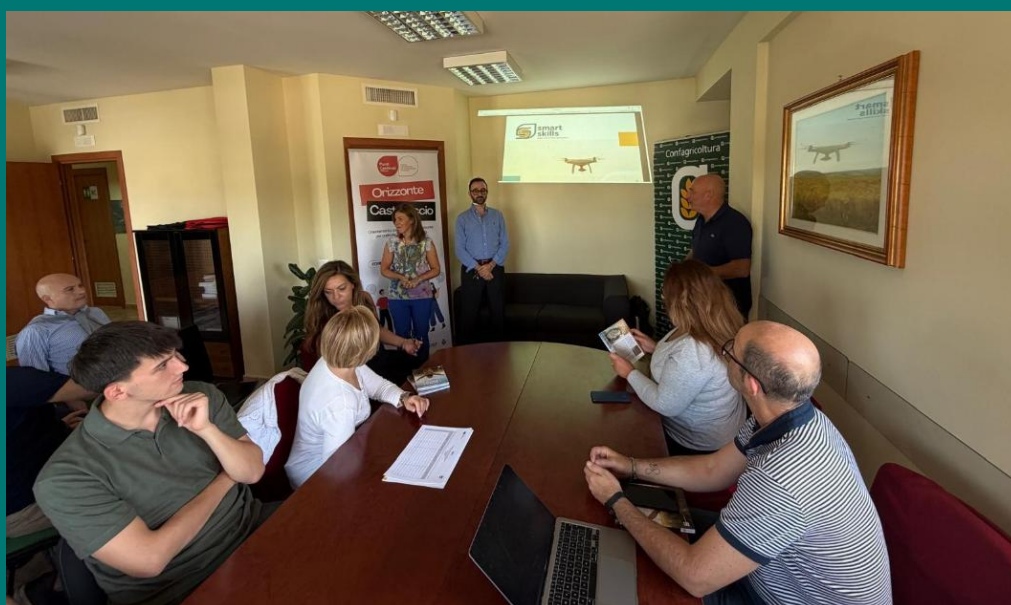
Based in Italy's Monti Dauni region, Meridaunia LAG specialises in grassroots rural development, agri-tourism, and agro-tech innovation. As a SMART SKILLS partner, Meridaunia contributes its expertise to empowering rural communities and addressing depopulation challenges. Their work focuses on sustainable agriculture, community resilience, and fostering leadership among young farmers

Info fact:

Foggia is an important agricultural centre for the wheat, vegetables, olives, grapes, fruit, tobacco, and cheese of the Puglia Tableland

Workshop Highlights & Findings:

- **Interactive Format:** The session combined expert presentations, live platform demonstrations, moderated discussions, and individual planning activities.
- **Core Discussion Themes:** Participants tackled regional hurdles, including varying digital skill levels among farmers, the perceived costs and complexity of new technologies, and the vital role advisors play as intermediaries.



The attendees explored how to leverage all the Smart Skills digital resources to support local farmers tackling modern agricultural challenges.

Individual Action Plans: Every participant completed a project template mapping out short-term (0–3 months), medium-term (3–6 months), and long-term (6–12 months) steps to integrate Smart Skills tools into their daily advisory practices



3. Smart Skills

WP4 Train-the-Trainer Toolkit

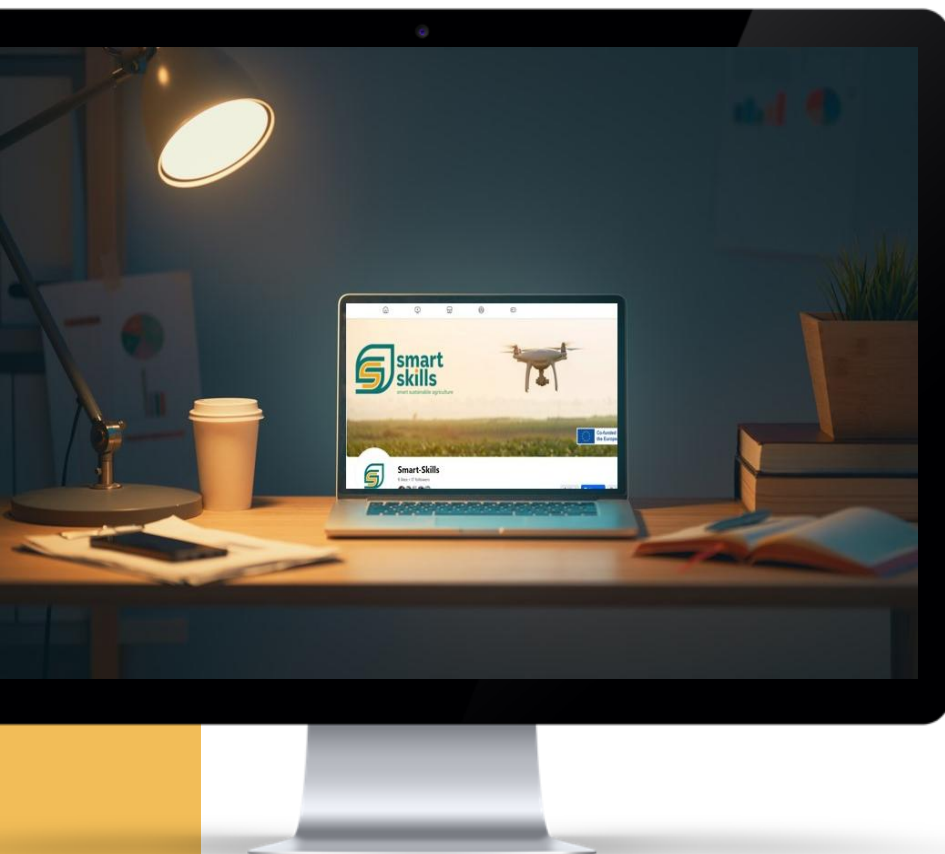
The SmartSkills Project Train-the-Trainer (TTT) Programme is designed to ensure the effective transfer, adaptation, and long-term use of project results at a regional level, preparing trainers and regional agricultural agencies to act as facilitators of regional collaboration and co-creation.

This programme or Toolkit is essentially designed to build the capacity of these trainers & stakeholders so that they become advocates for Agro-Tech and problem-solvers of the future.

These resources expedite SKILLS development & consequently, the onset of change.

The
TOOLKIT
includes:

- A Trainer's Module Manual
- Smart Skills, The Project Presentation
- A Regional Design Thinking Workshop – Facilitation Guide
- Downloadable Workshop Templates



WP4 Train-the-Trainer Toolkit

Toolkit Key Resources:

- **Presentation for Trainers:** An introductory overview presentation for trainers explaining the SmartSkills project objectives, background, and outputs.
- **Module Manual:** A structured manual following the **6 core courses** and their **30 modules**, providing guidance on content, learning objectives, delivery approaches, and practical activities.
- **Workshop Facilitation Guide:** A regional collaboration workshop facilitator's guide equipped with practical tools for trainers and rural agencies to lead Design Thinking participatory, multi-stakeholder workshops.
- **Design Thinking Templates:** A series of **20+ Design Thinking PDF templates** (including a dedicated SmartSkills Action Plan template) that underpin the collaborative methodology and assist in workshops.



**BOOSTING THE TRANSFER
OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
FOR SMART AND SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURE**



4. Lasting Impact:

How Smart Skills is Transforming European Agriculture

Over 30 months, Smart Skills has evolved from an ambitious vision into a living, breathing ecosystem deployed across multiple European nations, including Poland, Ireland, Italy, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.

The recent regional workshops captured insights and broader community feedback that highlight the persistent hurdles facing rural practitioners today. Farmers and advisors frequently navigate complex challenges such as:

- **The digital skills gap and technological overwhelm**, particularly when evaluating which digital tools best fit daily farm management.
- **Structural and economic pressures**, including rising input costs, unpredictable environmental conditions, and the complexity of aligning traditional farming workflows with modern green compliance.
- **A lack of localised guidance**, making it difficult to transition theoretical sustainability concepts into everyday on-the-farm actions.

Rather than offering quick fixes, Smart Skills addresses these shared knowledge-sharing gaps directly. By providing **free, multilingual digital resources, practical case studies, and structured training materials**, the project equips rural communities with the exact competencies needed to bridge the digital divide. From understanding smart grazing and precision agriculture to optimising resource use and lowering environmental footprints, Smart Skills tools serve as a vital key to change - fostering long-term capacity building and enhanced digitalisation that will continue to support European agriculture long after project completion.

5. Thank You & Keep Following the Journey!

As this 30-month project comes to a formal close, our greatest takeaway is that while European agriculture undoubtedly faces complex challenges, from rising costs and environmental pressures to the digital skills divide, it is an industry moving steadily in the right direction through collaboration, resilience, and forward-thinking digitalisation

Throughout this journey, quality remained at the heart of everything we did. Every tool, module, and framework was rigorously tested, refined, and evaluated to ensure it responds effectively to the real-world needs of agricultural communities.

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who helped shape this initiative, particularly our dedicated pilot testers and expert peer reviewers. Their valuable insights, constructive feedback, and unwavering commitment to excellence played a vital role

in strengthening and enhancing the quality of our work.

We are equally grateful to the farmers, students, trainers, advisors, and partner organisations across Europe whose engagement, support, participation and belief in this vision made this journey possible. Their contribution has been instrumental in transforming an ambitious idea into a meaningful and practical suite of resources for the agricultural sector.



Explore the website today!

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Follow our journey



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