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# Roadmap for agroecology participatory curricula

**Prepared by: SMOC and ANRD**



**DELIVERABLE FACTSHEET**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Sowing agroEcological Education (SEEDS) in the VET sector project is a two-year initiative that brings together seven partner organisations from five countries: Italy, France, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Kosovo.<sup>1</sup> The project aims to strengthen the capacity of Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems by integrating agroecological principles and participatory practices into curricula development across the Western Balkans and EU countries.

## 1.1. Purpose and scope of the Roadmap

This roadmap serves as a practical guide for the co-development of agroecological curricula within VET institutions across SEEDS partner countries. It has been designed to support the integration of agroecological principles, rooted in sustainability, equity, and co-creation of knowledge, into formal and non-formal VET systems in the EU and Western Balkans. The ultimate goal is to build the capacities of VET centres, teachers, and learners to respond to the growing need for green skills in the context of ecological transition, sustainable food systems, and rural revitalization, with a focus on agroecology.

The roadmap is rooted in a strong evidence base established through the SEEDS project's Work Package 2, including national context analyses and the **Manual of Agroecology – State of the Art of Agroecology Education in SEEDS Countries**. These foundational efforts identified critical skill gaps, institutional limitations, and best practices across France, Italy, Greece, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo. The roadmap now translates those insights into a structured yet adaptable tool that can guide curriculum development in diverse contexts—rural and urban, EU and non-EU, formal and non-formal education providers.

## 1.2. Alignment with SEEDS objectives and the LEADER approach

The roadmap contributes directly to the achievement of all four specific objectives (SO) of the SEEDS project:

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<sup>1</sup> The project is coordinated by CESIE (Italy) and includes the following implementing partners: Eurotraining Educational Organization (Greece), Synchify (France), Albanian Network for Rural Developemt (Albania), Universum Colleague (Kosovo), Srednja strukovna škola Silvija Strahimira Kranjčevića Livno (BiH) and Sarajevo Meeting of Cultures – SMOC (BiH).

- **SO1:** It provides the model for co-creating VET curriculum modules on agroecology using participatory methods;
- **SO2:** It supports VET teachers and institutions with tools and strategies for implementing these modules effectively;
- **SO3:** It anchors curriculum co-design within multi-actor, cross-border networks of farmers, CSOs and local authorities;
- **SO4:** It lays the groundwork for piloting the curricula in selected VET centres and testing green campus initiatives.

The entire design and implementation process is inspired by the LEADER approach, emphasizing a bottom-up, area-based, and partnership-driven methodology. The roadmap promotes locally adapted solutions by encouraging direct involvement of VET learners, educators, agroecological practitioners, and policy actors in shaping learning content. As highlighted in the Manual of Agroecology, agroecology itself thrives when rooted in place-specific knowledge, democratic participation, and territorial resilience, values that the LEADER method also upholds.

### 1.3. Methodology

The roadmap builds on a comprehensive multi-source developed through WP2 activities and its purpose is to provide guidance for designing curricula in a participatory manner. It is grounded in two main types of evidence: (1) **desk research**, including an in-depth review of EU and national policies (e.g., CAP eco-schemes, Farm to Fork Strategy, national VET strategies), a mapping of over 30 best practices relevant to agroecology in education, and (2) **primary data** gathered through semi-structured interviews with teachers, farmers, CSOs and government representatives across SEEDS countries.

The **Manual of Agroecology**, as a core output of WP2, played a key role in informing this roadmap. It included:

- Literature review of existing agroecology and VET policies in all partner countries;
- Comparative analysis between EU and non-EU countries;
- An overview of the main challenges and opportunities related to the integration of agroecology within VET systems in each SEEDs country.

This multi-layered analysis revealed a shared need for more participatory, interdisciplinary, and context-responsive learning approaches. It also underscored the importance of integrating place-based agroecological

knowledge, especially from grassroots actors, into formal VET frameworks. The roadmap uses this analysis as a foundation, guiding VET providers through a structured yet flexible process of co-creating curricula that align with territorial needs, green policy frameworks, and labour market expectations.





## 2. PARTICIPATORY CURRICULA DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

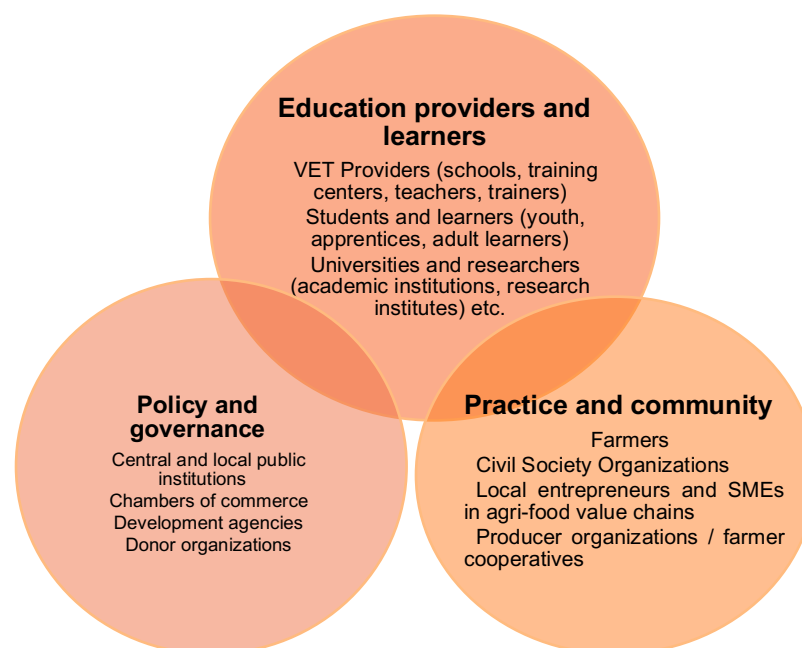
### 2.1. Preparing for a participatory development process

Integrating agroecology into VET curricula requires a strong foundation built on participation, inclusiveness and careful planning. Early preparation ensures that the process reflects the real needs of learners, educators, and local communities, while also creating ownership among stakeholders. Below is described the process of the preparation for a participatory curriculum development step by step, inspired by the Guideline on “[LEADER Local Development Strategies](#)” of the European Network for Rural Development:

**Step 1** Start by forming a small group of two or three committed actors, such as teachers, agricultural experts, farmers, or NGOs.

**Step 2** Carry out stakeholder mapping to identify additional actors, including local authorities, universities, and labour market representatives. Use this process to gradually expand the group and ensure involving women, youth, and other underrepresented groups.

**Figure 1. Key stakeholder engaged in drafting participatory agroecological curricula**



Source: Authors

**Step 3** Assess what members can realistically contribute in terms of time, skills, and information. Identify gaps in research expertise, technical



knowledge, or facilitation capacity, and build partnerships with universities, public agencies, or external experts to address them.

**Step 4.** Compile available resources, such as VET curricula, strategies, and labour market analyses, using a structured template. This makes it easier to see what knowledge already exists, where the gaps are, and how to avoid duplication. In the case of SEEDS project, the analysis has been carried out during the context analysis and during the presentation of the capacity building programme, there will be an introductory session on the results of the analysis.

**Step 5.** Define roles and responsibilities, set up mechanisms for dialogue, and agree on processes for curriculum development and piloting innovative practices. Over time, this platform becomes a space for collaboration and learning.

At this stage, the working group will have produced several key outputs such as the stakeholder map showing the range of actors involved and their potential roles, a database of group members, capturing their contact details, capacities, and organizational affiliations. The group will also compile an inventory of existing resources, highlighting both what is already available and the gaps that remain. Finally, these efforts will lead to an outline of priority needs, providing clear direction for how agroecology can be meaningfully integrated into VET.

## 2.2 Stakeholder engagement methods

Stakeholder participation is a cornerstone of developing a relevant and impactful curriculum that integrates agroecology in the VET system in SEEDS countries, through the LEADER approach. It empowers VET providers, students, farmers, and other community members to shape learning content that reflects their realities, challenges, and aspirations. Meaningful engagement strengthens both the legitimacy of the curriculum and its responsiveness to local needs, while fostering cooperation and knowledge-sharing across sectors.

During the previous phase of the project, each partner's methods for stakeholder engagement were collected and will be used to inform the roadmap, including:

**Workshops** bring together diverse participants in structured sessions that use tools like world cafés, flipcharts and group exercises.



**Co-designing activities** allow participants to collaboratively shape resources such as lesson plans, training modules, or creative spaces. This process ensures real-world accuracy, ownership, and long-term relevance of outcomes.

**Living labs** are interactive environments where participants experiment, co-create and test innovative solutions in real-life contexts.

**Focus groups** involve small-group discussions with a targeted audience to explore needs, challenges, and potential solutions in depth and are effective for uncovering insights that might not emerge in larger gatherings.

**Pilot testing** engages end users such as students, teachers, or youth workers in trying out new tools or resources before broader implementation. Feedback gathered in this stage helps refine materials and ensure their effectiveness.

The below table presents the most suitable engagement methods based on each stakeholder group key needs and priorities.

**Table 1. Recommended engagement methods based on the needs and priorities of each stakeholder group**

Stakeholder group	Needs and priorities	Recommended methods	Why this method?
VET providers	Relevant teaching materials, innovative pedagogies, capacity to integrate agroecology into curricula.	Workshops, co-designing, pilot testing	Workshops and co-design allow them to adapt content to teaching realities; pilot testing ensures materials are practical and effective in classrooms.
Students and learners	Hands-on learning, practical skills, opportunities to shape their own learning experiences.	Living Labs, co-designing, Pilot Testing	Living labs and pilot testing give students space to experiment and provide feedback; co-design ensures their voices shape training content.
Farmers	Solutions that reflect real farming challenges, space to share knowledge and practices.	Living Labs, Focus groups, workshops	Living labs allow direct experimentation in real contexts; focus groups capture in-depth insights; workshops support broader exchange.

Civil society	Inclusion, advocacy for sustainability, ensuring marginalized groups (women, youth) are represented.	Workshops, focus groups, co-designing	Workshops foster diverse participation, focus groups ensure marginalized voices are heard, and co-design secures ownership of outcomes.
Public institutions	Alignment with policies, local development priorities, and sustainable strategies.	Workshops, focus Groups	Workshops enable alignment with broader strategies; focus groups allow more targeted policy discussions.
Universities and researchers	Access to field data, collaboration opportunities, and testing of innovative practices.	Living Labs, co-designing	Living labs provide real-life research spaces; co-design connects scientific expertise with community needs.

Source: Authors

To illustrate the engagement methods in action, Box 1 presents the **Village Vision Fair<sup>2</sup>**.

### What is the village fair festival?

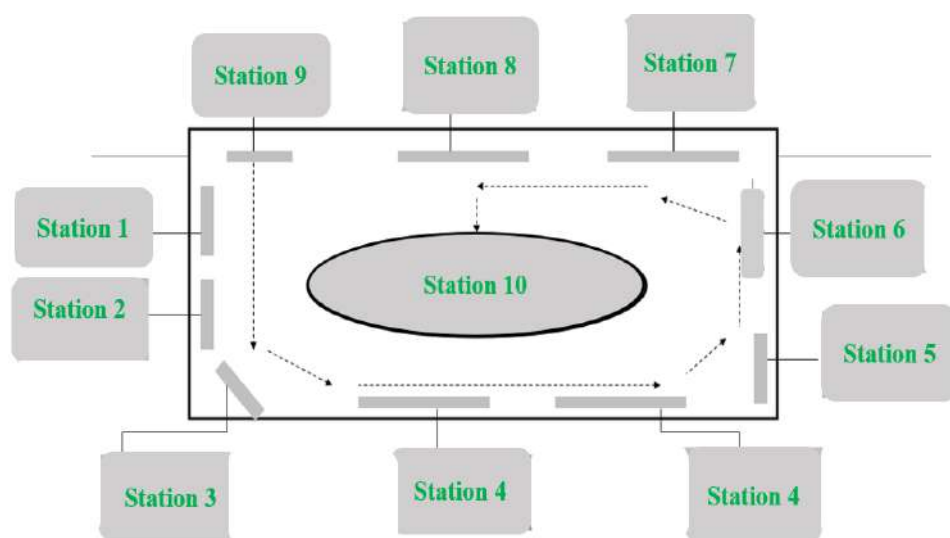
#### Aim

The Village Fair Festival is an informal participatory forum to elicit input from specific target groups such as VET learners, teachers, public institutions, local communities etc.

#### Method

- Interactive forum to gather stakeholders information on the curriculum as well as to have the opportunity to inform the public about the curriculum.
- Identifying a broad set of needs and priorities by different perspectives.

**Instructions:** To organize the village fair festival, set up a hall with 10 flip charts placed around the room, each representing a different “station.” On every flip chart, write a guiding question related to the theme of the festival. As participants enter, invite them to walk through the room, stopping at each station to read the question and write down their thoughts, ideas, or experiences directly on the chart. This process ensures that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to all questions.



#### Ideas for fair stations

**Station 1:** Introduction by organizers- purpose of the activity, methodology and rules for participation.

**Station 2:** What do I value most in our current curriculum?

**Station 3:** What are the main gaps in the existing curriculum?

**Station 4:** How can the curriculum better prepare students for the labor market?

**Station 5:** How can practical learning (internships, fieldwork, vocational practice) be improved?

**Station 6:** How can cultural and social dimensions be integrated into the curriculum?

**Station 7:** How can learning environments be improved to support the integration of the agroecology in the curriculum?

**Station 8:** How can sustainability and environmental topics (green skills, climate change) be included in the curriculum?

**Station 9:** How do you envision the ideal curriculum for your that integrates agroecology in 10 years?

<sup>2</sup> Field Guide and Toolkit on Participatory Local Development Planning, prepared by the Urban Institute (Washington, DC) in collaboration with the Albanian Development Fund (2003), as part of the World Bank-financed Second Community Works Program. The methodology was piloted in five communes and refined through participant observation and the experiences of the commune participants



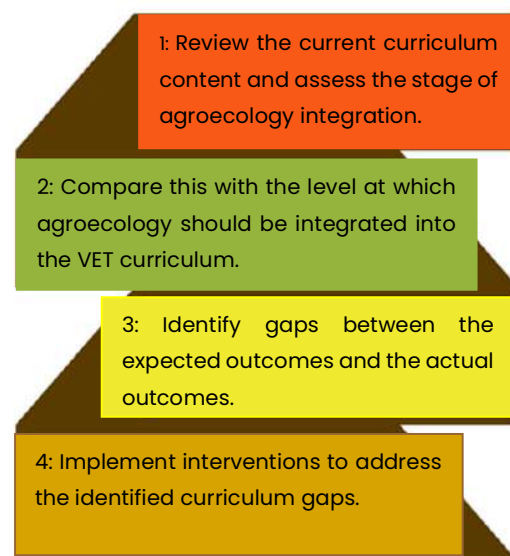
### 3. JOINING UP ALL PIECES – DRAFTING THE CURRICULA

#### 3.1 Defining the main stakeholders that will be included in developing and applying the curricula

The LEADER approach emphasizes the clear definition of the area and population covered by a Local Development Strategy, ensuring that the strategy is rooted in a coherent territory with sufficient social, economic, and environmental relevance to be viable (ENRD, 2016). In the same spirit, and based on LEADER principles, defining the main stakeholders involved in drafting and implementing the curriculum is essential to ensure that the roadmap responds to the specific capacities and needs of those driving the transition towards agroecology. Accordingly, the roadmap for integrating agroecology into the VET system will engage VET learners, farmers' organizations, NGOs, local authorities, policymakers, and educational institutions, thereby expanding knowledge and fostering integration of agroecology in the VET system.

#### 3.2 Skills gap analysis and best practices

Conducting a skills-gap analysis begins by reviewing the current curriculum to clearly identify the specific, measurable skills and knowledge learners are expected to acquire upon completion. Once identified, implement targeted interventions such as revising curriculum content and adapting teaching methods. It is very important that this process should be ongoing by monitoring the effectiveness of interventions, adjust strategies as needed, and involve key stakeholders such as farms, farmers' organizations, food processing businesses etc. in feedback and evaluation (TVET Trainer, 2022).



In SEEDS countries the integration of agroecology in the VET system still requires a big effort, with some exceptions like in France. Starting from this awareness, interviews to key agricultural informants revealed which are the main skills gaps in terms of agroecology education. Main skills gaps in integrating agroecology in the VET curriculum identified by analysing the information from the interviews conducted in SEEDS countries are as follows:

**1. Lack of acknowledgment of agroecology as a comprehensive discipline.**

In most cases agroecology is included indirectly in modules such as organic agriculture, environment and sustainable development. While these modules reference principles like biodiversity, soil and water conservation, and reduced chemical use, they do not include the holistic and systemic nature of agroecology that includes the social, economic and environmental dimensions. This emphasises the need to develop theoretical curricula which clarify the theoretical aspects of agroecology (Best practice)

**2. Lack of knowledge of agricultural good practices.** The interviews with key stakeholders from the SEEDS countries revealed that, practical training on agroecology is often lacking in VET system. Laboratory sessions, field visits, and structured collaboration with universities, companies, and farms are limited, mainly due to funding constraints. In cases when practice is included, such as in agrotourism modules, didactic farms, or greenhouse work, students demonstrate stronger understanding, highlighting the need for expanded work-based learning opportunities. (Best practice)

**3. Outdated curricula which still focus on conventional agricultural models.**

Curricula often remains focused in conventional agricultural models, focusing on input substitution rather than a full rethinking of the farm as an ecosystem. Key topics insufficiently addressed include soil ecology and fertility, biodiversity management, circular economy, short supply chains, and multifunctional farm models. This gap limits learners' ability to develop the ecological literacy required for sustainable resource management. (Best practice)

**4. Limited integration of green skills in VET system.** Although some curricula equip students with technical skills and market knowledge, they rarely integrate green skills such as competencies related to sustainable land use, water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and the reduction of excessive chemical usage. Likewise, practices in food processing, packaging and transportation are often overlooked, despite the importance of innovations such as biodegradable packaging materials and energy-efficient logistics in advancing agroecology. (Best practice)

**5. Lack of the integration of social and political principles in the curriculum.**

While some curricula integrate aspects of organic farming and sustainability, they overlook the social and political principles of agroecology, such as solidarity, cooperation, participatory knowledge creation, and community resilience. This limits the potential of education to

prepare learners not only as skilled workers but also as engaged citizens capable of contributing to sustainable and equitable food systems. (*Best practice*)

### 3.3 SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis on the integration of agroecology into curriculum in VET system should begin by identifying internal factors, such as the extent to which current curricula includes the principles of agroecology, the availability of qualified teachers, and the adequacy of training facilities. These strengths and weaknesses are within the education system's control and determine its readiness to embed agroecology principles. At the same time, external factors such as labour market needs, national agricultural and education policies and donors support must be assessed to understand the context that influences integration of agroecology in curriculum in the VET system.

In the Table 1 is presented a detailed SWOT on the integration of agroecology in curricula in VET system in SEEDS countries based on the previous analyses conducted by each partner.

**Table 2. SWOT analysis on integrating agroecology in curricula in VET system in SEEDS countries**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strong traditions of family-based farming already align with agroecological principles.</li> <li>○ Rich biodiversity and agro-ecological landscapes provide natural conditions for diversified farming and using agroecological practices.</li> <li>○ Youth and women's involvement in rural livelihoods presents a basis for inclusive approaches to innovation and skill development.</li> <li>○ Pilot projects and donor-funded initiatives have introduced elements of organic agriculture, sustainable soil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Absent or limited integration of the agroecology into curricula in VET system.</li> <li>○ Limited practical training infrastructure, with few demonstration farms, laboratories, or partnerships with agroecological producers.</li> <li>○ Limited capacities of teachers in embracing the principles of agroecology and participatory pedagogies.</li> <li>○ Reliance on short-term, donor-funded projects, leading to fragmentation and lack of</li> </ul>



<p>management etc. in educational programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In EU countries such as France there is a strong national commitment to agroecology, embedded in law and strategy.</li> </ul>	<p>systemic integration in education and training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Limited formal recognition of agroecology in national curricula and agricultural policies.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EU Green Deal, Farm to Fork Strategy, and CAP reforms encourage sustainable agriculture, offering both funding opportunities and policy alignment for agroecology integration.</li> <li>○ Potential for regional cooperation among SEEDS countries through cross-border training, curriculum harmonization and exchange programs.</li> <li>○ Expanding markets for organic, fair trade, and locally branded products create economic incentives for agroecological practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Policy instability and weak institutional commitment to agroecology in SEEDS countries hinder long-term integration into curricula and strategies.</li> <li>○ Migration from rural areas reduces the availability of the workforce that can implement agroecological practices.</li> <li>○ Climate change pressures create additional stress on farming systems that lack adaptive capacity.</li> <li>○ In WB-6 countries, public policies are oriented toward competitiveness increase, fosters high-input agriculture.</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Vision, mission and objectives

#### Vision

*The roadmap on participatory agroecological curriculum development envisions a future where agroecology is integrated into curricula in the VET system through participatory and inclusive approaches. This dynamic, participatory, and practice-oriented curriculum equips learners with green skills, empowers teachers and institutions, and strengthens food sovereignty. Our vision is to create a more competitive VET system in the green and sustainable sector, increasing employment opportunities for VET learners, while fostering environmental stewardship and national strategies for sustainable education.*

## **Mission**

Our mission is to co-develop and implement participatory agroecological curricula that bring together scientific knowledge, traditional practices, and hands-on learning within the VET system. By engaging farmers, learners, educators, policymakers and communities in an inclusive co-creation process, we aim to design training that is context-specific, future-oriented, and impactful. Through this collaborative approach, we will strengthen the capacities of VET sectors, equip learners with valuable green skills to promote sustainable development, advance food sovereignty.

## **Objectives**

General objective: Developing and piloting participatory agroecological curricula within the VET system that empower learners and educators, strengthen food sovereignty, and contribute to a more competitive, sustainable, and employment-oriented green sector in VET countries.

## **Specific objectives and indicators**

1. Designing, co-creating and integrating agroecology modules into VET existing curricula through participatory and inclusive approaches that reflect local contexts, needs, and labour market demands, ensuring relevance, adaptability, and long-term sustainability. Indicators:
  - Number of SEEDS LABs conducted with diverse stakeholder representation in SEEDS countries.
  - Number of agroecology modules developed and piloted within VET curricula.
  - Number of VET institutions adopting newly developed agroecology modules.
  - Percentage of stakeholders feeling included during the curriculum design process.
2. Strengthening skills, knowledge and methodological capacities of VET institutions, teachers, and trainers in participatory pedagogy, agroecological practices, and innovative teaching tools, enabling them to deliver dynamic, practice-oriented, and learner-centred education. Indicators:
  - Number of teachers and trainers trained in participatory pedagogy and agroecological practices.
  - Proportion of trained educators applying participatory teaching methods in their courses.

- Percentage of educators reporting improved knowledge and competences in delivering agroecology training.
3. Providing VET learners with comprehensive green skills, practical competencies, and entrepreneurial mindsets that increase employment, support sustainable livelihoods, and enable them to act as change agents in their communities and the wider green economy. Indicators:
- Number of VET learners reached through the piloting activities.
  - Percentage of VET learners that report through practical assessments.
  - Percentage of learners reporting increased confidence in applying agroecological knowledge in their communities.

## 4. DOCUMENTING THE BOTTOM-UP PROCESS

Documenting the bottom-up process of drafting the curriculum is essential to capture how the experiences, perspectives and knowledge relevant stakeholders have informed its design. This process ensures that the curriculum is not only participatory, but also rooted in the realities of those who will use and benefit from it, making it more responsive to local needs and capacities. Clear documentation also provides transparency and accountability, demonstrating the inclusiveness of the approach and reinforcing the legitimacy of the final product. In the annexes section, a template that can facilitate in documenting the process is provided. ([refer to Annex C](#))

## 5. IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULA IN THE VET SYSTEM – SEEDS COUNTRIES

To support the implementation of the participatory curriculum, the SEEDS consortium will develop and deliver three **Learning Units (LUs)** as outlined in Task 3.1 of the project. These include: **LU 1 – Framing agroecological theory**, which explores the conceptual, environmental, and political foundations of agroecology; **LU 2 – Practicing agroecological principles**, which focuses on applying agroecological methods in field-based settings; and **LU 3 – Participatory and community-engagement approaches**, which equips VET educators with inclusive, learner-centred and territorially rooted teaching practices. These units will be piloted across partner countries during the Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions and will serve as a backbone



for curriculum delivery in VET centres. The guidance provided in this chapter ensures that the learning environment, delivery formats, and institutional structures are fully aligned with the content and pedagogical vision of these three learning units.

Once the participatory agroecological curriculum is co-created and validated, its effective implementation within the VET system is critical for ensuring its impact. This phase translates ideas into learning experiences and requires alignment with institutional structures, local priorities, and national qualifications frameworks. Agroecological education, by nature, should be experiential, place-based, and community-embedded. Implementation should therefore balance formal instruction, practical learning, and local ecosystem integration.

## **5.1 Engaging VET institutions and authorities**

Start by securing formal endorsement from institutional and policy stakeholders:

- Present the final curriculum draft to school boards, Ministries of Education, and Agricultural Authorities, ensuring alignment with national qualification frameworks (EQF or AQF).
- Where possible, embed the modules into existing programs (e.g., horticulture, organic agriculture, rural entrepreneurship) or create elective/optional modules aligned with agroecological competencies.

*Refer to CEDEFOP's guidance on modular integration and lifelong learning systems (CEDEFOP, 2023).*

## **5.2 Training of Trainers (ToT)**

Teachers and trainers must be equipped to deliver agroecological content using participatory, learner-centered methods:

- Organize Training of Trainers sessions focused on:
  - Agroecology theory and principles (HLPE, FAO frameworks)
  - Community-based and systems thinking approaches
  - Participatory methodologies (field observation, problem-based learning, reflective dialogue)
  - Evaluation of soft and green skills

- Engage farmers, researchers, and NGOs as co-facilitators and resource persons.

These ToTs directly support WP3 deliverable D3.3 – a capacity-building package to be piloted in 6 countries.

*UNESCO-UNEVOC emphasizes continuous professional development for green skills in VET (UNESCO, 2022).*

### **5.3 Learning environments and infrastructure**

Agroecology must be taught through learning by doing:

- Establish or strengthen school gardens, demonstration plots, compost stations, seed-saving corners, and on-farm learning spaces.
- Partner with local agroecological farms or cooperatives to enable fieldwork and community placements.
- Use living labs (SEEDS Labs) as ongoing engagement and co-learning spaces.

*Manual of Agroecology (2025) highlights successful integration of agroecology in Lycées Agricoles (France) and Sicilian regional VET schools through practical modules.*

### **5.4 Delivery methods and platforms**

A blended learning model is recommended:

- Face-to-face delivery for hands-on activities, farm visits, and group projects.
- Online platforms for theoretical content, case studies, and international exchange:
  - Moodle, Google Classroom, or national e-learning portals (where available).
  - Recorded webinars and short video modules on key agroecology themes (e.g., soil health, biodiversity, food sovereignty).
  - Online reflection journals, discussion forums, and peer review assignments.

*Erasmus+ and EU digital education frameworks support hybrid models for VET modernization (European Commission, 2021).*

## 5.5 Stakeholder and community involvement

Involve community actors directly in curriculum rollout:

- Invite farmers, local seed keepers, agroecology activists, and municipal officials to act as guest speakers or facilitators.
- Organize community open days to showcase learner projects and encourage cross-generational exchange.
- Create a feedback mechanism (surveys, focus groups) for stakeholders to continuously shape delivery.

## 5.6 Documentation and reporting

VET providers should:

- Use logbooks, reflection journals, and competency checklists to track student progress.
- Report implementation progress to the SEEDS Network Committee, sharing good practices and challenges.
- Participate in cross-border learning exchanges facilitated by the consortium.

# 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is essential for ensuring that the participatory agroecological curriculum developed through the SEEDS project is not only implemented as planned, but is also delivering meaningful outcomes for learners, VET providers, and the broader community. A strong M&E system helps track progress, identify challenges early, capture success stories, and continuously improve the curriculum based on real feedback.

Unlike conventional subjects, **agroecology requires context-specific, experience-based learning**. Therefore, M&E tools must be both **quantitative and qualitative**, combining hard data (e.g. number of students trained) with more nuanced insights (e.g. student reflections, stakeholder satisfaction, behavioural change).



## What we monitor and why

The M&E system tracks three key areas:

1. **Curriculum implementation** – Are the modules being delivered as designed?
2. **Stakeholder engagement** – Are farmers, students, and trainers actively involved?
3. **Learning and impact outcomes** – Are learners acquiring green/agroecological competencies, and is the local system benefiting?

To support this, the SEEDS consortium proposes the following **practical M&E template** to be used by all partner institutions.

**Table 3. SEEDS Agroecology Curriculum – M&E Framework**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Responsible Actor</b>
<b>SO1: Designing, co-creating and integrating agroecology modules into VET curricula</b>	Number of SEEDS Labs conducted with diverse stakeholder participation	Workshop reports, attendance sheets	Quarterly	Local coordinators, WP2 & WP3 leads
	Number of agroecology modules developed and piloted	Curriculum drafts, institutional validation docs	Annually	VET institutions, Curriculum WG
	Number of VET institutions adopting new modules	Institutional declarations, integration reports	End of Year 2	National VET partners, WP3 leader
	% of stakeholders feeling included	Stakeholder feedback	Post-Lab / post-	SEEDS Network Committee

	during curriculum design	forms, surveys	design phase	
<b>SO2: Strengthening skills and capacities of VET educators</b>	Number of trainers trained in participatory agroecological pedagogy	ToT participant lists, training reports	Post-training	WP3 lead, Local training teams
	Proportion of trained educators applying participatory methods	Observation logs, teaching reflections	Each semester	School pedagogy leads
	% of educators reporting improved competence in delivering agroecology	Pre/post surveys, feedback forms	After ToT & piloting phase	WP3 evaluator, trainers
<b>SO3: Empowering VET learners with green skills and entrepreneurship</b>	Number of VET learners reached during pilot	Class registers, school reports	Midterm & final	VET centres, WP3 lead
	% of learners who demonstrate skills in practical assessments	Field reports, competency checklists	End of module	Trainers, external observers
	% of learners reporting confidence to apply agroecological knowledge	Post-module learner feedback	End of module	Teachers, WP3 evaluator

## How we use the Data

Data is collected by VET institutions and local coordinators, and then shared with the SEEDS consortium representatives. Together, they will:

- Hold annual review sessions to assess progress.
- Compare outcomes across partner countries.
- Identify transferable innovations and areas needing support.
- Document success stories for dissemination and policy advocacy.

In addition, qualitative findings (photos, quotes, stories from the field) will be compiled into a **“Living Evaluation Portfolio”**, providing a human-centered view of the curriculum’s evolution. Monitoring and evaluation are not just about checking boxes, but about **learning, adapting, and growing**. By embedding M&E into every phase of implementation, this roadmap ensures that agroecological VET is not only taught, but lived, evolving with learners, educators, and the communities they serve.

All data will feed into the SEEDS M&E system, and a midterm and final review will be conducted by the SEEDS consortium. This will ensure real-time feedback loops and the ability to adjust implementation where necessary.

## 7. ACTION PLAN

A well-structured action plan is essential to move from curriculum design to full implementation. This section outlines the core activities, tools, and success indicators that will guide SEEDS partners throughout the rollout process. The framework is based on a phased implementation model, ensuring structured coordination, regular feedback, and adaptability across the SEEDS countries.

### 7.1 Concrete activities and deliverables

The implementation of the participatory agroecology curriculum will take place in five key phases:

Phase	Key Activities	Deliverables	Timeline
Phase 1: Preparation	Finalize Roadmap and Manual; Map stakeholders; Form curriculum working groups	Roadmap document; Stakeholder list; SEEDS Network Committee operational	Months 1–4
Phase 2: Co-creation	Run SEEDS Labs; Facilitate co-design workshops; Gather inputs from farmers, CSOs, learners	Draft curriculum outline; Vision, objectives, learning outcomes	Months 5–8
Phase 3: Capacity Building	Conduct Training of Trainers (ToT); Share best practices from Manual; Develop facilitation guides	Trained trainers; Shared resource repository; Evaluation tools	Months 9–12
Phase 4: Pilot Implementation	Deliver modules in selected VET centres; Run practice-based sessions (e.g. in gardens/farms)	Pilot curricula tested; Implementation reports from each partner	Months 13–18
Phase 5: Evaluation and Scaling	Collect learner feedback; Conduct SWOT/M&E workshops; Refine content	Finalized curricula; Evaluation report; Policy briefs	Months 19–24

These activities will be carried out in partnership with VET schools, local authorities, civil society, and agroecological producers.

## 7.2 Tools and resources

To support these activities, SEEDS provides a set of tools and platforms that ensure consistency and adaptability across partner countries:



- **Templates and guides:**

- 1) Stakeholder Mapping Template
- 2) Curriculum Framework Template (WP3 – modules, learning outcomes)
- 3) Workshop Facilitation Guide for SEEDS Labs
- 4) Trainer Preparation Checklist (WP3)
- 5) M&E Reporting Template (Excel)

- **Platforms:**

- 1) Google Drive shared workspace
- 2) Learning Management System (Moodle or national equivalents)
- 3) Online communication tools: Zoom, Teams, etc. (for Labs and ToT)

- **Capacity-Building materials:**

- 1) SEEDS Manual of Agroecology (core knowledge base)
- 2) Best Practice Compendium (Italy, Greece, France, WB countries)
- 3) Training modules and presentations
- 4) Visual content: infographics, diagrams, real-life case studies

All partners will have access to a common resource hub, managed by the SEEDS coordination team, to ensure smooth sharing of content and updates.

### 7.3 Monitoring indicators and success criteria

To ensure accountability and guide learning, the following key indicators and criteria will be tracked:

Objective	Indicators	Success Criteria
Curriculum co-creation	No. of SEEDS Labs held; No. of stakeholders involved in design	Minimum 1 Labs per country; ≥ 10 stakeholders engaged
Trainer readiness	No. of ToTs held; Trainer evaluation scores; % of educators applying participatory methods	At least 6 trainers trained per country; ≥80% trainer satisfaction

Learner participation	No. of learners enrolled in pilot curricula; % of learners assessed practically	Minimum 36 learners reached across 6 countries; ≥50% demonstrate practical competence
Practice-based learning	% of learning hours delivered through practice-based methods (gardens, farms)	≥40% of learning hours must be hands-on or field-based – 25 hours
Stakeholder ownership	Frequency of stakeholder feedback points (e.g. surveys, focus groups)	≥3 structured stakeholder feedback sessions per country
Curriculum refinement	No. of curriculum revisions made based on M&E results	At least 2 major curriculum updates implemented before rollout

This framework is designed to be both ambitious and realistic. It leverages the diversity of the SEEDS partnership while ensuring local ownership and territorial relevance. With clear responsibilities, shared tools, and a strong commitment to continuous learning, this action plan sets the groundwork for transforming agroecology from a concept into a lived curriculum experience within the VET sector.

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# ANNEXES

## Annex A. Best practices

Annex A.1 Best practice related to agroecology as a discipline.

Country	Albania
Implemented by	Albanian Network for Rural Development
Title of Document	<i>Agroecology–Nurturing Sustainable Food Systems</i>
Author:	Professor Adrian Doko, Agricultural University of Tirana
Source/Publisher:	Not published, to access <a href="mailto:info@anrd.al">info@anrd.al</a> .
Type of document	Educational Resource/Training Module
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief summary</b></p> <p>The “<i>Agroecology–Nurturing Sustainable Food Systems</i>” training module was developed in the frame of the Farm to Fork Academy for Green Western Balkans–Our Shared European Future. Designed by professors from the Agricultural University of Tirana, this module has served as a key educational resource for the Training of Trainers targeting participants from six Western Balkans countries. An adapted version of the training module is used for delivering the national training for grassroots organization in each of the 6-WB. The module supports regional capacity-building efforts aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture practices in alignment with EU policies and sustainability goals.</p> <p>The training module aims to enhance participants' understanding of agroecology and its role in fostering sustainable food systems. It defines agroecology and its principles while exploring its socio-economic and environmental advantages. The module examines sustainable agriculture beyond environmental concerns by addressing human values and social relations. It presents tools and methodologies for sustainable agricultural practices, aligning agroecology with EU policies, the Green Deal, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Furthermore, it encourages knowledge-based agricultural economies and digital transformation in the agricultural sector.</p> <p>This module employs a multidisciplinary approach that combines theoretical frameworks with practical applications. It includes case studies and best practices in sustainable agricultural systems, alongside analysis</p>	

tools for evaluating EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) impacts and global agricultural trade trends. Participants explore certification schemes such as Organic Farming, Protected Designation of Origin, Protected Geographical Indication, and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed.

The Agroecology module also delves into sustainable agricultural production systems, including permaculture, agroforestry, silvopasture, and integrated farming systems. Digital tools and innovations are examined to enhance sustainability, addressing soil resilience, plant reproductive materials, and the reduction of chemical inputs.

The training module provides a comprehensive scope by covering agroecological principles, sustainable agriculture practices, and the integration of EU agricultural policies. It is highly practical, focusing on real-world applications, including certification schemes, sustainable forestry, and alternative farming systems. The module strongly aligns with the EU Green Deal and CAP tools for digitalization, while also addressing food and nutrition security. Its regional impact is significant, as it is tailored to the Western Balkans context, fostering regional cooperation and alignment with European sustainability standards.

The module effectively integrates agroecology into the educational framework by providing a structured, policy-aligned, and practice-oriented curriculum. It emphasizes the interconnection between economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainability, ensuring a holistic approach to agricultural development. By equipping learners with essential knowledge and tools, the module contributes to strengthening sustainable food systems and advancing green agricultural practices.

### **Core competencies, skills, or learning outcomes**

Understanding and applying agroecological principles to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Implementing organic farming methods, permaculture principles, integrated farming, agroforestry and silvopasture systems to promote sustainable land use.

Supporting the development of local and regional food markets that prioritize sustainability.

Analysing the interconnectedness of food production, consumption, and environmental sustainability.

Understanding the role of agroecology in ensuring food security and resilience against climate change.



Exploring sustainable certification schemes such as Organic Farming, PDO, PGI, and TSG.

Gaining insights into the EU's CAP and its tools for promoting sustainability.

Understanding the role of agroecology in the EU Green Deal and SDGs.

Developing skills in digital agriculture and precision farming for sustainability.

Addressing environmental challenges such as soil degradation, deforestation, and pollution through sustainable practices.

#### Annex A.2 Best practice in addressing imbalance between theory and practice

Country	Greece
Implemented by	"The Southern Lights" NGO
Title of Document	Regenerative Farming Greece
Publication link:	<a href="https://regenerativefarminggreece.org/">https://regenerativefarminggreece.org/</a>
Source/Publisher:	Regenerative Farming Greece
Type of document	Educational programme

#### **Brief summary**

In today's world there is a growing demand for the adoption of circular economy and sustainable development practices. The agricultural sector is one of the critical sectors in this transition. Experts and farmers are searching for ways to farm in accordance with new agroecological concepts. Regenerative Farming Greece aspires to encourage farmers in Greece to adopt agroecological approaches and implement ecological management practices.

The project's core objective is to contribute to the transition of Greek farming into a regenerative one. To achieve this, it aspires to equip Greek farmers with the knowledge, the tools and the motivation to create Regenerative farming ecosystems. Knowledge is shared through the participation of interested parties in various farmers networks where there is room for knowledge exchange and cooperation. On its website, a large platform featuring educational videos is provided. The practical level of the program entails the development of a network of pilot farms in various Greek rural cities. In these pilot farms, different agricultural models are

being represented. The organization along, with the owner of the farm, designs and provides specialized guidance to turn the farm from “a degenerating monoculture to an abundant and resilient regenerative farming operation”.

Agroecology is not only integrated, but it's the main focus of the project. Some of the main strategies implemented in pilot farms are water management, agroforestry, soil fertility, management of grazing operations, land-planning and education on regenerative ecology. The main strength of the program is that it engages the farming community in learning and hopefully adopting innovative modern farming methods in four ways: through education in written, oral and video form; through specialized guidance and information about how a farm could be transformed to a regenerative one; through practical examples which is the pilot farms; through the farm networks.

In conclusion, Regenerative Farming Greece is playing an important role in promoting the transition towards sustainable agricultural practices in Greece. By equipping farmers with the necessary knowledge, tools, and motivation, the project aims to shift Greek farming towards agroecological and regenerative methods. Through a combination of educational resources, hands-on guidance, and practical examples via pilot farms, the initiative is creating a platform for knowledge exchange and sectoral collaboration. The project's emphasis on key strategies such as water management, agroforestry, and soil fertility management promotes a holistic approach to building resilient and sustainable farming systems. Ultimately, Regenerative Farming Greece is not only contributing to the advancement of regenerative agriculture but also empowering farmers to embrace sustainable agroecological farming methods.

### **Core competencies, skills, or learning outcomes**

Through the videos (including topics about plant nutrition, agroforestry, compost and plant food) and the library (Studies, Books, Documentaries, Podcasts about a large variety of topics of agroecological interest) provided on the project's website every interested farmer can expand his/her knowledge and research agroecology at their own pace and level. Furthermore, tools such as regenerative hydrological designs (water management), Perennial agriculture for better biodiversity levels (agroforestry), basic concepts of soil fertility, integration of livestock in grazing operations (holistic approach to battle deforestation) were provided to understand interconnection of farm and land by design, and proper education of farmers are fundamental farming techniques.

Regarding community engagement, it is realized by the local networks established by the organization in multiple farming locations around Greece.

### Annex A.3 Best practice on technical training diversification

Country	Italy
Implemented by	<a href="#">"Terra! Riavvia il Pianeta" environmental organization"</a>
Title of Document Author(s): Source/Publisher:	<a href="https://www.associazioneterra.it/terra-about-us">https://www.associazioneterra.it/terra-about-us</a>
Type of document	Educational programme and educational resource
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief summary</b></p> <p>The "<a href="#">Scuola della Terra – Emilio Sereni</a>" is an educational initiative by Terra! Environmental organization aimed at training young individuals in agroecology and sustainable food systems. Established with the support of the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation, the school has trained over 120 students in seven editions and collaborated with 70 experts and a network of 30 farms.</p> <p>The program is structured to combine theoretical knowledge with practical experiences, engaging agronomists, researchers, professors, and agricultural practitioners. The curriculum covers key agroecological dimensions, including regenerative agriculture, biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, and sustainable water management. The course also promotes food sovereignty and the transition towards ecological food systems.</p> <p>The training format consists of online or in-person sessions, with the 8<sup>th</sup> edition including six online lessons totalling 12 hours. These sessions are delivered by experts in sustainable food systems, climate change, and agroecological practices. The school has facilitated employment opportunities for trainees, with 2/3 of past participants securing jobs in related fields.</p>	

In addition to the "Scuola della Terra – Emilio Sereni," Associazione Terra! also offers [various independent courses](#), most of which are free and accessible online. These courses cover a wide range of topics related to sustainable food systems and agroecology:

- The Agricultural Enterprise: Funds, Tools, Resources (paid course);
- Organic Agriculture;
- BRF and other agricultural techniques;
- Food Policy and Activism;
- Agricultural Biodiversity;
- Water Management in Agriculture;
- Sustainable Supply Chains;
- Ecological Restaurant Management.

These separate courses provide additional training opportunities for individuals interested in deepening their knowledge in specific areas of sustainability and agroecology

### **Core competencies, skills, or learning outcomes**

Based on the description of the "Scuola della Terra – Emilio Sereni" and related training programs by Associazione Terra!, several key competencies and learning outcomes emerge that reflect a grounded, practical, and political approach to agroecology education:

- **Agroecological farming practices:** students gain knowledge in regenerative agriculture, organic production, and biodiversity conservation, while also addressing climate adaptation and sustainable water management
- **Systems Thinking in Food and Agriculture:** the program encourages participants to think beyond the farm and understand the interconnections within food systems, from production to consumption. This includes reflections on food sovereignty, local economies, and the social and environmental impacts of agricultural choices;
- **Civic engagement and food policy literacy:** through courses on activism and governance, learners are introduced to the political dimensions of food systems and are encouraged to become active agents of change. This includes developing awareness of the structural barriers to sustainable agriculture and exploring strategies for influencing policy and promoting equitable food systems
- **Entrepreneurial and organizational skills:** offering insights into running sustainable agricultural businesses, accessing funding, and managing ecological food enterprises. These practical skills are key for those aiming to transition into agroecological professions or start community-based food initiatives.



#### Annex A.4 Best practice in green skills integration

Country	Albania and Kosovo
Implemented by	VIS Albania
Title of Document Author(s):	<i>Green Competences and Green Economy</i> Vis Albania
Source/Publisher:	VIS Albania, not published, to access <a href="mailto:vis.albania@volint.it">vis.albania@volint.it</a>
Type of document	Educational Resource/ Educational programme

#### **Brief summary**

“Green Competences and Green Economy” module, developed by VIS Albania as part of the Cultivating project, provides a structured educational framework aimed at integrating sustainability principles into the agri-food sector. It explores the concept of a green economy, emphasizing the need to reduce environmental risks while promoting sustainable development. This approach aligns with global efforts to transition towards environmentally friendly economic models that balance growth with ecological preservation.

The primary objective of the module is to equip learners with essential knowledge and skills related to green competences. It introduces the fundamental principles of a green economy, explaining key concepts such as sustainability, circular economy models, and environmental conservation. Additionally, it evaluates the impact of green policies on businesses and society, particularly in terms of carbon pricing, renewable energy incentives, and sustainable supply chains. The module further aims to foster the application of sustainable practices in economic decision-making by teaching methodologies such as life-cycle assessments, green investment analysis, and resource efficiency strategies. Beyond theory, it also highlights the role of green competences in enhancing employability, ensuring that learners are prepared for emerging job opportunities in sectors focused on sustainability.

The curriculum is structured into five modules, each addressing different aspects of sustainability within the agri-food sector. The first module introduces the green economy and the necessity of integrating sustainable policies into economic structures. The second module focuses on green competences within agriculture, emphasizing practices such as organic farming, agroecology, precision agriculture, and resource management. The third module examines the environmental footprint of

traditional farming and food production, highlighting concerns such as land use, water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and excessive chemical usage. The fourth module explores sustainable practices in food processing, packaging, and transportation, stressing the importance of innovations like biodegradable packaging materials, energy-efficient logistics, and renewable energy in food production. The final module discusses the relevance of green competences in enhancing employability, demonstrating how sustainability-oriented skills can improve career prospects and contribute to a more environmentally responsible workforce.

Agroecology is integrated as a fundamental component within the curriculum, recognizing its role in creating resilient and sustainable farming systems. The document emphasizes biodiversity conservation, soil health, and efficient water use as essential aspects of agroecology. It also promotes organic farming, regenerative agriculture, and integrated pest management as viable alternatives to conventional agricultural methods that often rely on chemical inputs. By encouraging the adoption of precision agriculture and climate-resilient farming techniques, the curriculum prepares individuals to respond to environmental challenges while ensuring food security and economic viability.

#### **The core competencies, skills, or learning outcomes**

- Organic farming principles, including the reduction of chemical inputs and reliance on natural ecological processes.
- Precision agriculture techniques, such as data-driven farming using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and sensor-based irrigation systems.
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM), promoting biological pest control and minimizing pesticide use.
- Agroforestry and polyculture farming, integrating diverse plant species to improve soil fertility and biodiversity.
- Water-efficient irrigation methods, such as drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting, to improve resource use.
- Participatory approaches in sustainable farming, encouraging farmers and local communities to share knowledge and implement ecological practices.
- Understanding food production cycles and their environmental impacts, with a focus on sustainability.
- Circular economy principles in agriculture, including waste reduction, composting, and the repurposing of agricultural by-products.

- Traditional and indigenous farming knowledge and its integration with modern agroecological techniques.
- Knowledge of agricultural policies at local, national, and international levels, particularly those aligned with the European Green Deal.
- Understanding of environmental regulations and subsidies that promote sustainable agricultural practices.
- Advocacy skills for promoting sustainable farming policies and encouraging institutional support for agroecology.

Annex A.5 Best practice on integration of social and political principles in the curriculum

Country	Italy
<b>Implemented by</b>	<a href="#">Scola Campesina Aps</a> (IT), in collaboration with the <a href="#">Grassroots Innovations Assembly for Agroecology</a> (GIA), <a href="#">University of Vermont's Institute for Agroecology</a> and <a href="#">Stats4SD</a> , with support from the <a href="#">McKnight Foundation</a>
<b>Title of Document</b> <b>Author(s):</b>	<a href="#">Agroecology and Innovations Disrupting Industrial Discourse by Organising Grassroots Innovation</a>
<b>Source/Publisher:</b>	<a href="#">University of Vermont's Institute for Agroecology</a> and <a href="#">Stats4SD</a> , with support from the <a href="#">McKnight Foundation</a>
<b>Type of document</b>	<b>Curriculum framework and educational programme</b>

### Brief summary

The "[Agroecology and Innovations](#)" course is an international training initiative designed to challenge the industrial discourse on innovation and promote grassroots agroecological knowledge systems. The course is developed and taught by Scola Campesina Aps, in collaboration with the Grassroots Innovations Assembly for Agroecology (GIA), and offered by the University of Vermont's Institute for Agroecology with support from Stats4SD and the McKnight Foundation.

The course provides a critical perspective on how extractive technology actors influence food systems and how grassroots organizations can reclaim innovation through agroecological practices. It combines theoretical learning with real-world case studies, exploring key themes such as:

- The bottom-up knowledge systems necessary for developing agroecological innovations.
- The political and economic context of innovation in food systems.
- The role of grassroots organizations in fostering local innovations.
- Strategies for protecting and scaling agroecological innovations.

The course is designed for civil society organizations, researchers, students, food producers, and NGOs working in the agroecology sector. It follows a blended learning model, with seven online sessions running from March 11th to April 16th. Participants engage in video lectures, group discussions, peer learning, and independent study, culminating in the development of a strategy or work plan to enhance innovation in their own organizations.

Course structure:

- **Introduction:** Overview of learning outcomes, methodology, and course structure.
- **Day 1:** Grassroots learning – exploring knowledge systems in agroecology and hearing perspectives from practitioners.
- **Day 2:** Innovation narratives of the industrial model – discussing the risks and threats of digitalization and high-tech narratives.
- **Day 3–4:** Fostering innovation for agroecology – case studies and collective discussions on local needs, technical solutions, and grassroots learning.



- **Day 5:** Enabling environments for agroecological innovation – understanding legal and social mechanisms for protecting and scaling grassroots technologies.
- **Day 6:** Participant project presentations and peer feedback on strategies for addressing innovation in agroecology.

**The core competencies, skills, or learning outcomes**

- **Understanding agroecological innovation:** analyzing the role of bottom-up knowledge systems and grassroots technological solutions in sustainable food systems.
- **Critical assessment of industrial narratives:** identifying the risks and impacts of digitalization, corporate control, and high-tech solutions in agriculture.
- **Community-driven problem solving:** learning participatory approaches to co-designing agroecological innovations with farmers and local stakeholders.
- **Policy and advocacy for agroecological innovation:** understanding the legal, social, and economic factors that influence agroecological innovations and how to advocate for supportive policies.
- **Scaling and protecting grassroots innovations:** exploring mechanisms for sustaining and expanding agroecological knowledge and practices at the local and global levels.
- **Strategic planning for agroecology organizations:** developing actionable work plans for implementing agroecological innovation strategies within organizations.

## **Annex B. Template for documenting the bottom-up process of drafting the curriculum**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Place and time</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Young people (18-40)</b>	<b>Notes from the meetings</b>	<b>Link to social media/ website etc</b>
<b>1</b>						
<b>2</b>						
<b>3</b>						
<b>4</b>						
<b>5</b>						
<b>6</b>						
<b>7</b>						



# The Partnership



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