



Policy Brief #2

SUPPORTING JOB CREATION AND JOB RETENTION IN RURAL AREAS

Stimulate creation of new business models

WHY RURAL AREAS?

According to the State of Food and Agriculture 2017 report, rural areas actually have vast potential for economic growth pegged to food production and related sectors; the fact that thousands of young people, job seekers set to enter the workforce, don't leave rural areas, depends on will hinge on unlocking that oft-neglected potential. When implemented successfully, a local food system can have a positive impact on three critical levels: environmental sustainability, economic viability and social equity. However novel and diversify food systems are needed. Acting on these three critical levels generates opportunities for young workers. The URBACT, initiative promoted by The European Regional Development Fund works on rethinking agri-food production in small and medium-sized cities and rural areas, the main goal being to find solutions that can stimulate job creation in the agri-food value chain. Therefore, on their report regarding how food sector can help to reduce unemployment in rural areas, the initiatives of greater potential for boosting employment in this area have been selected. From this point of view, SHEALTHY project directly impacts to major drivers of employment and socioeconomic development in rural areas in a way that will stimulate job creation and job retention.



[SHEALTHY](#) is a H2020 project (2019-2023) which aims to assess and develop an optimal combination of non-thermal sanitization, preservation and stabilization methods to improve the safety, while preserving the nutritional quality and prolonging the shelf-life of minimally F&V products. This project also focuses on the business conditions enabling Small and Medium Enterprises to successfully adopt and exploit new technologies.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

WHAT TO DO?

- COOPERATION BETWEEN FARMERS
- ALLIANCES BETWEEN FARMS AND FOOD BUSINESSES
- RAISING SKILLS AND COMPETENCES
- CAPITALIZATION ON LOCAL COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
- NURTURING TALENT
- ENGAGING WITH POLICYMAKERS

BUT HOW?

In SHEALTHY job retention measures rely on the potential of boosting firm performance, initiating cooperation between farmers, setting up alliances between farmers and processors and engaging with policymakers. As retention cannot be studied in a firm isolated manner, SHEALTHY thus comprises the relevant stakeholders when responding to job retention issues in rural areas keeping in mind that regional context should be taken into account when addressing specific interventions. SME-led sustainable holistic, inclusive and collaborative business models will be developed to smoothen the adoption of the technologies up scaled under SHEALTHY. The BMs (and thus related objectives, resources, capabilities) will go beyond the boundaries of the firm itself to enable the firm to create value



with partners and appropriate share of the value among key actors along the company value chain, promoting the cooperation between farmers and farmers with producers. Core skills and competencies will be assured due to all the training sessions that will take place during SHEALTHY. These training sessions will be carried out at different levels within the local SMEs: at a management level they will receive training for the incorporation of the new BMs, stimulating the collaboration between them and generating an “open minded atmosphere”: Technical skills will also be improved due to training sessions on the technologies to be apply in each company. Thanks to its replicability strategy SHEALTHY is the only project capable of working to increase the competitiveness of these areas from a pan-European perspective.

The following recommendations emerged from SHEALTHY's work. They should not be considered a comprehensive guide on integrated governance, but provide indications of what can be done.

PROTOTYPES OF COLLABORATIVE BUSINESS MODELS

Designing 5 prototypes of collaborative business models concerning the usage of F&V preservation methods in companies

PILOTS

9 pilots to enhance our understanding of the critical points of business model innovation specific for F&V SMEs.

MONITORING

Monitoring and analysing of business model experimentation during the pilots (on relevant food quality outcomes, meeting consumer preferences, efficiency of SME internal activities and their collaboration with suppliers).

SPECIFIC TRAININGS

Specific trainings will be offered not only on technologies and their applications but also business trainings for SME entrepreneurs with the aim of getting a skilled workforce that can lead the transition to innovation in order to ensure strong and sustained growth of SMEs in Europe.

