Journal of Finance, Investment and Sustainable Development / Volume: 08 /N°: 01 –June 2022, p 78-96

Harvesting the Benefits: How Agripreneurial Leadership Drives Innovation for Sustainable Rural Development in Europe- A Case Study.

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Received: 02/04/2023 ***Accepted: 06/06/2023*** ***Published : 09/06/2023***

Abstract:

This paper assesses the importance of agricultural entrepreneurship in selected European countries employing indicators reported by the ESOF project (a project for developing farmers' agripreneurial skills funded by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Program for European Research). Technology development). Examine innovative initiatives to strengthen agricultural entrepreneurship. The selected European countries are Finland; Netherlands, Switzerland, England; Italy; Poland. The ESOF project examines the economic, social, and cultural factors that hinder or encourage the development of farmers' agripreneurial skills. This study aimed to determine perceptions of agricultural entrepreneurial leadership through policy adjustments to the ongoing changes in the farm environment, which increasingly lead to farms being viewed as businesses like other farms in the marketplace. This means that agricultural entrepreneurs should engage in proactive and dynamic business activities that add value to agricultural products and diversify their businesses. From this perspective, innovation is highlighted as an essential criterion for agricultural entrepreneurship.

Keywords: *agripreneurship, innovation, agricultural, sustainable, europe*

Jel Classification Codes : *L31 ; O13 ; Q01.*

Résumé:

facteurs économiques, sociaux et culturels qui entravent ou encouragent le développement des compétences agripreneuriales des agriculteurs. Cette étude visait à déterminer les perceptions du leadership entrepreneurial agricole grâce à des ajustements politiques aux changements en cours dans l'environnement agricole, qui conduisent de plus en plus à considérer les fermes comme des entreprises comme les autres fermes sur le marché. Cela signifie que les entrepreneurs agricoles doivent s'engager dans des activités commerciales proactives et dynamiques qui ajoutent de la valeur aux produits agricoles et diversifient leurs activités. Dans cette perspective, l'innovation est mise en avant comme un critère essentiel pour l'entrepreneuriat agricole.

Mots clés: *agripreneuriat, innovation, agricole, durable, europe.*

Jel Classification Codes : *L53 ; L78 ; M00.*

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I. Introduction

Agriculture has always been crucial to the European economy, providing food, employment opportunities, and economic development in rural communities. However, as global challenges such as climate change, food security, and youth unemployment continue to emerge, there is a need for innovative solutions to enhance the sustainability and resilience of rural economies. One recent solution that has gained traction is agripreneurship - the entrepreneurial activity in agriculture - which offers a pathway to creating sustainable and resilient rural businesses (EEA, 2017a)

This study explores the role of agripreneurial leadership in driving innovation for sustainable rural development in Europe. Through examining key value chain activities in post-harvest processing and storage and the role of digital connectivity in supporting and scaling agripreneurship, this case study offers insights into effective strategies to develop sustainable agribusinesses. Additionally, the study highlights the performance and participation of young male and female entrepreneurs in the rice and maize subsectors

This study also explores the role of agripreneurial leadership in driving innovation for sustainable rural development in Europe. Through examining key value chain activities in post-harvest processing and storage and the role of digital connectivity in supporting and scaling agripreneurship, this case study offers insights into effective strategies to develop sustainable agribusinesses. Additionally, the study highlights the performance and participation of young male and female entrepreneurs in the rice and maize subsectors.

References to related studies and initiatives are found to exist which corroborate the significance of agripreneurship of sustainable rural development . Creating Something from Nothing: Resource Construction through Entrepreneurial Bricolage identified innovation and creating something out of nothing as key elements in the entrepreneurial activity Baker and Nelson (2005) . This study explors the entrepreneurship potential features and agribusiness desirability levels of youth in South Kivu also supports agribusiness's importance in promoting rural development Simbeko et al. (2023) . Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for digital connectivity in supporting rural and low-income groups, as found in a published article. Agribusinesses can leverage digital technologies to drive innovation and promote sustainable development Peng et al. (2022) .

By examining the factors that contribute to the success of agripreneurs and identifying effective strategies that support innovation, leadership skills, and access to resources, this case study seeks to promote sustainable rural development in Europe. Overall, this case study provides valuable insights into

the role of agripreneurial leadership in promoting sustainable agribusiness and rural development in Europe.

II. Theoretical framework

II.1 Agripreneurial leadership:

Agribusiness is a relatively new concept that is a profitable combination of farming and entrepreneurship to transform farms into agribusiness (Otache, 2017) Agricultural entrepreneurship is defined as generating growth or profit amid risks and uncertainties in agriculture. Agricultural entrepreneurship has been used in other countries as a tool to promote agricultural development as it has the potential to contribute to a range of social and economic developments, such as national economies (Bairwa, 2014). Agricultural entrepreneurship presents many opportunities for farmers as they are more willing to adopt and even experiment with different technologies that can be used in agriculture and are even more innovative than those who have been in agriculture for many years (Dar, 2016).

With this orientation, Agro-Entrepreneurship Leadership aims to increase the management knowledge of selected agro-entrepreneurs, especially that of self-management, which complements the development of general management skills—for a variety of reasons, depending on global challenges, firm development characteristics, and entrepreneurial perceptions (Dobermann, 2015). For example, it is estimated that global food production will need to increase by 70% by 2050. According to Horizon 2020 (European Commission, 2011) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, food security and sustainable agriculture are priority areas for research and innovation-related activities (Griggs, 2013).

On the other hand, most agricultural producer groups are created by owners of farms specializing in the same production field, having comparable production capacities (farm area, marketability, financial and tangible resources) and functioning within the same territory. At this point, a local community leader plays a vital role as he, when noticing new possibilities, takes pains to organize and manage a group of people (Oborn, 2011).

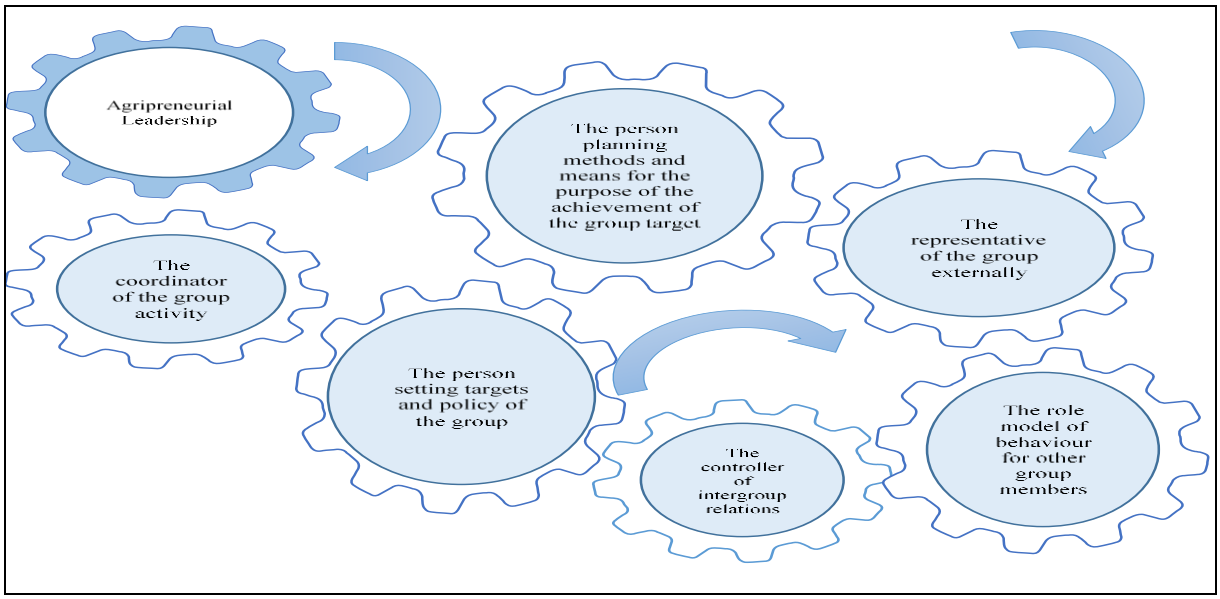
Most agricultural producer groups consist of farmers who specialize in the same production area, have comparable production capacity (farm area, market capacity, financial and material resources) and operate within the same area. At this point, the local community leader plays a vital role in organizing and managing a group of people as he sees new opportunities (Otache, 2017).

Individual leaders play a key role in forming and operating agricultural producer groups, and even formal groups cannot function effectively without an active, business-capable leader to handle group affairs (Manigo, 2021) .

Depending on the Group, goals and stage of existence, agribusiness leaders can perform many different functions, for example (Li, 2023) :

- Coordinator of group activities,
- The person who sets the team's goals and policies
- The person plans methods and means for team performance Target,
- External representatives of the Group,
- Controller of relationships between groups,
- Behavioral patterns of other group members, etc

Figure1 : The characteristics of an entrepreneurial leader



Source: Developed by researchers.

II.2 Sustainable rural development:

Sustainable rural development is based on three pillars: meeting social needs, economic efficiency, optimal management and conservation of natural resources, and reducing pressure on ecosystems (Evagelia Koutridi, 2023). In rural areas, the dominant economic sector is agriculture, mainly characterized by low population density due to the high demand for land, especially the principal productive capital of agriculture and animal husbandry (Shuxing Chen, 2022). This inverse relationship, along with growing demand for food (which the FAO says needs to increase by 60% to 70%), clothing and, more recently, energy production, is a major delay in its realization (FAO, 2016). As the need for land-use change increases (urban structure, industrial use, road networks, etc.), there is the potential to reduce agricultural land use. However, technological developments may push the limits of arable soils (Oliver, 2013).

In addition, rural communities face multiple agricultural challenges related to climate change, land degradation, deforestation, biodiversity loss and fragmentation of natural habitats, poverty, resource, landscape and geographic

barriers, socioeconomic conditions, demographic characteristics or economic tourism activities and industrial development challenges development paths (H. Karg, 2019).

Traditional economies based on subsistence agriculture are still prevalent in rural areas of the world. This type of economy is vulnerable to natural disasters (extreme weather, flash floods, landslides, erosion, drought) and low agricultural productivity, leading to famine, extreme poverty, land abandonment, and mass migration (Margaret , Thomas, & Ben, 2013). Land use management is crucial for future rural development prospects and for finding the optimal balance between natural habitats, agricultural land and built-up areas (Florin Constantin & Corneliu, 2020). Table 1 shows emerging social and environmental threats, sectoral approaches and synergies that need to be addressed at the subnational level for rural areas in each country through regional and local authorities.

Table (1): Challenges of rural communities under agenda 2030 framework.

	Societal & Environmental Threats	**Sectoral Approach**	**Synergic Effects**	**Development Perspectives**
Rural areas	Poverty & Marginalized Communities	Education and Health Services	Rural-Urban Migration	Quality of Life Improvement
	Famine & Subsistence Agriculture	Biodiversity Protection	Food Security	Sustainable Agriculture
	Land Degradation & Deforestation	Natural Hazards	Climate Changes	Rural Resilience
	Lack of Basic Utilities	Waste/Water/ Sanitation/Energy	Environmental Pollution	Circular Economy
	Underdevelopment Regions	Rural-Urban Gaps	Governance & Territorial Cohesion	Reducing Inequalities

Source : (www.fao.org, s.d.)

In addition to this broad view of what constitutes sustainability, the emergence and operation of social innovations in rural development can also occur in conjunction with policy measures to support social innovations within the rural development system (Neumeier, 2017).

Furthermore, social innovation in rural development is associated with the emergence of new collective learning, coordination and communication processes. These occur between different actors within a region, and the involvement of external actors in regional rural development processes strengthens the social capital of the actors involved, which should lead to significant improvements in rural areas (Hubert, 2010) .

III. Methodology

In this study, the role of farm leadership in introducing sustainable rural development in Europe was measured through a specific objective research project (SSPE-ct-006500): « Development of farmers' entrepreneurial skills ». The program reports on the main study, "Understanding Corporate Culture". All program dates are also available online at «www.esofarmers.org ».This interactive data hub provides charts and access to underlying data, links to data sources, and other online resources.

A research project with specific objectives: Entrepreneurship by Farmers (ESOF) aims to promote on-farm entrepreneurship by studying « the development of entrepreneurial skills in farmers ». The main objectives of the project are:

1. Identify and analyze economic, social, and cultural factors that hinder or facilitate the development of entrepreneurial skills and reflect the strategic positioning of companies.

2. Develop strategies and devices to improve these different agricultural plans.

Two key suppositions are relevant to these goals. Assume first that agripreneurship can be explored using the concept of entrepreneurial skills. Using this concept means that while the farmer is seen as central to entrepreneurship, the focus is on individual activities rather than enduring, cross-situational traits and character traits such as character traits or general ways of thinking. This entry point is not the most common when studying entrepreneurship, but it is good for changing and learning about entrepreneurship.

The second hypothesis is that skills are circumstantial and thus should be considered in the business type and setting context. One of the key questions, therefore, is how entrepreneurial skills play out in the context of agriculture. It has been speculated that entrepreneurial skills may manifest differently depending on the firm's strategic direction (traditional mass production, value creation, or diversification into non-food companies), as these directions argue differences in the business environment. Furthermore, the assumption that country differences are significant supports the decision to address this issue by conducting comparative case studies in six countries (Netherlands, Switzerland, Finland, the UK, Italy, and Poland).

The report's conclusions about the skills farmers need are as follows:

- To meet consumer and supply chain needs, farmers must ensure that their products meet high-quality standards. In order to be ruthless in the market, cost-effectiveness is required. Respondents, therefore, indicated that having production engineering and technical ability is a fundamental requirement.

- Respondents from all regions said farmers need management skills to stay

in agribusiness. Improving and managing agribusiness processes, working with employees and managing customers are essential activities for farmers and demand a variety of abilities and attributes.

- Given the significant trends in the agribusiness environment, farmers need to possess additional attributes to stay competitive. Respondents have cited identifying and realizing opportunities, market perception, customer focus, strategic planning, risk management, agribusiness monitoring, collaboration, teamwork, and leadership as principal skills for farmers to remain successful in agribusiness.

–- This requires not just a skill set but a set of competency-like traits such as ambition, creativity, innovation and flexibility, the ability to deal with uncertainty, an open mind, a positive attitude, commitment and a positive attitude towards risk-taking.

In the table below, we illustrate how farmers provide resources to reflect entrepreneurial skills holistically, using combinations of framework dimensions prepared from the ESOF report. Farmers provide resources through which they manifest specific abilities.

Table (2): Summing up the skills-related self-presentations between individual cases:

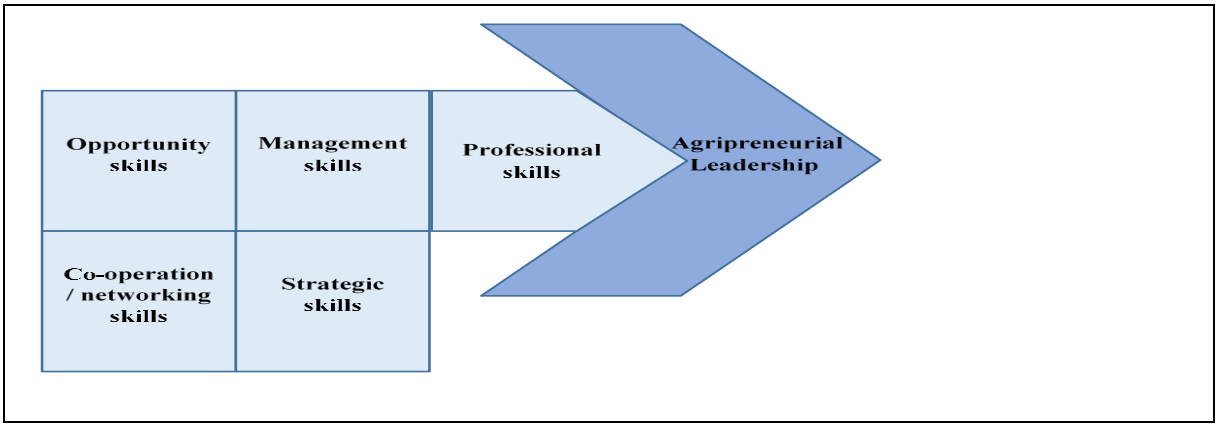
Skills	**Resources provided and how they are manifested in the farm business**	**Benefits identified for one's farm business and For the entrepreneur in general**
The skill of creating and evaluating a business strategy	Strategy is elaborated with the adoption of a formal business plan, aimed at multifunctionality, evaluated with management software, and confirms the validity of strategy adopted described within its main aspects, pointing out aims and purpose, actions.	To have good farm business management, to evaluate possible mistakes, to get credit from banks.
The skill of utilizing contacts	He is a vice-chairman of farmers' Trade Unions, he has ongoing contacts with banks, processors, Public Institutions;	To create and enforce a strategy, to get new opportunities for selling.
The skill of networking	He claims to be a member of a Purchasing Consumers Group (GAS) and he also participates in a Project on social agriculture, of which he was one of the promoters.	To connect and spread information among the farmers, as well as to shorten the distribution chain and to improve the producer's image; to safeguard local typical products; to develop new aspects such as social agriculture or management of public green areas.
The skill of recognizing and realizing opportunities	Example: about a financial opportunity provided by the Local public Administration, which they used to build a conditioning centre for vegetables on the hills	To evolve, to create new opportunities and to innovate agriculture to open it up to society.

Source : (www.esofarmers.org., s.d.)

IV. Findings

This section presents the findings related to the data containing the results of the EFOS reporting model. Figure 2 shows the skills needed to practice agricultural leadership on the farm and adopt new sustainable innovations for sustainable rural development.

Fig (2): Practicabilities to agripreneurial leadership skills for sustainable rural development



Source: Developed by researchers based on the ESOF Report enrolment data.

IV1. Explore the importance of entrepreneurial skills in agriculture

Based on the registration data, ESOF was very interested in the answers to the competency questions for this reason. The first is the various skills mentioned; the second exciting factor is the many competency-related comments made by the respondents, such as attributes and settings. Third, the results are very similar across countries.

The skills mentioned by the respondents in the interviews can be divided into five categories, as shown in Table 3.

Table (3): Skills groups identified in the interviews in six European regions.

Category	Underlying skills
Professional skills	- Plant or animal production skills - Technical skills
Management skills skills	- Financial management and administration - Human Resource Management skills - Customer management skills - General planning skills

Opportunity skills	- Recognising business opportunities -Market and customer orientation - Awareness of threats - Innovation skills - Risk management skills
Strategic skills	- Skills to receive and make use of feedback - Reflection skills - Monitoring and evaluation skills - Conceptual skills - Strategic planning skills - Strategic decision making skills - Goal setting skills
Co-operation / networking skills	- Skills related to co-operating with other farmers and companies - Networking skills - Team working skills - Leadership skills

Source : (www.esofarmers.org., s.d.)

The ESOF report concluded that the first three categories could be genuinely agripreneurial skills for growing a profitable agribusiness. The ESOF program takes this concept further by indicating that these three abilities can be viewed as more complex meta-level skills than professional (e.g. production skills) or management skills. According to ESOF Admissions, such complex skills are called entrepreneurship at a higher level, not because they exclude something but quite the opposite because they necessarily include other skills. So agripreneurial skills are fundamental skills. Categories of network capabilities include, for example, communication, team, and cooperation skills. Additionally, networking and strategic capabilities help identify and realize business opportunities. Entrepreneurial skills are thus interdependent.

The ESOF platform provides a monitoring mechanism to examine key trends in sustainable innovation. It provides unique insights into statistics and initiatives supporting innovation adoption. It reports on various descriptions of skills critical

to farmers' business success and sustainability-related opportunities, challenges and policy initiatives. As shown in Table 4.

Table (4): Skills-related remarks, made by interviewees in six European countries

Personnel Characteristics	Attitudes	Other
Flexibility, dealing with uncertainties	Positive attitude	Education
Creativeness, innovativeness	Pro-active attitude	Experience
Ambition, motivation, commitment	Open minded	Age
Self-knowledge	Open to new things	Gender
Feeling responsible	Attitude to feedback	
Courage to do new things	Being interested in the job	
Carefulness	Risk-taking attitude	
Honesty		
Immunity to stress		
Communicativeness, politeness		
Humor		
Dynamism		

Source: Developed by researchers based on the ESOF Report enrollment data.

Many of these comments relate to this study's fundamental concepts of entrepreneurship: flexibility and the ability to deal with uncertainty, risk-taking and commitment. Many respondents indicated that these elements are prerequisites for skills: entrepreneurial behaviour is limited without these traits, and skill development is hindered.

In many interviews, higher education was said to positively impact farmers' entrepreneurial quality. However, some respondents felt that agricultural education mainly focuses on technical and managerial skills. Italian respondents wondered whether current education and training facilities are sufficient to impart and develop entrepreneurial skills. They suggest that innovative education and training concepts are necessary.

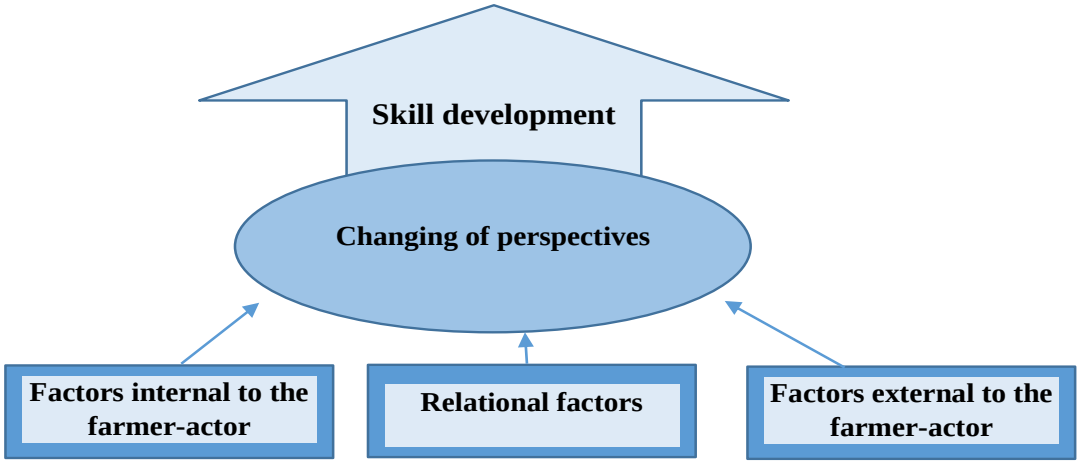
Age is a problematic factor related to entrepreneurial quality. Some respondents felt that younger farmers are better entrepreneurs because they are more ambitious, flexible and open to new ideas. Others argue that older farmers can be more entrepreneurial due to the farming organization's life cycle and business experience. The definition of young and old farmers depends mainly on the population's average age, which varies between European countries.

Furthermore, interpreting capacity development as a learning process reveals another commonality in capacity development mechanisms: in different types of attributions (internal, relational, external), learning events are framed as processes by which farmers are exposed to new perspectives. The importance of

new perspectives was expressed in several ways: the idea was hinted at in statements emphasizing the importance of being proactive; diverse work experience; careers outside agriculture; comprehensive agricultural knowledge; education and training; diverse networks and linkages; stimulating agricultural context, culture and environment; stimulate market vision and political incentives. Almost all explanations can be linked to exposure to new perspectives, altered thinking patterns, or thoughts of alternative courses of action.

Facilitating factors introduce the farmer to new perspectives and distance her from familiar ones, while hindering factors prevent the farmer from maintaining a new distance from her activities and gaining new perspectives. Figure 3 shows the final synthesis of perspective shifts as common denominators and mediating mechanisms in entrepreneurship learning.

Figure 3 : Change of perspective as a common denominator in the development of skills



-Personal features	-Social relations	-Features of the farm
-Experience - Communication	- Interaction	-Tradition /culture of farmers
-Education / training		-Supply of education ,
-Age(+Gender)		services , projects
		-Politico-economic issues

Source: Developed by researchers based on the ESOF Report enrollment data.

A common feature of the internal, relational, and external explanatory factors described above is that they can all manifest as factors that promote or hinder skill development.

Each farmer has a different level of proficiency in these skills. These differences, combined with the notion that business skills can be learned, mean that developing and improving these skills in farmers is a viable option and an achievable goal. This conclusion applies to farmers who focus on traditional production and those who diversify into value-added activities and non-food businesses.

According to our qualitative analysis, the development of entrepreneurial abilities can be viewed as a learning process. Many factors influence this process. Some of which are internal to the individual farmer and some external. Furthermore, best characterized as constituting the relationship between the individual and other participants.

Internal factors include farmers' characteristics, such as attitudes and dispositions, age and gender, experiential characteristics (such as off-farm or off-farm work experience), education and training. External factors, on the other hand, are related to the environment in which farmers work, including the physical characteristics and resources of the farm, the specific type of production being undertaken (which may allow for more or less flexibility and opportunities for innovation), and the physical and geographical location of the establishment. External factors include the social and cultural background of the farmer, their degree of embeddedness in the environment, and the institutional context and associated opportunities to support and develop on-farm and off-farm enterprises.. Concerning the latter factor, farmers are related differently to the political-economic environment that generates the institutional environment. Similar specific processes or policies affect farmers in different ways. There are also differences between regions and countries due to differences in local institutional arrangements and their impact on farmers, which is reflected in the diversity of rural development programs and approaches.

Relevant factors influencing a farmer's ability to develop entrepreneurial skills are related to social interaction and communication, particularly 'networking' skills and 'opportunity recognition and realization' skills, but also indicate how these skills interact with the physical, social or institutional context of the farm and the farmer Create an environment for entrepreneurial activity. Thus, relational factors bridge internal and external factors.

IV2. Rural development plans: institutional contexts for entrepreneurial farmers

The relationship between perceptions of agriculture and its place in broader economic development influences the context in which farmers' entrepreneurial

skills can develop. It suggests that the development of farmer entrepreneurship is highly regional or national.

Funds are allocated along three principal axes, forming an institutional framework for farmers to start businesses. A comparison of summaries of rural development programs gives a similar divergence map of current member state intentions and priorities. Table 5 below shows the distribution of funds across the four RDP axes across the five EU regions covered by ESOF projects.

Table 5 : Share (%) of total public expenditure (including EU contribution) in each country/region devoted to each axis

Country / Axis	Enhancement of the competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sectors	Improvement of the environment and countryside	Quality of life in the countryside and diversification of rural economy
Finland	7.6%	1.6%	6.5%
Poland	42%	32%	20%
Netherlands	30%	30%	30%
England	8.6%	81%	6.5%
Italy	38.5%	40%	10.5%
Switerzland	48 %	37%	22%

Source: Developed by researchers based on the ESOF Report enrollment data.

Nonetheless, it may be instructive to make a further but brief comparison of the two regions covered by the ESOF project, namely England and Switzerland, which appear to have very different approaches to allocating government support to agriculture and rural development.

As shown in Table 8 above, 80% of the RDP England (RDPE) budget is spent on measures under RDPE Axis 2, England. This includes spending on environmental management schemes, forest grant schemes, hill or natural barrier support areas and specific provisions for producing non-food products, such as the energy crops scheme.

For Switzerland, Axis 3 gets a tenth of the total funding. While focusing on modernizing farms, Axis 2 focuses on biodiversity, water, and pollution reduction to promote energy conservation and renewable energy development.

An analysis of the distribution of spending in the first RDP in Switzerland shows that the focus is on measures to improve the environment and rural areas but also includes measures such as the commercialization of premium products

that emphasize the particular link between product and space. This approach, embodied in the so-called "Swiss model" that forms the basis of the new RDP, emphasizes small and medium-sized farms, quality products, production diversification and the role of women in this activity. At the same time, the natural landscape is considered an element that will be integrated into the entire agri-food supply. Food production and tourism can benefit from each other.

Table 6 : Prominent features of rural development plans (RDP)

	Prominent features of rural development plans		
Country / Axis	**Enhancement of the competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sectors**	**Improvement of the environment and countryside**	**Quality of life in the countryside and diversification of rural economy**
Finland	Young Farmers; modernisation of holdings; Adding value	Natural handicap; Agri-environment	Diversification into non-agri activities; Micro-enterprises
Poland	Human & vocational potential; Quality and efficiency; Supply and processing chain improvement; cross compliance; rural infrastructure	Biodiversity; soil and water; forest cover; Environmental protection	Standards of living; rural infrastructure; entrepreneurship outside agriculture; rural services access
Netherlands	Entrepreneurship; Animal welfare; food quality; environmental impacts of agriculture, strengthen production chain	Natura 2000 sites and biodiversity; National Landscapes; Forest expansion	Diversification in agriculture; rural micro enterprises; rural tourism
England	Vocational training, advisory service, modernisation, adding value, infrastructure for agricultural sector	Agri-environment schemes: Environmental Stewardship, Woodland Grant Scheme, Hill Farm Allowance; Energy Crops Scheme	Non-agri diversification and business development, micro-enterprises
Italy	Support rural enterprises, markets links, innovative production, quality, opportunities for Young people	Biodiversity, water, renewable energy, landscape protection	tourism, conservation and rural heritage, skills acquisition

Switerzland	Market exploitation especially renewable energy, added value, entrepreneurial skills, knowledge transfer, skill enhancement	economically and ecologically sustainable water systems	Improving attractiveness of rural areas for enterprise and residents

Source : (http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/countries/index_en.htm, s.d.)

The first three countries have opted for a more equitable distribution, directing more rural and agricultural development resources to activities and programs that are expected to have a more direct impact on farmers' skill levels and their opportunities to develop agricultural activities (axis 1), Value-added activities or diversified operations (axes 1 and 3).

More funding for Axis 3 also indicates a more significant commitment to rural economic development, which does not necessarily depend directly on agricultural production

Table 6 shows the main areas each RDP highlights to be included in each axis, taken from the list of standard measures defined by the RDR. The percentage totals in Table 8 represent the share of the rural development budget allocated to each of the four axes of the total budget applicable to each country or region, including contributions from the Member States and the European Union.

V. Discussion

The ESOF research methodology has been highly successful, yielding various trends and developmental images and a broad viewpoint on the importance of entrepreneurial skills in agriculture.

All countries have prioritized specialized skills as a requirement for farmers to be influential on the farm. Many respondents from various countries stressed the importance of management skills for farmers: growing farm complexity, they believe, necessitates farmers becoming entrepreneurs.

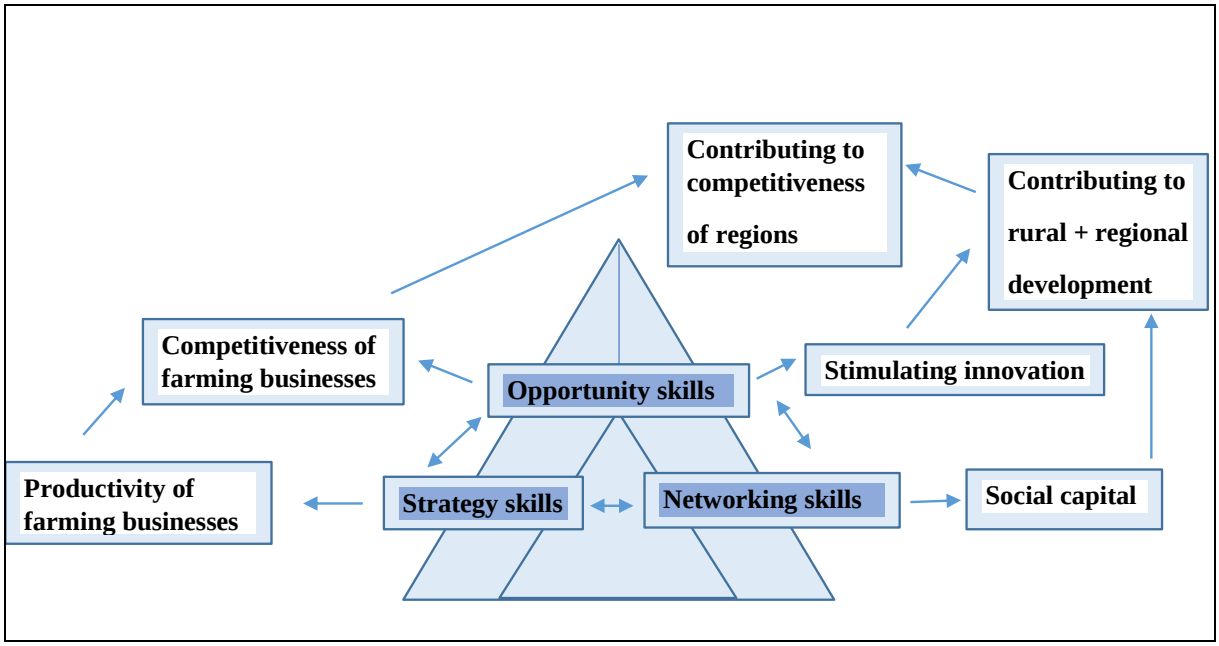
Other skills cited frequently include opportunity skills, collaboration and networking skills, and strategic skills, in addition to professional and leadership skills. These abilities are required to develop methods and strategies for building a profitable company, realizing business opportunities, and continuously growing and improving the business. When these skills are compared to the scientific literature, they can be deemed part of the quality of agricultural entrepreneurship.

The capacity to build relevant networks and social capital appears to be important in these situations, according to the resulting ESOF. Thus, it appears plausible that entrepreneurial skills, particularly the ability to network and use, among other things, could serve as incentives to form new relationships, manage them better, and identify the significance of these new market opportunities to

one's success. We should also remember that entrepreneurial skills, as defined in this study, are complex and include other low-level skills. Networking skills include, for example, teamwork or communication skills, strategic skills including reflection skills etc. - all of which are necessary and useful to build the necessary social capital in new markets.

This section demonstrates the relevance of entrepreneurship to rural and regional development by highlighting the contribution of entrepreneurship to innovation and the emergence of new markets. As shown in Figure 4.

Figure (4): Hypothesized contributions of farmers' entrepreneurial skills to rural and regional Develop



Source: Developed by researchers based on the ESOF Report enrollment data .

VI. Conclusion

So far, we have referred to various, even contentious, approaches to and applications of agripreneurship within the scientific community. We also contend that the theory of agripreneurial skills is superior to personality traits. Here, we would like to emphasize the advantages of employing agripreneurial skills. On the one hand, it is a straightforward idea with well-defined boundaries. (as defined in the ESOF study). On the other hand, it is so broad that all of the aforementioned entrepreneurial ideas can fit into it. The idea of agripreneurial skills can be applied regardless of whether agripreneurship is framed from a neoliberal, ecological, or social entrepreneurial viewpointAll of these types of entrepreneurship require the skills defined in our study.

In conclusion, certain debates become easier to conduct when the concept of competence rather than various concepts of entrepreneurship is emphasized, and framing is no longer a significant issue.

Regarding policy objectives, we contend that the eligibility concept is valuable because it promotes rural development by encouraging agricultural enterprise growth. This agribusiness growth will include a variety of characteristics, ranging from big manufacturing operations to multifunctional, innovative, and emerging markets. Strengthening the regional economy, all of these add to regional development. These issues are discussed in depth because they explain the connections between agricultural ideas and other ongoing EU-funded initiatives.

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