

SMaRT CURRICULUM DESIGN

FOREWORD

The present working document includes a proposal for a new university learning curriculum, centered on international sales management in the EU agri-food sector.

This curriculum aims to provide young students of economic extraction with an integrated set of high skills of economic and business, commercial skills, leadership and communicational and relational competencies to support agri-food SMEs to enter, remain and develop in international business circuits.

Active cooperation with key stakeholders has taken place to ensure that the European guidelines and quality labels are effective and sustainable in the marketplace.



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Rationale

At present, there is no curricula in HEI to empower market intermediaries with the set of knowledge and competences required to tackle the challenges of global markets for agriproducts.

The current approach undermines the ability of the EU to maintain its global market share and enhance efficiencies of the internal market through better positioning of its products. There is the need to establish innovative curricula to educate professional intermediaries to properly position on both the supply (i.e. producers/sellers) and the demand side (i.e. international buyers) EU high quality agriproducts.

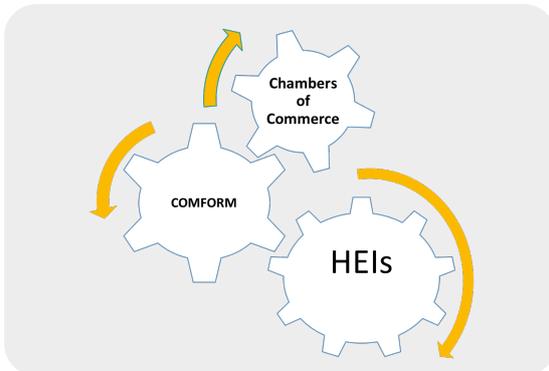
- ✓ Universitat Rovira i Virgili –URV, Spain-
- ✓ Università Politecnica delle Marche UNIVPM, Italy
- ✓ Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny W Poznaniu – PUEB, Poland
- ✓ Univerza Na Primorskem Universita del Litorale –Slovenia.

Specific skill requirements of agrif-food SMEs are very diverse. Their needs are incorporated into the curriculum thanks to the Chamber system of SMaRT strategic partnership:

- ✓ Wielkopolska Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Poland)
- ✓ Cámara de Comercio Italiana – Barcelona (Spain)
- ✓ The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.

CONFORM, - Consulenza Formazione e Management S.C.A.R.L (Italy) - as a methodological research and technology partner, provides inputs to configure the technical specifications for the use of the blended and challenge-based learning also in view of the interactive and gamified Open Educational Resources –OER- to be produced.

Knowledge sharing for quality results



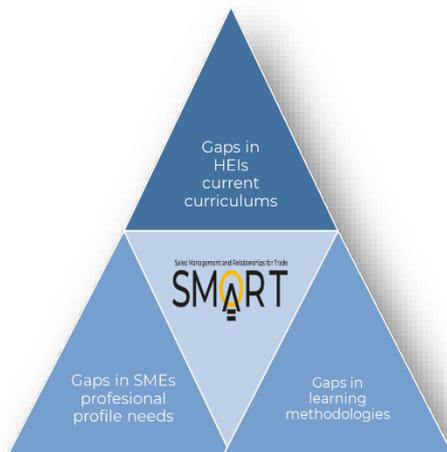
Thus, the “SMaRT-Sales Management and Relationships for Trade” project partnership will develop, validate and promote a 20 ECTS credit course based on a balanced mix of classroom, e-game-based learning and work-based learning methodologies. This new curriculum will be embedded in the current educational offer of four HEIs:

Curriculum design process

Content, structure and model for the new innovative curriculum have been based on three main steps.

- ✓ Needs analysis and current curricula review coordinated by Univerza Na Primorskem Universita del Litorale
- ✓ Field analysis coordinated by Univerza Na Primorskem Universita del Litorale
- ✓ Curriculum design coordinated by Universitat Rovira i Virgili.

In this way, the new developed curriculum has detected and solved three gaps. A first one related to curriculum content, a second one to learning methodologies, and a third one related to a labour market mismatch between current professional profiles and SMEs future needs. See Figure below. :



Current curriculum review

Comprehensive information has been collected within this task (existing studies and research reports analysing skills needs, existing curricula and/or comparable to the proposed one)

It is an in-depth analysis to fulfil skills gaps in students from HEs and surpass the existing curricula and formative offer to including future trends. This task has provided information to design and support the development of the proposed curriculum in International Sales Management in the Agri-food Sector.

Field analysis

This task has included:

- ✓ The definition of aims, objectives, fields of investigation, timing, human resources, logistical and organizational skills needed to hold the focus groups with the different targets
- ✓ The design of questionnaires and tools to hold focus groups
- ✓ An indication of the steps to follow to collect and undertake the reporting of the data obtained
- ✓ The administration of the questionnaires, holding of in-depth interviews and focus groups
- ✓ Conducting focus groups
- ✓ Analyse the data collected and to prepare final analysis report

Chambers and business representatives has validated the methodological structure, aims and tools prepared to obtain information.

Detailed reports are available at <https://smarteuproject.eu/io-1/>

See documents entitled

- IO1-Analysis for the international sales management profile
- IO1-Cross curricula analysis

Curriculum design

The design of the curriculum has been achieved by defining:

- ✓ the heritage of know how to be learnt by the students, related to the skills and competencies taken as the outcomes of the teaching programme.
- ✓ the training credits in line with ECTS principles
- ✓ the learning process and the relative steps to be taken to achieve the results foreseen (learning outcomes)
- ✓ the macro training contents of the individual steps, i.e. the single or multidisciplinary thematic themes being taught, in order to achieve the learning outcomes in line with the expected learning outcomes at the end of the training programme
- ✓ the methods and criteria to verify, evaluate and control learning levels achieved by students at the end of the training course

All partners have validated the methodological structure, aims and tools during transnational and virtual meetings and meetings.

Learning methodological approach

This new curriculum, centred on international sales management in the agri-food sector, needs a new methodological paradigm to allow the development of target skills. Thus, the learning process is based on innovative, blended, interactive, game-based, flexible methods and forms that are adaptable to individuals' needs.

Digital integration in learning help students access to a plurality of OER, in the form of interactive video pills, which will be freely accessed online for at least two years after the project end. It also allows a vast audience of students to acquire and maintain technical, managerial, commercial, relational, and functional skills to develop the process to increase sales volumes of agri-food SMEs, through effective management of commercial processes.

The development of game-based learning forms will lead SMaRT to the creation of the PlaS - Play to Sale game in episodes as an interactive recreational-educational knowledge hub.

Developing and evaluation skills to manage business processes and increase SMEs competitiveness in the agri-food sector is possible thanks to the new methodology developed by SMaRT. It combines F2F activities, online learning with real challenges, practical experience, networking opportunities and job-placements.

In that sense, SMaRT curriculum is based on

- ✓ cognitive learning (learning by thinking) to be taken through a balanced mixture of lectures, real case problem solutions and interactive e-learning sessions through the OER.
- ✓ behavioural learning (learning by acting) to be achieved with game-based learning triggered by the PlaS game to develop, nurture and enhance behavioural qualities of competitive spirit, result orientation and relational effectiveness that animate and qualify technical skills by transforming commercial activities into excellent professional performance.
- ✓ operational learning (learning by doing) to be carried out in on-the-job training in a company to develop the ability to conduct check-ups of planning, direction and control processes of commercial activities in the agri-food sector

SMaRT is designed to benefit students but but also HEIs and SMEs.

SMaRT curriculum is multidisciplinary. So, the following schools and departments, depending on each HEIs' structure and organization, will benefit:

- ✓ Economics, Finance, Marketing, International Relations, and other related fields of knowledge.
- ✓ Agricultural Science, Food and Beverage Management, and other related fields of knowledge.

SMaRT offers to HEIs an innovative and updated curriculum in International Sales Management in the Agri-food Sector. This curriculum is can be embedded in master degrees or in life-long learning programmes and vocational education.

SMaRT check-up model is designed help students to acquire valuable new knowledge, which in turn can be used for the strategic development of SMEs in the agri-food sector.

SMaRT is

a **professional profile-centred design**. It focuses a particular professional profile to cover all the necessary skills and knowledge a learner should acquire to succeed in the labour market.

a **learner-centred design**. It focuses on the learner trying to address their needs, interests, and goals.

an **employability-centred design**. It offers job market and networking opportunities to the learners.

SMEs in the EU agri-food sector are beneficiaries of the SMaRT curriculum. When SMEs are part of the process of curriculum design, university and business cooperation improves the skills of students relevant to the labour market career.

When cooperation involves job market opportunities, networking and practical experience students will gain the skills that are needed by the employers.

Beneficiaries



SMaRT: A 20 ECTs innovative programme

As result of the previously detailed tasks and collaboration among SMaRT partners, the following 20 ECTs structure was defined:

The percentage of teacher-directed learning is 30. This percentage can be adapted depending on each HEI teaching policies.

SMaRT will develop 3 PlaS Game and an SMEs check up model.

55% of SMaRT curriculum is based on behavioural and operational learning.

Table 1. SMaRT 20 ECTs curriculum

Intellectual output	Structure	ECT	Dimensions
#1	Module 1. International sales management and export	3	Cognitive (learning by thinking)
	Module 2. Personal selling	3	
	Module 3. Understanding the economics of agri-food sector	3	
#2	PlaS Game	6	Behavioral (learning by acting)
#3	SMEs check up model	5	Operational (learning by doing)

Note: One ECT credit is equivalent to 25 working hours.

All learning materials will be available through the project web page: <https://smarteuproject.eu/>

The Project will use CONFORM's Moodle platform

Materials will remain accessible at least two years after the finalization the project.

SMaRT curriculum: technology and employability

SMaRT curriculum is a technology-enhanced learning process. It offers a high degree of mobile learning, and the design of learning spaces that support innovative pedagogies.

Through the check-up model and job market opportunities, SMaRT will develop strong collaborations and partnerships with the employment sector, to address student's long term employability; and a

SMaRT curriculum content and methodology will be ready to be tested by March 1, 2022. Eighty students from four HEIs will participate in the pilot phase.

The hidden SMaRT curriculum

The testing phase is key to discover the **hidden SMaRT curriculum**. This part of the curriculum refers to learning outcomes that go beyond those explicitly defined in the SMaRT curriculum. This includes the values and norms that are transmitted implicitly through the material covered, the behaviour of the teachers, the interaction among students, and the set-up of the learning environment.

The hidden curriculum is still unknown but it will add value to the final learning outcomes.

The content of modules 1 to 3

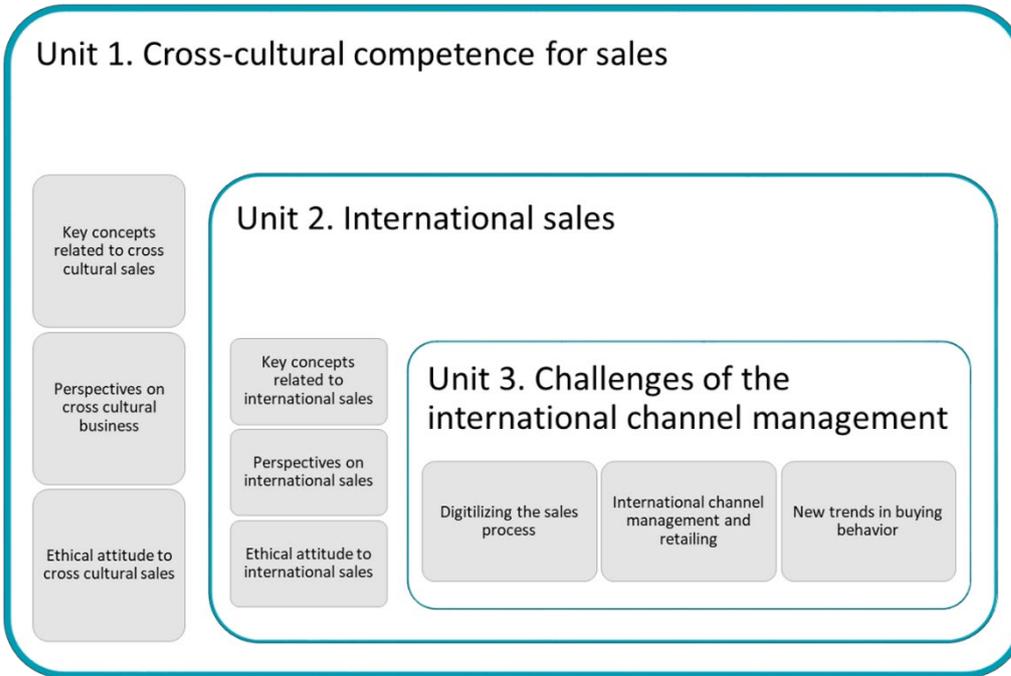
As stated, module 1 to 3 are based on learning by thinking through a balanced mixture of lectures, real case problem solutions and interactive e-learning sessions, which include Open Educational Resources -OER.

Modules 1 to 3 complement each other. Nevertheless, they can also be used as independent learning modules, if needed. This philosophy makes SMaRT curriculum highly flexible. Each module includes three different units with specific learning outcomes.

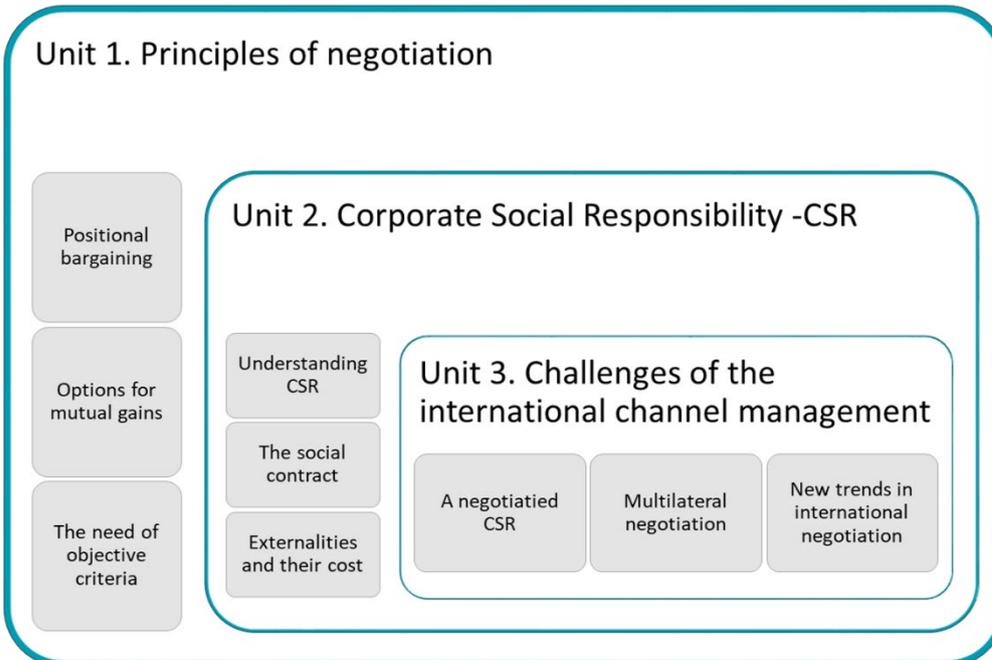
The following figures summarize the learning outcomes of module 1, 2 and 3. Learning outcomes are statements of what a student should know, understand and be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning (i.e., understanding key concepts related to positional bargain).

In figure 1 to 3, verbs associated with learning outcomes are omitted to facilitate reading.

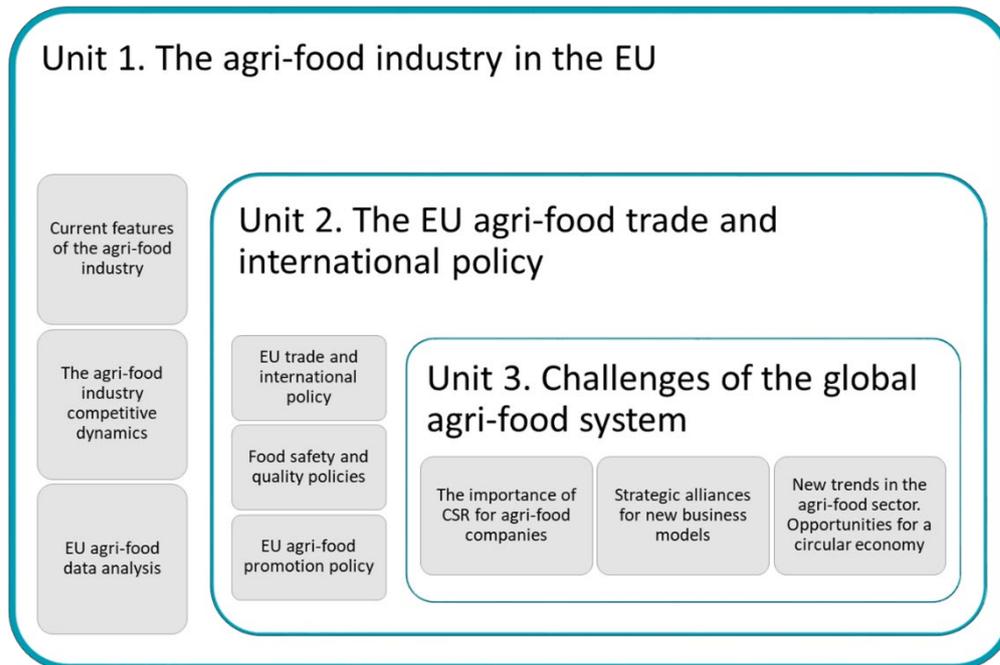
Module 1. International sales management/export



Module 2. Personal selling



Module 3. Understanding the economics of agri-food sector



Innovative learning activities

Interactive educational videos

Open Educational Resources play an important role in the learning process of Units 1 and 2 of modules 1 to 3. Interactive videos are created in Conform study by using Chroma Key and the application of computer graphic and motion graphic solutions



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These interactive educational videos allows the learner to access in-depth information recalled by the presenter in the video to cover the other aspects not included in the OER.

The learner can temporarily interrupt the episode and, through the hotspots inserted on the time-line of the video, recalled by specific "Key Words", to access the different training contents provided.

Interactive videos give learners online access to further investigation material (such as, thematic website, video, research paper and any other multimedia content).

SMaRT has developed 6 interactive video training pills.

Each interactive video is equivalent to 9 working hours.

27% of SMaRT curriculum working hours are based on educational video learning methodology.

Guest speakers in the (virtual) classroom

Unit 3 of Modules 1 to 3 is dedicated to challenges and trends. Strategic decision-making is the one of the most important areas of current sales management and plays a crucial role in achieving success and survival of SMEs in the agri-food sector.

Environmental changes bring new opportunities for companies' development, but also, at the same time, they mean threats. Monitoring, researching and predicting the development of environment has become increasingly difficult. It demands new set of skills. To develop this skills and competencies, SMaRT curriculum introduces guest speakers in the classroom.

SMaRT uses guest speakers as learning activity. Each activity is equivalent to 9 working hours.

13.5% of SMaRT curriculum working hours are based on the voice of the experience.

Including guest speakers in the classroom provides learners with access to other perspectives and more real world learning opportunities. At the end of unit 3, and to maximize active learning, students end up engaging in online discussions. This reflective activity helps students to make a more conscious effort to link course material to the insights from the speakers.

As female representation at senior management level in the agri-food sector level is still low, SMaRT recommends to select the guests speakers using a gender perspective.

PlaS Games

PlaS Games are video games that include content, practical to put knowledge into practice, and a story, a narrative that ties together the course theory and practical elements of the game. In that sense, PlaS Games are experiential learning.

SMaRT has developed 6 interactive PlaS Games; two games per module.

30% of SMaRT curriculum is based on game methodology.

Games stimulate direct participation in a recursive activation, verification and feedback process to train the target skills and evaluate the achievement of the Curriculum Learning outcomes in the interim and ex-post, in a gamified learning context that contemplates solutions with high educational and motivational impact.

To access the audio-visual products created for the project, students need to access "Erudire" e-learning platform at <http://www.erudire.it/>

A direct access to Erudice will be included in the project web page: <https://smarteuproject.eu/>

Learning assessment

Learning outcomes are validated through self-administrated online questionnaires and reflective activities, such as online forum and debates.

In line with the Bologna Process, the project will use digital credential systems that adopt the Open Badges Infrastructure standard and apply the blockchain in line with the IMS Global Standard, as a tool to represent, understand, verifiability, traceability, sharing, portability and recognition of the results and skills achieved.

Concluding remark

To date, the development of the curriculum follows the deadlines set in the proposal. Partners roles are perfectly defined to achieve quality results.

The next steps of the project will involve the active participation of students and SMEs. And, though risk management will become more important than ever, the process will be a fascinating learning journey for SMaRT partners, and the rest of participants.

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