

**ASKFOOD – Alliance for Skills and Knowledge to Widen  
Food Sector-related Open Innovation, Optimization and Development**



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**Guidance and Toolkit for the ASKFOOD Knowledge Clusters**

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<b>Dissemination Level</b>		
<b>PU</b>	Public	<b>X</b>
<b>PP</b>	Restricted to other programme participants (including Commission services and projects reviewers)	
<b>CO</b>	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including EACEA and Commission services and projects reviewers)	

**Summary**

This document describes the organisational structure and procedures for each Knowledge Clusters setting up the metrics for the staff and the performance development processes at each Cluster level, including the assessment of potentially exploitable outputs identified in WP8.

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## 1 Introduction

The Food & Drink Industry, the most important manufacturing sector in Europe, is a well-recognised “mature” sector with limited investments in innovation as well as in Research and Development. Innovative solutions and tools to boost innovation and promote a sustainable growth is necessary. The Innovation triangle model includes Education as key element along with Research to achieve with “industry” or more in general “business” the expected impact in our society. Currently, the European Higher Education and Training in the food-related sectors fails to meet the skills and competences needs of enterprises and businesses, due to:

- lack of updated skills and competences needs from food enterprises;
- limited university-business interplay on training and education due to the no ability and openness to a collaborative dialog;
- lack of tools able to offer university-business collaborative;
- limited knowledge transfer;
- old style/conventional training methodologies.

The ASKFOOD project aims to improve the dialogue and strengthen the collaboration between academic sector (i.e. Universities, research centres, etc.) and all various stakeholders of the food-related sectors in an innovative, multisector and multidisciplinary “ecosystem” by offering modern tools and frameworks of collaboration. Taking as reference the EU-FoodSTA Centers created by the Erasmus + Knowledge Alliance EU-FoodSTA project, ASKFOOD will offer a new and innovative framework of collaboration and cooperation for University, training providers, individual business (enterprises, start-ups, professionals) and existing clusters to enable the exchange of knowledge, innovation demands and opportunities, ideas, training and staff.

In this framework, aims and tasks of WP2 are:

- (a) to establish a Joint Platform (**ASKFOOD Innovative Training Hub**) to share, test and apply disruptive training solutions, collecting inputs, contents and supports from academia, industry, and other key stakeholders in the food-related sectors.
- (b) to bring together the various stakeholders (**ASKFOOD Knowledge Clusters**) to foster successful learning for students and graduates, as well as for industry staff and other stakeholders – according to their needs.

This document describes the organisational structure and procedures for the Knowledge Clusters setting up, the metrics for the staff and the performance development processes at each Cluster level, including the assessment of potentially exploitable outputs identified in WP8.

The network plan for collaboration is described in D2.1. Collaboration and network Plan of the Knowledge clusters.

## 2 KNOWLEDGE CLUSTERS AND TOOLKIT

### 2.1 Knowledge Clusters (KC)

Knowledge Clusters within the ASKFOOD project and community will be made of the various stakeholders that will be created to foster successful learning for students and graduates, as well as for industry staff and other stakeholders – according to their needs. It will be a consortium of representatives from universities, companies and students, supported by associated partners.

#### Target partners and end-users:

1. Food-related enterprises,
2. Clusters, hubs, organizations, and associations in the food-related sectors,
3. Universities and research centers,
4. Training providers, and
5. Individual experts and professionals as well as young researchers, entrepreneurs and professional.

In addition, “talents” (early stage professionals and researchers, students, graduates and post-graduates) will be considered target end-users as future professionals and workforce in the food-related sectors.

The initial members of the Knowledge clusters will be the ASKFOOD partners and associated partners and their communities. The ASKFOOD project is aimed to enlarge the KC by various engaging activities including workshops, webinars, involvement in innovative training activities.

### 2.2 Toolkit

The setup of the ASKFOOD Innovative Training Hub and Knowledge Clusters is expected to develop an Accelerator Ecosystem, favouring the networking among the partners and the key stakeholders and the contamination of talents, ideas and innovation initiatives that can multiply the value of training in the food-related sector.

The toolkit includes:

a. **a virtual Platform**, i.e. the Digital Business and Training Ecosystem (DBTE) that will be **based on an “hub and spoke” model**, so to guarantee an evolutionary scheme to both academic and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training that can respect the three criteria of disruptive learner-led training: (1) personalized; (2) situated and context-specific; (3) authentic (because real-world problems and projects are literally within reach of disruptive training models). The Joint Platform (**ASKFOOD Innovative Training Hub**) will be set up to share, test and apply disruptive training solutions, collecting inputs, contents and supports from academia, industry, and other key stakeholders in the food-related sectors. The online platform will be **based on an “hub and spoke” model**, so to guarantee an evolutionary scheme to both academic and CPD training.

The DBTE has to include dedicated space for:

- meeting and networking environment for all members of the KC a dedicated space has to be developed also for “talents” (early stage professionals and researchers, students, graduates and post-graduates), offering them the opportunity to contact business and other representatives of the job market in the food-related sectors.
- **a knowledge management toolkit.** This will be a platform that supports the activity of the Knowledge Clusters. It is organized as a Knowledge Map/Aggregator and Practice Sharing Tool and developed around **six building blocks (BB) of the Learning and Knowledge Management process.** The Toolkit is based on the “GO LEAN” approach to generate innovative standard solutions to create and share knowledge.

**GO LEAN** is the acronym that summarises the following five steps to create innovative solutions:

1. **G**oal: identifying what are you looking for according to the six building blocks of the learning and knowledge management process.
2. **O**bserve and Orient stage: browsing materials.
3. **L**everaging on them to refine your ideas and to choose what you would like to apply within your community.
4. **E**xperiment: involving ideas and implementing the activities in your community.
5. **A**nalysing the effects and contributing with your inputs to share knowledge and to identify **N**ext actions.

The Toolkit will collect and adapt Sprint/Scrum/Agile Methodologies to support intrapreneurship in the KCs (i.e. Lean Canvas, Traction model, Customer Factory, Explanatory Propelling Questions, Test kit to identify and decide on solutions).

Video tutorials and learning pills on the project website will demonstrate in an interactive way the purpose of the single tools and how to use it.

- **innovative training materials** addressing hot topics relevant for food- and food related innovation.

b. **A series of complementary virtual/online tools** that will be developed by the ASKFOOD project and made available to the Knowledge Clusters (WP1), namely:

- Interactive Training Gap Identifier
- Smart Atlas
- Forecast aggregator

All these tools will support the KC to design, develop and exploit their activities and promote innovation in the food-related sectors

c. **ASKFOOD Permanent Observatory**, a Community of Practice made of representatives of different sectors dealing with education and training that will be developed to carry out activities to trace and identify skills and competences skills of the future generation of food graduates and professionals (WP5).

### 3 STRUCTURE

The organisational structure will include:

1. **Chair** or administrator of the virtual platform DBTE: this role will be taken by the entity/institution that will agree in its exploitation at the end of the project. The Chair will be supported by a Steering committee made of representatives of the various stakeholders of interest of the DBTE
2. **Community of Practice** made of all Clusters, members and talents. The registration will allow automatically to be categorised in clusters based on the main sector of activity. As already mentioned, project partners and associated project partners of the ASKFOOD project are automatically members of the KC network.

The Chair will be responsible of the maintenance and update of the DBTE platform and the KC information and interplay. The Chair will boost collaboration among the members by adding new contents in the DBTE, sending emails, using dedicated social media pages; members will have the possibility to interact among them within the platform by using dedicated tools. By request KC members and partners or when needed, online meetings will be organized to ensure the exchange of ideas and the correct performance of the network.

At national level the ASKFOOD partners will be asked to identify clusters, business and talents interested to act as **local Knowledge Cluster**.

## 4 GUIDANCE and EXPLOITATION plans

The virtual DBTE Platform (“**ASKFOOD Innovative Training Hub**”) will be set up to share, test and apply disruptive training solutions, collecting inputs, contents and supports from academia, industry, and other key stakeholders in the food-related sectors.

The online platform will be **based on an “hub and spoke” model**, so to guarantee an evolutionary scheme to both academic and CPD training.

The main activity of the Chair and of all the members will be:

- to promote the interaction with and usage of the platform to network, share materials, information, publications, training opportunities, project calls, innovation needs and solutions. The maintenance, also be adding new contents and information, will be an essential element along with the communication with the KC members, ensuring a two-way communication exchange system:

1. receiving inputs and feedbacks from stakeholders concerning needs and demands (e.g. R&D, innovation, skills), and
2. providing them with solutions or opening dedicated posts in the dedicated space of the DBTE.

- to support the organisation of innovative trainings in collaboration with other institutions/clusters/entities;

- to enlarge the KC community

- to network with other Cluster communities (e.g. European Cluster collaboration platform).

ASKFOOD performed a feasibility study on which an initial business concept approach was developed (D2.2., M12). Similar to a business-start up, the Business plan of ASKFOOD is subject to constant iteration to match emerging needs and contributions.

As such, it will be updated once the DBTE will be ready and launched; the latter will set progressive goals for long-term success of each KC, testing the viability of the KC’s business model. The business opportunities (business cases, e.g. trainings, training tools, databases, etc.) and marketability of outputs will be also evaluated.

## 5 MEMBERSHIP

The Chair/administrator will be defined based on the exploitation strategy that will be defined in the ASKFOOD project within WP8. The steering committee will be made of three selected members as representatives of the ASKFOOD project and KC members.

Each ASKFOOD partner will be invited to join the DBTE both as institution/organisation and individual professions/researcher. Moreover, in his/her country, (s)he will be asked to identify clusters, business and talents interested to act as **local Knowledge Cluster** as well as collected the interest of other cluster and/or Vocational Education and Training providers to join the DBTE thereby the enlargement of the **Knowledge Clusters community** could be achieved.

Representatives of the various stakeholders of the food system and food-related clusters and hubs will be invited to join the DBTE and KC community, to support the activities and directly benefit from the developments. The Membership is free of charge. New members will not receive any EU-funding from the project. Due to the Erasmus+ funding rules, costs of additional partners cannot be covered.

The benefits of becoming a member of the KC and DBTE are listed below:

- Be part of the KC, an open multisector community with activities aimed to promote innovation in the food enterprises and business by disruptive methodologies;
- Access to the DBTE intranet and virtual environment and all related networking and information benefits;
- Access to training materials;
- Contribute to shaping the developed trainings with the consortium according to the needs;
- Attend meetings (virtual and physical).

The obligations of new ASKFOOD KC members will be:

- Dissemination of activities of the aims and activities developed within the DBTE
- Promotion of the membership to further partners
- Contribution to trainings and other activities (e.g. surveys)

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*End of the deliverable*