



## PROJECT H2020

### “Living Lab research concept in rural Areas – LIVERUR”

#### D6.1 – Report on the roundtables

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **About LIVERUR project**

LIVERUR is a pioneering H2020 project addressing Living Lab concepts, circular economy and the creation of new business models for rural enterprises in Europe and beyond.

LIVERUR combines relevant rural topics (agriculture, tourism, innovation, energy & environment, food, water, entrepreneurship, social innovation, etc.) for future challenges in rural / remote / mountain areas, in order to give them real and sustainable perspectives to cope with existing challenges.

The project consortium is collaborating on a unique initiative and open innovation approach, the Living Lab concept, providing knowledge transfer from research results, reusable and replicable methods and tools in order to foster an effective rural sector transformation (technological, socio-economic, human centric) for all LIVERUR partners in their targeted territories.

LIVERUR project aims at bringing rural innovation along with high impact to the wide spectrum of agricultural and rural activities, entrepreneurship, job creation, digital skills improvement, shared and circular economies among new business models and prototypes for better decision-making and community engagement.

### **About WP6 – Development of the regional circular living lab tool for entrepreneurs in rural areas**

WP6 aims at creating a unique and integrated tool / environment for incubating the concept of RAIN – Regional Circular Living Lab business model. The tool shall include a website (RAIN platform) and an integrated App for smartphones (both for Android and iOS operating systems), which will have the same features, components, sections and contents.

The LIVERUR tool for entrepreneurs can be compared to an “incubator” concept: it will consist an anchor where entrepreneurs will be able to have access in marketing advices, funding solutions,



counselling services from relevant experts and feedback regarding legal aspects. Moreover, the LIVERUR tool aims to be the first Pan-European living lab entrepreneurs' platform aiming to support entrepreneurs and start-uppers.

This report presents the results of the Task6.1.1 – Roundtables, which consists in collecting and recording the needs and challenges of the entrepreneurs present in the piloting territories of the project through the implementation of round tables during which:

- ✓ Rural entrepreneurs were presented with the overall project's activities, goals and objectives as well as with the concept of the RAIN business model and RAIN platform.
- ✓ Following the above presentations, rural entrepreneurs were asked to fill in the relevant structured questionnaire (either on spot or online).

### **Key results - Outputs for LIVERUR next steps and activities**

In the table below, an overview of the key results along with a relevant analysis of the input that each key result provides to LIVERUR for the development of the next deliverables and, specifically, the RAIN platform is being presented.

This analysis can be considered as the “heart” of this report and, of course along with the overall conclusions and results, will be the main guide in order to achieve the ideal design and functionality of the RAIN platform in a way that the platform covers all relevant needs of the rural entrepreneurs and enterprises.



| Key results from the round tables   | Key outputs / conclusions for LIVERUR next steps & activities  |
|---|--|
| <p>Regarding the relevant <a href="#">channels that rural / agriculture enterprises use in order to reach their customers</a>, the majority of them (59%) uses a combination of channels in order to reach their customers (in person, through wholesalers, online, etc.). But, it is also worth mentioning that 18% develops only in person relationships with the customers, 15% exploits wholesalers' and third parties' networks for the promotion of their products / services and 3% uses only online channels for reaching out to customers.</p> | <p>The innovative RAIN business model is recommended to combine the RAIN principles of social sustainability and stakeholders' involvement / openness with the core business activity of marketing and distribution in order to provide a context of new and/or innovative channels that can be used to reach customers.</p>   |
| <p>The majority of the rural entrepreneurs that participated in the round tables states (63%) that the <a href="#">weekly working hours</a> are more than 46, a result that confirms that running a business requires a great amount of personal effort and time, significantly affecting the work-life balance.</p>  | <p>RAIN Entrepreneurial Tool should provide support and guidance on the topic of work-life balance through the presence of relevant experts and through the possibility that rural entrepreneurs can directly communicate with them through the online community.</p>  |
| <p>Examining the <a href="#">operational and technological business capability</a>, besides the fact that the vast majority of the rural / agriculture enterprises have the capacity for more productions and sales, the following results can also be highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A significant percentage (13%) declare that they <i>do not know</i> if they are able to achieve more sales or not.</li> </ul>  | <p>RAIN Entrepreneurial Tool should provide support and guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Conducting a business state-of-the-art analysis so that rural entrepreneurs are able to recognize their capability and their potential for business growth.</li> <li>➤ Improving the rural / agriculture enterprises' technological readiness level, exploiting the cooperation with relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul> |



| Key results from the round tables  | Key outputs / conclusions for LIVERUR next steps & activities  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 15% of the rural / agriculture activities does not acquire IT equipment and internet connection within their premises.</li> <li>▪ 36.2% of the rural / agriculture activities does not acquire video-conferencing facilities and equipment within their premises.</li> </ul>  |  |
| <p>Analyzing the general <a href="#">long-term business strategy</a> of the rural / agriculture enterprises that have participated in the round tables, the following strategic objectives appear to be very important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Maintain current position or achieve slight expansion</li> <li>✓ Get onto a secure footing</li> <li>✓ Substantial expansion / develop and adopt a new business model</li> </ul> | <p>These results lead to an important business need: ensuring the long-term business viability and sustainability which can be covered through the RAIN Entrepreneurial Tool and the innovative RAIN business model by enriching the core business activities with the RAIN principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ecological sustainability</li> <li>✓ Economic sustainability</li> <li>✓ Open innovation</li> <li>✓ ICT</li> <li>✓ Stakeholders involvement / openness</li> <li>✓ Circular economy</li> <li>✓ Social sustainability</li> </ul> |
| <p>Several factors (both operational and financial) affect <a href="#">the capability of a business to grow</a> in a viable and sustainable way. Focusing on the operational part:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 35% of rural entrepreneurs states that the lack of space / premises prevents them from growing.</li> </ul>   | <p>RAIN Entrepreneurial Tool should be designed in a way that enables the cooperation between rural / agriculture enterprises and other stakeholders from the quadruple helix embodying open innovation procedures. This can be achieved through an interactive map, which will provide information on relevant organizations (public authorities, research</p>  |



| Key results from the round tables  | Key outputs / conclusions for LIVERUR next steps & activities  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 44% of rural entrepreneurs states that the lack of staff / experts prevents them from growing.</li> </ul> <p>Focusing on the financial part of business growth, 60% stated that there is indeed a shortage of capital and another 20% stated that there is no such shortage but can only just afford a slight expansion.</p>  | <p>organizations, universities, other rural / agriculture enterprises, etc.) that can support rural / agriculture enterprises and cover their needs in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ space / premises</li> <li>➔ specialized staff / experts</li> <li>➔ product development</li> <li>➔ marketing activities</li> <li>➔ Updated business equipment / buildings / IT equipment</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Analyzing <a href="#">the specific needs of rural entrepreneurs for advice / support</a>, the following topics / “areas” emerge as the most important ones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Developing the business model</li> <li>➤ Developing the business strategy</li> <li>➤ Development of management and organizational skills</li> <li>➤ Staff training/development</li> <li>➤ Quality standards and their application</li> <li>➤ Environmental sustainability</li> <li>➤ Financial management / taxation</li> <li>➤ Developing the marketing strategy / Market search / Digital marketing</li> <li>➤ Developing new products/services</li> <li>➤ Innovation</li> </ul> | <p>These results directly highlight and enrich the topics and areas in which rural / agriculture enterprises need support and advice. Therefore, RAIN Entrepreneurial Tool should adopt a personalized approach in order to meet these needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identification of each entrepreneur’s specific needs through the data each one will provide while registering in the platform.</li> <li>➤ Analysis of these data and direct matchmaking of each entrepreneur with the relevant expert / section of the RAIN Entrepreneurial Tool that can help him/her address the relevant needs.</li> </ul> |



| Key results from the round tables  | Key outputs / conclusions for LIVERUR next steps & activities   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Public relations / Networking</li> <li>➤ ICT skills</li> <li>➤ Risk management methods</li> <li>➤ HR management</li> <li>➤ Management of discrepancies</li> </ul>   |   |
| <p>Rural entrepreneurs present a high level of engagement and participation in <a href="#">training</a> courses and activities while, on the other hand, the level of the employees can be improved. One of the main reasons why both business owners and employees are not engaged in training activities is the lack of information on available training courses.</p> | <p>These results provide lead us to two main conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Cooperation schemes between the rural / agriculture enterprises and relevant and useful stakeholders should be promoted within the RAIN Entrepreneurial Tool focusing, in this case, on the cooperation for the engagement in continuing training and education. This can be achieved again through the feature of an interactive map.</li> <li>➤ The RAIN business model and, consequently, the RAIN Entrepreneurial Tool should include a feature for recognizing the rural / agriculture enterprises' specific needs for training and education.</li> </ul> |

Table 1: Key results - outputs for LIVERUR next steps & activities



## I. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Europe is at an economic and social crossroads and nowhere more so than in rural areas. The continent faces the challenge of creating smart, inclusive and sustainable growth at a time when an ageing population will leave 47 million fewer working-age people by 2060.

Over the same period, an estimated 20% of Europeans (over 100 million) will leave rural areas for towns and cities, a trend, which threatens the viability of the agro-food sector, which has already declined from supporting more than 54 million jobs a decade ago to 45 million today. It is obvious that, such demographic changes threaten to leave rural regions behind and put pressure on the security and growth of the European economy.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to extend the growth agenda beyond smarter cities to include Europe's rural regions, which account for 77% of the continent. Specifically, the challenge is to move beyond a "one size fits all" model of growth and empower rural regions to capitalize on their distinctive territorial capital and turn diversity and demographic change into strengths. Moreover, to truly take advantage of social innovation as an engine of rural growth, Europe needs a mechanism for understanding the unique characteristics of each region and the tools to deliver tailored social innovation programs on the ground.

To this direction, LIVERUR goal is to introduce the Rural Living Lab research methodology in SMAEs framework, in order to identify and analyze various business model approaches and, to that, create added value, social cohesion, jobs, stakeholders' integration, actors' inclusiveness and business resilience through the development of an innovative business model for rural enterprises based on the concept of Rural Living Labs (RAIN). This model will be integrated into an online platform (RAIN platform) to ensure accessibility and sustainability.

A first step towards the development of the RAIN business model and RAIN platform is to record and analyze the current situation and needs of the rural / agriculture enterprises in order to reflect these needs within the new business model and adapt the design and the contents of the RAIN platform in a way that meets these needs.

This first step is being materialized through the implementation of the roundtables in the project's piloting territories with the participation of rural entrepreneurs, while this report demonstrates the results from the relevant survey.



## II. METHODOLOGY

The steps that project partners followed in order to reach the objectives of Task6.1.1 are:

- I. Work package leading partner (IED) developed a structured questionnaire to be used during the implementation of the round tables in the piloting territories.
- II. After collecting relevant feedback from all partners, the questionnaire was finalized and transferred in an online form in order to facilitate the recording of the results in each piloting territory.
- III. Partners in the project’s piloting territories organized and implemented the round tables with rural entrepreneurs in order to collect the relevant filled questionnaires. The number of entrepreneurs that participated in the round tables organized in each piloting territory as well as the total number of collected questionnaires are available in the following table.

| <b>Piloting area (country / region)</b> | <b>Partner(s) responsible</b> | <b>Number of participants / entrepreneurs</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Austria                                 | RMB                           | 19  |
| Spain / Murcia                          | ADRI                          | 20  |
| Czech Republic / Bohemia                | UHLA                          | 20  |
| Malta / Gozo                            | TRA                           | 4   |
| Azores / Archipelago                    | FRCT                          | 5   |
| Slovenia                                | UL                            | 19  |
| France / Britany                        | CRAB                          | 8   |
| France / West of France                 | CAPL                          | 16  |
| Latvia                                  | ZSA                           | 19  |
| Turkey                                  | ZEKA                          | 23  |
| Italy / Lake Trasimeno                  | UCT                           | 20  |
| Italy / Reggio Emilia                   | E35                           | 22  |
| Tunisia / Gabes Governorate             | DAR                           | 20  |
| Italy / Sicily                          | CESIE                         | 9   |
| <b>Total</b>                            |                               | <b>224</b>                                    |

*Table 2: Number of participants in the roundtables per piloting territory*



- Following the implementation of the round tables in each piloting area, partners collected the filled questionnaires and recorded the results in the relevant online form that was developed for that exact purpose.

### **III. RESULTS**

In this section, the overall results from the implementation of the roundtables are being presented and analyzed. For the better understanding of the overall results, the report follows this structure:

- General information about the rural / agriculture enterprises that participated in the round tables
- Information about the location of the rural / agriculture enterprises
- Results regarding the business strategy followed by the rural / agriculture enterprises
- Analysis of the specific business needs and challenges that rural / agriculture enterprises face
- Results regarding the level of participation of rural / agriculture enterprises in continuing education and training activities.

#### **General information**

The main objective of this questionnaire's section was to collect and analyze some important general information about the rural SMEs that participated in the round tables.

### Year of business foundation

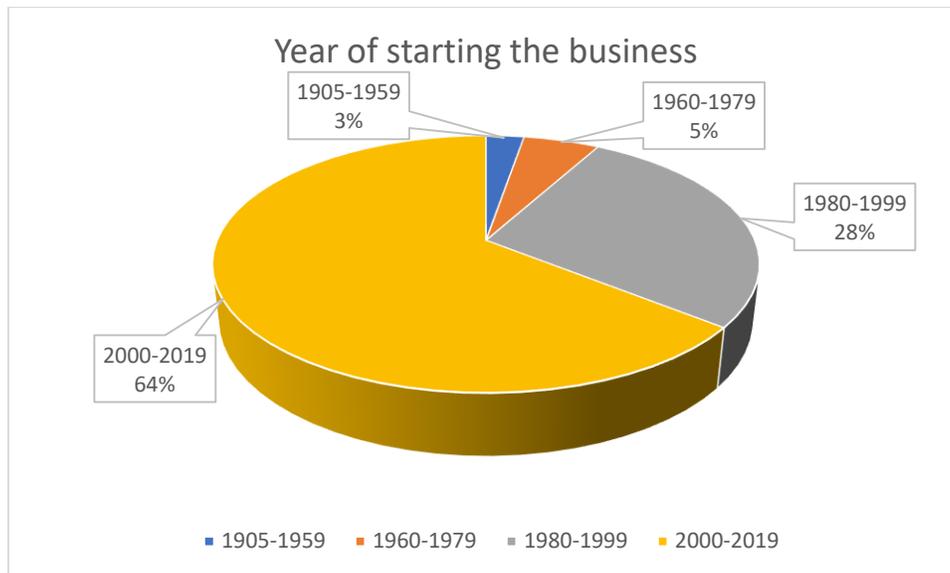


Figure 1: Year of business foundation

As figure 1 states, the majority of the rural SMEs that participated in the round tables (64%) was founded during the last 20 years, while a significant percentage (28%) was founded between the years 1980 and 1999. A quite interesting element emerging from the data analysis is that 5 SMEs were founded within 2019 and 31 SMEs were founded within the last three years (2016-2018).

## Initial involvement in the business

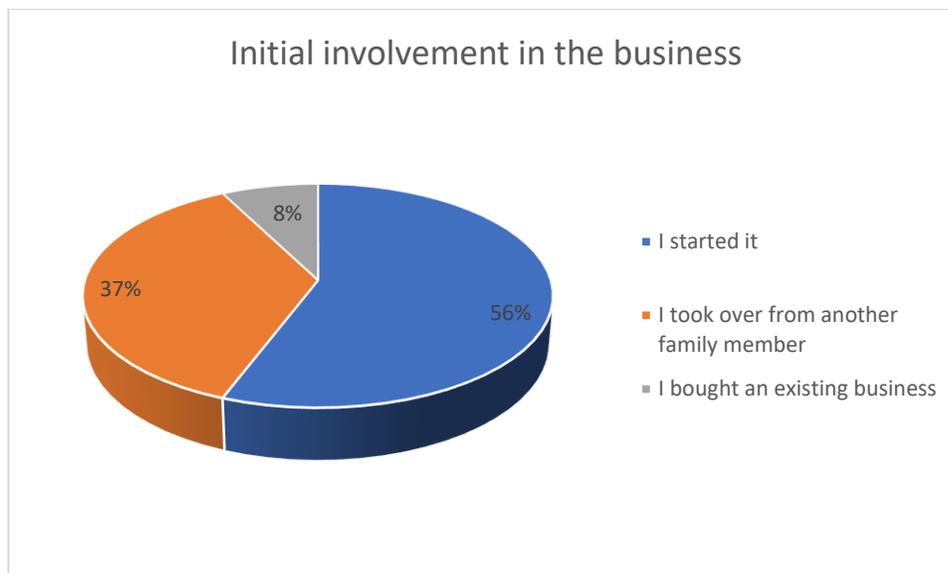


Figure 2: Initial involvement in the business

In order to examine the initial involvement in the business, three options / answers were made available:

- The business owner has started the business
- The business owner took over from another family member
- The business owner bought an existing business

Each one of these choices states and represents a different level of:

- Initial risk undertaken by the business owner (with the highest one coming from starting a new business)
- The initial investment made by the business owner
- The initiative and vision of the business owner by taking over / starting the business

As figure 2 presents, the vast majority of rural entrepreneurs either have started their own business (56%), or took over the business from another family member (37%). Only a small percentage (8%) of entrepreneurs have bought an existing rural / agriculture enterprise.

### Main reason(s) for starting the business

For both figures 3 and 4, series 1 = of no importance at all, series 2 = slightly important, series 3 = moderately important, series 4 = important and series 5 = extremely important.

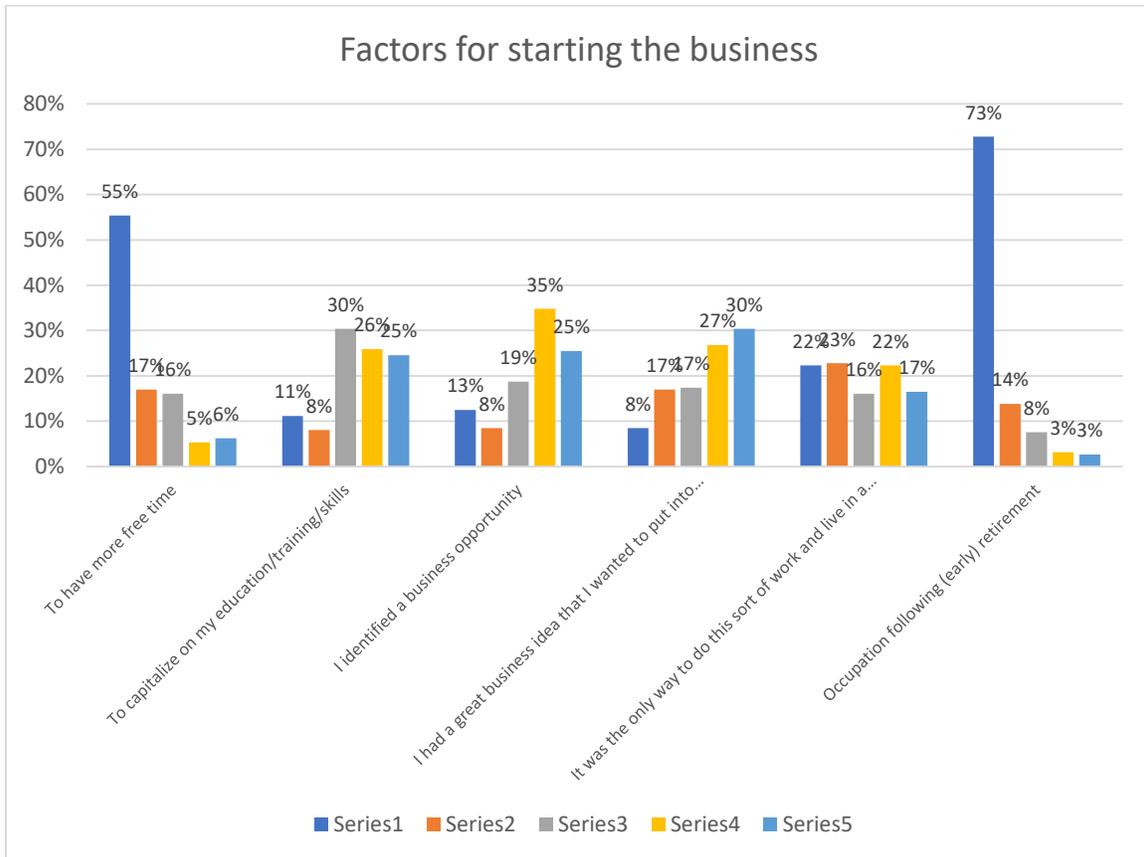


Figure 3: Factors for starting the business (1/2)

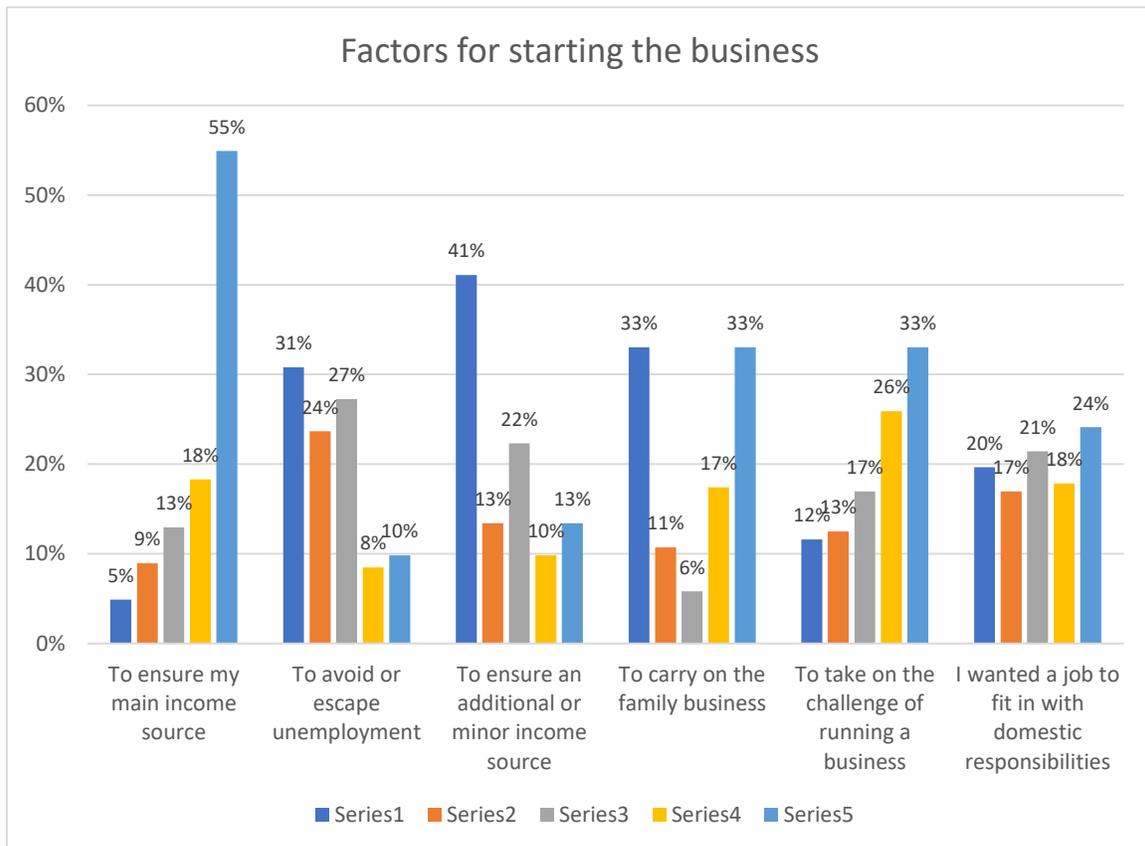


Figure 4: Factors for starting the business (2/2)

Analyzing figures 3 and 4, the most important reasons and factors for business owners to start their entrepreneurial path can be summarized as following:

- To ensure the main income source
- To carry on the family business (this reason, obviously, is connected with the business owners that took over from another family member)
- Identification of a business opportunity
- To take on the challenge of running a business

On the contrary, the least important reasons and factors are:

- To ensure more free time
- Occupation following (early) retirement
- To ensure an additional or minor income source



## Main activity / activities of the business

The main activity / activities of the agriculture and rural enterprises that participated in the round tables can be summarized into the following ones:

- Farming / mixed farming
- Growing of perennial crops
- Animal breeding / production
- Manufacture of food products (dairy products, vegetables, bakery, etc.) and beverages
- Wholesale and retail activities
- Services related to tourism and agro-tourism (accommodation, food services, travel agencies, etc.)
- Business consultants and management activities
- Manufacture of textiles
- Other services and activities

## Financial information

In this section, some basic financial information, such as the annual turnover (figures 5 and 6) and previous application for and receipt of a business loan and a grant (figures 7 and 8) of the rural / agriculture enterprises is being presented.

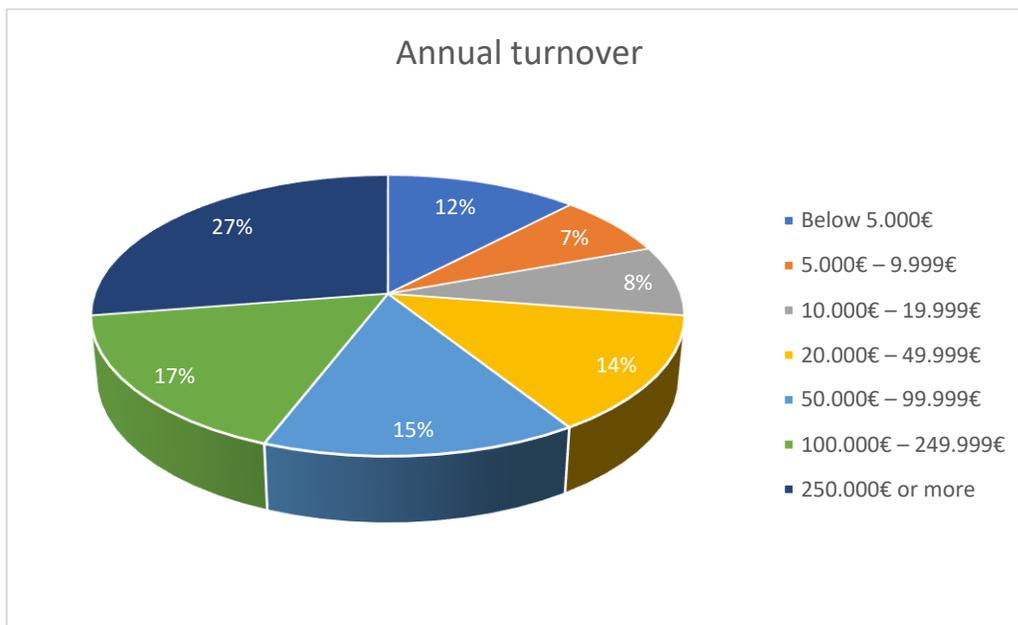


Figure 5: Annual turnover of the rural enterprises

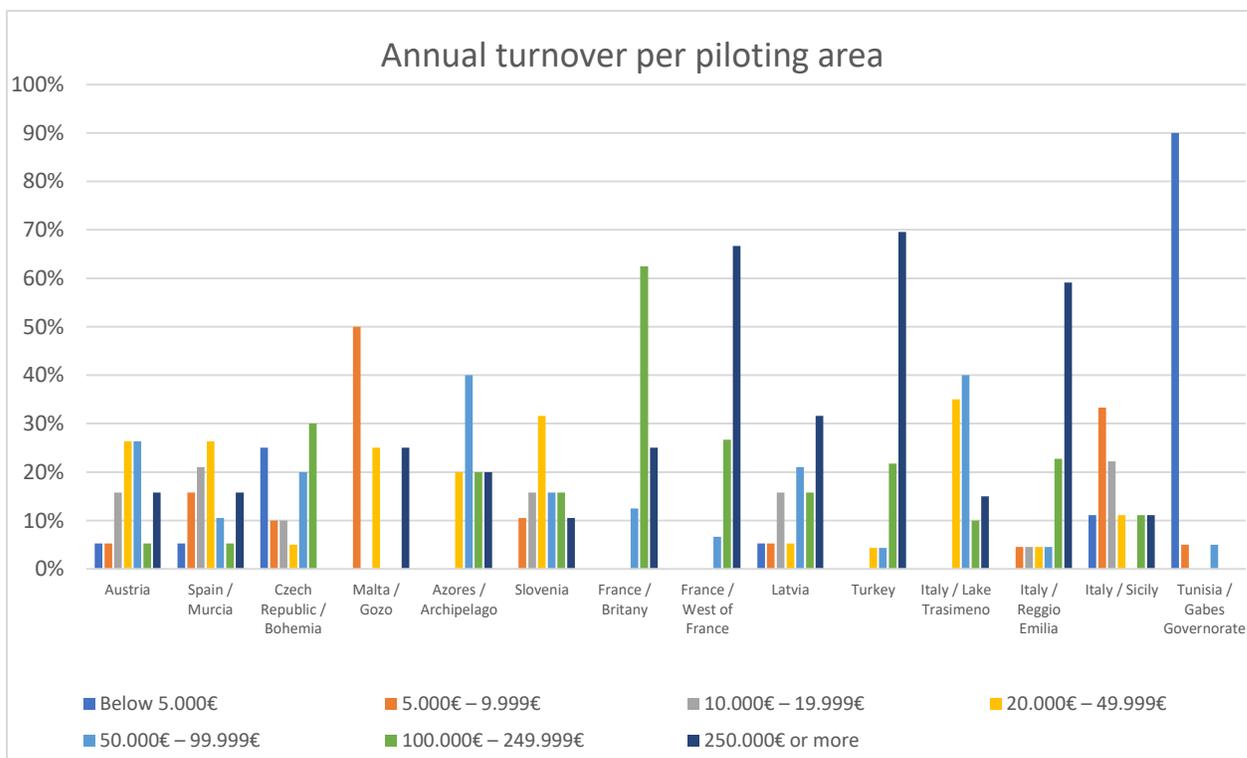


Figure 6: Annual turnover per piloting area

Regarding the annual turnover of the enterprises, an almost uniform distribution is noticeable although the percentage of the enterprises with an annual turnover of 250.000€ or more is significant higher than the other categories.

Analyzing the results regarding annual turnover per piloting area, one can come to the following conclusions:

- The piloting areas of Austria, Spain (Murcia), Czech Republic (Bohemia) and Slovenia present a uniform distribution of the selected enterprises among the various levels of annual turnover.
- On the other hand, the piloting areas of Malta, France, Turkey, Italy (Lake Trasimeno and Reggio Emilia) and Tunisia present a concentration of the enterprises either in the lower levels (the cases of Tunisia, Lake Trasimeno, Sicily and Malta) or in the higher levels of the annual turnover (the cases of Turkey, France and Reggio Emilia).

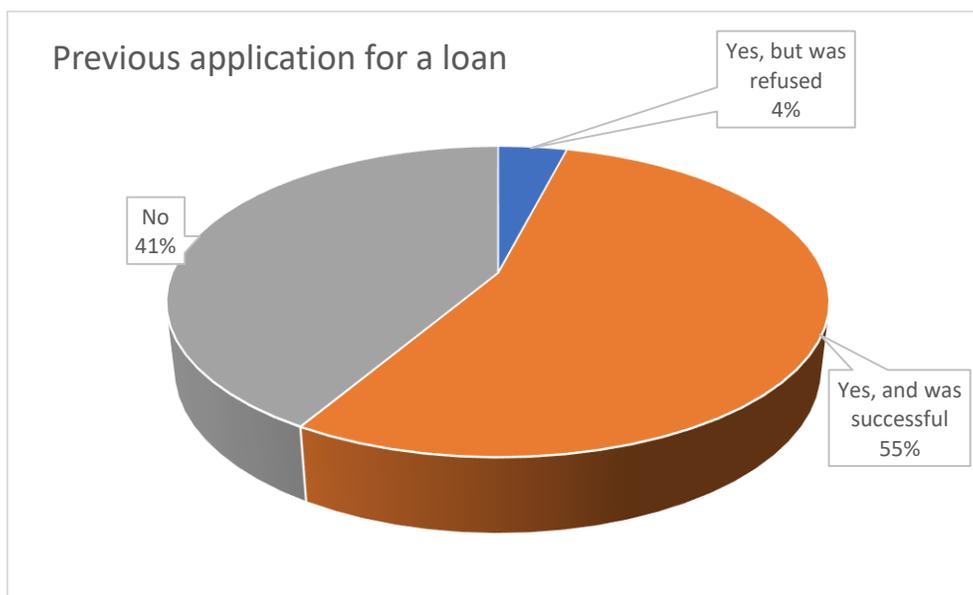


Figure 7: Previous application for a business loan

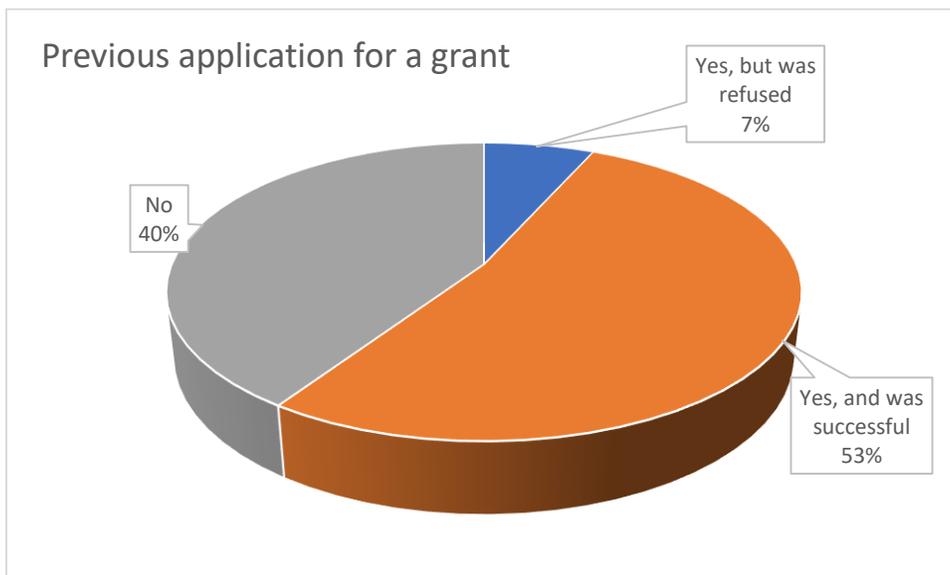


Figure 8: Previous application for a grant

### Legal form

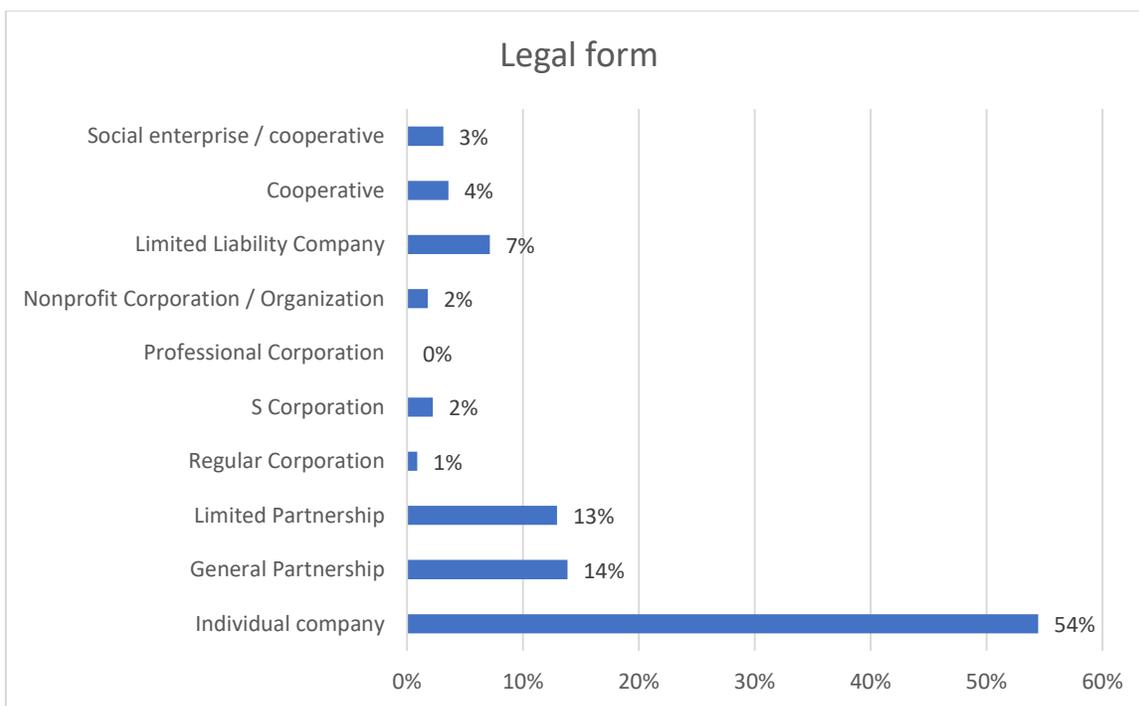


Figure 9: Legal form of the rural enterprises



Regarding the legal form of the rural / agriculture enterprises, individual company appears to be the most common one among the survey’s sample (54%), while the forms of general partnership, limited partnership and limited liability company are significantly represented by the survey’s sample (14%, 13% and 7% accordingly).

### Customers

A vital aspect of the business viability and sustainability is to be able to recognize and segment the business’s customers with the highest precision possible.

The customers of the agriculture / rural enterprises that have participated in this survey can be summarized into the following categories:

- General public
- Businesses / groups
- Cooperatives
- Local customers
- Wholesalers
- Producers
- Online customers
- Customers within the touristic sector

### Customers’ location

| Location                             | %     |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Local (less than 50 kms)             | 19,6% |
| Regional (50 – 120 kms)              | 13,4% |
| National                             | 7,1%  |
| European                             | 1,8%  |
| Worldwide                            | 6,3%  |
| Local & Regional                     | 12,5% |
| Local & National                     | 1,3%  |
| Local, Regional & National           | 13,4% |
| Local, Regional, National & European | 7,1%  |



| <b>Location</b>                                | <b>%</b> |
|--|----------|
| Local, Regional, European                      | 0,4%     |
| Local, National, European                      | 0,4%     |
| Local, European                                | 0,4%     |
| Local, National, European, Worldwide           | 0,9%     |
| Local, Regional, National, European, Worldwide | 4,5%     |
| Local, Worldwide                               | 0,4%     |
| Local, National, Worldwide                     | 0,4%     |
| Regional, National, Worldwide                  | 0,4%     |
| Regional, National, European, Worldwide        | 0,9%     |
| Regional, National, European                   | 0,9%     |
| Regional, European                             | 1,3%     |
| Regional, National                             | 3,1%     |
| National, Worldwide                            | 0,4%     |
| National, European, Worldwide                  | 1,3%     |
| National, European                             | 1,3%     |

*Table 3: Location of the customers*

According to table 3, most common customers' locations are:

- Local (less than 50 kms)
- Regional (50 – 120 kms)
- Local, Regional & National
- Local & Regional
- National
- Local, Regional, National & European



### Channels used to reach customers

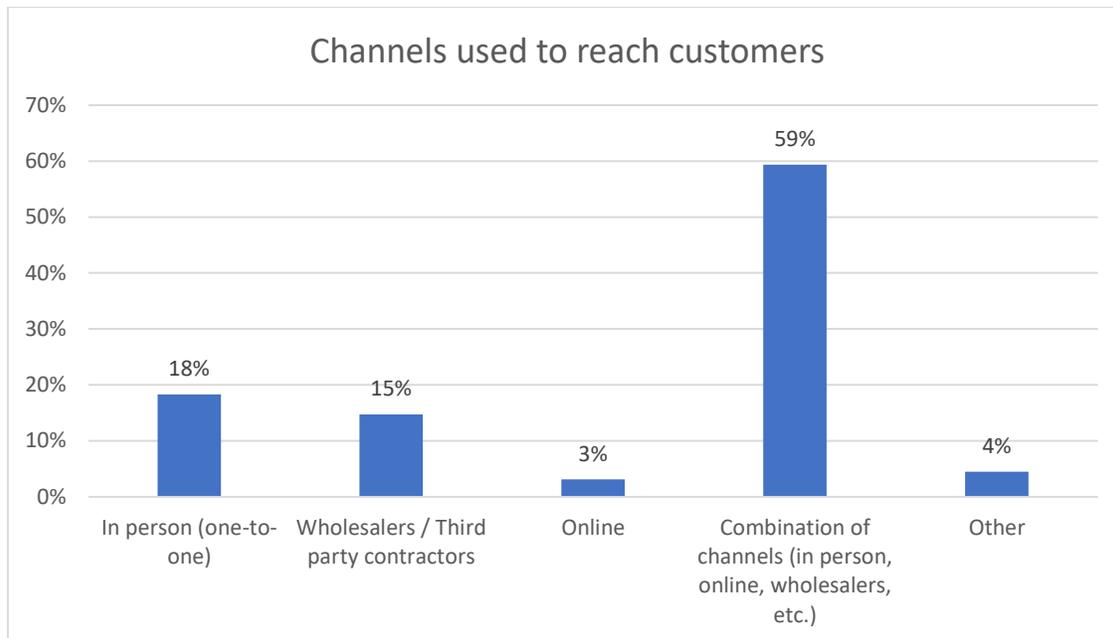


Figure 10: Channels used to reach customers

As expected, the majority of the rural / agriculture enterprises (59%) uses a combination of channels in order to reach their customers (in person, through wholesalers, online, etc.). But, it is also worth mentioning that 18% develops only in person relationships with the customers, 15% exploits wholesalers' and third parties' networks for the promotion of their products / services and 3% uses only online channels for reaching out to customers.



## External companies / stakeholders / suppliers

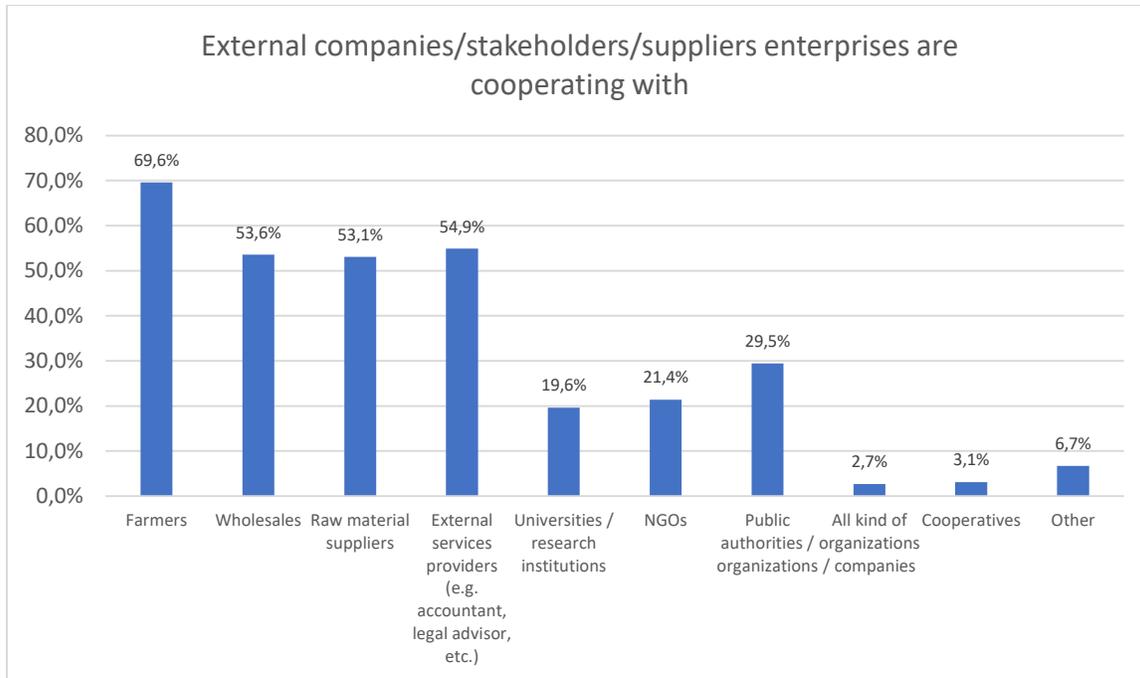


Figure 11: External companies/stakeholders/suppliers enterprises are cooperating with



Figure 12: Location of external companies/stakeholders/suppliers

Within this section, the intension was to investigate the representation of the triple helix parties in the enterprises' networks of partners that cooperate with. The relevant results show that all 3 partiers are present: companies, universities/research organizations and public organizations, although the cooperation that rural / agriculture enterprises develop with these organizations is mainly within a local, regional and national level (72%, 54% and 33% accordingly).

## Number of employees

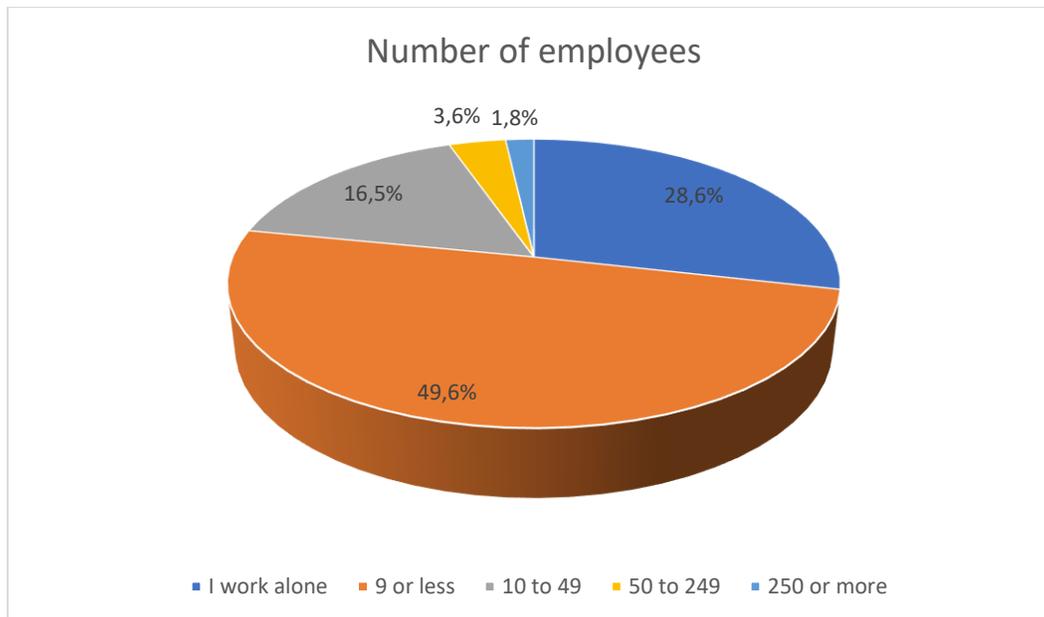


Figure 13: Number of employees

Analyzing the number of employees of the rural / agriculture enterprises that have participated in the round tables, one can come to the following conclusions:

- The significant majority of them (49.6%) fall into the micro businesses category
- In 28.6% of them the business owner works by himself/herself
- 16.5% of them fall into the small businesses category
- 3.6% of them fall into the medium businesses category
- 1.8% of them fall into the large business category

## Family members working in the business

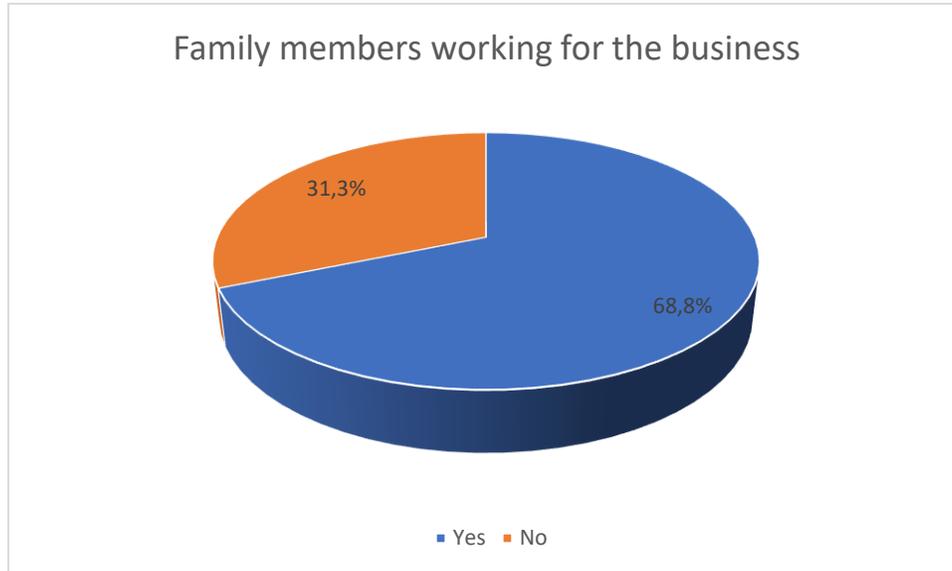


Figure 14: Family members working for the business

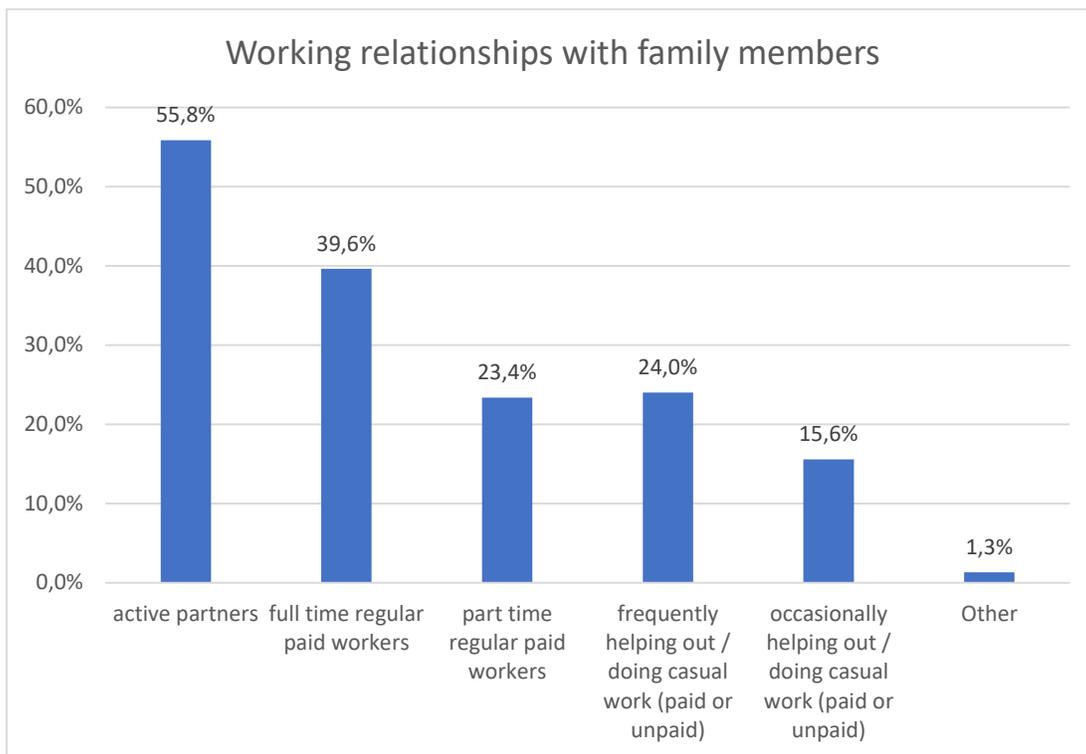


Figure 15: Working relationships with family members

According to figures 14 and 15, 68.8% of the rural / agriculture enterprises occupies family members, with the most common forms of occupation being:

- active partners of the company
- full time regular paid worker
- frequently or occasionally helping out and doing casual work (paid or unpaid)

### Average working hours per week

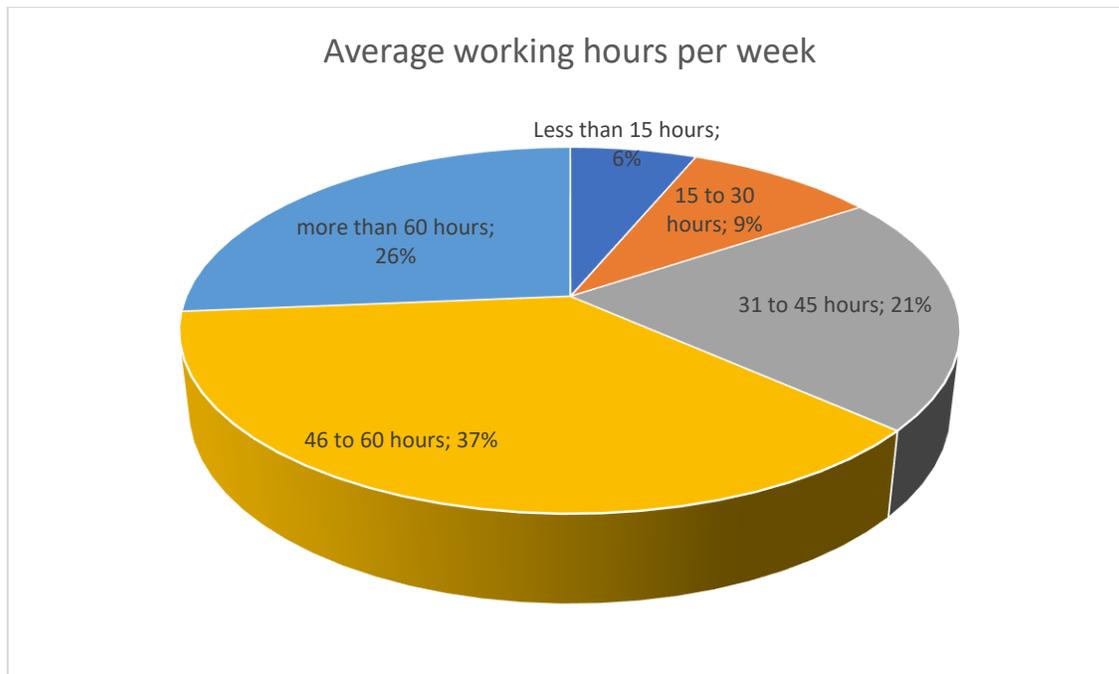


Figure 16: Average working hours per week

As it is widely known and established, running a business requires a great amount of personal effort and time, significantly affecting the work-life balance. This is also confirmed by the business owners that participated in the round tables, with the majority of them working either 46 to 60 hours (37%) or more than 60 hours (26%) per week.



## Location

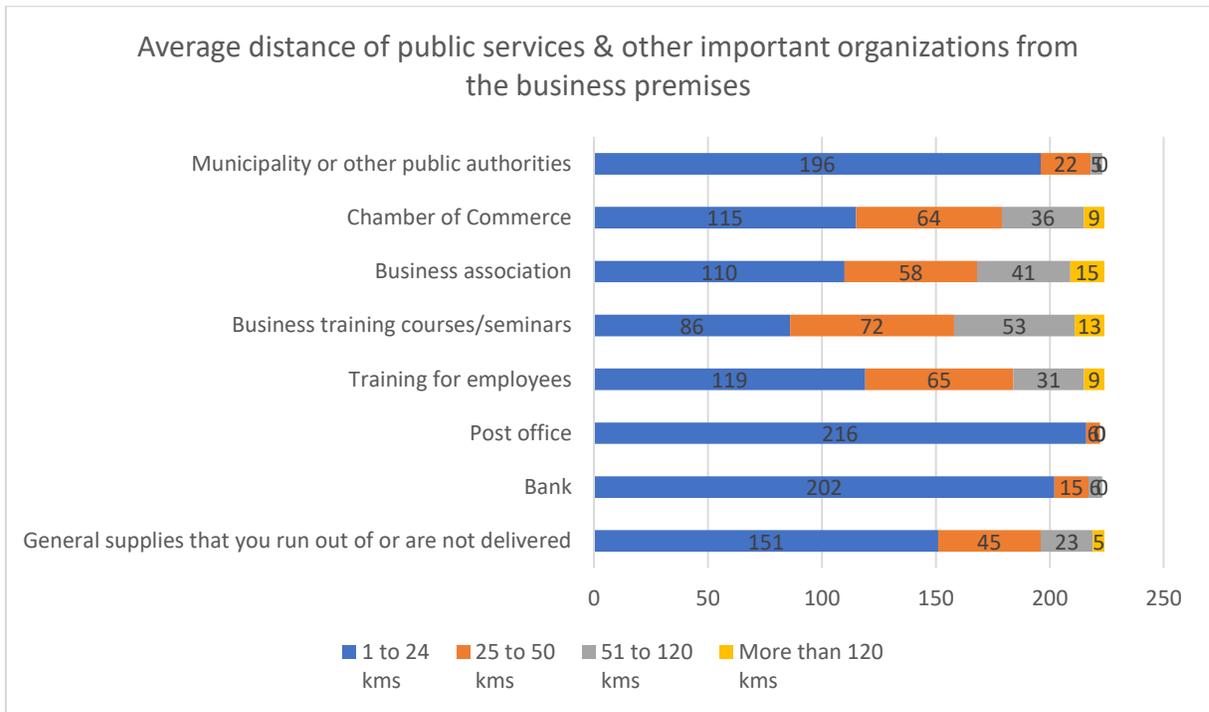


Figure 17: Average distance of public services & other important organizations from the business premises

Analyzing figure 17, all public services and other important organizations are in close distance from the businesses' premises, with the exception of a small number of rural / agriculture enterprises stating that the Chamber of Commerce (9), business association (15), business training providers (22) are more than 120Kms away for the company's premises.

## Business Strategy

The analysis of aspects and factors determining their business strategy is a crucial step in order to better understand the needs of the rural / agriculture enterprises. Therefore, the results of this section, combined with the identification of the businesses' needs, provide valuable feedback on the “areas” on which RAIN platform will be designed to support rural entrepreneurs.

### Business goals

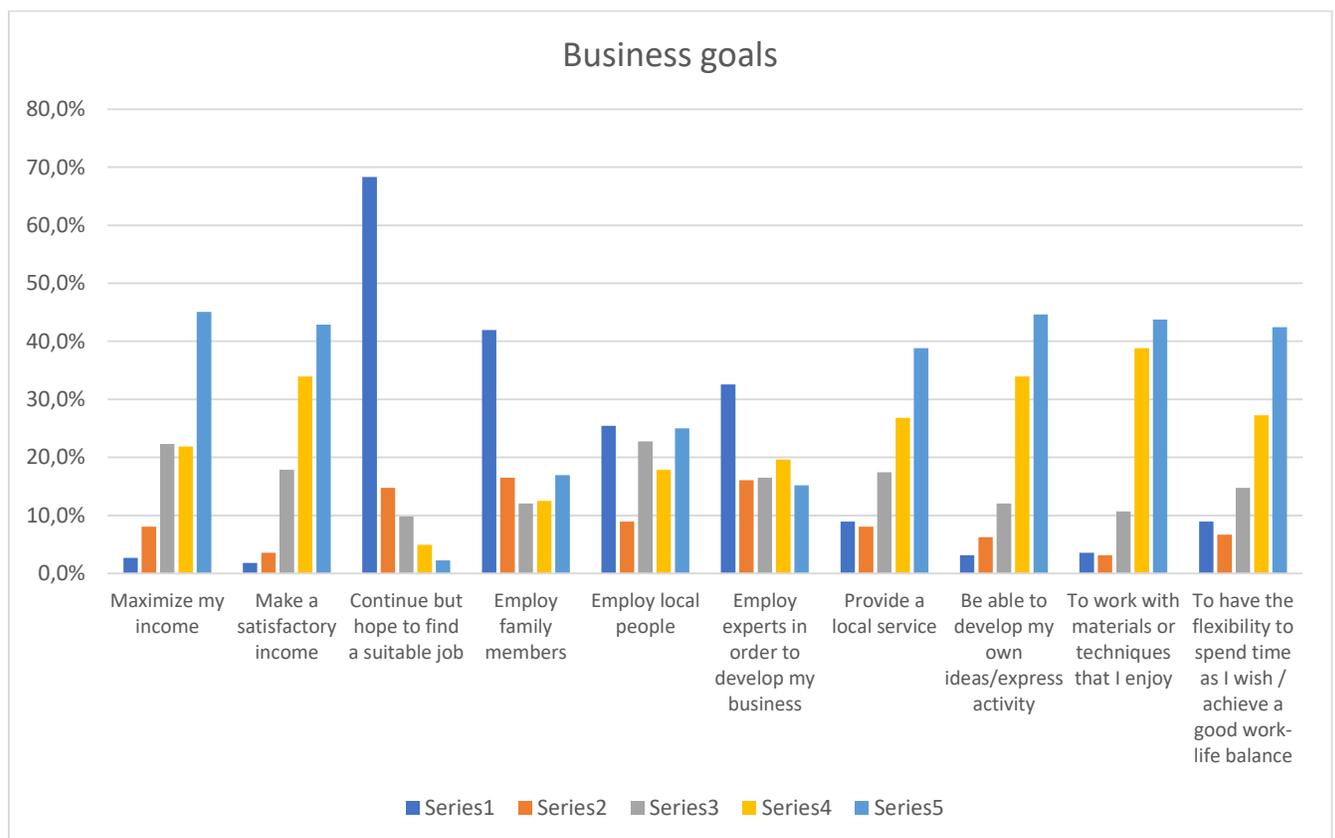
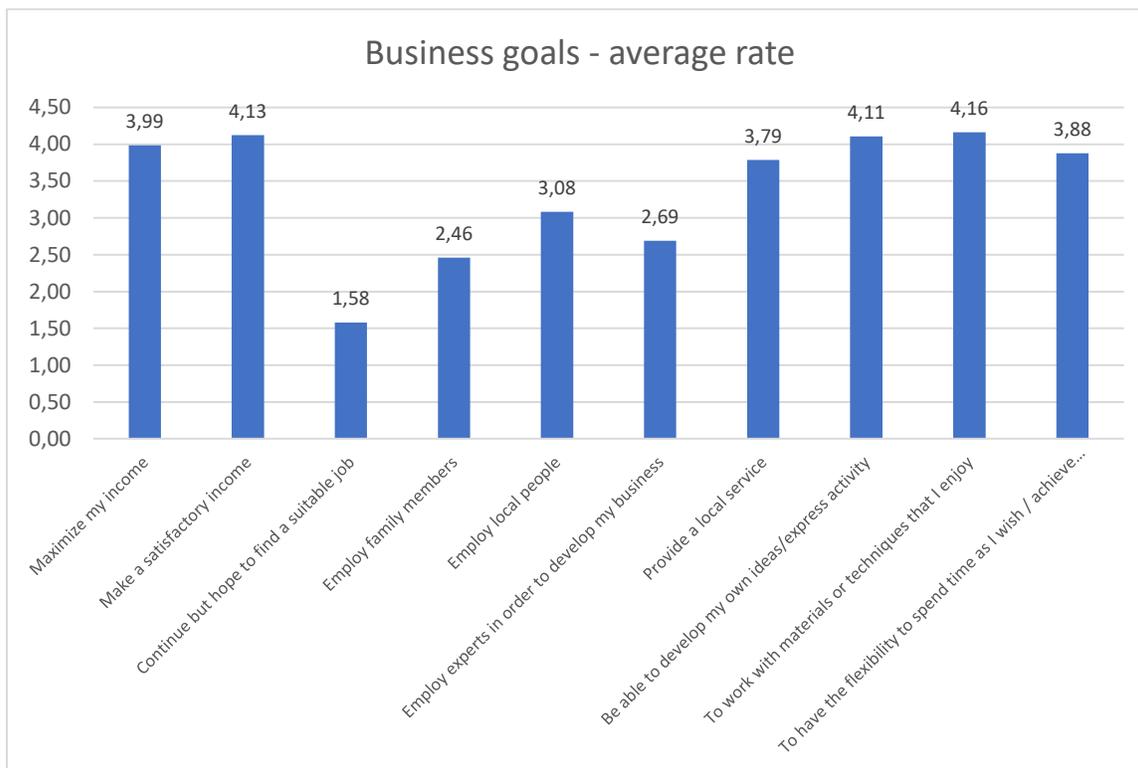


Figure 18: Business goals

For figure 18, series 1 = of no importance at all, series 2 = slightly important, series 3 = moderately important, series 4 = important and series 5 = extremely important.



*Figure 19: Average score for each business goal*

Defining one’s short-term and long-term business goals is the very first step towards developing the overall business strategy. To this direction, this question asked rural entrepreneurs to grade each one of the provided business goals using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1=of no importance at all and 5=extremely important.

According to figures 18 and 19, the business goals with the higher average score and, therefore, the top trending business goals among the rural entrepreneurs that participated in the round tables, are:

- ✓ To work with materials or techniques that I enjoy
- ✓ Make a satisfactory income
- ✓ To be able to develop my own ideas / express activity
- ✓ Maximize my income

## Business capability

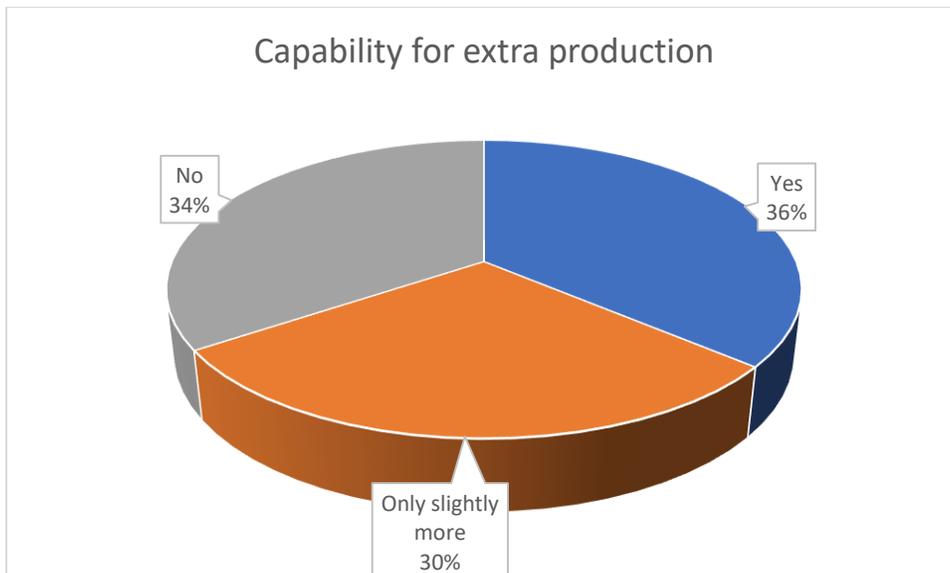


Figure 20: Capability for extra production

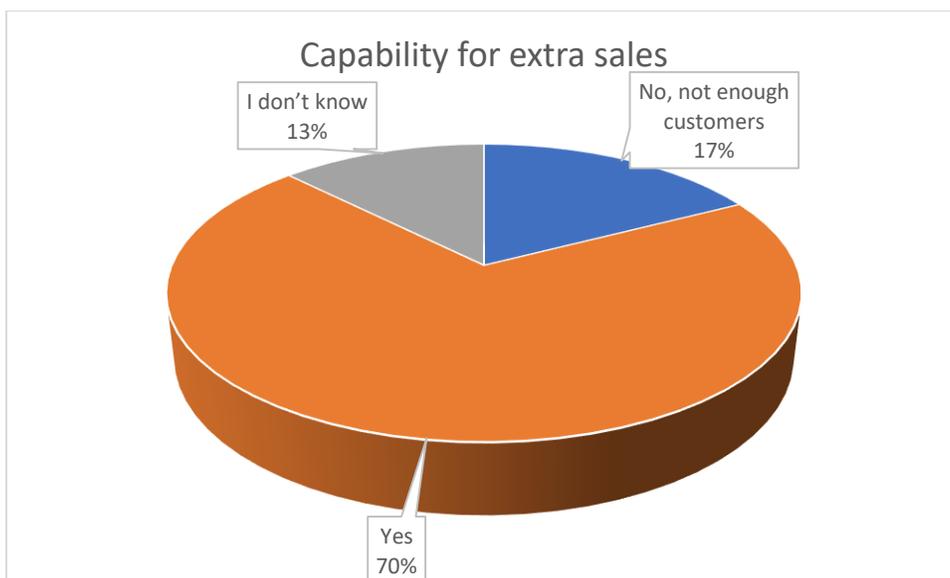


Figure 21: Capability for extra sales

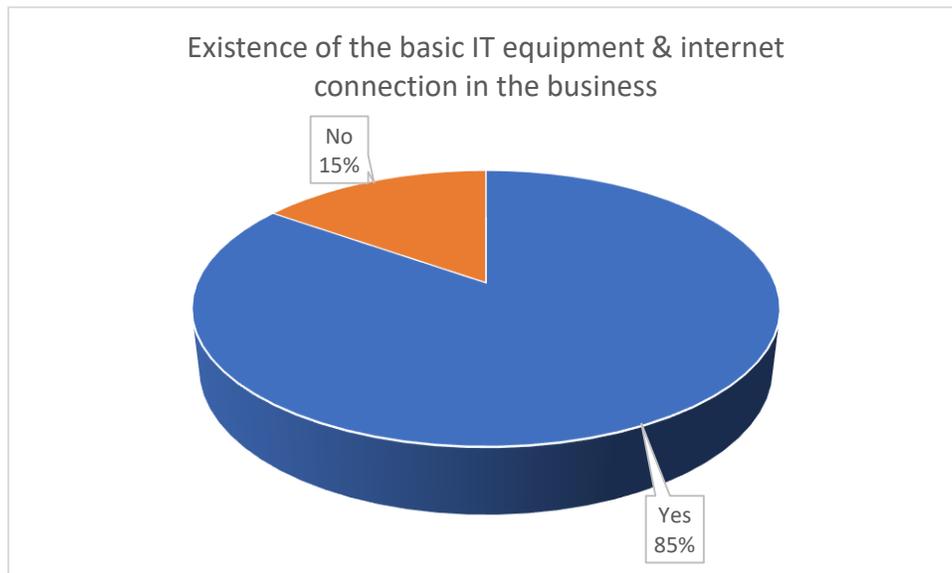


Figure 22: Existence of the basic IT equipment & internet connection in the business

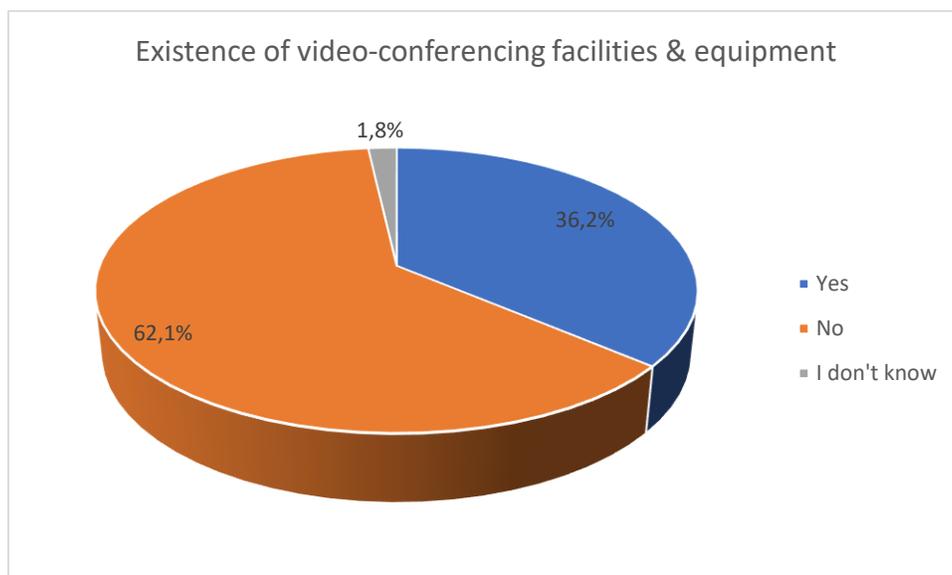


Figure 23: Existence of video-conferencing facilities & equipment

The main purpose of this part of the questionnaire was to examine the operational and technological capability of the rural / agriculture enterprises, of course both at a very basic level. The main conclusions are:

- The vast majority of the enterprises (66%) declare that they have the capability for more production, although almost half of them only for slightly extra production.
- Again, the vast majority of 70% declares that they are able to achieve a higher level of sales. An interesting point here is that a significant percentage (13%) declare that they *do not know* if they are able to achieve more sales or not. This fact can be a clue of an existing need for further support of the company’s operational and administrative organization.
- Regarding the existence of the basic IT equipment and internet connection within the company’s premises, 85% declares that they are existent, while 15% state that they do not acquire such facilities.
- Specializing the IT equipment, business owners were asked whether they have video-conferencing facilities and equipment. The percentage of those that answered positively (62.1%) is higher than the one of those that answered negatively (36.2%).

### General business strategy

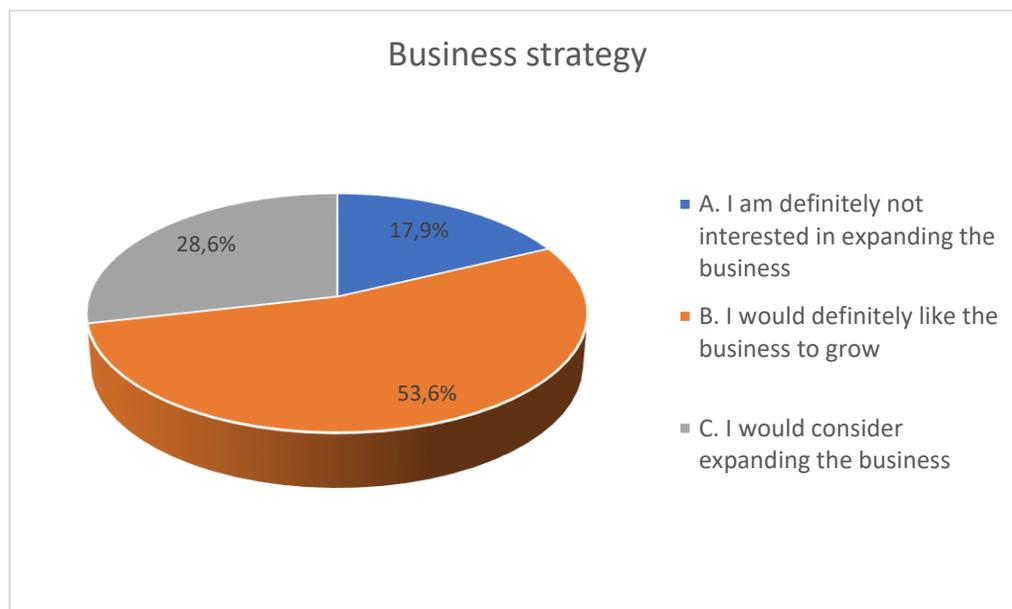


Figure 24: General business strategy

The objective of this section of the questionnaire was to examine the rural / agriculture enterprises’ attitude and strategy towards potential growth. To this direction, figure 24 shows that the vast

majority of the enterprises would consider or definitely like the business to grow (82.2%) while 17.9% of them is definitely not interested in expanding the business.

Expanding the analysis on the general business strategy, entrepreneurs were asked to rate some available options regarding their strategy for the next two years and, at the same time, for the next ten years. In the first case, the majority of the entrepreneurs (65.6%) stated that their main goal is to maintain current position or achieve slight expansion. 37.9% of them stated that getting their business onto a secure footing is also a strategic priority. Substantial expansion (18.8%) and developing and/or adopting a new business model (14.3%) are also two strategic goals that can be highlighted. In a more long-term perspective (next 10 years), the aforementioned 4 strategic goals are still present, along with some new ones:

- Hand on to a successor (14.7%)
- Redefine my business objectives (14.3%)



Figure 25: Business strategy for the next 2 years



Figure 26: Business strategy for the next 10 years

## Business Needs

### Business needs for growth

Several factors (both operational and financial) affect the capability of a business to grow in a viable and sustainable way. Focusing on the operational part, this section of the questionnaire intended to detect the needs of the rural / agriculture enterprises on space / premises and staff / experts in order to ensure their growth.

So, to the question if enterprises encounter a lack of space / premises which prevents them from growing, the majority of the (65%) answered negatively, while a significant percentage (35%) answered positively. For those companies that a lack of space / premises prevent them from growing, the main reasons behind this lack are:

- ❖ Lack of finance for building (50.6%)
- ❖ Lack of room on site to expand (43.7%)
- ❖ No affordable local premises (20.7%)

Regarding the lack of staff / experts as a prohibitive reason, 44% of the entrepreneurs stated that they do face this challenge, mainly because:

- ❖ they cannot bear the additional staff costs
- ❖ they cannot cope up with the required time and effort for managing the procedure of recruiting staff / experts.

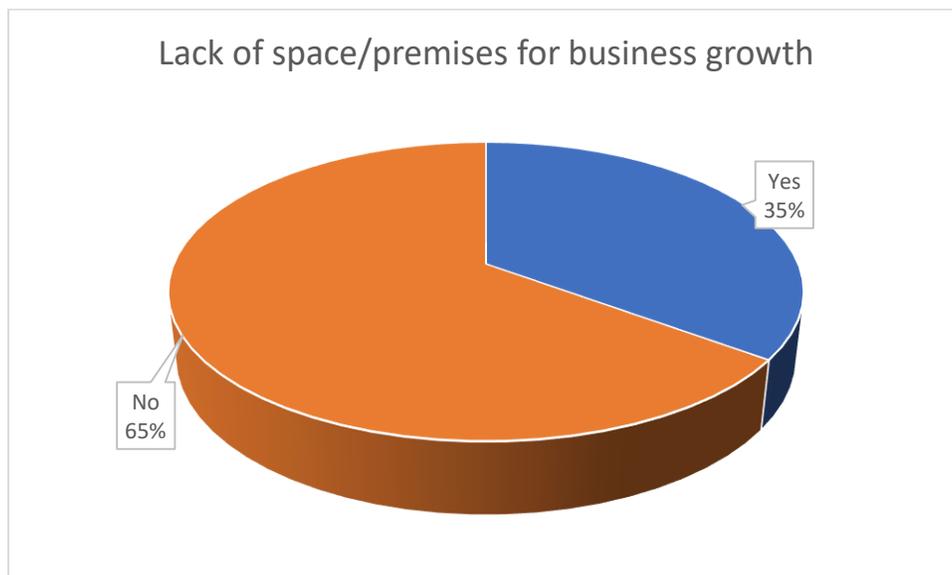


Figure 27: Lack of space/premises for business growth

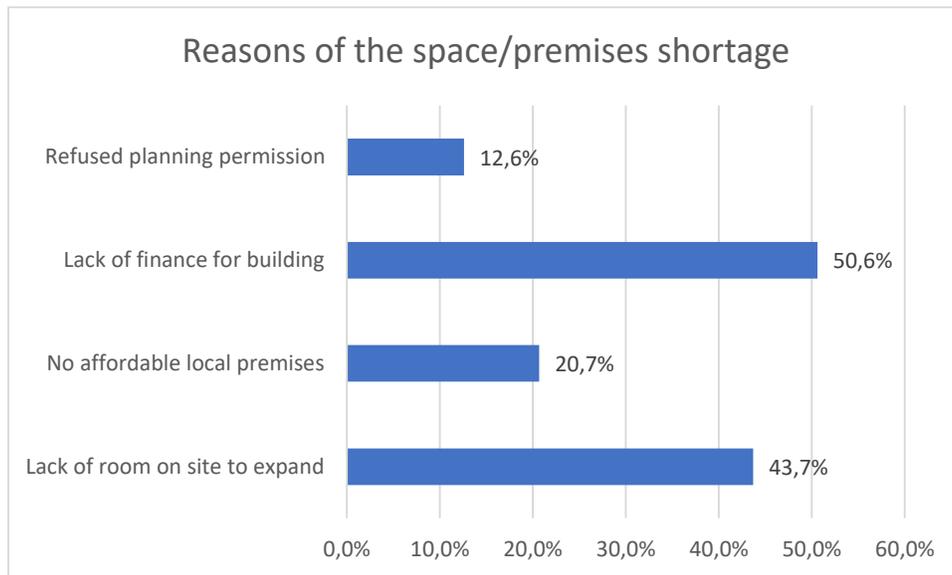


Figure 28: Reasons of the space/premises shortage

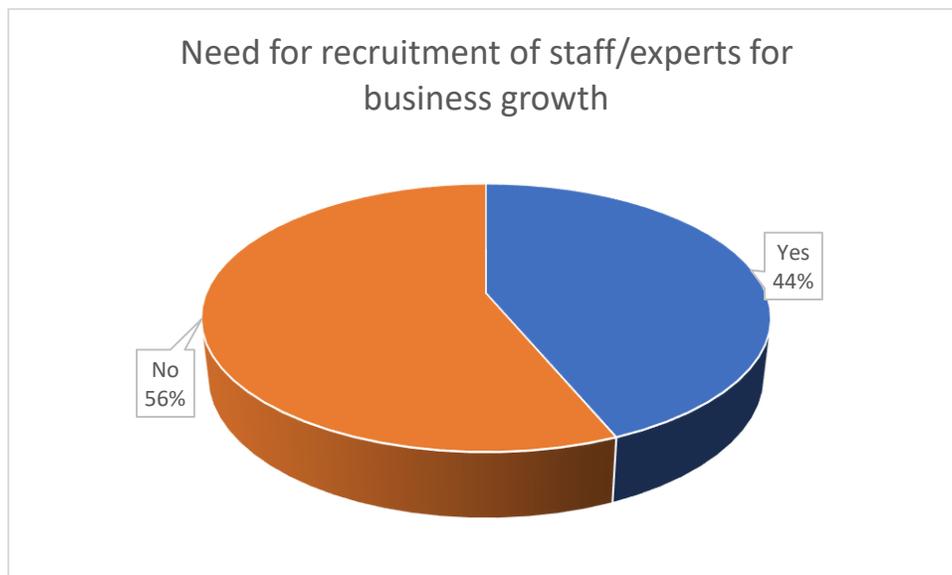
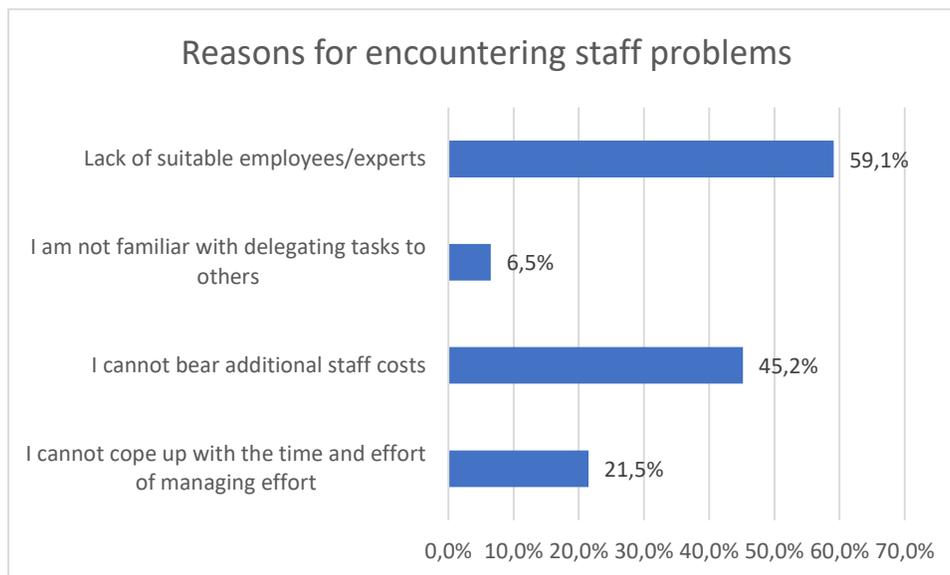


Figure 29: Need for recruitment of staff/experts for business growth



*Figure 30: Reasons for encountering staff problems*

Focusing on the financial part of business growth, entrepreneurs were asked if the shortage of capital is the main prohibitive reason for growing their business. The results are clear, as 60% stated that there is indeed a shortage of capital and another 20% stated that there is no such shortage but can only just afford a slight expansion.

For those entrepreneurs that extra capital is actually necessary, the main reasons of the capital shortage are:

- Lack of own capital
- Lack of funds / cash in their business
- Obstacles in obtaining a grant
- Ongoing loans that prevent them for applying for a new one

Last, the entrepreneurs that do lack the necessary capital for growth, the main business operations that they would reinforce if they would have this capital available are:

- Product development (54%)
- Marketing activities (54%)
- Update of the business equipment
- Hiring staff / experts
- Renovate or building / buying new premises

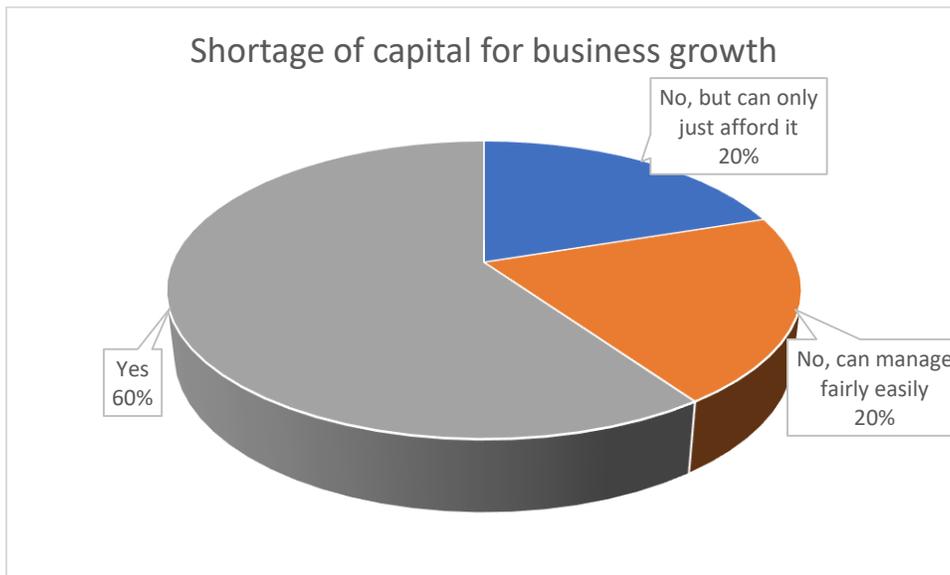


Figure 31: Shortage of capital for business growth

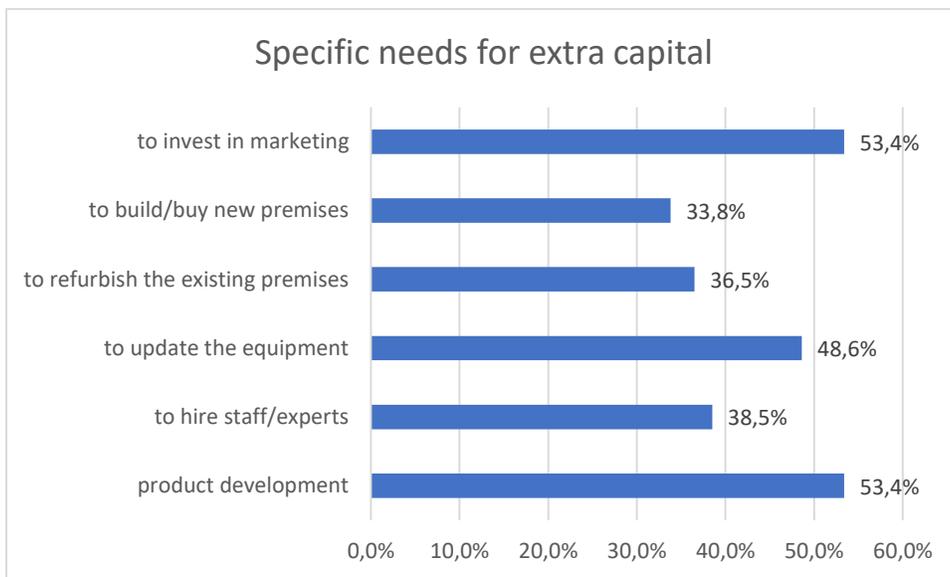


Figure 32: Specific needs for extra capital

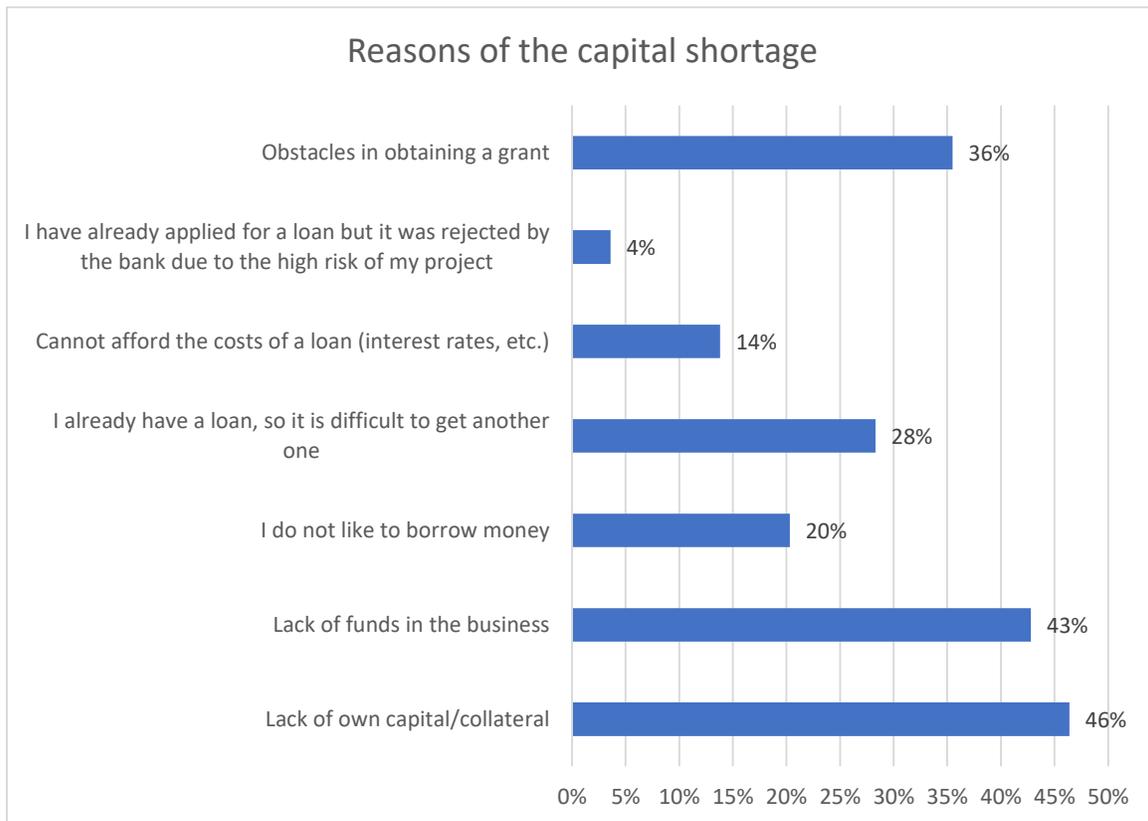


Figure 33: Reasons of the capital shortage

### Needs for business advice / support

In order to recognize and define the topics and “areas” on which rural / agriculture enterprises need external advice and support, participants in the round tables were asked to:

- Firstly, rate how useful each one of these topics / areas were in the past and are now, or if each one of these topics is applicable or now (Table 4). The topics / areas that appear to be extremely useful today for rural entrepreneurs are highlighted with a green color in table 4 below.
- Secondly, self-evaluate their own knowledge on each one of the topics / areas (Table 5). The results presented in this table can be better-understood analyzing figure 34, in which the responses are grouped into two categories: self-evaluation for each topic / area of



medium level and below and of high level – expertise. According to this figure, the topics / area on which rural entrepreneurs appear to need to improve their knowledge are:

- Risk management methods
- Methods of staff control
- Employing staff
- Market research
- Digital marketing
- Social media management
- Calculation of the startup capital
- Basic accounting
- Management of discrepancies

| Business advice/support area                           | Useful in the past |            | Useful today |            | Not applicable |            |
|--|--------------------|------------|--------------|------------|----------------|------------|
|  | Count              | Percentage | Count        | Percentage | Count          | Percentage |
| Developing the business model                          | 56                 | 25,0%      | 131          | 58,5%      | 37             | 16,5%      |
| Developing the business strategy                       | 43                 | 19,2%      | 148          | 66,1%      | 33             | 14,7%      |
| Development of management and organizational skills    | 38                 | 17,0%      | 153          | 68,3%      | 33             | 14,7%      |
| Risk management methods                                | 24                 | 10,7%      | 125          | 55,8%      | 75             | 33,5%      |
| Employing staff  | 49                 | 21,9%      | 122          | 54,5%      | 53             | 23,7%      |
| Staff training/development                             | 25                 | 11,2%      | 153          | 68,3%      | 46             | 20,5%      |
| Methods of staff control                               | 27                 | 12,1%      | 119          | 53,1%      | 78             | 34,8%      |
| Facing customer complaints                             | 21                 | 9,4%       | 143          | 63,8%      | 60             | 26,8%      |
| Quality standards and their application                | 30                 | 13,4%      | 152          | 67,9%      | 42             | 18,8%      |
| The importance of quality certification                | 31                 | 13,8%      | 150          | 67,0%      | 43             | 19,2%      |
| Management of discrepancies                            | 30                 | 13,4%      | 134          | 59,8%      | 60             | 26,8%      |
| Environmental sustainability                           | 19                 | 8,5%       | 176          | 78,6%      | 29             | 12,9%      |
| Safety regulations                                     | 29                 | 12,9%      | 148          | 66,1%      | 47             | 21,0%      |
| Financial management / taxation                        | 22                 | 9,8%       | 162          | 72,3%      | 40             | 17,9%      |
| Basic economic principles                              | 59                 | 26,3%      | 125          | 55,8%      | 40             | 17,9%      |
| Calculation of the start-up capital                    | 88                 | 39,3%      | 85           | 37,9%      | 51             | 22,8%      |
| Basic accounting                                       | 56                 | 25,0%      | 125          | 55,8%      | 43             | 19,2%      |
| Preparation of monthly cash flows (incomes & expenses) | 38                 | 17,0%      | 133          | 59,4%      | 53             | 23,7%      |
| Developing the marketing strategy                      | 30                 | 13,4%      | 158          | 70,5%      | 36             | 16,1%      |
| Developing new products/services                       | 26                 | 11,6%      | 170          | 75,9%      | 28             | 12,5%      |
| Advertising  | 16                 | 7,1%       | 164          | 73,2%      | 44             | 19,6%      |
| Market research  | 19                 | 8,5%       | 151          | 67,4%      | 54             | 24,1%      |
| Identifying new market opportunities                   | 11                 | 4,9%       | 174          | 77,7%      | 39             | 17,4%      |
| Public relations                                       | 16                 | 7,1%       | 165          | 73,7%      | 43             | 19,2%      |
| Networking   | 19                 | 8,5%       | 152          | 67,9%      | 53             | 23,7%      |
| Digital marketing                                      | 12                 | 5,4%       | 165          | 73,7%      | 47             | 21,0%      |



| Business advice/support area | Useful in the past |            | Useful today |            | Not applicable |            |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------|------------|----------------|------------|
|                              | Count              | Percentage | Count        | Percentage | Count          | Percentage |
| Social Media management      | 6                  | 2,7%       | 171          | 76,3%      | 47             | 21,0%      |
| ICT skills                   | 10                 | 4,5%       | 169          | 75,4%      | 45             | 20,1%      |
| Negotiation skills           | 23                 | 10,3%      | 165          | 73,7%      | 36             | 16,1%      |
| Continuing education         | 24                 | 10,7%      | 168          | 75,0%      | 32             | 14,3%      |
| Innovation                   | 6                  | 2,7%       | 195          | 87,1%      | 23             | 10,3%      |

Table 4: Topics on which business advice / support is useful

| Business advice/support area                           | No knowledge |            | Low level |            | Medium level |            | High level |            | Expertise |            |
|--|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|  | Count        | Percentage | Count     | Percentage | Count        | Percentage | Count      | Percentage | Count     | Percentage |
| Developing the business model                          | 20           | 8,9%       | 27        | 12,1%      | 74           | 33,0%      | 78         | 34,8%      | 25        | 11,2%      |
| Developing the business strategy                       | 16           | 7,1%       | 24        | 10,7%      | 81           | 36,2%      | 80         | 35,7%      | 23        | 10,3%      |
| Development of management and organizational skills    | 18           | 8,0%       | 22        | 9,8%       | 64           | 28,6%      | 92         | 41,1%      | 28        | 12,5%      |
| Risk management methods                                | 34           | 15,2%      | 45        | 20,1%      | 73           | 32,6%      | 62         | 27,7%      | 10        | 4,5%       |
| Employing staff  | 28           | 12,5%      | 44        | 19,6%      | 64           | 28,6%      | 70         | 31,3%      | 18        | 8,0%       |
| Staff training/development                             | 22           | 9,8%       | 23        | 10,3%      | 79           | 35,3%      | 74         | 33,0%      | 26        | 11,6%      |
| Methods of staff control                               | 32           | 14,3%      | 44        | 19,6%      | 65           | 29,0%      | 67         | 29,9%      | 16        | 7,1%       |
| Facing customer complaints                             | 20           | 8,9%       | 42        | 18,8%      | 57           | 25,4%      | 71         | 31,7%      | 34        | 15,2%      |
| Quality standards and their application                | 13           | 5,8%       | 23        | 10,3%      | 69           | 30,8%      | 74         | 33,0%      | 45        | 20,1%      |
| The importance of quality certification                | 15           | 6,7%       | 28        | 12,5%      | 68           | 30,4%      | 58         | 25,9%      | 55        | 24,6%      |
| Management of discrepancies                            | 27           | 12,1%      | 30        | 13,4%      | 75           | 33,5%      | 64         | 28,6%      | 28        | 12,5%      |
| Environmental sustainability                           | 13           | 5,8%       | 24        | 10,7%      | 59           | 26,3%      | 76         | 33,9%      | 52        | 23,2%      |
| Safety regulations                                     | 11           | 4,9%       | 34        | 15,2%      | 61           | 27,2%      | 80         | 35,7%      | 38        | 17,0%      |
| Financial management / taxation                        | 26           | 11,6%      | 35        | 15,6%      | 67           | 29,9%      | 67         | 29,9%      | 29        | 12,9%      |
| Basic economic principles                              | 28           | 12,5%      | 23        | 10,3%      | 67           | 29,9%      | 71         | 31,7%      | 35        | 15,6%      |
| Calculation of the start-up capital                    | 25           | 11,2%      | 32        | 14,3%      | 80           | 35,7%      | 56         | 25,0%      | 31        | 13,8%      |
| Basic accounting                                       | 25           | 11,2%      | 24        | 10,7%      | 84           | 37,5%      | 59         | 26,3%      | 32        | 14,3%      |
| Preparation of monthly cash flows (incomes & expenses) | 18           | 8,0%       | 26        | 11,6%      | 81           | 36,2%      | 63         | 28,1%      | 36        | 16,1%      |
| Developing the marketing strategy                      | 26           | 11,6%      | 26        | 11,6%      | 68           | 30,4%      | 75         | 33,5%      | 29        | 12,9%      |
| Developing new products/services                       | 17           | 7,6%       | 27        | 12,1%      | 64           | 28,6%      | 81         | 36,2%      | 35        | 15,6%      |
| Advertising  | 28           | 12,5%      | 40        | 17,9%      | 63           | 28,1%      | 58         | 25,9%      | 35        | 15,6%      |
| Market research  | 29           | 12,9%      | 44        | 19,6%      | 67           | 29,9%      | 52         | 23,2%      | 32        | 14,3%      |
| Identifying new market opportunities                   | 23           | 10,3%      | 25        | 11,2%      | 80           | 35,7%      | 54         | 24,1%      | 42        | 18,8%      |
| Public relations                                       | 16           | 7,1%       | 34        | 15,2%      | 63           | 28,1%      | 69         | 30,8%      | 42        | 18,8%      |
| Networking   | 29           | 12,9%      | 33        | 14,7%      | 60           | 26,8%      | 56         | 25,0%      | 46        | 20,5%      |
| Digital marketing                                      | 43           | 19,2%      | 41        | 18,3%      | 58           | 25,9%      | 49         | 21,9%      | 33        | 14,7%      |
| Social Media management                                | 47           | 21,0%      | 43        | 19,2%      | 49           | 21,9%      | 47         | 21,0%      | 38        | 17,0%      |
| ICT skills   | 40           | 17,9%      | 32        | 14,3%      | 53           | 23,7%      | 79         | 35,3%      | 20        | 8,9%       |
| Negotiation skills                                     | 13           | 5,8%       | 30        | 13,4%      | 63           | 28,1%      | 87         | 38,8%      | 31        | 13,8%      |
| Continuing education                                   | 22           | 9,8%       | 27        | 12,1%      | 49           | 21,9%      | 92         | 41,1%      | 34        | 15,2%      |
| Innovation   | 14           | 6,3%       | 35        | 15,6%      | 67           | 29,9%      | 56         | 25,0%      | 52        | 23,2%      |

Table 5: Self-evaluation of the level of knowledge on business related topics

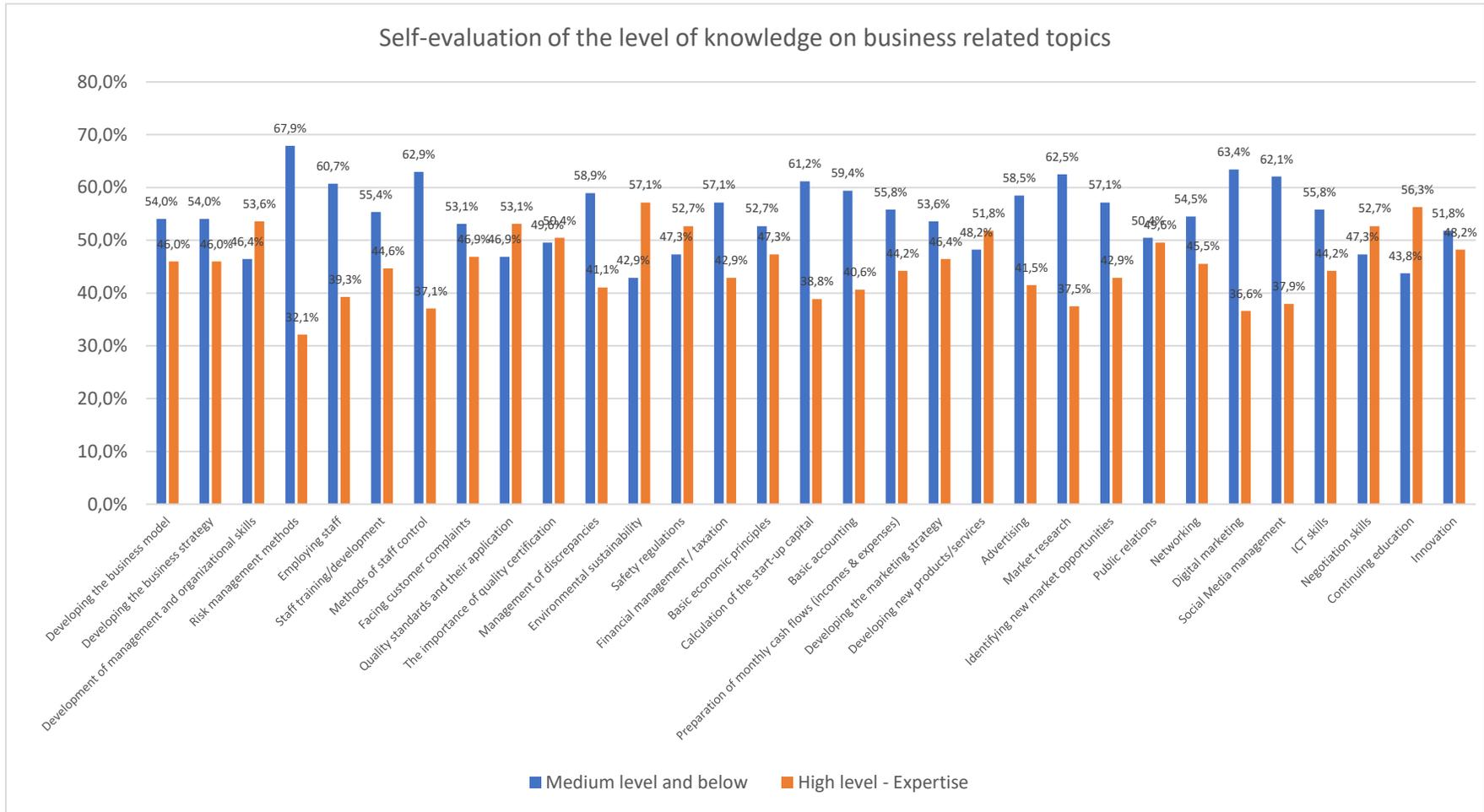


Figure 34: Self-evaluation of the level of knowledge on business related topics

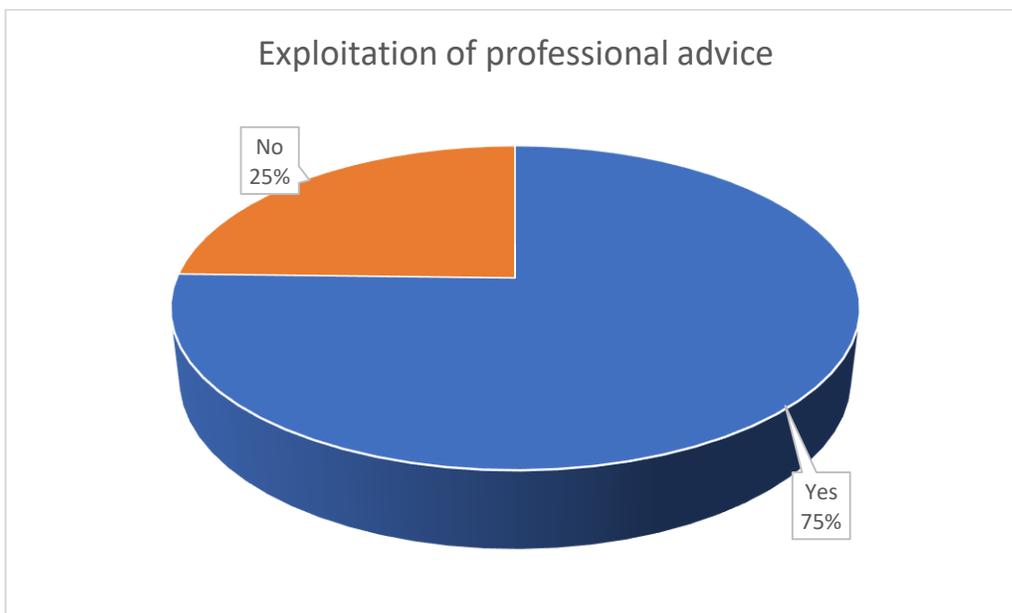
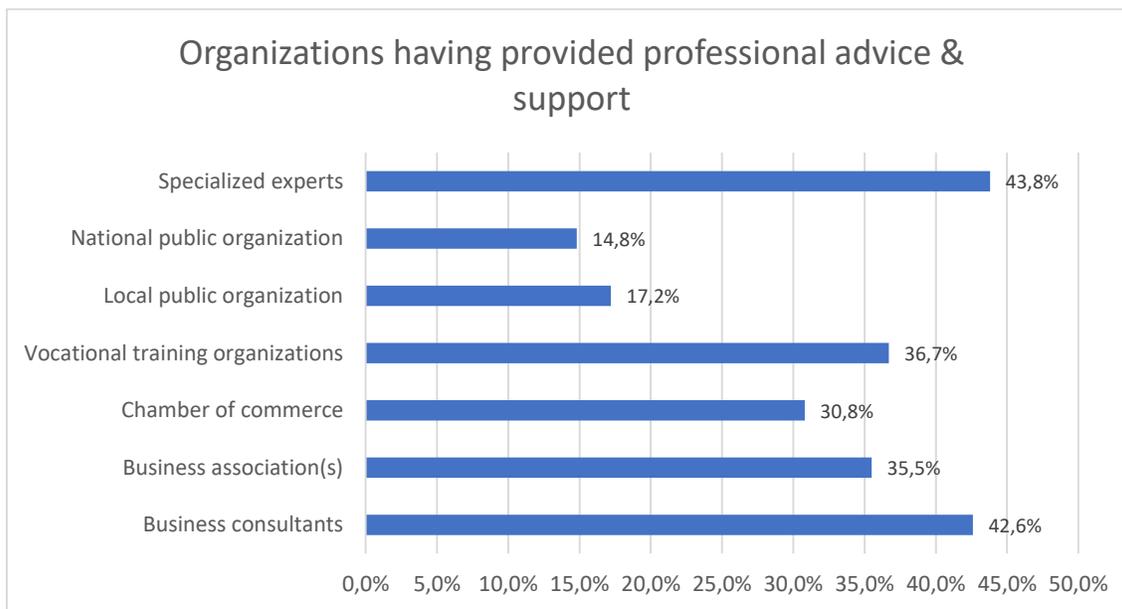


Figure 35: Previous exploitation of professional advice

As figure 35 shows, 75% of the rural entrepreneurs have exploited professional advice in the past focusing on the following “areas”:

- ✓ Business management
- ✓ Accounting and financial management
- ✓ ICT
- ✓ Innovation development and management
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Production management
- ✓ Quality management

Business consultants and specialized experts, along with relevant supporting organizations such as business associations, chambers of commerce and vocational training organizations are the main stakeholders that rural entrepreneurs have sought help / support from.



*Figure 36: Organization having provided professional advice & support*

## Business Training

Within this section of the questionnaire, the intention was to investigate the proactiveness and engagement of rural / agriculture enterprises in training and educational activities in order to improve the business owners and employees' knowledge and skills.

The overall results show that business owners have a satisfactory level of participation in training activities, while the level of participation of the employees of the rural / agriculture enterprises that participated in the round tables can be improved. In order to achieve this, both rural entrepreneurs and employees should be informed about the multiple benefits of continuing education and training.

Specifically, analyzing the results and as figure 37 shows, 92% of the rural entrepreneurs has participated in a training course (either face-to-face or online) in the past, in the following topics:

- ➡ Business management
- ➡ Financial & accounting management
- ➡ Production / Quality management



- Marketing, digital marketing
- Food security
- Work safety regulations
- ICT

For those rural entrepreneurs that have not attended a training course in the past (17.9%), the main reasons are:

- Lack of time
- Not needed so far
- Lack of available information on the training courses
- Lack of training courses on specific topics of interest

Regarding the employees, the level of participation is not that high as the one for the business owners since 54.4% of the rural entrepreneurs stated that their employees have attended a training course in the past while 39.7% stated that their employees have not attended a training course.

For those employees that have attended a training course, the main topics were:

- ICT
- Production / Quality management
- Marketing, digital marketing
- Work safety regulations and management

For those employees that have not attended a training course, the main reasons are:

- Business owners thought it was not necessary
- Lack of time
- Lack of interest
- Lack of training courses on specific topics of interest

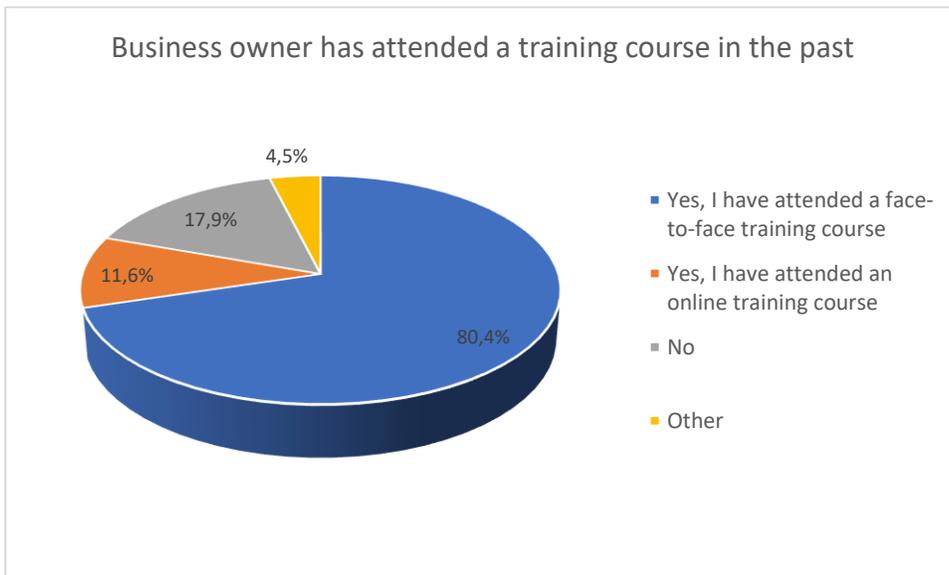


Figure 37: Business owner has attended a training course in the past

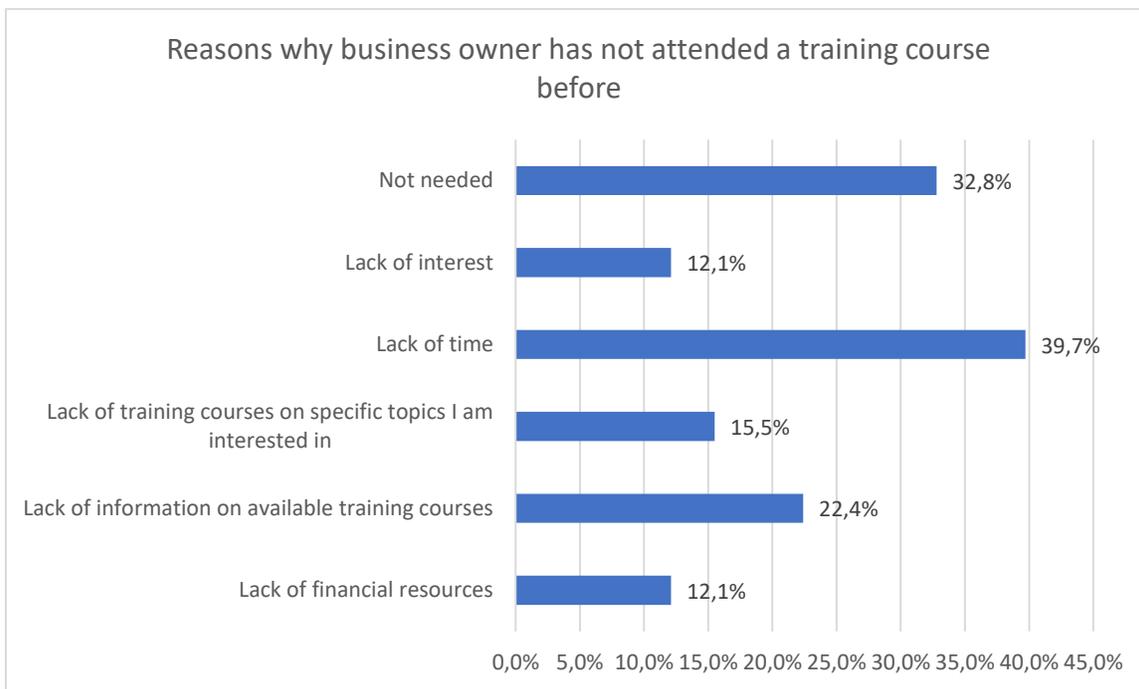


Figure 38: Reasons why business owner has not attended a training course before

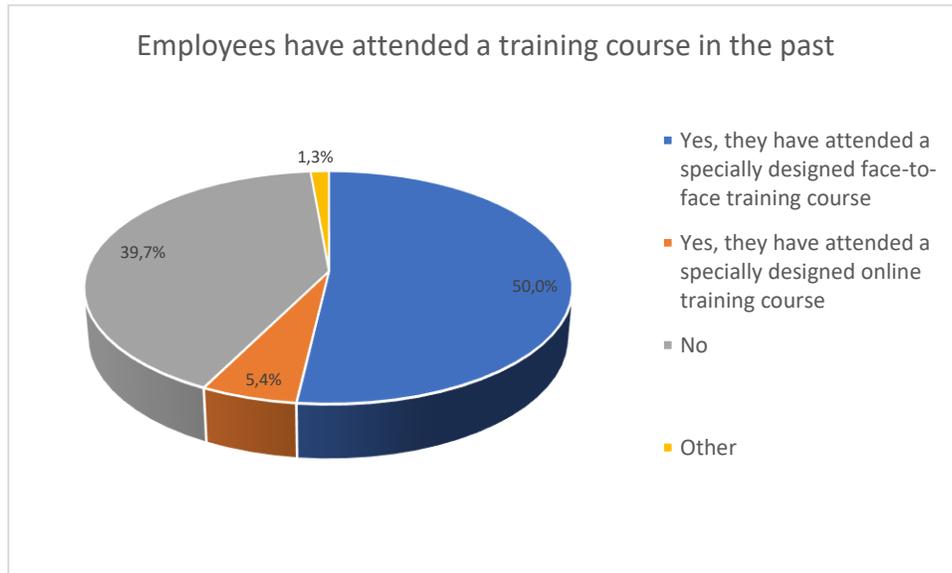


Figure 39: Employees have attended a training course in the past

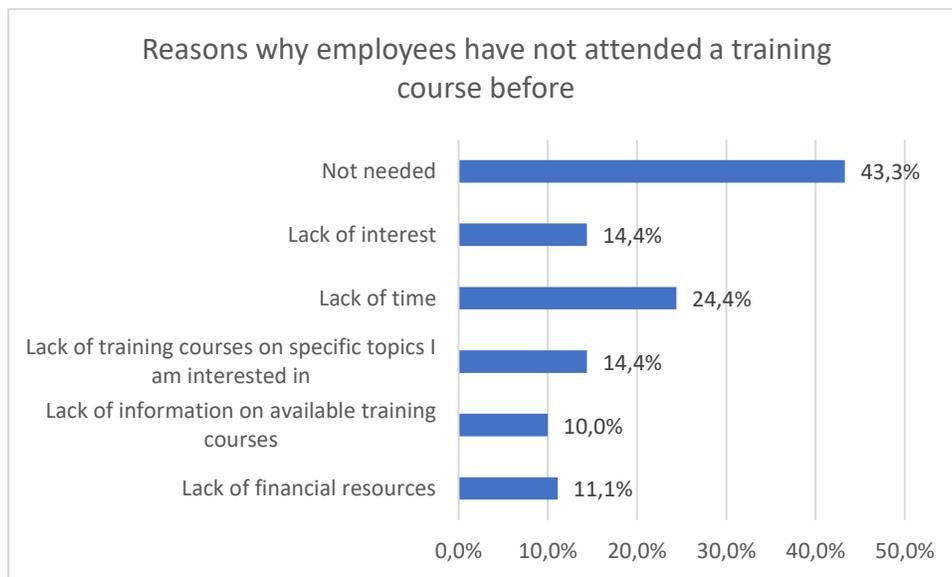


Figure 40: Reasons why employees have not attended a training course before



## IV. CONCLUSIONS

The present reports consists an analysis of the 224 questionnaires collected from rural entrepreneurs from the project's piloting areas within the implementation of the round tables (task 6.1.1).

The main objective of this report is to identify and record the needs of rural entrepreneurs in order to design and develop the RAIN Entrepreneurial Tool (platform) in a way that meets and cover these needs.

The key results along with a relevant analysis of the input that each key result provides to LIVERUR for the development of the next deliverables and, specifically, the RAIN platform is being presented in [Table 1](#) of the report.

This analysis can be considered as the “heart” of this report and, of course along with the overall conclusions and results, will be the main guide in order to achieve the ideal design and functionality of the RAIN Entrepreneurial Tool.



## V. REFERENCES & SOURCES

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Queensland Treasury © The State of Queensland

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au>

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## VI. APPENDICES

Structured questionnaire for the implementation of the round tables.

# Questionnaire for the implementation of the Round Tables

The aim of this structured questionnaire is to identify the needs and challenges of the entrepreneurs present in the piloting areas and territories. The survey is conducted within WP6 - Development of the regional circular living lab tool for entrepreneurs in rural areas, Task 6.1.1. - Round Tables of the project "LIVERUR - Living Lab Research concept in rural Areas".

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## Disclaimer:

The information and views set out in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.

\* Required

## 1. 1. Piloting Area \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Austria
- Spain / Murcia
- Czech Republic / Bohemia
- Malta / Gozo
- Azores / Archipelago
- Slovenia
- France / Brittany
- France / West of France
- Latvia
- Turkey
- Italy / Lake Trasimeno
- Italy / Reggio Emilia
- Tunisia / Gabes Governorate

**2. 2. Partners Organization \***

*Check all that apply.*

- UCAM
- RMB
- ADRI
- WRLS
- UHLA
- TRA
- FRCT
- UL
- CRAB
- CEA
- CAPL
- ZSA
- ZEKA
- SOG
- UCT
- E35
- DAR

**General Information****3. 3. In which year did the business start? \***

Please, enter the year:

---

**4. 4. How were you involved in the business? \***

Please, tick one box

*Check all that apply.*

- I started it
- I took over from another family member
- I bought an existing business

**5. 5. When starting up/taking over the business, how important were the following factors? \***

Please use a scale from 1 to 5, 1=of no importance at all, 2=slightly important, 3=moderately important, 4=important, 5=extremely important

Mark only one oval per row.

|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| To ensure my main income source  | <input type="radio"/> |
| To avoid or escape unemployment  | <input type="radio"/> |
| To ensure an additional or minor income source                           | <input type="radio"/> |
| To carry on the family business  | <input type="radio"/> |
| To take on the challenge of running a business                           | <input type="radio"/> |
| I wanted a job to fit in with domestic responsibilities                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| To have more free time   | <input type="radio"/> |
| To capitalize on my education/training/skills                            | <input type="radio"/> |
| I identified a business opportunity                                      | <input type="radio"/> |
| I had a great business idea that I wanted to put into practice           | <input type="radio"/> |
| It was the only way to do this sort of work and live in a rural location | <input type="radio"/> |
| Occupation following (early) retirement                                  | <input type="radio"/> |

**6. 6. Please describe the main activity / activities of the business. \***

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**7. 7. Please describe the product(s)/service(s) offered. \***

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**8. 8. What is the average annual turnover of your business?**

Please, tick one box

*Check all that apply.*

- Below 5.000€
- 5.000€ – 9.999€
- 10.000€ – 19.999€
- 20.000€ – 49.999€
- 50.000€ – 99.999€
- 100.000€ – 249.999€
- 250.000€ or more

**9. 9. What is the legal form of your business? \***

Please tick one box

*Check all that apply.*

- Individual company
- General Partnership
- Limited Partnership
- Regular Corporation
- S Corporation
- Professional Corporation
- Nonprofit Corporation / Organization
- Limited Liability Company
- Cooperative
- Social enterprise / cooperative

**10. 10. Who are your customers? \***

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**11. 11. Which is your customers' location? \***

You can select more than one choice

*Check all that apply.*

- Local (less than 50 kms)
- Regional (50 – 120 kms)
- National
- European
- Worldwide

**12. 12. What are the channels used to reach the customers? \***

You can select more than one choice  
*Check all that apply.*

- In person (one-to-one)
- Wholesalers / Third party contractors
- Online
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**13. 13. What kind of external companies/stakeholders/suppliers are you cooperating with? \***

You can select more than one choice  
*Check all that apply.*

- Farmers
- Wholesales
- Raw material suppliers
- External services providers (e.g. accountant, legal advisor, etc.)
- Universities / research institutions
- NGOs
- Public authorities / organizations
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**14. 14. Which is your external companies/stakeholders/suppliers' location? \***

You can select more than one choice  
*Check all that apply.*

- Local (less than 50 kms)
- Regional (50 – 120 kms)
- National
- European
- Worldwide

**15. 15. How many people do you employ in your organization? \***

Please tick one box  
*Mark only one oval.*

- I work alone
- 9 or less
- 10 to 49
- 50 to 249
- 250 or more

**16. 16. Are there any close family members working in the business? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

**17. 17. If yes, please indicate which one(s) of the following working relationships is/are applicable.**

You can select more than one choice  
 Check all that apply.

- active partners
- full time regular paid workers
- part time regular paid workers
- frequently helping out / doing casual work (paid or unpaid)
- occasionally helping out / doing casual work (paid or unpaid)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**18. 18. Please provide an estimation of the average number of hours you work per week in the business. \***

Please tick one box  
 Mark only one oval.

- Less than 15 hours
- 15 to 30 hours
- 31 to 45 hours
- 46 to 60 hours
- more than 60 hours

**Location**

**19. 19. Approximately, what distance would you (or your partners/employees) have to travel from your premises for each of the following? \***

Mark only one oval per row.

|   | 1 to 24 kms           | 25 to 50 kms          | 51 to 120 kms         | More than 120 kms     |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| General supplies that you run out of or are not delivered | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bank  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Post office   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Training for employees                                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Business training courses/seminars                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Business association                                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Chamber of Commerce                                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Municipality or other public authorities                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**Business Strategy**

**20. 20. At the moment, what would you like to achieve from running the business? \***

Please use a scale from 1 to 5, 1=of no importance at all, 2=slightly important, 3=moderately important, 4=important, 5=extremely important

Mark only one oval per row.

|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Maximize my income   | <input type="radio"/> |
| Make a satisfactory income   | <input type="radio"/> |
| Continue but hope to find a suitable job   | <input type="radio"/> |
| Employ family members  | <input type="radio"/> |
| Employ local people  | <input type="radio"/> |
| Employ experts in order to develop my business                                     | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provide a local service  | <input type="radio"/> |
| Be able to develop my own ideas/express activity                                   | <input type="radio"/> |
| To work with materials or techniques that I enjoy                                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| To have the flexibility to spend time as I wish / achieve a good work-life balance | <input type="radio"/> |

**21. 21. Would you be able to sell more of your current range of products/services if you produced more? \***

Please tick one box

Mark only one oval.

- No, not enough customers
- Yes
- I don't know

**22. 22. Is it possible for you to produce more using only your present workforce, building and equipment? \***

Please tick one box

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- Only slightly more
- No

**23. 23. Which of the following better describes your attitude/strategy towards growth? \***

Please tick one box

Mark only one oval.

- A. I am definitely not interested in expanding the business
- B. I would definitely like the business to grow
- C. I would consider expanding the business

**If A is selected, please proceed directly to question 31.**

**24. 24. Is the growth of your business restricted by a lack of space for expansion?**

Mark only one oval.

- Yes  
 No

**25. 25. If yes, is the shortage of space due to:**

You can select more than one choice

Check all that apply.

- Lack of room on site to expand  
 No affordable local premises  
 Lack of finance for building  
 Refused planning permission

**26. 26. Is the growth of your business restricted by the need to recruit additional staff/experts?**

Mark only one oval.

- Yes  
 No

**27. 27. If yes, what is the reason(s) for encountering staff problems?**

You can select more than one choice

Check all that apply.

- I cannot cope up with the time and effort of managing effort  
 I cannot bear additional staff costs  
 I am not familiar with delegating tasks to others  
 Lack of suitable employees/experts

**28. 28. Does a shortage of capital inhibit the growth of your business?**

Please tick one box

Mark only one oval.

- No, but can only just afford it  
 No, can manage fairly easily  
 Yes

**29. 29. If yes, what is the capital needed for?**

You can select more than one choice

Check all that apply.

- product development  
 to hire staff/experts  
 to update the equipment  
 to refurbish the existing premises  
 to build/buy new premises  
 to invest in marketing

**30. 30. If yes, what is(are) the reason(s) for the shortage of capital?**

You can select more than one choice

*Check all that apply.*

- Lack of own capital/collateral
- Lack of funds in the business
- I do not like to borrow money
- I already have a loan, so it is difficult to get another one
- Cannot afford the costs of a loan (interest rates, etc.)
- I have already applied for a loan but it was rejected by the bank due to the high risk of my project
- Obstacles in obtaining a grant

**31. 31. In the past five years, have you applied for a loan? \***

Please tick one box

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes, but was refused
- Yes, and was successful
- No

**32. 32. In the past five years, have you made an application for a grant? \***

Please tick one box

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes, but was refused
- Yes, and was successful
- No

**33. 33. What is your strategy for the next two years? \***

You can select more than one choice

*Check all that apply.*

- Maintain current position or slight expansion
- Get onto a secure footing
- Reduce the scale of activities
- Substantial expansion
- Sell the business
- Retirement
- Hand on to a successor
- Redefine my business objectives
- Develop and/or adopt a new business model
- Don't know/uncertain

**34. 34. What is your strategy for the next ten years? \***

You can select more than one choice

*Check all that apply.*

- Maintain current position or slight expansion
- Get onto a secure footing
- Reduce the scale of activities
- Substantial expansion
- Sell the business
- Retirement
- Hand on to a successor
- Redefine my business objectives
- Develop and/or adopt a new business model
- Don't know/uncertain

**Business Needs**

**35. Please read the following list of business advice / support “areas” and tick any which you think were useful to you in the past and any which could currently be of use. \***

*Mark only one oval per row.*

|  | Useful in the past    | Useful today          | Not applicable        |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Developing the business model                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Developing the business strategy                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Development of management and organizational skills    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Risk management methods                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Employing staff  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Staff training/development                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Methods of staff control                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Facing customer complaints                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Quality standards and their application                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The importance of quality certification                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Management of discrepancies                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Environmental sustainability                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Safety regulations                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Financial management / taxation                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Basic economic principles                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Calculation of the start-up capital                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Basic accounting                                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Preparation of monthly cash flows (incomes & expenses) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Developing the marketing strategy                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Developing new products/services                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Advertising  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Market research  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Identifying new market opportunities                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Public relations                                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Networking   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Digital marketing                                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Social Media management                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ICT skills   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Negotiation skills                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Continuing education                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Innovation   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**36. 36. For the same list of “areas”, please self-evaluate your level of knowledge for each one. \***

Please use a scale from 1 to 5, 1=no knowledge, 2=low level, 3=medium level, 4=high level, 5=very high level/expertise

Mark only one oval per row.

|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Developing the business model                          | <input type="radio"/> |
| Developing the business strategy                       | <input type="radio"/> |
| Development of management and organizational skills    | <input type="radio"/> |
| Risk management methods                                | <input type="radio"/> |
| Employing staff  | <input type="radio"/> |
| Staff training/development                             | <input type="radio"/> |
| Methods of staff control                               | <input type="radio"/> |
| Facing customer complaints                             | <input type="radio"/> |
| Quality standards and their application                | <input type="radio"/> |
| The importance of quality certification                | <input type="radio"/> |
| Management of discrepancies                            | <input type="radio"/> |
| Environmental sustainability                           | <input type="radio"/> |
| Safety regulations                                     | <input type="radio"/> |
| Financial management / taxation                        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Basic economic principles                              | <input type="radio"/> |
| Calculation of the start-up capital                    | <input type="radio"/> |
| Basic accounting                                       | <input type="radio"/> |
| Preparation of monthly cash flows (incomes & expenses) | <input type="radio"/> |
| Developing the marketing strategy                      | <input type="radio"/> |
| Developing new products/services                       | <input type="radio"/> |
| Advertising  | <input type="radio"/> |
| Market research  | <input type="radio"/> |
| Identifying new market opportunities                   | <input type="radio"/> |
| Public relations                                       | <input type="radio"/> |
| Networking   | <input type="radio"/> |
| Digital marketing                                      | <input type="radio"/> |
| Social Media management                                | <input type="radio"/> |
| ICT skills   | <input type="radio"/> |
| Negotiation skills                                     | <input type="radio"/> |
| Continuing education                                   | <input type="radio"/> |
| Innovation   | <input type="radio"/> |

**37. 37. Have you ever considered seeking and received advice on the above “areas”? \***

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

38. **38. If yes, please describe the areas/topics the advice/support was about.**

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39. **39. If yes, what kind of organization(s) supported you?**

You can select more than one choice

*Check all that apply.*

- Business consultants
- Business association(s)
- Chamber of commerce
- Vocational training organizations
- Local public organization
- National public organization
- Specialized experts

40. **40. Do you acquire the basic IT equipment and an internet connection in your facilities? \***

Please tick one box

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

41. **41. Do you acquire video-conferencing facilities & equipment? \***

Please tick one box

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

## Business Training

42. **42. Have you attended any training courses in the past? \***

You can select more than one choice

*Check all that apply.*

- Yes, I have attended a face-to-face training course
- Yes, I have attended an online training course
- No
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**43. 43. If yes, what was the topic of the training course?**


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**44. 44. If no, which were the inhibiting reasons?**

You can select more than one choice

*Check all that apply.*

- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of information on available training courses
- Lack of training courses on specific topics I am interested in
- Lack of time
- Lack of interest
- Not needed

**45. 45. Have your employees attended a training course in the past? \***

You can select more than one choice

*Check all that apply.*

- Yes, they have attended a specially designed face-to-face training course
- Yes, they have attended a specially designed online training course
- No
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**46. 46. If yes, what was the topic of the training course?**


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**47. 47. If no, which were the inhibiting reasons?**

You can select more than one choice

*Check all that apply.*

- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of information on available training courses
- Lack of training courses on specific topics necessary for the development of my employees
- Lack of time
- Lack of interest
- Not needed

