

**Interreg Central Baltic cross-border cooperation project NatureBizz**  
**Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences**



**Report about**  
**Research of Skills and Knowledge for Micro**  
**entrepreneurs in Green Entrepreneurship**  
**Summary report**  
**Latvia**

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## Introduction

Particular research report is part of Interreg Central Baltic cross-border cooperation project NatureBizz results- to identify the necessary business skills and knowledge in natural and green entrepreneurship of Latvian micro level entrepreneurs. The aim of research is following: to identify business skills and knowledge needed in order to improve usage of natural resources for production of products and services. Skills and knowledge identified will be used to develop international training module for micro entrepreneurs as target group. Later in the project training module developed will be gradually introduced in participating high education institutions, in Finland, Estonia, Sweden and Latvia.

Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (ViA) was founded in 1996 and in 2001 acquired the status of a state university. In 2002, it was accredited for an indefinite period. ViA offers high-quality and flexible study programmes that successfully balance theory and practice. These are adapted to the current needs of society and changes in the labour market. The quality of the studies is ensured by experienced and professional teaching staff, advanced study methods, as well as by students who know what they want to achieve and how to succeed. The university is a ecosystem platform for fulfilling dreams and achieving goals. Individually and collectively. It serves those who want to acquire new knowledge and skills regardless of age, and those who have a good idea, but lack the knowledge and skills to make it happen. It also supports individuals who want to realise their scientific idea and create new products by engaging in the research work at the university, and those who want to transfer their knowledge to others by lecturing or consulting.

For this research there are involved two experts – Dr. oec, Professor in Entrepreneurship and Business Administration, Researcher of Institute of Human, Economic, Social and Political Sciences Maira Lescevic and MSc. Manag., MSc. Comp., Researcher of Institute of Human, Economic, Social and Political Sciences Aigars Andersons, with support from MSc. Theol, project coordinator Laura Fisere.

# 1. Research of necessary skills and knowledge of micro entrepreneurs

Research was performed in three stages – firstly stage Secondary information collection and analysis, second stage – elaboration of questionnaires for organizations/ institutions, and for micro entrepreneurs, and third stage survey of micro entrepreneurs and their representative institutions/ associations/ organizations.

## 1.1. Methodology and data collection

The methods used to perform research were:

- Analysis of documents;
- Semi structured interviews – face to face meetings with micro entrepreneurs and telephone interviews with institutes/ organizations;
- Study visits to micro business locations with introduction into the production processes and routines;
- Survey data preparation for report needs- transcription and interpretation of data.

Compilation of various viewpoints of micro entrepreneurs and their stakeholders is a base for this report and will provide further reliable data for preparation of international studies training module.

As a general question for this research was to clarify what kind of new knowledge and skills needed for micro size enterprises working in businesses related with natural resource exploitation for their profit.

## 1.2. Secondary data collection and analysis

Secondary data includes policy documents, global and local reports, planning documents, explanation of main terms used to describe green entrepreneurship and green business. Important information is added about private consumption and that people are spending quite a lot for base of well-being- food, entertainment and healing, etc.

### 1.2.1. Policy framing, planning documents and main terms used

*Europe 2020 strategy* puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities, where one is directly connected with green economy:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more **resource efficient, greener** and more competitive **economy**.
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion (Europe 2020, 2010).

The business structure of Latvia is mostly made up of micro-enterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises with no capacity to invest in R&D and a small share of high technology enterprises. The *RIS3 strategy* also identifies the following specialisation areas:

- Knowledge-based **bio-economy**;
- Biomedicine, medical appliances, bio-pharmacy and bio-technology;
- Smart materials, technology and engineering systems;
- Smart energy;
- ICT (Progress Report on Implementation of Latvia’s NRP, 2018).

One of the main tasks of GRTDI policy is connected with one of the aims for this project – **“To promote cooperation of higher education institutions with enterprises and cooperation of enterprises with enterprises from other countries in creation and commercialisation of different innovative products”** (The *Guidelines on Research, Technology Development, and Innovation for 2014–2020* (GRTDI)).

Across EU28, almost **one third of all SMEs either currently offer green products or services** (24%), or are planning to do so in the next two years (9%). The majority, however, do not currently offer green products or services, and have no plans to do so (63%). **Green products and services** were defined in the survey as the following: Green products and services are those with a predominant function of reducing environmental risk and minimize pollution and resources (SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets, January, 2018)

These documents give solid base and evidence of need for development of **green business** and **green entrepreneurship** concept and definition development.

### 1.2.2. The most used term in Latvia is Organic Agriculture or Organic Farming

The **sector of organic agriculture** is continuously developing, involving more and more new enterprises, but the number of certified organic farms has stabilized, and in 2013 (when last official statistic data are collected) it reached 3473 farms (see Fig.1).

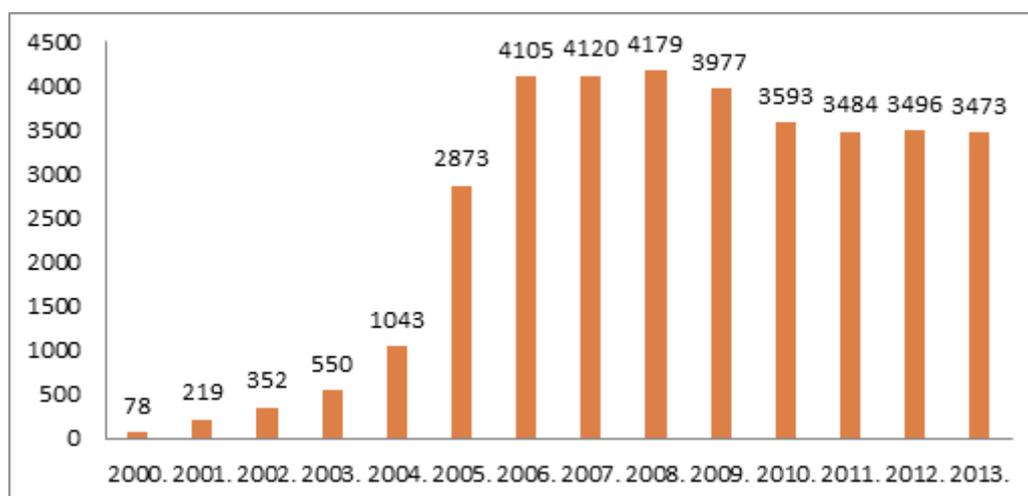


Figure 1. The number of certified organic farms (Ministry of Agriculture, 2018)

By estimation of Gustavs Norkarklis, a Chairman of Latvia Biological Agriculture Association, at the end of Year 2017 there were approximately 4000 biologically certified enterprises managing 260 000 hectares of land in Latvia and he expect that this number will be more less the same in the next two years, too.

In 2013 the major part of certified organic agricultural land areas and those in transition (without perennial grasses, meadows and pastures) was under cereal crops. On organic farms, a dominant sector of animal husbandry is milk production and in 2013 it yielded 69.6 thousand tons of milk, the amount of meat has increased slightly than in the previous year (see fig. 2).

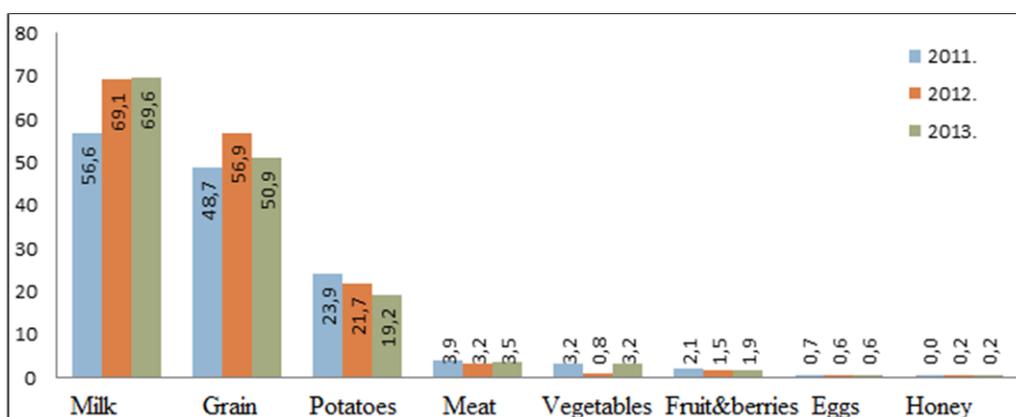


Figure 2. Amounts of output produced by certified organic agriculture, thsd. tons (Ministry of Agriculture, 2018)

In 2013 in general, a share of organic products in the total agricultural output did not exceed 5%, except honey (13,6%) and milk production, which was 7,6% (Ministry of Agriculture, 2018).

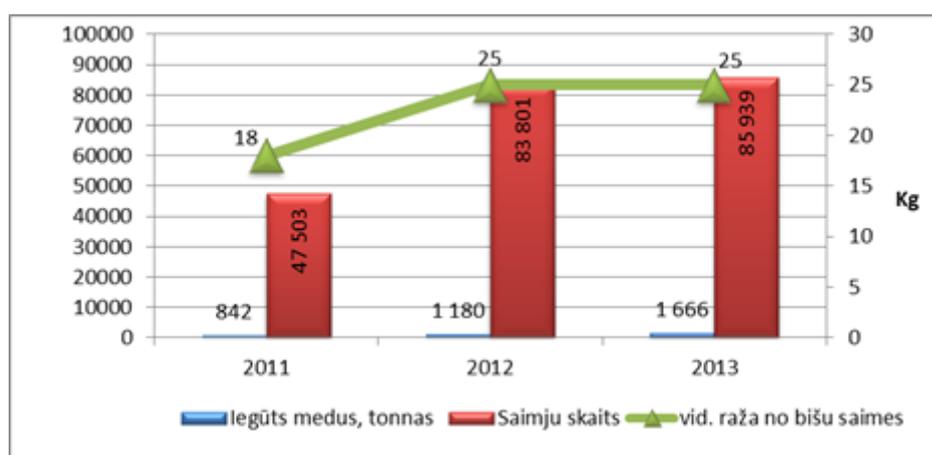


Figure 3. Amount of honey production (Agricultural Data Center, Central Statistical Bureau, Latvian Beekeepers' Association, 2018) (translation of colours starting from blue- Honey production, tons, red- Number of bee-families, green- Average yield per bee-family)

From the amount of marketed produce, as compared with 2012, the share of produce marketed as organic is increasing. Most of all, potatoes, honey, cereal and chicken eggs are marketed as organically produced products (see Fig.3). To facilitate market access for organic products, in 2013 the State support for producers of primary products, treated products and processed products, who participated in the scheme of organic agriculture, was continued thus ensuring marketing of the produce in retail network. In 2013, exports of organic grain and starch commenced to third countries (Ministry of Agriculture, 2018).

Organic farming is certified and is going check up on yearly bases. Farms are checked according to requirements agreed. Before starting farmers has to pass certain courses and prepare plan for transformation of existing enterprise. Organic farming is dealing mainly with traditional agriculture only in most cases in smaller sizes. Traditional agriculture is possible to study at higher education level in the only university with agriculture specialization – Latvia University of Agriculture.

### 1.2.3. Non-traditional Agriculture

**Non-traditional Agriculture** is another businesses, not connected with traditional agriculture, and mainly connected with green entrepreneurship and natural resources

One of the most ancient non-traditional sectors of agriculture in Latvia is **fur animal farming** focusing on production of furs. The most stable non-traditional sectors of agriculture is **rabbit breeding**, which has all the possibilities for further development and enlargement of the number of herds. The rabbit breeding is characteristic for its short cycle, yielding qualitative meat and furs, as well as it actively participates in tourism. In Latvia, mainly meat breeds of rabbits are bred as well as rabbits are reared as pet animals. The sector is aiming, as much as possible, to yield better quality of products and in larger quantity. In Latvia, farming of **game animals** in confined areas, is becoming more and more popular. This non-traditional sector of agriculture is characteristic for a high efficiency, ensuring production of game meat and trophies and organization of hunting events. Farming of game animals ensures the use of low-value land for agricultural purposes, facilitates the development of tourism, increases employment opportunities, and offers meat and antlers for exports. In Latvia a purposeful **rearing of edible snails** started already in mid 90s, but it activated only recently. Currently, there are two species of edible snails reared in Latvia - park snails -*Helixpomatia* and (quick-growing) orchard snails - *Helixpomatia*. In Latvia, a serious perspective can have park snails, which have been well-adjusted to our climatic conditions. **Growing of earthworms** is one of the latest trends in non-traditional agriculture that is rapidly gaining popularity, because there is a high demand for bio-humus produced by earthworms both in Latvia and abroad. Earthworms are grown both for production of bio-humus and for angling, as additional feed for young poultry and young pigs (as animal feed additive), as well as for processing into proteins. In the process of growing of earthworms, organic waste is being processed (manure, plant and food waste that is beneficial for the environment (Ministry of Agriculture, 2018).

Most of these non-traditional agriculture farms has started from special courses, which has been very popular during end of nineties, begging of 2000. Non-traditional agriculture were also introduced in Latvia University of Agriculture by inviting experts to exchange experience.

#### 1.2.4. Bioeconomy

Latvia’s vision for the bioeconomy strategy – **the bioeconomy sectors of Latvia are innovation leaders in the Baltic States** in preserving natural capital, increasing its value and in efficiently and sustainably exploiting it. Innovative approaches for the efficient and sustainable exploitation of natural resources are developed and introduced in the bioeconomy industries in order to provide growth of the national economy providing higher value-added, promoting exports and employment in Latvia. This shall be achieved while simultaneously balancing economic interests with ensuring environmental quality and preserving and enhancing biodiversity. It is critically important to change not only traditional production, but also **the consumption pattern of society from fossil resource based goods and materials to bio-based ones** (Short version of Latvian Bioeconomy Strategy 2030, 2017).

#### 1.2.5. Green public procurement (GPP)

Every year EU member states spend overall 19 % of GDP for public procurement purposes (in Latvia 20%). Such a ratio has a considerable impact on the goods and services market, therefore, by integration of environmental considerations within public procurement it is possible not only **to increase the share of environmentally friendly goods and services in the market**, but also gain the financial and social benefits.



Figure 4. Sustainable development goals (United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015)

Taking into account above mentioned, green public procurement becoming one of the priority instruments for EU environmental, climate and energy policy (see Fig.4). The integration of environmental consideration within the technical specifications for procurements become as the priority task for Latvia. The current regulation (in force from 1st July 2017) extends the scope of mandatory application to additional six product groups and services. The Green procurement is one of the implementation tools of the horizontal principle “sustainable development” applied to receive the assistance from EU financial instruments. In turn green public procurement in financial terms reached 19% from all public procurements in 2015, however decreased to 13-14% in 2016 and 2017.

Entrepreneurs has to follow special requirements to be able to compete for green public procurement. There are several projects developed to help to introduce GPP in local communities and other institutions. Also training was performed for entrepreneur’s qualification – mainly for reaching specific requirements.

### **1.2.6. Green Technology incubator**

The Technology incubator, legal name Green Industry Innovation Centre (GIIC), is focused on supporting and encouraging businesses involved in green industry innovation. The GIIC supports development of products, services, and processes that harness renewable materials, energy sources and efficiency, reduce the use of natural resources, and cut or eliminate emissions and wastes. Project (enterprise) is accepted into incubator if it develops a ‘green’ product, technology or process contributing to:

- 1) Production of renewable energy;
- 2) Production of green (energy efficient) products and materials for buildings;
- 3) Clean transportation;
- 4) Water management;
- 5) Waste management;
- 6) Eco design;
- 7) Or any other improvements in products, technologies or processes in other fields contributing to energy efficiency, lower emissions or lesser consumption of resources (Source: Green Technology Incubator, 2018).

### **1.2.7. Circular Economy**

Priority areas implementing Circular Economy are presented in Fig. 5 by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia.

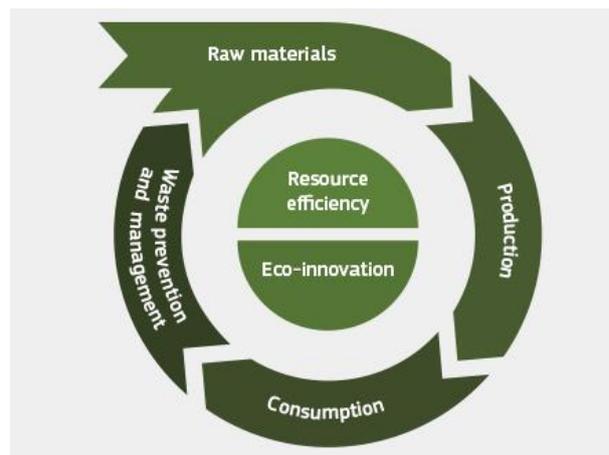
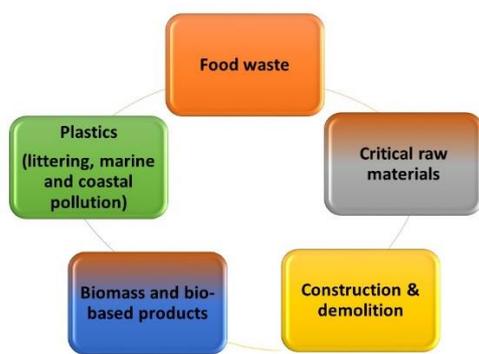


Figure 5. Priority areas and transition cycle for implementing Circular Economy in Latvia (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development,)

Basically this means improvement and transition of enterprises from Linear Economy towards Circular Economy by **Sustainable products and services (eco-design)**, **sustainable consumption (circular procurement & product labelling)**, more & better recycling and removing impediments in existing legislation.

Based on the analysed policy, planning and report documents, institution homepages, development trends and stakeholders of green business and entrepreneurship, the most needed skills for entrepreneurs would be:

- sustainable principles and circularity;
- effective energy management;
- repeated water usage;
- waste management/ minimization;
- company development plans;
- new product development;
- visual identity for company;
- project writing and management skills;
- knowledge how to use ITC solutions for business;
- knowledge about social networks use for busies purposes, digital marketing;
- green certificates, licences, procurements;
- marketing, differentiating from others and finding their USP;
- distribution channels of products and services;
- cooperation and co-working;
- development, use and implementation of innovations;
- sustainability and nature protection measures;
- using more natural materials instead of artificial in product development.

### **1.3. Empirical research by interviews**

As part of overall research involved survey of target group- micro entrepreneurs active in green business, and main stakeholders- business development organisations and sectorial agencies. Sample of 22 micro entrepreneurs was selected randomly by using published information from other trade exhibitions and regional events.

Sample of 8 business development organisations and sectorial agencies were selected from micro entrepreneur's survey or more related to the sector.

Empirical research was performed during August- September 2018. During this period, 20 micro sized entrepreneurs and 8 representatives of different organisations active in the field of green entrepreneurship support and consulting, were interviewed using semi-structured interview form (20 face to face and 8 telephone interviews). Enterprises were mostly operating in the central part of Latvia, organisations- representing all around Latvia.

Interview questions (see appendix 1) were combined by all project NatureBizz partners based on the topics identified in the secondary data analyses, covering topics from previous training and daily functioning issues, to the future of the sector. Interviews were conducted and recorded in Latvian, transcribed and systematised in English.

For respondents there were given an opportunity to answer the questions in very open form. In the most of visited companies for researchers there was a possibility to visit production premises or get insight into the practical operations of these companies. Thus it was possible to gather additional practical information for further analysis.

## 2. The necessary skills and knowledge for micro entrepreneurs

Survey of micro entrepreneurs contained the following certain procedures:

- List of entrepreneurs were selected from existing exhibition and fair/ marketing materials;
- Next step was calling and/or sending email with introduction to project, in some cases also introducing with questionnaire;
- All interviews were conducted at the participant's business operation places;
- Photos of participants, production process, products and place were taken;
- In the most of companies also basic production samples were available for testing.

Businesses interviewed all are dealing with natural resources and maximum eco-friendly products in sustainable way. Majority of interviewed companies indicated 80-100% as incomes from natural, organic or eco products in their businesses.

Products produced were soaps, special mushrooms, and herbal teas, eco-cosmetics, cleaning and washing liquids, juices, syrups, jams, honey products, goat cheese, natural milk products, wax candles and lanterns, products from wood, different nature- based services as organization of outdoor recreational events and specialized guest-houses with integrated green social business aspect.

### 2.1. Identified during micro enterprises interviews

All entrepreneurs during interview showed clear understanding and interest in participating in project and particularly in the Survey and later on in training sessions. Survey participants showed **extreme satisfaction with their business** and therefore many answered that they do not want to grow up or to increase their companies' turnover. They seemed to be satisfied with business development at reached level.

'*Green business*' was explained as a business dealing with green raw materials and green products or business based on ecology aspects. This type of business must be proved by different "eco" certificates or licences.

'*Green entrepreneurship*' was mostly explained by traditional entrepreneurship with emphasis on responsible attitude to the environment or entrepreneurship where is minimized negative impact to the environment, society and economy.

**None of interviewed had certificate as Organic farm/ company.** Just one company has "Green Point" label so it participates in the sustainable product chain management. At the same time they expressed negative attitude to the painful process of gaining certificates and licences and their renewal process every year. The main idea from entrepreneurs was that it is more formal process to get subsidies nor increase a proportion of real organic production within industries.

When asked about **sustainability, most of them understood it as continuation of business.** Even after explanation respondents still turned to the business viability. But at the same time, they mentioned that their attitude to natural resources is very careful – their businesses depend on them. Some mentioned that their competitiveness suffers because of extremely

expensive natural raw ingredients and materials for their production. For many of micro size entrepreneurs their business have turned also in living style/ necessity. Just few of interviewed emphasized points that their business has a positive impact to the whole society in form of sustainability and nature protection.

**They use mainly direct approach for getting feedback from clients.** Only few mentioned that they do not see real client, but only mediator. Also most of them tell about their products also by using verbal communication and direct speech. There are also very few entrepreneurs who use opinions collection from integrated social networks' feedback channels.

Some of them are not only entrepreneurs, but also socially active and important persons on local, regional and state level. **Level of education for these entrepreneurs are high, even up to doctor degree holders in businesses where deep understanding of chemical processes in food production industries are essential.**

**All of them are competing mostly on local market.** Experience of few entrepreneurs to start export was not successful because, traditionally, market requests big volume deliveries of products what is impossible to realize without serious cooperation incentives. Micro size enterprises in Latvia has limited possibilities to join existing cooperatives because they produce only conventional products. One entrepreneur is looking for export possibilities, because his products have saturated market.

**Most of entrepreneurs are ready to experiment with their products and to try something new and to offer completely new/improved/innovative products to existing clients.** Their clients are used to innovations. New product development happens in their own premises, sometimes in association with research institutions and labs. Special field for expansion of micro size businesses is offer of special additional services, like product tasting rooms, specific food museums, and study tours for children, gastronomy tourism events, cafeterias and so on. Some companies already has slightly higher incomes from these supplementary services than basic business operations. In this sense these services has one very big bonus- money for this service is paid in advance but in their basic business payments they expect only after few weeks after product is produced and delivered to customer. To limit this negative payment balance impact most of entrepreneurs choose small local markets with direct sales instead of use traditional selling channels in food stores or supermarkets. Slightly different situation is for companies offering direct nature-based services like open air recreational events or “eco” style guest houses. They observe a space for their business expansion in Latvia and Baltics because of vast availability of open air spaces (forests, lakes, rivers and so on) suitable for their business style.

The most of offered products provides well-being at first to the local society, and afterwards to the individual level of health. Some of them already serve people during excursions and visits, some are only planning to offer services tied to the existing products.

Most of entrepreneurs rate their business skills as appropriate for managing particular company. Only a couple of persons mentioned that they did not have any knowledge or experience in business because they just bought or inherited this business.

They try to be active salespersons themselves and always are ready to explain their biggest competitive advantage– as being natural product producers and sellers but they are less competent

**on sales promotion, packaging, branding, direct sales, online sales, product differentiation, customer segmentation, etc.**

The most of questioned pointed a need of such training subject as **marketing – how to reach customer (at existing local and potential international market) and management in general**, because some of them are without special managerial knowledge or experience. Many persons also mentioned that **courses in English would be challenging and they would need translation service**.

**Some of respondents are part of their industry networks and/or associations.** Only some of these organizations are also offering trainings, consultancies or simple advice, like LLKC Ltd. Valmiera Business Incubator, Latvian Hotel and Restaurant Association, Association of Latvian travel Agents and Tour Operators. Some of associations offer only paid services. Additionally there are a lot of seminars and workshops in Latvia organized free of charge as part of various EU financed projects by NGOs and educational institutions. The quality of these courses, seminars, conferences and workshops is average because limited financing in EU projects forbid to attract high level specialists with practical experience in business, mostly lecturers on seminars or conferences have only theoretical knowledge about specific subject.

**The entrepreneurs mentioned that they primarily would like to have hands-on training opportunities**– more practical case studies and real storytelling then theoretical knowledge. Also they would like to meet face to face instead of online training. When asked about special knowledge they need in order to use more natural resources, few mentioned that their priority would be masterclasses on certain product/ service and some need more information about certification and licencing procedures. The new courses should be organized in form **“HOW TO DO”** instead **“WHAT TO DO”**. Entrepreneurs, as usual, know what they want to do but have limited knowledge how to make it ready. There should be invited as teachers also field experts who has practical experience from direct sales and online sales.

Special challenge mentioned by entrepreneurs were negative trends in Latvian local market– **a little declining number of existing clients**. Especially for products which are not connected with everyday consumption.

**Mostly the respondents are ready to spend 1-2 days on training once in month.** It could be repeated on regular basis. The best period of studies is from November till April because most of entrepreneurs are connected with agricultural production cycles. Place of workshop preferably could be real business where they can see and learn something with an opportunity to ask questions. Certificates and diplomas after each completed course are noted as compulsory or highly recommended element. Besides some companies are ready to share payment for visits to another country/ to another companies but in similar/comparable field of business they already have.

Respondents do not have high expectations from future and fast business development/ growth, but they certainly are looking for holding on their place on the market/ to maintain the same level. Additionally they see high potential for growth by offering different additional services like study tours, masterclasses with product tasting, restaurants and other paid services. They also are looking forward that someday their business will be inherited by their descendants.

## 2.2. Identified during business development organisations and sectorial agencies interviews

The real stakeholder's survey was also performed during research. Business development organisations had general information companies, but they analysed training needs within the sector. Two organizations were supporting and consulting, two- bringing together sectoral enterprises in association and cooperative, in regional and rural areas and four represented enterprises who offer camping and nature-tourism services. Business development organizations and professional associations offer to their members also short time courses but micro size companies are rare participants because of rather high participation fees for these courses. Some NGOs and professional associations have EU financed projects with purpose to educate entrepreneurs but quality of such courses are not at the highest level.

Respondents acknowledged that **micro entrepreneurs are weak in cooperation, representation in domestic and foreign markets**, but very flexible and independent from financing institutions. They usually have good operative financial balance records but they lack in financing for further business growth incentives. Entrepreneurs have problems with keeping the same level of product and service quality in long run period, so reducing business potential growth opportunities and sustainability. Also they are sometimes **competing too much with other local companies instead of healthy co-opting**. Respondents predict their businesses developing slowly but being very stable now with prospering future for green micro entrepreneurs.

Business development organisations and sectorial cooperatives and associations suggested following training needs (more practical training than theory):

- Packaging, labelling;
- Team building;
- Online sales worldwide through B2C platforms;
- Marketing;
- Digital marketing;
- Sales, selling;
- Marketing segmentation;
- Market research;
- Accountancy;
- Product energy content.

Respondents also have been organizing courses on yearly bases, but mainly as campaigns according to the current needs, project needs, and new trends. They cooperate with Latvia University of Agriculture, local schools, development centres.

Also industry representatives identified certain **need to change local municipality's thinking– from global products sales to local goods promotion. Consumers** also deserve **education/** introduction to well-being of local products and services.

Education of potential customers is emphasized as a key point in local micro size business promotion. If entrepreneurs are rather well informed about their products and competitors then consumers usually are living in “supermarket” bubbles without information about high quality locally produced goods and services.

### 3. Mapping the skills and knowledge needed for micro entrepreneurs

Based on the analysed documents in the first chapter, interviewed entrepreneurs and support organisation representatives in the second chapter, the key topics to consider when educating micro entrepreneurs who use natural resources are presented in skills and knowledge matrix (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Skills and knowledge matrix for green micro entrepreneurs**

	<b>Policy, global and local reports, planning documents</b>	<b>Micro entrepreneurs opinion</b>	<b>Opinion of business development organisations and sectorial associations, cooperatives, agencies</b>
1	2	3	4
<b>General knowledge, change of attitude, thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sustainable principles and circularity;</li> <li>• effective energy management;</li> <li>• repeated water usage;</li> <li>• waste management/ minimization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• management</li> <li>• certification</li> <li>• EU funding opportunities</li> <li>• accountancy</li> <li>• HRM</li> <li>• innovation</li> <li>• real estate market (rental)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sectoral and cross-sectoral analysis</li> <li>• accountancy</li> <li>• attracting of investments for faster company growth</li> <li>• certification and licencing</li> <li>• innovation</li> <li>• green thinking</li> <li>• green procurement</li> </ul>
<b>Company management, managerial skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development plans</li> <li>• project writing and management skills</li> <li>• knowledge how to use IT solutions for business</li> <li>• cooperation and co-working</li> <li>• development, use and implementation of innovations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• packaging</li> <li>• e-shop development and management</li> <li>• online sales in B2C and B2B segments;</li> <li>• working in team</li> <li>• ITC competences</li> <li>• cross border sales</li> <li>• team building skills</li> <li>• cash flow analysis</li> <li>• production costs calculations</li> <li>• science and technology support opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• packaging</li> <li>• IT competencies</li> <li>• networking</li> <li>• clusters</li> <li>• eco- labelling</li> </ul>

1	2	3	4
<b>Product development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>marketing, differentiating from others and finding their USP</li> <li>using more natural materials instead of artificial in product development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>branding</li> <li>labelling</li> <li>technologies</li> <li>new product development</li> <li>special product features (conservancy, sugar-free)</li> <li>science and technology support opportunities in new product development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>quality management</li> <li>branding</li> <li>labelling</li> <li>product energy content</li> <li>niche product development;</li> <li>organization of local selling point/ local market selling point</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>distribution channels of products and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sales promotion</li> <li>direct sales</li> <li>sales in internet</li> <li>customer segments</li> <li>delivery channels</li> <li>direct sales</li> <li>B2B and B2C differentiation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>marketing</li> <li>sales promotion</li> <li>selling</li> <li>marketing segmentation</li> <li>customer segmentations</li> <li>product value proposals</li> <li>representation on local markets</li> </ul>
<b>Exporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of special state business promotion institutions advisory services</li> <li>use of local business incubator services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>market research</li> <li>partner search</li> <li>dealer networks</li> <li>small product parties special markets abroad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>market research</li> <li>sales platforms</li> <li>work with professional associations networking</li> </ul>
<b>Organization of courses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as appendixes of projects, planning documents at national and EU levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>face to face; deeply practical; hands on training sessions;</li> <li>masterclasses; sharing of individual experiences;</li> <li>practice based learning;</li> <li>exercises related to reality;</li> <li>exercises with real practical outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of professional associations' advisory services;</li> <li>use of Latvia Investment and Innovation Agency offers;</li> <li>joint educational activities for entrepreneurs and potential customers;</li> </ul>
<b>Length</b>	1 day	1-2 days	4 hours, 1 day maximum
<b>Place</b>	Riga, or in biggest cities	On hosting company local business place	City centres, local municipalities
<b>Language</b>	Provide translation	Need translation	Provide translation

## References

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2. Europe 2020, A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Brussels, 2010.
3. Progress Report on Implementation of Latvia's NRP, 2018
4. Short version of Latvian Bioeconomy Strategy 2030, 2017
5. United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015
6. Green Technology Incubator, last retrieved on 2.11.2018 <http://www.giic.lv/en/>
7. SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets, January, 2018

# Appendixes

### Interview questions for entrepreneurs

#### General information

1. When was your company established?
2. How many employees are in your company?
3. Please name your main products/services. (Tell me about your products)

#### Nature & green approach

4. Do you use natural resources in your business activities?

If yes, please mention \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is your opinion, is your business connected with nature?
6. What does green business and green entrepreneurship mean to you

Green business \_\_\_\_\_

Green entrepreneurship \_\_\_\_\_

7. How responsible/sustainable/ethical is your business in your opinion? How about use of natural resources?

#### Development of business, sales, marketing, communication

8. How do you find out if there are any new customer needs?
9. Are you thinking about expanding (local, regional, national, international)? Into new customer segments? New products/services? Possibilities and challenges for expansion/growth/development?
10. What is your target market? Who is your client?
11. How do you
  - a) market-
  - b) communicate-
  - c) sell your products/services/brand/ anda ..... sustainability of your...?

#### Products

12. What kind of value does your products create for the consumer? Why are your products better than the ones provided by competitors?
13. How do you design/develop your products and services?
14. Does your products provide well-being? Local community, human health, animal well-being etc. How, in what ways?

#### Needs for training

15. What kind of additional business skills and knowledge do you need to be able to use natural resources in your business activities? NB!
16. How do you communicate the sustainability of your products and services?

17. With whom do you collaborate (clusters, networks)? What are the benefits and challenges of cooperation?

18. How would you like to develop your business? What are the challenges?

19. Do you plan to use more natural resources in your business? Yes/No

Do you think you would need more knowledge, skills or competences for that?

Please, mention \_\_\_\_\_

20. What are the proportions of green products in the your total income?

21. What training/education have you participated in? What kind of training do you need? How should it be organized and delivered (in what formats)?

22. How should the study program be implemented?

23. Will it be realistic for you to participate in all 4 on-line courses? when? how? time-period? content? purpose? What is your view on university credits for the participation (if possible)? What is your views on a diploma/certificate?

24. We have planned a study trip for entrepreneurs piloting the courses. Where would you like to go?

How much are you willing to pay extra for participation of a 3-4 day study trip? Background info about possible alternatives? When? Why? Purpose?

25. How do you view your company in 5 years? In 10 years?

26. Anything you would like to add?

### Interview questions for organisations

1. What kind of micro size entrepreneurs using natural resources are represented by your organisation/ are in your area?
2. What kind of natural resources are they using in their business activities?
3. What kind of additional business skills and knowledge do they need?
4. How do you see the state of art of the sector now and how do you see the development of the sector in the future? Why?
5. SWOT of the sector
6. Have you provided trainings for micro size entrepreneurs related to the topic (business skills/natural resources)?
7. How should we implement the trainings?