

Guide for the Implementation of the Mentoring Programme

within the project

“ENAG – Enhancing the quality of education for agripreneurs in the
Hungarian-Serbian border area”

This Guide for the implementation of the Mentoring Programme was developed within the project **“ENAG – Enhancing the quality of education for agripreneurs in the Hungarian-Serbian border area”**, implemented under the Interreg VI-A Hungary–Serbia Programme.

The Mentoring Programme is launched with the aim of engaging experienced women entrepreneurs, experts and practitioners in agriculture and agribusiness in transferring knowledge, skills and experience to young women, unemployed women and women from hard-to-employ groups, as well as beginners in agribusiness, in order to encourage their entry into, retention in and professional development within the agriculture sector and related activities. A special focus of the Programme is on strengthening entrepreneurial thinking, self-confidence and practical competences necessary for (self-)employment and sustainable business in rural areas.

The Mentoring Programme is implemented and coordinated by the project partners - in Hungary by the Hungarian Women’s Union (Magyar Női Unió Egyesület), and in Serbia by the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Association “Foodscale Hub” from Novi Sad, in close cooperation with relevant local stakeholders, experts and institutions involved in education, agriculture and entrepreneurship support. The Programme is implemented in a cross-border context, with the aim of strengthening cooperation, exchange of experience and transfer of good practices between Hungary and Serbia.

The Mentoring Programme provides for the formation of mentoring pairs consisting of a mentor (an experienced expert or entrepreneur) and a mentee (programme participant). The total number of mentoring pairs is determined in line with the interests and needs of project participants in both countries. Participants who took part in ENAG activities such as the stakeholder events, ENAG Boot Camp and study visits can apply for mentoring support, in line with their personal development goals and areas where they need additional support.

The Mentoring Programme represents an integrative phase of the ENAG project, aimed at translating the knowledge gained through training and the digital platform into concrete professional and entrepreneurial steps, with individualized support and expert guidance.

TERMINOLOGY

The goal of the ENAG project is to improve the knowledge, skills and competences of women in agriculture and agribusiness, with a special focus on young women, unemployed women and women from hard-to-employ groups, as well as those considering (self-)employment in rural areas.

The concept of mentoring strongly supports the goals that the ENAG project seeks to achieve, as it enables the direct transfer of practical knowledge and experience, individualised support, and the empowerment of participants throughout their professional development. The Mentoring Programme is explained in more detail in this Guide to familiarise mentors and mentees more closely with the concept of mentoring, its principles and the way it is implemented within the ENAG project.

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|----------------------------|---|
| MENTORSHIP | <i>An interactive, development-oriented process between people with different levels of experience and knowledge, in which more experienced individuals provide support, advice and guidance to less experienced ones, with the aim of strengthening their competences and achieving personal and professional goals in agriculture and agribusiness.</i> |
| MENTOR | <i>An experienced woman entrepreneur, expert or practitioner in agriculture, agribusiness or related fields who, through the mentoring relationship, provides support to a mentee in developing knowledge, skills and professional plans.</i> |
| MENTEE | <i>A participant of the ENAG Mentoring Programme – a young woman, unemployed woman, woman from hard-to-employ groups or a beginner in agribusiness – who receives support through the Programme in her personal and professional development.</i> |
| MENTORING PROGRAMME | <i>A structured and organised framework within which mentors and mentees are paired to achieve specific learning and development goals. The Mentoring Programme is the system that supports, monitors and evaluates this relationship.</i> |
| COORDINATOR | <i>The Coordinator of the Mentoring Programme is the organizer and facilitator of mentoring activities. The coordinator connects mentors and participants, monitors the development of mentoring relationships, provides organisational support and intervenes in case of challenges or the need for additional guidance.</i> |

“Leaders become great not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others.”

John C. Maxwell

MENTORING PROGRAMME

The mentoring model is present worldwide and is successfully implemented in almost all spheres of society - from science and business to politics - and contributes to creating positive change in society.

What is mentorship?

Mentorship is an interactive and development-oriented process that takes place between individuals with different levels of experience and knowledge, in which more experienced and knowledgeable persons provide support, advice and guidance to less experienced persons, in order to help them improve their competences and contribute to the achievement of personal, professional and entrepreneurial goals in the field of agriculture and agribusiness.

For a mentoring relationship to be successful, the commitment, openness, honesty and trust of both sides in the mentoring process are crucial. The concept of the Mentoring Programme within the ENAG project is based on mutual respect, the exchange of experience and motivation, as well as on the willingness of both the mentor and the mentee to actively participate in a joint process of learning and development.

What are the objectives of the Mentoring Programme?

In the field of agriculture and agribusiness, knowledge and skills are often acquired through practical work, experience and personal contacts. In addition to formal education and training, mentoring support plays a key role in empowering women to enter the labour market, start or improve their own businesses and make informed business decisions.

The objectives of the Mentoring Programme within the ENAG project are as follows:

- Empowering women in agriculture and agribusiness and promoting women's entrepreneurship.
- Improving personal, professional and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.
- Transferring practical knowledge and experience from real business environments.
- Developing self-confidence, initiative and leadership skills among mentees.

- Creating and strengthening a network of women in agribusiness at the local and cross-border level.
- Encouraging intergenerational cooperation and the exchange of good practices.
- Promoting successful examples of women operating in agriculture and related sectors.

What results do we expect from the Mentoring Programme?

Motivation for employment, self-employment or professional development does not have to come exclusively from formal sources such as training programmes, institutions or advisory services. Advice, support and encouragement coming from experienced women entrepreneurs, farmers and experts who have already gone through similar professional paths often have value and credibility.

Participation in the Mentoring Programme provides ENAG project participants with the opportunity to:

- Build relationships with experienced mentors.
- Receive concrete, practical advice for further professional development (up to 15 hours per person).
- Better understand the challenges and opportunities of working in agriculture and agribusiness.
- Gain insight into different professional paths – from employment to starting one's own business.

Many mentors are active as owners or managers of farms, entrepreneurs, advisors, educators, or members of professional and local institutions, which enables participants to gain insight into different models of career development in the sector.

The broader social impact of the Mentoring Programme

The Mentoring Programme does not benefit only the mentees, but also has a broader social impact, as it contributes to the empowerment of women in rural areas and to strengthening positive perceptions of women as active and visible actors in agriculture and local economic development.

The programme highlights the many opportunities that the agriculture and agribusiness sector offers to women and can further inspire other members of local communities to engage in educational programmes, entrepreneurial initiatives and professional development activities.

The motivation, commitment and example set by both the mentor and the mentee can have a positive impact on the local community, family farms, cooperatives, educational institutions and other organisations involved in promoting women's entrepreneurship.

Mentoring is a process through which both sides develop!

A successful mentoring relationship can continue even after the formal completion of the Mentoring Programme. Although the Programme is time-limited, maintaining contact and exchanging experiences between the mentor and mentee may continue after the project ends, which indicates the quality of the relationship established and the recognised value of their joint work.

The Mentoring Programme within the ENAG project is non-profit in nature and free of charge for mentees, while the engagement of mentors is based on volunteerism, professional motivation and the desire to contribute to the empowerment of women in agriculture and agribusiness.

For a successful mentoring relationship, the commitment of both sides and active engagement in the mentoring process in a way that is most appropriate for both the mentor and the mentee are essential.

WHO IS A MENTOR?

The ideal mentor within the ENAG project is a person who is actively engaged or has previously been engaged in agriculture, agribusiness or related fields, and who possesses significant practical experience in her area of work. The mentor's age is not decisive – if the mentor is younger, there is a greater likelihood of easier mutual understanding and similarity in professional challenges, while older mentors often have richer experience and broader insight into career and business development.

Given that the Mentoring Programme is based on volunteerism, the mentor should be enthusiastic, motivated and committed to empowering women in agriculture and agribusiness, willing to share her knowledge and experience with the mentee and ready to dedicate her time and attention to her.

The role of the mentor is to be a conversation partner, a source of support and a guide, and through joint work and open dialogue to contribute to the mentee's personal and professional development. The mentor is driven by the desire to transfer knowledge and experience, and her motivation stems from the awareness that through her engagement she has helped the participant take concrete steps towards employment, self-employment or business development.

Within the ENAG Mentoring Programme, the mentor:

- Provides support and guidance, as well as assistance in developing the mentee's self-confidence and professional assurance.
- Encourages the mentee through honest, constructive advice and practical guidance.
- Builds a relationship of trust by fostering openness, direct communication and mutual respect within the mentoring relationship.

The mentoring relationship is a two-way street in which both the mentor and the mentee gain new knowledge and experience, strengthen existing skills and develop new ones.

Why become a mentor?

- You have likely had, at some point in your professional or personal journey, a teacher, advisor or more experienced colleague whose advice, support or example had a strong and lasting impact on your development. You might not be where you are today if you had not had the opportunity to listen to them or learn from their experience. Mentoring is an opportunity for you to have a similar impact and provide support to a woman who is at the beginning of her professional or entrepreneurial journey.
- Working with people, especially younger, inexperienced or unemployed women, represents a valuable opportunity to develop patience, openness and flexibility. Through the mentoring process, mentors further develop their leadership skills, as the ability to positively guide and empower another person often forms the foundation for leading teams, family farms or business initiatives in agribusiness.
- During the Mentoring Programme, mentors have the opportunity to establish new professional contacts, meet other participants and experts, exchange experiences and consider different perspectives, which can lead to new ideas, collaborations and professional opportunities.
- The difference in age and experience between the mentor and the mentee is beneficial for both sides, as it contributes to the development of empathy, understanding and intergenerational dialogue, and enables mentors to better understand the needs, attitudes and challenges faced by younger generations of women in rural areas and in the labour market.

WHO IS A MENTEE?

The ideal participant in the ENAG Mentoring Programme does not need to have prior entrepreneurial experience or an established business. What matters most is that she is motivated, committed and ready to invest time and effort in her personal and professional development. The mentee is a woman who wishes to improve her knowledge and skills in the fields of agriculture, agribusiness and entrepreneurship, whether she is considering employment, self-employment or the further development of existing activities.

A mentee in the ENAG Mentoring Programme is ambitious, open to learning and willing to share her experiences with others, thereby contributing to the visibility of the Programme and the dissemination of information about the ENAG project within the local and cross-border community. She is open to challenges and change, receptive to new ideas, suggestions and forms of communication. Through the mentoring process, she can further develop her self-confidence, professional assurance and personal capacities, which contributes to her continued development.

Why become a mentee in the Mentoring Programme?

- If you are motivated to improve your knowledge, skills and professional opportunities in agriculture or agribusiness, the Mentoring Programme can help you define your goals more clearly and identify ways to achieve them. You will have the opportunity to establish direct contact with an experienced mentor and receive practical advice from real business contexts.
- If you enjoy learning new things and feel that, in addition to existing training and support environments, you will benefit from additional support from an experienced mentor, the Mentoring Programme represents an excellent opportunity for further development.
- It is always useful to look at things from different perspectives. Even if you already work with trainers, advisors or colleagues, a mentor can point out new opportunities, challenges and solutions, and offer you a different perspective that can positively influence your professional development.
- A mentoring relationship often leads to new contacts and networking opportunities. You can establish connections not only with your mentor, but also with other participants and mentors through joint activities, events and exchanges of experience, which can be an additional source of inspiration.

- Together with your mentor, you decide in which areas you want to make the most progress. Whether it is developing a business idea, improving practical skills, career planning or strengthening self-confidence, the mentoring process is tailored to your needs and goals, providing support where you need it most.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is key to building a successful mentoring relationship. A prerequisite for successful communication is that the mentor and the mentee find common ground, build mutual trust and exchange experiences and opinions openly and without hesitation.

At the very beginning, each mentoring pair within the Mentoring Programme jointly defines the mode of communication (e-mail, mobile phone, SMS, Viber, WhatsApp, online meetings, in-person meetings, etc.), as well as the frequency of communication and meetings. In-person meetings can be organized within the framework of trainings, events or other activities that the mentor and mentee consider relevant and useful.

For mentoring pairs who do not live in the same place or have limited opportunities for in-person meetings, the use of online communication is recommended, as it enables continuity of the mentoring relationship regardless of geographical distance.

At the start of the Mentoring Programme, the mentee initiates communication. The mentor should encourage the mentee to talk about her successes, challenges, dilemmas and progress, as well as about the positive and negative aspects of professional development that she considers important.

Mutual communication among programme participants, as well as among the mentors themselves, is also welcome, as the exchange of experience further contributes to learning, networking and strengthening the community of women in agriculture and agribusiness.

To establish high-quality and functional communication within a mentoring pair, it is necessary to define the following already at the beginning:

- the frequency and duration of meetings,
- the format and location of meetings,
- the possibilities for communication between scheduled meetings.

Suggested questions for the first meeting of the mentoring pair

MENTOR can ask the mentee:

- What are you currently doing and what is your previous experience in agriculture or agribusiness?
- What motivated you to participate in the Mentoring Programme?
- Do you have a business idea, or are you considering employment or self-employment?
- Which areas would you most like to improve (knowledge, skills, self-confidence, work organization, career planning)?
- What challenges are you currently facing?
- Do you have a role model or someone who inspires you?
- How do you envision your professional future in five or ten years?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about yourself?

MENTEE can ask the mentor:

- What activities have you been involved in throughout your career?
- What did your professional path look like and what were the key turning points?
- What motivated you to engage in this field of work?
- What challenges have you encountered and how did you overcome them?
- What is your current professional engagement?
- What are you most proud of in your professional work so far?
- What motivated you to take on the role of mentor in the Mentoring Programme?
- Do you have any advice for women who are at the beginning of their professional journey?
- Anything else you would like to share about yourself?

What to do besides talking?

Opportunities for learning within the mentoring relationship, in addition to conversations and meetings, can also be realised through the following activities:

- Joint visits to agricultural fairs, events or educational activities.
- Visits to a farm, workplace or business premises of the mentor or the mentee.
- Joint meetings with third parties (experts, advisors, collaborators, family members involved in the farm/business).
- Shadowing activities, i.e. the mentee observing the mentor's professional activities.
- Joint participation in a workshop, training or field activity within the ENAG project.

EVENTS IN THE ENAG MENTORING PROGRAMME

Introductory meeting

The start of the Mentoring Programme will be officially marked by an introductory meeting in an online environment, during which mentors and mentees will have the opportunity to meet each other (for the first time). The meeting will be organized for all mentoring pairs.

During the introductory meeting, the concept of the Mentoring Programme, its structure and expectations will be presented, followed by an open discussion to clarify any questions related to the implementation of the Programme. The following is also planned:

- Exchange of contact details between mentors and mentees.
- Agreement on the future mode of communication and cooperation within each mentoring pair.

Final conference of the ENAG project

One or more mentoring pairs, selected by the project coordinator, may have the opportunity to participate in and be presented at the final ENAG project conference, which will be held in Hungary. At the final conference, the following will be presented:

- Project results.
- Examples of good practice.
- Success stories of mentoring pairs from Serbia and Hungary.

Participation in the final conference represents an opportunity to promote women's entrepreneurship in agriculture, exchange experiences in a cross-border context and strengthen the professional visibility of Programme participants.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION

With the aim of promoting women's entrepreneurship, employability and the active participation of women in agriculture and agribusiness, the Mentoring Programme will be publicly promoted through the ENAG project's communication channels, in line with the visibility rules of the Interreg VI-A Hungary–Serbia Programme.

The Mentoring Programme contributes to:

- Greater visibility of women in agriculture and agribusiness.
- The promotion of their professional achievements and initiatives.
- Strengthening positive perceptions of the role of women in rural development.

In addition, the Mentoring Programme and its promotion through project communication channels and tools, such as:

- social media,
- project events,
- participation in European initiatives and thematic campaigns,

contribute to greater visibility of the ENAG project and its results in both local and European contexts.

Follow us on social media!

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EVALUATION

After the completion of the Mentoring Programme, a final evaluation questionnaire will be sent to both mentors and mentees to summarise the achieved results, assess the contribution of mentoring to the mentee's personal and professional development and evaluate the overall effects of the Mentoring Programme within the ENAG project.

The evaluation questionnaires are completed by both mentors and mentees based on predefined questions. The collected data will be used:

- For the preparation of the final ENAG project report.
- For the analysis of the effectiveness of the Mentoring Programme.
- Planning and improving future initiatives, programmes and projects aimed at education, employability and the empowerment of women in agricultural entrepreneurship in the cross-border area of Hungary and Serbia.

The evaluation questionnaire is presented in Annex III.

Annex I – MENTOR REGISTRATION FORM

Name and surname: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Field of activity (please circle one):

1. Entrepreneur in agriculture / agribusiness
2. Expert (trainer/educator, advisor, consultant)
3. Owner / manager of an agricultural holding (farm)
4. Employed in an institution, organization or association relevant to agriculture and rural development

Name of organisation / farm / institution:

Status (owner, manager, advisor, educator, etc.):

Period of activity:

From _____ to _____

MOST SIGNIFICANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

(please list relevant experience, projects, achievements)

OTHER RELEVANT ACTIVITIES

(networks, associations, additional training, mentoring, etc.)

Disclaimer:

This event has been organised with the financial assistance of the European Union through the Interreg VI-A IPA Hungary-Serbia programme. The content of the event is the sole responsibility of the project partners and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union and/or the Managing Authority of the Programme.

Annex II – MENTEE REGISTRATION FORM

Name and surname: _____

Place of residence (city/municipality): _____

Education level: _____

Status (please circle):

- unemployed
- employed
- self-employed
- pupil / student

Do you have experience in agriculture or agribusiness?

Are you considering employment or self-employment?

Area(s) of interest within the Mentoring Programme:

Which personal or professional achievement to date are you most proud of?

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Annex III – Evaluation questionnaire

Dear mentors and mentees,

In front of you is the evaluation questionnaire of the Mentoring Programme within the project ***“ENAG – Enhancing the quality of education for agripreneurs in the Hungarian-Serbian border area.”***

Your opinion is important to us for evaluating the success of the Programme so that we can have a basis for creating and launching similar initiatives in the future. We kindly ask you to answer the following questions honestly.

Thank you in advance!
ENAG team

Name and surname: _____

1. Your satisfaction with the relationship with your mentor/mentee

- Not satisfied
- Satisfactory
- Good
- Very good
- Excellent

2. Usefulness of the Mentoring Programme

- Not useful
- Satisfactory
- Very useful
- Excellent

3. How often did you meet with your mentor/mentee?

- Never
- Once
- Twice
- Three times
- More than three times

4. How do you define the success/failure of a mentoring relationship?

5. Willingness to continue cooperation after the completion of the Mentoring Programme:

- Yes
- No

6. Would you improve anything in the Mentoring Programme? If yes, please explain.

7. Your message to the Coordinators of the ENAG project.

Thank you for your cooperation!