

# POLICY THAT SPEEDS UP SME ADOPTION IN AGRI-FOOD

Strong, aligned policy builds strong ecosystems — and strong ecosystems help SMEs adopt and scale faster.

## WHAT'S INSIDE



### Purpose

Practical policy levers for SME digital/green adoption



### Who it's for

Regions, EU funders, programme owners



### How it was built

SME pilots, vouchers, cluster services, interregional work

## THE FOUR POLICY AREAS



Digitalisation & advanced tech adoption



Funding access, investment readiness & scaling



Intersectoral & interregional collaboration



Ecosystem strengthening & governance

## GOVERNANCE MAP

### Regions



Run test-before-invest, simplify SME grants, anchor clusters

### Shared

Data/cyber by design, first-buyer incentives, cross-border rules

### European Union



Standards & once-only data, blended finance, recognise clusters

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE



Higher SME tech uptake; measurable gains in quality, yield and resource use.



Faster scale-up cycles; simpler finance and clearer routes to deployment.



Proven solutions replicated across regions; reduced cross-border friction.



Clusters recognised as trusted delivery partners with stable capacity.



Test-before-invest and shared data becoming standard practice.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

Turn ambition into adoption. Align simple rules, once-only data and test-before-invest; fund the middle mile (blended finance, first-buyer); back clusters long-term so SMEs validate faster, scale with less risk and replicate across borders.



**HOW IT WAS BUILT**

# FOCUS TOP

## CROSS-CUTTING PRINCIPLES

- 1 Simplify — Once-only data, standard forms, lighter admin for SMEs.
- 2 Continue — Multi-annual support for clusters, testbeds and services.
- 3 Collaborate — Cross-border living labs, shared roadmaps and consortia brokerage.
- 4 Include — Lower SME barriers; invest in skills and outreach.
- 5 Measure — Few outcome metrics; public dashboards and evidence-led updates.

## POLICY MOVES

- 1 Permanent test-before-invest & living labs
- 2 EU-wide first-buyer/innovation procurement for validated foodtech
- 3 Interoperability + once-only data standards
- 4 Blended finance for scale; fund the “middle mile”
- 5 Formal recognition and multi-annual support for clusters



**FULL RECOMMENDATIONS**