

CHALLENGE AREA

Digital & Technical Barriers in EU Agrifood Manufacturing

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

The EU agrifood manufacturing sector employs **4.7 million people** and is the **largest manufacturing sector in Europe**.

Around **309,000 companies** operate in the sector, of which **99.2% are SMEs**.

Many companies operate with legacy production systems **not compatible** with Industry **4.0 technologies**.

Digital connectivity gaps remain significant in **rural regions**, where many agrifood companies are located.

KEY BARRIERS

**Legacy infrastructure**

Outdated equipment limits the integration of automation, IoT and smart manufacturing systems.

**Connectivity gaps**

Limited broadband and 5G coverage restricts access to cloud systems and real-time monitoring.

**Fragmented digital systems**

Production, logistics and traceability platforms often operate in isolation.

**Technical complexity**

Many SMEs lack internal expertise to evaluate implement and maintain advanced technologies.

**Cybersecurity and data management challenges**

Digitalisation introduces new operational risks and governance needs.

IMPACT ON COMPANIES AND WORKFORCE

- Slower adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies
- Limited operational efficiency and data-driven decision-making
- Growing demand for specialised technical skills
- Risk of widening competitiveness gaps between large firms and SMEs

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Strengthen digital infrastructure in rural areas
- Support SMEs in upgrading legacy systems
- Promote interoperable digital solutions across the value chain
- Expand technical training in digital manufacturing

HOW TAURUS ADDRESSES THIS CHALLENGE

TAURUS analyses technological barriers affecting agrifood SMEs and their workforce, helping identify **digital maturity levels and training needs** to support the sector's transition toward Industry 4.0 and 5.0.