



Promoting attractiveness, competitiveness and internationalisation of Agro-food Clusters of the Med Area

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AGROFOOD SECTOR

The agrofood sector can be identified as the industrial area which includes the totality of technologies and products linked to agriculture, farm and food and beverage products. Therefore, all services connected to companies involved in supply, processing and distribution of agrofood products are to be considered.

Over the last decades the agrofood sector has undergone significant developments in terms of both research, technology, and production and its economic implications have been increasing.

Nowadays, the food industry is the EU second largest sector in the manufacturing industry in value added terms, with a market share of 12.2% and a turnover of over 900 billion € for the area of the EU27. Counting with over 4 Mil employees (ca 14% of total manufacturing sector), the European Union is the world's largest exporter of food and drink products, exporting goods with a value of over 50 billion €.

The agro-food sector in the Mediterranean regions of the Union accounts for a high proportion of GNP and employment.

European agrofood clusters have to tackle finance shortages, lack of R&D opportunities, difficulties to access raw materials, climate change adaptation, which are some of the main obstacles which must be cleared. Consumers are increasingly demanding, leading to high expectations for safe products close to new lifestyles of families and demographic changes and to new associated territorial services. A future market is also emerging as well as new agricultural values and approaches (from farm to fork; 0 km food..). Agrofood in MED countries must meet these new challenges.

In many countries the production system of the agrofood sector has seen the creation of clusters. The concept of cluster is used in order to explain the "system" elements belonging to an aggregate of productive enterprises, without necessarily meaning a precise geographic localisation in a narrow domain/place. Agrofood clusters are growing significantly. They are made up of companies basing their competitiveness on management dynamicity, on fast entry in new market niches, on fast consolidation of experience curves and finally on activation of a noteworthy innovation capability.





THE PROJECT

The PACMAN project is a three-year operation partly financed by the European Union in the framework of the MED Programme.

The project started in October 2010 and will end on September 2013. The official opening of the PACMAN project (Kick off meeting) took place in Bologna in November 25th and 26th 2010 where representatives of each partner participated.

Over the last years various regions in Europe have established different forms of regional networking activities. Most of these innovation support tools connect local and regional players to strengthen regional development and cooperation. Nevertheless there are still many European regions that don't use the instrument of cluster policy for their regional economical development. In addition, the status quo, the period of the implementation and the approach of such an instrument is very varied specified Europe-wide.

Therefore, the **main issue** of the operation PACMAN is the effort to equalise this inhomogeneous status quo in the participating regions at first. As a matter of fact, the field of cluster policy and regional development is very complex and comprehensive. Thus, the operation PACMAN will put its emphasis on the subject "agrofood sector" - the mutual basis of the project partners. The experiences with cluster policy and network management and their occurrence are very different within the chosen partner consortium. By running this operation the partners want to solve this imbalance between their regions to a certain extent. Beyond that the gotten experiences and results will be transferable to further European regions and interested regional actors.

The **general approach** of the operation PACMAN is to explore a need assessment and to analyse the current state of regional and local cluster management and networking activities, in the field of the agrofood sector - the thematical basis of

the partner consortium. The partner consortium comprises mainly RDAs, local authorities, universities and research bodies and chambers of commerce.

The **aims** of PACMAN Network are to improve continually and support existing local and regional cluster and networking initiatives through interregional, long-term and strategic co-operation between the participating regional partners as well as a sustainable know-how-transfer concerning regional innovation support policies with a main focus on cluster policy and network formation processes.

Moreover, the project intends optimize cluster policy structures and networking activities in all participating regions through benchmarking processes as well as exchange of experiences including all partners.

The **results** of PACMAN analyses will be the basis for future optimized processes of interfaces between relevant regional actors (authorities, institutes, initiatives, SMEs, agrofood stakeholders, economic development actors, policymakers, other relevant actors etc.). Therefore, one of the main objectives of PACMAN will be making MED agrofood sector more attractive and international, supporting international cooperation for agrofood by promoting innovative technologies and strategies, as well as increasing agrofood SMEs and stakeholders knowhow.

Substantial outputs of the prior analyses, like new developed instruments, tools, services and further recommendations, will be disseminated and distributed on the regional and interregional level through local workshops and European transfer conferences, which are open to the interested European public.

Naturally the benchmark and good practice results are part of dissemination, information and publicity measures.





LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES

In the first instance the main working and implementation orientated activities will be located within the participating regions itself:

Murcia Region / Spain

Crete / Greece

Emilia-Romagna / Italy

Valencian Community/ Spain

Alentejo Region / Portugal

Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur / France

Cyprus

Central Macedonia/ Greece





PARTNERSHIP

All the partners are key actors in the agrofood sector with different expertise and experiences, being RDAs, local authorities, universities and research bodies, chambers of commerce. Many of them are members of a strong European network, Eurada - The European Association of Development Agencies. Most partners are highly experienced in project work and management on regional and also European level.

The main interests of the partners are the exchanging of European experiences referring cluster policies and their operations, the chance of developing respectively of implementing new instruments for a successful and innovative regional development and to get in touch with other European clusters or networks.

The project coordinator is:

ERVET - Emilia-Romagna Regional Development Agency

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ERVET is the "in house" company of Emilia-Romagna Region. It commits itself to the cooperation among regions, provinces and municipalities, and, in consultation with economic and social forces, to the realisation of coordinated actions to promote sustainable development and environmental qualification of the region. It deals with integrated territorial policies and it operates as a policy advisor. The Company has to ensure technical and operational support in the framework of regional development policies, fostering cooperation and partnership in a European dimension. It provides assistance on territorial development, international policies, sustainable development, knowledge society, labour and welfare, competitiveness of the economic systems.

The partners are:

Provincia di Parma

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Provincia di Parma Province of Parma is a local government dealing with a broad range of public

activities in many areas including environment and agriculture. Promoting an integrated system of safeguard of quality products and the rural environment, Province of Parma supports an agriculture-related development of its territory and abides to European regulations and decisions.

ADRAL - Agência de Desenvolvimento Regional do Alentejo

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ADRAL is a regional structure with 68 partners/shareholders, both public and private, with relevant experience in all sectors of economic, social research and development activities, geographically spread and deeply acquainted of local and regional reality. ADRAL mission is to contribute to the promotion, divulgation and development of Alentejo region.

IMPIVA – Institute for the Small and Medium Companies from Valencian Community

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IMPIVA is a public entity of the Generalitat Valenciana region, whose role is to develop policies for promoting innovation of the Valencian Government in the field of small and medium enterprises. Impiva provides support to both public and private companies, as well as not for profit organizations in different fields, including agrofood sector.

MURCIA REGION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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The **Murcia Regional Development Agency** is organically attached to the Regional Ministry of Universities, Business and Research. Its main objective is to boost the development of SMEs in Murcia by means of economic promotion, investment raising, elimination of obstacles and the establishment of an environment favouring competitiveness. One of the main objectives of the development agency is to ensure the upgrading and economic growth of regional SMEs, including those operating in the agrofood field.





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PRAXI (HELP-FORWARD) network is a non-profit private organisation, administered by FORTH, aiming at providing a bridge between Research and Industry in Greece. It is a member of the Innovation Relay Centres Network in Europe, offering Technology Transfer brokerage services to Greek companies and RTD Institutions and it has thus established close links with many regional actors in various technological fields. It will deal with mapping and analysing each country's agrofood economic sectors and segments, providing regional information on socioeconomic issues and policies.

CRITT Agroalimentaire PACA

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CRITT is a French Innovation and technology Transfer Center dedicated to food processing industry. The CRITT Agroalimentaire Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur is the dedicated tool for innovation and technology transfer on food industry in south west of France. It has 20 years experience in agrofood networks at national and regional level as well as a 10-years-experience in agrofood networks at EU level. Having a good knowledge of needs and functioning of firms involved in the agrofood clusters, it will be responsible for benchmarking in practices and improvement of the support to the agrofood sector, also enhancing networking tools and processes.

Province of Modena

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Province of Modena coordinates the municipalities for economic, territorial and regional environmental planning and adopts its own long-term strategies. It is responsible for direct management of services that concern the vast provincial area in competent matters and for programmed intervention, carried out in close relation with the Regional authority. It participates in the determination of regional development planning The Province of Modena, Lead partner of the TECH.FOOD project is building a R&D node and innovation scheme for the agro-food local system. Its role in PACMAN project will be to contribute and share the experience acquired in this sector and best practices acquired.

CUT – Cyprus University of Technology

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CUT aspires to develop itself into a modern, pioneering University able to offer education and high level research in leading branches of science and technology which have high impact on the economic, technical, and scientific sectors. It plays a role in support of the state and society in their efforts to confront problems, which cover all areas of science and technology. CUT puts special emphasis in applied research and has a strong experience of project management. It participated as a partner in many EU and Med programs (including in 3 Med project awarded in 2010 on innovation, csr and agrofood).

Kilkis Chamber of Commerce and Industry

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The **Chamber of Kilkis** is a consultative advisory body of the State and Business Members. It aims to represent, monitor and promote of industry, small sized industry, trade and services, in line with the development of the economy. The Chamber, in order to meet the institutional and developmental role, operates on a business plan, with the help of which reorganized its services and has built its organization chart.





www.pacmanproject.eu

www.pacmanproject.eu is the first output of the PACMAN operation. Designed as a portal, it is structured in several thematic areas easily and immediately accessible, useful and flexible. The PACMAN portal responds to the aims of the project, through a clear vision of the overall contents of the project, a detailed description of the partnership and updated news and information of ongoing events at European level on the agrofood sector. Visiting www.pacmanproject.eu you will be able to find the project contacts and the state of the art of the activities and the final products will be downloadable as to inform the users on the project midterm and final results.

