



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

Best practices in the agro-food market internationalisation

The increase in demand related to growing consumer concerns about food safety and quality makes it necessary to seek new solutions and products that captivate and answer to new consumer expectations at global level. In this perspective the quality of traditional products have great potential that allow evolve and win more market presence through export and internationalization. It was within this context that ADRAL interviewed the General Secretary of the National Association of Producers and Municipalities Valuation and Qualifying for the Portuguese Traditional Products

Interview with Engineer Ana Soeiro - General Secretary of the National Association of producers and Municipalities Valuation and Qualifying for the Portuguese Tradicional Products

1. Why was founded and what is its mission?

Eng^a Ana Soeiro: - National Association of Producers and Municipalities valuation and Qualifying of the Portuguese Traditional Products is a legal person of private law which has 61 members (the municipalities, producer groups, the Portuguese Federation of Gastronomic Brotherhoods producers and

traders and individual). It is a nonprofit association and its mission is the recovery, identification, protection, promotion and dignity of the identity of the traditional

Portuguese products, their producers and territory. The association also aims to identify



traditional products and prevent them getting lost and with them the knowledge and cultures of many regions of Portugal. In this sense, we consider not only the traditional products for basic agricultural products (vegetables, meats, fish, honey, herbs, etc.) but also processed products (cheeses, sausages, jams, preserves, olive oil, etc..), the dishes from traditional and non-food products such as pottery, embroidery, lace, wooden objects, ceramics and many others.

The well known that traditional products have difficulty in protecting their specificities from attacks more or less explicit by others, that not respecting the knowledge, traditional methods, materials or genuine raw materials try to conquer markets with imitations, with abusive use of

registered names or traditional and exploitation of others' reputations. The knows that the place that should be of traditional products, legit and authentic is being occupied by inferior products of very dubious authenticity and origin uncertain.

One of our struggles is to disseminate knowledge about traditional products, about their modes of production, on their own times of consumption, on its history, on culture and know that underlie them, and why not, on the pleasure that leads to their consumption!

2. What are the requirements to qualify a product?

Eng^a Ana Soeiro: A product can be qualified, for example, according to:

- their geographical origin (in which case what qualifies truly is the geographical name of the product) - and we have products whose name is strictly

related of origin or geographical indication;

- Their mode of production - and we have the example of organic agriculture products;

- From their traditional way of production - and in this case under a traditional product with great constancy of raw materials and methods of manufacture and the know-how was passed from generation to generation;

- From its origin - for example, be produced and processed only in a farm or a mountain, respecting ecosystems and sustainability of farms or farming or forestry;

- From his Special History - for example, products of the Portuguese Conventual sweets;

- Being produced by a craftsman or an artisan company;

In what way this qualification increased the added value of the products and its internationalization? There are some successful cases of internationalization resulting from the qualification?

Eng^a Ana Soeiro: Qualified products can normally carry special symbols that aim not only to attract potential businesses and consumers, but also give them the idea that are special products, with a historical or geographical origin or from a particular mode of production, as described above. Europe has equipped itself with symbols of their own to publicize the differentiation of some special products such as those that benefit from a DOP or an IGP or those produced in accordance with the rules of organic agriculture.



However there is nothing for the other. QUALIFICA already recorded some collective marks which can

only be used by the associated products which meet a strict set of requirements. We think that national and international marketing will be easier since the products bear labels with a solid foundation, strict requirements and surveillance balanced.

There are several cases that are examples of Portuguese commercial success based on qualification, as is the case of multiple products with Protected Designation of Origin (port wine, pear west, cheese Serra da Estrela, Nisa cheese, Barrancos ham, Elvas Plums, cheeses of Beira Baixa and others). We are trying to help the others products brand's and others producers to have commercial success within and outside the country. The international success is so strong that there are already several non-European countries (Colombia, China, Thailand, India, Vietnam, Turkey, etc.) that

also requested that Europe should classify their products under the regulations which permit protect geographical names of products.

4. The Pacman project is part of the European Cooperation Program MED, which unites various Mediterranean regions and agents. What gains can be found at the level of cooperation between producers and agents in the business in this territory culturally and geographically close?

Eng^a Ana Soeiro: First of all, much more can be explored on component "Mediterranean" and "Mediterranean Diet" by extending the concept to a certain type of life and being in the world. More than compete with each other - which usually only brings down the price of the final product - the producers and other economic agents should join efforts to "sell" the concept of the Mediterranean and its cultural components, landscapes, people, etc. and more than trade and export some products from the Mediterranean, could be more interesting the education of visitors, providing them not only food and accommodation but, above all, a full cultural immersion program, including the local aspects of agriculture, forestry and food qualified.



CHARACTERIZATION OF THE AGRO-FOOD SECTOR – ALENTEJIO PORTUGAL



Alentejo is the largest NUT II of Portugal, occupying an area of 31,550.9 km², representing 34.3% of the country. NUTS II Alentejo region is composed by five NUTS III: Alentejo Central, Alto Alentejo, Baixo Alentejo, and

Alentejo Litoral and Lezíria do Tejo. In the PRIA - Regional Plan for Innovation in the Alentejo, it appears that in the regional economy there are two types of clusters: Traditional Clusters and emerging Clusters. The agro-food cluster is inserted in the traditional cluster, because it is related to the specific social and territorial asserting itself as an important element of local and regional production structure. In Alentejo region we are able to identified 5 sub-regional agro-food subsectors in the agriculture and agro-food resources: the production and processing of cereals and related products, production of meat and meat products, the production and processing of vegetables and fruit, the production of dairy products and olive oil production.

The capacity of the sector are mainly related to the positive image of agro-food of Alentejo, with the emergence of new niche markets (organic), and with growing domestic and international demand for quality products / healthy.

The main difficulties are the absence of scale in production and marketing and the difficulty in penetrating in foreign markets.

It can be stated then that is the area of production that the agro-food sector is stronger. It is in the area of marketing which are found the greatest difficulties, particularly in terms of lack of marketing strategies.

We present below some of the major challenges of the agro-food sector (PRIA) in the Alentejo region: Training and providing technical assistance, management culture and business organization; Commercial Associations, Organization of all actors in the chain (production, processing and marketing); encourage competitiveness in international markets, prioritize and direct the activities of research and development to concrete problems of the Alentejo.



Qualified Products of Alentejo

The traditional quality products of Alentejo are arguably one of the potential of the region, constituting an element of exploitation of the region, not only the intrinsic level, but also in promoting the region's image abroad. This promotion is an element of social and economic revitalization of this area, since it generates an increase in jobs and contributes both to the global promotion of the region through regional quality products. The focus in traditional quality products is justified since the Alentejo region is the region's agrarian country with more products with protected names recognized and marketed effectively.

Traditional products with protected names encompass a range of several tens of Portuguese products, which appear associated with the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), protected geographical indications (PGI) and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG).



Products with Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) have a strong connection to the area or place to which they are associated, so that you can prove that its quality is influenced by soil, climate, animal breeds or plant varieties and the know-how of the people of this area. Some of these are: Elvas Plum, North Alentejo Olive, Olives of Elvas and

Campo Maior; Carnalentaiana; Meat of Heath; Pork Alentejo Breed; Meat Mertolenga; Chestnut Marvão and Portalegre; Cherry St. Julian and Portalegre; honey from Alentejo, Évora cheese, Nisa cheese.

The Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), refers to the region or area that means the products in which at least a portion of its production cycle, comes from that site and has a reputation associated

with it to allow connect some of the characteristics of the product soils, climate, animal breeds, plant varieties and know-how of these people. Some of these products are: lamb from Northeast Alentejo, Portalegre White sausage; sausage meat from Estremoz and Borba, Sausage from Portalegre, Portalegre apple; Mestizo Cheese of Tolosa.

The Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) respect to agricultural products or foodstuffs which are produced have a composition or a mode of production or processing traditional. The traditional cattle mounted is an example of a TSG product.

Alongside the traditional product, it is essential to bet on production methods that do not harm the environment and are synonymous of quality to the consumer, including products from organic production. Regional characteristics lead us to invest in this sector because Alentejo Region is the largest area in Portugal considering organic production.

IP - Integrated Pest Management is a way of farming that aims to contribute to the equilibrium of agro ecosystems by reducing natural pests and other appropriate means of struggle in order to prevent the pest exceeds the intensity attacks that entail significant economic losses.



PACMAN STATE OF THE ART

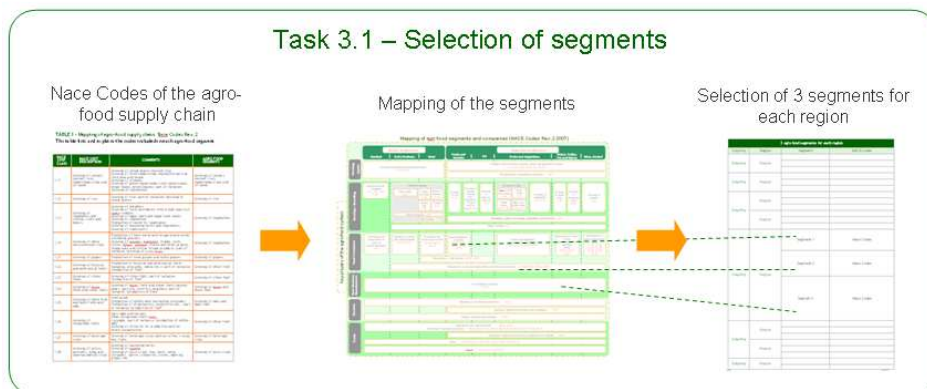
PACMAN is carrying out its activities according to the project timeline.

As far as the Component 3 is concerned, within the activities scheduled in Task 3.1, the project leader has started to collect all preliminary proposals of the agro-food segments on which focusing PACMAN activities from all partners. A first proposal of the segments is useful so to help partners taking shared decisions and enhancing networking activities. The activity is still ongoing. The definitive list is to be finalised in Task 3.2 which started in the month of April. Furthermore, the project partners have been asked to select and provide to the project leader a maximum of 3 best practices of international projects that deal with innovation, internationalization and networking in the agro-food sector. The final aim of the activity is to capitalize in PACMAN the experience gained from other projects. The deadline is foreseen for 30th May 2011. The selection of the segments and the best practices are supported by the guidelines previously developed in the task 3.1, which provided the project partners with a map and a list of all the segments of the agro-food chain and with a fiche to fill in to summarize the international projects.

At the end of April the second and third progress reports were submitted regarding actions and expenses incurred by February 2011 (Component 2). As far as administrative and financial management is concerned, the project partners still need more time to activate payments and reporting. By October, when the IV report and payment claim will be submitted, each partner will need to report and certify at least 10% of their ERDF budget .

As far as component 1 is concerned, the second newsletter was published and delivered and the project leaflet was produced. The English version is also downloadable from the project website www.pacmanproject.eu. Both the newsletters and the leaflet are being translated in the 5 partners' languages: Italian, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Greek.

The project website is also being translated into the 5 languages and soon the multilingual pages will be online.





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.