



## STRING: Strategies for Regional Innovative Food Clusters

The brand new European project STRING improves the performance of regional development instruments and programmes in building strong agrifood innovation systems across Europe and promotes agrifood innovation clusters as testbeds of (new) co-creation and cooperation in the agrifood production sector.

### **STRING** boosts innovation

The provision of smart, healthy and sustainable food is a top priority in Europe. The liveliness and dynamism of some European regions depends on the activity of the agrifood sector. STRING boosts the competitiveness of agrifood companies and clusters through innovation and international development.

### **Agri & food** for regional growth

The agri & food industry is a challenging driver for regional innovation and growth. STRING unifies European regions sharing the ambition to improve the (international) competitive capacity of their agrifood clusters. Because those clusters have enormous economic and societal impact; today and tomorrow.





## Cooperation and promotion

STRING focuses on the strength of regional development strategies, value chain promotion campaigns and cross-sector hybrid clusterization as the engines for success. To optimize the management of the measures oriented to the innovation in agrifood competitive cooperation is key. That urges partners across Europe to work together on solutions adaptable to one and another regional context. STRING designs a brand new learning process, promoting interregional activities, knowledge sharing and everlasting inter cluster cooperation.

## Agri & food in the center point

In the European context food sector in general and food clusters (as test beds for innovation) in particular potentially prosper in those regions where the sector is positioned as central in the regional development strategies.

The shared bottlenecks of agrofood innovation ecosystems –often rooted in the malfunctioning of policy instruments– urge partners to work on solutions adaptable to specific regional contexts.

## **Improvement of policy instruments**

All STRING regions have been renowned for their food production traditions, and for their innovation potentials. They all are engaged in food innovation and production in different roles.

The overall objective of the partners - independent from their development level and the strength of cohesion in their regional food sectors – is to improve the performance and implementation efficiency of development policies and programmes related to food Research, Development and Innovation and clusterization to promote innovation value chains for the sector.

By deepening cluster integration and creating more added value contributing to smart growth – each region will reach this ambition.

STRING promotes intensive interregional learning, knowledge exchange and everlasting intercluster cooperation. As the result of STRING, the performance and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) financed policy instruments related to agrofood innovation and to the vertical, triplehelix clusterization – both supported by enhanced SME participation – are improved. Intra and inter cluster cooperation is deepened, serving the proper operation of food innovation value chains in the 7 partner regions and EU widely.

Strategies for creating added value are adopted and successfully applied also via (new) food innovation projects born at the interface of coworking among economic sectors, like health care, high-tech systems and big data.

## **Expected outputs**

### **Regional action plans**

The main project outputs are seven action plans addressing improvements (via new projects, structural change, new measures, increased funding) in seven regional policy instruments (all OPs) related to the agrofood innovation ecosystems.

### **Policy Learning Synthesis**

This is a collection of lessons learned, best practices and their adaptation strategies for different socioeconomic contexts

### **As the result of STRING:**

- 1.** the performance and implementation of regional development policies and programmes related to agrofood innovation, and vertical, triple helix based clusterization are improved,
- 2.** intra and inter cluster cooperation is deepened serving the proper operation of food innovation value chains in the partner regions,
- 3.** strategies for creating added value are adopted and successfully used.

All results of STRING need to be evaluated in the context of their initial standards and the specific objectives they set for themselves, therefore not the same magnitude and type of impact is projected for all the seven STRING regions.

## **Our partnership**

The project development of STRING started at the initiative of North Brabant and Emilia Romagna Provinces in early 2015. The starting point was the shared bottlenecks in the operation of innovation chains in regional food clusters. The project partnership involves seven regions of Europe and altogether eleven partners.

## What's going on?

By fostering the development of agroinnovation ecosystem frames such as open labs, test factories and breeding ground the city of Debrecen (Hungary) and its region will successfully implement a project financed from ERDF (TOP) for an innovation lab specialized in agrofood R&D.

Crosssectoral cooperation initiatives will be strengthened in regions such as Central Denmark and Region Alsace (France) by implementing measures to harmonize sectoral innovation initiatives and financing regarding food clusters.

As another project result the position of agriculture and food innovation improves in regional development thanks to better harmonized policy

instruments (Emilia Romagna, Italy) and the commercialization of R&D outputs becomes more efficient.

Tackling efficiently the cluster integration problems of the SMEs and Midcaps will also be a direct result of the project (mainly in Castilla y León, Spain, North Brabant, Holland and Covasna Region, Romania), this way all participants of the triple helix relation will be equally motivated for coworking.

