



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 agri-food innovation and to the vertical, triple helix clusterisation – 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.



**STRING**  
Interreg Europe

## STRING: Strategies for Regional Innovative Food Clusters

Now the European project STRING has come to an end we can look back on a project which improves the performance of regional development instruments and programs in building strong agri-food innovation systems across Europe and promotes agri-food innovation clusters as testbeds of (new) co-creation and cooperation in the agri-food production sector.

### Improvement of regional 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 programs related to food Research, Development and Innovation and clusterisation 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.

But how to boost such a strong and competitive regional sector? STRING has found the answer to that question in seven participating regions across Europe.



Also improving the capacity of your food cluster?  
[www.interreurope.eu/string](http://www.interreurope.eu/string) | [@STRINGprojectEU](https://twitter.com/STRINGprojectEU)



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 agri-food clusters. Because those clusters have enormous economic-social impact, today and tomorrow.

### Agri & food for regional growth

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 agri-food sector. STRING boosts the competitiveness of agri-food companies and clusters through innovation and international development.

### STRING boosts innovation

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 agri-food innovation ecosystems – often rooted in the malfunctioning of policy instruments – urge partners to work on solutions adaptable to specific regional contexts.

### Agri & food in the centre point

STRING focuses on the strength of regional development strategies, value chain promotion campaigns and cross-sector hybrid clusterisation as the engines for success. To optimize the management of the measures oriented to the innovation in agri-food 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.

### Cooperation and promotion



### Province of North Brabant The Netherlands

**KEY FIGURES AGRIFOOD REGION**

- The Agrifood sector accounts for nearly 10 per cent of the national income and employment of the Netherlands. The sector also accounts for 25 per cent of the country's exports and more than 50 per cent of its trade surplus. The Netherlands is the second-largest exporter of food in the world. Every year the sector generates €50 billion of added value and accounts for over €80 billion of exports.
- Noord-Brabant is the biggest agri-food region in the Netherlands and accountable for 20,6% of all Dutch agri-food production. When we look at the total Dutch Agrifood export, Noord-Brabant is accountable for 17,5% of total Dutch export. Agrifood employs more than 100.000 people in Noord-Brabant. Over 13.000 companies participate in this sector. They represent an added value of 7,5 billion euros.

**Targeted Policy Instrument**

**Engines for Change!**

QR Code

### Aria Alsace France

**KEY FIGURES AGRIFOOD REGION**

- Excellent and extremely favourable environment for implantation and development of new activities (large pool of consumers, ease of logistics, natural resources: water plentiful and easily accessible).
- Quality and know-how Sector structured around a strong ARIA (Regional Agency for Agri-Food industries).
- Variety of productions and regional specialties recognised and appreciated (market niche).
- Presence of 'champions' across the world.
- Few productions require offshoring.
- Important innovation culture.
- Strong prospects to major export (China, Japan, USA and Middle East).
- High concern in energy saving and recycling of waste.

**Policy Instrument Target**

**Engines for Change!**

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### Castilla y León Spain

**KEY FIGURES AGRIFOOD REGION**

- Castilla y León is one of the largest region in Europe with a territory of 94,225 km<sup>2</sup>.
- Population of Castilla y León represents over 5% of country population with 2.415.900 people.
- The Agrifood sector is the main economic sector, representing more than 13% of the regional GDP.
- Agri-food industry is the main branch of the industrial sector in the Region. It represents 27,5% of the industrial turnover and 29,4% of the industrial employment.
- Approximately 3,100 companies (mainly micro-SMEs) operate in this industry in the Region, employing more than 35,000 people Its weight in regional GDP (2014) is 7,2%, with turnover of 9.37 billion euros.
- Castilla y León; ranks number three in the country, representing 11% of the national agri-food GDP.
- High quality of the raw materials produced, and the high specialization of industries are some of the main strengths of the sector.

**Targeted policy instrument**

**Engines for Change!**

QR Code

# The future of food

## Key figures per agrifood region

**Province of North Brabant (lead partner)**  
s-Hertogenbosch

**ZLTO Southern Agricultural and Horticultural Organisation**  
s-Hertogenbosch THE NETHERLANDS

**Central Denmark Region**  
Viborg DENMARK

**University of Debrecen**  
Debrecen

**The Association of Small and Medium Size Enterprises of the County of Covasna**  
Sfântu Gheorghe ROMANIA

**Municipality of Debrecen**  
Debrecen HUNGARY

**ARIA Alsace Regional Association for Food Industries in Alsace**  
Schiltigheim FRANCE

**Research Centre for Animal Production**  
Reggio Emilia

**Emilia-Romagna Region Directorate General For Agriculture, Hunting and Fisheries**  
Bologna ITALY

**Instituto para la competitividad empresarial de Castilla y León (ICE)**  
Arroyo de la Encomienda

**VITARTIS Food Industry Cluster of Castilla and León**  
Boecillo (Valladolid) SPAIN

● Lead partner ● Partner

### Emilia Romagna Region Italy

**KEY FIGURES AGRIFOOD REGION**

- Two research organisations focused on agriculture: CRPA (animal production) and CRPV (plant production)
- The High Technological Network, which includes the agri-food platform, coordinated by ASTER;
- The Technopoles, infrastructures of research and technological transfer located near the main cities in the whole regional territory;
- The regional training system, specifically the polytechnic network of tertiary specialist training, centred on Higher Technical Institutes, and the regional system of agricultural and forestry education

**Innovation of tradition**

**Focus on agro-food sector in the ERDF programme**

**Engines for Change!**

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### Central Denmark Region

**KEY FIGURES AGRIFOOD REGION**

- With a total population of 1,2 million, inhabitants CDR is the second largest of the 5 regions in Denmark.
- CDR accounts for 61% of Danish food exports and 55% of the total Danish turnover. The total exports from CDR is €10.000 million.
- The level of employment directly related to farming and the percentage of farming related to the total GDP is relatively low – 3.5% and 1.7% respectively. If you include related industries (secondary and tertiary industries such as food processing, service, ingredients, machinery etc. but excluding retail) the employment level rises to 7.1%.
- CDR counts for 9400 agri-food companies with >34.000 employees and a total volume turnover of €18.6 million.
- CDR is renowned as a R&D hub where both SMEs and large companies as ARLA, DuPont and Danish Crown have located their R&D activities primarily in and around Aarhus, the main city of CDR.
- A lot of small innovative food companies, that cater to the thriving gastrosce in and around the main cities of Denmark is also present here.
- The closest to having a PDO in CDR is the native "Limfjords oysters" that is cultivated in and around the northern and western part of the region. Denmark as such has 10 different products under PGI and none PDO.
- Main agricultural production: pig meat, dairy and cereals.

**Targeted policy instrument**

**Engines for Change!**

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### Covasna County Romania

**KEY FIGURES AGRIFOOD REGION**

- The Central Region is situated in the central area of Romania, within the great curves of the Carpathian Mountains, on the upper and middle courses of Mures and Olt. Natural resources are diverse and include important reserves of natural gas, salt, nonferrous metals, building materials (basalt, andesite, marble, travertine), small coal deposits and many mineral water springs.
- The agricultural area of the Center Region is 1909 thousand hectares representing 55.5% of the total area of the region and 13% of the agricultural area of Romania.
- Total number of agri-food firms in this region: 2775 with >21.000 employees and a total production volume of 3,2 million.
- Main agricultural products: dairy and meat.

**Targeted policy instrument**

**Engines for Change!**

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### Northern Great Plain Hungary

**KEY FIGURES AGRIFOOD REGION**

- The GDP by the Hungarian national economy is €11,145.9 per capital. The share of Hungarian agriculture was 3.5% of the total GDP. GDP per person employed is 18.9 thousand euros in agriculture, 14.8 thousand euros per person in food production, and 26 thousand euros per person at national level.
- At regional level, there are 6303 enterprises in agriculture.
- There are 203.2 thousand employees in agriculture, and 140.3 thousand in food production, while 4210.5 thousand people work in total in the country.
- The production volume turnover of agriculture is € 2489.8 million, the production of food is € 9133.6.
- In the Northern Great Plain food production turnover is € 2.67 billion, produced by 10000 food industry workers, which is 1.7% of total regional employment.
- Main agricultural production: sweet corn, poultry and apple.

**Policy instrument - TOP**

**Engines for Change!**

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