

PR 2 PGI00589 RobinFood - Building an Innovative and Sustainable Regional Agrifood Sector

Reporting period 01/04/2019 to 30/09/2019

	Partner name	Partner state	Current report
1-LP	Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia	 LV	29,655.69 €
2-PP	Development Agency of Asturias	 ES	17,664.24 €
3-PP	Agency for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Investment	 HR	14,856.64 €
4-PP	Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia	 FI	21,884.72 €
5-PP	Tolna County Development Agency	 HU	11,806.09 €
Total			95,867.38 €

1. Insight into project's implementation

1.1 Overview

Exchange of experience process

Please describe the involvement of partners during the reporting period. Is this involvement according to the plans?

During the 2nd semester, cooperation between the partners has been intensified. All partners have actively participated in the interregional learning meeting organised in Oviedo (Spain) except PP3. The meeting was highly valued in the questionnaire thanks to the increased involvement of all partners in the project implementation.

Is the policy learning process progressing as initially planned? Do the partners learn from each other and is there any difficulty encountered in this regards during the reporting period?

During the interregional learning meeting, the policy learning process has been a key focus. The main topic of the meeting was 'Supporting programmes for the agrifood sector'. The partners learnt from each other and 3 good practices were selected. Finally, the difficulties experienced during the first interregional learning meeting organised in Riga have been solved. In addition, stakeholders attended the interregional event.

How are the stakeholders involved in this learning process? Is this involvement ensured in all partner regions?

Several stakeholders meetings have been organised: LP organised 1 meeting in Riga 15.05 (12 participants), PP2 organised 3 meetings (7 participants), PP3 organised 1 meeting 18.05, PP4 organised 1 meeting and PP5 organised 3 meetings in Tolna 16.05, 22.05 and 26.10. The stakeholder meeting organised in Hungary end of October was to prepare the 3rd Interregional learning meeting that will take place in February 2020. The project partners shared the outcomes of the interregional meeting with their stakeholder groups in each region through articles and social media.

1. Insight into project's implementation

1.1 Overview

Exchange of experience process

Please describe the involvement of partners during the reporting period. Is this involvement according to the plans?

During the 2nd semester, cooperation between the partners has been intensified. All partners have actively participated in the second interregional learning meeting organised in Oviedo (Spain) except for PP3. **PP2 was in charge of organising the meeting, preparing the agenda and coordinating the minutes and the evaluation questionnaire. All partners were involved in supporting the preparation process, which included the identification and selection of regional good practices. These good practices were circulated before the meeting.** The meeting was highly valued in the **evaluation** questionnaire thanks to the increased involvement of all partners in the project implementation.

Is the policy learning process progressing as initially planned? Do the partners learn from each other and is there any difficulty encountered in this regards during the reporting period?

During the interregional learning meeting, the policy learning process has been a key focus. The main topic of the meeting was 'Supporting programmes for the agrifood sector'. **Each partner identified and presented a brief 'challenge' or a good practice in relation to it and 3 good practices were selected: 1. Diagnostic tool for agrifood SMEs from Latvia, 2. Community Food Champions from Finland and 3. Food Waste circuits from Hungary. In addition, several stakeholders attended the interregional event.**

Based on the reflection of the first interregional learning meeting, more time was reserved for interactive and open discussions and debate. The participants felt inspired by this new approach, which allowed to improve the exchange experiences and learn from each other. Therefore the partnership encountered no difficulty in this reporting period.

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Participation in Policy Learning Platform

During the reporting period, did you or your partners use any of the PLP services (e.g. expert helpdesk for policy advice, thematic workshops or webinars, good practice database, thematic publications)?

RobinFood participated in the webinar organised by the JS on Action Plans on 20 June 2019.

Could you describe any specific benefits gained from using the PLP services (e.g. cooperation with new organisations or with new projects, identification of interesting content for your own project)?

n/a

Do you have any specific suggestions related to the PLP services (e.g. topics to be covered, new services that could be offered)?

n/a

1.2 Storytelling

What are you particularly proud of in this reporting period?

The interregional meeting in Oviedo allowed partners to visit the Agrifood Innovation Lab which recently opened in January 2019. This state of the art Lab is a 5,000 square-meters plant-based food processing and product development facility located on the Asturias Technology Park. This pilot-scale facility serves as a catalyst for food research and food manufacturing.

Participation in Policy Learning Platform

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~~RobinFood participated in the webinar organised by the JS on Action Plans on 20 June 2019.~~ During the semester the Lead Partner and some of the partners have used the Policy Learning Platform as a source of information. It is considered an important hub of knowledge for the development of the RobinFood project. In particular the policy brief on Food Waste has been useful in order to learn about wide different initiatives at national, regional and local levels.

Could you describe any specific benefits gained from using the PLP services (e.g. cooperation with new organisations or with new projects, identification of interesting content for your own project)?

Partners have used inspiring examples on the Good Practices database to feed their stakeholders meetings in order to facilitate the selection of the regional good practices. In addition, the following 2 good practices from the PLP database should be particularly highlighted since they were showcased during the interregional learning meeting in Oviedo: Tipperary Food Producers Network from Ireland (SUPER) and Support for investment in agrifood industries from Spain (SME Organics)

Do you have any specific suggestions related to the PLP services (e.g. topics to be covered, new services that could be offered)?

Suggestions from some partners are to receive the dates of the PLP events in an earlier stage (e.g. thematic workshop, webinars, peer reviews). As the involvement of some partners in more than one project, makes them plan their meetings way in advance, with some meetings overlapping with the of the PLP events.

1.2 Storytelling

What are you particularly proud of in this reporting period?

The interregional meeting in Oviedo allowed partners to visit the Agrifood Innovation Lab which opened in January 2019. This state-of-the-art Lab is a 5,000 square-meters plant-based food processing and product development facility located on the Asturias Technology Park. This pilot-scale facility serves as a catalyst for food research and food manufacturing. Mr Jaime Fernandez, Executive Director explained that “The Agrifood Innovation Lab strength is in its versatility—this facility succeeds with a wide variety of customers with unique needs and objectives. We are able to support agrifood start-ups to get new products to market, established companies seeking to expand product lines and equipment manufacturers looking to demonstrate new equipment capability.” Tradition and innovation come together in a sector with a huge potential for growth. The food and agriculture industry is of great capital importance in the industrial activity, constituting the third branch of activity along with metal and extractive industries, energy and water. Backing quality and market adaptability have marked the evolution of companies in this sector in the region. To do so they have relied on collaboration from technology and research centres and support from the Regional Government, which in turn promoted quality brands and backing for the internationalisation of companies.

In 2017, the Development Agency of Asturias, partner in the RobinFood project commissioned an economic feasibility study to evaluate food manufacturing potential in the region. The study predicted that in less than 10 years, food manufacturing could contribute an additional 2,000 jobs and 1,2 MEUR boost to the turnover, if key recommendations were implemented.

In 2018, Regional Minister for Innovation Ms Ana Fraile, launched a Food Manufacturing Task Force with 35 stakeholders representing various actors of the Asturias food sector (SMEs, Research and Technology Centers, University of Oviedo and Consumer Associations) to investigate how the region could seek economic opportunities in this area. The Agrifood Innovation Lab was one of the key recommendations of these organisations.

1.3 Work plan

1.3.1 Main outputs

Output indicators	Current period	Achieved so far	Target
Number of policy learning events organised	10	16	46
Number of good practices identified	5	5	20
Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0	0	100
Number of action plans developed	0	0	5
Number of appearances in media (e.g. press)	6	9	75
Media appearances are justified in a dedicated table, available in the project folder under this link: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B_2u8LvpD_IzQndsY19rUFFzShh .			
Average number of sessions at the project pages per reporting period	426	389	500
Sessions at the project pages are recorded in a dedicated table (one per call), available under this link: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B_2u8LvpD_IzTnFvOUVwLWxiYjHH .			

1.3.2 Reporting per semester

Activities of the current reporting period as originally planned

a) Exchange of experience

During the second semester, the 'exchange of experience' is continued through on a REGIONAL LEVEL, the identification of good practices in cooperation with the stakeholders. Each region will also organize their second regional stakeholder meeting. On an INTERREGIONAL LEVEL the second interregional learning meeting will be organised in Asturias (ES). PP2 will be responsible for preparing the agenda. Each partner will select 2 stakeholders that will participate in this meeting. Based on their regional interest the workshop will focus on the topic of supporting programmes for the agrifood sector.

b) Communication and dissemination

In the second semester, the target groups are informed about the project through updates of the project website with links to social media (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), the second newsletter and articles in press and media. All communication activities will be coordinated by the CM with the input of all partners.

c) Project management

During the second semester, the Steering Committee meets in Spain. Furthermore, all partners prepare the progress report for semester 1 (according to the guidelines of the programme) and the lead partner will create a Joint Progress Report. Each partner will ensure that the first level control is executed by the approved first level controller.

Main outputs of the current reporting period as originally planned

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE

1 interregional learning workshop (ES) with the focus on supporting programmes for the agrifood sector

5 regional stakeholder meetings (1 per region)

5 Good practices identified (1 per region)

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

1 update of website

5 Press releases

1 Newsletter developed and disseminated

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

1 progress report for semester 1 developed and submitted

1 Steering Committee meeting (ES)

1.3 Work plan

1.3.1 Main outputs

Output indicators	Current period	Achieved so far	Target
Number of policy learning events organised	6	11	46
Number of good practices identified	3	3	20
Number of people with increased professional capacity due to their participation in interregional cooperation activities	0	0	100
Number of action plans developed	0	0	5
Number of appearances in media (e.g. press)	6	9	75
Media appearances are justified in a dedicated table, available in the project folder under this link: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B_2u8LvpD_IzQndsY19rUFFzShh .			
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During the second semester, the Steering Committee meets in Spain. Furthermore, all partners prepare the progress report for semester 1 (according to the guidelines of the programme) and the lead partner will create a Joint Progress Report. Each partner will ensure that the first level control is executed by the approved first level controller.

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1 update of website

5 Press releases

1 Newsletter developed and disseminated

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

1 progress report for semester 1 developed and submitted

1 Steering Committee meeting (ES)

Activities which took place during the reporting period

Describe in detail the activities related to a) exchange of experience, b) communication and dissemination and c) project management.

a) Exchange of experience

Several stakeholders meetings have been organised: LP organised 1 meeting in Riga 15.05 (12 participants), PP2 organised 3 meetings in Oviedo (7 participants), PP3 organised 1 meeting 18.05, PP4 organised 1 meeting and PP5 organised 3 meetings in Tolna 16.05, 22.05 and 26.10. During the interregional learning meeting, the policy learning process has been a key focus. The main topic of the meeting was “Supporting programmes for the agrifood sector”. The partners learnt from each other and 3 good practices were selected. Finally, the difficulties experienced during the first meeting organised in Riga have been solved. In addition, several stakeholders attended the interregional event.

b) Communication and dissemination

In the second semester, the target groups were informed about the project through updates of the project website with links to social media (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) and articles in press and media. All communication activities are coordinated by the CM with the input of all partners.

c) Project management

The day-to-day project management has been discussed during the Steering Committee meeting. All partners were involved in the development of the first joint progress report (PR1) which was submitted within the official deadlines.

Changes from the original plans

Describe and justify any changes from the original work plan and, in case of delays, outline the solutions found to catch up with the foreseen time plan.

The partnership agreed on organizing regular online meetings to increase the cooperation and involvement of all partners in the project. These meetings were not initially planned in the project application.

Activities which took place during the reporting period

Describe in detail the activities related to a) exchange of experience, b) communication and dissemination and c) project management.

a) Exchange of experience

Several stakeholders meetings have been organised. LP 1 meeting in Riga 15.05 (12 participants), PP2: 3 meetings in Oviedo 09.06 (2), 15.06.09 (3) and 20.06.09 (2) to be counted as one, PP3: 1 in Dubrovnik 18.05 (9), PP4: 1 in Vaasa 02.09 (8) and PP5: 2 in Tolna 16.05 (3) and 22.05 (2) ~~and 26.10~~ to be counted as one. A total of 5 stakeholder meetings are considered for the indicator. During these meetings regional good practices for the 2nd Interregional event were identified. The interregional meeting took place on 17 and 18 September 2019 in Oviedo (ES) with 23 participants (staff and stakeholders). Each partner identified and presented a brief 'challenge' or a good practice. After these presentations, participants were invited to ask questions and give advice on the challenges. Finally 3 good practices were selected: First, the programme of the Nordic Food Cluster (FI) to support cooperation among 30 entrepreneurs of the agrifood sector (Champions) to implement innovation for shorter food chains and circular economy. Ms. Loikanen, manager of the cluster also shared the current and future challenges related to prioritising food for the region, food waste and smart food. Second, the triple-helix cooperation scheme to use waste of one company to develop a new food product for another company (waste circuits) presented by Mr. Szabo from the Good Farm project (HU) and third, the diagnostic tool to advise local SMEs about the best available support programme based on factors such as size, manufacturing process and export potential was presented by Ms Balode, director of Food-Riga (LV). Participants also had the opportunity to learn about the branding of local food and the underlying cooperation of Spanish entrepreneurs. Finally the European quality scheme for agrifood products and the threats related to climate change were also discussed.

b) Communication and dissemination

The website has been constantly refreshed with news from partner regions. New items were added to the structure of the website, like a section dedicated to the promotion of upcoming events of international interest, related to the focus of the project. After the interregional meeting each partner prepared and circulated a press release (5). The focus of the project partners on the dissemination of project related information has been positively reflected in the increased number of media appearances (6).

c) Project management

The day-to-day project management has been discussed during the Steering Committee (8 participants) organised back to back with the second interregional learning event. High-level representatives such as Mr Pukas, Agrifood General Director of the Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia explained that "To make sure our production of food is prepared for the future, we need more innovation in the agrifood sector and we must reap the full potential of existing and new technologies. As discussed this morning, we also need creative and ambitious financing on various levels", Mr. Nagy a local councillor of Tolna County Council and Ms. Karins, Vice-Minister for Regional Development of Latvia also spoke about the importance of the agrifood sector in their territories. The progress in relation to the finances and the outputs was presented and the members of the Steering Committee did not signal any deviations or difficulties. All partners were involved in the development of the first joint progress report (PR1) which was submitted within the official deadlines.

Changes from the original plans

Describe and justify any changes from the original work plan and, in case of delays, outline the solutions found to catch up with the foreseen time plan.

The issuing of the second newsletter has been postponed to the beginning of the next semester in order to include the results from the 2nd Interregional meeting. PP3 could not attend the 2nd interregional meeting due to a last minute cancellation of their flight. The LP organised a videoconference to inform PP3 about the main issues discussed. The partnership agreed on organizing several online meetings to increase the cooperation and involvement of all partners in the project. These meetings were not initially planned in the project application. Finally, only 3 good practices were selected instead of 5 since PP3 could not present it in detail and the good practice from PP2 was similar to the one from PP4.