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SMEOrigin

SMEOrigin

Newsletter

Issue 2 / February 2024



Dear reader,

Welcome to the second edition of the newsletter series of the [SMEOrigin project](#), which aims to make a difference in one of the most special industries in the European Union and worldwide – the food industry.

In March 2023 our partnership from 7 countries launched this project, dedicated to boosting SME competitiveness in our regions, particularly aimed at entities producing traditional regional food with Geographical Indication, which is unique heritage of Europe.

One year from the launch of the project, we are happy to share our progress.

One part of it is the **intensive exchange of experience and good practices** between partners, communication with stakeholders, field studies, multiple new ideas. To enhance this process, we launched a **platform for exchange of experience** between stakeholders from across the world. Simultaneously, all partners have been actively **researching and studying** in details their regional policies and opportunities. On this base, we are now preparing a **strategic toolkit** to serve as a compass for future development.

Feel free to contact us if you need to learn more or them or to share your ideas and proposals with the partnership!

The SMEOrigin project team

SMEOrigin aims to improve regional development policies to increase the competitiveness of food SMEs specialized in geographical indication.



IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2nd interregional meeting – Patras, Greece
- Best practices – regional branding, community events, operational support groups
- Join the community: Platform for exchange of experience between stakeholders
- Forthcoming activities: 3rd Interregional Meeting in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria



Second interregional meeting – Patras, Greece

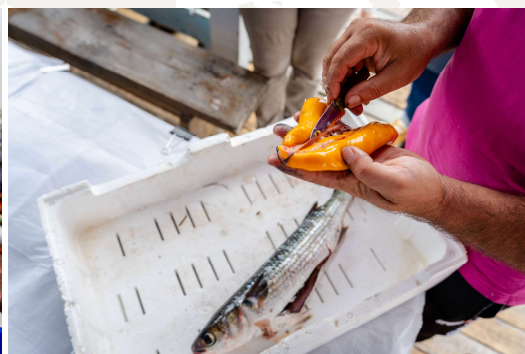


The **second interregional meeting** of the SMEOrigin project took place in the region of **Patras, Western Greece, on 3 – 5 September 2023**. It focused on the results of the 1st semester and the launch of new activities, including the development of the strategic toolkit which will serve as a compass for policy improvement and the transfer process.

Partners made study visits to the historic [Achaia Clauss winery](#), the Messolonghi lagoon and [the dairy cooperative of Kalavryta](#) to witness the production of local **Mavrodaphne of Patras PDO** wine, **Feta PDO** cheese and **Bottarga PDO**, a traditional style of caviar.

Learn more about how Mavrodaphne of Patras and Feta cheese are produced on the SMEOrigin website:

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/smeorigin>



GOOD PRACTICES

Many good practices were identified and more than 15 of them submitted to the Interreg Europe platform during the first year of SMEOrigin project.

Several categories of successful actions emerged:

- **Regional brands** as a tool to provide recognition for local and regional producers
- **Communication campaigns and events** to draw awareness to Geographical Indications, organic and local products
- **Cooperation initiatives** like business clusters and operational groups to strengthen the links and boost cooperation between producers, market players and authorities

The screenshot displays the SMEOrigin website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, News & events, Policy Instruments, Good practices (highlighted), Library, and Contacts. Below this is a search bar and a 'Share' button. The main content area is titled 'Good practices' and includes a sub-header 'Explore inspiring and tested policy solutions identified by our cooperation projects and beyond.' Below this, there is a grid of 12 practice cards, each with a title, a brief description, and a date. The cards include: 'Nouvelle-Aquitaine Funders' club for organic operators', 'Open your eyes, enjoy! PDO and PGI promotion campaign for Spanish agrifood products', 'ArrozInnova Calasparra - Operational Group', 'School for Regionality', 'Festival of Wine and Cultural Heritage "Avugustada"', 'Festival of Rose in Kazanlak, Bulgaria', 'Communication campaign "They said yes!" to promote regional organic agriculture and food products', 'BIO SUD OUEST FRANCE (BSOF): a regional trademark that guarantee to buy organic and local', '"Opolskie ze smakiem" brand', 'Value-chain analysis: definition of a fair price', and 'PRACTICAL HANDBOOK ON EU PROTECTION OF ORIGIN'.

Discover all good practices in details on the SMEOrigin website:

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/smeorigin/good-practices>

JOIN THE COMMUNITY

Platform for exchange of experience

Platform for exchange of experience aiming at helping SMEs in the food sector was developed and launched by SMEOrigin project partners. The platform is bringing together European companies, state agencies, NGOs, professional associations, educational institutions and individual experts working in the sector. The main goal of the platform is to facilitate the exchange of experience and feedback (both good practices but also bad practices) between all involved in the sector and contribute both to solving individual and local challenges and developing a better environment for the SMEs across Europe.

How it works:

1. Stakeholders are invited to fill a template with their BIO, specialization and interests.
2. The information is fed to a database, open to the participants so that they can easily browse and find new contacts of interest. This database will also serve for matchmaking with potential partners and markets in the future.
3. Stakeholders are also invited to participate in the Google group [SMEOrigin - Networking and cooperation](#) and actively exchange experience real-time with other stakeholders
4. A [LinkedIn group](#) is created to serve those active users of LinkedIn who prefer use the network.

Benefits of joining:

- **Get access to** tens of colleagues, fellow companies, potential partners a administration officials from all parts of Europe and **find helpful know-how and new connections**
- Find **new partners and new markets**
- **Find solutions for your challenges** – someone on the other side of Europe may already have them.
- **Suggest and participate in developing new policies and initiatives for increasing SME competitiveness**

Start networking now:

- [Fill in the form](#) and share your details, field of work and interests. You will be automatically added to the database of contacts
- [Check the database](#) for relevant contacts, potential partners or clients you want to get in touch
- [Join the Google Group](#) to ask a question or share a proposal with the whole community. If you use LinkedIn, you can join the [LinkedIn group](#) as well
- Or **write directly** to the ones you wish to connect to.

Participation in the platform is entirely voluntarily and free of any charge. You are free to invite other professionals that may be interested in joining the community.



Join the community by scanning the QR code

WORK AT REGIONAL LEVEL

Stakeholder meetings, communication and third-party events

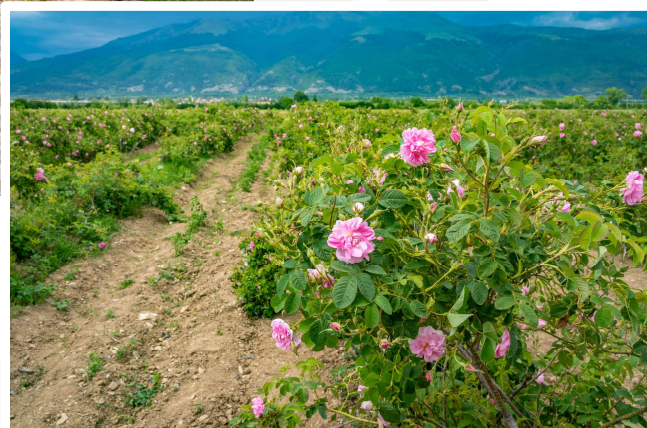


During the second semester, project partners continued to work actively in their regions by holding stakeholder meetings, communication campaigns and participation in third-party events aimed at boosting SME competitiveness. These included participation in academic conferences, food and wine trade fairs



FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

Third interregional meeting: Stara Zagora, Bulgaria



The third interregional meeting will take place in the region of Stara Zagora, Bulgaria in May 2024 during the rose harvesting season.

The event will focus on Food Industry Digitalization, Precision Farming and Innovations in Food Industry. A joint paper on the good practices collected in the field of digitalization and innovation will be produced distributed to the consortium and stakeholders.

Partners will kick-start the second step of the project “Policy improvement and Transfer”.

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SMART



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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SMEOrigin>

PROJECT PARTNERS:

[Steirische Wirtschaftsförderungsges.m.b.H. \(AT\)](#)

[Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency \(BG\)](#)

[Opolskie Centre for Economy Development/ Opolskie Voivodeship \(PL\)](#)

[Savonlinna Development Services \(FI\)](#)

[University of Patras \(EL\)](#)

[Municipality of Calasparra \(ES\)](#)

[INTERBIO Aquitaine/ Limousin/ Poitou-Charentes \(FR\)](#)