

# Relevance of Participation of SMEs in European Projects to the Promotion of Technology and Knowledge Transfer from CIMO to the Local Community

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## ABSTRACT

The **Mountain Research Centre (CIMO)** is a multidisciplinary research centre focused on mountain issues. One of the three strategic Research Groups deals with **Food Safety and Technology**, namely in the context of the traditional food sector.

In order to promote the **commercial application of research results**, technology and knowledge transfer initiatives are a priority for CIMO. A project (**AgroAli@EU**) was developed aiming at promoting the **participation of Portuguese SMEs in European projects**.

The major results include 1) the integration of Portuguese entities in **5 FP7 projects**, with a total allocated budget of nearly **2 million €** and 2) the promotion of additional **market-oriented, collaborative research and innovation projects** between traditional food SMEs and CIMO.

## INTRODUCTION

**Research centers** should play an **active role** in promoting the involvement of SMEs in research and innovation projects, in order to facilitate **knowledge and technology transfer**.

The participation of traditional food SMEs in **European research and innovation projects** should be viewed as an important component of their **internationalisation strategy**.

## KEY QUESTIONS

How can **research centers get closer to the SMEs community**?

How can traditional food SMEs find the **best scientific/technological partners** and **integrate international research and innovation consortia**?

## APPROACH


- 1) Engage **strategic partners** such as Regional Businesses Associations, the Portuguese Food Cluster, the Portuguese Agrifood Businesses Association;
- 2) Organise **workshops and brokerage events** in cooperation with the strategic partners and, whenever possible, as satellite events of major scientific and technical events;
- 3) Participate in international events organized by **European networks**, aiming at presenting the competencies, needs and opportunities provided by Portuguese SMEs and CIMO;
- 4) Support the submission of **FP7 project proposals** with the participation of Portuguese SMEs.

## RESULTS

**Introduction of traditional food SMEs to international research & innovation networks working on e.g.:**


Company: QUINTA HOLMINHOS LDA.

Sector: Wine

R&I topics: "Electronic nose to detect haloanisoles in cork stoppers" 

Company: M. FERREIRA & FILHAS LDA.

Sector: Bakery

R&I topics: "Traditional Food: Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology Transfer" 

**Examples of other market-oriented research & innovation projects that resulted from interactions in the context of the AgroAli@EU initiative:**

Company: M. FERREIRA & FILHAS LDA.

Sector: Bakery

R&I topics:



"Increased shelf life of traditional meat-containing bakery products"

"Olive bread: innovative bakery products incorporating green stoned table olives"

Company: BÔFUMEIRO LDA.

Sector: Meat

R&I topics:



"Novel fermented meat products"

**Return on investment:**

AgroAli@EU project budget: 90.410,95 €

Budget of Portuguese entities participating in approved FP7 projects: 1.909.962,6 €



## CONCLUSIONS

It is time for researchers to leave their labs and talk to SMEs. However, **a facilitator should always be present in order to improve consensus!**

The active participation in European networks is key. **Get known** in Brussels!

**SMEs** need to be supported all along and **participate actively in the project development process**. Otherwise the technology and knowledge transfer efforts may not fulfil the expectations!

The approach used was shown to be effective: **local traditional food SMEs are interacting more with CIMO and participating more in market-driven collaborative innovation projects.**

