

EUROACE

Euroregion Alentejo, Centro Extremadura

<https://www.euro-ace.eu/en>



Teresa Jorge, CCDRC, Centro (PT)

Patricia da Costa Félix, Fundecyt-PCTEX, Extremadura (Spain)

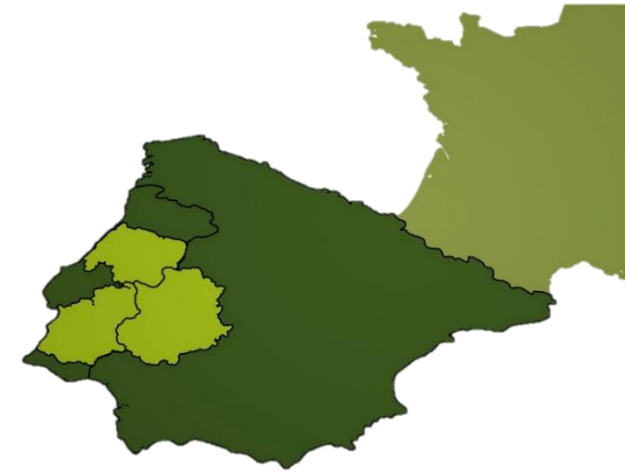
Madrid, 25.02.2020

- ❖ **Establishment:** 2009

- ❖ **Composition:**
 - Alentejo (Portugal)
 - Centro (Portugal)
 - Extremaduran (Spain)

- ❖ **Surface:** 95,532 Km² (15% of the Iberian Peninsula)

- ❖ **Population:** 3.4 million inhabitants



Aim: to promote cross-border and inter-regional cooperation between the three regions, promote the integrated development of the three territories and improve the living conditions of the population.

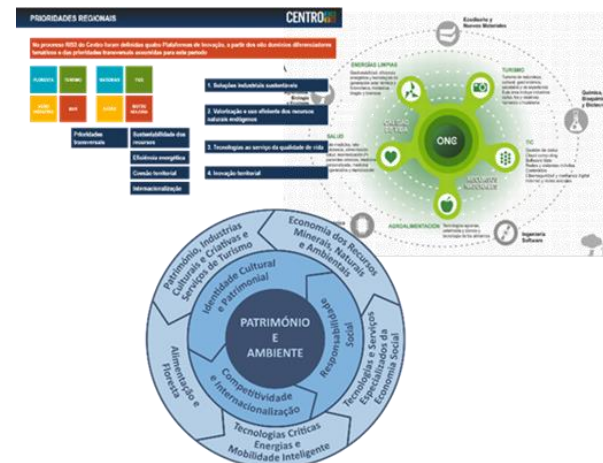
Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>...</p> <p>2.High environmental conditions, food and health quality of agricultural, livestock and forestry output.</p> <p>...</p> <p>6.Extensive historical, artistic and cultural heritage and excellent natural conditions for tourism segments growing in popularity (nature, rural, spa).</p> <p>7.Good network of universities and technology centres capable of training, research and technology transfer.</p> <p>...</p>	<p>1.Discouraging demographic context (ageing, low population density and depopulation).</p> <p>...</p> <p>3.Hard to attract and retain human resources, especially in the border areas.</p> <p>...</p> <p>7.Predominance of industries related to initial stages of chain of value.</p> <p>...</p> <p>10.Weak interaction between the science and technology system and businesses, despite recent progress.</p> <p>...</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>...</p> <p>6.Growing demand for tourist products that combine green/environmental and cultural tourism, given the great potential of EUROACE.</p> <p>...</p> <p>7.Growing demand for safe, high-quality foods as an opportunity to invest in improving production conditions and in the quality of traditional produce.</p> <p>...</p>	<p>...</p> <p>4.Increasing exposure to natural risks because of progressive abandonment of the countryside and agriculture.</p> <p>...</p> <p>8.Polarising effect of metropolitan areas of Lisbon, Madrid, Seville and Oporto causing haemorrhage of skilled human resources and economic activities.</p> <p>...</p>

Strategy elaborated in 2010 and formally published in 2011. It is structured around **four priority axes**:

- Axis 1 - More Territory (preservation, sustainability, territorial identity, mobility)
- Axis 2 - More Competitiveness (an innovative economy, integrated into international markets)
- Axis 3 - More Citizenship (citizens with needs met and rights respected)
- Axis 4 - More EUROACE (cooperation between actors and local authorities)



Smart Specialization Strategies played an important in the current programming period. In this context EUROACE decided to create, back in June 2014, a **“RIS3 task force”** to work on a common reference for the three regions, to foster cooperation in common and/or complementary areas



Areas of interest to work in a collaborative way:

- ❖ Agro-food
- ❖ Tourism and cultural and natural heritage
- ❖ Sustainable management of natural resources

- ❖ Supported by DG AGRI
- ❖ Launched in January 2016
- ❖ Aim: to provide and develop practical knowledge on how to strengthen the agriculture and food sector through cross-border cooperation.
- ❖ Two case study selected:
 - The EUROACE Euroregion between Portugal and Spain
 - The cross-border region between Carinthia in the South of Austria and Slovenia



Agropol –
Support for
European
cross-border
regions in the
agribusiness
sector

Agro-food was one of these common strategic priorities, being AGROPOL project considered an excellent opportunity to develop the work benefiting from (additional) support.



**Development of a strategy for
the agro-food sector in
EUROACE**

EUROACE AGROPOL PROJECT Agro-food Strategy

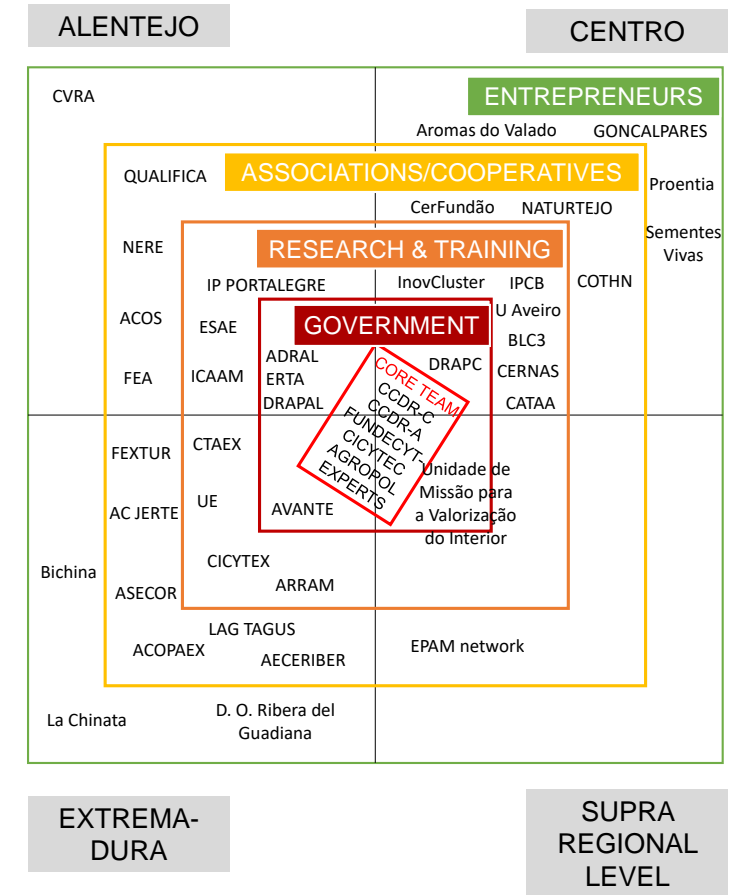
❖ Definition of its central aim: two overall objectives



❖ Specific Objectives (innovation):

- More knowledge transfer to small and medium sized entrepreneurs
 - More economic activities that create high value added

Stakeholder mapping



The strategy identified **Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAP)** as one of the growth sectors.



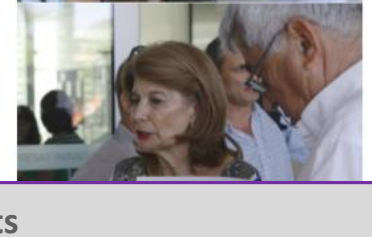
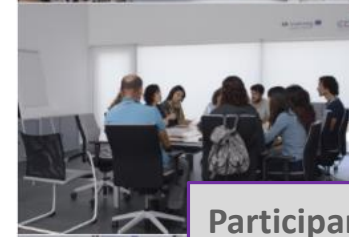
COOP4PAM cross border meeting- Aromatics and medicinal plants

"Cooperating to grow in the MAP sector"

- ❖ to strengthen inter-sectoral and cross-border cooperation links and to define strategies with a view to the development and growth of MAP sector

As a result of the Coop 4PAM cross-border event:

- ▶ A project proposal in the MAP sector was submitted for funding under the POCTEP (Spain-Portugal Cross Border Cooperation Programme)
- ▶ A prize was organized for the best thesis in the MAP SECTOR, financed by GIT EUROACE.



Participants

- 87 participants, 78 from Portugal and 9 from Spain
- 54 enterprises, 1 entrepreneur, 16 researchers, 9 associations, 4 from public administration, 3 from research centres



Main objective:

- ▶ Develop the PAM sector in the EUROACE area, strengthening and increasing the competitiveness and innovation of companies so that they can address national and international markets, given that it is a young sector with a potential for growth and diversification and where the territory cross-border presents comparative advantages.

Issues:

- ▶ Identify the species with the greatest potential in the Euroregion to be valued
- ▶ Obtain an industry information system
- ▶ To value the knowledge and potential of the agents in the value chain through collaboration between the partners

Partnership:

- ▶ 9 complementary and experienced partners coming from the 3 regions, and including research institutes, (public/private), a networking & knowledge brokerage services, a private laboratory & consultancy and a local development agency.



INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

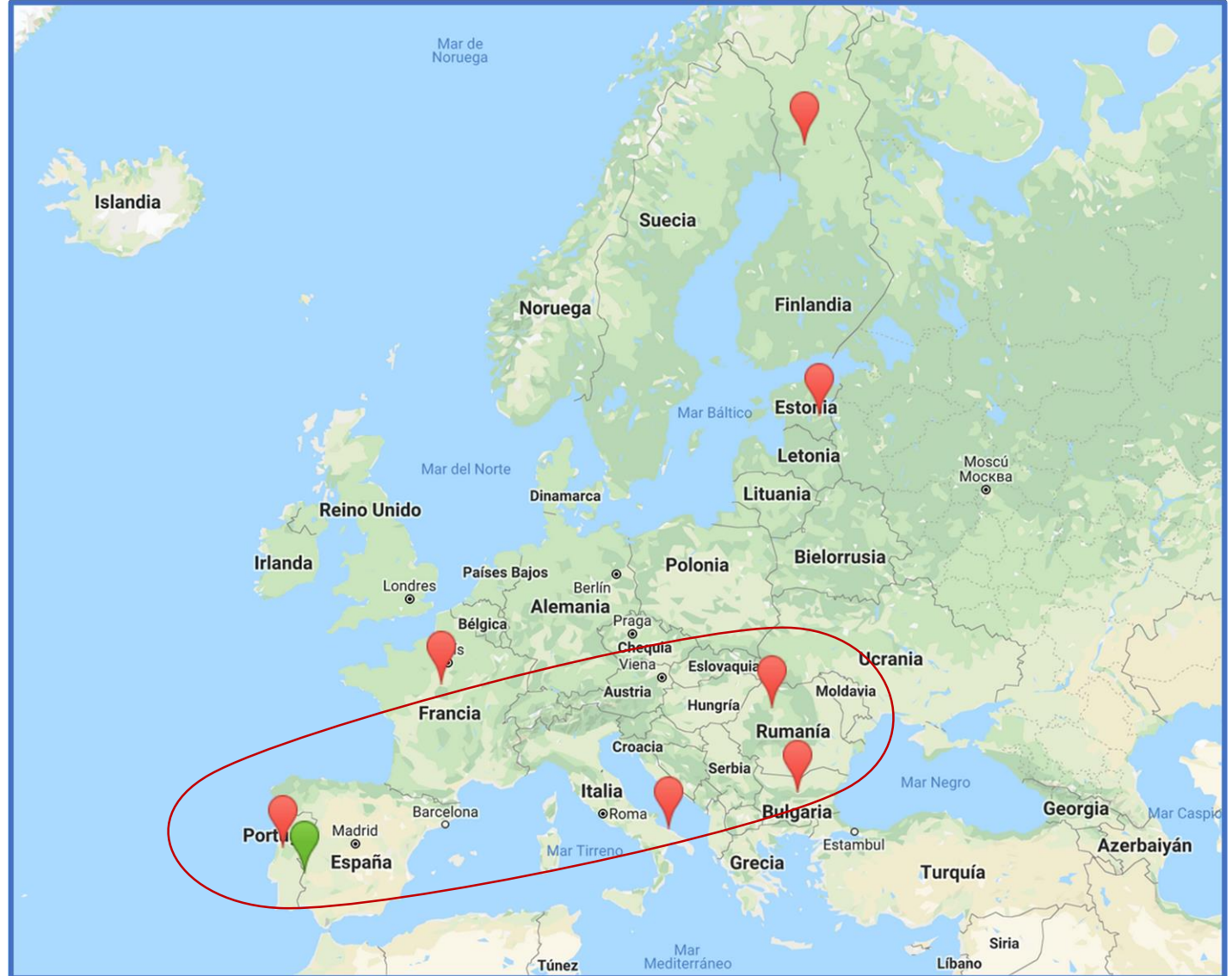
IMPROVE project



Research & innovation



Approved under the 4th call for proposals of Interreg Europe Programme



Issue addressed

Common Challenge



How to achieve better management of Structural Funds in order to optimise its absorption by regional actors and improve the implementation of different policies, programmes and strategies aimed at fostering regional development.

Objectives of the project

The project will seek this improvement by addressing issues such as how to:

- establish the appropriate framework, policy mix and instruments for the delivery of R&D&I policies and the implementation of smart specialisation strategies
- coordinate the delivery of Structural Funds Programmes with other Funds managed at regional, national and European level
- manage transnational coordination
- implement an effective governance
- monitor and evaluate the impact achieved

Project activities



Framework and features of the interregional cooperation

- In this case, the regional (RIS3) exercises were developed individually and then the cross border cooperation context was used to develop a common approach
- In terms of resources, namely financial, there is a 'privileged' Program (POCTEP) that, however, has not been extensively used for this purpose (support of cooperation projects in common RIS3 priorities)
- The fact that there is a long term 'working community' that mobilizes potential partners from both sides of the border in the development of collaborative initiatives/projects around the topics identified in a common strategy, helps overcoming the obstacles that different governance models imply



Preparation 2021-2027

- The outward-looking dimension of RIS3 was not central in the present programming period... but it is becoming more and more important
- The alignment of regional priorities with goals of the European policies (Green Deal, digitalization, etc) and the creation of instruments to support the inter regional collaboration (e.g. component 5) will pave the way to boost this type of cooperation
- The S3 thematic Platforms have performed an important role creating a fruitful framework for collaborative approaches among regions (being them cross border or not); both Centro and Extremadura participate in the High Tech Farming thematic area of the Agri-food Platform
- IMPROVE (the INTERREG Europe project) will act as a testing bed for approaches that will enhance the international dimension of RIS3 of the participating regions in the next programming period



Final reflections

- The international dimension of the regional S3 will help broadening the array of financial instruments used to implement the strategy
- The insertion of the region in international value chains (through interregional cooperation projects) has the power to improve its innovation performance and (ultimately) its competitiveness
- Interregional cooperation is crucial in two dimensions: (i) to gain critical mass (very important in lagging regions), but also (ii) to unlock the innovation potential of regional resources (by bringing in missing assets)

