Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms for Agri-Food / Industrial Modernisation

Expression of interest for the development thematic sub-areas

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

EU regions and member states are invited to propose a thematic area that is of their interest and it is linked to agri-food or industrial modernisation and their smart specialisation strategies (RIS3), and in which they wish to collaborate on with other regions or members states in perspective of starting a partnership for co-investment in the development of new value chains.

Submissions are welcome from one region or a group of regions which are keen to act as coordinating/leading region(s).

To submit your proposal, please fill in the survey below.

Title of proposed subtheme/focus area

BEETTER FOOD VALUE CHAINS, MORE RESILIENT, TRANSPARENT AND COMPETITIVE
Please indicate the most relevant Thematic Platform for your proposed area:

- [x] Agri-food
- [ ] Industrial modernisation

Your name

PABLO

Your surname

GÓMEZ CONEJO

Region / country

CASTILLA Y LEÓN / SPAIN

Your affiliation and function within the institution

RESPONSIBLE FOR R&D&I IN THE REGIONAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK IN CASTILLA Y LEÓN.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY. INSTITUTE OF AGRIFOOD TECHNOLOGY IN CASTILLA Y LEÓN.

Your email

gomconpa@itacyl.es

Your telephone
BETTER FOOD VALUE CHAINS: MORE RESILIENT, TRANSPARENT AND COMPETITIVE

Huge economic, social and political efforts, (using regional, national and European funds), at both public and private levels, are being allocated by regions to restore agri-food sectors and subsectors whose value chains are weak and unbalanced, given the impact of the socio-economic environment variables.

The proposal raises the development of a cross-regional work that ultimately will allow in each region a greater number of food subsectors with Food Value Chains clearly committed to innovation, transparency, balance, and therefore resilience.

The aim is to reverse the effort - reducing the number of measures intended for the rebalancing or sustainability in extremis - and devoting this effort to innovative actions of strengthening (“prevention” better than “cure”).

It will be developed through a working model involving all the actors in the chain, bearing in mind the quadruple helix (institutional bodies, research sphere, business sector and citizens), and relying on the principles of “Open Innovation” as a strategy for competitiveness.

This will be done by following the next 5 steps:

• Identify in each participant region, successful Food Value Chains, the ones considered to be a benchmark at regional level. (strong, well balanced and resilient Food Value Chains)

• Analyze of the characteristics and strengths of innovation, transparency and balance of the identified Food Value Chains, looking for their transfer potential and adaptation to other weak Food Value Chains of the same region or other regions participating in the Platform.

• Set initiatives for the transfer of these characteristics to other Food Value Chains in each region, through pilot actions of the different measures, including other new measures identified by the participants in the Platform.

• Benchmarking and joint review, aimed at learning among the different regions which have transferred or introduced actions. Identifying particular and local issues of each Food Value Chain and primarily the global issues since they are more transferrable to weaker Food Value Chain in the same or other region.

• Scaling up the results to regional policies; as measures to increase the competitiveness of the agrifood sector, including its deployment in both the RIS3 and its Rural Development Programs.

Results are expected to be transferred to other regions, considering that 3 out of 4 European regions have Agri-food sector among their RIS3 priorities.
Are you involved in the design and/or implementation of research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3) in your region/Member State? Please explain.

Yes, Castilla y León Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock participated in the drafting of the RIS3 to define the scope of thematic Priority 1 - Agri-food and natural resources as catalysts of innovation processes over the territory.

It participates in the Management Technical Group of RIS3, with responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy programmes which aims to assess the degree of compliance with the objectives and priorities, materialized in the annual report of actions.

Furthermore, the Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, with competence in R&D&I, participates in the implementation of the RIS3 in Castilla y León. The Institute of Agricultural Technology in Castilla y León (ITACyL) is responsible for determining and steering the scientific, technical and analytical demands of the agricultural sector in Castilla y León. It is also in charge of preparing and proposing plans for agricultural research and experimentation. Those should be consistent with the research and Regional Innovation Strategy, RIS3 for Castilla y León.

This proposal falls within the framework of the thematic Priority 1 - Agri-food and natural resources as catalysts of innovation processes over the territory of the RIS3 Castilla y León 2014-2020. It is transversal for every scope (R&D&I in Agriculture, Livestock and Aquaculture, Food, Bioenergy and Bioproducts, Forest Management) and it has a direct relationship with the other thematic Priorities due to its links with Health, Environmental Sustainability or R&D in Information Technologies, among others.

Also, this regional Ministry keeps a very tight and continuous collaboration with its regional Innovation, Financing and Internationalization Agency (ADE Castilla y León).
Please explain the transformative nature of your proposal. What are you aiming to achieve?

The objective of this proposal is to create a COLLABORATIVE WORKING MODEL to develop strategic actions and measures for more balanced and resilient Food Value Chains. Looking for well planned growth, a maximum efficiency, transparency in the operations and competitiveness.

This objective will be achieved through co-operation, analyses and exchange of successful experiences among representatives of the regions under study. Every stakeholder implied should be involved in the feasibility study for each Food Value Chain, under an open innovation approach. All the agents in the chain must cooperate in moving towards innovation under a coordinated pattern, as a business strategy to improve competitiveness. Results achieved through that working model shall be the result of a consensus among all stakeholders. Some expected results are, real increase in cooperativism, framework contracts by subsectors, avoidance of unbalances, etc, which contribute to the transparency, resilience and strengthening of the Food Value Chains.

This new working model will allow Public Administrations to play a proactive role, non-interventionist, in enabling a sustainable and innovative growth, generating value, and devoting part of the efforts to coordination tasks and improvement of the understanding among members.

S3 Thematic Platforms initiative are a proper interregional framework to jointly face this challenge among several regions. The support of the Commission experts on the basis of this S3 Initiative is foreseen as very useful on supporting the cooperation methodology among regions as well as bringing in broader knowledge on Food Value Chains challenges.

Please detail main challenges in relation to your proposed sub-area that may be addressed through interregional collaboration.

The development of resilient, transparent and competitive Food Value Chains is a global challenge, encompassing all economic links and relationships among them. Their proper development will ensure the supply of good-quality safe food, the compliance with requirements and expectations demanded by the society, the creation of employment, wealth, territorial balance and respect for the environment.

The proposal envisages the search for global solutions, transferable and adaptable, built from a bottom-up approach. Thus, by means of a collaborative analysis of the specific chains located in different regions, which exploit and transfer regional best experiences and practices.

The interregional collaboration will allow the development of stronger measures.
Please indicate any commitment and political support (regional/national level) for this proposed sub-area. Please also indicate approximate amounts and sources of funding to be provided during a period of at least 2 years.

Since the European Commission published its "Communication on improving the functioning of the Agri-food chain" in 2009, initiatives have been launched to deepen the analysis and identification of problems affecting their development.

The regional and national governments have put in place tools aimed at balancing the food chain and ensuring a right, fair and effective competition.

Institutional support at regional level:

The proposal has the institutional support of the regional government and will take advantage of the synergies resulting from the coincidence of the objectives set out with the new approach of the regional policy in this matter.

The Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in Castilla y León is working on following initiatives and tools in order to improve the efficiency and balance in the food value chains in the region:

The Rural Development Program of Castilla y León 2014-2020 (RDP) includes among its priorities, several activities to strengthen the food value chain, with actions in food quality, creation of Producer Organizations, risks management in farms and cooperation for the innovation, which will have an amount of 33.3 million €.

The Regional Ministry is also working in the creation of a Platform for the competitiveness of the agri-food production in Castilla y León, which shall allow the development of actions by the three main stakeholders of the food value chain in a coordinated manner. The aim is that these actions are not analyzed from different perspectives. The platform will associate production and demand as guarantee of competitiveness.

The Platform seeks the balance between each and every stakeholder of the value chain, stability and sustainability as keys for its subsequent improvement and development. The priority objectives are: rejuvenation of the sector, an increased productivity and competitiveness, the balance of the value chain, quality as a differential feature of Community products, and research and technological application at the service of the sector.

The Platform will have several enabling instruments that will provide transparency to the process. Meanwhile, we are working on the creation of productive competitiveness platforms, supporting different key sub-sectors of regional development: Sheep and goat sector, Dairy cattle sector and Wine.

Decrees for these competitiveness platforms are currently being made, linked to the Law 12/2013, including measures to improve the functioning of the food supply chain.

In terms of research, the Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock has launched this year the New Research and Innovation Model to improve the competitiveness of the agri-food sector in Castilla y León, an instrument aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness—at public and private level—in R&Innovation, as a tool to improve the competitiveness of the sector in the region, in line with the thematic Priority 1, the Agri-food and natural resources of the RIS3 for Castilla y León and the European and
For the implementation of the new R&I Model, a map of needs has been made consulting more than 30 different subsectors and identifying capacities and stakeholders in the region dealing with research in the agri-food sector. The New R&I Model is a living instrument, continuously revised and updated; it maintains continuous contact with companies to channel their demands and orient their efforts to the actual needs of the sector.

The stakeholders will collaborate through integral projects under an open innovation model to respond to the identified needs.

Institutional support at national level:
Within the European Union, Spain is the leading country in the introduction of a specific regulation for the food chain.

With Law 12/2013, of August 2, on the measures to improve the functioning of the food chain, Spain opened the way in the EU for the regulation of trade relations in the food chain. The Spanish legislation has served as a model to establish similar rules in other Member States, in order to achieve a balance in trade relations.

This Law has the purpose of improving the functioning and the structure of the food chain in order to increase the efficiency and competitiveness of the Spanish agri-food sector and reduce the imbalance in the trade relations among the different stakeholders, that benefits not only the sector, but also the consumers.

The Report on commercial practices regulations in the food chain of the U.E., emphasizes that Spanish legislation offers coverage to all links in the chain, and has implemented self-regulatory instruments.

In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and Environment coordinates the regional RDPs and sets the national framework for rural development. It has almost € 435 million of public funds. One of the priorities is to promote the organization of the food chain; 70% the funds have been allocated to them.

---

* Which other regions/countries are interested in this proposed sub-area? Describe their interest and current level of commitment as well as complementarities and value added. Also, please add contact details.

Certain contacts have been held. Nevertheless, next conference in Tuscany will be the key venue and time to present this platform and add up complementary regions.
* Please describe the extent to which this sub-theme is supported by businesses (clusters) and/or academia and/or civil society in your region.
The proposal has to be supported by different business and academic agents, covering all Food Value Chain elements and R&D&I support, from all regions involved. At Castilla y León the following have been contacted and are keen to participate:

Production sector:
- Regional Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Castilla y León, URCACYL is an association of cooperatives with almost 200 members from different agricultural sectors: arable crops, feed, wine, fruit and vegetables, beets, potatoes, sheep and goats and supplies.

Industry sector (includes R&D&I and the distribution channel):
- Business Association for an Innovative Food Industry of Castilla y León VITARTIS, is a Cluster grouping entities from the following areas: R&D&I agencies and technology transfer (public and private), biotechnology companies, agri-food companies and distribution channel of food products. It has 80 partners from various subsectors.

Distribution sector:
- Association of Entrepreneurs of Supermarkets in Castilla y León (ASUCYL), contact partner of the national association to which it belongs, ASEDAS (Spanish Association of Distributors, Self-services and Supermarkets). In Castilla y León, it has 10 partners (1,350 establishments).

All these agents are highly representative, that is why they will be involved in the decision-making process related to the chains and the participants.

R&D&I Centres and Academia:
- Universities of Castilla y León through the Network TCUE (Transfer of Knowledge University-Enterprise)
- Experts Groups in economic studies and efficiency in value chains: Higher Council of Scientific Research (CSIC) - University of León.

Other supports:
- Agency of Innovation, Financing and Internationalization Business (ADE), public entity, integrated in the Ministry of Economy and Finance, whose purpose is to promote the development of the Economic Activity and the Productive System of Castilla y León.
- Food Information and Control Agency (AICA), autonomous body attached to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishing, Food and Environment, whose purpose is to control the rights and obligations established by Law 12/2013, of August 2, on the measures to improve the functioning of the food chain.
- Financial entities: CajaMar Caja Rural,...

Finally, indicate that this regional ministry and its Institute of Agricultural Technology are members of the following groups:
- ERIAFF - Network of European Regions for Innovation in Agriculture, Food and Forestry.
- EIP-AGRI - European Association for Innovation "Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability". Focus group 21. Robust and resilient dairy production systems.
- AECOSAN - Spanish Agency for Consumption, Food Safety and Nutrition.
Please provide some details related to the implementation of your proposal from its conception phase to the development phase of concrete investment projects, including milestones and expected outcomes at each phase.

1. Identification of the partners, platform and goals configuration:
   - Identification of the regions interested in the proposal that could provide added value
   - Determination of the most appropriate Food Value Chains analysis methodology and the main indicators to explore. Examples: FAO Manuals, Global Value Chains (GVCs) Mapping (supported by the European Commission and its JRC), ValueLinks (International ValueLinks Association), etc.

2. Development of actions:
   - Mapping and identifying the successful Food Value Chains considered to be a benchmark at regional level, balanced, sustainable, efficient, R&D+Innovation intensive. Selecting the Food Value Chains under study for each region.
   - Analyzing the characteristics and strengths of innovation of the identified Food Value Chains, looking for their transfer potential and adaptation to other weaker Food Value Chains of the same region or other regions participating in the Platform. Determining and assessing, in coordination with all the stakeholders of the chains, the factors which boost them and influence on them, together with the hazards.
   - Actions for the transfer of these characteristics to other Food Value Chains in each region, through pilot actions of the different measures. Taking actions to improve both the process and the products: cooperativism promotion, support to the quality and product differentiation, framework contracts by subsector, development of enabling technologies tailored to each link of the chain, etc., and including other new measures identified by the participants in the Platform.
   - Benchmarking and joint review, aimed at learning among the different regions which have transferred or introduced actions. Identifying particular and local issues of each Food Value Chain and, above all, the global issues since they are more transferrable to other weaker Food Value Chains in the same or other region.
   - Scaling up the results to reach regional policies as measures to increase the competitiveness of the Agri-food sector, including its deployment in both the RIS3 and its Rural Development Programs. And dissemination of the results at European level for possible inclusion in other RIS3 having Agri-food as a priority concern. The new working model will have to be continuously evaluated and allow for the effectiveness monitoring of the implemented measures, together with the hazard analysis and critical control points.
Please include any additional comments.

*Do you agree that your proposal, your name, institution and email address are published at the S3 Platform website?

- Yes
- No

Thank you!

S3 Platform

Contact

Fatime-Barbara.HEGYI@ec.europa.eu