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## **Newfood Project - food technologies valorization in traditional foods sector**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The European food and drink sector is unique in its very high regional and continent-wide cultural diversity, which is not only a point of pride for many citizens, but also provides a framework ideally suited to foster creativity and innovation.

The NEWFOOD - Food Technologies Valorization project joins the ambitions of the 4 public Universities of the Northern Region (University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, Portuguese Catholic University - Porto Regional Center, University of Minho and University of Porto) to accelerate the expansion and consolidation of the so-called "traditional products" through a proposal of innovation catalyzed by the transfer of knowledge and technology.

This project proposes three Actions that are articulated: (i) develop a knowledge and skills map of the Region and an inventory of the needs of the sector to ensure the innovation process focused on the central axes of expansion and consolidation of the sector; (ii) promote innovation projects aimed at generating new products / solutions of economic relevance in the "Traditional Products" sector and (iii) actively disseminate knowledge, skills and resources to the entities involved, including stakeholders from the relevant economic sectors.

Critical factors for the competitiveness of the traditional products sector will thus be worked out. Given the territorially distributed nature of the project, it will also promote the competitiveness of the Region associated with Agro-food activity, but also with related activities such as Tourism.

The dissemination, both national and international, of knowledge and traditional products will contribute to the notoriety and attractiveness of the Region and the Country, adding value in the production chains. In this way, it is intended to support the internationalization of value added products such as traditional products, thus promoting the competitiveness of the agro-food industry.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The European food and drink sector is unique in its very high regional and continent-wide cultural diversity, which is not only a point of pride for many citizens, but also provides a framework ideally suited to foster creativity and innovation. The great variety of regional culinary traditions that have developed across Europe over the centuries ensure that the food and drink sector is deeply rooted in society [1].

Newfood — Food Technologies Valorization is a project that joins the ambitions of the four public Universities of the North Region (University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, Portuguese Catholic University - Porto Regional Center, University of Minho and University of Porto) to accelerate the processes of expansion and consolidation of the so-called "traditional products" through a proposal of innovation catalyzed by the transfer of knowledge and technology. This project responds to the clear identification of “traditional” products and the evolution and adaptation of these products to modern markets, as a priority for the development of the economy in the North Region, pursuing the Regional Intelligent Specialization plan (RIS3) [2] merging agricultural and agro-food competences and resources held in the region, articulated through 4 Universities of the North Region. There are very strong, productive and structured cooperation links of varied forms between relevant actors in the agro-food sector and the Universities involved. These links include bilateral relations between companies and researchers, formal protocols and associations formed specifically to advance the R&D agenda for the sector.

Therefore, the objective of this work is to present the Newfood Project as a model for the promotion of innovation in Traditional Portuguese Products, as well as for the stimulation of entrepreneurial spirit and the transfer and valorization of scientific knowledge.

## **2. RATIONAL**

The project's rationale is based on the unique, specialized and complementary capacities in the Northern region and its Research Centers in the Agro-food sector. Based on this coherence of competencies, a single project structured in the priority axis RIS3 - Agro-environmental Systems and Food has the capacity to mobilize the I&I of the various Entities of the Scientific and Technological System (ESTS) of the North region, relevant for this sector of activity in the dynamics of technology transfer and knowledge valorization. The Newfood project focuses on the transfer of technology to the food sector in the components of dissemination of research results to generate innovative products based on traditional food products and endogenous resources with differentiated value proposals updated to the needs of markets, for application in the food processing industry, throughout the value chain.

Thus, it proposes an articulated set of actions (Table1) for the production of structured I&I knowledge, based on the identification of the market needs and the aggregate technological offer of the partners, that support the transfer of knowledge at national and international level, creating conditions for investment in knowledge protection by European patents and in licensing strategies, as well as in the implementation of an innovation and development program focused on accelerating modernization and competitiveness in the “Traditional Products” sector, capable of increasing the readiness of people and knowledge in the relationship with the market, investors and companies.

**Table 1.** Action and description of Newfood Project.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Description</i>
1- Knowledge and Needs	Mapping existing knowledge and the needs of the economic fabric in order to promote opportunities through the correspondence between knowledge - needs, generating added value. Two characterization studies will be carried out by each University, of the knowledge produced and existing, with potential for transference to the Stakeholders of the value chain. There will also be eight studies on Sector Needs conditioned by trends relevant to the value chain, supported by technical visits and participation in international events relevant to the intended dynamics. A set of Seminars / Workshops will ensure the Public Disclosure and discussion in the territory of the results of the studies carried out, including International Benchmarking with territories with dynamics in the area. The formation of the correspondence between Knowledge and Needs will be characterized in the Knowledge-Needs Matching Study with the respective public presentation to the target audience.
2 - Program for the Promotion of Innovation Projects	Valuation of knowledge through its application in the development of projects oriented to the innovation and competitiveness of "Traditional Food Products" based on the differentiation of endogenous resources to the territory, with results along the value chain (primary production, processing, ingredients, industry, packaging, distribution and food service). The intention is to promote two approaches, one, the "FoodValorization" competition, based on the support of proposals for innovative projects involving Proofs of Concept and Business Projects for Entrepreneurship - oriented to new business initiatives in the value chain; another, the "NewFood" competition, based on support for a selection of innovation proposals with projects of economic relevance and with added value for Prototyping. The projects and their results will be presented publicly at the Fine Showcase and Food Festival sessions, seeking to create conditions for stakeholder evaluation and promotion of knowledge transfer in the sector.
3 - Promotion of Knowledge and Innovation	Promotion of the transfer of knowledge to the economic fabric, extended to the whole value chain, through practical and demonstrative actions as well as through concrete projects with companies, of innovation for the availability of the capacities and resources existing in the Research Centers. Promotion of applied knowledge and innovation potential in the area to the national business community, the national and international consumer, and the technical and scientific community through a set of actions that include videos, campaigns on social networks, communications and publications of different nature at the level National and international.

### 3. EXPECTED RESULTS

#### 3.1 Action 1 - Knowledge and Needs

8 Knowledge Mapping Studies; 8 Needs and Trends Studies; 8 Seminars of Disclosure in the Territory of Trends and Benchmarking; 4 International technical visits to Territories / Regions

with relevant dynamics; 1 Knowledge Matching Study – Needs; 1 Public presentation of the Matching Study (100 participants); 4 Participation in International Events by Partner.

### **3.2 Action 2 - Program for the Promotion of Innovation Projects**

A "FoodValorization" competition for a selection of 16 Proof of Concept Projects and Business Project for Entrepreneurs with cash and expense awards; A "NewFood" competition for a selection of 8 Projects for Prototyping to be developed based on cash and expense premiums; A Final ShowCase presenting the 24 FoodValorization and NewFood Projects and their results to an audience of Companies, Entrepreneurs, Investors and Stakeholders in general; A FoodFestival for contextualized and articulated promotion with sectors of related activity, in particular the Tourism.

### **3.3 Action 3 - Promotion of Knowledge and Innovation**

8 Sectoral Seminars / Workshops; 8 Thematic / Functional Seminars / Workshops; 40 Videos about Products, Services, Projects; 8 Social Networking Campaigns; 8 Thematic Publications; 8 Technical and Scientific Communications; 8 Publications in Technical and Scientific Journals; 8 Open Access for Scientific Publications.

## **4. FINAL REMARKS**

The Newfood project has an ambition focused on the Portuguese Traditional Food Products sector in the North region and its ESTS. In terms of stimulating the search for R&I the scope was national and includes international dimensions. The project aims to contribute to the sustainability of knowledge transfer to the sector, through: promoting the dynamism of the University-Company interface; the consolidation and opening of national and international knowledge transfer channels; the establishment of economic valuation practices in the field of researchers in areas that have a temporal relevance and are easier to institutionalize in the context of a research program and postgraduate studies, and also by the structuring of know-how associated with the processes inherent to the competitions and entrepreneurship programs underway.

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