

Quality standards and authenticity to foster competitiveness of agrifood SMEs



NEWSLETTER N° 3

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GENCAT Second internal meeting

The second internal GENCAT (Government of Catalonia – Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food) meeting within the framework of the QUALIFY project was held on Monday, November 16, 2020.

The meeting was attended by representatives of several units from the Public Administration of Catalonia and was focused on presenting the opportunities offered by the new programmes and plans for the agri-food sector and specifically, if they anticipate addressing the strategic areas by QUALIFY ([read more](#)).



GENCAT Third stakeholder meeting

GENCAT third stakeholder meeting was held on Wednesday, November 26, 2020.

The central theme of this third stakeholder meeting was food quality own-control systems. It was attended by about 60 professionals and experts from the agri-food sector who are part of the Qualify Strategic Committee to address each project topic in a coordinated way ([read more](#)).



CALV Third stakeholder meeting

The Chamber of Agriculture of la Vienne (CALV) organized the third stakeholder meeting online on September 10, 2020.

During the meeting participants discussed about the system and method to check the self- controls of companies, which is the topic of Semester 3 of the Qualify project. The discussion focused on the planning of control of brand products and on the results of checks on the brand products in France.



ECCI Third stakeholder meeting

The Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECCI) held the third stakeholder meeting on October 26, 2020 at the premises of the Ministry of Rural Affairs of the Republic of Estonia. During the meeting the ECCI project team presented to the representatives of the Ministry's Food Safety Department the Qualify project and followed a discussion among the participants about the current situation and state of play of the food fraud and the quality self-control system, fraud systems and traceability methods.



ECCI Internal meeting

ECCI organized the internal meeting of Semester 3 on January 18, 2021.

The project coordinators informed their colleagues about the progress of the project activities and requested for further collaboration in order to effectively disseminate and communicate the Qualify outcomes to local stakeholders and companies.



Participation of ECCI in seminars and online events

03.09.2020: Seminar "What kind of food is on the plate in 2030?" at Ministry of Rural Affairs premises.

2.10.2020: Online "Food Industry Annual Conference".

22.10.2020: Online seminar "Good labeling requirements", organized by Estonian Food Industry Association in cooperation with the Ministry of Rural Affairs and the Veterinary and Food Board.

19.11.2020: Virtual seminar-discussion "From farm to plate".

25.11.2020: Virtual seminar "Food safety legislation and supervision" Estonian Food Industry Association Information Day.

26.11.2020: Virtual seminar "Food Product Development Days 2020".

14.01.2021: Virtual seminar "Food safety communication" organized by The Estonian Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce.

CCIS internal meeting

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (CCIS) held the internal meeting on January 11, 2021 in order to summarize activities on Qualify project in last semester. Firstly, Jana Ramuš presented some general information about fraudulent activities regarding food and described concrete examples of food fraud in different food groups. Later, Barbara Lončarek described main project activities in third semester.

After that she presented an example of good practice regarding purchasing raw materials and exposed things, that food companies must take special attention to when buying raw materials. At the end there was a discussion about most common food fraud and ways to prevent fraudulent activities. Every co-worker also presented their opinion about integrating their area of expertise in project Qualify topics.



CCIS third stakeholder meeting 26/01/2021

At the beginning of the meeting Jana Ramuš (CCIS-CAFE) said a few introductory words about the purpose of the meeting. She also briefly presented Qualify project and its main activities. After that she presented HACCP system, that is mandatory for food business operators, hazard analysis and risk-based preventive controls, importance of vulnerability assessment, mitigation plan and real time verification. The second speaker was Andreja Bizjak, director of Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Inspection at Administration for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection.

The main topic of her presentation was legislation regarding food fraud and official controls, practical examples of frauded food products in Slovenia and in Europe. Later, Barbara Lončarek (CCIS-CAFE) presented preventive procedures when purchasing raw materials (food ingredients, processing aids, packaging materials), including fraud prevention actions. At the end, Tina Malovrh (Don don d. o. o.) presented practical example of HACCP study about donuts with apricot jam, that was made during HACCP workshop on CCIS-CAFE.



BCCI Third stakeholder meeting

The third stakeholder meeting was held in the premises of Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) on the 23rd of October 2020. 11 persons from different fields (administration, R&D institutions, private sector and civil society) took participation in the organised event.

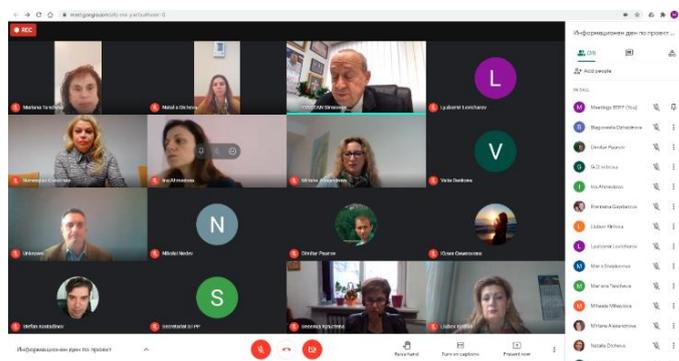
Two lectures were given to the audience: New food law in Bulgaria changes and new moments; Bio farming in Bulgaria (analysis and new tendencies). The progress in the project implementation activities in the last six months was presented to the participants by the project team members. The content of the online library Topic 2 quality control systems and the materials accumulated were discussed between the participants.



BCCI Second internal meeting

The internal meeting for the employees of BCCI was held on 26th of November 2020 via on line.

In total 31 participants attended the online meeting during which the project objectives, activities and expected results were presented. The project coordinator presented the main activities implemented so far, focusing on the collection of good practices accumulated from the project partners and the topics of fraud prevention and Own quality control systems of the on-line library. Fruitful discussion was held at the end regarding the possible measures that could be included in the Action plan for the next programming period.



Region of Thessaly stakeholder meetings

The Region of Thessaly held the second stakeholder meeting online on November 27, 2020. At the meeting participated the Deputy Governor of Thessaly–Responsible for EU Funds and Commerce, the project team of the Department of Development, Planning and Programming and the Department of Agriculture Development of the Region of Thessaly, the External Expert project team, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce of Larissa and the Development Agency of the Prefecture of Larissa. The discussion among the participants focused on own-control systems of the agri-food sector and the initiatives that have been implemented and are planned on the topic at regional level.



During Semester 3, Region of Thessaly held another stakeholder online meeting on January 27, 2021. The aim of the meeting was to present the project Qualify to small businesses of the food sector. Among the participants there were members of the local group of the Urbact project FOOD CORRIDORS in which the Municipality of Larissa participates. The attendees agreed in cooperation between the two projects at local level in order for further synergies to be developed.



Region of Thessaly Internal meeting

The Region of Thessaly organized the internal meeting of Semester 3 on January 27, 2021. The Region of Thessaly Qualify team informed their colleagues about the progress of the project of the current Semester and the planned upcoming activities.



Online QUALIFY partner Meetings

30.09.2020 Online partner meeting via Microsoft Teams.

The aim of the online partner meeting was to discuss about the progress of the project activities.

18.11.2020 Online partner meeting via Microsoft Teams.

The Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECCI) organized the online partner meeting on the 18th of November 2020. During the first session of the meeting a broad range of topics, ideas and concerns on safety and sustainability of the food industry were raised and discussed during the meeting. Likewise, the panelists had an opportunity to share their experiences and expertise on activities related to the development of the food industry.

The second part of the meeting focused on the system and/or frameworks in that project partners from Catalonia, France, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Greece apply in their region/country regarding “quality own-control”, in other words, how SMEs in the agri-food sector establish mechanisms to ensure quality standards in their companies, including the support of the public administrations in this regard ([read more](#)).



Working on content for online library

Every project partner had to prepare a document, regarding food quality own-control systems in their country. The main topics were European and national legislation, own-control systems, regional and national strategies, operational programmes, future predictions and some practical examples.

Selecting and describing good practices

The main topic of this semester was quality own-control systems, so every project partner needed to select and describe some good practices from their country and upload it to the Interreg Europe platform.

Project summary

QUALIFY has been designed to foster the competitiveness of the SMEs in the agrifood sector by tackling a challenge that affects the involved regions and the whole EU (as stated by the European Commission):

- The improvement of the quality processes of these SMEs.
- The fight against the fraud in the sector.
- The promotion of the authenticity in their products.

Overcoming the barriers related to these challenges is to foster the reduction of costs, better chain values, better processes, and better products that will allow the tackled SMEs to grow and be more competitive in the national and international markets, where they need to enlarge their presence in front of larger companies, which are much less challenged by the presented topics.

To work in this direction, the project tackles the ERDF funds devoted to increase SMEs competitiveness in 7 EU regions/states which are representative of the EU geographical dimension and which incorporate agrifood and SMEs as core aspects of their respective RIS3.

The project aims at ensuring that when the projects funded under these schemes tackle agrifood SMEs they introduce aspects of quality, fraud prevention, and authenticity, which must complement the existing financial and non-financial instruments, enlarging the desired outcome: the growth of these SMEs.

The project also aims at enlarging the capacities of the managing authorities, relevant SMEs representatives and other stakeholders to better tackle these aspects and develop better and more efficient projects.

The main project outputs are: 7 policy instruments enlarged and improved through 7 action plans + monitoring systems, setting-up of a course with materials on the project topics for managing authorities and SMEs to foster an e-learning process, 35 stakeholder meetings, 4 dissemination events, 6 partner meetings with study visits, a continuous contact with national and EU institutions working in these topics, and over 50 best practices learned/exchanged.

Partners



Further information on our website: <http://www.interregeurope.eu/qualify/>