

Quality standards and authenticity to foster competitiveness of agrifood SMEs



NEWSLETTER N° 4

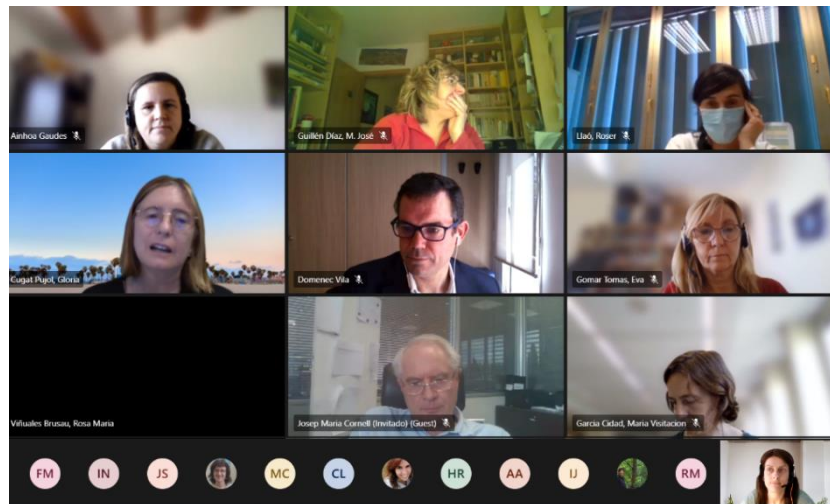
In this issue...

- GENCAT and Region of Thessaly internal meeting.
- Fourth stakeholder group meetings in each project partner country.
- Partners meeting in Slovenia.

3rd GENCAT internal meeting

The third GENCAT internal meeting was held on Wednesday 12 May. The QUALIFY project is co-financed from ERDF funds, hence a review of instruments that manage this and other funds, such as the EAFRD, is required.

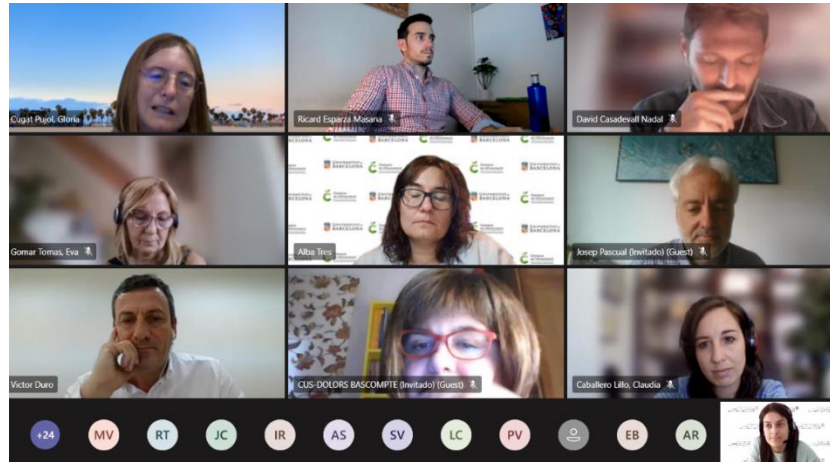
In relation to this objective, a search was carried out to identify programs and calls and also, during the meeting, various experiences were shared to meet the pros and cons in order to improve the available instruments or create new ones that cover the sector needs.



GENCAT 4th stakeholders meeting

The meeting took place on Wednesday, 19 May, it was about the theme: Promoting authenticity and other quality attributes as value for consumers.

A total of 67 professionals from the agri-food industry, research centres, professionals from public administration and representatives of consumer associations met to address the issue jointly and contribute ideas to the Qualify Action Plan, which will include actions to improve the competitiveness of SMEs in the agri-food industry.

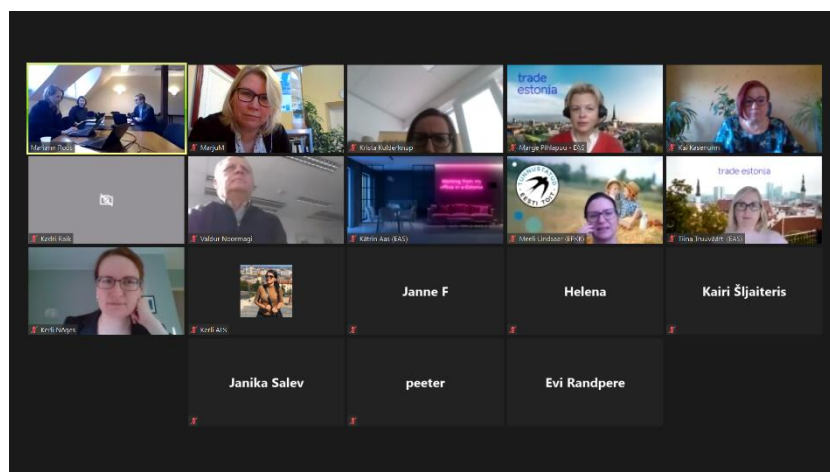


ECCI 4th stakeholders meeting

The 4th Stakeholder meeting was held on March 3, 2021 via Zoom with total of 43 participants.

At the meeting Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Marju Männik and Kadri Raik) were presenting state of play project of Qualify and further activities, also the open library on own-control systems information and cooperation with different institution.

Various topics were discussed, incl. participation and support for food fairs, acquisition and support of quality standards, availability of market research and access to different databases. Institutional cooperation is very important to plan the further activities.



BCCI 4th stakeholders meeting

The fourth stakeholders meeting was held in the premises of BCCI, hall B on 15 of June 2021. 20 persons attended the event – representatives of public administration, universities, companies, members of the Chamber, NGOs, branch associations.

The project coordinator presented the progress in the project implementation activities in the last months – the development of the third part of the online library regarding the authenticity of the food, the benchmarking of initiatives in this field and good practices already applied successfully in Bulgaria. The following topics were discussed during the meeting:

- OPIC programme and the new programming period - measures to improve the digitalization, in the area of agroindustry;
- Opportunities for creating a digital innovation hub (DIH) in the field of agro-industry - good examples from the project;
- Good practices for application of digital innovations in agriculture in Bulgaria;
- Digital Europe Programme food industry;
- European Green Pact.

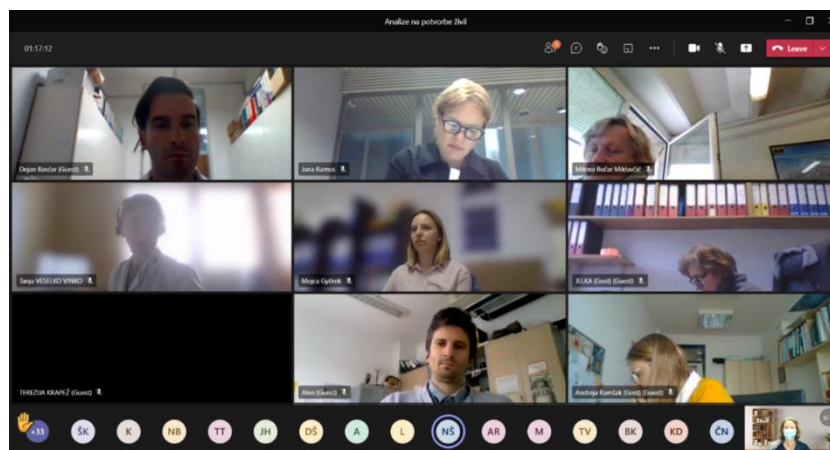


CCIS 4th stakeholders meeting

The fourth stakeholders meeting took place on Friday, 14 May, via Teams application. The main purpose of the meeting was introduction of methods for authenticity testing, that research and development institutions perform to food safety experts from food companies. Food safety experts were very interested in the topic of the meeting, since they cannot access the information regarding testing methods for authenticity, all in one place.

Nine Slovenian institutions presented themselves and their work in the field of food authenticity testing.

At the end of the meeting, discussion about most common food fraud cases and difficulties detecting certain food frauds followed. Food safety experts also received contacts of research institutions, that make analysis regarding different food fraud. Food safety experts also received contacts of research institutions, that make analysis regarding different food fraud.



CALV 4th stakeholder meeting

On the 23rd of July the Chamber of Agriculture, Beritovet and Draaf met to discuss and look for ideas to develop an action plan focusing on advice for small and medium sized agri-businesses.

The idea was to create a website containing different informative flyers for the different agri-food sectors with the following information:

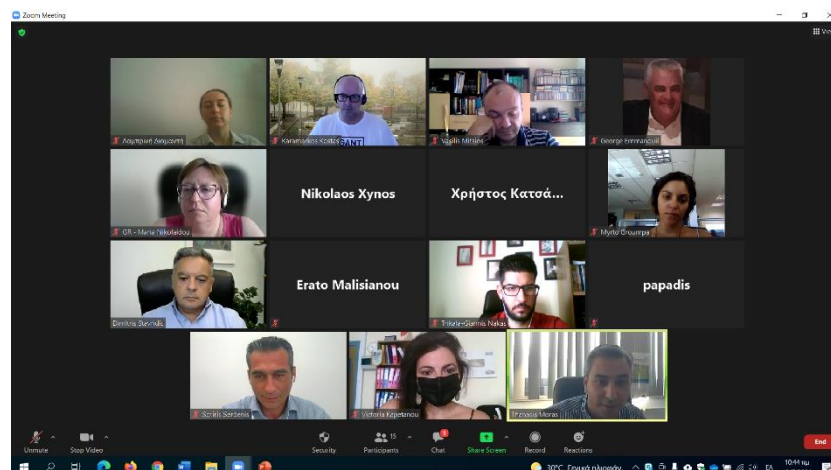
- The benefits of the different products.
- Hygiene, food safety, and product preservation.
- Authenticity, and fraud control: why choose a French product? How to recognize it? Distinction of the different quality signs.
- A personalized space for each producer.

The sectors in the Vienne and New Aquitaine that will be contacted for the development of this information material are the following Lamb and beef, cheese, eggs, hazelnuts, plums, kiwi, apples, melons, tomatoes.



Region of Thessaly 4th stakeholder meeting

The Region of Thessaly held the fourth stakeholder meeting online on July 12, 2021. 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, the General Director of the Ministry of Interior (sector Macedonia and Thrace) and representatives relevant Interreg Europe projects, in which Greek organizations participate. The meeting gave the opportunity to local stakeholders to learn about the evolvement of the projects and exchange their experiences through the presentation of good practices from the participating countries and the proposed action plans.



Region of Thessaly internal meeting

The Region of Thessaly organized the internal meeting of Semester 4 on July 28, 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.



Partners meeting in Slovenia

From 29. 6. to 1. 7. 2021, Qualify project partners meeting took place in Slovenia. Firstly, we presented CCIS-CAFE and our activities, then presentation of Administration for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection (AFSVSPP) followed, project partners also presented related activities in their countries.

Regarding study visits, we visited Medex company, that produces honey, Jožef Stefan Institute, that makes analyses regarding food fraud, NIB-Marine Biology Station Piran, that presented study about substitution of squid species, Port of Koper, which accepts import food items and make analyses (in cooperation with FARS and AFSVSPP) about their quality and authenticity, VinaKoper, which produces wine and Žito PC Gorenjka company, which produces Swiss rolls and chocolate.



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.

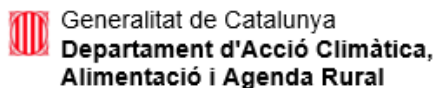
To work in this direction, the project tackles the ERDF funds devoted to increase SMEs competitiveness in 7 EU regions/states which are representative of the EU geographical dimension and which incorporate agrifood and SMEs as core aspects of their respective RIS3.

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 in our web: <http://www.interregeurope.eu/qualify/>