

FOOD4HEALTH

Sustainable and innovative Agro food and fisheries value chain for MSME's cross border market

WORK PACKAGE T2

T2.1 Clusters established among research and business actors

OUTPUT REPORT



Clusters established among research and business actors

Work Package T2 focused on the establishment of clusters and project-supporting groups for the five laboratories. Although only five partners were directly involved in the establishment of the laboratories, all partners actively contributed to the creation of the clusters.

The following five project partners were directly involved in the establishment of clusters and signed the respective agreements:

PP2 – ATTC KORCA – Laboratory of Korca

PP3 – ATTC VLORA – Laboratory of Vlora

PP4 – CIHEAM BARI – Laboratory of Tricase

PP6 – Region of Molise – Community Virtual Lab – Maps of Molise - Integrated Services Center for Supporting the Emerging Businesses and SMSs, in Agri-food Sector

PP8 – University of Montenegro, Institute of Marine Biology – Laboratory of Kotor, Boka Kotorska Bay

The project promoted the establishment and involvement of local stakeholders in these clusters as an innovative model to support businesses in agri-food sectors and when possible, incubate new enterprises. Local farmers, now utilizing the laboratories, can improve their production chains across the cross-border area.

The clusters aim to provide effective solutions and collaboration schemes for all stakeholders, with local laboratories' final users being the primary beneficiaries of this initiative.

Because of Covid-19 situation, partnership was unable to organize matching among business and research institutions and local or cross border MSMEs, so at project level it decided to create clusters with farmers, fishermen and oyster growers involved from the beginning in the project, and research partners promoted the project; indeed for Albania area: ATTC Vlore and ATTC Korce are scientific research institutes; for Italy area: Ciheam Bari is the international research centre and post graduate/master centre and for Montenegro area: Institute of marine biology is part of the University of Montenegro and it is a research academic centre.

Just Molise region create a specific cluster (with an official registration) in Italian law called ATS (temporary association of purpose) between farmers and an agency out of the partnership but that has the ownership of the management of the “Community Virtual Lab-Maps of Molise”.

The cluster was formalized during the first two years of the project through bilateral agreements for Kotor and Tricase area, in the last year of the project for Vlore, Korca and Molise area.

Members of these clusters are therefore research and business actors within the project areas, and the stakeholders that responded to a public expression of interest issued in various way by each

partner involved with the Food4Health Community Labs. At the beginning of the project, for each target area, after a market research or personal contact (because of the nature of the partners involved, research centre or sector institutions, a lot of MSMEs that could be interesting in the project activities were already knew), emails or a social media announcement were sent to territorial MSMEs to invite them to a sort of open day in which the project was presented.

For Kotor and Tricase, in the following months project staff created right away the agreement and farmers or fishermen was invited to sign it. Following the subscription of the agreement, local stakeholder meetings as foreseen by the project (workshop, demonstration events, living lab...), were organized in each project area to ensure broad participation in all project activities.

For Korca and Vlore the agreements and the signature was formalized after the project activities and after stakeholders meetings (workshop, demonstration events, living lab...), organized within the project; just for Molise region, a specific announcement for cluster creation was launched the last months of the project life.

All these announcements and agreements were addressed to local MSMEs, so at partnership level, it was decided to generally present these in national language. For Tricase laboratory, a translation of the agreements was provided for report and to sharing between partner for cross border purpose. with a translation. Only for Molise's cluster we don't have a translation because the document was legally registered according to Italian law.

Each cluster has its unique characteristics, but all share the common transnational objectives of competitiveness and sustainable management.

Therefore, Food4Health partners have established following clusters:

- 1. Cluster with Apple Farmers in the Region of Korça:** Established in Korça area, this cluster includes ATTC Korça and eight local farmers who work with apples and apple products (jams, marmalade, and other typical products). **Annex 1**
 - The aim of this cluster is to enhance the quality and marketability of apple products through shared resources and expertise.
- 2. Cluster with Local Fruit Farmers in the Region of Korça:** Established in Korça area, this cluster includes ATTC Korça and nine local farmers who work with fruits (plums, figs, etc.) and other agricultural products. **Annex 2**
 - The aim of this cluster is to diversify and improve the production of local fruits, creating new market opportunities.

3. **Cluster with Fishermen in the Region of Vlorë:** Established in Vlorë area, this cluster includes ATTC Vlorë and 11 local fishermen. **Annex 3**
 - The aim of this cluster is to promote innovative seafood processing techniques for locally typical products.

4. **Cluster with Educational centre in the Region of Vlorë:** Established in Vlorë area, this cluster includes the Industrial VET High School “Pavarësia” (the Independence) and the restaurant S.R. Kropisht. **Annex 4**
 - The aim of this cluster is to support practical training for high school students and apprentice young workers from the local private sector.

5. **Cluster with Local Oyster Growers of Boka Kotorska Bay:** Established in Kotor area, this cluster involves the Institute of Marine Biology and nine local oyster farmers, with bilateral agreements in place. **Annex 5**
 - The aim of this cluster is to foster collaboration among oyster farmers, improving production techniques and market access and to use the Food4Health lab in Kotor also after the project end according to the management rules.

6. **Cluster of Local Farmers in Tricase area:** established in Tricase area, this cluster involves CIHEAM Bari and eighteen local farmers and honey producer, with bilateral agreements in place. **Annex 6**
 - The aim of this cluster is to promote sustainable farming practices, to enhance the marketability of local agricultural products, to use the Food4Health lab in Tricase also after the project end according to the management rules and to be an “incubator centers” that provide demonstration and pilot initiatives focused on knowledge transfer to support farmers and startups focused on farming.

7. **Cluster of Local Fishermen in Tricase area:** established in Tricase area, this cluster involves CIHEAM Bari and four local fishermen, with bilateral agreements in place. **Annex 7**
 - The aim of this cluster is to promote sustainable fishing practices, to enhance the marketability of local fish products, to use the Food4Health lab in Tricase also after the project end according to the management rules and to be an “incubator centers” that provide demonstration and pilot initiatives focused on knowledge transfer to support fishermen and startups focused on fishing.

8. **Cluster of Local farmers and local association and agency in Molise:** established in Molise Region, this cluster involved ARSARP (Regional Agency for Agricultural, Rural

and Fisheries Development), an Association and nine farmers among those who responded to the public notice. **Annex 8** (only in Italian language)

- The aim of this cluster is to support rural development and innovation in the agri-food sector and to use in the manner and within the terms provided the “Community Virtual Lab-Maps of Molise”.