

## SPAIN

### Agri-food chain integration & quality

**Location**  
Seville

**Programming period**  
2014 – 2020

**Priority**  
P3 - Food chain & risk  
management

**Measure**  
M09 – Producers groups &  
organisations

**Funding (EUR)**  
Total budget 409 510  
EAFRD 327 608  
National/Regional 81 902

**Project duration**  
2017 – 2021

**Project promoter**  
MANCERA, S.C.A.

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**Website**  
[www.agrocolor.es/certificacion/globalgap-ifa/](http://www.agrocolor.es/certificacion/globalgap-ifa/)

A cooperative in Spain implemented a quality certification programme for tomato crops, aiming to increase the added value of the product, while being committed to promote safe and sustainable production processes.

## Summary

The Mancera Cooperative Society implemented the GLOBALG.A.P. quality certification in tomato crops, aiming to establish a product of added value, while maintaining the Cooperative's commitment to promote safe and sustainable production processes.



The certification body Agrocolor was entrusted with the consultancy and advisory work for Mancera's members, to implement the quality and safety protocols needed for the granting of the quality certification. The application of these protocols has led to an improvement in the marketing of their tomatoes. The protocols have led to changes in the production organisation in terms of management, infrastructure, maintenance and production processes, while guaranteeing environmental sustainability.

## Results

The GLOBALG.A.P. quality certification was obtained for the tomato production of the Cooperative's members. A higher value-added product is now produced to meet current and future demand.

The organisational and production management processes of the entire organisation were redefined. The Cooperative improved the control of the production practices and optimised the use of different resources, such as phytopharmaceuticals, also known as herbal remedies.

The project achieved greater cooperation and coordination among the actors who participated in the implementation of the protocol. Those involved included farmers, service companies, farm workers and the technical personnel.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The GLOBALG.A.P. offers benefits when it comes to administration. Customers are trusting of this certification and do not ask for further documentation, therefore, having a quality certification simplifies the relations with the customers.
- ❑ The standardisation of the production processes has a direct impact, not only on improving productivity, but also on the well-being of producers and their working conditions.
- ❑ It would be desirable to make the annual payments of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) support during the growing season to ensure a continuous flow of funds during the tomato production cycle.

## Context

Mancera is a Cooperative Society with more than 200 associated producers. The Cooperative provides technical assistance in production management, investment planning and in implementing production certification processes to its members. The Cooperative covers the autonomous communities of Andalusia and Extremadura and more specifically the provinces of Cadiz, Seville, Cordoba, Huelva and Badajoz.

Since its foundation in 1992, the Mancera Cooperative Society has been committed to quality production as a differentiating element of its products. Consequently, all participating producers follow the agricultural production system, known as 'Integrated Production'. This system aims to achieve sustainability in agricultural production through the optimal use of natural resources and agricultural inputs, better waste management and the conservation of biodiversity. This philosophy has led all members to focus on quality produce, helped by applying strict procedures which change depending on current demands of the processing industry, markets and society.

The Mancera Cooperative Society decided to improve the quality of tomato production, with the purpose of providing a higher value-added product, as well as promoting more sustainable production processes. In 2017, they hired the certification body Agrocolor with support from the National Rural Development Programme. A joint action was launched with the target of implementing the GLOBALG.A.P. certification in all tomato producing plots.

GLOBALG.A.P. is the main internationally recognised standard for agricultural production, guaranteeing producers, distributors and consumers that the certified goods have been produced using a safe and sustainable production system. This certification covers all stages of production, from pre-harvest activities, such as soil management and pesticide application, to post-harvest product handling and storage.

This was an unusual case as there is currently no other organisation or processing industry that certifies its entire production chain under this demanding quality protocol.

## Objectives

The main objective of this project was to obtain the GLOBALG.A.P. quality certification for tomato production and become a reference point in terms of sustainable and environmentally friendly production. Furthermore, the project aimed to:

- Reduce the environmental impact of production by improving the use and management of agricultural resources and inputs; and
- Improve the organisation and communication among the Cooperative's members.

## Activities

The project was developed in three stages. The first two stages involved auditing activities, which were carried out by Agrocolor. The last stage involved actions to maintain the quality certification, which were carried out by Mancera Cooperative Society.

### First stage:

- A detailed analysis of the Cooperative Society's procedures was carried out.
- Individual interviews were conducted to find out the specific characteristics of each farm.
- Audits were carried out, to identify possible deficiencies to be solved.
- Guidelines and technical instructions were established, so that producers could start the implementation of the quality and safety protocols related to the standard.

### Second stage:

- An evaluation of the processes implemented by the Cooperative members was carried out.
- Agrocolor shadowed Cooperative members carrying out their work to identify possible issues and to give them guidelines for their correction.
- The final certificate of conformity was issued once the audit had been successfully completed.

### Third stage:

- The Mancera Cooperative Society will provide advice to new members on how to adapt to the established quality protocols.
- Periodic monitoring of all members is carried out to detect and correct any possible non-compliance, with the objective of maintaining the quality certification in all tomato production plots.

All parties involved worked together for the correct implementation of the GLOBAL G.A.P. protocol and to obtain the corresponding certification for the Mancera Cooperative company. The networking resulted in a system of communication, coordination and support between partners through meetings, e-mails, phone calls and messaging on social networks.

## Main Results

The GLOBALG.A.P. quality certification was obtained for the tomato production of the Cooperative's members. A higher value-added product is now produced to meet current and future demand. This was made possible by improvements made to the infrastructure of participating farms.

The organisational and production management processes of the entire organisation were redefined. Better control over the production practices was achieved, as well as the optimisation of the use of different resources e.g. phytopharmaceuticals, herbal remedies. The efficiency of the farming system increased by reducing the use of fertilizers and plant protection products, as well as the use of irrigation water and energy. As a result, the environmental impact was reduced during the production and packaging processes.

The project achieved greater cooperation and coordination among the actors who participated in the implementation of the protocol. Those involved included farmers, service companies, farm workers and the technical personnel.

The GLOBALG.A.P. certification not only provides information and documentation to guarantee the quality standards and compliance with the farm's objectives, but it is also a way of standardising production practices. Although this good practice focuses on tomato production, MANCERA has other production processes, such as citrus fruits production, which can benefit from learning and replicating relevant production improvements to achieve better quality.

During the time that this initiative has been running, it has also proven to be transferable to other partners and territories. In fact, several individual producers, not belonging to the Cooperative, have implemented these protocols, even on different crops.

## Key lessons

The development of this initiative has identified some important aspects to be taken into account, such as the difficulties related to improving the farms' infrastructure to make them compliant with protocols. This is mainly due to the state of the farms before undertaking the certification process.

The experience gained from the coordination and implementation of the protocols between the different members of the Cooperative helps to ensure the continuity of the project and allows for it to be transferred to other members and crops.

The GLOBALG.A.P. also offers benefits when it comes to administration. Customers are trusting of this certification and do not ask for further documentation, therefore, having a quality certification simplifies relations with the customers.

The standardisation of the productions processes has a direct impact, not only on improving productivity, but also on the wellbeing of producers and their working conditions.

It would be desirable to make the annual payments of the RDP support during the growing season to ensure a continuous flow of funds during the tomato production cycle.



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## Additional sources of information

[www.globalgap.org](http://www.globalgap.org)