

## PORTUGAL

### Entry of skilled / younger farmers

#### Location

Alentejo

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P2 – Competitiveness

#### Measure

M6 – Farm & business development

#### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 350 000

RDP contribution 150 000

Private 150 000

Other 50 000

#### Project duration

2015 – 2020

#### Project promoter

Pepe Aromas, Lda

#### Contact

[pepearomas@gmail.com](mailto:pepearomas@gmail.com)

#### Website

[www.pepearomas.com](http://www.pepearomas.com)

A unique example of a rural business which achieved economic profitability based on innovation and environmentally-friendly practices.

### Summary

The Pepe Aromas agri-business set out to revitalise its rural area through the production of high-quality products made from organically-farmed prickly pears.



The company generated added value for the entire area by creating a value chain that brought together local suppliers, retailers and local employment. It began cultivating prickly pears using organic methods and renovated an abandoned railway station which became its offices. In collaboration with universities, Pepe Aromas created a series of high-quality products which are now sold across Portugal.

### Results

Pepe Aromas is the first Portuguese company to develop foodstuffs made from organic prickly pears.

The company estimates that in 2020 it will be able to create one to two additional jobs.

It has invested in organic farming processes to reduce its environmental impact. Use of mineral fertilisers has been cut significantly and water consumption is lower thanks to the introduction of efficient drop irrigation methods.

### Context

Pepe Aromas is a family agro-business set up in 2013 as a organic farming operation using sustainable practices. The company's goals were to increase local employment, protect and preserve the natural landscape and its resources, and ensure that cultural traditions are preserved in a sustainable way.

### Objectives

The project had five main objectives:

- create employment in a rural area;
- preserve natural resources;
- use good agricultural practices;
- maintain cultural traditions by renovating an abandoned railway station; and
- set up an example of sustainable agriculture involving the cultivation of prickly pears.

### Activities

RDP funding for 'farm and business development' is helping Pepe Aromas to develop. The timeline of project activities is as follows:

2015 – Installation of 6 ha of prickly pear plantations. All cultivation areas (10 ha) acquire organic certification.

2016 – Investigated options for new products.

2017 - Installed an additional 14 ha of prickly pears, which were certified as organic.

2018 – Renovated an abandoned railway station, which became the company's offices.

Bought and installed fruit-processing equipment.

Pepe Aromas is now developing a range of new organic products including juices, vinegar, jams and jellies. Some of these have been developed in collaboration with the University of Évora in Portugal.

The company has a contract with Mendes Gonçalves, which transports the fruit and processes it into end products, including juice and vinegar. Pepe Aromas also has agreements to supply the supermarket Intermarche with fresh prickly pears; and Ideias e Requentes with jams and jellies.



### Main results

Pepe Aromas is the first Portuguese company to develop foodstuffs made from organic prickly pears.

The company estimates that in 2020 it will be able to create one to two additional jobs.

It has invested in organic farming processes to reduce its environmental impact. Use of mineral fertilisers has been cut significantly and water consumption is lower thanks to the introduction of efficient drop irrigation methods.

The initiative has improved the morale of the local population as it has good potential for job creation and social inclusion.