

# GO CEREZA - Improving the competitiveness of cherry production in the mountainous North of Extremadura, Spain

LEADER LAGs cooperate with EIP Operational Group to improve competitiveness of Spanish cherries.

## EAFRD-funded projects

**Location:** Extremadura, Spain

**Programming period:** 2014-2020

**Priority:** P2 - Competitiveness

**Focus Area:** Farm's performance, restructuring & modernisation

**Measures:** M16 - Cooperation

**Funding:**

|                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Total budget      | 299 999.48 (EUR) |
| EAFRD             | 215 999.62 (EUR) |
| National/Regional | 53 999.91 (EUR)  |
| Private           | 29 999.95 (EUR)  |

**Timeframe:** 2018 to 2022

**Project promoter:** EIP-AGRI Operational Group GO CEREZA

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## Project results

The main published results of the initiative include:

- > Approved sectoral list of cherry varieties.
- > Procedures for supplying certified plant material and harvesting.
- > Map of varieties.
- > Good Practices Book for Cherry Cultivation
- > Publication of information brochures.

Key economic, social and environmental impacts were: a common marketing strategy; increased competitiveness / incomes; strengthened role of producers (participating in advisory boards); reduced use of pesticide, fertilisers and other resources creating savings improved waste and energy management; as well as social gains for rural women and young people.

## Summary

Spain's GO CEREZA project was created with the overall aim to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of the entire value chain of cherry production in Extremadura. The best way of implementing such a project was by cooperation and by bringing together all relevant stakeholders of the value chain. For this reason, a new Operational Group of the EIP AGRI was formed consisting of the following 13 members:

- > Five Producer Organisations (with around 4 000 small producers, SMEs and cooperatives) and one individual producer.
- > Five Local Action Groups (LEADER LAGs) located in the 5 cherry production territories in the north of Extremadura region, Spain.
- > One Research & Development organisation.
- > One Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Cluster.



## Lessons & Recommendations

- Producer Organisations, including food and drink sectors, have an important role to play in the development of rural areas.
- This project demonstrates how Producer Organisations can cooperate and how this can be supported by LEADER. The LEADER LAGs played a crucial role in facilitating cooperation. In addition, the results demonstrate that the CAP's financing from both Pillars can successfully be managed together in a complementary manner.
- AKIS is useful for knowledge transfer and fostering awareness of producers about the different links in food supply chains.

## Context

Cherry tree farms in Valle del Jerte and across all northern Extremadura, Spain, face increasing competition from other cherry production areas in the world. When in 2016 sector representatives came together to debate these challenges, two key issues were identified. This included a lack of information about the global agricultural and agri-food developments of the sector and a slow uptake of the knowledge produced by sector-specific research centres.

It was felt that the sector's competitiveness could be improved if access to information about global market demands was better facilitated. In addition, a more effective response was needed to satisfy the increasingly sophisticated demands by consumers. To address these needs, the project GO CEREZA was created with the overall aim to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of the entire value chain of cherry production in Extremadura.

The best way of implementing such a project was by cooperation and by bringing together all relevant stakeholders of the value chain. For this reason, a new Operational Group of the EIP AGRI was formed consisting of the following 13 members:

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## Objectives

The main aim of the EIP-AGRI Operational Group GO CEREZA is to improve the competitiveness of cherry farms and increase their added value in the food chain.

## Activities

The project activities involved economic, environmental and social perspectives. This ensured that the Operational Group applied an integrated and cohesive approach. The following main activities can be summarised as follows:

- Developing and investigating different topics for the "field labs".
- Supporting the implementation and maintenance of quality certifications in line with Good Agricultural Practices standards.
- Disseminating knowledge about renewable energy and energetic efficiency across the cherry value chain.
- Carrying out marketing and promotion campaigns with retailers and consumer markets
- Focusing on supporting the improvement of incomes in small producers' farms
- Defining gender equality plans in stakeholder organisations.
- Implementing relevant training for producers and workers across the value chain with a particular focus on the topic of young people in a modern sustainable agriculture.
- Improving the utilisation of food safety management systems by Producer organisations.
- Developing a manual of Good Practices in the Cultivation of the Cherry Tree incorporating cultural traditions as well as technological and scientific knowledge. For the use for training and as a commercial, promotional and marketing tool.

## Main results

**At the results level, the project produced the following:**

- Production of reports and materials, including:
- Approved sectoral list of cherry varieties.
- Procedures for supplying certified plant material and harvesting.



- › Map of varieties.
- › Good Practices Book for Cherry Cultivation
- › Publication of information brochures.
- › Comprehensive training program in recycling and requalification.
- › Creation of experimental fields and field laboratories.
- › Networks have been developed linking different actors and fostering cross-sectoral relationships.
- › Working groups have been organised involving stakeholders of the food chain sector and LEADER LAGs.
- › A dissemination campaign has been carried out through presentation and information sessions.
- › Final hybrid event for the transfer of the project results.
- › Publication of a website.
- › Development of an App

**The main economic, social and environmental impacts were:**

- › Implementation of a common marketing strategy.
- › Increased competitiveness / incomes.
- › Strengthened role of producers (participating in advisory boards).
- › Reduced use of pesticide and fertilisers reducing inputs costs.
- › Reduced industrial water consumption.
- › Improved oil management preventing contamination and erosion.
- › Improved diversification and local production.
- › Improved residue management (packaging, product waste and transport gas emissions).
- › Increased use of renewable energy and improved energetic efficiency in sector.
- › Improved gender equality through shared ownership and visibility of women.
- › Improved attractiveness of agriculture for young people by promoting generational renewal.
- › Improved food safety and health benefits by promoting organic food production and quality labels.

## Key lessons

- › This project demonstrates how Producer Organisations can cooperate and how this can be supported by LEADER. The LEADER LAGs played a crucial role in facilitating cooperation. In addition, the results demonstrate that the CAP's financing from both Pillars can successfully be managed together in a complementary manner.
- › The need of improving resilience must be assessed across all three perspectives: economic, social, and environmental.
- › Producer Organisations, including food and drink sectors, have an important role to play in the development of rural areas.
- › Existing opportunities need to be utilised, such as relevant EU tools and EU Funds to respond to ongoing changes in the marketplace, customer awareness and sensitivities about products.
- › Awareness levels of how research, new technologies, agriculture precision tools and genetic resources can be utilised need to stay high.
- › The role of AKIS is key for knowledge transfer and fostering awareness of producers about the different links in the food supply chain.

## Additional information:

[cerezadeljerte.org/el-proyecto-go-cereza-para-la-mejora-de-la-competitividad-del-cultivo-se-presenta-caceres](http://cerezadeljerte.org/el-proyecto-go-cereza-para-la-mejora-de-la-competitividad-del-cultivo-se-presenta-caceres)

[youtube.com/watch?v=3-dcS07uzzc](https://youtube.com/watch?v=3-dcS07uzzc)



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