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*Traditional Food Network to improve the transfer of knowledge for innovation*



Project no.: 613912

**Project acronym: TRAF00N**

Project title: Traditional Food Network to improve the transfer of knowledge for innovation

Instrument:

FP7-KBBE COORDINATION AND SUPPORT ACTION  
(SUPPORTING ACTION)

**Activity 2.2:** Fork to Farm: Food (including seafood), health and well being

**Topic KBBE.2013.2.3-02:** Network for the transfer of knowledge on traditional foods to SMEs

## **Deliverable Report for D5.6**

*Guidelines for successfully transferred product innovations*

Due date of deliverable: M 26

Actual submission date: M 36

Start date of project: November 1<sup>st</sup> 2013

Duration: 3 years

Organisation name of lead contractor for this deliverable: AAC (Partner 12)

Contributing partners: HES-SO (Partner 19), BU (Partner 15), WBF (Partner 20), CITOLIVA (Partner 27), IFAPA (Partner 13), SPI (Partner 22)

**Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013)**

### **Dissemination Level**

<b>PU</b>	Public	<b>x</b>
<b>PP</b>	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
<b>RE</b>	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
<b>CO</b>	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

During 2015-2016, Trafooon project has organized more than 55 Training Workshops (TWs) in 14 European countries with the focus on six different food product sectors: 1) grains, 2) fish, 3) vegetables, 4) mushrooms, 5) fruits and 6) olives, and general topics like food quality & food safety, and entrepreneurship. The main objective of the TWs was to allow the transfer of knowledge and innovation to SMEs, based on the analysis of the Inventory of needs (IoNs) previously performed during the Multi-stakeholder Workshops (MWs) at the beginning of the project.

TRAF00N knowledge transfer network interlinks researchers, knowledge transfer organizations and associations of SMEs on a European, national and regional level. The network acts as a mediator for the transfer of current innovative research in production and marketing of traditional food, and fosters entrepreneurship in the sector of traditional food producers.

The importance of knowledge transfer in the European food industry is obvious, especially in the case of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the food producing sector. These SMEs are increasingly under pressure due to the opening of new markets, an increasing demand of standardized and price competitive food products by the consumers, the rising importance of large retailers, and the need to conform to governmental regulations. To deal with this complex situation, the transfer of new technology and knowledge is essential, becoming an important subject of scientific research, as well as in economic and public policy.

Many obstacles that hamper the transfer of new scientific insights and innovation to SMEs have been identified, e.g. lack of trust, language and culture barriers, lack of ability to transfer knowledge to a non-specialist. Based on the experience in implementation of TRAF00N Training Workshops on Sweet Fruits and Olive products, this document collects best practices, practical information, lessons learned and recommendations for a successfully transfer innovations to SMEs.

Regarding the topics included in WP5, sweet fruits and products from olives, 18 different training workshops have been organized:



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1st round Workshops - WP5 (Fruits and Olives) 2015	VENUE	DATE	PARTNER
<b>TRAFOON Workshop on Raspberry in Serbia</b>	Ivanjica, Serbia	22-23/10/2015	BU
<b>Five Summer Training Workshops on Apricots in Switzerland</b>	Valais, Switzerland	06/25/2015 07/09/2015 07/23/2015 08/06/2015 08/20/2015	Hes-so
<b>Training Workshop on Fruits in Serbia</b>	Belgrade, Serbia	24/06/2015	BU
<b>Training Workshop on Fruits in Poland</b>	Olsztyn, Poland	18/06/2015	IAR&FR
<b>Training Workshop on Olives in Portugal</b>	Santarém, Portugal	08/06/2015	SPI
<b>Training Workshop on Berries in Switzerland</b>	Conthey, Switzerland	22/05/2015	Hes-so
<b>Training Workshop on Berries in Switzerland</b>	Uitikon, Switzerland	19/05/2015	Hes-so
<b>Training Workshop on Olives in Spain</b>	Jaen, Spain	05-06/05/2015	AAC/IFAPA

Table1: List of WP5 training workshops organized during 2015

2nd round Workshops - WP5 (Fruits and Olives) 2016	VENUE	DATE	PARTNER
<b>"Innovation in production and processing of plum" Training Workshop on Plum in Serbia</b>	Cacak, Serbia	26/02/2016	BU
<b>"Innovation in processing of plum" Training Workshop on Plum in Serbia</b>	Kraljevo, Serbia	25/03/2016	BU
<b>"Contributions of private and public R&amp;D into value creation in food and agriculture sector"</b>	Sion	23/06/2016	HES/SO
<b>Training Workshop on Apricots in Switzerland</b>	Saxon, Valais	05/08/2016	HES/SO
<b>Training Workshop on Olives in Spain</b>	Cordoba, Spain	08-09/06/2016	AAC/IFAPA/ CITOLIVA
<b>Training Workshop on Olives in Portugal</b>	Santarém, Portugal	07/06/2016	SPI

Table 2: List of WP5 training workshops organized during 2016

At these events, technical innovations were transferred to SMEs, answering to the needs indicated in the IoNs and discussed in the Multi-stakeholder workshops. They were also a platform for discussion among



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SMEs, scientists and other networks to come up with ideas to satisfy the needs/items for which there is no transferable knowledge available.

## **2. Sweet fruits Workshops.**

### **Workshops contents and structure**

#### *Selection of transferrable knowledge*

During the first year of the Project, Inventory of innovation needs of SMEs in three European countries involved in WP5 Sweet fruits was carried out using the questionnaire and semi-structure interviews. These results were analysed and classified during the multi-stakeholder workshop held in Sion by partners of TRAF00N consortium, external experts and representatives of SMEs Associations. Two groups of needs: those that can be covered with exiting knowledge from National and European projects (FP6 and FP7) and those that cannot be covered with existing knowledge were distinguished. The first group of needs was selected as transferrable knowledge. The specific needs were prioritised and the most urgent and important were selected as thematic of the training workshops. At the same time some selection of the target public based on the group of fruit important for specific country has been performed. For most of the workshops organised it was decided to organise separate training workshops for different traditional fruits.

It should be stressed out that the participation of the SME associations in the topic selection is very important. They are well aware of the interests of their members. The presentations should focus on the latest trends and technics and not on the results of scientific research.

#### *Preparation of training material*

Following the decisions taken during the multi-stakeholder workshop and selection of knowledge which could be transferred to SMEs, the list of topics for the training workshops was designed. The experts for each selected topic were invited to prepare presentations on relevant issues.

The targeted audience should be taken into account during the preparation of the training material. The applied character of the knowledge to be transferred is very important. The participants should be



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provided with the training materials. Presentations as hard copies or files available for the download should be provided.

#### Preparation of promotional material

Some promotional office supplies such as notebooks and pencils are appreciated by the participants. Some other supplies like bags, flyers, newsletters might be also provided. The certificates of attendance were issued in Serbia. Serbian partner, for every event related to the Project such as Conference, Congresses, Fairs prepared newsletters and flyers. The results the project were presented on the Fair "The fruits of West Pomoravlje", where specially designed material consists of selected presentations from all TWs held in Serbia entitled: "Best practice guide: Innovation in production and processing of raspberry and plum", T-shirts with web address of TRAF00N Project, notebook, pencils, bags, flyers and newsletters were prepared for dissemination.

#### Structure of the workshop

Different approaches for the workshop structures were applied by the project partners, from multiple short sessions, through half a day, 1 day to 2 days long workshop. The multiple sessions were organised in the late afternoon as fortnightly recurring events during two months. It was adapted to the busy schedules of apricot producers during the harvest period. Out of the busiest period longer events might be organised. It is recommended to differentiate the topics between morning and afternoon sessions, for example: trainings on the technical innovations (production and processing) in the morning, whereas afternoon session covered generic topics on food packaging, food safety, food quality as well as business, marketing and IPR issues.

It is recommended to limit the duration of lectures. Entrepreneurs do not have much time. Also they often need a ready-made solutions and simple messages. They are rarely interested in scientific basis of the solutions they may apply during their activities. It is important to take care of the highly interesting form of the trainings especially in the case of longer workshops. For example theoretical activities might be interwoven with practical ones. It is advisable to present the "success stories" by inviting people who have achieved success in their business or similar activities that are the inspiration for the participants.



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Additional activities: excursions, visit, etc.

The orchard visits, practical trainings in the orchards, or the visits of the large plantations were highly appreciated by the participants. Some specific subjects such as transfer of innovation in fruit processing or knowledge on disease diagnostic can be much more efficient in the transforming plant or orchards, respectively. It might be a good way to render the workshop more attractive to participants.

Also it might be a good idea to invite extra guests eg. lawyers, financial advisors to increase attractiveness of the workshop. A large variety of thematic is not always a drawback; on the contrary it can often increase the value of the workshop or the number of participants.

## **Designing and planning Workshops**

Date (special considerations for SMEs)

In general, dates outside of the period of intensive field work or the harvest are recommended. Alternatively, other dates in communication with local organizations that have direct contact with potential participants of the workshop. The events important for the branch but also availability of experts should be taken into account. It might be also interesting to organize meetings with entrepreneurs after normal business hours. Many of them lead their businesses and are able to allocate only a late afternoon to participate in the training workshop. This type of event was successfully organized in Switzerland.

Venue (accessibility, location, etc.)

A place with convenient access for most of the participants is recommended. Possibly close to the place of residence or business, in the leading region of production or processing. It should be also easy to reach with appropriate infrastructure for training (appropriate hall, place for registration, coffee break and lunch). It is good if the place is attractive for participants, worth visiting or connected to the branch commerce or industry.

If the specific traditional food is cultivated/processed in two or more distinct regions, it is worth to organise the workshop which will gather both regions and create forum to exchange experiences.



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### Invitations (who?, when?, how?)

The access to large databases of SMEs involved in the production/transformation of the traditional fruits is needed in order to target the potential participants. Also for that reason the contact with SME association or clusters are very valuable. It might be advisable to organize the workshop in collaboration with such institutions.

The invitations might be sent by e-mail or post and preferably directly addressed to a specific person. It should be send well in advance (ideally up to 3 months, and at least month ahead). The invitation should include the detailed agenda and the link or questionnaire for registration. It is advisable to send the reminder in case of not satisfactory response rate. Also the reminder about the workshop should be send few days before it takes place.

The information about the workshop should be posted on the website of the organizers, the project and co-organizing/supporting institutions. It might be useful to use the local media to spread the information about the workshop.

### Participation of SMEs Associations as mediator

As it was mentioned before the engagement of SME Associations is very important already at the level of workshop organization.

### Registration

The necessity of the registration depends on the character of the event. For example: for short sessions organized in the orchards where the space limit does not apply the registration is not necessary. However longer events, especially including coffee breaks and lunch/aperitif, the registration will enable the estimation of the number of participants. It is recommended to have some possibility to adapt the number of participants.

### Agenda (presentations, coffee breaks and lunches, networking time)

It is important to adapt the duration of the presentation to the audience. It is rather recommended that the presentation does not exceed 25-30 minutes. It is very important to reserve enough time for the discussion after each presentation or at the end as round table discussion. Coffee breaks or networking aperitif are great possibility to create the good atmosphere for exchange of experiences between participants but also discussion with speakers.

The agenda and duration of the workshops should be adapted for the needs of participants.

## Lessons learned

### What to avoid for a successfully transferred innovations to SMEs?

In general, speakers which do not know specific situation of the participating SMEs should be avoided. The participants lose interest in the workshop presenting the solutions which are not applicable to their business. Therefore, it is important to present the innovation adapted for the specific participants.

The questionnaire of workshop evaluation should be simple, easily comprehensible and quick to fill in.

### General recommendations

For successfully transferred innovations to SMEs it is very important to select the experts that are in close contact with the producers and processors and could translate the knowledge to the understandable form for people which often do not have academic education. The experts connected with the associations, agricultural advisory services or R&D Institutions, active in media gain easier contact with the audience. It is highly important that the experts are at ease with the talks to non-scientific audience.

### Specific recommendations

The main recommendation is to prepare the workshops which are tailored to the needs and capacities of specific audience.

### Identified difference between countries

One of the biggest differences between the countries was the time which the SMEs were willing to devote for the training workshop. In Switzerland a half a day workshop was the longest one for which the participants could be found, and most of the workshops organised took place at the end of the day, after normal working hours. In Serbia even 2-days long workshop was organised.

### **3. Olive products Workshops.**

#### **Contents and structure**

##### *Selection of transferrable knowledge*

Through the Multi-stakeholder Workshops held in the first year of the project (Task 5.3), transferable knowledge was selected based on the analysis of the Inventory of Needs. Therefore, those needs which do not require in depth research and may be solved without the development of new research projects, were identified, finding the solutions within the consortium experts, external scientists or in collaboration with ongoing projects (Mobilization of Food Research).

As a result of the Multi-stakeholder Workshop, 22 needs were proposed by the olive oil and table olives SMEs and SMEs associations. Each need was discussed and classified by prioritization, urgency and solution. Most of these topics were included in the training workshops on olives held in Spain and Portugal.

Involving the target audience at a previous stage is highly advisable in order to prioritize and adapt the contents and structure to them.

##### *Preparation of training material*

After the training workshops, all participants received the presentations made by the speakers in electronic format.

The knowledge level of the audience has to be taken into account in order to adapt the training material. Complex scientific terms and/or legal rules should be avoided.

##### *Preparation of promotional material*

Some promotional material was prepared for the workshop and distributed to the speakers and audience, such as, posters, leaflets, textile folders, pens and pen drives. For the second workshop on olives in Spain, according to the thematic, red glass oil containers with TRAF00N logo were also given to the participants. This last special material was given in exchange of the workshop evaluation form, which was a very successful method to receive a high number of forms.



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The agenda should also explain the objective of the workshop in order to show potential participants the event's purpose, as well as, encouraging and motivating them to attend the workshop.

Providing logistic information to participants is recommendable.

### Structure of the workshop

Workshops on olives held in Spain were structured in two days including both technical sessions and visits. Workshops in Portugal were held in one day with technical sessions.

According to the experience, it would be better to held workshops, either one or two days, but only during the morning session, as during the afternoon sessions the number of attendees was significantly reduced.

Furthermore, discussion sessions are also quite important since the participants can assimilate the content of the workshop more easily and clarify any question.

Keeping the track of time, is a task to be recommended in this type of workshops.

Promoting networking through "break the ice" sessions is useful when make in accordance to the tone of the event.

### Additional activities: excursions, visit, etc.

Additional activities, such as, the show cooking, the visit to an Experimental Mill and the visit to a company, were organized during the workshops held in Spain and were appreciated by some of the participants. It seems to be a good initiative to make the workshop more attractive to the attendees.

Anyway, as it is mentioned previously, is an interesting activity as long as it is scheduled during the morning sessions due to the lack of attendance observed in afternoon sessions in general.

## Designing and planning Workshops

### Date (special considerations for SMEs)

SMEs have a limited number of staff and resources so dates with high activity intensity should be avoided. In the olive sector, the period from October to January (olive harvesting) is not recommendable for such type of events.

### Venue (accessibility, location, etc.)

The venue should be an easy location with convenient access to parking and other logistic services (bus, train, etc.). It is recommendable to choose the site in advance in order to find availability.

Signs to draw the attendees to the conference rooms, registration table or coffee-break/lunch is advisable.

### Invitations (who?, when?, how?)

At least, one month in advance, is necessary to start dissemination to large company databases working in the target sector. So, it is recommendable to generate it in advance. Later, massive mailing describing the workshop with a link to a brief registration form is a good way to share and disseminate the organization of the workshop.

It would be advisable to share the registration form to all organizares (with tools like Drive, for instance) with the aim of controlling the attendance and making more effort (e.g. through a phone call, personalized invitation,...) in those missing organizations but good targets for the event content. Sharing this information, allows avoiding forwarding/calls to those organizations already registered.

Also, a careful choice of speakers is very important, but can be tricky. Good criteria should involve: relevance to the event / audience, a mix of junior and senior speakers, opt for interesting speakers that can really engage with the audience.

E.g. there was a speaker from an olive oil company that did not use any multimedia, but just told his story. The audience really responded to it.



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### Participation of SMEs Associations as mediator

Related associations to the sector were contacted in order to make dissemination of the workshop among their members. Besides, some of them were contacted to take part as speakers.

Anyway, based on the experience, it is also recommendable individualized contact to SMEs in order to assure their participation.

### Registration

It is highly recommended to enable a registration process, as it helps to control the attendance (very important to control the room capacity and catering services) and to have a physical proof of it.

Signing up through an online platform, such as Google Forms, will significantly ease the registration process.

### Agenda (presentations, coffee breaks and lunches, networking time)

Presentations should be trending topics in the sector and the speakers should have accredited experience on them. Including breaks and networking time is required for networking, as it allows the sharing of experiences among attendees and speakers.

Consider the conference breaks as major opportunities to facilitate meetings:

- Have standing-up tables where people can eat and meet.
- Have sofas for people to sit and talk

Other ways to promote networking could be, for example:

- Prepare a list of participants and include the list in each distributed workshop dossier (asking permission beforehand).
- Prepare name tags so that people know who to meet. It is also good practice to identify attendees by type of organization (HES, research body, company, etc.)

If possible, set up an additional session dedicated to networking.



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## **Lessons learned**

### What to avoid for a successfully transferred innovations to SMEs?

- ✓ Workshops of more than 2 days.
- ✓ Topics and/or speakers with poor interest for the target audience.
- ✓ Scheduling the workshop during periods of great activity for the SME sector. Not filtering for interesting, relevant communications.
- ✓ Promoting Power Points rather than story-telling
- ✓ Full-day workshops
- ✓ Have free debates that last more than they should.

### General recommendations

- ✓ Topic selection based on real interest of the audience through previous surveys, meetings, calls...etc.
- ✓ Inviting to famed speakers on the topic in order to create expectation on the event.
- ✓ Taking into account the level of knowledge of the audience to adapting the content to it.
- ✓ Sessions scheduled only along the morning, trying to avoid the mid-afternoon and the evening because the observed reduced attendance.
- ✓ Including discussion sessions along the workshop and also breaks or networking time.
- ✓ Visits, excursions, show cooking...etc. are highly recommended.
- ✓ The venue has to be accessible.
- ✓ Identifying previously the target audience.
- ✓ Achieving the dissemination of the event with, at least, one month in advance.
- ✓ Follow-up on speakers and attendees. Prepare the minutes of the workshop and publish it / send it to attendants.
- ✓ Have several debate periods along the workshop.
- ✓ Prepare it in advance.
- ✓ Before logistics, picture what the workshop would be for, how would it be like and for whom.
- ✓ Prepare with a team – multiple considerations will arrive and a broad team is an indispensable asset.
- ✓ Don't forget Wi-fi connection as most participants will ask for it.



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Specific considerations

- ✓ Taking into account the greater period of activity of the sector of SMEs in order to avoid scheduling the workshop on that period. This period for olive SMEs is from October to January.
- ✓ In the Spanish olive sector, the mediation of SMEs associations does not work well enough.
- ✓ Collaborate with other organisations with similar goals. This will result in a mutually beneficial collaboration and will add interest and dimension to the event. This is especially useful in the frame of European projects, where several events are organized per year, and some "event fatigue" is increasingly noticeable.
- ✓ Choose the location carefully. A nice / impressive location is an attractive business card already.

Identified difference between countries

None