



The role of the LAG Eloro in the process of local development of the southern area of Syracuse.

The cooperation among cross-border clusters of MSMEs in the agri-food sector (as well as in the environmental, crafts and tourism related sectors) in terms of quality and safety of products and services for the enrichment of the local know-how, can provide an added value in competitive terms in the new Euro-Mediterranean market that is arising



in a difficult time, such as that of globalisation and its cyclical crises.

The LAG ELORO deals with sustainable rural development since 1998; it has participated, since its establishment, in many cooperation activities and distinguished itself especially in the planning and management of local integrated development

initiatives and sustainability interventions in rural areas, as in the case of the activation of participatory technical tables on specific agri-food supply chains; or, again, in the drafting of memoranda of understanding and creation of networks with professional associations, consumers associations, local authorities and institutions, to support the productive chains and the integration of the stages of production / processing / marketing of agri-food products in the local agricultural economy; or, finally, in the case of the launching of public tenders and the activation of special support measures to encourage the productive chains of the quality typical products of the area (oil, wine, almonds, and several fruit and vegetables with the quality marks as PGI, PDO

brands, etc.) and the direct sale of products (according to the philosophy of 'food mile' or 'zero km').

The action of the LAG Eoro unfolds into two main areas: one closely linked to the ***support of local economies*** (agriculture and agri-food, crafts, tourism, culture, social economy, environment, MSMEs, etc.) and another one related to the ***cooperation with other territories*** with inter-territorial, interregional and transnational scope.

The support for local economies

Through the **Community Initiative Programmes LEADER II, LEADER+ and of the Axis IV LEADER Approach of the Sicily RDP 2007-2013**, the LAG Eloro has made some real integrated and participatory Action Plans for local sustainable development that allowed to experience a common methodology with local actors and to promote development initiatives mainly addressed to individuals and associated entrepreneurs, especially in the areas of agriculture, tourism, environmental protection and promotion of sites of natural interest, demonstrating the benefits of actions implemented at district level. The LAG Eloro has proceeded with the creation of an integrated production system in which agriculture, crafts, MSMEs, tourist-receptive offer and services in general can contribute to the enhancement of land resources, increasing their attractiveness and the quality of life of its inhabitants. It has also made the practical application of the chain approach, first with the signing of three " Supply Chain Pacts" (oil, wine and almonds) with the major producers; then, by implementing a strategy of connection and completion designed to cover any areas of development remained outside of the initiatives promoted by the clustering tools available and to strengthen the tourism sector integrated with the promotion of the short chain in agriculture and agri-food. In more than two decades of local planning, the LAG Eloro has proven to be an active player in the local administration and distribution of the project



finance awarding, as contracting authority of the LEADER programme, approximately 14 million Euro in 15 years of activity in the Eloro district, that is to say, in the territory of the 5 municipalities (Avola, Noto, Pachino, Portopalo di Capo Passero and Rosolini) where it has territorial competence. About 120 beneficiaries, primarily MSMEs and their clusters, followed by associations and some local authorities. That is, that in more than two decades it has

gone from supporting individual micro-business initiatives to supporting business combinations, up to the packages of systemic aids or supply chain aids.

This process continues in terms of strengthening and improvement, in fact, the new **Local Action Plan "Eloro 2020"**, recently approved under the **Rural Development Program "Sicily" 2014-2020**, whose main idea is inspired to the valorisation of the Mediterranean Diet as a way of life, concerns

two main pillars: ***Development and Innovation addressed to local production systems and chains*** and ***Sustainable Tourism***, with a transversal objective, ***Promotion of Innovation***, which supports and connects the two main thematic areas in a balanced manner; the identified strategy consists in strengthening the organisation in supply chains of the quality circuits of local productions by integrating agricultural production, craftsmanship and tourist offer.

Of course, the support for local economies does not end here. The LAG Eloro has played a key role in the socioeconomic animation in the Eloro district as for tourism development and environmental re-qualification projects included in the **PRUSST "The Economies of Tourism" (1999-2006)**, with a budget of more than 720 million Euro; as co-actuator in the **Territorial Integrated Programme - TIP n° 9 "Eco-museum of the Mediterranean" (1999-2006)** promoted by the Regional Province of Syracuse to enhance, with a budget of over 55 million Euro, cultural, environmental, ethno-anthropological resources and those of the typical productive activities of the territory identity, transforming them into as many products to be allocated to the tourism market through the creation of a network with a unified, integrated and coordinated offer, functionally organised under a single brand of quality. Still, in the framework of the **Thematic Territorial Pact for agriculture and fisheries "ELORO VENDICARI" (1999-2004)**, the LAG Eloro played the role of socioeconomic animator of 75 entrepreneurial initiatives included therein, for a value of about 35 million Euro, in the agricultural, agri-food and fishing sectors, the investments related to the provision of complementary services to agricultural and fish-pond production and investments related to the agricultural and fisheries products promotion. In addition, as part of the **Strategic Planning "City Development" (2005-2010)**, funded by the Sicilian Region with over 300 thousand Euros to the Municipalities of Avola (lead partner), Ispica, Noto, Pachino, Portopalo di Capo Passero, Pozzallo and Rosolini, the LAG Eloro plays the role of socioeconomic animator, involving potential beneficiaries in order to implement the framework program of urban re-qualification and improvement of the quality of life that the strategic plan subtends. Finally, under the EAFRD Fund O.P. Sicily 2007-2013, Sicily RDP 2007-2013, the LAG Eloro became the creator and promoter and is currently the lead partner of the **District of Quality Fruits and Vegetables of the Noto Valley - DOQVN (Jan. 2008/ongoing)**. The DOQVN is the first local big cluster (productive district) based on quality fruit and vegetable production in the Eloro District, recognised by the Sicilian Region, Department of Cooperation, by Decree no. 546/12S published in the GURS on 6th April 2007, which counts on over 102 subscriber companies, with 1,621 workers, 13 Producer



Organisations, 3 Protection Consortia and 29 other entities, including 7 local institutions and 22 organisms (universities, research centres, associations of producers, trade associations, financial institutions, local associations, etc.), with a business turnover of the subscribers amounting to more than 130 million Euro. The LAG Eloro maintains the role of lead partner and is the official representative of the DOQVN as an integral part of the Network of the Sicilian Productive Districts,

composed of the eight productive districts officially recognised by the Sicilian Region. Starting from 7 July 2020, following the formal recognition by the Productive Activities Department of the Sicilian Region which took place with Councillor Decree No. 1294, the DOQVN, after 13 years of existence, has expanded to the entire regional territory, also thanks to the collaboration with the LAG Metropoli Est gravitating in western Sicily, and has taken on the new name of the **Sicilian Quality Fruit and Vegetable Production District - DPOQS**, which has adopted an Action Plan that fully grasps the opportunity to play a role of absolute protagonist on the whole regional scene, involving in addition to businesses and companies in the fruit and vegetable sector supply chains, also numerous local administrations, universities and research bodies from all over Sicily. The plant of the Sicilian production districts appears today — and will be even more so in the future — as the true tool for the consultation, elaboration and implementation of the planning and development policies of the Sicilian Region. This one, indeed, recognises their role as privileged partners able to contribute to the determination of policies in order to support businesses, in the full awareness that EU



investments in the new EU seven-years programming period 2021-2027 pay great attention to business combinations with other organisations, grouped in the form of a productive district. In short, a historic success that projects the LAG Eloro and the entire Elorino district onto a dimension that transcends the strictly local one and guarantees all companies and institutions partners of the DPOQS the possibility of directly influencing future strategic choices, in terms of economic development and support for the business sector of the Sicilian territory.



The LAG Eloro was the promoter of a project for the creation of a **Network of Shops of Short Chain**: *specific protocols were signed between the LAG Eloro, The Municipality of Noto, the SOAT of Syracuse (Regional Dept. For Agriculture) and the Permanent Association of Testa dell'Acqua District* (April 2013), in order to pursue a strategy to revitalise the historic centres and the rural villages of the area, the retailers and small shops located there, enhancing the consumers exigencies of food quality and safety and the need for the socioeconomic redemption of producers and processors of typical agricultural and agri-food products. It is a new deal for 'short chain' between the world of agriculture and that one of the urban consumption, with direct and immediate benefits to farmers and the citizens, with the launch and promotion of the brand "zero miles, done close to your home" and the system of Organised Direct Sales (ODS) as opposed to the Large-scale Organized Distribution system which draws immense profits at the expense of producers and consumers. The project was assisted by two young Spanish researchers assigned to the LAG Eloro by the University of Alicante (*Comunidad Valenciana*) through the **Leonardo da Vinci EU programme**.

The cooperation activities

The LAG Eoro has been since its constitution and is still a true pioneer of cooperative activities in Sicily, of inter-territorial, inter-regional and cross-border or transnational nature. Within the **LEADER II Sect. C**, we mention the transnational cooperation Project **AGROBIOTOUR (2000-2001)**, aiming at the creation of a transnational network of organic producers for the promotion and marketing in network of a joint basket of organic farming products, the common participation in exhibitions and international fairs on organic products, the testing of electronic commerce, the definition of the statute draft of a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) for the management of the organisation. The LAG Eoro played the role of lead partner, with the following involved partners: Terre del Sosio LAG (Italy), Asdepr LAG (Portugal), Ader Sousa LAG (Portugal).



During the same period, always through the **Leader II Sect. C Community Initiative Programme**, the LAG Eoro was the lead partner in the **INOVATOUR transnational cooperation project (2000-2001)**, aimed at testing techniques of restoration conjugated with those of seismic retrofitting of rural buildings of historic value for tourism-receptive aims, in order to increase the know-how in this innovative field, thanks to the creation of a manual of good practices, the exchange of training for engineers and architects and the start-up of an experimental site for green architecture. Partners involved: CEDER AITANA LAG (Spain), University “La Sapienza” Rome (Italy), CNR – GNDT (Earthquakes Defence National Group) Rome (Italy), Polytechnic of Turin (Italy), Inst. Bio-Architecture of Alicante (Spain).



In the same time frame, the LAG Eloro was the promoter and lead partner of the **ADDCI project, on cooperation with Tunisia (1999-2001)**, which consisted in the diffusion of know-how on the role and tasks of a local action group and the related socio-economic animation activities. It was planned and implemented, according to the participatory approach,

an extra-EU LAG in Tunisia, based on the organisational model and realised through the transfer of know-how from the LAG Eloro, called A.D.D.C.I., *Association pour le Développement Durable et la Coopération Internationale de Zarzis*, inaugurated in 2001 and become a LAG Eloro partner in several European projects of integrated and sustainable local development. This process of cooperation also had the official recognition as “exemplary good practice” by the specialised ONU agency **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**, during an international event of dissemination and sensitisation towards the ACP and Latin America countries, held in Rome in June 2011.



Still, at the same time, the LAG Eloro was lead partner in the **EUROYOUTH project**, funded under the **Transnational Cooperation Programme PRINCE, European Commission - DG ECOFIN (2000-2001)**. The project aimed at spreading knowledge, among young people, on the Euro in order to gain a greater understanding about the opportunities and consequences of the introduction of the new Euro coin in the markets; at developing, among young people, through games of simulation, the operational capabilities of the Euro use in commercial transactions and, thanks to the use of the technologies of the information society, the practical application of the Euro in the electronic business of typical products of the cultural identity of the participating countries. Partners Involved: IEPS (Belgium), IEBA (Portugal), GAL OATEP (Greece), Carrefour Bragança (Portugal), GAL ADER SOUSA (Portugal), GAL ASDEPR (Portugal), Video Mediterraneo S.r.l. (Italy), Set S.r.l. (Italy).



Cooperation in Tunisia has also continued with the Regional Programme for decentralised cooperation for development,

AGECAVA project: Agents for the promotion of a network of holiday homes and hospitality rooms (2005-2006). Also in this case, there has been the transfer of know-how and best practices for the creation of a sustainable transnational network for an extra-hotel and tourism local cultural offer, linked to the increase of the income of local families.

Under the **LEADER+ Community Initiative Programme**, ELORO Local Development Plan, the LAG Eloro has played the role of lead partner in the transnational cooperation project entitled **SOLISOL - Eco-museum of the Mediterranean (2006-2007)**, which has triggered a complex euro-Mediterranean tourist development pattern, with the planning of integrated joint initiatives among LAGs and equivalent entities of Mediterranean Europe and Countries of the Mediterranean basin in general, aimed at the promotion of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the environmental resources, such as the agri-food typical organic and eco-friendly products, the artistic handicrafts of their own territories, as well as to the strengthening of the moments of constructive dialogue among local development actors of the Euro-Mediterranean context, as an essential basis for the transfer of know-how, for the strengthening and dissemination of innovative practices for sustainable rural development, in view of the enhancement of local resources to be achieved through the integration of local systems. Involved partners: Trihonida



S.A. Development Agency (Greece), Elikonas-Parnassos S.A. (Greece), Aitoliki Development Enterprise A.a. (Greece), Fokiki Developing S.A. (Greece), Platani Quisquina LAG (Italy), ADDCI Zarzis (Tunisia), Larnaca District Development Agency (Cyprus).

Also in the framework of the **LEADER+ Community Initiative Programme**, ELORO Local Development Plan, the LAG Eloro has played the role of project partner in the transnational cooperation project entitled **Rediscovery and Enhancement of the Mediterranean Rurality (2007-2009)**, which aims to promote and market the reception system of the partner countries, and in particular: hospitality, food and wine, local products and crafts, culture of rural areas in the European and non-European markets, more and more sensitive to quality products and its territories. In particular, it is aimed to promote, strengthen and consolidate the supply of the rural-tourism system, the knowledge of DOC, PDO, PGI, TSG, QWPSR certified quality products of the European Union's rural areas, as well as the access of the LAG areas products in the international markets. The project has foreseen the preparation of the Marketing Plan of the Mediterranean Rurality, the logo design and the "Mediterranean Rurality" specifications, the creation of a Web Portal, the communication and promotion activities of the Mediterranean Rurality, the constitution of an EEIG and of the "Mediterranean Rurality" Association. Partners involved: LAG Alto Casertano (lead partner), 6 more LAGs from Campania, 12 LAGs from Sicily, 3 LAGs from Greece, 1 LAG from Malta, for a total of 23 partners. Website: www.ruralitamediterranea.com



Between 2007 and 2009, the LAG Eloro was partner in the project of inter-territorial cooperation **Network of Mediterranean Rural**

Districts, through which we proceeded with the construction of a "system" for the functional and operational connection of different affected areas and allow an effective process for the international enhancement of the rural Mediterranean, in all its expressions, around which create quality tourism products and effective distribution and promotion systems for local products. Operationally, it was to create a system of public and private entities that could help to define and manage a new tourist offer and an effective international distribution of local products. Partners involved: all Sicilian LAGs, as lead partner the Agency for the Mediterranean (ApM).



Outside the scope of the PIC LEADER, the LAG Eoro has played the role of expert partner in the **EuroMed Youth III Programme, "Prevention of violence against young women" Project (2007-2008)**, a project aimed at promoting equality of sexes and the preparation of young people to a couple life more respectful towards the rights of the human person and the dignity of others. In this context, it was signed a Memorandum of Agreement for the implementation of transnational cooperation activities in the Euro-Mediterranean context. Partners involved: young people, politicians and operators in the sector from Italy, France, Morocco and Tunisia; as observers, Egypt, Sudan and Malta.

Still, since March 2008, the LAG Eoro is the official representative of all Italian LAGs in the Euro-Maghrebian cooperation network called **RE.MA.DE.L. - Réseau Maghrebin Développement Local**, an association between rural development agencies, foundations and rural associations of Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Spain, France and Italy (Website: www.remadel.org), that is the recognition of the role played since years by the LAG Eoro in cooperation with Southern Mediterranean Countries.



In addition, in the field of cross-border cooperation, the LAG Eloro is partner in the **ENPI CBC «Italy-Tunisia» 2007-2013 programme: Les Voyages de la Connaissance 017 Project (Nov. 2011 / Dec. 2015)**, which deals with the valorisation of the resources related to territorial identities, in particular the

intangible cultural heritage and the handicrafts of excellence; with a set of proposals for innovative paths to discover the heritage founded on traditions and common roots of the two territories; and with an offer of concrete information on the territories through a system of modern communication that promotes various types of offer in every season. Partners involved: PRO.PI.TER (lead partner, Italy), Circuito Castelli e Borghi Medioevali (Italy), Elimos LAG (Italy), Quisquina LAG (Italy), Municipality of Modica (Italy), O.N.A. (Tunisia), A.M.V.P.P.C. (Tunisia).

Always in the field of cross-border cooperation, the LAG Eloro is the lead partner in the **ENPI CBC «Italy-Tunisia» 2007-2013: SERVAGRI 045 - Italo-Tunisian Observatory at Service of sustainable quality AGRiculture Project (Nov 2011 / Mar 2015)**. It is the creation of an Italian-Tunisian Observatory on agri-food safety and quality policies, inaugurated in Tunis on 21st September 2012, with the objective of creating Euro-Mediterranean quality clusters / productive districts,



the implementation of pilot projects in the fields of olive growing, bee-keeping, organic farming and short chain, as well as the spread of brands, specifications, protocols and labelling to ensure consumers quality, traceability and food safety. Partners involved: TENMYA 21 (Tunisia), APEL (Tunisia), CIA Siracusa (Italy), EURISPES Sicilia (Italy), CISS ONG (Italy), ADDCI Zarzis, associated partner (Tunisia). Website: www.servagri.eu – Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/servagri.eu>; Link:

<http://www.ciheam.org/images/CIHEAM/PDFs/Publications/LV/wl24.pdf> (see. page 24 and following).

Finally and always in the same field of cross-border cooperation, the LAG Elero is the first partner in the **ENPI CBC «Italy-Tunisia» 2007-2013: “HI.L.F.TRAD. - Hilal sicilo-tunisien de la Filière Laitière-Fromagère Traditionnelle à travers les Nouvelles Technologies”**, Project (Jun. 2014 / Jul. 2016). Creation of a scientific and institutional network between researchers and stakeholders in the dairy field for the transfer of knowledge, skills, production technology, conservation, characterisation and optimisation of traditional historical cheeses made from sheep raw milk in the Beja region of Tunisia. Thanks to HILFTRAD and the intense communication activity



coordinated by the LAG Elero, Tunisian traditional cheeses have become important tools for the understanding of their production sites, breeding and feeding systems, promoting the first certification recognised in Tunisia for products of animal origin, namely the AOC (Appellation

d'Origine Contrôlée), through a knowledge transfer action between managers of ministries and food departments of the two countries.

Under **Measure 421 "Cooperation" of the Rural Development Programme of Sicily 2007-2013**, we implemented three complementary projects, listed below, aiming at strengthening the process of exploitation of land resources and real economic recovery, started in the 2000-2006 EU programming period with the transnational cooperation project "**Rediscovery and enhancement of the Mediterranean Rurality**", which was attended by 23 LAGs and which laid the groundwork for the creation of an integrated tourist offer, tailor-made for those territories being mostly marginal from a tourist point of view, and the inter-territorial cooperation project "**Network of Mediterranean Rural Districts**" that gave birth to the **Agency for the Mediterranean**, established in 2008 by the Sicilian LAGs and the Campanian partner LAG Consortium Alto Casertano, as common legal entity to consolidate network policies at both national and international levels, and to give continuity to the policies of cooperation, so ensuring the management of the brand "Mediterranean Rurality", according to law.

The cooperation projects being implemented for the period 2007-2013 are:

"Mediterranean Rurality - Typical products - RAMSES (Network of Market Areas for the Development of a Sustainable Economy)", aimed at creating a network of companies for the

promotion of typical products of the LAG areas, in order to enable actions to strengthen agricultural and regional agri-food supply chain policies; that is, a network connecting entrepreneurial structures and professionals of the LAG areas, promoting collaboration at local level and reducing the fragmentation of the sector. The strategy of the project was based on strengthening the degree of integration of the economic chains, the creation of an integrated and reticular system for the promotion and dissemination of agricultural and agri-food production, capable of connecting public and private institutions; the development of services to local enterprises, aimed at supporting the best functioning of the reticular system created. The "network" aimed to implement a collective approach to enhancing strategies and testing of innovative forms of cooperation. This logic has been shown to be successful, because: it improves globally and systemically competitiveness and overall quality of companies and productions; it provides benefits for consumers; it impacts positively in socio-occupational terms and for the quality of life of local populations. The project activities, in fact, concerned:

- the construction and improvement of a common identity among manufacturers of the individual territorial areas, so that each participant in the system can be both the founder but also a guarantor in front of other producers and third parties;
- the creation of a uniform offer of Sicilian products from rural areas that is competitive and attractive;

- the construction and diffusion of a unique system of tools and services aimed specifically at enhancing the common identity; the definition of the sensorial profile contributes to the realisation of a product specification, a description of the quality provided through a sensorial "passport of taste". The "passport of taste", usable by the buyer, the consumer, and also the enterprise, is essentially a product identity card, useful for transmission to the target consumers/buyers. The passport is divided into several sections: product description, characteristics, organoleptic description, story, nutritional, healthy and quality facts (nutraceutical facts), safety and traceability aspects (see www.ilpassaportodelgusto.it);
- the construction of a participatory governance model able to stimulate the development of the local agricultural economy.



The expected results, for which a multiplier effect was awaited, have improved the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the sector, increasing productivity and efficiency, favouring the improvement of production, not only in quantitative terms, but also in terms of quality. The project has also strengthened the collaboration relationships between the territories concerned, and between territories and regional governance with the attained medium-long term objective of fostering a stable and continuous cooperation (LAG Eoro as lead partner);

"Mediterranean Rurality - Tourism - RADAMES (Network of of Agri-Environmental Areas and Districts for the Tourism Movement, Hiking and Leisure)", with the aim of consolidating the tourist system in rural areas through a network action between the LAGs' partnership (the LAG Eoro as project partner) and

"Mediterranean Rurality - Internationalisation - SALITIS (System of Local Actions for the Internationalisation of the Territories of Southern Italy)", for the valorisation of a common identity of rural areas and their productions of excellence in an international showcase of undeniable effectiveness, in synergy with the actions taken by the Regional Administration in the context of **Expo 2015** (the LAG Eoro as project partner).

These projects represent concrete actions to enhance, organise and promote on the national and international markets the integrated territorial offer of Sicily and the whole Euro-Mediterranean area, with the platform "**Mediterranean Rurality**". See: www.ruralitamediterranea.com, www.passaportideltgusto.it and www.valoresicilia.net.

Briefly, in more than two decades of activity, the LAG Eoro can now count on a partners network that groups several European countries (Spain, Belgium, Greece, Portugal, Malta, France, Cyprus), but also many countries of the Southern Mediterranean (Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan), spreading anywhere the values of which it focuses, i.e. those based on transparent procedures, the efficient and effective management of actions and interventions, the sustainability of the actions for future generations of the Eoro area, the **integrated approach** and the **participatory method** for the construction of future scenarios for local development and sharing of the needed tools.

Within the seven-year planning period 2014-2020, the LAG Eoro is the promoter of cross-border cooperation initiatives, under implementation or just submitted and still under assessment by the European Union, considered fundamental for the re-launch and the development of the Eoro district and its inhabitants.

Thanks to the **ENPARD PAP TUNISIA 2014-2020 Programme**, the LAG Eloro, the only Italian LAG



beneficiary of the new European ENPARD (European Neighbouring Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development) Programme, is participating, as a Partner, together with the NGO Oxfam Italia (IT), Lead partner, and the partners Oxfam Novib (NL) and the non-profit Association El Wifak Bargou (TN), to the project **"Bargou 2020 Strategy - Promotion of an inclusive territorial development in the Bargou**

Delegation" (2017-2020), which aims to contribute to the sustainable and integrated development of economic, environmental and social resources in rural areas in Tunisia for the benefit of vulnerable rural populations in a framework of collaboration between public and private actors. The project activities aim to systematise the production chains in the Delegation of Bargou, in the Governorate of Siliana (Tunisia) through the dissemination of the LEADER method, based on the integrated approach and on the CLLD (Community-Led Local Development) strategy. The LAG Eloro has made available its indisputable expertise in the field of the LEADER Approach, first of all in supporting the identification of the members of the Local Development Committee (LDC), with highly participatory functions and validation of socio-economic initiatives, constituted according to the principle of the "Quintuple Helix", and having the main mandate to draw up a Local Development Plan (LDP) inclusive of vulnerable groups and local needs. Thanks to the experts of the LAG Eloro, it was possible, by adopting the aforementioned approach and a firmly participatory methodology, to guide the members of the LDC in an integrated design financing micro-enterprises of young people and women in activities in which the territory has a strong vocation. Web site: <https://www.strategie-bargou2020.tn/>; Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/bargou2020/>.





In the framework of the **ENI CBC “Italy-Tunisia” Programme 2014-2020 1° call for Standard projects**, the LAG Eloro is the Lead Partner of the project **CLUSTER SERVAGRI - cross-border CLUSTER SERVing the networking and qualification of the AGRicultural**

olive oil production chains (2020- 2022), whose objective is the restructuring of the cross-border olive oil supply chain thanks to the strengthening of an economic cluster of conventional, organic, fully traceable and quality olive oil, in order to adapt production and supply to international standards: CLUSTER SERVAGRI, capitalising on the experience of the SERVAGRI Observatory, aims to meet the needs of consumers and entrepreneurs in the internal and external markets of the cross-border area, to improve the quality and safety of olive oil thanks to a joint applied study, aimed at realise and disseminate technology transfer and innovation of both product and process.

The main activities of the project concern: the research and strengthening of system actions for the improvement of quality restructuring, standards; actions for strengthening, developing

networks of MSMEs of excellence and business organisations for quality, full traceability and safety



of the olive sector; the creation of clustering agreements aimed at the marketing of quality oils; pilot inter-institutional cooperation actions for the harmonisation of regulatory standards, the capitalisation of the cluster and the common virtual logistic platform. The project partnership that joined the initiative is composed of the National Agronomic Institute of Tunisia (Tunisia), the Olive Institute of Sousse (Tunisia), the Sicilian Region - Agriculture Department (Italy), the Olive Producers Association (Italy), the Tunisian Union Agriculture and Fisheries (Tunisia) and six associated partners from Italy, Tunisia, France and Greece.



Still within the framework of the **ENI CBC "Italy-Tunisia" Programme 2014-2020, 1st Call for Standard projects**, the LAG Eoro is a partner of the project **JESMED - Mediterranean Ancestral Bridge of the sheep production chain (2020-2022)**, which sees INAT (Tunisia), as Lead

Partner, while the rest of the partnership is made up of UniCT (Italy), DGPA (Tunisia), DGAEBN (Tunisia), CORFILAC (Italy) and two associated Tunisian partners. The project aims to promote ancestral know-how in the field of sheep breeding of the *Noir de Thibar* breed and to protect it from the risks of disappearance that threaten it, with the establishment of a quality label, which allows the recognition of its specific characteristics, but also the protection of the environment and nature through the enhancement of heritage and ancestral know-how. It has to capitalise the experience of Sicilian partners in the field of the promotion of alternative food resources and in the objective assessment of the nutritional and sensory characteristics of the products, and enhance the results of the various Tunisian partners in terms of knowledge about the characteristics of the meat of the *Noir de Thibar* breed, as well as in terms of certification and organisation of production chains. The distinctive brand for the meat of this breed, allows the creation of inter-professional certification bodies and quality control, the creation of marketing contracts and the promotion of eco-tourism. In Sicily there are no protection labels for sheep meat, the experience of this project will represent a model for the future development of Sicilian suckling lamb and Sicilian lamb meat, will increase knowledge and good practices in the field of *Halal* slaughter and the territorial proximity and environmental similarities of the cross-border area will improve.



In conclusion and as it is already well-known, the LAG Eloro has so far distinguished itself not only among all the Sicilian LAGs, but also among the about 200 LAGs existing at national level, for its recognised qualities and design dynamism, both in the LEADER field, and also outside of it, since the LAG Eloro was and is still the beneficiary, as lead partner or project partner, of a series of cross-border and transnational cooperation projects, for which, very often, it's mentioned as an example by organisms of international renown, such as, for example:

- the CIHEAM (*Centre International Hautes Etudes Agronomiques en Méditerranée*) in his specialised magazine *CIHEAM Watch Letter*; (https://www.ciheam.org/en/publications/watch_letter/details?pub=WL_24&id=23)
- the RAI 3 television channel in the famous "Mediterraneo" TV program and in the services of the regional news program (TGR); (see: <http://youtu.be/bWnBF1f0dzk>; <http://www.rai.tv/dl/RaiTV/programmi/media/ContentItem-e42a7b73-3fcf-408d-9b1e-b2488382072c-tgr.html>);
- the CREA - National Council for Research on agri-food and Agrarian Economy, in its researches commissioned by the National Rural Network, like the one published in March 2014 on cooperation among rural areas, which ***places the LAG Eloro at the second place in the national podium for project quality and at the first place of the regional podium for project dynamism***;
- the European Union itself has published, in late July 2016, the ENPARD programme (European Neighbouring Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development) Tunisia where the SERVAGRI Observatory is the only project among the existing 33 ENPI CBC "Italy-Tunisia" projects, to be officially mentioned in the *European Commission's Financing Decision* of the current ENPARD Pilot Action Programme of the European Union in Tunisia (see: http://ec.europa.eu/.../d.../aap/2013/af_aap-spe_2013_tun_p4.pdf, page 5, third paragraph).

In short, it is a series of institutional awards that, all together, make the LAG Eloro proud, along with its project partnership and the whole team of professionals and experts who have worked so hard, encouraging them to progress and in making any effort with the aim to ensure a better quality of life of the rural populations, as well as the full food security of cross-border production, a sustainable and high quality tourist offer, an attention to the identity traditions and cultural and environmental heritage of its territory and those ones of its partners.

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