

Press release

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Good news for food related SMEs in rural areas of the North Sea Region

Additional funds have been granted to a European project that works towards creating better conditions for food related SMEs in rural areas.

On 18 June the European project REFRAME, which has set out to recover and set-up regional food chains, was granted a 1-year extension and additional funding from the North Sea Region Programme. These regional food chains add to a sustainable economy with growing employment and increased innovation.

By recovering and setting up regional food chains REFRAME is taking steps towards creating better conditions for food related SMEs in rural areas. The project is promoting a regional approach. This entails developing new skills for food related SMEs, fostering regional cooperation, supporting transnational learning and stimulating innovation. The aim is to heighten the awareness about regional food supply and demand as well as nudging local governments and large-scale consumers to buy food regionally.

“We are very excited about the extensions”, says Hein Braaksma, project coordinator of REFRAME. “During the implementation of REFRAME many beneficiaries have encountered challenges, but also new, relevant possibilities to effectively support sustainable and long-term innovation potential for food related SMEs in rural areas of the North Sea Region. With this extension and extra funding, we can now act on the relevant new possibilities that have become visible”, Hein adds.

Increased focus on sustainability

The great impact which food and food production has on the climate calls for an increased focus on sustainability. “Sustainability has always been an integrated part of the project as we focus on short supply-chains and regional production, however, now we will also focus on the potential for sustainable, healthy food alternatives from the region”, Hein explains. New possibilities, which the project partners of REFRAME want to explore include creating data about regional, sustainable alternative food options, identifying potential changing demands as well as identifying the possibilities to produce for a changing demand.

Gathering best practices

The REFRAME project has been running since January 2016 where 14 committed partners from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden respectively are working together to create better conditions for food related SMEs in rural areas. The project partners are continuously gathering best practices from each region, which are uploaded to an [Online Resource Centre](#) on the project website. In this way they ensure that others can benefit from the experiences and knowledge collected in the project.

For further information please contact

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Photo: The European project REFRAME has received additional funding and time creating better conditions for food related SMEs in rural areas.