

PROJECT FINAL REPORT

"Final Publishable Summary Report"

Grant Agreement number: 202967

Project acronym: PRO WOOD

Project title: Promoting and linking Wood Industry and Research in Romanian Regions using good practice from acknowledged wood clusters in the EU

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Project's objectives

PRO-WOOD is a project designed to support an emerging wood cluster in the County of Brasov-Covasna in Romania. The wood sector has a long tradition in business and R&D, and an economic potential that needs to be developed. A very successful tool to trigger such economic and knowledge-based environments is cluster initiatives (CIs). However CIs do not have a long tradition in Eastern Europe, so called transition countries. Therefore it is the challenge of PRO-WOOD to initiate a know how-transfer in order to structure the existing cluster elements.

The know how-transfer is was upon a fact finding analysis and was harmonized with the special needs of the wood sector in Brasov-Covasna. The project comprised four major objectives:

- (1) Establish an infrastructure for regular co-operation between the stakeholders of the wood sector in Brasov-Covasna.
- (2) Trigger and increase the role of R&D within the future cluster work.
- (3) Formulate a vision for the wood cluster, which indicates objectives and measurable results.
- (4) Release a web-based network platform.

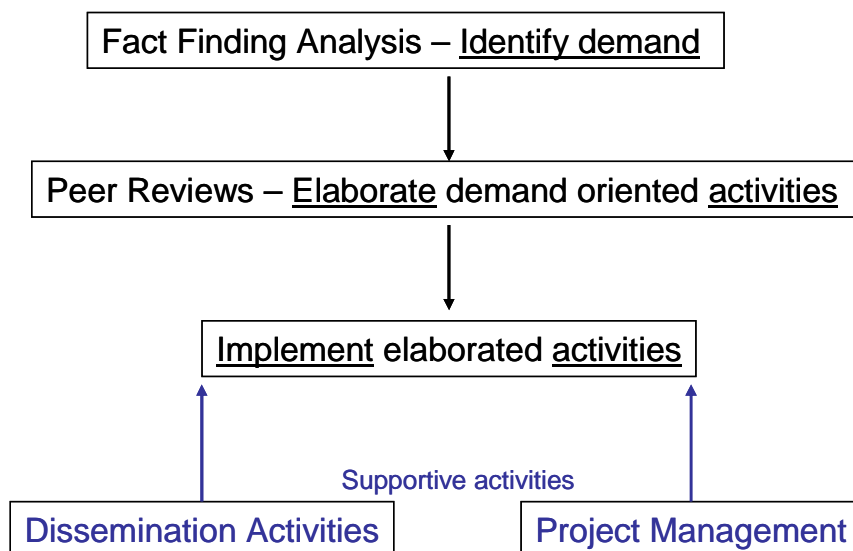
Beside the economic effects that an established wood cluster could have for the region Brasov-Covasna the cluster shall support the integration of the region into the European Research Area. Eight partners from Romania, Finland, France and Germany have formed a consortium. This partnership comprised the needed stakeholders on the Romanian side and the knowledge about cluster policy tools, wood research and business on the other side.



Project consortium at the Launching Conference in Covasna (Romania), December 2008

Work performed

The structure of the project can be separated into two main phases. In the first one the project team addressed the future target group and identified their needs. In the second half of the project PRO WOOD carried out activities responding to the needs in order to strengthen the wood community in Brasov and Covasna.



The fact finding analysis gave a good insight into the needs of the wood sector in the target region. The main findings were:

- Weak cooperation between research and business
- Low cooperation within the wood sector at all
- Weak web presence of companies
- Lack of qualified staff in marketing / public relation issues
- Poor collaboration between vocational schools and business
- Vocational training does not meet the needs of the market
- No awareness for the advantages of research activities

In order to address these findings the team of PRO WOOD invited experts and stakeholders in Brasov/Covasna and elaborated activities to meet the problems addressed in the fact finding analysis.

The following activities have been elaborated and conducted:

- 1 Organisation of a competition between pupils in order to attract pupils for working with wood
- 2 Two training seminars on funding programmes and successful proposal writing
- 3 Company visits to schools to introduce the wood sector to the future generation
- 4 6 customised advisories for companies
- 5 Generation of a Thematic Working Group, where topics of interest (e.g. technical issues) were discussed

- 6 Spread information on operation safety for the target group
- 7 Training seminars about e-commerce and marketing
- 8 Support KO-FO (the wood department within ASIMCOV) to built up a sales & marketing department
- 9 Improve the web presence of KO-FA
- 10 Organise the share of know how & machinery within the wood sector in Brasov and Covasna
- 11 Organise a workshop on the following technical issue: "Increase the efficiency and performance of woodworking companies".

Main results

With regard to the main results we would like to mirror the four main objectives of PRO WOOD with the results achieved.

Objective	Result
Establish an infrastructure for regular co-operation between the stakeholders of the wood sector in Brasov-Covasna.	On the 19th April 2010, at the final dissemination conference of PRO WOOD, 17 regional stakeholders of the wood industry in Brasov and Covasna signed a formal cluster-forming agreement. In this agreement a list of objectives and future activities is fixed, a management board is established and regular meetings are foreseen.
Trigger and increase the role of R&D within the future cluster work.	The collaboration of research institutions with all other parts of the wood sector in Brasov and Covasna is one objective of the cluster agreement. In addition to that two seminars on FP7 and other funding opportunities for research activities have been conducted within PRO WOOD.
Formulate a vision for the wood cluster, which indicates objectives and measurable results.	The cluster forming agreement states on the first page the vision for the future of PRO WOOD: "The aim of this agreement is to harmonize and to represent the companies' interest; to increase the competitiveness by joint participation on retail markets; to help the professional improvement of the managers and employees; to create and manage a common database; collaboration with the institutions, local authorities, research institutions and educational bodies; collaboration with other national or international clusters."
Release a web-based network platform.	One activity within PRO WOOD was the improvement of the current online services of

	<p>the wood association KO-FA for the wood sector. By means of workshops and round table meetings with the target group, a concept to improve the services has been designed. The improvements are implemented by a Romanian ICT & Marketing expert.</p> <p>Above that the content and structure of the project website of PRO WOOD will be integrated into the new KO-FA website.</p>
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Conclusions and potential impact

The main impact of PRO WOOD is the establishment of a formal cluster with 17 partners of the wood sector in Brasov and Covasna. This result has exceeded the original objective of PRO WOOD.

The project has managed to structure existing cluster elements and to intensify the cooperation of all stakeholders in the sector. It aroused awareness for the concept and the advantages of cooperation.

Beside this PRO WOOD is regarded as a model project for the national cluster policy of Romania.



Formal signature of the Cluster Forming Agreement, 19.04.2010, Sf. Gheorghe, Romania

Target Group

The project PRO WOOD addressed all possible bodies involved in the wood sector: companies, research institutions, public administration (local and national), wood related associations and educational institutions.

Public Relations

A project website has been established and is operating since September 2008 www.prowood.ro.

The future cluster PRO WOOD uses some elements of the project website and merge with the content of the KO-FA (wood association) website in order to create a new online service.

The project has designed a logo for PRO WOOD that will also be used beyond project life time.



List of project partners (beneficiaries):

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