

# **European Network of rice production areas: Project summary**

**EU PROGRAMME:** Europe for Citizens - Thematic networks of twinned towns

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS:** 15th February 2010

**PARTNERS:**

- Province of Vercelli, Piemonte, Italia (leader)
- Valencian Federation of Municipalities and Provinces
- Thessaloniki and Serres, Grecia

**PERIOD:** 18 months

**OBJECTIVES:**

The main objective of the Network of the European rice production areas project is to enhance knowledge, attraction and development of the European rice agricultural system in a broad sense, including, production, processing, environment, culture, land management etc. involving all the actors chain.

Within this framework the creation of four main issue groups has been designed involving local stakeholders active in the rice chain to identify the main issues to analyse and discuss in the project, at European level, by the expert groups.

These working groups deal with the following main issues:

- ❖ Water
- ❖ Environment
- ❖ Marketing and promotion
- ❖ Human capital

The technical topics for each group are roughly the following:

**WATER:**

- ✓ Management of watering and of water distribution to optimize its use (elaboration of common data, practices, methodologies, approaches etc.)
- ✓ Use of rice fields and channel system as possible sinks to fight natural catastrophes such as flood (impacts on rice production, organisation problems etc.)
- ✓ Fertilisers, chemical products and water quality
- ✓ Soil chemical and physical characteristics and water use
- ✓ Salty wedge problem

**ENVIRONMENT:**

- ✓ How to manage in an environmentally sound way and take advantage from rice waste
- ✓ Rice fields as refilling systems for water layers

- ✓ Agro-energies and small hydro-energy plants: which opportunities in rice production areas
- ✓ Network of natural parks with rice production areas to face and solve common problems: rice production and biodiversity
- ✓ Natural engineering in rivers and canals restoration

#### MARKETING AND PROMOTION:

##### Product oriented activities

- ✓ Information campaigns and marketing strategies for the European rice quality and its production process (the European rice system)
- ✓ Information and marketing of traditional and less known rice qualities
- ✓ Information on the nutritional positive characteristics of European rice

##### Land oriented activities

- ✓ Common social and cultural roots of the rice production areas in Europe (how rice affects landscape and people living in the areas historically, environmentally and socially)
- ✓ Marketing of products and services of the production areas (rural tourism in peculiar areas where the product production affect heavy the landscape, the product as ambassador of the production areas, "albergo diffuso" third generation tourist, gastronomy as un instrument of marketing and knowledge diffusion, etc.)
- ✓ Culture and agri-culture in the case of rice (rice production and rice processing)

#### HUMAN CAPITAL:

- ✓ Training techniques and exchange of experiences in partner countries
- ✓ Innovations in (i) technologies (equipment) and (ii) cultural techniques (processing, stoking etc.)
- ✓ Rice production and social economy (the cooperative system)
- ✓ Exchange among schools of the partners (students, professors, approaches and methodologies). E-twinning programme
- ✓ Exchange of young entrepreneurs - New Erasmus entrepreneurs programme