

## AHFES NEWS RELEASE Ref Final event Galway Feb 2023



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The innovative Healthy Food AHFES Project is holding its final event in Galway on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2023.

Since June 2018 the EU-funded food and drink programme for SMEs, AHFES project, has collaborated across the sector to improve the overall competitiveness and growth of SMEs in the value chain of healthy food & lifestyles.

The innovative AHFES programme has provided remotely extensive training and mentoring to food and drink SMEs across the Atlantic Area regions of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales, France, Spain, and Portugal.

Supporting a sustainable growth by achieving a quadruple helix ecosystem (public authorities, industry, academia and citizens) in support of SME competitiveness.

During this period AHFES has created a significant library of training modules, analysis and webinars aimed at companies working in the healthy food sector.

Available free via the AHFES project website the training covers a range of topics including,

Consumer and market insights, product and export development, human nutrition, new concepts and obligations around labels and packaging.

In addition, AHFES has produced and made available online webinars aimed at providing knowledge and insight into topics such as, protein innovation, healthy food trends, and the psychology of consumer decision making.

In August 2022 the 1.2 million Euro project received an additional funding of over €235,000 which was aimed at the sustainability component of food manufacturing, and to help provide further training and support services for SMEs, helping them to analyse their current status and formulating recommendations for action towards incorporating sustainability practices. The findings and recommendation for the sustainability of innovation in healthy food sector will be presented in the second day of the AHFES Galway event.

In advance of the meeting in Galway Ana Felgueiras from the lead Partner Clusaga says the AHFES project has delivered considerable benefits to the participating companies.

“Working remotely the AHFES partnership has produced beneficial and insightful training and analysis. Now with the ability to work and conduct meetings in person, I am certain we can deliver great benefits to SME’S seeking to transform their businesses into more sustainable and eco-friendly companies. We hope that AHFES will be the first point of reference for SMEs who are looking at building their business to reflect the new eco-friendly and sustainable approach.”

The AHFES project is primarily aimed at food and drink stakeholders including researchers and manufacturers from across eight regions. Currently they are benefiting from a pioneering €1.4 million EU INTERREG funded programme which has been helping boost the sector by creating an ecosystem for growth in this crucial area.

Further information on the project can be found at <https://www.ahfesproject.com/>.

Ends

Notes

AHFES is an innovative programme which has brought together the collective skills and experience of regional representative bodies from Spain, France, Portugal, Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

The eight partners from across the Atlantic area region are cooperating to develop a quadruple helix Atlantic Area Healthy Food Ecosystem for growth of small and medium enterprises.

Healthy food stakeholders including researchers and manufactures from across the regions have benefitted from this pioneering €1.4 million EU INTERREG funded programme. AHFES works collaboratively with stakeholders to stimulate innovation and competitiveness; provides market research and facilitation of cluster business networks, with the primary aim of benefiting SMEs through advanced support, including management, marketing, and design services; builds intelligence for design and the provision of training for SMEs, and maps out an ecosystem for healthy food and lifestyles and helping them become more competitive and extending their reach into the healthy food market.

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