

Una manera de hacer Europa



BUENAS PRÁCTICAS

Actuaciones Cofinanciadas

Entrepreneurial Competitiveness Improvement line of the Subsidy Programme for Industrial Development, the Improvement of Competitiveness, Digital Transformation and the Creation of Employment 2017-2020, in the province of Almería

Agency for Innovation and Development of Andalusia (IDEA)

Programa Operativo de Andalucía

Año 2020

Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional

The Good Practices of the Agency for Innovation and Development of Andalusia IDEA is presented herein, consisting of the aid granted in the Entrepreneurial Competitiveness Improvement line of the Subsidy Programme for Industrial Development, the Improvement of Competitiveness, Digital Transformation and the Creation of Employment 2017-2020, in the province of Almeria

This Entrepreneurial Competitiveness Improvement line includes investment projects to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs, mainly in capital goods, and that involves an initial eligible investment of more than 30,000 euros, aimed at improving concurrency and generating indefinite employment or contribute to its upkeep. Within this line, the aids for the province of Almeria, and as part of them, the companies **Agrar Plantas del Sur** in El Ejido, **Cristalería F. Sola** in Fines and **Abrasivos Manhattan** in Antas are chosen as model firms.

Solid fertiliser manufacturer **Agrar Plantas del Sur** has acquired a new plant to increase its production capacity by 35%. Its aim is to meet growing demand in South America. Furthermore, the new facilities automate the manufacturing and packaging processes for fertilisers and prevent caking when these are performed in a closed environment.

For its part, **Cristalería F. Sola** has diversified its product catalogue. In this way, it seeks to enter a sector with major demand: that of the manufacture of industrial cooling equipment. In this way, it expands its innovative products such as screen-printed glass bathroom screens, curtains, glass countertops and headstones in addition to large double glazing.

In the case of **Abrasivos Manhattan**, it has opted for its grinding wheel factory in Antas (Almeria) to make the parts in full. Until now, the Almeria plant only undertook the mixing, pressing and heat treatment of these wheels for sharpening and polishing all kinds of pieces. While the product was finished at the headquarters in Vitoria. Now, the company has given a boost to its factory in Andalusia.

The eligible cost of this line of incentives in Almeria is **3,460,471.47 euros**, of which **1,053,632.82 euros** correspond to financing from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The line of Entrepreneurial Competitiveness Improvement incentives in the province of Almeria compromised the **creation of 85 employments and the upkeep of a further 877**.

It is considered good practice since it meets the criteria defined for this purpose.

1. The role of the ERDF has been conveniently disseminated amongst beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and the general public¹

The companies have installed the mandatory identification plates both in a place accessible to the public and in the machinery acquired in the framework of the projects subsidised by the ERDF.



Likewise, the companies receiving backing have also resonated this on their webpages:



Furthermore, the investment made, and the financial support of ERDF funds has been reflected in the media through the dissemination in news outlets about aid in general or specific aid to these and other companies, as well as through the dissemination in local media (print edition, digital edition and profiles on social networks) in the province of Almería.



¹ The data that appears in the press releases, publications on social networks and web pages, and in the audiovisual elements may have suffered some variation due to the evolution of the projects between their approval and their certification.

In the same way, this information has been disclosed through the official Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn profiles of the IDEA Agency and the Andalusian Regional Government to which the IDEA Agency is attached (currently the Ministry of Economic Transformation, Industry, Knowledge and Universities) and on the websites of both organizations.

It is worthwhile mentioning, aside from the foregoing, the undertaking of an audio-visual micro-space offering a description of each one of the projects and in which it is recorded that EFDR's support has been involved in these, as can be seen from the following screenshots:



These videos are published on the YouTube profile of the IDEA Agency, at the following links:

- **Cristalería F. Sola:** https://youtu.be/NoSqMhN5_KQ
- **Agrar Plantas del Sur:** <https://youtu.be/YjL-xT6t5VM>

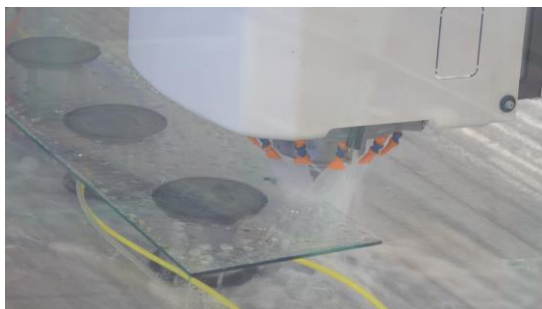
Likewise, the **Cristalería F. Sola** project and the **Abrasivos Manhattan** project have had a microspace for their dissemination through the main radio stations in Andalusia, which can be accessed at the following links:

- **Cristalería F. Sola:** <https://andaluciaesindustria.fondoseuropeos-agenciaidea.es/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/01-CRISTALERIA-FEDERICO-SOLA.wav>
- **Abrasivos Manhattan:** <https://andaluciaesindustria.fondoseuropeos-agenciaidea.es/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/01-ABRASIVOS-MANHATTAN.wav>

2. The activity incorporates innovative elements.

This line of incentives has amongst its aims the improvement of the competitiveness of companies in Andalusia, through the incorporation of advanced services, the increase in economic activity, generated by increasingly more competitive companies, and the creation of more and higher quality employment.

In the case of **Cristalería F. Sola**, the ERDF incentives have been used to purchase new equipment. Specifically, an edger and a group of bilaterals to mechanise the forming of and rims on glazing pieces. This new machinery has increased its production capacity. Similarly, larger orders can be accepted. In addition, it reduces manufacturing times by 11%, thus increasing its competitiveness.



For its part, the **Agrar Plantas del Sur** project has entailed the start-up of a new plant. Until now, the manufacturing and mixing process of solid fertilisers was carried out manually in open hoppers and augers. This caused both the raw materials and the final product to absorb environmental humidity and, in the long term, caused problems with caking of the product. In the new plant, the entire mixing and packaging process is carried out in an automated way and in a closed environment. This drastically reduces caking problems. They also improve occupational health conditions for workers in the fertiliser factory since, likewise, suspended dust is reduced.



The production process of **Abrasivos Manhattan** is so different from the competition that it requires custom machinery to be able to develop it. With this project, the Antas plant will focus on the manufacture of larger wheels, intended for polishing shock absorbers and bearings, since they represent the main source of income and also have greater added value, due to their high specialization. Specifically, the Almeria grinding wheel factory will be dedicated to carrying out the entire process of the larger wheels without having to send them to Vitoria to finish them. Due to the differential characteristics of its production process, there is no machinery that performs the functions and meets the requirements required by the company's products.

3. Adaptation of the results to the stated aims

The improvement in the production of companies such as those that have been supported in the line of improvement of business competitiveness in the province of Almeria, establishes a direct link with the increase in competitiveness in their sectors.

In the case of **Cristaleria F. Sola**, it has been developing a product diversification strategy to avoid excessive dependence on the construction sector. On the one hand, it has incorporated the forming of large double glazing (Aislaglass brand) and screen-printed glass bathroom screens or

glass curtains. On the other, it has entered new sectors by manufacturing equipment for industrial refrigeration, glass countertops (Solahouse brand) and glass headstones (Tabglass).

The company's demand levels in these new sectors has risen continuously. Hence the need for this investment to increase its production capacity, within its already established quality standards, and thus improve its competitiveness in the market.



On the other hand, the project carried out by **Agrar Plantas del Sur** has improved its production processes, since the entire mixing and packaging process is carried out in an automated way in the new plant and in a closed environment, thus avoiding caking issues with the product and occupational health conditions are improved for workers in the fertiliser factory since, likewise, suspended dust is reduced.



In the case of **Abrasivos Manhattan**, until now, at the Almeria plant, around 80,000 kilos of semi-finished grinding wheels were manufactured. The forecast is that, by exclusively dedicating itself to the larger wheels, production and sales will increase between 30 and 40%. Furthermore, by selling to international markets directly from the Antas plant, mainly through the port of Valencia, significant transportation costs for the semi-finished product from the Almeria factory to the Vitoria factory are avoided. Even transport to European countries such as Poland or Romania or Asia is faster and cheaper leaving directly from Antas.

4. Contribution to the resolution of a regional problem or weakness

In Andalusia, viewed as a regional problem or weakness, unemployment is compounded by the difficulty of access to business financing, a major obstacle faced by Andalusian companies, especially SMEs and which, on occasions, can slow down the development of investment plans, meaning that these projects are another instrument to contribute to reducing barriers to business development. This incentive programme, in its Entrepreneurial Competitiveness Improvement line, tackles as its main challenge the increase and improvement of economic activity, generated by more and more competitive companies, this growth in activity inducing the creation of more and higher quality working posts.

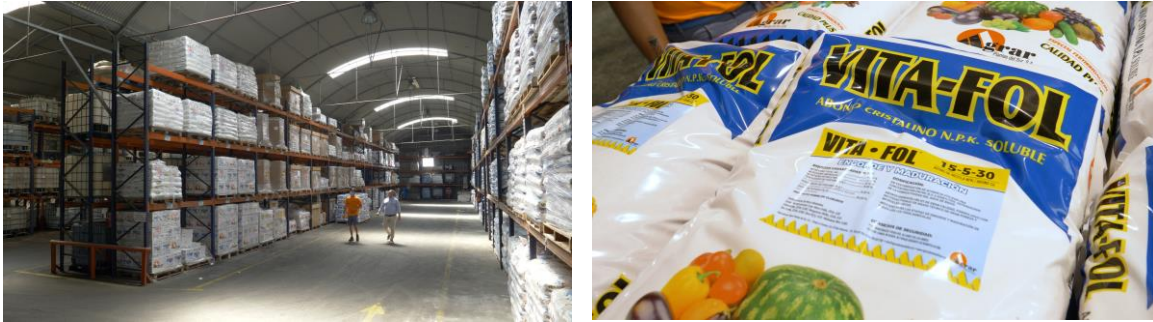
The adaptation of the Entrepreneurial Competitiveness Improvement line of this incentive program in the province of Almeria is embodied in the fact that ERDF financing has promoted an investment of more than **3.4 million euros**, which, as has already been mentioned. This line compromised the creation of **85 employments and the upkeep of a further 877**. In the specific case of the projects of the companies **Cristaleria F. Sola, Agrar Plantas del Sur and Abrasivos Manhattan**, their eligible investment has been close to 1.7 million euros and their commitment to create employment amounts to 6.



5. High degree of coverage of the target population

The Entrepreneurial Competitiveness Improvement line of the Subsidy Programme for Industrial Development, the Improvement of Competitiveness, Digital Transformation and the Creation of Employment 2017-2020 covers all SMEs in the industrial sector and services to industry in the province of Almeria.

In the case of **Agrar Plantas del Sur**, its project, developed in El Ejido (Almeria), has allowed it to increase the annual production of solid fertilisers and improve product quality. It has also created a more convivial working ambience for the operators. **Agrar Plantas del Sur** sells solid fertilisers for both intensive and extensive agriculture. National sales represent 90% of production and international sales 10%. It currently exports to countries such as Portugal, Italy, Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Cuba, Chile, Morocco, Egypt and China. With the start-up of the new plant, the company has increased its production capacity by 35%, which will allow it to meet the growing demand from its customers, mainly from South American countries.



The actions carried out by **Cristalería F. Sola** have allowed it to respond to growth in demand levels. Investing in new equipment makes it easier for them to handle more orders in a shorter lead time. With this, their sales have increased by 12%. They have achieved this by attracting new customers in a market in which the main competitors are in China and Italy.



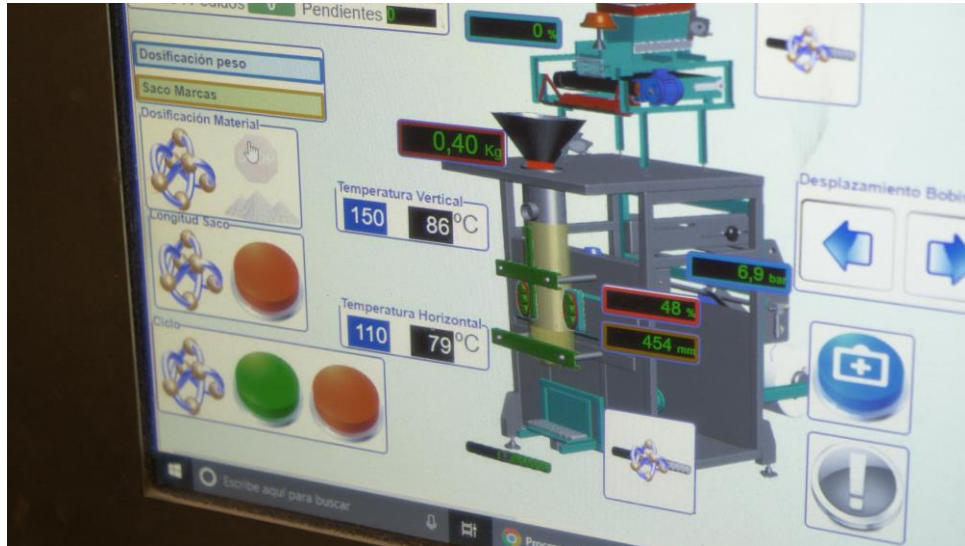
With the investment made, **Abrasivos Manhattan** strengthens the center of the company in Andalusia, since it centers the entire manufacturing line of large wheels in Antas, including quality control and even direct delivery to the customer, without having to finish the process in Vitoria (Basque Country) as up to now.

The project plans to increase its sales between 30 and 40%. 90% of the production of Abrasivos Manhattan is destined for foreign markets, mainly in Europe, but also in India, where it has a strongly established commercial network and high customer loyalty.

6. The horizontal criteria of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, as well as social responsibility and environmental sustainability have been taken into account

This line of incentives in Almería aims, in general, to promote and encourage the employability of women, the entrepreneurial culture and enhance the social economy and contribute to the development of a sustainable industrial activity that respects the environment.

In the case of the project developed by **Agrar Plantas del Sur**, the company has acquired an energy saving system with the aim of reducing electricity consumption. The installation of this equipment can lead to a saving of 14% in electricity consumption.



For its part, **Cristalería F. Sola** has incorporated new machinery with the aim of increasing the productive capacity of the company, within its already established quality standards, and reducing environmental impact, reducing the high consumption of water that the activity requires.

Finally, in the case of **Abrasivos Manhattan**, the new project will save them significant costs of transporting the semi-finished product from the Antas plant to the Vitoria plant, with the consequent saving also in CO² emissions, since even transport to countries Europeans (Poland or Romania) or Asians can be faster or cheaper by leaving directly from Antas.

7. Synergies with other public intervention policies or instruments

The aims of the Entrepreneurial Competitiveness Improvement line are aligned with those of the Europe 2020 Strategy of the European Union on smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, which contribute to the generation of high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. This Strategy is reflected in different policies and strategies designed by the Government of Andalusia.

In this regard, for example, the **Agrar Plantas del Sur** company is engaged in the Manufacture of Fertilisers and Nitrogen Compounds. This activity of the company is included within the high and medium technology sectors, meaning this aspect is also taken into account when granting the incentive.

Likewise, **Cristalería, F. Sola**, along with **Abrasivos Manhattan** and **Agrar Plantas del Sur**, have created new employments thanks to this investment, which is aligned with the objectives of the Agenda for Employment 2014-2020, regarding the promotion of employment in the information and communication technology sector and in improving the competitiveness of SMEs; as well as with the Andalusian Economic Plan 2014-2020, specifically in its aim of generating employment and bolstering the business sector by increasing the number of companies with between 10 and 50 workers by 20%.

On the other hand, these subsidies are also framed within the Industrial Strategy of Andalusia 2020, in its aim of industrialising Andalusia and increasing industrial employment, as well as creating a more efficient and competitive industry.

Additionally, the supported projects are in line with the Commission communication “A stronger European industry for growth and economic recovery”, especially in pillar A, which recommends “Facilitating investment in new technologies and innovation”, and in the action “Sustainable industrial policy, construction and raw materials”.

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