

SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO DE PRESUPUESTOS Y GASTOS DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE FONDOS EUROPEOS

MINISTERIO DE HACIENDA







BUENAS PRÁCTICAS Actuaciones Cofinanciadas

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Programa Operativo de La Rioja

Año 2020

Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional

Good practice of the Agency for Economic Development of La Rioja (ADER), of the aid line for research and development (R & D) projects in 2016, aimed at the footwear sector, personalised in the grants granted to the companies Arneplant and Calzados Cienta.

The purpose of the aid is to finance research and development (R & D) and process and organisational innovation projects, for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills that may be useful in developing new products, processes or services, or significantly improving existing ones, thereby increasing the competitiveness of companies from La Rioja. Within this line, aids directed to **the footwear sector** are selected, among which are chosen as an example those of the companies **Arneplant** and **Calzados Cienta**.

The **footwear sector** has great relevance in the regional economy. It is mainly concentrated in La Rioja Baja, mainly in the municipality of Arnedo, with well-known companies nationally and internationally, such as Fluchos, Calzados Hergar (Callaghan, Gorilla), Calzados Nuevo Milenio (Victoria), Footwear Pitillos, Footwear Gaimo, Footwear Fal (Chiruca), etc., supported by an important auxiliary industry. This is a traditional sector, where research, development and innovation are of fundamental importance for the modernisation of enterprises, ensuring their survival, and where support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is essential.

In the 2016 call for aid, the footwear sector has received aid amounting to 589,000 EUR, of which 50 % corresponds to co-financing from the ERDF. It has involved an investment by companies of 2,179,000 EUR, an increase in productive investment in the sector.

The project developed by **Arneplant** is called ArneWarm, and has consisted of the development of new polyurethane foams to improve their processibility during the manufacture of breathable footwear insoles





Calzados Cienta has carried out the Rubber Cycle project, aimed at acquiring new knowledge and skills based on circular economy, to improve the reuse of vulcanised rubber waste from the remains generated in the manufacture of footwear soles.

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

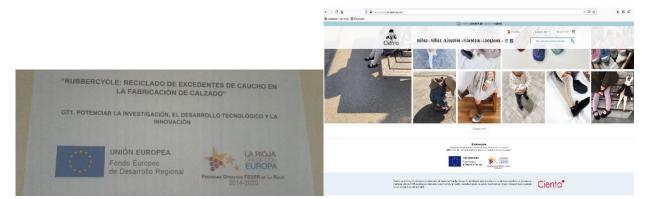
1.- The action has been appropriately disseminated among the beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and the general public.

The aid recipients have communicated the support of ERDF through the poster placed on their premises and on their websites.

Arneplant (arneplant.com/feder).



Calzados Cienta (www.cientashoes.com).



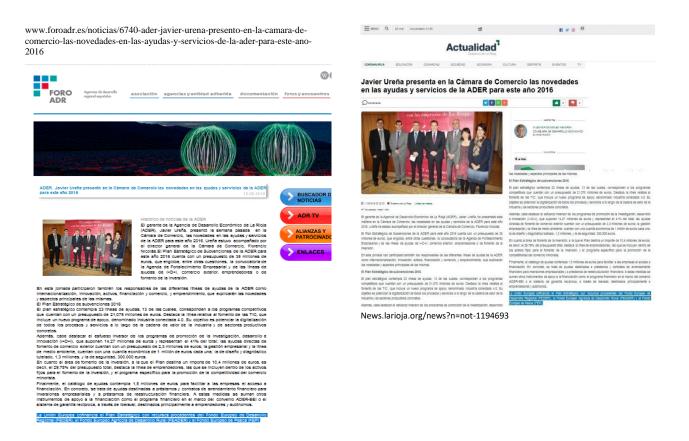
The **Agency for Economic Development of Rioja** (ADER), as an aid management body, also disseminates through its website (www.ader.es/ayudas/fondos-eie).



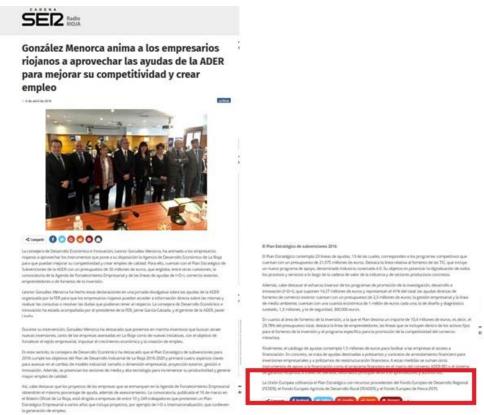
In addition, there has been the collaboration of the main economic agents of the region, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services of La Rioja and the Federation of Employers of La Rioja (FER), as well as the various technological centers, which in the case of the footwear sector is The Footwear Technology Center of La Rioja (CTCR), located in Arnedo, through the organisation of different **information days**.



There has also been a wide dissemination through **press releases** and **news** items in various media, pointing to European Union funding from resources from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF):



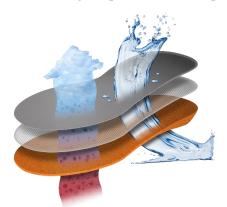
www.radiorioja.es/2016/04/06/gonzalez-menorca-anima-a-los-empresarios-riojanos-a-aprovechar-las-ayudas-de-la-ader-para-mejorar-su-competitividad-y-crear-empleo/



2.- The action incorporates innovative elements.

This aid for R & D projects aims to increase the competitiveness of R & D of Rioja companies by promoting and promoting investment and spending on R & D & I, producing innovations, both process and product, and encouraging the implementation and exploitation of research and development results.

The main objective of the **ArneWarm**-funded project has been to develop a new polyurethane foam that, while maintaining all the current properties, will reduce the temperature needed to produce thermoforming operation, a process that consists of heating a semi-finished thermoplastic plate or sheet, so that when it is softened it can be adapted to the shape of a mold by vacuum pressure action or by means of a countermould. This improvement offers an important innovation, since it assumes that the thermoforming processes of the foam and the glue of the fabric, which provides the final finish of the template, can be carried out in a single operation, reducing the process time and producing remarkable energy savings.





The **Rubber Cycle** project has submitted to research and study the micronisation technique (crushed and ground vulcanised rubber, that is, that rubber that has previously been heated to make it harder, waterproof and cold-resistant) and its subsequent devulcanisation so that it can be reintroduced into the manufacture of new soles. This has meant validating the previous technology, thus allowing to improve the reuse of vulcanised rubber residues from the remains generated in the manufacture of footwear soles (excessive material in the manufacturing process, in the parts that protrude from the soles, etc.).

3.- Adaptation of the results obtained to the established objectives.

The aim is that, with these aids, the companies from La Rioja take advantage of their experience and the possibilities of technology to adapt to the needs and demands of the consumer, thus being able to offer healthier, more sustainable and personalised products.

The aid received by **Arneplant** for the start-up of its project has enabled the company, after developing different types of polyurethane foams, and after seeking to improve the temperatures and thermoforming times of the same, to obtain a series of formulations that make it possible to improve the temperature. Currently, one of the formulations developed in this project is being used in most of the company's production.

As for **Calzados Cienta**, the manufacture of prototype footwear with rubber sole introducing micronised powder from scraps has been satisfactory, revealing its economic technical viability with 32 % micronised powder. The chemical physical characteristics obtained meet the requirements for good use of street footwear.

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

A weakness in the Spanish economy, and in particular in La Rioja, is the low expenditure on research and development, far from the objectives of the European Union. This aid is aimed at strengthening the system of research, development and innovation, increasing the number of companies creating new products/processes or services, and increasing the private effort in these actions accompanying public aid.

Furthermore, the limited dynamisation and development of R & D & I units in companies complicates the assimilation of existing technologies and the development of their own technologies. There is also little collaboration in the development of R & D & I projects or other innovation activities between companies and Technology Centers and Universities.

The **Arneplant** project, in line with this latest weakness detected, has counted on the external collaboration of a company expert in formulation, and another expert in nanomaterials.

Calzados Cienta has had the collaboration of the Footwear Technology Center of La Rioja (CTCR) for the development of the project.

In this way in both companies, collaboration with leading technology companies has contributed to improving technological infrastructure not only for them, but in the region, achieving the adaptation of a traditional sector such as footwear to the new standards of quality, innovation and price reduction demanded by increasingly international and competitive markets.

5.- High degree of coverage of the target population.

As a result of the development of these operations, it contributes to the improvement of business competitiveness and the maintenance of a sector of great tradition and importance for the region, which provides wealth and employs a large part of the population of La Rioja Baja.

Arneplant, which is a family business founded in 1999 with headquarters in Arnedo (La Rioja), and is a benchmark in the field of foam production, microfibers and breathable footwear insoles, centralizes all management and manufacturing in this city, employing more than 250 people. Its production supplies many other occupational, casual, sports, sanitary and orthopedic footwear companies, exporting 80 % of their production mainly to countries of the European Union, reaching national and international citizens.

Calzados Cienta is a family business founded in 1982, also based in Arnedo, specialising in children's footwear. For design and manufacturing they focus on quality and comfort, using the most advanced technology and natural raw materials, purchased 100 % in the region, and employing 50 people. Its breathable and lightweight footwear, adapted to the needs of the youngest, is distributed in different countries, as it exports 90 % of its production, accompanying the steps of children from all over the world.



6. - Consideration of horizontal criteria of equal opportunities, non-discrimination, as well as social responsibility and environmental sustainability.

The call for aid for the development of R & D projects is based on horizontal principles, with priority being given to projects by companies that have certified a certificate in the field of labour relations, corporate social responsibility, reconciliation of family and work life, equality plans, family responsible companies and occupational risk prevention systems.

In the environmental field, the **Arneplant** project has managed to reduce energy expenditure during the manufacturing of the templates, by lowering the working temperature, as well as in the gluing stage, since it is not necessary to reheat the foam for the adhesion operation, now being carried out in conjunction with the thermoforming. In addition, the waste of raw materials has been reduced by unifying the thermoforming and gluing operations in a single stage.

As for **Calzados Cienta**, it is a circular economy project that seeks the use of waste by reincorporating them into the production process, achieving a reduction in the necessary natural resources and a reduction in the generation of waste and CO2 emissions by 33 %, contributing to the Paris Agreement.

7.- Synergies with other policies or instruments of public intervention.

The projects are in line with the priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the achievement of the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the European Union.

In addition, they fall within the competitiveness objectives set out in the **La Rioja 2020 Strategic Plan**, in order to achieve the long-term objective of placing La Rioja among the 60 most advanced European regions in Europe in 2020 and **the Community Industrial Development Plan**, which articulate its own system of science, technology, research and innovation.

This aid to the footwear sector is often complemented by the aid granted by the **CDTI**, under the Ministry of Science and Innovation, for the promotion of innovation and technological development of Spanish companies, always in accordance with the accumulation rules and maximum intensities set by the European Union to avoid double funding.

Both companies, Arneplant and Calzados Cienta, have the collaboration and support of the **Technological Center of Calzado de La Rioja (CTCR)**, which provides service and coverage to 97 % of companies in the Riojan footwear sector.

In addition, the regional government, in collaboration with the **Association of Footwear and Related Industries of La Rioja (Aiccor)**, favours the internationalisation of the Rioja companies from the footwear sector through their participation in national and international fairs, as well as **ICEX**, under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism.



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