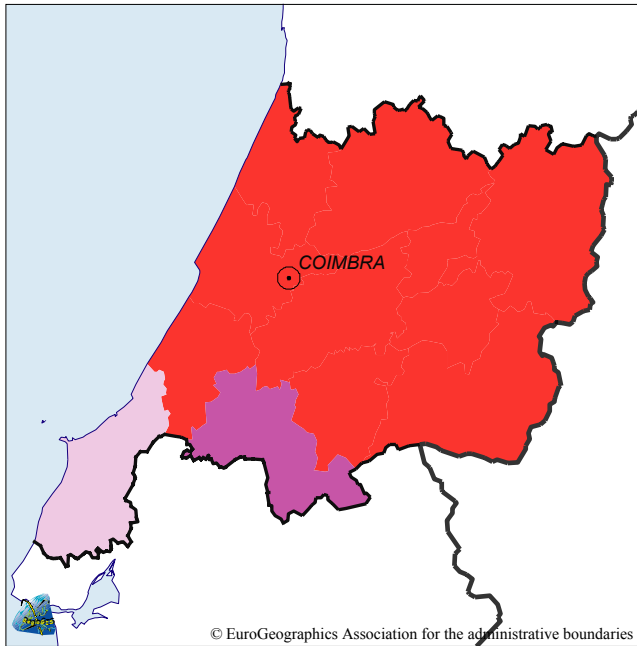
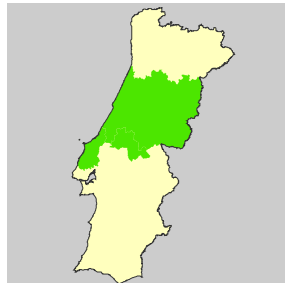




# European Regional Innovation Awards 2004



- Objective 1
- Phasing-out Obj. 1 (till 31/12/2005)
- Phasing-out Obj. 1 (till 31/12/2006)



## Centro, Portugal

The Centro region is conveniently situated half way between Lisbon and Oporto and has easy access to the rest of Europe across its border at Vilar Formoso and through its ports at Aveiro and Figueira da Foz.

The region boasts valuable natural resources: the sea, its rivers, and its large expanses of forest.

17.2% of Portugal's population lives in this region, mainly concentrated in and around eight medium-sized cities.

The presence of the University of Coimbra, in particular, means that the level of education is high and training is in abundant supply. The region also attracts many tourists thanks to the quality of its coastline.

## Centro : main regional indicators

Area	23668.2 km <sup>2</sup>
Population	1.8 million
Population density	75.4 inn./km <sup>2</sup>
GDP growth (annual average % change)	3.4%
Employment rate	73.6%
Patent application rate (EU average 153.6)	4.8 per million inhabitants

Source: European Commission, DG for Regional Policy  
Population Figures for 2001; GDP Figures for 1995 - 2001;  
Employment Figures for 2002;  
Patents Figures for 1999 - 2001

*"The Centro Region uses innovation as a basic instrument to improve the competitiveness of its economy. 'X-PROT' represents a good example of this, combining knowledge and technology transfer with regional and local development."*



**Paulo Pereira COELHO**  
President of Centro  
(Regional Executive)

## X-PROT - a Molecular Biotechnology Research and Development unit to tackle a commercially difficult but scientifically important project

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Right: X-PROT logo

Below: Recombinant  
Protein in the laboratory



### X-PROT: Biotechnology in Centro, Portugal

The "X-PROT" project has been given a European Regional Innovative Action Award for helping businesses through the transfer of knowledge and technical innovation.

The aim of the X-PROT project was to set up a Molecular Biotechnology Research and Development unit to produce recombinant proteins. Recombinant proteins are used in crystallisation studies, antibody production and the screening of new drugs, and are therefore useful to the scientific community. However the techniques used to produce these proteins are complicated and it is therefore difficult to get commercial backing for such a project.

X-PROT were able to achieve their goal by engaging with several partners in the field of biotechnology. They used the scientific facilities of the Centre of Neuroscience and Cellular Biology from the University of Coimbra (CNC), and Association for Biomedical Research and Innovation in Light and Image (AIBILI), and the technical staff of Bluepharma, former Bayer Portugal, a pharmaceutical company of the Centro Region of Portugal, to create a viable project.

The potential commercial spin-offs from the X-PROT project will ensure that biotechnology continues to boost the regional economy of Centro for many years to come.

#### View of the jury:

***"This project is an excellent example of technological innovation that can be transferred to the private sector in order to benefit the region as a whole."***

### More information on ERDF Regional Programmes of Innovative Actions

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/innovation/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/innovation/index_en.htm)