

# BRITISH PLASTICS AND RUBBER

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SEPT 2021



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**WOMEN IN PLASTICS SPOTLIGHT**  
BP&R shines a spotlight on one of the platform's inspirational interviewees

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# ONE STEP AHEAD

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**RUI TOCHA,  
GENERAL MANAGER  
OF PORTUGUESE  
ENGINEERING &  
TOOLING CLUSTER  
DISCUSSES  
ENGINEERING AND  
TOOLING FROM  
PORTUGAL AND  
HOW IT IS ONE  
STEP AHEAD FOR  
THE PRODUCTS  
OF THE FUTURE  
TO SUPPORT THE  
PLANET RESILIENCE.**

It makes no sense to think about (new) products without the involvement of modern mouldmaking and plastics value chains, considering its positioning within the critical path of product development. Portugal is still a global reference on these industries taking advantage of its Engineering & Tooling Cluster, by exporting 90 percent of its Tooling production, specially to the most modern and advanced markets, like Germany, France, Spain, UK, USA, Poland, Czech Republic, and many others.

Since 2010, under the common brand “Engineering & Tooling from Portugal”, the Portuguese Engineering & Tooling Cluster has increased its production and exports over 100 percent. The Tooling Sector includes more than 500 companies and generates over 11.000 jobs. In 2018, the Portuguese Tooling industry exported approximately 700 million euros, ensuring the 3rd position in terms of production of plastic injection moulds at European level.

The Engineering & Tooling Cluster members are the best ambassadors of our common brand, “Engineering & Tooling from Portugal”:

The Portuguese Engineering & Tooling Cluster has a long experience (over 60 years) in the international market, integrating a large value chain to support global clients from more than 80 countries in the world. Innovation and technology-based Know-how and ability to provide quality services and reliable solutions as a “one-stop-shop” (from design to product), are identified as key values in Portugal.

During COVID-19 Pandemic period, the Portuguese Engineering & Tooling Cluster companies reinforced their capacity by exploring the development of an extended action based on innovation and people qualification allowing for new solutions on design and product development and manufacturing. (50 million Euros on research & innovative projects, involving more than 100 companies and 50 RTO)

Using competitive processes and advanced and green materials, supported by I4.0 technologies and Zero-Defect Manufacturing methodologies, (Artificial Intelligence, Additive Manufacturing, Simulations/Digital Twin, LCA – Life Cycle Assessment and High-Performance Computing) companies are exploring the new reality on digital and green trends, and adapting their internal skills and technological competences, to the new demand.

The Portuguese Engineering & Tooling Industries are the best partners for the new products of the future, considering their advance and differentiation of their value chain, namely the capacity to cooperate and provide global solutions to sophisticated markets such as: Automotive, Aeronautics & Aerospace, Medical Devices, Packaging and Electronic, among others. The technological cooperation has been anchored on many projects, such as:

- TOOLING 4G - Advanced Tools for Smart Manufacturing (<https://tooling4g.toolingportugal.com/>), involving 20 companies and 10 RTO & Universities, exploring: I4.0 technologies, Collaborative Robotics, AI, Augmented Reality, Additive Manufacturing, Zero Defect Production.
- S4PLAST – Sustainable Plastics & Advanced Solutions (<https://www.centimfe.com/s4plast.html>), involving 9 companies and 6 RTO/ Universities, and POOL-NET (coordinator of the Cluster), exploring: Design for Circularity, Sustainability and Valorization; New Advanced and Multifunctional Polymeric Materials; Advanced Production Technologies; Products & Processes Intelligent Integration.
- PTcentroDiH – Digital Innovation Hub for Portugal Centre Region (<http://www.ptcentrodih.pt/>), Coordinated by POOL-NET (Engineering & Tooling Cluster) with three other Clusters (TICE.PT; SUSTAINABLE HABITAT; INOVCLUSTER), 3 Universities (Coimbra, Aveiro and UBI); 6 Polytechnics (Leiria, Guarda, Tomar, Viseu, Coimbra, Castelo Branco); 8 RTO (CENTIMFE, ITCONS, CTCV, AIBILI, BLC3, IT, AEMITEQ, IPN); with the support of the Regional Authority (CCDR), to support the digitalization process of the industry and public entities within the next seven years.

Considering the Qualification of the People, the Portuguese Engineering & Tooling Cluster benefits also from one Pilot Action promoted by the Portuguese Government to train and qualify Industrial workers, using this Cluster as demonstrator, recognizing its importance to support the European Industrialization Process and its multi-sectorial impacts on the economy.

In this context, the Engineering & Tooling is well prepared and one step ahead to support global clients. Go ahead, challenge our industry and take advantage of our competitive performance!

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