



Lifelong  
Learning  
Programme



# AGRO-BUSINESS START

Best practices to promote becoming  
agricultural entrepreneurs

2015



Hungary – Germany – Italy – Greece





# AGRO-BUSINESS START

with the development of agricultural  
entrepreneurial competences

2015



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The Guide has been made within the frames of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme subsidised under the Grundtvig Learning Partnerships entitled 'AGRO-BUSINESS START – with the development of entrepreneurial competences'

Grant agreement number: 13/0030-G/1140

Project reference number: GR-LP-2013-140

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Publishing:  
Government Office for Békés County  
2015

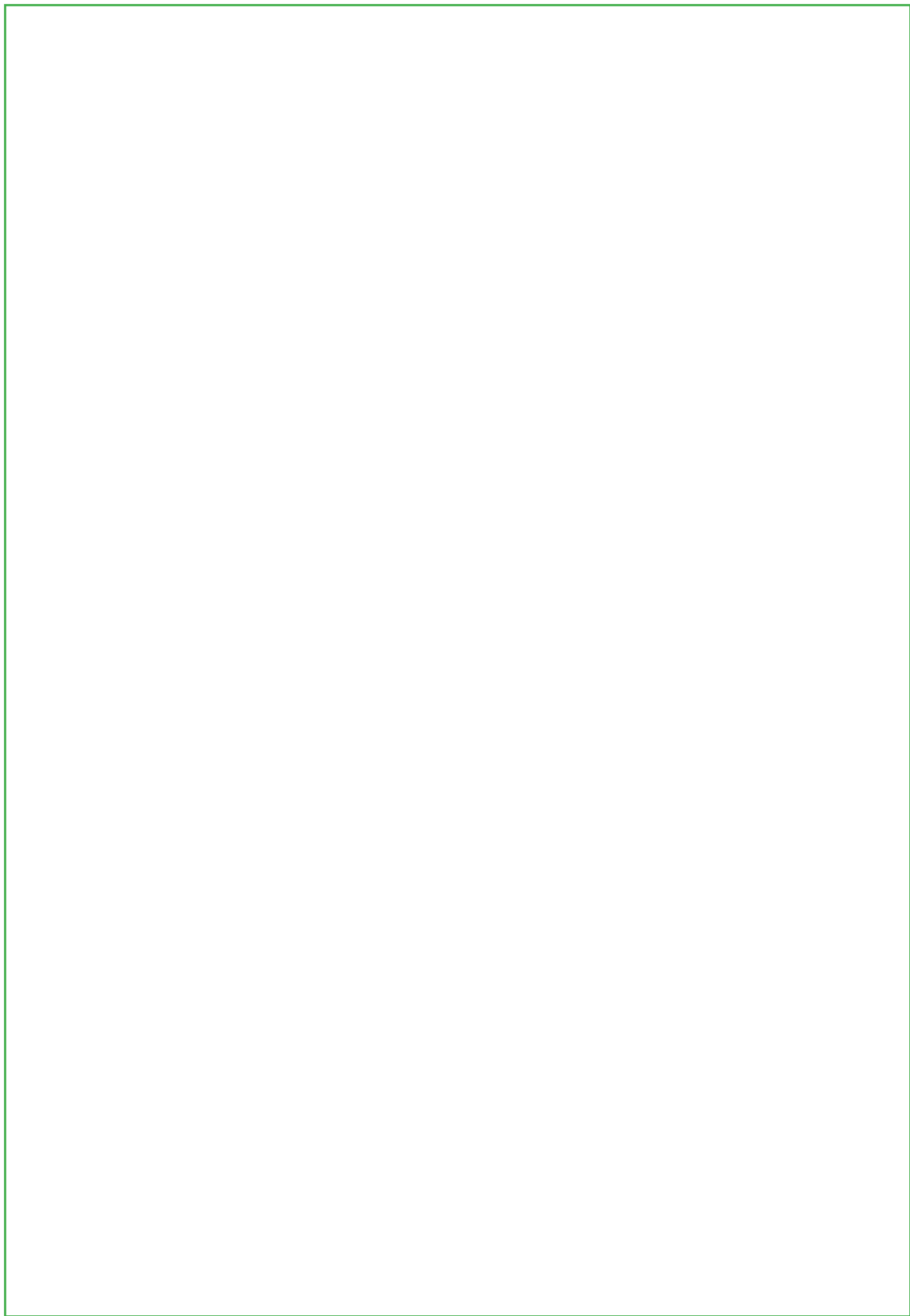
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This project has been funded with support from the European Union.  
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# I. Introduction

The project entitled 'AGRO-BUSINESS START – with the development of entrepreneurial competences' has been made within the frames of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme subsidised under the Grundtvig Learning Partnerships by the consortium lead by the Government Office of Békés County.

As a partnership principle, it is a continuous problem in partnership countries to integrate lowly educated, disadvantaged, unqualified and unemployed people into the labour-market. The agricultural sector provides the possibility to increase employment in every partner country, so the partner countries define the process of supporting disadvantaged groups becoming agricultural entrepreneurs as a breakout point.

To fulfil all needs, partners decided to exchange experiences regarding this topic and implement a project in an international contribution, which has an aim to prepare professionals working in vocational education or at partner organisations involved in adult education and in increasing employment to support the arousal and maintenance of learning motivation of job-seekers living in the area and who are lowly educated, unqualified or have outdated qualification to become agricultural entrepreneurs in the long-term. Labour organisations, research organisations, training organisations and a university are involved in the project.

To ensure the successful implementation of the project, the partners organised international meetings, during which the organisations' applied methods, motivational tools, initiatives used in order to involve lowly educated, disadvantaged, unqualified and unemployed people in training, providing professional agricultural knowledge, keeping them in training and supporting them in finding a job or becoming an entrepreneur, were introduced in full detail. All the elements of trainings aiming the improvement of agricultural entrepreneur competences have also been introduced.

The results of these international meetings are published in this brochure as the collection of best practices, which contains the best methods, practices, case studies and programmes of partner countries applied for arousing and maintain learning motivation of job-seekers who are lowly educated or have outdated qualification to become agricultural entrepreneurs in the long-term.

## II. Introduction of partners

The **Government Office for Békés County** was founded on 1st January 2011 and is a budgetary organisation which carries out its tasks under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice. The implementation of international projects belongs to the Department of Employment, which is a part of the Government Office. The department's major task is to reduce, handle and release employment tensions, satisfy the labour force demand of employers, to prevent and reduce unemployment and its disadvantageous consequences. It collects and provides information on the labour market processes and situation of the region, it makes predictions on the expected changes and orientates the bodies maintaining schools about how to define their training structure. The Department of Employment carries out the following tasks and duties:

providing labour market and employment information, different counselling activities, transferring jobs, organising and implementing labour market trainings and paying unemployed benefits for registered job-seekers. During the past ten years the organisation has successfully developed more than 50 projects.

**Serifo srl**, founded in 2001, works in the Agricultural - Agrifood- and Rural Sectors through an integrated strategy focused on an expertise in 4 areas: Real Services, Research and Training in Agricultural, Rural and Environmental Sectors. Serifo supports new plans of enterprise development through actions duly planned for the testing of experimental trainings aimed at facilitating the improvement of the expertise as a strategy to increase the potential of employability and to adapt workers to technological changes and to the development of the production systems. It is also focused on the professionalisation of specific professional profiles in different working fields. For example, it has developed a new training curriculum and pathway (NEAM) addressed to agricultural managers to provide them with skills and expertise in strategic entrepreneurial areas; It is also involved in the testing of an innovative use of ICT in the VET: the development of a virtual world as environment for the simulation of situations of professional practice as a way to improve the attitude of future agricultural entrepreneurs and managers (V-3DAS – Virtual 3D Agri-Stage for experiential learning).

The **SAQ GmbH** has been operating since 1991 as a recognized structure development company in various labour-market policy-oriented projects with strategic and operational partners in the region of West Saxony. As a service provider they operate today mainly in the labour-market and the private economy sector. Their activities consist of the active support of job-seekers in integrating them into the labour-market, as well as in assisting companies and institutions to solve problems in human resources and in the corporate organisation. In the context of labour and personnel development, job placement and project management the SAQ initiated education and training projects, projects to prepare people for working life, reintegrate, and develop individual perspectives. The SAQ has a wide network of stakeholders in the education and labour-market, the employment policy and relevant institutions of vocational and adult education, with the target of a holistic work of integration.

**Agricoltura è Vita Associazione**, promoted by Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori–CIA was founded in 1962 then named as CIPAT. Based in Rome, it has associated structures all across the country. Its general aims are training, research and dissemination to promote economic and social development of farmers, agri-food operators and citizens, especially in rural areas. It has been recognized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy by Law 40/87. It has implemented a quality management system of training activities, certified under the standard UNI EN ISO 9001:2008 EA 37 and recently under the standard ISO 29990. It is registered in the Legal Personality's Register at n. 768/2011, at Rome's Prefecture, under DPR February 10, 2000, n. 361. It is enrolled to the bulletin-board of the Ministry of University and Research for the accredited subjects to develop projects of research with code 8188116V.

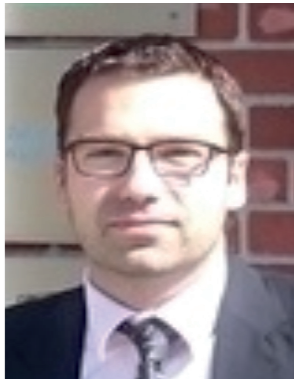
In 1983 the **TEI of Athens** evolved from a Higher Technical Education Centre to a Technological Educational Institution. Today the TEI of Athens is a modern Higher Education Institution comprising 456 teaching staff members whose educational and research work is supported by several temporary Teaching staff members, 207 Administrative staff members, 79 Specialized Scientific staff members and 25.000 students. In terms of teaching staff and student resources, it is the largest Technological Educational Institute and the third largest Higher Education

Institution in Greece as for the number of students. The TEI of Athens consists of twenty-seven Departments belonging to five Faculties, staffed by distinguished scientific, technological and supporting members. In addition, the TEI of Athens possesses all the necessary infrastructure for the proper service of students, including the electronic handling of requests concerning secretarial work, free Wi-Fi, library, clinic, gym, restaurants and canteens, parking places, conference center, structures for counseling and social care, employment and career, innovation and entrepreneurship, liaison office, as well as structures for student exchange, internship and lifelong learning.

We all learnt a great deal from working together in this project. We hope that we managed to raise the attention and interest of readers regarding the project and we are confident that they gained useful information after reading this brochure.



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### III. Best practices, case studies in order to promote agricultural entrepreneurship

#### III.1. Hungary

##### **‘Breakout Point towards Farming’ – Public Employment Pilot Programme in Békés County**

There are a large number of job-seekers in Békés County’s labour-market with low educational levels, who are mostly unskilled and persistently struggling with unemployment, which make their return to the labour-market a significant challenge for the organisation. In addition, Békés County has traditionally been one of the country’s agricultural areas, thus on the basis of local values and natural resources this sector can be considered as a major breakout point in moderating employment tensions.

The knowledge already available for local people and the thematic, improved and newly acquired traditional knowledge within the programme ensure the expansion of employment in this disadvantaged area in the long-term and the possibility of obtaining labour income.

The possibility of starting an agricultural entrepreneurial activity is based on public employment programmes operated in Hungary, which on the one hand ensure a temporary income for stakeholders during the initial periods, on the other hand represent a capital and funding for the realisation of outbound investments.

Participants of the programme highly prioritise to implement an effective, expedient and economical public employment in Békés County, especially in the affected areas of southern Békés. They want to create an opportunity for everyone who wishes to earn the resources necessary to live as a result of working. They want to enable all working people to be a building brick of the region through work, to enable all of them to better the affected region and each other’s lives through their creative energies. Participants feel that the work is not just an economic necessity, but a realisation of creative energy dormant in all of us, as well as a tool for community building.

##### **The aim of the programme**

The aim of the public employment pilot programme of Békés County titled ‘Breakout Point towards Farming’ – which is also an economic model – is to set up an economically sustainable (i.e.: operational without state funding) system, which will significantly reduce the unemployment rates of the region, by carrying out meaningful and long-term sustainable economic activity with creating joint backyard economic activity. In addition, its priority task is to realise self-supporting production activity with products satisfying market needs and with modern professional knowledge and approach.



### **The target group of the programme**

Those disadvantaged people - living in a region suitable for agricultural activity - who have agricultural skills acquired in the context of the winter public employment programme, and those unskilled job-seekers who undertake their obligations connected to their social cooperative membership, as well as having an entrepreneurial attitude and intention.

### **Background of the programme**

The programme as a unique initiative would like to support the establishment of self-sustaining – even in the medium term – small-scale farmers working in domestic farms based on Békés County's capabilities and by continuing traditional agricultural activities. There is a major demand in Hungary related to the consumption of small-scale produced agricultural products, thus carrying out entrepreneurial activities based on the production of these products is obvious. The work of participants is ensured by the materials provided and outsourced by social cooperatives and the infrastructure. These latter activities fill the gaps resulting from the lack of entrepreneurial capital, as well as ensure sales, thereby a certain income.

By this the risk factors connected to the entrepreneurial activity may decrease significantly.

The programme is implemented within the framework of a consortium agreement signed by the municipalities concerned.



### **Specific activities implemented within the programme**

During the first period of the implementation of the complex programme, after selecting the range of participants and signing the consortium agreement, tasks related to the production of goods (vegetable cultivation and animal rearing tasks) is carried out within the contractual framework provided by the coordinating organisation. Unified and high-quality production is carried out by input materials, production technology, professional consultation provided by the coordinating organisation.

In the case of crop production 440 persons are involved to work in a brigade of 10+1 persons in block themed foil tents on areas provided by municipalities.







In livestock farming pigs were placed out depending on local conditions, thus it is possible to outsource porkers to houses, or raise them in fattening houses.

In the second phase the stabilisation of the programme takes place - in this phase only the financing of supported wage costs happens, with no additional payments. The main goal in this phase is to ensure that publicly employed people – with the help of social cooperatives – become self-sustaining at the end of the

programme, and that previously unemployed people carry out entrepreneurial activities within a cooperative membership.

The transfer of knowledge connected to activities happens in a demonstration farm set up on the two spots. In the context of the programme a practical demonstration site showing the practical knowledge of crop production and innovative technologies, as well as a practical demonstration site showing the practical knowledge of animal husbandry, where the participants of the programme may acquire the practical knowledge necessary to carry out productive activities. By the end of the programme they acquire professional and entrepreneurial skills, which enable them to carry out independent, value-creating and gainful work in cooperatives.

The organisations participating in the programme act together - by strengthening sales and purchases between each other - in areas of market, marketing, procurement and consultancy, by taking into account customers' demands. During the programme – according to the consortium agreement – there is an emphasised importance on cooperation, which can form the basis of future cooperative collaborations, implementing programmes enhancing employment, the transferring of best practices and sharing useful knowledge.

### **The impact and result of the programme**

As a result of the programme, by achieving goals set in cooperatives farming independently and without subsidies, members, who were unemployed people previously, will be able to generate an income ensuring the means of subsistence for themselves and their families.

With the acquired knowledge the cooperatives can later become employers by expanding their range of activities and capacity, thus by employing people they can further increase the employment rate of their region and reduce unemployment. The production and maintenance skills are transferred on a multiplicative basis, therefore on the demonstration sites the constant transfer of knowledge for new entrants is ensured, and trainings providing vocational qualification can be started on the same educational farm training places.

As a secondary effect of the programme the cooperation of municipalities participating in the consortium enhanced, which may prompt them to set up further collaborations and implement successful programme.



## 2. „Test Business Incubator” complex labour-market programme

The essential purpose of the Government Office of Békés County operating on behalf of the public employment service is the handling of unemployment with, among others, the creation of new vacancies. An important element of job creation is to support job-seekers becoming entrepreneurs therefore within a targeted labour-market programme with the help of a unique, innovative system of tools job-seekers were supported to start up their own businesses, partly in the field of agriculture.

In the 2-year project finishing in 2013, we supported 18 job-seekers having marketable qualification and a viable economic idea for starting up their own businesses in Békés county with the help of a test business incubator method tested in foreign countries and adapted to Hungarian national circumstances.

### Aim of the programme

As one of the breakout points of Békés county considered to be as a disadvantageous region, to enhance the **creation of new businesses** with the implementation of a complex labour-market programme using both EU and national resources.

As an aim we set to become acquainted with the so-called ‘couveuse’ – test business incubator method developed in France and successfully initiated in Belgium and Portugal, to adapt it considering local characteristics and legal system, test it in national circumstances and develop the local model. By using national resources we targeted the training, mentoring and supporting job-seekers participated in the programme becoming entrepreneurs.

### Target group of the programme

Job-seekers living in the disadvantageous region, having a qualification and a viable business idea and willing to become entrepreneurs.

### Background of the programme

In Békés county a great amount of job-seekers inquire about the subsidy provided by the public employment service to enhance them becoming entrepreneurs, though the number of applicants is roughly 10% of those interested. Based on a survey it was revealed that the high risk factor and the lack of knowledge needed for starting up and operating businesses were identified as hindering factors of job-seekers’ low intention of becoming entrepreneurs.

Despite of a thorough selection and preparation procedure, the success of a future business can only be proven if the future entrepreneur tries it out. Our national practice has not provided an opportunity for that, however, it would be of high demand therefore we wished to create an opportunity for job-seekers to **try out** and **test their entrepreneurial ideas without taking any risks**.

### Concrete activities implemented during the programme

During the adaptation and testing phase of the ‘couveuse’ – test business incubator method, in Békés county 18 unemployed persons received the opportunity to develop competences necessary for running and operating a business, test their business ideas and start their own businesses.

The Hungarian organisations implementing the programme and their tasks:

- Government Office of Békés County (implementation and coordination of the programme, asserting entrepreneurial support)
- Békés County Foundation for Enterprise Promotion (mentoring),

- Türr István Training and Research Institution Directorate of Békéscsaba (training implementation, mentoring),
- Trade Association of Békéscsaba (mentoring),
- Federation of Traders and Caterers of Békés County (mentoring),
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Békés County (mentoring),
- Test-Business Incubator Ltd. (testing businesses)



The key element of the new adapted method was that the entrepreneur candidates got a chance to try out their business ideas without taking any risks. The method's unique and innovative features allow participants to test their businesses in a legal status that do not pose any risks for them. The entrepreneur candidates carried out their entrepreneurial activities on behalf of the so-called Békés County Test Business Incubation Ltd. which covers their risks, so they could obtain feedback

from the market concerning the demand for their products/services even before becoming independent entrepreneurs. This risk minimisation method provided the test business incubator's uniqueness and ensures the success of emerging businesses.

The **selection of participants** was carried out by the Government Office and its cooperating partner organisations. The aim was to involve participants who already had viable business plans as well as professional qualifications required by the business activity. In the context of the project a **selection methodology and a guide** were prepared providing guidelines for professionals in order to examine the compliance of job-seekers entering the programme with the selection criteria. Altogether we accepted 144 job-seekers' application for the call. After a three-round selection process 18 persons were involved into the programme.



We provided continuous **individualised mentoring** for the participants; mentors supported the participants of the programme individually during and after the training period, in order for them to realise their business plans and to be able to start their own business with entrepreneurial support.

**Supporting entrepreneurship** started after the conclusion of the training programme element when leaving the protected environment. Those who pursued a successful entrepreneurial activity during the test period and decided to become an entrepreneur, received the grant helping those becoming entrepreneurs – equal to the prevailing minimum wage – for a maximum of 6 months. The purpose of the grant was to ensure that beginner entrepreneurs have a fixed amount, minimum income during their first months of their self-employment, which covered the compulsory charges and the payment of expenses during the ascension of the business. Mentor-

ship support was also ensured for the participants during the period of supporting the process of becoming entrepreneurs.

In the context of the programme it was possible to become an employee, if the candidate decided after the test period not to pursue entrepreneurial intentions. This has prevented the negative consequences of a business failure.

With the support of the Government Office of Békés County candidates are able to **raise awareness among the general public regarding their products and services** during various fairs, festivals and exhibitions in order to ensure future entrepreneurial success after the conclusion of the programme.



### Result and impact of the programme

The complex labour-market programme realised from EU and national sources was very successful, 15 of the 18 participants became entrepreneurs, 3 of them became licensed, traditional small-scale producers and later on four of them even started employing further workers.

The project received the **quality award** when applying

for the 'European Enterprise Promotion Award 2013' both in the national and international rounds.

At the Government Office of Békés County, we pay special attention to continuously apply the test business incubator method transferred and adapted in an international project and built in the operation of the organisation. This method was also used in the EU-project entitled 'For the Well-Operating Businesses' implemented between 2013-2014, and the county labour-market programme entitled 'Test Business Incubator 2.0' implemented between 2014-2015.

Within the programme a total number of 98 people were involved, of them 74 attendants participated in a supported training targeted to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. **As a result of the programmes 64 persons became entrepreneurs**, being beekeeper, gardener, plant grower and even a grower of Jerusalem artichokes among them.

The programmes implemented significantly enhanced the forming of job-seekers' entre-



preneurial attitude, encouraged them to become entrepreneurs. In the long run, the programme **contributes to the improvement of the employment situation** and the reducing of unemployment **via helping and supporting the entrepreneurial status**. With the help of the programme – as opposed to the ‘forced’ businesses doomed to failure – job-seekers having the necessary qualifications and a truly viable project idea could become successful entrepreneurs.

An additional, exceptionally important impact of the project is that by the utilisation of experiences **we have made a proposal to amend the legislation** towards the Ministry of National Economy, and, as a result, from 2014 job-seekers can be supported by ensuring trainings to acquire competences how to start up and operate businesses, as well as participating in trainings developing entrepreneurial competences.

## III.2. Germany

### 1. Teaching and Testing Institute Köllitsch

A network of state-run training centres for agriculture has been established in Germany. These training centres support the companies with the dual apprenticeship and offer extra-occupational training courses for companies.

The Lehr- und Versuchsgut Köllitsch is used by over 1.500 companies, employees and apprentices per year.

#### Description and goals of the programme

The Teaching and Testing Institute Köllitsch is one of 18 state run training and qualification centres in Germany. The facility is guided and financed by the Free State of Saxony.

The facility pursues the following goals:

- realisation of the vocational programme in the context of the German dual educational system for the jobs that require training like agriculturist and animal husbandry worker
- further training of agricultural practitioners, consultants and other specialists
- realisation of experiments, trials and demonstrations
- demonstration of a sustainable and environmentally responsible agriculture connected with the implementation of an agroecological landscape concept

The guaranteed future and efficiency of the Saxon farms is supposed to be supported by the up-to-date technical status and high level of the training and qualification offers.

#### Target group of the programme

The Teaching and Testing Institute Köllitsch with its offers is open to all interested people. In particular the following group of people from the agricultural sector are addressed:

- apprentices
- agricultural workers
- farmers
- consultants

Due to the territorial sectioning of the training centres in Germany, the institute in Köllitsch is mostly used by people and companies from Saxony and the south of Brandenburg. There are also collaborations with other countries and schools, like Poland or Czech Republic. There is also the possibility to plan individual teaching instructions for different groups.

### **The history of the programme**

The history of the institute begins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the fusion of several rural farms to a cooperative. Until the end of 1945 it was managed as a national breeding farm in private ownership. In 1949 a nationally owned estate was founded in this location, which developed to a leading apprentice and breeding farm in the former GDR.



After 1992 the existing potential of qualified personnel, breeders' valuable livestock and the experiences with the vocational training formed the base to create a modern teaching and trial farm. There were no comparable offers. Role models for the structure and offers were already established in the form of training and qualification centres in western Germany.

The Teaching and Trial Institute is integrated into the Saxony State Office for Environment,

Agriculture and Geology and forms the trial base for the special branches of the State Office. It is also a teaching and qualification centre for agriculture in Saxony and the adjoining federal states.

### **Applied technologies implemented in the programme**

In the Free State of Saxony the sponsorship of competence centres was supported, i.e. the facilities were supported according to their competences and specialised themselves. Besides agriculture there are also educational facilities for fishery, horse breeding and forestry. The Teaching and Trial Institute in Köllitsch is specialised in agriculture and animal husbandry. With this specialisation the available financial resources can be applied more efficiently and the quality is increasing.

The training centre has a variety of modern training workshops and teaching cabinets:

- training workshop for cattle farming (dairy cow keeping, young cattle upbringing, beef cattle upbringing)
- training workshop for pig farming (piglet propagation, pig fattening)
- training workshop for animal and product knowledge
- training workshop for the technology of indoor works
- training workshop for agricultural engineering
- teaching cabinets for easy repairs
- renewable resources (including biogasplant)
- computer cabinet
- practice field (5,5 hectares of cultivated area and grassland)



The instructions in the context of the vocational programme are conducted in groups of 6-8 people with high practical practise content. In this connection the mediation of complex connections has a special significance.

A variety of machines and equipment, which are only available for the training courses, guarantee a high training value for each participant. Six functioning milking plants, haulers and tractors, pest management guns as well as choppers are only a few examples. The given constructional and technical facilities, livestock and dates of production of the Teaching and Trial Institute are completely involved in the workshops and completed with training equipment in separate schooling rooms.

The Teaching and Trial Institute is also a forage growing facility with 925 hectares of agricultural area (66% cultivated area and 44% grassland). The livestock consists of 200 milk cows, 90 sucking cows, 140 sows, 240 mothers and 50 does. With the connection of scientific analysis in the context of applied research in the institute, a high expertise and timeliness is guaranteed. Parallel to this the gathered insights of numerous research projects can be realised and demonstrated immediately. A team of skilled training supervisors with expert knowledge is available for the training of the apprentices. By means of permanent professional and pedagogical systematic qualification, an apprenticeship on a high level can be offered.

The conditions of an apprenticeship can be watched in a film at [www.smul.sachsen.de/lvg](http://www.smul.sachsen.de/lvg)

The training centre also has an own boarding school. During the courses the participants live in a residential home which has double rooms with sanitary modules. Each room has an own fridge and TV. In the free time a soccer field, fitness room, internet room and barbecue place are available.

### **New products and technologies/innovative aspect**

The innovative aspect of the Teaching and Trial Institute Köllitsch is the implementation of a high-value, expert qualification based on modern technologies for all interested people. Thanks to the governmental support, which makes attractive pricing possible, and the regional proximity of the 18 training facilities in Germany in total, nearly every entrepreneur can use these offers for qualification. This offer increases the competitiveness and success of the entrepreneurs.

Another important part is the extension of the dual apprenticeship. Normally the dual apprenticeship contains academic qualification and practical learning and working at the farm. At the Teaching and Trial Institute the apprenticeship is completed with workshops concerning specific topics. For example the apprentices can learn to weld to do small repairs; they can train to be able to use the automatic milking plants or GPS-navigated tractors.

This extension of the apprenticeship is fully financed by the Free State of Saxony, i.e. it is free for the apprentice. With this extension the adolescents have a high chance to get a work contract after their apprenticeship. The youth unemployment is correspondingly low.

### **Results and effects**

The qualification offers of the Teaching and Trial Institute in Köllitsch are attended by 1.400 participants in qualification courses and 130 apprentices in the context of the dual apprenticeship per year.

The operating grad rate is high, the offered workshops are nearly constantly booked up.

An indirect result is the increasing professionalism of the agricultural entrepreneurs. The bankruptcy rate in the agricultural sector was 0,2% in the first quarter in 2014. Other lines of business like the building industry or gastronomy had 1 %, nearly 5 times as high.

In total the number of bankruptcies has decreased over the last 10 years.

## 2. Agrargenossenschaft Gospersgrün

It is even hard for qualified companies to establish their business by themselves and to live from the earnings. The “model of cooperatives” (Genossenschaftsmodell) from Germany and Austria is an established example for the successful cooperation of young businesses, estate owners and experienced partners.

The presented “Agrargenossenschaft Gospersgrün” shows how over 100 partners work successfully together.

### Description and objectives of the programme

The Agrarhof Gospergrün is a registered association under German law. The cooperatives are an association of private individuals, as well as companies, and their goal is the economical boost (realisation of profits) of its members through joint business operations. The Agrarhof Gospersgrün is an agricultural cooperative and was established in 1991 by 176 members. The cooperative is run by a Management Board and a Supervisory Board, these individuals are chosen by the members.

The special feature of the Agrargenossenschaft Geospersgrün is the variety of services and offers. Here the advantage of cooperation is particularly evident.

### Target group of the programme

The model of the cooperative is suited to increase productivity, efficiency and therefore the profitability of small businesses and micro-entrepreneurs. The companies bring their surfaces or existing technology in the cooperative, use the available structures and share the profit. However, individuals and large companies can also benefit from participation in a cooperative. Individuals can bring in unutilized agricultural land or large companies can participate financially and thereby have an influence on production conditions or secure long-term supply.

The advantages of a combination of micro and small enterprises are diverse, so communal machines can be used conjointly, better terms for the purchase as well as sale of goods can be negotiated or common structures for the marketing of the products produced can be constructed and used. These are all services which may be difficult for micro-entrepreneurs to build themselves. Mostly missing are the financial options.

### The history of the programme

The first cooperatives in German-speaking countries were established in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This served to support small companies with loans or to improve as purchasing cooperatives the conditions for the purchase of goods. Since 1889 the cooperative law in Germany finds the essential application even today. In 2015 there were 7.600 cooperatives in Germany with 20 million members. In March 2015 the cooperative idea has been submitted as the first German nomination to UNESCO for the Intangible Cultural Heritage.





The history of Agrarhof Gospersgrün begins in 1977. In this year the Agricultural Production Cooperative (Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft LPG) "Saatbau" has been founded.

There are three agricultural enterprises joined forces in the area. In this form, the socialist government promoted the joint production and thereby the supply of the people through assignment of tasks and targets. In return, the state supported the development of advanced science and technology.

After German reunification in 1990 there was a dissolution of the LPG. The model of cooperatives offered a possibility for the existing companies to carry on. The former employees were often members and they led the company self-perpetuating.

On 01 November 1991 the Agrarhof Gospersgrün eG was founded by a conversion. 176 shareholders participated in the preservation of their operation. An area of approximately 3,000 hectares are farmed.

The services offered by the Agrarhof eG have continuously expanded in the following years. To the growing of crops, with an emphasis on grain, seed and potatoes, came up with the time the direct marketing of products.

In 1993 the buildings and livestock were bought up by the Agrarhof Gospersgrün eG, emerged from a plant operating to a mixture operation.

According to the requirements of animal welfare for dairy cattle and fattening bulls, the conversions in the stables followed.

On 01.01.1997 the divestment of SB -Gaststätte, the butcher and the Caterer of the Agrarhof Gospersgrün eG happened. It is run as a limited company since that time and is a 100% subsidiary of the eG.

In 2001 the renovation of a former cattle barn for horses paradise with sports hall and livery stables began.

In 2011 – inauguration of the newly built dairy barn with fully automatic milking systems. The completion of the conversion work and the successful 4-star classification took place in 2012.

In October 2013 completion of renovation work on livestock buildings to today's Kutscherstube and Landhaus- holiday apartment

### **Technology applied during the programme**

Access into the company is open, anyone can join the cooperative. First thing to do is to pay or collect other suitable value to be participating in the admission process. By joining the company the new entrant is entitled to vote, even in the distribution of profits. A job in the company is dependent on vacancies or an extension. The wage is set by collective agreement, plus a profit participation.

An interesting development in the contemplation of this company is the high degree of diversification of services. There was no specialization in performance but a broadening of the offered services. It was ensured that a reasonable and economically viable re-use has been created for existing structures but were no longer economically viable. For example, former stables were rebuilt to function rooms and apartments.

Own and regional products are sold in the farm shop or even processed in the on-site restaurant. Currently these are the following services at the Agrarhof Gospersgrün:

Cereals and agriculture

- market production of cereals, legumes, canola and forage
- controlled use of modern and powerful technology and GPS
- marketing nationally and internationally
- feed grain is also marketed in the farm shop

- Potato growing
- use of modern stoning systems promotes growth conditions
- cultivation of different varieties of potatoes
- own marketing via farm shop and sales partner

#### Milk and cattle

- own calf rearing
- welfare
- own ground bait preparation
- marketing also has its own ice-cream production

#### Restaurants, butcher and caterers

- making homemade sausage and own marketing
- delivery of plates and dishes for event
- own kitchen and self-service restaurant with traditional dishes
- delivery of meals for seniors, business and school canteens
- own function rooms up to 120 people

#### Berry plantation

- strawberry, raspberry, Gojia, aronia-pick

#### Farm shop

- marketing its own and regional products

#### Holiday apartments banquet facilities

- 8 holiday apartments, RV parks
- banquet facilities in different sizes

#### Horses

- equestrian tourism holiday with horse, horse pension
- riding lessons, drive with carriage

### **New products and technologies/innovative aspect**

The Agrarhof Gospersgrün eG shows - due to its diverse offerings that can work together successfully - that an association of small and micro enterprises can work and has many advantages: central management, accounting, purchasing and marketing, community investment and use of machinery and equipment, new investments. Thereby increasing the productivity and competitiveness without losing the own influence completely.

The diverse range of Agrarhof also has the background that decreases the dependency of one range. Due to the current low milk prices, working economically is hardly possible. However, this can be offset by other business areas, the company as a whole is still economically strong.

### **Results and impact**

Expenses establishing an association are high as initially a common ground for cooperation must be found, and each also has to bring in money. This commanding step successfully managed and implemented in a more professional way, the form of a cooperative is one of the safest business forms - at least in Germany. The number of corporate insolvencies in 2012 was 0.06% and thereby was the type of company with the lowest risk.

The Agrarhof Gospersgrün operates successfully since 1977 in various forms of a cooperative. The prognosis for these companies is positive; the company offers more than 100 jobs.

### III.3. Italy

#### 1. TAS for AGRIFORM

##### Introduction

This document aims to illustrate on TAS for Agriform, an innovative project designed as a tool of inclusion of difficult targets within the agricultural and rural areas in the professional training system.

The project aims to improve the competitiveness of small and medium European agricultural companies, throughout an innovative training methodology tailored for farmers who tend to be marginalized from the formal educational process.

The international research action of this project included Italy, France, Spain, Poland and Bulgaria, and was specifically addressed to the meaningful yet misconsidered target group of adult farmers with low educational level.

##### Aims and objectives

Tas for Agriform means 'Traceability as a Strategy for Agricultural Formation' and comes up as a participative research action which is aimed to experiment and validate a new effectual methodology of training, addressed to the particular difficult target of agricultural entrepreneurs being over 50 years old, having a low educational level and experiencing difficulties in learning in formal contexts.

Such target was defined after a scenario and context analysis (run throughout local visits to farms and agricultural companies and interviews to selected individuals involved in the agricultural sector) and a relevant dissemination action, run by contact-making actions, and by an awareness raising campaign directed to agricultural companies.

The newly designed training method comes up as an effectual strategy to improve the competitiveness of small and medium agricultural enterprises in Europe.

The development plan has followed a participatory action research framework on the basis of a preliminary context/ scenario analysis and on the identification of learning characteristics/ motivations/ needs of the farmers, through:

- interviews to Vocational Trainer in the agro-sector – and Vocational Trainer experts privileged witnesses;
- motivational semi-structured interviews among farmers/entrepreneurs working in different EU regional contexts;
- collection of professional practise narratives (script).

A main limit for professional approach is the lack of competencies in business management/ marketing and trade/ quality/ traceability.

Those agricultural entrepreneurs feel the need for professional development, new qualifications for their competencies, but their push for innovation gets weakened because of the difficulties in:

- acknowledging and practically explicating their training needs, which are kept tacit and therefore unsatisfied;
- getting back to their formal training because of their lack of minimal access requirements, usually referred to mid-high level knowledge / competences;
- formalising knowledge/competencies acquired in a work environment to improve the integration with new knowledge contents.

TAS for Agriform tried to overcome these obstacles taking into account two conditions: the training has to provide a 'return on investments' with concrete results, in order to be considered by trainees as a priority, and it has to allow the conciliation with their professional constraints.

##### The project was declined in several objectives:

- the development of innovative approaches that meet the needs of the agri-entrepreneurs.

- the creation of a training model focused on the peculiar characteristics of agri-entrepreneurs;
- agri-entrepreneurs' skills improvement;
- identify the teaching guidelines to be applied during the testing phase;
- testing with a focus group of Agri-entrepreneurs in Italy/France/Spain/Poland/Bulgaria.

### **Target groups**

An agriculture that does not get a really meaningful income leads the farmers to leave their activities without being replaced by younger generations, who are not attracted by such a choice.

In a way it is well known that the public incentives on "turnover" work for the entrance of new generations in the agricultural activities, but its indeed easily understandable that no one will be disposed to inherit a patrimony with no growth perspective.

On these premises the work of TAS for AGRIFORM has established and identified a target of agricultural entrepreneurs who picture the actual reality of a great part of European Union; these are their main elements:

- over fifty;
- low education level;
- lack of or low training in business.

These adult farmers will have to learn and get acquainted with the new scenarios. The broad range of abilities may be distributed on four general areas.

**Business Management:** The farmers are not longer only producers: they need to become managers;

**Marketing & Trading:** no EU grants, but the success of the farm depends essentially by farmer's capacity to know how to:

Read and interpret the market demand; establish relations with the other involved actors in the market;

**Safety and food quality:** a strategic asset of business process, granting respect of the ethical principles environmental, safeguard and care about health of the final consumers.

**Traceability:** They are called to run the process and its traceability as managers, considering the agricultural production as a whole ongoing process, from the field to the table.

### **Background of the project**

There are several elements which make it very hard for the farmers to take part in continuous training process in life-long learning perspective.

More specifically, we need to realize that the farmers belong in a traditional inclusive community, which strongly influence their life perception and professional practise; their attitude is not really open to change, as giving up traditional practises. Farmers are deeply attached to their own land and heritage;

The farmers work inside a network of tradition, family, territorial and professional relations: the training of farmers' innovation and entrepreneurship needs to establish an ongoing relation among old and new knowledge, capacities and competencies, which are all necessary to reproject the farm, facing the new political and economic realities; professional development is a challenge that the professional training institutions cannot give up.

### **Process description**

The preliminary research made on the actual training strategies revealed the utter disregard of the specific target of TAS for Agriform in the actual training actions. The project work was therefore oriented to the most innovative scientific contributions of Andragogy, which were analysed in a life-long learning perspective; from Andragogy and Pedagogy the project acquired significant data and parameters on the modalities of adult learners, on the motivational push and the most appropriate approach.

The training setting itself was perceived in an innovative perspective. Search data on VET and on EU Lifelong Learning practices have shown that adults tend to avoid formal training settings

and learn better in informal contexts, as meeting places that are familiar to farmers and easy to reach when they do not work. The training was therefore implemented in non formal settings, in a professional practice context, as the agricultural enterprises. The training sessions were held during the evening, in a two hour time.

In the implementation of the project the learning process was enrolled in the following methodology:

- work sessions in focus group starting from stimulating materials presented as narratives;
- work in small groups (max 10 people) with the intervention of trainers and experts playing different and complimentary roles;
- use of route of questions in order to support a search process starting from a challenging situation;
- integration of informal knowledge and formalised knowledge on a specific focus.

As a part of the process the new professional profile of consultant-trainer was established, to be characterised by a wide professional knowledge and competence, concerning contents (enterprise management, production techniques, marketing, production quality), territory, enterprises, communication, learning process, animation skills, training groups management.

#### **The role of the trainer was declined in the:**

- facilitation of problem finding and problem solving pathways from stimulating situations;
- facilitation of guided reflection pathways on professional knowledge starting from stimulating situations;
- introduction of new knowledge and support in its acquisition and use;
- facilitation of the acquisition and use of new competences.

The **learning materials** were prepared with great attention, as fully responding to the following characteristics:

- easy to be understand;
- simple language;
- supported by pictures and comic strips to allow a better understanding of text;
- eliciting identification process of learning subjects;
- presenting familiar situations and problems
- presenting problems clearly to identify and define;
- presenting situations showing clearly the lack of specific knowledge and competences.

#### **The training procedures are modulated by specific steps.**

**Presentation** of a stimulating situation, showing that the lack of specific knowledge and competences does not allow to efficiently face a problematic situation;

**Analysis** and discussion of the case, focusing on the problem to solve, on the possible solutions and on needed knowledge and competences;

**Introduction** of new elements of information and knowledge from the consultant/trainer;

**Identification** of some possible solutions to the problem, by using both ideas and knowledge from professionals and the new information and knowledge from the consultant/trainers;

**Discussion** on the validity and effectiveness of proposed solutions;

**Acknowledgement** and formalisation of new sector knowledge and competences

The procedures for the assessment were applied both on the *learning process and on the product, focusing on evaluation of learning, training approach and methodology.*

The particular triangulation of the points of view of experts, trainers and entrepreneurs was a key strategy in the assessment procedures.

#### **Innovative aspects**

The innovation of “TAS for Agriform” training methodology is based on the real involvement of the farmers, aiming to acknowledge their needs facing the evolution of agricultural economy. The farmers were trained in innovation and entrepreneurship, connecting their valuable

traditional legacy to the new needed knowledge; such professional adjournment has come up a successful tool for facing the global market, with the following characteristics:

- originality;
- innovation;
- easy to be transferred;
- free from of formalised and formal learning materials;
- applicable in diverse practice contexts;
- learning users are active protagonists - individual contributions and social interaction are promoted as tool to build up together the knowledge;
- introduction of a new profile of trainer (the consultant/trainer);
- construction of learning pathways for specific sector knowledge and competences;
- new types of learning and assessment materials.

Such strategy works through three fundamental didactic-methodological tools:

- development and consolidation of new knowledge and competences, based on the **critical analysis of meaningful experience** and of the daily professional practise;
- **comic strips**, picturing episodes taken from daily work activities, as tools to capture attention of the learners and implement the reflection process and stimulate learning.
- **discussions in focus groups**, supported by an expert consultant / trainer, who is able to activate reflection pathways on the base of stimulating situations.

#### **Results and impact of the project**

- implementation of the methodology through a protocol to be transferred to different sectors of the lifelong training;
- insertion of the training pack (curriculum – methodology – toolbox) within the framework of available continuous training repertoires at local and national level in different countries in the EU;
- training of professional profiles and development of curriculum and tailored training devices;
- dissemination and divulgation of the methodology and collection of feedbacks on its impact in different sectors;
- transferring and adaptation of the methodology to other contexts of professional development on the basis of the feedbacks collected.

## **2. Oasi Agrituristică Baugiano**

Oasi Agrituristică Baugiano is a century old farm located in Quarrata, in the rural area of Montalbano, in Tuscany. The site recently evolved from a traditional agricultural farm into an active centre devoted to Agri-tourism, educational, artistic, cultural and training activities, and even animation and entertainment.

Baugiano is to be considered a brilliant example of agricultural business, which combines the traditional agricultural productions with a wide offer of multifunctional activities.

The project started in 1999, after the initiative of young entrepreneurship.

#### **Aims and objectives**

Baugiano intended to evolve from a traditional farm into a modern Agri-tourism activity, combining different aspects.

- safeguarding and promoting its organic and biodynamic production;
- differentiating its offer in a multifunctional dimension;
- welcoming a wide audience to the farm;
- developing a meaningful cultural and environmental profile;
- implementing activities that are particularly addressed to children.

Such transition looked forward to the wide scopes of safeguarding organic agriculture, raising environmental consciousness and educating new generations to the respect and appreciation of natural life. A wide project has indeed been implemented.

### Target groups

Oasi Agriturstica Baugiano is open to a wide audience, welcoming the public as an appealing tourist site, offering organic food and meals and accommodation.

Baugiano is indeed the provider of an open range of cultural, didactic and entertainment services.

The specific target of Baugiano cultural activities are actually school children and teenagers. A wide original offer has been set up for them.

### Background of the project

Baugiano farm is located in the alluring rural area of Montalbano, on a 13 hectare wide land. The inhabitancy of the local area dates back to the Neolithic era, as witnessed by the prehistoric ruins that are still visible nowadays. The agricultural site dates back to the sixteenth century, with the organic cultivation of typical olive trees and diverse vegetable gardens; a small livestock has also long been held, as for a rural family use. In the eighteenth century an inn was opened on the site, with a catering definitely based on local production.

In 1999 the hard conjunctures of European economy were particularly affecting the small agricultural companies; the farm endurance was somehow at risk. Baugiano management decided to face the challenge, allowing the evolution of this traditional farm into a multifunctional company, proving an innovative offer of products and activities.

### Process description

Without giving up its organic agricultural dimension, in Baugiano new provisions were set up, so to create a multifunctional site with an open wide offer.

The original base of the farm production consists of the **cultivation** of olive trees, chestnuts and a wide **vegetable garden**. The farm produces and transforms for the retailing to 'Campagna Amica' markets (*network of Coldiretti agricultural association*). Baugiano is organic with Bioagricert certification; because of the small amount of the production, the single products however are not certified, not to increase their final costs for the customers.

The **livestock** includes sheep, goats, cows, horses, donkeys, pigs, rabbits, chickens. The farm products are retailed to the public at the internal shop and restaurant.

In a wide renovation project, the whole farm installations have been open to the public, and made usable and enjoyable.

The old buildings have been restored; a small **hotel** has been opened to accommodate up to 19 people.

Within the farm, **five thematic areas** were installed, in order to welcome children and teenagers, get them in real touch with the rural world and raise their environmental consciousness. The areas are: *Agrizoo*, the garden of the farm animals; *Il bosco dei folletti*, the wood of elves, a site dedicated to theatre and storytelling on old legends of the wood;

- *Preistorica*, the Neolithic site for archaeology practise;
- *Ortolandia*, the vegetable garden devoted to a wide range of cultivations,
- *Il giardino dei profumi*, the flower and plant garden.

### Innovative aspects

Baugiano is a brilliant example of the positive evolution of a traditional agricultural farm, devoted to agriculture and breeding, into a multifunctional business, with a strong cultural and educational dimension, an original didactic offer and a full involvement in the environmental themes.

The farm cultivations and breeding have been the starting point of a creative approach; communication has been implemented as the key strategy to transform the farm into a rural park for children. The attractions of Baugiano are not fairground attractions, but meaningful lively contents

of the rural world. The products of traditional heritage, as honey, bread, cheese, organic cultivations, are shown within a different light and promoted as a precious – even magical - resource.

Baugiano has set up a valuable interactive programme of guided tours, theatre, workshops, role-playing.

The structure may work as a reference for many other farms, which are usually isolated in their production asset and do not manage to properly open to the public.

Baugiano well interpreted the actual trend, which considers tourism as an involving experience.

Moreover the farm implements social business, cooperating with the local health services and welcoming disable people into a specific educational program.

### **Results**

Oasi Naturalistica Baugiano is a successful business, providing a wide interesting offer, particularly tailored to a young audience.

Baugiano has been acknowledged as a model of multifunctional business and received several official awards.

In 2009 it won the National Prize ‘Oscar Green Coldiretti’ for the local development.

In 2010 it was inserted in the national archives ‘Genius Loci’ as one of the twelve cases of good practise in the national economy.

In 2011 it won the European prize ‘Copa-Cogeac’ for the female based innovation in agriculture.

In 2012 Baugiano won the national prize of the Ministry of Agricultural and Forest Policy, ‘De@terra’.

In 2013 it was selected as one of the four Best Practises for the promotion of the PAC, European agricultural reform; it was therefore presented as an excellent sustainable family farm at Brussels exhibition in 2014.

In 2014 it won ‘Terre Fiorenti’, the price awarded by the Province of Florence for the agricultural sustainability.

The appreciation of the audience has also been a constant acknowledgment, leading Baugiano to its full deserved success.

## **3. Angeli di Varano – Agrotourism and related Multifunctional activity in the Cornro Park**

The current case titled “Angeli di Varano” is useful because it represents that working “with own family” is better than working alone, and because multi-functionality helps the farmer to diversify revenue. In addition, agro-tourism helps city residents to learn more about the countryside, to know the farmers’ work and encourages them to buy the products directly at the farm.

The Chiuconni brothers attended universities (Lorenzo has a degree in Economics and Finance and Matteo has a degree in Agricultural Sciences and Technology, and one in Viticulture and Enology), as well as the Ministry of Agriculture for Young Farmers that provided the basis for the current case. Their courses included for example: control and planning of business management, family finance and regulation of family relations, inter-company relations, technological and regulatory environment of the agro-food, understanding the basics of economics and business management and paradigms.

The thorough education enabled them to lead both the winery and the agro-tourism in their own business.

### **History and farm description**

Between sea and mountains at the foot of Mount Conero, inside the Park Natural is the location of “*Angeli di Varano*”.

Here in the quiet countryside of Marche, caressed by the sea breeze, surrounded by Monti Sibillini, and thanks to the hard work of those who had always lived in this land, they produce products that are the mirror of an ancient history that does not fear renewal.



Three generations linked by one great passion: love for their land. This is the foundation that gave birth to the dream **“Angeli di Varano”**, farm and agro-tourism located in the town of Ancona.

From the story of the family Chiucconi comes the challenge of the third millennium. The two brothers Lorenzo and Matteo decided, in accordance with tradition, to produce extra virgin olive oil, a precious honey of sunflower, a popular pasta derived from wheat taken from the old **“Senatore Cappelli”**, a spreadable cream with chocolate in olive oil and the best grapes to get the absolute excellence of Rosso Conero, arising from the main grape of this region: Montepulciano.

In recent years, with the help of their parents, they added agro-tourism activities (B & B) to make the basis of a larger project, which leads to an increased number of tourists to stay or just visit this little paradise in the heart of Conero.

For the farmers, multifunctionality means using all the resources at their disposal to achieve a higher income and / or savings. All the efforts have always gone in this direction: additional income by diversifying agricultural activities and saving using their professional workmanship and craftsmanship.

The situation at the beginning was not the best, but the company immediately let itself to be interpreted as a modern and **“multifunctional”** company.

Investments was made for the redevelopment of the old historic winery to become a modern winery by purchasing equipment and arranging the old barrels made of cement with a new vitrification paint for food. Furthermore new tractor wheels were bought, they planted another 2.5 hectares of vineyard, almost doubled the olive grove and also introduced hives to produce honey. They planted durum wheat for pasta and act wheat for bread-making, they carried out many tests, which continue even today, to present the agricultural production of the country with more and more closer to the environment methods by using healthier products. During these last years they started to provide a B & B service with three rooms inside their dwelling and a tavern was set up with a farm shop and a tasting room.



**Lorenzo**, the elder of the two brothers, was born in Ancona in 1975 and has always lived in these lands. After obtaining degree in Economics and Finance at the University Politecnica delle Marche, he devoted himself to his true passion, wine. Currently he is a member of the Association of Italian Sommeliers, which lends its professionalism and is Vice Chairman of the Provincial Italian Farmers Confederation. Within the company he plays an active role both as regards the production for everything related to the business side administration.

**Matteo** the youngest, was born in 1978 in Ancona. He's graduated in Agricultural Sciences and Technology as well as in Viticulture and Enology. He has had experience at companies such as „Rutherford Hill Winery” (Napa Valley, USA), „Haselgrove

Wines” (Mclaren Vale, Australia), „Monteverro” (Grosseto, Italy), „La Cantina dei Colli Ripani” (Ascoli Piceno, Italy), „Thes-tia ltd” (Agrinio, Greece), respectively, as a cellar worker, assistant winemaker, laboratory manager, winemaker director. Currently as an entrepreneurial activity he provides professional advice for wine farms in the Marche region and abroad, his role in the company is mainly technical, aimed at the development and quality control.



### **Technologies used/concrete activities/process description/training methods implemented**

The core business, represented by the production of DOC and DOCG wine is then joined together by the production of extra virgin olive oil, wildflower honey and sunflower, pasta and a Bed & Breakfast open all year from this year.

The company is not energy independent, they are assessing commissioning by a 6 kW photovoltaic system that meets everyone's business needs and the B & B.

- **Arable land:** 20 acres of rotational crops, durum wheat, soft wheat, sunflowers cereal production at the end of the campaign are sold at consortia and in part maintained by the company for the production of pasta, bread;
- **Olive:** 120 plants that produce an average of 6 Q.li of olive oil, bottled, most is to be sold in the farm shop that network-distributed wine sales;
- **Vineyard:** 3.5 hectares of land of which 2.5 planted in 2010. Current production is 8,000 bottles. Estimated production in the next two years is 16,000 bottles, waiting for the full production of the new vineyard;
- **Pasta, bread, honey:** to date production for local sale and in some market, it is not their core business, but they want more and more to be specialized to get local products and niche.

### **Activities**

- Agriculture
- Agritourism

### **Agritourism accommodations**

- 1 house (originally a farmhouse dating back to 1850)
- 3 double/triple rooms
- 9 beds available
- Breakfast room only for guests)
- Tasting room of farm's products

### **Commercialisation**

- Farm shop for direct selling

## PROCESS GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

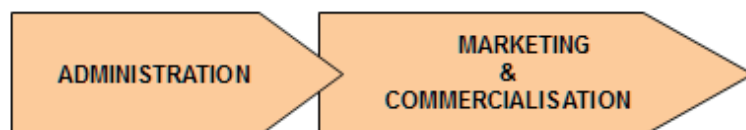


### ANGELI DI VARANO PROCESS GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

#### KEY PROCESSES



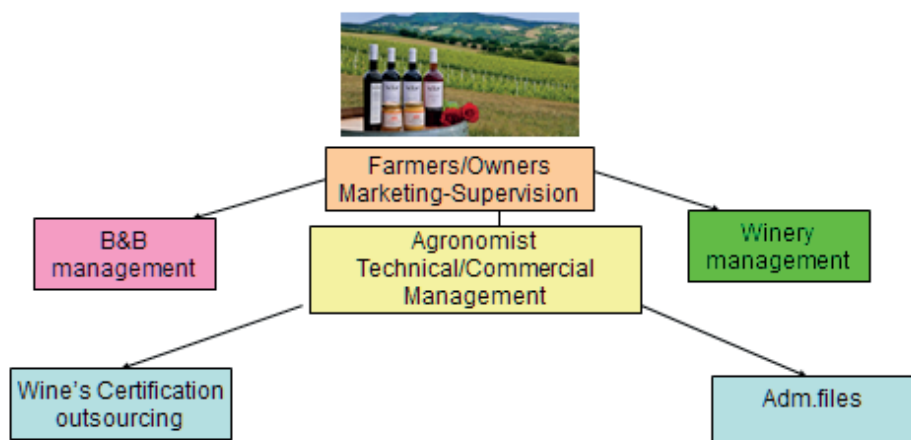
#### SUPPORT PROCESSES



## SUPPORT PROCESS DESCRIPTION CORPORATE FLOWCHART



### ANGELI DI VARANO SUPPORT PROCESS DESCRIPTION CORPORATE FLOWCHART



#### **4. Azienda Agricola Enrico & Lazalaco S.S.**

This case, representing the best practice, is important because it is seen as “unity in strength” and cooperation between generations and within the family are the foundation to build something unique. Moreover, it shows that even in the most difficult environmental situations it’s possible to be almost as productive - on the basis of working the land and using it productively - as in the plains.

Luca’s attended the Higher Institute of Agriculture as well as the Ministry of Agriculture for Young Farmers for a more specific training where courses included for example: control and planning of business management, family finance and regulation of family relations, inter-company relations, technological and regulatory environment of the agro-food, understanding the basics of economics and business management and paradigms. His studies helped the formation of the case study “Enrico e Lanzalaco”.

Above all, the training of Luca derived from the family history of his farm with his grandparents and parents who have handed him important news and knowledge that only the experience of old people can explain: variety typical of the place, in that way it’s possible to dominate terrace the Ligurian hills, the ability to diversify the offer even though the company is not very extensive.

In conclusion, this case is important because it highlights the importance of families and the capacity of Luca to continue to look around him and know how to adapt to his needs the concept of multifunctional agriculture: for example, the creation and the installation of the photovoltaic system.

##### **History and farm description**

The farm Enrico & Lanzalaco was founded in 1984. When they were married, the parents of the young farmers – currently the head of the farm – decided to take over the company, which long before had been conducted and managed by many generations of his mother’s family. The farm is located in the only plain of Liguria and precise in the Piana del Centa, an important area pluriurbana characterized by a specialized agriculture, in the municipality of Albenga (SV). The farm is in a unique body partly covered by greenhouses and in part for cultivation in the open air. The farm is part of the typical structure of the plain of Albenga where demands arise from the limited arable land and the farmers have tried to optimize the exploitation of the soil by cultivating high value-added and intensively. The farm mainly produces flowering plants and herbs in pots, in particular, Rosemary, Thyme, Sage, Cyclamen and daisies for the Italian market and abroad. Also a part of the company is still used for growing some vegetables such as Albenga’s Asparagus niche Violet (Slow Food Presidium) and the Albenga’s Artichoke Violet Prickly for the local market.

##### **Production experience**

The farm in 1984 was composed of more funds very far between and logistically impractical, it also was mainly planted with vegetables, both summer and winter, and there was only one antiquated and obsolete greenhouse. In 1985, the parents of the head of the farm began to reduce the fragmentation of the company by buying the adjacent land and selling those too far away, to be able to create a company made up of a single large plot. After a few years they succeeded in their aim to enlarge the farm up to the current surface.

But soon they realized that the demands of the market were changing and that more and more traditionally grown products such as vegetables were not required at the expense of a greater demand for plants in pots. Given the need to promote earnings and optimize the use of land to meet even the recent investments, they began to produce the first crop of 2,000 vases of daisies. Since then production has always been increasing at the expense of horticultural crops (more extensive). The farmers began to cultivate other potted flowering plants such as chrysanthemums and cyclamen in a greenhouse and in fine aromatic plants in the open field. In 1997 they decided to build a new greenhouse best suited to new crops with new localized irrigation systems and heating systems.

##### **Technologies used/concrete activities/process description/training methods implemented**

In 2006 over to his experience of studying at Agricultural High School of Albenga and finishing his apprenticeship to be able to subscribe to ‘Register of Agricultural Technicians in the Province of Savona, he decided to support his parents in the management of the company. They realized at that time that it was necessary to improve and diversify the company still planted

with vegetables and decided to reconstitute the asparagus field a variety of typical and unique areas of violet asparagus of Albenga, that had been claimed by Presidio Slow Food being really endangered. It was a return to the past; they carried out three years after the first harvest when the local market fully absorbed confirming their expectations. At the same time they decided to broaden their products offering in the pot and turn especially to large retailers, in particular Germany, however, there were strict rules and limits on herbs in pots. So they decided to certify the entire company with the Global GAP standard (formerly EurepGAP), which has the objective of:

- meeting the demands of the European market with a tool of competitive advantage;
- improving the efficiency of natural resources use while minimizing environmental impact;
- integrating good agricultural practices (GAP) with the rules of integrated pest management (IPM);
- ensuring traceability and compliance with the hygienic handling of products;
- ensuring a responsible attitude towards health and safety of workers.

In summary, to ensure agricultural products low environmental and social impact.

In 2009, with a group of other companies after months of extensive studies and research, they decided to engage in the first person and invest their professional skills to support investment in renewable energy sources with particular attention in the implementation and management of photovoltaic systems.

So in December of 2011 the farm become the first company in the area to build a photovoltaic system for the farm act not to do business by exploiting the beneficial energy bill, but to put one of the first brick to build a smart grid that allows in a simple way and effective to optimize the production and the consumption of energy of a territory by limiting the production of CO<sub>2</sub>.

To date, the company produces 200,000 pots of herbs and flowering plants of different diameter and grows to 3000 m<sup>2</sup> autumn spring vegetables sold directly through the territory of Solidal Purchase Groups – National network in collaboration and through the mediation of Slow Food. Implements a policy of raising virtuous use of water and energy, with particular emphasis on renewable energy. In addition, along with other companies working with Albenga's Institute of Agriculture giving the opportunity to young graduates to follow practical training acts to deepen the concepts learned in school.

#### **Property extent**

2 Hectares (1.5 of property and 0.5 for rent)

#### **Agricultural products**

- 200,000 pots of different diameters of herbs and flowering plants;
- vegetables of autumn and spring

#### **Food products**

- herbs; vegetables of autumn and spring

#### **Non-food products**

- Flowering plants
- investment in renewable energy sources with particular attention in the implementation and management of photovoltaic systems

#### **Activities**

- Agriculture
- collaboration with Albenga's Institute of Agriculture offer opportunities to young graduates to follow practical training acts to deepen the concepts learned at school

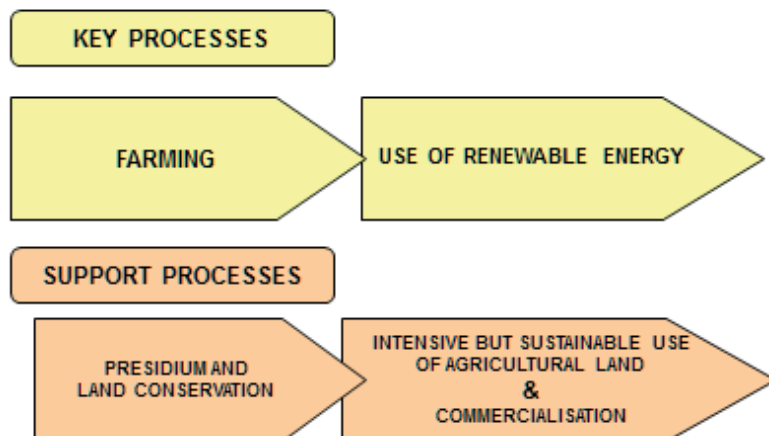
#### **Commercialisation**

- Traditional sales channels
- GAS (Solidal Purchase Groups – National network)

## PROCESS GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION



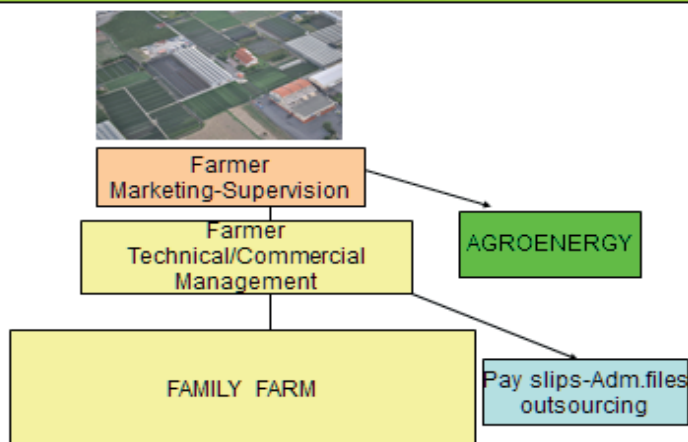
### ENRICO & LANZALACO S.S. PROCESS GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION



## SUPPORT PROCESS DESCRIPTION CORPORATE FLOWCHART



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## Addendum

In the context of spatial planning can say that agriculture and landscape have always been inseparable, so much so that the landscape is largely identified with the agricultural landscape. Liguria is no exception to this rule, much less the Western Liguria, Albenga and less than ever.

This traditional condition of happy marriage and almost identification between agriculture and the landscape has profoundly changed for several decades now, for well-known reasons, which are summarized in the lower incidence of agriculture in employment and training of GDP and the related to the growing importance and intrusive in the landscape, structures and artifacts unrelated to agriculture itself, from urban and suburban residence and tourism to industrial buildings to shopping centers to major road infrastructure and energy. Stems largely from this transformation, which is as deep as fast, what today is perceived as the problem of the territory, which it seeks to address the practice called *“planning Landscaping”*.

For this to Albenga last urban planning (not yet approved) has been proposed by administration a *“master plan”* that includes investments in facilities business and infrastructure support to improve the environmental quality of the area, the intensive agricultural production as well as its competitiveness, thereby generating the actual condition of its sustainability.

It will be one of the challenges of the future be able to defend the union between agriculture and the countryside by supporting the importance of the presidium of the companies in the area, which by their presence provide a safeguard against the risks of fire and hydrological. Unfortunately, the news in recent months in Liguria demonstrated how the lack of attention to these factors and the depletion of the territory not supporting agriculture and facilitating urban sprawl has led to serious news stories of Genoa and La Spezia.

In addition, the penalty period in which our country is entering should make us reflect on how the activities of farms, especially in areas at particular risk is to be borne by the obvious advantages that the territory and government budgets and the state would gain by avoiding situations emergency and devastation that we had to attend.+

## III.4. Greece

### 1. Choromidis Co.

The company “Choromidis Co” was established in 1947 by Alexandros Choromidis. After he finished his studies at the Agricultural University of Athens, he started his career with cultivating ornamental trees and shrubs.

In a privately owned land in the municipality of Acharnes, north of Athens, he began operating a prototype nursery, where he was cultivating ornamental plants. At the same time, he was the first agriculturist in Greece who worked on the landscape architecture.

Travelling all over Europe and reading scientific books, he designed and performed plantings in major projects of his time. He planned and performed the planting of Onasis Island “Skorpios” and Niarchos Island “Spetsopoula”, the planting of the American Embassy of Athens, the reformation of the Acropolis’ Hill.

At the same time, during the ‘60s and ‘70s, while all football stadiums in Greece were covered by soil, they were converted by him on stadiums with turf.

His love for the plants pushed Alexandros Choromidis to import from England and install in 1967 the first mist propagation system in Greece in the company’s greenhouse.

So he started the multiplication of plants using cuttings. He was the first grower in Greece who used this method. All students of the Agricultural Universities of Athens and Thessaloniki with their professors were visiting our greenhouse to see how the mist propagation and the cultivation with cuttings work.

### Technologies used

The company uses the following methods of cultivation:

- 1) using mist propagation system, to multiply their plants;
- 2) using a special greenhouse to store the young plants and help them become individual plants, by growing proper roots;



- 3) they also use drop irrigation system to irrigate most of their plants. This system gives them a considerable economy of volume of water, but also allows them to distribute fertilizers while irrigating the plants.
  - 4) they use perlite and pumice stone when preparing their soil mixtures, so they allow the roots of their plants to have an excellent drainage and ventilation of the roots;
  - 5) during summer time, when the sun light is very strong, they cover the nursery in 7 m. high with a shadow net allowing 60% only of the sunlight to penetrate and approach to the leaves of the plants and trees;
  - 6) they use a special biological "hormone" which accelerates and helps a lot the plant to create new roots under stress condition of the plant (heavy cold etc.);
  - 7) they spray the sensitive plants and trees, during winter time, during nights with temperatures below zero, with liquid wax, biological, which create a film of wax on the leaves and protects the sensitive leaves from frost;
  - 8) during spring time, we give additional fertilizer from our compost, so we add a lot of organic matter to our plants;
  - 9) they clarify that their company is not using chemical hormones, since in this case, the growth of the plants is not natural and the plant get stressed and finally destroy the "new" vegetation that is provided by the chemical "help";
  - 10) we have recently established solar panels in order to be self sufficient in terms of the electricity required in their offices;
- Since they have no green houses to store indoor plants, the electricity they use, is only to cover their offices requirements.



### Activities

Alexandros Choromidis has two sons, Efklidis and Spiros to whom he transmitted his love for the nature and the cultivation of plants. Both of them finished their studies at the Agricultural University. After their basic studies, they continued Efklidis with studies on landscape architecture and then marketing, and Spiros on large-scale irrigation projects.

The nursery is constantly expanding and new installations are created. Meanwhile they design and construct a lot of private gardens throughout the region of Attica. At the same time they design and perform projects in large hotels all over Greece.

Since 1989 they began importing from all over Europe gardening supplies and then they started the representation and the distribution of pots and supplies throughout Greece.

Today, the company represents many famous and big companies from Europe and Asia and distributes their products all over Greece. They have a wide variety of gardening materials which can cover the needs of any gardener, amateur or professional.

Back on 1998 they were the first in Greece to work with grasses and perennials. They planted many private gardens using the plants above. At the same time the company was the first which started the construction and planting of green walls in Greece.

They now try to improve them and decrease the cost of the green wall, to make it affordable to a greater number of customers.

Generally speaking, their present activities are the following:

- 1) They mainly cultivate outdoor plants and trees, as well as fruit trees and many shrubs.
- 2) They import and distribute all over Greece, many well know companies from Europe and Asia, regarding pots.
- 3) They also import many items regarding gardening materials, which allow any professional or private person to complete a project.
- 4) They also provide their clients irrigation systems for lawns and plants, for private gardens.
- 5) They also offer to their clients a large scale of soil mixtures, which allows to grow different varieties of plants with different and special needs.(water plants, plants with low pH etc)



### New products and expected results

Their passion and love for the plants, leads them in the search of new varieties and species. They visit many exhibitions in Europe and they follow the new species of shrubs and trees. This way they can offer to their customers - professionals and nonprofessionals – every new variety of plants. They also follow every new gardening material: Pots, soil mixtures, fertilizers, support materials, irrigation systems etc.

The future of the company is based on the third generation of the family, which they hope that will continue the tradition of the company. They try to transmit their love for the nature and the plants and they hope that the company will continue to exist in the coming years.

The company looking forward and trying to help the environment, took the decision to become autonomous concerning the electricity that consumes. There will be solar panels installed so that its operation will be totally autonomous using only sun light.

At the same time they use irrigation methods to minimize the consumption of water when they irrigate the nursery.



## 2. Anagnostou Wines: Using phytochemicals as wine preservatives

### Objective

To replace the chemical preservatives added to wines (sulfite salts) with natural antioxidants, taken from freeze-dried fruits and leaves of the plant *hippophaes rhamnoides*.

### Target group

Wine makers willing to develop organic wine-based products.

### History of the company

Anagnostou Winery S.A.  
69, Andrianou str. 19400 Koropi,  
Attiki, Greece, tel. 0030-210-6623266,  
URL: <http://www.oinopoiia-anagnostou.gr>

The Anagnostou family has a tradition of 3 generations in the vine cultivation and production of white and red wines. The owner and Managing Director of the Company, Mr Christos Anagnostou, is a certified food technologist and oenologist with undergraduate studies in the TEI of Athens and Post Graduate studies in Germany (Geisenheim). The vineyards, taking a total area of 10 hectares, are in the vicinity of the winery, near the town of Koropi, in the eastern part of Attiki peninsula. Attiki, has a long tradition in the production of “retsina”. This is a white wine, coming from the Attiki’s variety Savatiano, in which resin taken from pines is added. Initially for preservation purposes (sealing of the wooden barrels during the maturation period) and later, for organoleptic characteristics, becoming a typical (for its flavor) wine.

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the enterprise proceeded to a large investment under a business plan, in an area of 1.5 hectares, where all the activities are now running.

### Technologies used/activities/process description

The Enterprise has now a modern infrastructure starting from the reception of grapes, the must production, its vinification and maturation in inox tanks. According to the corresponding specifications, aging of the wine takes place in wooden (oak) barrels. Occasionally, the aging of certain wines is taking place within their bottles, in specially constructed caves.

Apart from the technical/oenological infrastructure of the winery, the enterprise has also two halls (one for 150 and another for 350 persons) where organoleptic testing (degustations), training seminars and receptions are taking place, with the support of modern IT equipment. The Anagnostou Winery is –at present – producing seven types of wines, coming from the relevant Greek and French varieties, all cultivated in the vicinity of the company's vineyards. These varieties are: a) the white/ Greek Savatiano, Asyrtiko, Athiri, Malagousia and the white/French Sauvignon Blanc. b) the red/Greek Agiorgitiko and the red/French Merlot, Syrah, and Cabernet Sauvignon. From the Company's brand names is worth tasting the Blanc de Blanc (dry white from Sauvignon Blanc), the Isidora (red , special cuvee, from Cabernet Sauvignon, bottled in 1,5 L bottles), Ampelones Anagnostou (local dry white wine from Savatiano) and the semi-sweet white wine, produced from sun dried Malagousia.

#### New products and technologies

Starting from the initiatives of the corresponding Case Study of the AGRO – BUSINESS – START Project to promote innovative aspects for new entrepreneurs, some recent outcomes taken from a relevant research programme coordinated by the TEI of Athens (Department of Food Technology) were implemented within the Anagnostou Winery. Namely, the TEI's research team, was able to produce in small scale experiments red wine based products in which the addition of the chemical antioxidants sulfites (normally and legally added to wines for preservation purposes), was substituted with the addition of natural extracts taken from the plant *Hippophaes rhamnoides* (buckthorn). Fruits and leaves of this plant are characterized for a high antioxidant activity. Samples of both of them, were sterilized with gamma-irradiation for not cross-contaminating the wine into which would be –eventually- added. The irradiated products were tested for potential traces of remaining radioactivity. The results were – as expected- negative. These treated plant products were added into the tanks containing the must undergoing the relevant vinification.

The small scale experiments taken from the TEI's laboratories of the Departments of Food Technology and Oenology, were extended and transferred to the pilot plant vinification in the Anagnostou winery. The wine was taken from its variety Agiorgitiko, the grapes being collected in early autumn 2014. Specific data and results of the pilot plant experiments will be presented after the issuing of the relevant patent, applied for in June 2015 in the Greek patent authorities (OBI, Athens Patent office). Nevertheless, the results are very promising, at least concerning the organoleptic properties of the resulted wine product. Tests were carried out by relevant experts (degustateurs) on monthly intervals. After 7 months of the addition of the above natural products the corresponding wine product was much appreciated when tested. It was also characterized by a higher anti-oxidant capacity than the must, due to the extra polyphenols, extracted from *Hippophaes rhamnoides*.



## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Organic products
- No chemical preservatives
- No side-effects on health, resulting from the sulfites

### Weaknesses

- Need for sterilization of the added plant products
- Higher costs

### Opportunities

- Increase of the content of flavonoids and other polyphenols in the final wine product.
- Consumption from individuals sensitive/allergic to sulfites
- Use of the methodology to other fermented products, requiring treatment with chemical preservatives

### Threats

- Negative approach from consumers for the irradiated food/drink items
- Unwillingness to deviate from the so-called *traditional* wines
- Difficulties on legal approaches for the labeling (wine/wine products)

### Results and Impact

The chemical preservatives used in the wines can be replaced by phytochemicals extracted from natural products and particularly from the plant *Hippophaes rhamnoides*. This is a good example for an advance on the sustainable agro-food industry.

## IV. Staff implementing the project during international meetings

First international meeting, Italy



Second international meeting, Germany



Third international meeting, Greece



Fourth international meeting, Hungary



## **V. Closing remarks**

This brochure is too short to present the intense work in full detail what has been done during a 2 years period in this project by the exemplary cooperation of partner organisations working in the area of lifelong learning, vocational training and employment.

For arousement and maintenance of learning motivation of job-seekers who are lowly educated, unqualified or have outdated qualification and for the support of them sustainably become agricultural entrepreneurs, we collected the best methods, practices, case studies and programs from Hungary, Greece, Germany and Italy, which provides the most profit for the reader as a professional or agricultural entrepreneur or a person who is starting a business.

For more information you may contact the partner organisations:

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