



FOCUS

**- Strengthening competitiveness of agri-food SMEs
through transnational Cluster**

“FOCUS” 3RD STC&PM AND 2ND FOCUS GROUP MEETING, VLORE, ALBANIA

On November, 14th and 15th 2018 AULEDA_Local Economic Development Agency and the FOCUS partners covering the BALKAN-MED area organized the third project & steering committee meeting and the second focus group meeting in Vlore-Albania. During the first day all the partners participated in the project meeting and presented each one their activities / information about the work done so far, the achieved results, the activities to be implemented and discussed the next steps of the project.

Project partners discussed on Agri-food sectors targeting regional agro-food groups to be included in the Balkan CLUSTER according to the project’s activity. Among the key points that were discussed were the Cluster Target Group, the different forms of services and innovation and technologies advancements to be provided by the Regional Cluster.

Moreover, Auleda_ Local Economic Development Agency had invited experts from the local ecosystem to share their experiences and opinions on the functioning of Regional Clusters and to bring the Albanian experience, discussed and exchanged their views on this topic

Mr. Agim Rrapaj on behalf the Albanian Agribusiness Council, provided information on the Agriculture sector, and some of the best practices operating in the territory of Albania. Mr. Gramos Osmani -Director of the Department of Agriculture, Risi Albania, spoke about the main sectors of agro culture in Albania; the new EU standards for Albania Agriculture to reach the EU market, to grow up the exports and to produce with high quality. Mr. Alban Zusi - Director of the Albania Export Centre and representative of the Food Industrialists Association shared his experience of clusters by focusing on the first Albanian clusters; why Clusters, the profit, the development, the structure and the legal form. Mrs. Aulona Veizi - Director of the Agricultural Technology Transfer Center, Vlora spoke about the services offered to businesses operating in the Agro sector. Mrs. Jonida Haxhillari - EEN Project Manager, Tirana Chamber of Commerce and Industry shared with the participants the project experience that she coordinates in synergy with the FOCUS project.

**CULTIVATING
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NEWSLETTER

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“FOCUS” 3RD STC&PM MEETING 2ND FOCUS GROUP, VLORE, ALBANIA



STUDY VISIT, OLIVE OIL FACTORY "AULONA" IN PANAJA, VLORE

Following the Focus groups AULEDA organised two study visits: at the Agricultural Technology Transfer Center where the partners had the chance to see the invitro methods and the laboratory they also visited the greenhouse of the centre to see the rroting of the fruit trees especially the olive oil After they went at the Olive Oil Factory "AULONA" in Panaja, Vlore. The partners were introduced to the olive oil processing technology, the features of Kalinjot olive oil, the market and the perspective of this sector. The participants were welcomed with some bio local foods etc.



LOCAL OPEN DAY EVENT, SKARINOU, CYPRUS

The Funding opportunities and guidance services in Research and Innovation in the agri-food sector were the topic of the Local Open Day workshop organised by the CCCI, on Wednesday, November 28, 2018 at 3:00 pm at the Mountain Larnaca Environmental Information Center, Skarinou, Cyprus. The aim of the event was to present the project activities and the opportunities for the SMEs to join and receive advanced free of charge innovation given by the relevant officials of Ministries and Institutions related to the Scheme 16 (RDP 2014 -2020) - Agri-Food Innovation Cooperation, Food Business Traceability, Horizon 2020 Program - Food and Agriculture, and the Enterprise Europe Network - Partner Search Services. Mr. Savvas Maliotis, an agronomist, and a CCCI consultant for the FOCUS project, presented the CCCI initiatives in relation to the project's innovation services that will be foreseen to develop addresses small and medium-sized enterprises through an innovative agri-food methodology.

The project coordinator of CCCI, Ms Monica Andreou, gave an overview and informing the participants about the activities of the FOCUS project and the innovative services that will act as a Regional Agri-Food Cluster in Cyprus, thereby enhancing innovation and technology advancements in agrifood sector. She stated that the ultimate goal of the CCCI is to assist small and medium-sized enterprises in the agri-food sector by providing progressively tailored guidance services.

All presentations were stimulating and were delivered in a lively manner. The participants were interested and commented on a lot of points raised by the experts. Moreover, they stated their readiness to be part of the project's activities and shared their views in the informal chats during the break, expressing at the same time their satisfaction about the organization of the event.



LOCAL OPEN DAY EVENT, PELOPONNESE, GREECE

The Region of Peloponnese on 6th of December 2018 organized a Local Event entitled “The project FOCUS – Innovative support services for the agrifood sector” that took place in Tripoli at the Malliaropoulou Theater and started at 11.30 am.

The Open Day was organized under the framework of FOCUS project aiming at «Strengthening competitiveness of agrifood SMEs through transnational Clusters». The Project, Led by the Region of Peloponnese is part of the Balkan-MED Programme and is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and National Funds.

The Open Day was mainly addressed to SMEs, startups and independent producers of Agrifood sector interested in adopting to their businesses new technologies and innovative processes such as new trends, new technologies, development of new innovative products, innovative farms, exploitation of byproducts of agrifood products, sustainability, functional foods, use of Bioactive compounds for food packaging, carbon footprint of food and drink products, superfoods etc. as well as local private or public organisations involved in Agrifood sector of the Region of Peloponnese.

The participants had the opportunity to exchange ideas and pose questions to the speakers concerning the FOCUS project and its activities while they had also the opportunity to be informed about the role of the Region of Peloponnese in the project and the services and activities that will offer within the project supporting local agrifood SMEs.



PARTNERSGreece - **Region of Peloponnese**Greece - **National Technical University of Athens**Greece - **Agriculture University of Athens**Cyprus - **Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry**Albania - **Local Economic Development Agency of Vlora**Bulgaria - **Business Support Centre for SMEs, Ruse**Bulgaria - **Agriculture University of Plovdiv****1ST CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP, PELOPONNESE, GREECE****NEW TRENDS, TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION IN AGRI-FOOD SECTOR**

The Region of Peloponnese on 6th of December 2018 organized the 1st Capacity Building Workshop entitled “New trends, Technologies and Innovation in Agrifood sector” that took place in Tripoli at the Malliaropoulou Theater and started at 13.15 pm.

The seminar was organized under the framework of FOCUS project aiming at «Strengthening competitiveness of agri-food SMEs through transnational Clusters». The Project, Led by the Region of Peloponnese is part of the Balkan-MED Programme and is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and National Funds.

The seminar was mainly addressed to SMEs, startups and independent producers of Agrifood sector interested in adopting to their businesses new technologies and innovative processes such as new trends, new technologies, development of new innovative products, innovative farms, exploitation of byproducts of agrifood products, sustainability, functional foods, use of Bioactive compounds for food packaging, carbon footprint of food and drink products, superfoods etc. More specifically, the seminar targeted to enterprises operating in the following sectors:

- Fruits - Pomegranate– Juices
- Olives – Olive oil
- Raisin – Wine
- Dairy products

The participants had the opportunity to be trained on, exchange ideas and pose questions to the speakers concerning all the topics discussed such as Functional foods, New trends and technologies, Exploitation of food industry byproducts and sustainability, Innovative farms and products while they had the opportunity receive the first service of the FOCUS Regional cluster that of the training.



More Information for the project and related events

<http://www.focuseuproject.com>



The Project is co-funded by the European Union and National Funds of the participating countries