

FOCUS

- Strengthening competitiveness of agri-food SMEs
through transnational Cluster

“FOCUS” 4TH STC&PM AND 3RD FOCUS GROUP MEETING, NICOSIA, CYPRUS

On **May, 15th and 16th 2019**, in Nicosia-Cyprus, the **Cyprus Chamber of Commerce & Industry _CCCI**, in the framework of FOCUS Balkan-Med project, organised with the collaboration of the project partners the fourth project & steering committee meeting, the third focus group meeting and the Transnational Agri-Food Matchmaking Fair.

On the 15th of May all the project partners, covering the Balkan-Mediterranean area, attended the 4th Project & Steering Committee meeting in order to discuss over the progress of the FOCUS project and its activities. Late afternoon, in the same day the 3rd Focus Group took place aiming to enhance the Agri-food innovation services mix offered within the project under the operation of the four Regional Agri-food Clusters that have been established in the 4 partners countries in Balkan med area: Cyprus, Greece, Bulgaria, Albania exchanged views and suggestions from the experts. Experts from the Cyprus University of Technology, Professor Dimitris Tsaltas, and from the Federation of the Hellenic Food Industry, Dr Fotini Salta, briefly presented their organisations and best practices of innovation services in Agri-Food sector and specified the case for Cyprus and Greece. A discussion was contacted in order to identify and capitalise specific options and improvements in terms of the platform and the exploitation of the innovation services that the FOCUS project provides thoroughly to its Clusters’ members.



**CULTIVATING
INNOVATION**

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NEWSLETTER

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“FOCUS” TRANSNATIONAL AGRI-FOOD MATCHMAKING FAIR

On the 16th of May the **FOCUS Transnational Agri-Food Matchmaking Fair** was organised with the participation of more than 45 stakeholders of the project who explored the growing challenges of the Agri-food mixed innovation services provided through project outputs. The end beneficiaries of the project the 22 transnational Regional SMEs from Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, Cyprus were also participated in the event, being members of the FOCUS's 4 Regional Agri-Food Clusters. The representation from the academia, public sector and the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN Cyprus) had a significant contribution in the event, during the presentations session, the working session of the business to business and networking. Welcoming remarks delivered by Mr Leonidas Paschalides, Deputy Secretary General, who emphasised the value of the project outcomes in Agri-Food industry in Cyprus and abroad. Demetris Tsaltas, Associate Professor in Agriculture Microbiology and Biotechnology in the Cyprus Technology University, elaborated in his keynote speech on efforts that was made the last years in the research and development of Agri-Food sector in Cyprus, provided examples of best practices and innovation services in the specific sector. Other speakers included Ms Nadia Karra from KiNNO Consultants Ltd, the external expert of the Region of Peloponnese for FOCUS project, Sofia Karma on behalf of the National Technical University of Athens, Stalo Demosthenous from the Enterprise Europe Network Cyprus and Constantinos Loizou from EMBIO Diagnostics Ltd. The successful B2B working session brought tangible results for instance between the two companies – S & S Tria Enniaria Trading Ltd that has found a new business partner and has diversified their products range and Aroniada - Agro Ltd has found a new market for their products.



5 TECHNICAL CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS

During this period, the organization of 5 out of 8 Technical Capacity Building Workshops in total were organized by the partners from Cyprus, Bulgaria and Albania. The aim was to help cluster SMEs approach new markets, strengthen their networking with other companies, consider new technologies and processes, obtain new products' ideas. The content of each workshop was decided by the responsible partner cluster in collaboration with the scientific support partner of the consortium.

BULGARIA

1ST TECHNICAL CAPACITY BUILDING WS THAT TOOK PLACE IN RUSE, BULGARIA ON 31ST JANUARY 2019. The event was organized by the Business Support Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises – Ruse. The workshop was aimed at SMEs and individual producers from the agri-food sector, to be trained on successfully looking for sources of funding for their projects, finding partners abroad, introducing innovative practices and technologies into their production. 31 participants took part in the 1st workshop, 12 out of them not involved in the other FOCUS project services. Among the topics that the agenda of the event covered were International standards ; open and foreseen measures under Rural Development Programme, access to foreign markets with the assistance of the Enterprise Europe Network.



CYPRUS

1ST TECHNICAL CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON THE DAIRY SECTOR ENTITLED "DAIRY LINE PRODUCTION AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS" HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2019, THE FILOXENIA CONFERENCE CENTRE IN NICOSIA

The purpose of the event was to inform the agri-food sector about the current prospects of the dairy industry and its focus in the technical, legal and marketing aspects of the industry as well as current trends and ideas for innovation of the Cyprus dairy sector. The conference was attended by representatives of local food organizations of the Cypriot dairy industry and parallel food entrepreneurs and the academia. The event brought closer traditional local products in dairy sector its developments, quality standards, the preparation of haloumi cheese CYS 94:1985 and the development of its exports. Also, there was a presentation in innovation and traditional local products, best practices to excel and future developments in the dairy products. An interactive discussion took place at the end of the 2nd part to what extent can mature local cheeses can find a way in the production lines of local producers and compete with mature cheeses from abroad.



2ND TECHNICAL CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON INNOVATION IN THE AGROFOOD SECTOR UNDER THE NAME "RESEARCH & INNOVATION IN AGRIFOOD CREATING NEW ALLIANCES" HELD ON 15 APRIL 2019, LONDA HOTEL IN LIMASSOL

The purpose of the event was to inform the agri-food sector about the prospects for strengthening the networking and cooperation structures of Cyprus with the EU in the fields of research and innovation. Also, exploring the possibilities of business collaboration with the academic community through an interactive dialogue with the aim of finding common points of cooperation. This enhances business's ability to innovate and extroversion, making it more competitive. The conference was attended by representatives of European food organizations as well as by Cypriot agri-food entrepreneurs. Conclusions reached that there is an immediate need for cooperation between the industry and the academia in building bridges for innovation projects. Functional foods is a key differentiation driver for the agri-food industry and offers high potential for R&D projects. The need for innovation incubator techniques is of utmost importance for turning ideas into actual projects with realistic deliverables and objectives.



PARTNERS

Greece - **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**



ALBANIA— 1ST TECHNICAL CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

The 1st Capacity building Workshop entitled ‘Innovative services to SME-s’ took place in Vlorë. Auleda on May 3rd, 2019 near the "Center of Agriculture and Technology Transfer", Vlorë, in another collaboration with the "Center of Agriculture and Technology Transfer", the Institute for Social Politics and Development, in the organization of a workshop to introduce initiatives in Vlorë Region for farmers, agro-producers and agro-processors. Organic farming and the European legal context for it, access in finance for the subsidy schemes from the "Agency of Agriculture and Rural Development", the services offered from public institutions and intermediaries in the support of target-group, were subject of the presentations and discussions from the representatives of the "Center of Agriculture and Technology Transfer", "Institute of Social Politics", "Auleda" - Local Development Economic Agency, Vlorë, "Council of Albanian Agribusiness", "Risi Albania" program, "Albinspekt". "Auleda" - Local Economic Development Agency, presented the services that will be offered to the target-group in the framework of financial support from the "Risi Albania" program and the FOCUS - MED Balkan Project, which created the cluster, the possibility of inclusion in the international clusters of agro-producers and agro-processors.



More Information for the project and related events

<http://www.focuseuproject.com>



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