Development of an innovative network for the promotion of extroversion of agro-food companies in Adriatic – Ionian Area

INNOVAGRO

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5th

Transnational Networking Workshop publication

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1.1 Introduction

The ANDRION area is characterized by low innovation performance, limited capacity of SMEs, inadequate cooperation among companies and research institutes, low synergies among afro-food and tourism sector and low implementation of environmentally – friendly farming practices.

On the other hand, there are some strong points, such as the existence of quality agro-food products, the existence of several competitive and highly active research and innovation clusters, albeit with poor intraregional joint activities, and also the existence of RIS3, where transnational cooperation can focus in, in order to find solutions in the common problem of SMEs extroversion.

The field is complex and requires much learning in terms of internationalization, access to market, financing, networking, innovation capacity, business transfer, entrepreneurship, cross-border ጼ cross-sector and environmentally-friendly farming cooperation, practices. It also entails incorporation of new forms of SME development, such as design, eco-conception and corporate social responsibility.

Based on the above, **INNOVAGRO** project focuses on the development of links and synergies among farmers, afrofood enterprises, research institutes and public authorities, for:

- a. the promotion of agro-food products' extroversion,
- b. the development of agro-food companies' internalization,
- c. the promotion of environmentally-friendly farming practices.

1.2. Short presentation of INNOVAGRO project

The main aim of **INNOVAGRO** project is the development of an innovative network for the promotion of extroversion of agro-food companies in Adriatic-Ionian Area. Ten partners from four countries (Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Albania, Serbia) are participating in the project. More specific, the project partnership consists of:

- 3 Research Institutes and Universities with extensive experience in business innovation and rural development (Technical University of Crete, E-Institute
 Institute for Comprehensive Development Solutions, University of Basilicata),
- 4 Chambers/Unions of Chambers (Chania Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Network of Insular Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the EU, Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania, and Serbian Chamber of Commerce & Industry),
- 1 Agriculture Confederation (Italian Confederation of Agriculture),
- 2 Regional/Local Authorities (Region of Crete and Province of Potenza).

The cooperation between agrofood companies, research institutes, and local authorities is not as close and strong as it should be. **INNOVAGRO** project will assist agrofood companies from different countries to cooperate and exchange experiences beyond national borders through:

- the establishment of a Transnational Cooperation Network in agro-food and tourism sector,
- the creation of a Virtual Transnational Business Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center.

For more information please visit INNOVAGRO webpage: https://innovagro.adrioninterreg.eu/

1.3. Main discussion key-points

The 5th Transnational Networking Workshop was organized by Chania Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 1st November 2019 in his premises in Chania, Greece, in the framework of the Interreg Adrion INNOVAGRO Project.

The main aim of the workshop was the strengthening of the links between agro-food and tourism sector. Other specific objectives of this Workshop are:

- Highlighting of the reach local gastronomy heritage of the ADRION area.
- Promotion of alternative forms of tourism linked with the agrofood sector.
- Presentation of good networking practices among agrofood and tourism sector.
- Design & management principles of eno-gastronomy destinations/routes in ADRION area.

During the workshop, many experts from Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Serbia and Albania, presented the reach local gastronomy heritage of their countries and exchange experiences in the field of the eno-gastronomy tourism and agrotourism.

More specific the Workshop began with the welcome speech of **Mr Antonis Rokakis**, President of the Chania Chamber of Commerce and Industry, highlighting that Tourism and Agrofood are both critical sectors for the development of Chania region and very important for the whole Greek economy. Agriculture comprises 2,9% of GDP and 14% of employment in Greece, while regarding tourism 33 million people visited Greece in 2018, generating more than 16 billion euros in revenues.



He continued by stating that all countries participating in this project will seize the opportunity and will find common ground to promote new initiatives linking tourism and agrofood sectors.

Finally, Mr. Rokakis emphasized that the cooperation among the Research Institutes, Universities, and Local Authorities from one hand and the Enterprises form the other hand is a goal that should be kept by pursuing for the introduction of innovative solutions to real life.

Then, **Mr Theodoros Tsimrikidis**, INNOVAGRO Project Manager presented the main aims, activities, and outcomes of **INNOVAGRO** project and the project partnership details.



He also focused on the specific characteristics of the ANDRION area in the field of agrofood sector, as described in the SWOT analysis of the agrofood sector in the study area.

More specific, the main results of the **SWOT ANALYSIS** are:

Strengths	Weaknesses
 Strong agro-food sector Local gastronomy with strong elements of uniqueness in many territories Existence of high quality and branded (PDO, PGI, TSG) agrofood products Long tradition in agriculture and agri-food sector Strong assets of some territories (e.g Crete, Puglia) in tourism. Appropriate climate, microclimatic and land conditions 	 Small investments in new PDO, PGI, TSG, and Organic products in the majority of the regions/countries. Low level of innovation and internalization spirit in agro-food SME'S Small number of effective regional and business collaborations/networks Weak technology transfer activities between R&D Institutes and companies
Opportunities	Threats
 Rising investments and initiatives in R&D R&D specialization in agrofood & agribusiness sector Future entry of IPA countries in EU 	 Increasing competition in EU agro-food markets Strong competition from third countries Further decline of agriculture income

After the presentation of INNOVAGRO project, **Mr Georgios Angelakis**, Researcher of Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, on behalf of a scientific team consisted also by **Dr. Georgios Baourakis** form Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, **Dr. Konstantinos Zopounidis** from Technical University of Crete, and **Dr. Christos Lemonakis** from Hellenic Mediterranean University, presented the results of a survey about the "**Tourists' perceptions and attitudes on alternative forms of tourism based on agrofood sector in Western Crete**".

More specific, Mr. Angelakis mentioned that tourist arrivals - based on data taken from Chania Airport- has increased significantly throughout the period 1998-2018, by 222%. Most of them came from Sweden (14.1%), Great Britain (13.9%) and Norway (13.8%).

Significant changes in arrivals have been observed especially in the non-Scandinavian tourists, which had decreased by 34% in the period 2007-2010, while 2010-2017 had increased by 254%.

The main results of the survey are:

- visitors are mainly middle aged (25-54 years old)
- 77% of visitors are university graduates
- 60% report high annual households' income over 45,000 euros
- 59% are public/private employees
- 60% consider prices as normal
- The booking of hotel accommodation was done by 72% through a travel agent and online reservation systems
- The average duration of holidays approaching 10 days
- 53% reside in Platanias and Agia Marina
- 61% prefer to stay in hotels, 26% in rented apartments/rooms/studio

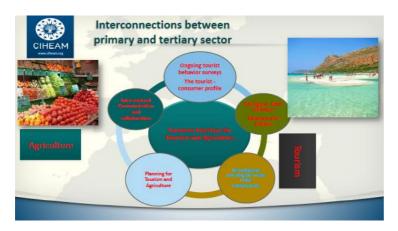
- 74% prefer to stay in 3&4 star hotel accommodations
- "All inclusive" package selected by 26% of foreign visitors

Regarding the tourists' preferences of visiting Western Crete, 79% stated the local food and the main satisfaction comes from restaurants/tavernas as well as the behavior of the local people. Although, they stated that dissatisfaction comes mainly from road and network and signs and cleanliness in towns and roads.

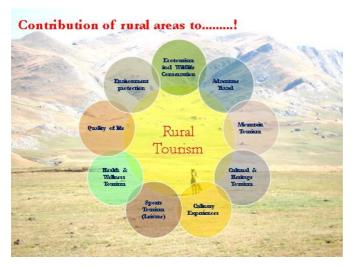
Moreover, as far as expenditures' distribution is concerned, 86% is spent in restaurants and tavernas and 80% on food and drinks.

Finally, as for the alternative forms of tourism per nationality, Scandinavians, Central Europe/UK and Mediterranean are motivated by gastronomic tourism (40%), followed by agrotourism (35%) and water sports (33%).

Afterwards, eight experts from Serbia, Greece, Italy, Albania, and Slovenia presented best networking practices among agrofood and tourism sector.



Stefan Nicolic Adviser in the Food Industry Sector of Serbian Chamber of Commerce & Industry spoke about the contribution of rural tourism to the diversification of economic activities in rural areas.



Mr. Nicolic states that new kind of travelers with diversified motives, educated, aware of ecology, seek for good reasons to stay and spend more, in rural areas. Rural guests participate in lifestyles and traditions of rural communities to get a personalised experience of the countryside. They usually rent rural authentic, small-scale accommodations, run by local people, preferably reflecting the authentic rural heritage of the area. Activities and local attractions are most welcome, letting the guests enjoy the local social, cultural and natural resources.

He also mentioned that rural tourism should be developed in ADRION area for the following reasons:

- To promote the natural sites it has
- To stop depopulation and brain drain
- To increase the number of tourists' choices

- To reduce seasonality
- To gain repeated guests
- To increase cross-border cooperation
- To attract the right kind of guests-value not volume

Finally, Mr Nicolic highlighted that the key to success is the creation of an efficient system support of beginners in rural tourism business, the development of new managerial and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, and the interaction of agriculture and tourism.

Stefano Fabio Massa, Expert from CIA presented a study of Dr. Massimo Fragassi about the enogastronomic routes in the Province of Foggia.

More specific, he focused in the valorization of territorial heritage in several aspects (historical, cultural, naturalistic, demographic, ethnological, anthropological, and gastronomic) through the promotion of an integrated agritourist offer made up by a network of public and private operators that guarantee a quality of tourism services and products capable of making the use of the territorial heritage a unique and interesting experience.

Mr Massa highlighted that today, territories need to communicate uniqueness, values, excellence of development in order to generate a sense of belonging in the people who live there and attract others. Rural communities must invest their local resources in competitive economic activities.



He also specified the term of the Area Brand as the promotion and selling of the territory as a whole with the products of agro-food excellence. Tourist routes such as "Environmental tours" and "The Road of Wine, Oil and Tastes" should be established as a means of promotion.

Finally, Mr Massa mentioned that the main reasons for the creation of a Territorial Marketing Plan are:

- 1. The territory has the potential of unexpressed tourist attraction
- 2. Rural tourism is a form of tourism that respects the environment
- 3. A development based on the principles of sustainability implies the assumption of coherent behavior by the subjects, in order to achieve the set and shared objectives
- 4. The local economy is largely based on the food bought. Promoting a quality food product means enhancing the territory from which it comes and promoting the territory means enhancing the food products that the area produces.

Christina Sarri, Expert from Cyclades Chamber presented the project of Cyclades Chamber titled: "Aegean Cuisine Cluster" highlighting that the vision of Cyclades Chamber is to offer a superior authentic culinary experience to visitors, through the evolved Aegean Cuisine network and the Cluster of Cycladitic

products, so as to encourage a powerful and lasting appreciation of and preference for the local products.

As a consequence, visitors will actively seek out local products and become "ambassadors" of the gastronomic richness and culture of the Cyclades and the Aegean as a whole.

Ms Sarri mentioned also that there is an increasing number of consumers who prefer local food. International research has shown that 30% of European consumers are reported to have the origin of the product as their main criterion, while 76% said they are consuming traditionally produced products. For one to two visitors of Cyclades, local gastronomy was a very important criterion for choosing the travel destination.

Then, Ms Sarri explained that "Aegean Cuisine" is a network of certified restaurants and businesses. 171 restaurants in Cyclades have been awarded the Aegean Cuisine sign and at the same time 387 products of 81 producers have been awarded with the "Aegean Cuisine Recommended" sign.

The aim of "Aegean Cuisine" is to:

- Offer visitors the original Aegean experiencethrough the wealth of local gastronomy
- Promote the authenticity and quality of local products,
- Attract thematic tourism to our islands

Finally, Ms Sarri informed that Cyclades Chamber of Commerce has also introduced a new project, the Aegean Cluster, which is referring to the promotion of Cycladic products from the natural nutrition and gastronomy sector.



Giustino Donofrio from Italian Academy for Cooking Italian Academy for Cooking - Delegate for the Vulture Area presented Aglianica Wine festival which is an event dedicated to the promotion of the Aglianico del Vulture Wine held in different sites of the Vulture area in the Region of Basilicata.

Aglianico is one of the oldest wines in Italy, probably originating in Greece and introduced in Italy around the 7th-6th century BC. Today Aglianico is one of the "princes" of the national wine scene, thanks to its very intense organoleptic characteristics that make it also an excellent match with important dishes.

The number of production companies of Aglianico del Vulture wine in the last 20 years has tripled. From the few wineries of 1971 we moved on to the current numbers:

- 60 companies
- 139 labels
- 3.717.200 is the average annual production of wine bottle
- 200 stakeholders coming from different part of Italy
- more than 10.000 visitors/day

Mr Donofrio mentioned that Wine tourism is a great opportunity for the Vulture but also for the Basilicata in general, because, for example, a few kilometers from the cellars there is an artistic, architectural and cultural heritage, testimony of a very long glorious historical past.

He also highlighted that Wine tourism is a great opportunity for the Vulture but also for the Basilicata in general, because, for example, a few kilometers from the cellars there is an artistic, architectural and cultural heritage, testimony of a very long glorious historical past.



Finally, Mr Donofrio pointed out that the combination of wineries and territory is now leading to a second step in the management of the cellars which, in addition to producing very high quality wines, are also being proposed as a place to visit, purchase, taste and stay overnight, that is, a tourist accommodation. Some producers are already at an advanced stage in this process thanks to the opportunity given by the latest law on wine tourism (Art. 1 cc 502-5 Budget law 2018).

Sokol Prenga, Chef-Gourmet Expert from Albania presented the culinary culture his country and the Albanian wines, as a part of the Mediterranean heritage.

As Mr Prenga mentioned, Albania is divided into four vine cultivation areas, coastal plain areas, hilly areas, sub-zones and mountainous areas. Some of the indigenous cultivars for wine production are the following:

- White Square and Black Square are the most important varieties for wine production. The name comes from the hilly village of Shesh, located 15 km from Tirana and from where it was distributed in many parts of Albania.
- Kallmeti is the noblest red grape cultivated in ancient times in the provinces of Lezha, Zadrima, Shkodra, Bukemira and around the lake of Shkodra. It is also known as the Black Tokai or Shkodra Black Vine.
- Vloshi is the most important red grape of Fier, Vlora, Himara, Delvina etc. The village of Narta represents the typical vineyard. Production ripens at the end of September and the sugar content is very high.
- Serine is the most important red and white grape of the province of Korca, Pogradec, Leskovik.
- Manakuq is a pink grape cultivar, selected, preserved and propagated in the vineyards of the Balkan Peninsula. The largest area where Manakuq is present is the triangle



Albania -Montenegro -Kosovo. **Darko Ferčej,** Head of EU Project Unit of E-Institute - Institute for Comprehensive Development Solutions presented the wine and gastronomy tourism routes and good practices in Slovenia.

Mr Ferčej, at the beginning of his presentation summarized the basic characteristics of Wine routes in Slovenia, as follows:

- 900 km
- 52 varieties of wine
- Popular to establish in past (EU funding)
- All wine regions
- Synergies with local food specialties
- Not connected, limited cooperation, no systemic funding, sometimes outdated signs
- · Specific cases of adding value

Vianneta dolio Podravje Claim Stajerska Slovenija *359 ha Prekmurje 784 ha Vianneta dolio Posavje Chelin Slovenska dolina 2,548 ha Bela krajina 350 ha Bela krajina 350 ha

ADRION ADRIATIC-IONAM

Then, Mr Ferčej presented some records & innovative stories from the wine sector in Slovenia, such as:

- "Refosco" dessert wine created with grapes harvested in the Koper Region Slovenia and white truffle from Italy. 1 bottle has been sold at the price of 500.000 euros during a wine contest. Maybe is the most expensive price in the world for a bottle of wine.
- Wine with added aromas (vanilla, chilli, honey, Chocolade)
- Wine from Amfora
- The existence of a 440 years old grapevine in Slovenia, (Guinnes record).
- The existence of the oldest wine cellar in Ptuj with the oldest wine from 1917

Finally, Mr Ferčej announced that within INNOVAGRO extroversion event in Tirana in October 12th 2018 Slovenian team of experts and producers met Slovenian ambassador in Tirana. Among producers was the prominent Slovenian young farmer Matic Vizjak who established good cooperation with Slovenian Foreign ministry. Some months later he was invited by Slovenian Embassy in Washington to participate and present his chilli-wine in the prestigious event "Fashion-night Ignites", connecting fashion, culinary and diplomacy.

Aspassia Stavroulaki, Manager of the Cretan Gastronomy Center of Crete Region presented Gastronomy & culture experiences of his Center.

Ms Stavroulaki presented that the main aims of the Cretan Gastronomy Center which are to connect the primary sector to tourism and to promote Cretan Gastronomy through educational and evidence-based programs for children and adults, such as:

- Cooking lessons
- Tasting sessions
- School educative thematic visits
- Programs for families
- Experiencing local cuisine by cooking with locals
- Events and local festivals
- Workshops about Cretan diet



Ms Stavroulaki also mentioned that the local products of Crete, such as olive oil, dairy products, honey, endemic plants and various wild herbs, have formed the eating habits of Cretan people and have contributed to the fame of Cretan diet for being the healthiest nutritional model in the world. This explains why the Cretan Diet is the base for the so-called "Mediterranean Diet".

Finalising her presentation, Ms Stavroulaki emphasized that above all, the Cretan Diet is a way of life which includes values such as hospitality, family, but also fast and daily exercise. The Cretan Diet is not just what we eat but the way we live our life and cultivate.

Ioannis Papargyris, Financial Secretary of CANON presented the "CANON" initiative aiming at the provision of organized support to the production procedure and the products of monastery communities and of small and very small



producers, in order to protect them from any other products that find their way in the market without any control.

He pointed out that it has been observed that communities are cognizant of and support the products produced by monastic communities and small producers. However, the lack of an organized procedure restricts their distribution to a limited local level without the possibility of their expansion into a supralocal market with all the

benefits this could entail.

For this reason, as Mr Papargyris mentioned, CANON provides consulting to monastic communities and small producers, through appropriate actions and synergies, on how to get organized for optimal distribution of those products, benefiting both producers and consumers. CANON also undertakes the responsibility for labeling those products.

Finally, at the end of the workshop an interactive session took place in which the experts marked in a digital map the most important eno-gastronomy tourism destinations /events, and agro-food production places ANDRION Area (Please see the map in the final page of the e-booklet)

1.4 Best practices for networking

Tourism Observatory in Western Crete

The establishment of the Tourism Observatory in Western Crete was a joint effort for an Innovative Entrepreneurship by:

- CIHEAM-MAICh, Business Economics and Management
- TUC, School of Production Engineering and Management
- Hellenic Mediterranean University,
- Hotel Owners' Association of Chania Crete
- Chania Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Economic Chamber of Western Crete
- Chania International Airport Fraport Greece

The Observatory implements an effective and systematic recording and analysis of:

- Demographic information of the visitors
- Visitor's travel and spending behaviour
- Destination perceptions and attitudes
- Preferences to local products
- Economic implications of their visit for the local societies
- Level of satisfaction from services
- Tourist potential and prospects in the tourism market in Crete/Chania

Some aims for the future:

- Support and encourage the decision-making process for existing businesses
- Highlight new business opportunities
- Strengthen the linkages with other sectors, eg promotion of local food quality products
- Provide a base for new policy and strategy design

Tourist routes of the Daunia Rurale

The role of Local Action Groups (LAG) GAL in rural tour design and especially in the construction of the tourists' routes of the Daunia Rurale was very important and useful.

The construction of the tourist routes of the Daunia Rurale takes place as direct fusion experimentation, including:

- Elaborate regional territorial landscape plan,
- Select relevant content of the places,
- Develop web actions of the explorers,
- Capture of tracks,
- Design real journeys through the territory
- Outreach at companies and public administrations.

The main methodology steps for the design of tourist routes:

- Competitive analysis of the unique and distinctive elements of the value proposition
- Differentiate your segments in an innovative way
- Define experiential strategies
- Analyze the extended experience cycle
- Extended experience design

The Wine & Olive Tourism Routes in Daunia Rurale:

- The wine route runs through the towns of San Severo, Apricena, San Paolo di Civitate and Torremaggiore. There are several events dedicated to wine, such as the Festa di San Martino in San Severo and the Sagra del Vino Novello in San Paolo di Civitate, both in November.
- Alto Tavoliere is a significant Olive Tourism destination, as one of the major producers of extra virgin olive oil, appreciated and exported internationally. The cultivated olive varieties are mainly "Peranzana" and "Rotondella".

Cluster for Cycladic products in the natural nutrition (agri-food) and gastronomy sector

The Purpose of the establishment of the Cluster:

- To create an innovative business cluster as part of the Aegean Cuisine Network in the Cyclades, with the participation of local businesses that are active in agrifood and gastronomy sector, by joining forces in order to have a more effective promotion of their products and to achieve their entrance in new markets
- The Cluster, within the gastronomy tourism sector, has the potential as a source of jobs, entrepreneurship and innovation for Cyclades
- The Cluster for Cycladic products will act as a Pilot for all regions of the country where agri-food producers are looking to penetrate new, promising markets

The Aegean Cluster includes:

- A continuous, dedicated support process for cluster members
- A network of vending machines selling specialty local products at the main entrance/exit gates of Cyclades region
- A centrally-located logistic center in Attica that will serve a wholesale distribution center for Greece
- Special scale points, located amongst the most visited islands of Cyclades, that will provide an authentic Aegean taste experience to visitors
- An e-shop for the promotion of local products based on B2B and B2C development models for both business and consumers

Aglianica Wine Festival

Aglianica Wine Festival organized by the Aglianica Association and now in its 20th edition. In addition to tasting wines and typical Vulture products, it gives wine lovers the opportunity to learn about the world of Aglianico del Vulture through the close connection between art and tourism.

The Festival is structured on two days of meetings, tastings and food and wine workshops. The Wine shop of Aglianica (Giardino degli Elci), is the beating heart of the whole event. At the wine shop it is possible to meet and get acquainted with the great Lucan wine makers. The wine shop is organized to make tastings of the best Aglianico selections.

A series of spaces located on the streets of the historic center and set up with stands complete the exhibition spaces of the event. The most important of these is called "The road of flavors" and presents a careful selection of the best companies of typical products.

The event is completed by a series of workshops in historic buildings dedicated to the presentation and tasting of great Aglianici and the different terroirs that characterize Vulture's viticulture.

Additionally, a series of spaces that are set up for the occasion and that are part of the urban park of the cellars are an integral part of the event.

Aglianica Wine Festival represents only the beginning of a future that foresees the integration between territories, products and culture in order to promote the historical identity of the territory and give the visitor a product of excellence as well as a unique emotional experience.

NICHE Interreg Europe project

The main specific objectives of NICHE project are:

- Pioneer an open innovation approach in the food sector bringing together all the relevant stakeholders under a quadruple-helix model i.e. research centres, universities, enterprises, policy makers, innovation agencies, final consumers, etc, at both regional and interregional level.
- Establish regional open innovation ecosystems to assure the perpetuation of a systemic support to the innovation applied to the food sector.
- Exchange and learn from experiences among regions sharing similar challenges, opportunities and areas of smart specialization.
- Explore new mechanisms to transfer and apply research and innovation for new food products, services or processes.

More specific the main goal of Cretan Gastronomy Center in the framework of this project is the design of 3 following thematic gastro-routes in the area around the Cretan Gastronomy Center:

- The route of the Mountain
- The route of the Lake.
- The route of the Sea.

in order to increase the visits on the spot.

The food actors around the Cretan Gastronomy Center (e.g producers, shops, restaurants, olive mill, cheese makers etc) will be profited from the developed networking, by promoting the Cretan Gastronomy Culture as a new touristic product.

"CANON" Initiative

The non-profit partnership CANON is the outcome of cooperation between Inetrparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy and the Hellenic Confederation of Professional, Craftsmen and Merchants (GSEVEE).

CANON undertakes the role of labeling, so that products' brand awareness be certified both in the local and supralocal market.

CANON trade mark awarded to the producers for the labeling of their products, that distinguishes them from any party possibly intending to violate the term Monastery product re Small Producers Products.

Using the CANON trade mark constitutes a benchmark safeguarding both the production procedure and the product itself made available to the domestic and the international market

Granting CANON trade mark is conditional on the relevant provisions and procedures of the approved regulation, governed by transparency and simplicity

The trade mark CANON is graphically rendered by Byzantine Script, with the Greek letters 'A' and ' Ω ' prevailing to showcase the Orthodox origin of products bearing said labeling.

CANON is Orthodoxy's fundamental principle and concept, being internationally recognized by all states sharing the same religious dogma.

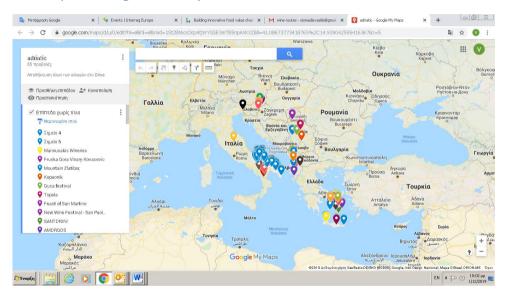
1.5 Design & management principles of enogastronomy tourism destinations

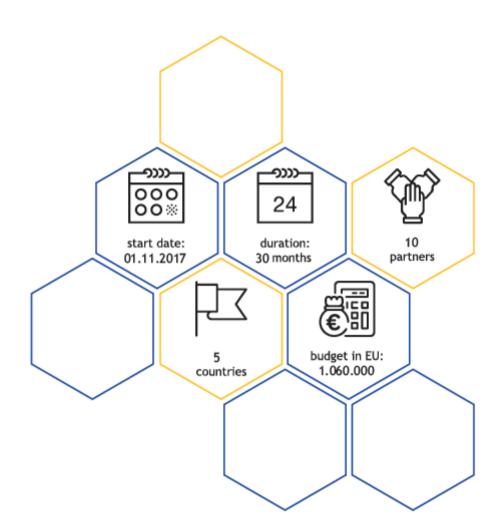
Key Success Factors of Destination Management:

- Efficient system of support for beginners in rural tourism business: information, education, consulting, favorable financing, joint marketing strategy and action planning.
- Development of new managerial and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills – focus on generation change & gender equality.
- Integration of agriculture and tourism as a lever of rural development (e.g. local value chains, PDO, PGI, GI,...).



1.6 Map of eno-gastronomy tourism destinations in ANDRION Area





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