
Deliverable 1.1.3

Project Management

Organisation of Kick-off Meeting in Serres

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The project STRENGTHEN is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Programme



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1. Introduction

The STRENGTHEN project in a glance

Strengthening the entrepreneurship culture and collaboration in the eligible programme area - STRENGTHEN

STRENGTHEN

1. Development and support of local economy

3a. Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators

Subsidy Contract: No B6.3a.25

The development of extroversion and exports is one of the main levers in order to overcome the intense problems created by the economic crisis and the prolonged recession in both countries. In this context, the initiative for strengthening the entrepreneurship culture and collaboration in the eligible programme area aims to highlight, promote and enhance the extroversion of quality Greek and Bulgarian products and services by stimulating their export activity, upgrading their general international trade, their international networking, the search for partners, etc.

The overall objective of the proposed project "STRENGTHEN" is to enhance the competitiveness, sustainability and management capacity of targeted smes in the cross border area by stimulating cross border cooperation, enabling the promotion of local products and services and improving services and tools for business support and internationalization. The objective will be reached through targeted actions to support the business networking and partnership of smes in cross border area and promote the export activity of Greek and Bulgarian products and services through participation in trade fairs and business missions. SMEs are much more likely to survive in the globally competitive business climate if they internationalise. International SMEs are also more innovative than their stay-at-home cousins and more resistant to local and national crises.

Moreover, the project aims at exploiting opportunities for cross border cooperation by developing common mechanisms and actions on strategic issues, such as the creation of conditions for the future development of competitive cross-border clusters.

In conclusion, the proposed project "STRENGTHEN" provides with the purpose to improve entrepreneurial support systems for smes in the cross border area – through joint actions undertaken by the project partners – focusing on removing the above mentioned barriers and bottlenecks for smes thus strengthening business survival and providing support to specific smes.

2. Minutes of the Kick off Meeting

President Mr. Athanasios Malliaras welcomed all Project Partners and expressed his sound interest for the project and a fruitful cooperation in the next two years of project implementation.

Presentation of STRENGTHEN partners

The floor was given to project partners who shortly presented their organisation (mission, competence, etc) with a description of the network they are representing (at local/national level) and past experiences/projects on the project topics followed by their expectations/Benefit expected from their participation in the project.

Project Overview

Next, the Lead Beneficiary presented the Project Overview, Project Objectives and Goals, as well as a general structure of the project, per Work Package and Action. LB explained the general concept to all partners, pointing out the key points in project's lifecycle and partners' responsibilities and involvement.

Questions were raised regarding the publicity of the project in social media. The LB cleared out that PB3 will create pages / accounts in three of the most well-known and most used social media.

Another question was raised on the training process and especially regarding the co training where for four days Greek and Bulgarian trainers will teach together in the classroom. LB explained in details the responsibilities and task of each partner.

PB3 expressed his concern regarding the trainees' allowance and discussing, if possible, budget modification. LB suggested PB3 to go through the budget and suggest any changes always having in mind that sufficient justification must be put in place.

Project implementation principles

Following this, the Lead Beneficiary discussed with partners the project implementation principles and especially on the reporting procedures, eligibility of expenditures and payment / cash flows. Progress reports are submitted via the MIS system (<http://logon.ops.gr>) with the partners sending their input to the KB using the standard excel form provided.

For more information regarding Project Implementation Procedures, the LB asked all PBs to read through relevant documentation on Programme's web-site, available on the following address: http://www.greece-bulgaria.eu/com/17_Documents-for-project-implementation

Information & Publicity

Regarding the information and publicity, the Lead Beneficiary informed the participants on the mandatory I&P outputs:

- a) Project communication plan
- b) Development of a project website,
- c) At least one publication (brochure/booklet) with the results of the project and
- d) Organization of one final public event

and he stressed out the need of the correct use of the visual programme's and project's identity in all official documents, projects' outputs and advertising materials.

Short term actions – next steps

Then, the LB gave some basic guidelines to all PPs, on their commitments for the proper project implementation (e.g. project should be registered in a separate accounting unit) and for complying with all the rules and obligations set out in the Subsidy Contract and in the Partnership Agreement.

The Lead Beneficiary advised that the original documents issued shall bear a stamp and described the start-up actions required by all partners.

Project Partners set out a timeline by December to conclude with all tender documents regarding the purchase of equipment and appointment of external experts.

Decisions:

The LB will send an e-mail to all PBs with Minutes of the kick-off meeting for their comments, participants list, presentations and photos held during the kick-off meeting

Next project meeting will be held in Blagoevgrad in March 2022 and the exact date will be agreed among partners via e-communication.

3. Invitation and Agenda



CHAMBER OF SERRES

Project Title

**"STRENGTHENING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CULTURE AND
COLLABORATION IN THE ELIGIBLE PROGRAMME AREA"**

Project Acronym

STRENGTHEN

Kick-Off Project Meeting Invitation and Agenda

Invitation

Kick-Off Project Meeting

Chamber of Serres, 11/10/2021

The **Chamber of Serres**, Lead Beneficiary of the STRENGTHEN project, invites you to participate in the Kick-Off Meeting of the STRENGTHEN project, financed by the INTERREG V-A "Greece – Bulgaria 2014-2020" Programme.

Date: 11/10/2021

Venue: Chamber of Serres – 3rd Floor "GEORGIOS CHRISTIDIS" Conference Hall (P. Kostopoulou 2, Serres, GR 62122).

Tel: 00302321099744

Language: English (Programme's official language)

Participants

LB	CHAMBER OF SERIES	Greece
PB2	LIFELONG LEARNING CENTER OF REGION OF CENTRAL MACEDONIA SA	Greece
PB3	CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY-BLAGOEVGRAD	Bulgaria
PB4	EUROPEAN INFORMATIONAL AND CONSULTANCY CENTER-BG REGIONS	Bulgaria

The project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and national funds of the countries participating in the Cooperation Programme INTERREG VA "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020"

AGENDA		
Time	Topic	Speaker
10:30 – 10:40	Opening of the meeting and welcome speech	• President of the Chamber of Serres
10:40 – 11:00	Presentation of STRENGTHEN partners	• All project partners
11:00 – 11:30	Project Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives, Milestones and Outputs • PPs responsibilities; Work Plan and Work Packages 	• Lead Partner, all project partners
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee break	
12:00 – 12:30	Project implementation principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting procedures • Eligibility of expenditures • Payment / cash flows 	• Lead Partner
12:30 – 13:00	Information & Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project strategy 	• Lead Partner
13:00 – 13:30	Short term actions – next steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPs commitments – analysis of activities and deadlines 	• Lead Partner, all project partners
13:30 – 14:00	Planning of Project's Events & Outputs – Final Discussion – End of the Kick-Off Project Meeting	• All project partners
14:00	Lunch	

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4. Photos







5. Presentations



Interreg
Greece-Bulgaria

"STRENGTHENING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CULTURE AND COLLABORATION IN THE ELIGIBLE PROGRAMME AREA"

Project Overview

Kick-off meeting – Serres
11/10/2021

The project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and national funds of the countries participating in the Cooperation Programme INTERREG VA "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020"



Interreg
Greece-Bulgaria

Project Information

Priority Axis	1. A Competitive and Innovative Cross-Border Area
Thematic Objective	03 - Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and the fisheries and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF)
Investment Priority	3a. Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
Specific Objective	1. To improve entrepreneurship SME support systems
Project Title	STRENGTHENING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CULTURE AND COLLABORATION IN THE ELIGIBLE PROGRAMME AREA
Project Acronym	STRENGTHEN
Subsidy Contract Number	HS-3a-25
Lead Beneficiary	CHAMBER OF SERRES
Country of Lead Beneficiary	Greece

Project Partnership

Pr. Nr.	Partner title	Country
LB (PP1)	CHAMBER OF SERRES	Greece
PP2	LIFELONG LEARNING CENTER OF REGION OF CENTRAL MACEDONIA SA	Greece
PP3	CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY - BLAGOEVGRAD	Bulgaria
PP4	EUROPEAN INFORMATION AND CONSULTANCY CENTER - BG REGIONS	Bulgaria

Project Concept

The overall objective of the proposed project "STRENGTHEN" is to enhance the competitiveness, sustainability and management capacity of targeted smes in the cross border area by stimulating cross border cooperation, enabling the promotion of local products and services and improving services and tools for business support and internationalization.

The objective will be reached through targeted actions to support the business networking and partnership of smes in cross border area and promote the export activity of Greek and Bulgarian products and services through participation in trade fairs and business missions.

Moreover, the project aims at exploiting opportunities for cross border cooperation by developing common mechanisms and actions on strategic issues, such as the creation of conditions for the future development of competitive cross-border clusters.

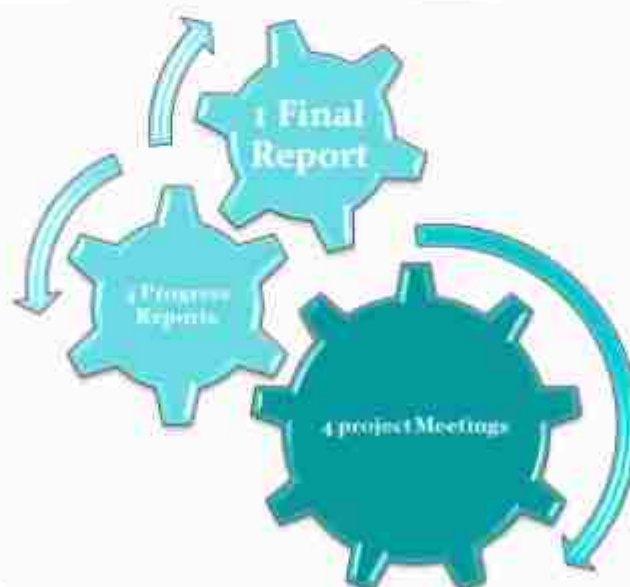
Project Concept

PBs will collaborate to elaborate new policies for supporting local smes and local educational institutions. It seems to be a good interaction track-record between these actors from Greece and Bulgaria due to long-standing cooperation.

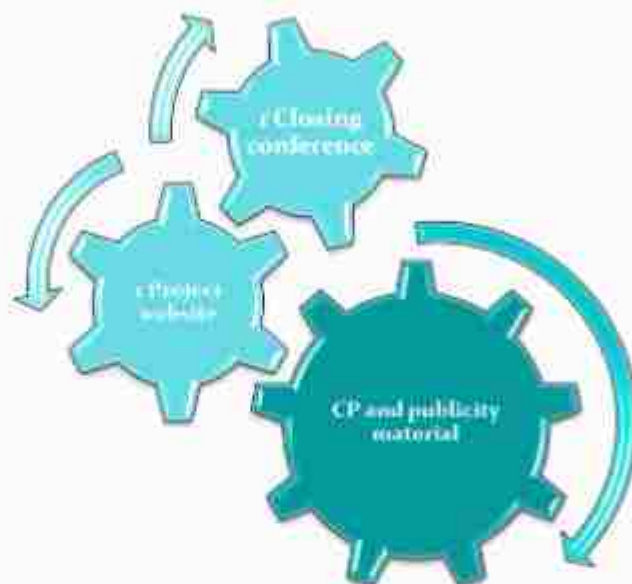
In addition, the project provides a solution to the bottleneck of inadequate human development and skills with the provision of training seminars in the field of Export Trade and Food Safety & Quality Management by recognizing that human resource training is a function that involves developing employees' skills, knowledge and abilities to meet the organization's needs.

Project Concept

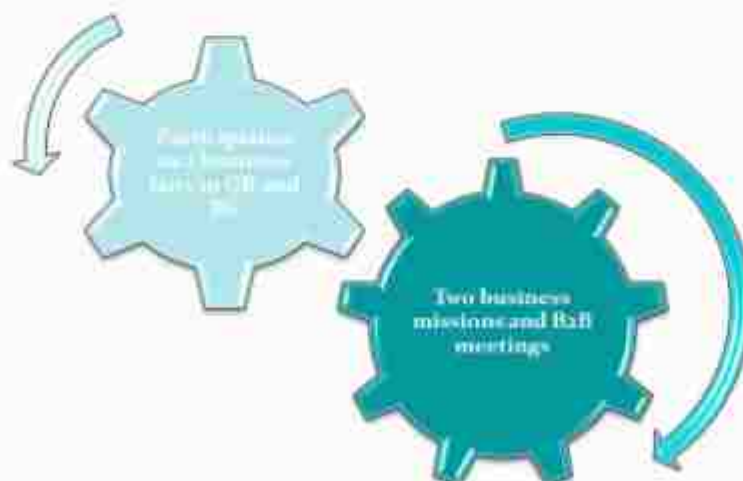
Moreover, PPs will develop common mechanisms and actions towards the creation of conditions for the development of competitive cross-border clusters in the future. Namely, they will organise meetings (focus groups) to investigate the creation of competitive clusters in the Agro-food, Building Materials / Construction, Tourism and sector and will elaborate a common strategy that will guide future actions by the partners, who share responsibility for its implementation and the achievement of its priority objectives.



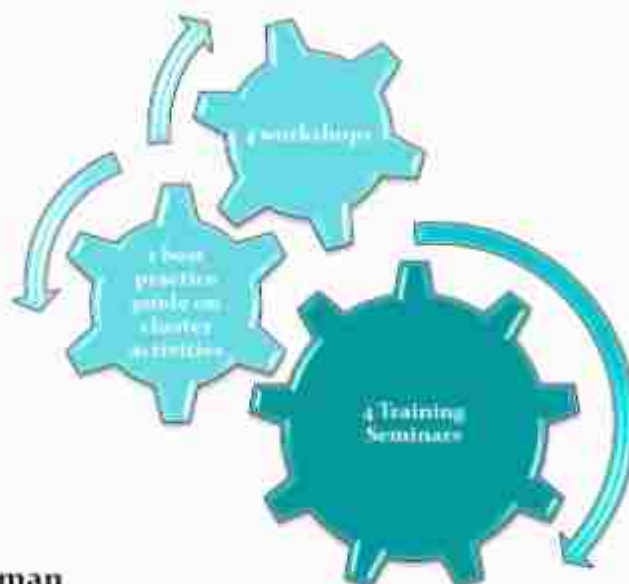
WP1: Project Management and Coordination



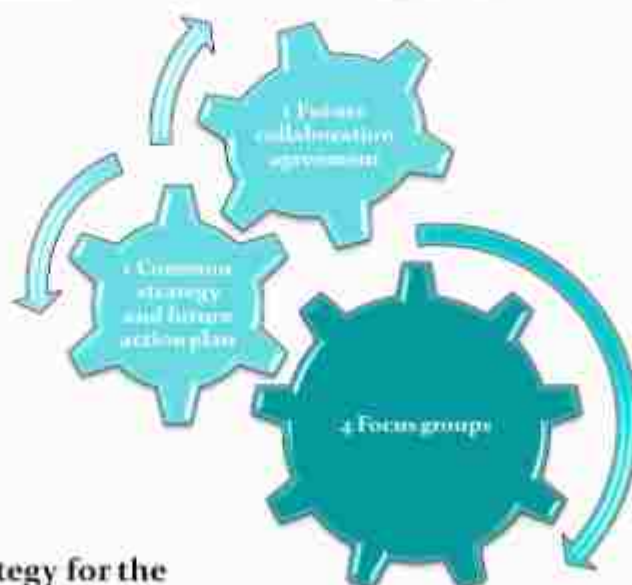
**WP2: Communication and
Dissemination**



**WP3: Integrated
promotional program**



**WP4: Human
Development and Skills**



**WP5: Joint strategy for the
enhancement of
collaboration in the cross-
border area**

Key points in project's lifecycle

- 13/4/2021 (Subsidy contract signed) - Launch of the project / eligibility of expenses
- 31/12/2021 (start up period end)

Allocate the necessary resources to implement the project activities

- Partners' staff
- Preparation of Table of References, assignment of tasks to External Experts

PPs responsibilities - Lead Beneficiary

- Project Management
 - Is the contact point representing the partnership for any communication with the JS/MA or any other of the Programme Structures.
 - Is responsible for the overall coordination, management and implementation of the project vis-à-vis the MA.
 - Shall appoint a Project Manager who has operational responsibility for the implementation of the overall project and a Financial Manager.
 - Prepares the project's progress reports and payment claims from all project beneficiaries and submit them to the JS according to the Programme and Project Manual in force.
 - Shall address requests for project modifications according to the Programme and Project Manual in force.

PPs responsibilities - Lead Beneficiary

- Financial Monitoring
 - Ensures that the expenditure presented by the beneficiaries participating in the project has been incurred for the purpose of implementing the operation
 - Shall receive and transfer IPA II contribution for the part of the operation implemented by project beneficiaries who are not located in Greece, participating in the operation within one month of its receipt and in full

PPs responsibilities – Partners

- Carry out the specific activities set out in the Application form;
- Provide all information and data to the Lead Beneficiary that is required by the latter (information for the progress reports etc)
- Submit expenditure for verification as they become available, to the designated Controllers.
- Notify the Lead Beneficiary of any factors that may adversely affect implementation of the project in accordance with the work plan;

Project workplan

WP Number	Name	Start Date	End Date	Amount
1	Project Management and Coordination	13/04/2021	12/04/2023	120,000.00
2	Coordination and Dissemination	13/04/2021	12/04/2023	50,000.00
3	Integrated territorial projects	13/04/2021	12/04/2023	200,000.00
4	Human Development activities	13/04/2021	12/04/2023	100,000.00
5	Joint strategy for the achievement of objectives in the cross-border area	13/04/2021	12/04/2023	50,000.00
Total				520,000.00

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D1.2 All partners have to submit on time their input regarding the progress report (financial & technical part) to the LB using the official form (Progress Reports), which is provided by the MA/JTS for hard copy submission. LB submits the consolidated Progress Report via MIS.

D1.3 Partners host one project meeting each.

WP1: Project Management & Coordination

Deliverable 1.X.2: Project management

Deliverable 1.X.3: Project Meetings

Deliverable 1.X.4: Audit Costs

D1.4 All partners follow the procedures for the verification of their expenditure

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D2.1 The LB is responsible for the elaboration of the CP

D2.2

LB is responsible for the mock ups and printing of publicity material (500 copies), i.e. folders, blocks, pens, leaflets, usb for Greek partners (300 items)

WP2: Communication and Dissemination

Deliverable 2.X.1: Communication Plan

Deliverable 2.X.2: Publicity material and promotion in social media

Deliverable 2.X.3: Development of project website and content update

Deliverable 2.X.4: Closing conference

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D2.2

Promotional material

PB3 is responsible for the printing of publicity material, i.e. folders, blocks, pens, leaflets (also translation in Bulgarian), for Bulgarian partners

All PBs will produce one banner each

Social Media

LB is responsible for the elaboration of Social Media Plan

WP2: Communication and Dissemination

Deliverable 2.X.1: Communication Plan

Deliverable 2.X.2: Publicity material and promotion in social media

Deliverable 2.X.3: Development of project website and content update

Deliverable 2.X.4: Closing conference

Project's WPs & Deliverables

All partners will promote the project in social media as follows:

LB: at least 70 posts in social media throughout the project

PB2: at least 100 posts in social media throughout the project

WP2: Communication and Dissemination

Deliverable 2.X.1: Communication Plan

Deliverable 2.X.2: Publicity material and promotion in social media

Deliverable 2.X.3: Development of project website and content update

Deliverable 2.X.4: Closing conference

Project's WPs & Deliverables

PB3: Social media management
- Creation of three accounts on 3 social media channels, post cover / header photo and profile image, monitoring of social media demographics) & creation of at least 100 posts in social media throughout the project

PB4: at least 100 posts in social media throughout the project

WP2: Communication and Dissemination

Deliverable 2.X.1: Communication Plan

Deliverable 2.X.2: Publicity material and promotion in social media.

Deliverable 2.X.3: Development of project website and content update

Deliverable 2.X.4: Closing conference

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D2.3

The LB is responsible for the development of the project website

All partners contribute with website content in partners language and in english

D2.4

LB is responsible for the organisation of the closing conference

All partners participate in the conference

WP2: Communication and Dissemination

Deliverable 2.X.1: Communication Plan

Deliverable 2.X.2: Publicity material and promotion in social media

Deliverable 2.X.3: Development of project website and content update

Deliverable 2.X.4: Closing conference

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D3.1

LB and PB3 will organise one business mission each. Participation of max. 30 people from each country for 2 days,

Business Mission in Serres:

LB will cover the organisation costs (catering, venue suppliers, etc)

PB3 will organise the travel arrangements for the Bulgarian participants

WP3: Integrated promotional program

Deliverable 3.X.1: Business missions and B2B meetings

Deliverable 3.X.2: Participation in business fairs in GR and BG

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D3.1

Business Mission in Serres:

PB4 will cover the organisation costs (catering, transport, venue suppliers, etc) and organise the travel arrangements for the Bulgarian participants (20 unemployed)

Aim: Establish appropriate contacts and promote local products and services in the cross border area among Greek and Bulgarian companies

Raise awareness on the new trends in exports (financial tools, entering to new markets etc)

WP3: Integrated promotional program

Deliverable 3.X.1: Business missions and B2B meetings

Deliverable 3.X.2: Participation in business fairs in GR and BG

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D3.2

Trade fairs

LB will participate in 2 trade fairs in Greece and Bulgaria and will cover the space and stand rental costs for 30 Greek participants in each fair

LB will also purchase equipment (2 video wall matrix, 1 video wall mount, 1 electric and 730 chairs) for the SEREXPO event

WP3: Integrated product promotion and promotion program

Deliverable 3.X.1: Business missions and B2B meetings

Deliverable 3.X.2: Participation in business fairs in GR and BG

PB2 will participate in 2 trade fairs in Greece and Bulgaria (space and stand rental costs will be covered by LB) and purchase 1 TV for the need of the fairs

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D3.2

PB3 will participate in 2 trade fairs in Greece and Bulgaria and will cover the space and stand rental costs for 30 participants

PB4 will participate in the two trade fairs and will cover his own space and stand rental costs

WP3: Integrated product promotion and promotion program

Deliverable 3.X.1: Business missions and B2B meetings

Deliverable 3.X.2: Participation in business fairs in GR and BG

Aim: Gradually create a strong brand image of the Greek and Bulgarian companies and enhance the potential for expanding their export activities, through the integrated promotion of products and services of specific sectors (agro-food, building materials / construction tourism, creative industries & culture) to recognized international buyers.

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D4.1

PB2 and PB4 will organise 2 training seminars each on Food Safety & Quality Management and Export Trade

In each training program with duration 120 hours each, 104 hours will be done in partners' language and 16 hours in English language.

For the 16 hours in English language, PB3 will cover the travel and accommodation costs of 2 Bulgarian English speaking trainers for 4 days.

WP4: Human Development and Skills

Deliverable 4.X.1: Training seminars

Deliverable 4.X.2: Informative workshops on the institution of cluster and dissemination of best practices

These trainers (2 days each) will teach in the classroom together with a Greek English speaking Co-Trainer who supports them in issues such as translation, conducting the discussion with the participants etc. The cost for the Greek Co-Trainer will be covered by PB2.

Project's WPs & Deliverables

The same will be done for the training programs in Bulgaria. PB2 will cover the travel and accommodation costs of 2 Greek English speaking trainers for 4 days for each program. The cost for the Bulgarian Co-Trainer will be cover by PB3.

During these 4 days subjects that may be developed are indicatively: territory of the project, products, legislation about exports, establishing a company etc, and the PB will avoid complicated issues such us a Greek partner hiring a Bulgarian trainer, insurance, invoices etc

Aim: Improving and updating skills in accordance with the changing needs of the job market

WP4: Human Development and Skills

Deliverable 4.X.1: Training seminars

Deliverable 4.X.2: Informative workshops on the institution of cluster and dissemination of best practices

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D4.2

PB2 is responsible for the elaboration of best practice guide on cluster activities in EU level with the contribution of PB3 and PB4.

PB2 will organise two workshops for the dissemination of best practices to policy makers & intermediary organisations

Aim:

Raise awareness on the institution of cluster, what's in it for the smes
Highlight the synergies, benefits for the smes, present best practices

WP4: Human Development and Skills

Deliverable 4.X.1: Training seminars

Deliverable 4.X.2: Informative workshops on the institution of cluster and dissemination of best practices

PB3 and PB4 will organise one workshop each for the dissemination of best practices to intermediary organisations and policy makers accordingly

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D5.1

- LB will organise 1 focus group with stakeholders in **Agro-food industry**
- PB2 will organise 1 focus group with stakeholders in **Building Materials / Construction industry**
- PB3 will organise 1 focus group with stakeholders in **Sustainable tourism industry**
- PB4 will organise 1 focus group with stakeholders in **Creative industry**

WP5: Joint strategy for the enhancement of collaboration in the cross-border area

Deliverable 5.X.1: Meetings / focus groups to investigate the creation of competitive clusters

Deliverable 5.X.2: Common strategy and future action plan

Deliverable 5.X.3: Future collaboration agreement

Aim: Exchange views and discuss on the needs of smes in each region and how they can enhance their extroversion by operating as clusters

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D5.2

All partners will contribute to the elaboration of common strategy and future action plan

PB1 will provide with the document layout to be agreed by all partners and drafting the document for the Greek side

PB2 is responsible for overiewing draft texts and for the elaboration of the consolidated document

PB3 and PB4 will contribute to the drafting the document for the Bulgarian side

WP5: Joint strategy for the enhancement of collaboration in the cross-border area

Deliverable 5.X.1: Meetings / focus groups to investigate the creation of competitive clusters

Deliverable 5.X.2: Common strategy and future action plan

Deliverable 5.X.3: Future collaboration agreement

Aim: Develop common mechanisms and actions towards the creation of conditions for the development of competitive cross-border clusters in the future

Project's WPs & Deliverables

D5.3

All partners will contribute to the elaboration of the future collaboration agreement (MoU) aiming at creating the conditions for the future development of competitive cross-border clusters through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding

Aim:

Facilitate the future collaboration (e.g. discuss and identify potential funding programmes and initiatives for the support of clustering, etc) and set the grounds for the creation of competitive clusters in the sectors under consideration.

WP5: Joint strategy for the enhancement of collaboration in the cross-border area

Deliverable 5.X.1: Meetings / focus groups to investigate the creation of competitive clusters

Deliverable 5.X.2: Common strategy and future action plan

Deliverable 5.X.3: Future collaboration agreement

Thank you for your attention



"STRENGTHENING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CULTURE AND COLLABORATION IN THE ELIGIBLE PROGRAMME AREA"

Project implementation principles

Kick-off meeting – Serres
11/10/2021

The project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and national funds of the countries participating in the Cooperation Programme INTERREG V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020"

Main Programme Documents

- Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020" v.3.1
- Management and Control System (MCS) of the CP INTERREG V-A "Greece-Bulgaria" 2014-2020 – 2021 Modifications_MCS_2021_GrBg

Key Project Documents

- Subsidy Contract
- Partnership Agreement
- Progress Report and Guidelines
- First Level Control Documents
- Programme and Project Implementation Manual
- Information and Publicity Project Partners Guidebook
- Ministerial Decision for the Management and Control Systems of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective Operational Programmes, as in force (regards Greek beneficiaries)
- Project Closure Manual

Index

- Reporting procedures
- Eligibility of Expenditures
- Payment / Cash Flows

Reporting Procedures

Process for Progress Report submission

- The Lead Beneficiary in accordance to article 13 par.1 of Regulation 1299/2013 is responsible for the submission to the Joint Secretariat (JS) of the progress reports on project implementation activities
- All project partners have to submit on time their input (financial & technical part) to the LB using the official form (Progress Reports), which are provided by the MA/JTS for hard copy submission
- LB submits the consolidated Progress Report via MIS.
- LB will still abide by the deadlines for submission of the reports even if there is missing information
- LB will add the missing information in the next reporting period
- All reports must be submitted in English

When to submit

The Lead Beneficiary will submit a progress report to the JS every six months in accordance with the following schedule

Report ing Period	Deadline for partners to submit input to the LB	Deadline for the Submission of Progress Report to JS
January - June	15 th of July of the respective year	20 th of July of the respective year
July - December	15 th of January of the following year	20 th of January of the following year
Final Report	not later than two (2) months from the date of the final verification	

Final Report and Project Closure

- After finalisation of the project's activities, the Lead Beneficiary (LB) must submit a Final Project Report (standard form provided) to the MA/ JS not later than two (2) months from the date of the final verification, giving a qualitative summary of the project implementation as a whole.
- The Final Report of the project will be submitted to the JS/MA for approval, not later than two (2) months from the date of the final verification. In any case, the Final Report must be submitted no later than six months after the official end date of the project.
- For more details please refer to the relevant Closure Manual

Eligibility of Expenditures

General Rule on eligibility

As a general rule, expenses shall be eligible for funding if:

- they have been incurred and paid out within the time frame (as per paragraph 5.6 below) in which expenditure can take place; under no circumstances can the final date of eligibility of expenditure exceed the 31st of December 2023;
- they are directly related to the project - either for its development or implementation - and are included in the approved project budget;
- they follow the "real cost" or "flat rate" principle;
- costs which have actually been incurred and paid by the PBs and are supported by original invoices or other accounting documents of equivalent probative value;
- they are in line with national, EU and programme rules;
- they are in compliance with the principles of efficiency, economy and expediency of all actions, especially the cost/benefit ratio has to be ensured.

Project Budget Categories

- A. Staff;
- B. Office and administration;
- C. Travel and accommodation;
- D. External expertise and services;
- E. Equipment;
- F. Infrastructure and Works

More concrete guidance about the eligibility of the expenditures, the verification process and the audit trail to verify these expenditures (necessary documents, invoices, etc.) for each Budget Line is provided in the Guidance on Management Verification document available on the CP GR-BG 2014-2020 website.

Ineligible expenditure

The following expenditures are ineligible for funding under the Programme:

- Recoverable Value Added Tax (VAT) (Art 69 (3) of EU Reg. 1303/2013);
- Fines, financial penalties and expenditure on legal disputes and litigation (Art. 2 of EU Delegated Reg. 481/2014);
- Costs of gifts, except those not exceeding 50€ per gift where related to promotion, communication, publicity or information (Art. 2 of EU Delegated Reg. 481/2014);
- Costs related to fluctuation of foreign exchange currency (Art. 2 of EU Delegated Reg. 481/2014);

Payment / Cash Flows

National Contribution

- For a sound financial management, all PBs must have a dedicated interest-free bank account for the purpose of their project implementation.
- Bank account data of the interest-free account of the LBs must be submitted to the JS as soon as it becomes available and whenever it changes
- For Greek PBs the national contribution (15%) will be granted through the Public Investments Budget.
- The national contribution of Bulgaria (15%) to the Bulgarian PBs is ensured by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works

For Greek partners

- Following the registration of the approved projects in the PDE, and in order to be able to proceed with funding requests via MIS, Greek partners:
- must appoint an accounting officer ant for your project, and
- designate a responsible for the bank account officer

Project Modifications

- Any requests for Project modifications should be duly justified and addressed to the JS.
- The procedure for submission and approval of Project modifications is described in detail in the Programme and Project Implementation Manual as in force



**"STRENGTHENING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
CULTURE AND COLLABORATION IN THE
ELIGIBLE PROGRAMME AREA"**

Information & Publicity

Kick-off meeting - Series
11/10/2021

The project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and national funds of the countries participating in the Cooperation Programme INTERREG VA "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020"

Information & Publicity Objectives

The general objectives of any I&P actions concerning Interreg co-funded Projects should be the following:

- **Awareness:**

Highlighting of the role of the European Union and the Structural Funds of the European Union for the general public and the promotion of the added value of EU participation in the co-funded Projects;

- **Transparency:**

Ensuring transparency as far as access to the Funds is concerned.

- **Equal opportunities and non-discrimination:**

Ensure accessibility and as far as visibility implementation is concerned.

Information & Publicity Objectives

A specific Work Package (WP2) of the Application Form of the Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme requires that an I&P strategy shall be laid down.

- i. the basic structure of the Project's Communication Plan (timetable, milestones etc.),
- ii. the information and publicity measures to be carried out (website, events, publicity material etc.),
- iii. the means of communication to be used to disseminate the Project's outputs, results and achievements (social media, brochures, promotional material etc.) and
- iv. how the anticipated Project results are going to be promoted at a national and/or at a regional level shall be identified

Communication Plan

- The project communication plan should be developed in English as soon as the project starts.
- The project's communication plan should be submitted to the Joint Secretariat with the first Progress Report.
- Project beneficiaries shall use the template available

Communication & visibility plan template

ANNEX III: Communication & visibility plan template

- I. General communication strategy
- II. Objectives
- III. Communication activities
 - a. Main activities
 - b. Communication tools chosen
 - c. Indicators of achievements
- IV. Resources
 - a. Human Resources
 - b. Financial resources
- V. Timeline

Mandatory I&P outputs

There are four **mandatory I&P outputs**:

1. The creation of a visual identity;
2. The development of a website;
3. At least one leaflet/booklet, including the Project results;
4. At least one conference (if it is one then it must be the final conference)

Visual Identity

The correct use of the following elements is essential in all official documents, projects' outputs and advertising materials, as it enforces the Programme's brand identity:

- The **Programme's name**: Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme
- The **Interreg project logo**: 
- **Reference to EU and sources of financing**:

"The Project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and by national funds of the countries participating in the Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme"

Project website

- The name of the website shall be short and memorable run under its own **Project domain** e.g. www.strengthen.eu (if its available).
- The Project's website should be launched within the first six (6) months after the Project's start (contractual start date of a Project) and shall be kept online at least two years after Project closure.
- The website shall be launched at least in **English**, which is the official language of the Programme

Project website

The Project's webpage must:

- provide information about the Project, its nature, goals, procedures, benefits and the expected results;
- include a short description of the Programme (information on the content of the Project, the beginning and end date of the Project and the amount of the Programme funds to be received)
- include some basic information for the Beneficiaries and their contact details;
- have a category under which one can find the produced communication material and the project's main deliverables which should also be available for download. On-line applications, platforms, databases, networks etc., should be linked to the project website.
- be in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR);

Project website

- Refer to the Cooperation Programme and the EU co-funding
Includes the Programme logo along with the textual reference to the sources of financing:

"The Project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme".

Both must appear on the homepage (front page) of the Project's webpage.

The website has to be linked with the Programme's website (redirection via the Programme's logo that should be included in a prominent place).

- There must be a **disclaimer** on the bottom of the homepage including the following:

"This webpage has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of the webpage are sole responsibility of <Beneficiary's name> and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union, the participating countries the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat".

Project website

- The beneficiaries need to make available at least the links to the following websites:
 - the website dedicated to EU Regional Policy: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/
 - the Programme's website: <http://www.greece-bulgaria.eu>
 - the institutional websites of the Project Beneficiaries
- The link to the Project website must be made available also on the Project Beneficiaries' official websites.

Result leaflet

- At least one leaflet/booklet, including the Project results, must be published.
- This leaflet/ booklet must:
 - be available in **English, Greek and Bulgarian**.
 - be **uploaded** in the Project's webpage as well as the Programme's webpage
 - Include the following **disclaimer**: *"The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union, the participating countries and the Managing Authority".*
 - Include the textual **reference to the sources of financing**
- The cover page should contain the **Interreg project logo**.
- The **flags** of EU and the two participating countries must appear either on the cover page or the back page.

Public final event

- At least one **conference** (if it is one then it must be the final conference) must be organised.
- This activity must include **press release** available in **English, Greek and Bulgarian** and audiovisual material.
- The Project Beneficiaries must **inform in advance** (at least 10 days before the set date) both the Communication Officer and the Project Officer about the any event related to the Project's activities.
- The Interreg project logo, as well as the reference to the sources of financing (The project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Programme) should appear on all documents, publications, presentations, or other materials made available during the event.

Non-mandatory I&P outputs

- Social Media

The Project's background and co-funding sources shall be highlighted in the Project's social media web-pages, including:

- a reference to the Cooperation Programme and the EU co-funding: *"The project is implemented in the framework of the Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme and is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Programme"*
- a short description about the Project: its nature, goals, benefits; expected results.
- links to: the project's website; the Programme's website and the institutional websites of the Project Beneficiaries
- Media relations such as press releases, press conferences or press (field) trips, public relations campaigns, paid articles and ads, direct contacts and interviews etc.

Project's horizontal principles

- Ensure that people with disabilities can access the communication channels (website, promotional material, venues etc.) and that there are no barriers which prevent this.
 - Accessibility of venues: Make sure that any conference/seminar/meeting rooms or other venues are accessible and reachable.
 - Accessibility of information material: People with cognitive and developmental disabilities present a widely varied audience whose individual members may benefit from modified content, as well as alternate formats.
 - Accessibility of information on the Web: It is advised that the website is accessible according to Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).
- Integrate social and environmental concerns in the project implementation, I&P execution and in their interaction with their stakeholders and target groups.

Marking objects and events

- In order to mark objects and to indicate the European Union's contribution, all Projects or activities financed from the Programme's funds have to be marked with the logo. These objects include:
 - Buildings; Events; Machinery; Equipment;
 - Publications; Information and advertising material;
 - Digital information carriers and material;
 - Television shows, articles and other texts in a technically possible and suitable manner;
 - Advertisements in print or digital media; Souvenirs.

Visual Identity Elements in Projects

	Interreg project logo	Technical reference to the sources of financing	Standard	Link to the project website	Remarks
Leaflets, Brochures, Flyers	✓	✓	✓	✓	Project ID No., within 20/80 or 30/70 (20/80: the maximum of the number of English characters)
Stationery, letterheads, envelopes, business cards, folders etc.)	✓	✓			where it is not possible to include the logo, it must be placed above
Event material (Posters, Banners, Notice boards etc.)	✓	✓		✓	For the promotion of projects the Programme's logo and Project Beneficiary (as well as co-financing Partner Development Tool) is optional
Web content: Websites, Publications, Documents	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Project press video	✓	✓			In English, if not English subtitles are added
Photographs/Items	✓				where it is not possible to include the information, it must be placed above
Project deliverable	✓	✓	✓	✓	In English, if not the inclusion of an English version is mandatory

The project logo should be bigger in size than any other logo (i.e. Project Beneficiaries' logos) that appears in the same page with it. In general, the EU flag, which is part of the Interreg project logo, should be bigger in size than any other emblem used in the same page with it.

Marking objects and events

- The logo shall be used in ALL I&P material. This includes .doc, .pdf, .ppt or similar documents, as well as information made available by electronic means and audio-visual material.
- The logo must always be visible.
- In case it is not possible to mark the produced material with the logo due to distinctive features of this material, at least emblems of and reference to the European Union must be provided.
- Project Beneficiaries must place the logo on documents and certificates that will be distributed during implementation or as a result of any Project, to participants or to the public.
- Information and communication material such as publications, newsletters, brochures, pamphlets etc must contain a clear indication of the EU's participation on the title page. Publications should include references to the body responsible for the information.
- **Project Beneficiaries are obliged to send any I&P material to the Communication Officer of the Joint Secretariat.**

Further support

- The Lead Beneficiaries are asked to inform the Communication Officer of the Joint Secretariat and the Managing Authority on public Project events.
- If possible, staff members of the Joint Secretariat and/or the Managing Authority will participate to these events and offer promotion material (e.g. Programme banners or posters).
- Before taking any decision on the production of I&P items project beneficiaries are requested to consult the JS Communication Officer.
- For any clarifications at all stages, please consult the Communication Officer of the Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme.



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Responsibilities of the Lead Beneficiary

- The Project partnership is governed by the Lead Beneficiary principle. The Lead Beneficiary legally represents the Beneficiaries participating in the project vis-à-vis the MA, the CA, the Member States, the Audit Authority and the European Commission. The Lead beneficiary:
 - will be assisted in its role by a Project Management Team comprising representatives of all Beneficiaries, taking decisions unanimously and governed by internal rules of procedures.
 - vis-à-vis the MA/JS, accepts total responsibility for the implementation and management of the Project as described in the approved Application Form and undertakes the responsibility to coordinate the rest of the Beneficiaries participating in the Project and ensures that all undertake the obligation to participate in the implementation of the Project.
 - shall be responsible for transferring the ERDF contribution to the Beneficiaries participating in the operation who are not located in Greece within one month of its receipt and in full without withholding any amounts
- The Lead Beneficiary must ensure compliance of the project with Articles 115 and Annex XII of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 on information and publicity measures concerning co-financing from Structural Funds

PBs commitments

- All PBs must have a dedicated interest-free bank account for the purpose of their project implementation
- The expenditure shall be registered in a separate, for the project, accounting unit.
- Expenditure that is not registered in the accounting unit of the project is not verified, except if the recording is not possible, e.g. general costs, personnel cost etc.
- The lead beneficiary keeps a full file of the project (Subsidy Contract, Partnership Agreement, relevant documents of the verified expenditure of the beneficiaries, copies of the receipts of each beneficiary) as well as the documents proving the transfer of the payment to the beneficiaries

PPs commitments

- To comply with all the rules and obligations set out in the Subsidy Contract and in the Partnership Agreement
- Compliance with European and national policies and legislation (public procurement)
- Make every effort to ensure compliance with financial commitments in order to avoid risk of de-commitment

PPs commitments

- The original documents issued shall bear a stamp:
 - Project Partner:.....
 - Project: Strengthening the entrepreneurship culture and collaboration in the eligible programme area / STRENGTHEN
 - Contract no: B6.3a.25
 - Programme: Cooperation Programme "Interreg V-A Greece-Bulgaria" 2014-2020
 - Period: from to
 - Payment claim number:

Start – up actions

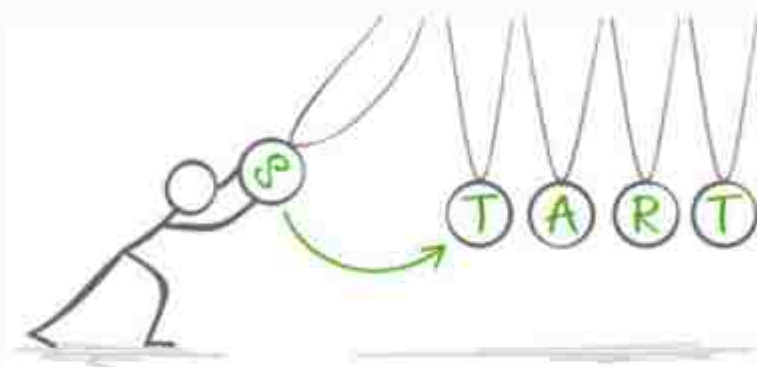
- Preparation of tender procedures:
 - Assignment of external experts
 - Procurement of equipment
- Specify and allocate the necessary resources (partner's staff) to be involved in the implementation of project deliverables.
- Prepare and send to MA and JS the tender documents for D3.1.2 (Participation in business fairs in GR and BG), BL Equipment for a pre-tender check. After the pre-tender check, a pre-contract check is going to follow.
- Agree upon a realistic workplan regarding the conclusion of the tender procedure and the actual implementation of core project activities

Next steps

- Finalise public procurement documents
- Open (if not already) a bank account specifically dedicated to the project
- a decision by the beneficiary's administration specifying the working team, the allocation of work, the working hours, the project manager and the person in charge for deliverables
- Issue a decision of the governing/designated body of each project partner for the project team (which specifies the working team, including specific reference to the staff who will work for the project, the division of work, the allocation of working hours, the project manager and the person in charge for accepting the activities/deliverables
- Prepare the tender documents for D3.1.2 (Participation in business fairs in GR and BG), BL Equipment and send them to MA, JS for a pre-tender check
- Circulate a suggested workplan regarding the conclusion of the tender procedure and the actual implementation of core project activities
- Decide on 2nd project's meeting dates.

Thank you
for your attention

Let's



**"STRENGTHENING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
CULTURE AND COLLABORATION IN THE
ELIGIBLE PROGRAMME AREA"**

**LEAD BENEFICIARY
SERRES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY**

Thomai Boziou, Project Manager

Kick-off meeting – Serres
11/10/2021

BRIEF PRESENTATION OF SERRES CHAMBER

- ☐ Founded in 1947
- ☐ Approximately 10.000 members
- ☐ It consists of three sectors:
Trade (3.600), Manufacturing
(1.400) & Services (5.000)
- ☐ Official & Institutionalized State
Consultant for the promotion of
local development issues
- ☐ www.serreschamber.gr



SERRES CHAMBER'S MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

- ☐ Recording, Study & Service in decision-making Centers (Government, Region, Institution, etc.) of the current socio-economic status of Serres
- ☐ Submission of Proposals for the county development as part of the overall development of the national economy, by demonstrating the comparative advantages of Serres
- ☐ Interventions & Memoranda for solving local entrepreneurship problems (eg: descending progress of the secondary sector, low investment incentives etc.).

SERRES CHAMBER'S MAIN SERVICES

A. Services to its members, such as:

- ☐ Compliance of the General Commercial Registry (GEMI)
- ☐ One Stop Shop, Specific Registers (Export, Licenses Insurance Intermediaries, etc.)
- ☐ Statements & Business / Sector Statistics
- ☐ Organization of Technical Security Seminars / EFET / Exports etc.



SERRES CHAMBER'S MAIN SERVICES

B. Consult & Entrepreneurship Support Services, including:

- ☐ Consulting in co-financed programs issues
- ☐ Information on tax, social security and labor issues
- ☐ Organizing Exhibitions / Business Missions / B2B Meetings
- ☐ Organizing Information Days
- ☐ Training and Development Conferences
- ☐ Studies



SERRES CHAMBER'S MAIN SERVICES

C. Employment and Entrepreneurship Support Structures, operating in Chambers Mansion as:

- ☐ Investor Information Office
- ☐ Employment & Entrepreneurship Development Office
- ☐ Representative of the Entrepreneur
- ☐ Labour Affairs Office
- ☐ First Business Aid Office
- ☐ Tax and Insurance Support Office



SERRES CHAMBER'S MAIN DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

- ✓ International Business Exhibition of Serres (SER-EXPO)
- ✓ Greek-Russian Conference - Business Forum in Thessaloniki
- ✓ Local products and businesses exhibition in Athens
- ✓ Serres Gastronomy Festival
- ✓ Organization of Information Days / Development Conferences
- ✓ Lifelong Education & Training
- ✓ Seminars Hellenic Food Authority (EFET)



SERRES CHAMBER'S EXPERIENCE IN PROJECTS

- ☐ INTERREG I, INTERREG II AND INTERREG III GREECE – BULGARIA
- ☐ INTERREG III B CADSES (PARTICIPATION IN 2 PROJECTS, "EMBRACE" AND "HERITOUR")
- ☐ MEMBER OF THE EUROREGION STRYMON – STROUMA
- ☐ INTERREG 2007-2013 ("Learning Community", "EMPLOCOMP", "ENACT", "ENTRE+GB" "SKILLS BALANCING")
- ☐ RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 2014-2020 – LOCAL PROGRAM "LEADER" 2014 ("TOURISM INFORMATION OF SERRES")
- ☐ INTERREG 2014-2020 – „EMPLOYOUTH“
- ☐ INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EXHIBITION OF SERRES "SER-EXPO"



EXPECTATIONS

- ✓ Highlight, promote and enhance the business extroversion of quality products and services in the cross-border area by stimulating their export activities
- ✓ Promote business networking and partnership among entrepreneurs
- ✓ Exploit opportunities for cross border cooperation by developing common mechanisms and actions on strategic issues, such as the creation of conditions for the future development of competitive cross-border clusters



BENEFITS

- ✓ Contribution to the enhancement of competitiveness in the cross border area
- ✓ Promotion of local products
- ✓ Cross border cooperation and synergies
- ✓ Promotion of business extroversion



Thank you
for your attention!



"STRENGTHENING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CULTURE AND COLLABORATION IN THE ELIGIBLE PROGRAMME AREA"

LIFELONG LEARNING CENTER OF REGION OF
CENTRAL MACEDONIA SA

Presentation of PB2

Presenter: **Kalathas Athanasios - Director**

Kick-off meeting – Serres
11/10/2021

- Shareholders:
 - Region of Central Macedonia
 - Union of Municipalities and Communities of Central Macedonia
- Located in Greece, in the Regional Unit of Serres & Regional Unit Veroia, the Center acts in the wider area of Central Macedonia Region.
- It is certified from the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP registration number 192202633-191202632).
- Certification
 - ISO 9001:2015
 - ISO 27001:2013
 - ISO 27701:2019

Facilities

- Headquarters Building at Terma Omonoias str., Serres, Greece
- Info Point Offices at Ypsilantou 4 str., Serres, Greece
- Training Branch at Melenikitsi, Serres, Greece
- Training Branch at Alistrati, Serres, Greece
- Training Branch at Imathia,Veroia, Greece

<https://www.kelipkm.gr/>

Facilities



<https://www.kelipkm.gr/>

Activities

- Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning (LLL)
- Consultative & Supportive Services
- Wide network of associates including quality consultants, adults' trainers, psychologists, sociologists, economists, ICT experts, etc.
- Training programs for unemployed people, employees, entrepreneurs and unemployed potential entrepreneurs
 - finance and administration,
 - tourism,
 - agriculture,
 - ICT, etc.
- "On the Job" training in cooperation with our wide local businesses network. Also, provides counselling services at the aforementioned groups with the collaboration of qualified external.
- Link of our organization: <https://www.fekplm.gr/>

Experience



Greece-Republic of North Macedonia



BORDERLESS CULTURE



In the framework of project Fashion Employment Hub as a Lead partner under the INTERREG IPA CBC the LLC RCM is responsible for the organization and implementation of 3 training programs with the titles "Certified Export Trade Executive", "Digital image processing" and "Certified Special Fashion Designer - Costume Designer - Stylist" and the Development of a e-learning platform and a Sewing laboratory

In the framework of project ToCulter under the INTERREG IPA CBC, the LLC RCM was responsible for the organization and implementation of 5 training programs with the titles "Business and tourism management", "Restaurant and service techniques", "Spa management" and "Health Protocols and Safety for covid 19 for tourism businesses" and prepare a Local Quality Agreement of tourism enterprises.

In the framework of project BORDERLESS CULTURE under the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020, the LLC RCM is responsible for the organization and implementation of 2 training programs with the titles "Hospitality and Catering", "Organization and management of special and alternative forms of tourism".

In the project "PARK" as Lead Partner under the Greece-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Cross Border Programme 2007-2013 established a Business Incubator Department and implemented business plans, a joint web-based business promotional platform, an e-learning program and training programs in "Management of SMEs" targeted at entrepreneurs, potential entrepreneurs and unemployed, study visits etc.

As Lead Partner implemented the projects "Social Struma" and "Serraiqi G" under the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development 2007-2013" co-funded by the European Social Fund, which both focused on the training and promotion of 200 unemployed (such as farmers, people from rural areas and socially vulnerable groups) into set up their own personal business and also their support during the first 3 months of their work through counselling and training programs.

<https://www.fekplm.gr/>

Expectations/Benefits

- the widening of our expertise
- effective implementation of the actions
- establishment of networks and partnerships

Deliverables and milestones during the whole project

Work Package	Deliverable No	Deliverable Description
WP3	3.2.1	Business missions and B2B meetings
	3.2.2	Participation in business fairs
WP4	4.2.1	Training seminars "Certified Executive of Food Safety & Quality Management"
	4.2.2	"Certified Export/Trade Executive" Informative workshops on the institution of cluster and dissemination of best practices
WP5	5.2.1	Meetings / focus groups to investigate the creation of competitive clusters
	5.2.2	Common strategy and future action plan
	5.2.3	Future collaboration agreement

**Thank you
for your attention!**

Благодаря ви!

Σας ευχαριστώ!

<https://www.leckpkin.gr/>

6. Press releases

<https://strengthen-project.eu/kick-off-meeting/>

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news

Kick off Meeting





The kick-off meeting of STRENGTHEN project took place on Monday 11/10/2021. The meeting was hosted by the Chamber of Serres and all Project Beneficiaries participated with representatives.

During the meeting, Project Beneficiaries set the grounds for the smooth implementation of the project and discussed the project overview, the project implementation principles, short term actions and next steps.

[2nd Meeting in Blagoevgrad >](#)

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