<u>SURVEY – STUDY</u>
BACKGROUND AND PROSPECTS OF THE HANDCRAFTING INDUSTRY IN THE CROSS-BORDER AREA OF GREECE – BULGARIA

The project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and by national resources of the countries participating in the Interreg V–A Cooperation Program "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020".

DELIVERABLE 6.2.1 – STUDY OF THE CROSS-BORDER AREA'S BACKGROUND & PERSPECTIVES FOR IN-HOUSE FARM PRODUCTS' PROCESSING

APRIL, 2023

www.qualfarm.eu

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INTRODUCTION

For the implementation of the Project[1] « **Support of Entrepreneurship in the Field of In - House Processing of Quality Farm Products in the Districts of Evros, Haskovo, Smolyan and Kardzhali "** with the acronym **"QUALFARM"** financed by the Cooperation Program "INTERREG V–A Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020", the Research, Polling, Consulting and Communication Company **"PALMOS ANALYSIS P.C."** has been appointed as the Contractor».

The Project concept and the partnership were developed based on the experience of **"QUALFARM"** Local Action Group (LAG) participants[2], which showed that entrepreneurship in rural areas is hampered by some common challenges, namely:

- Difficulties in obtaining financing.
- Entrepreneurs' limited access to business know-how.
- Limited access to information and contacts.
- Lack of support services.
- Lack of access/expertise on cost saving technologies and
- Inadequate skills.

For this purpose, "QUALFARM" will establish four (4) Business Support Offices at the facilities of the respective partners of the program which are:

1. The Northern Evros Research and Development Company (from the Greek side)
2. Evros Dimosineteristiki (from the Greek side)
3. Haskovo (carrier from the Bulgarian side)
4. Kharkov (carrier from the Bulgarian side)

These support structures will be responsible for providing guidance, training and ongoing support to enable innovative entrepreneurship and support existing in the agricultural and livestock processing sector, with particular emphasis on small-scale 'in-house' processing of local quality products that they are produced, both by active enterprises (small farms and small workshops), and by those who are interested in developing this type of business activity and come from the most dynamic segments of the agricultural population (women, young graduates, etc.).

The objective of the project is to trigger innovative entrepreneurship in the field of quality processing of agricultural products, with a particular emphasis on "in-house" processing (handcrafting industry), i.e. on farms or small workshops, through training and guidance on

[1] Public cooperative Evros S.A./ No. First _ 1404/16.12.2022
[2] http://www.greece-bulgaria.eu/approved-project/104/

issues innovation, marketing, food safety and traceability by specialized business support structures that will be created with the development of the "QUALFARM" project so that existing and new businesses improve the readability of their products and consequently, their commercial value. The end users of the activities are considered to be farmers and members of agricultural households active in the agri-food sector.

In the framework of the Project, the preparation of a study-research about the background - and prospects of the handcrafting industry in the cross-border area is planned. More specifically, the study will, among other things, include a bibliographic survey, a "Field" sample survey with a structured questionnaire that will be designed, an analysis–mapping of the existing situation , relevant **SWOT** and **PEST analyses**, as well as a series of proposed actions for the development of the handcrafting industry.

It is pointed out that PALMOS ANALYSIS will receive the assistance of the opinion of all involved partners during the preparation of the issue.

I. CHAPTER – ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

1. General reference

Handcrafting is the processing, on a small scale, of agricultural products exclusively produced by the producer and his family, in the area of the rural residence or farming. According to the No. 4912/120862 /17-11-2015 (Government Gazette Β΄/ 24 68/ 2015) Decision of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food establishing the conditions and requirements for the production and distribution of home-made food, as well as the registration procedures of the units preparation of these in the **"Central Electronic Register of HandCraft Businesses (CERHB)".**

To register at CERHB, you need:

1. Submission of an Electronic Application for Registration in the **CERHB** Electronic Application on the website of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food (www.minagric.gr).
2. Submission of the required supporting documents to the competent **DAEVM** (Directorate of Agricultural Economy and Veterinary Medicine) within 10 days from the date of submission of the electronic Registration Application.

The supporting documents submitted to **DAEVM** are:

1. Confirmation of the interested party that his main occupation is a farmer from the competent Department of Rural Development for the year of submission of the Application for Registration.

2. Copy of **IMCS** (Integrated Management and Control System) Crop Declaration for the year of submission of the Registration Application.
3. Fee payment for registration at CERHB (10 Euros)
4. Declaration of compliance with the general hygiene requirements of European and National legislation (it is in the form R/S and the document is provided by DAEVM).

The types of handcrafted food products are:

1. Cereal products e.g. oatmeal, bobota.
2. Baked goods (e.g. nuts, toasts, breads, raisin bread , breadsticks, dipping , honey doughnuts, pretzels, lagans, bipyrite bread - galette, puff pastry, puff pastry, pies, savory and sweet) .
3. Pasta with cereal flour as the main ingredient (e.g. trachanas, noodles, lasagne, xynochon-dros etc.).
4. Sweets e.g. halva with semolina, samali, ravani.
5. Products of vegetable origin with sweeteners, in particular spoon sweets, jams, compotes, fruit jellies, sweet fruit and vegetable spreads and sweet pastes, fruit Glaze, petimezi, mu-stalewria, almonds, contractors, carob honey and sesame products.
6. Products with extra virgin and virgin olive oils that have been added various aromas and - plants, spices, essential oils, fruit juices etc., food in packaging up to two (2) liters.
7. Products preserved in salt, vinegar and oil foods of vegetable origin, especially table - olives and olive products spreads, pickles, sauces .
8. Products preserved by drying food of plant origin, especially fruits and vegetables , nuts, legumes, aromatic plants.
9. Products with honey and nuts, dried fruits, mastic, yolk, etc. foods.
10. Other foods e.g. vinegar, fruit and vegetable juices in up to 1 liter packaging.
11. Dairy products if the conditions set out in No. 3724/162303/22.12.14 Official Gazette (Government Gazette 3438/B/2014).

**It should be noted that, in the context of handcrafting, the production of drinks that contain alcohol is not permitted.*

The above products can be available in prepackaged or unpackaged form.

The quantities of the final products are calculated based on the production of the primary pro-duct, which is the main primary component of the product, from the producer's crops in accor-dance with the second paragraph of paragraph b of paragraph 2 of article 56 of Law No. 4235 /2014. In particular, only persons who are professional farmers, as defined and registered in the Register of Farmers and Agricultural Holdings, in accordance with Law No. 3874/2010 , as well as family members, have the right to domestically manufacture processed agricultural products. In their handcrafting activity, professional farmers can use as raw material agricultural products with a maximum limit of their entire production or, exceptionally and in small quantities, products produced within the boundaries of their agricultural holding or agricultural property residential, but are not declared in the IMCS. Those who participate in agricultural cooperatives have the right to use in their handcrafting activity the part of their production that they do not have in the cooperative. In the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food, a **"Central Electronic Register of HandCraft Businesses"** is recommended, in which the producers and also the types of products produced in the context of handcrafts are recorded. The processed products produced are intended for immediate - disposal, by the home builder, on his premises or at periodic local events (such as trade fairs and municipal events) or at local street markets or farmers ' markets or at retail and mass - catering businesses of the local market.

The Ministry of Agricaltural Development has announced that according to the Independent Public Revenue Authority (IPRA) from 01.01.2017 the incomes arising from the activities of the handcrafting industry will be counted and included in the agricultural incomes. This inclusion was a constant request of professional farmers, as they are defined and registered in the Register of Farmers and Agricultural Holdings (RFAH) [3].

In addition, the Unified Food Control Agency **(UFCA)** has issued **a "Good Practice Guide - for Home-prepared Food Units"**[4] with the aim of contributing to compliance with general hygiene requirements and raising awareness among producers who wish to operate Home-prepared Food Units, regarding with their food law obligations.

The responsibility borne by the producer is much more than his agricultural status, that is, he is the manager of a food business. He must comply with the requirements of food legislation and above all has primary responsibility for the hygiene and safety of the food he produces and places on the market. The production of safe food and the protection of the consumers' health is the responsibility of all employees in a food business. Everyone involved in food handling (from preparation to distribution) contributes to food safety so that no adverse effects are caused to consumers.

[3] https://neaait.gr/os-agrotika-eisodimata-tha-logizontai-ta-esoda-apo-tin-oikotechnia/
[4] EFET_ Athens 2017

2. Evros Regional Unit

It has a total area of 4,246 sq km and the permanent population amounts to 133,842 inhabitants (ELSTAT 2021 data), showing a decrease of 9.5% compared to the ELSTAT 2011 census (147,947 inhabitants).

TABLE 1_ POPULATION DATA OF R.U.. EVROS

N/A	MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION			MEN			WOMEN		
		2011	2021	DIFFERENCE	2011	2021	DIFFERENCE	2011	2021	DIFFERENCE
1	ALEXANDROUPOLIS	72,959	71,601	**1.9%**	35,755	34,882	**2.4%**	37,184	36,719	**1.3%**
2	DIDIMOTICHO	19,493	16.161	**17.1%**	10,140	8,464	**16.5%**	9,353	7,697	**17.7%**
3	ORESTIADA	37,695	31,694	**15.9%**	19,554	16,199	**17.2%**	18.141	15,495	**14.6%**
4	SAMOTHRAKI	2,859	2,622	**8.3%**	1,616	1,408	**12.9%**	1,213	1,214	**-0.1%**
5	SOUFLI	14,941	11,784	**21.1%**	7,620	6,083	**20.2%**	7,321	5,701	**22.1%**
	TOTAL	147,947	**133,862**	**9.5%**	74,685	**67,036**	**10.2%**	73,212	**66,826**	**8.7%**

Source: ELSTAT

Soufli shows the biggest population decrease (-21.1%) followed by Didimoticho (-17.1%), Orestiada (-15.9%), Samothraki (-8.3%), with Alexandroupolis (capital of the Prefecture) to show the smallest change (-1.9%) which indicates the trend of internal migration to areas surrounding the capital of the Prefecture. R.U. of Evros is located in a position of particular geostrategic importance (between Europe and Asia)[5], at the point that connects the Black Sea with the Eastern Mediterranean basin. Undoubtedly, the geographical position of Evros gives it a comparative advantage in terms of stimulating the economy, trade, services and tourism. The economy is mainly based on the tertiary service sector and secondarily on the primary and secondary (see tables below)

TABLE 2 _Gross Value Added (GVA) Primary Sector R.U. Evros (million €)

AREA	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011*	2012*	2013*	2014*	2015*	2016*
HELLAS	6,974	7,068	6,793	6,663	6,519	6.109	6.191	5,794	6,070	6,730	6,313
EVROS	113	129	121	112	117	113	106	112	110	104	114
%	**6.61%**	**6.76%**	**6.03%**	**5.44%**	**5.51%**	**5.95%**	**6.09%**	**6.98%**	**6.96%**	**6.55%**	**7.13%**

Source: ELSTAT

[5] Formulation of Strategic and Development Plan of Evros Province (Diplomatic Thesis D.P.Th. 2019)

Based on the available data, the primary sector of R.U. Evros, like Greece, shows low growth rates in the period 2006-2016. Estimates that the crisis and unemployment would lead more people to the primary sector, do not seem to be confirmed.

TABLE 3 _Gross Added Value (GVA) of the Secondary Sector R.U. Evros (million €)

AREA	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011*	2012*	2013*	2014*	2015*	2016*
HELLAS	45,345	41,881	37,895	36,375	31,255	28,326	27,932	26,491	25,276	25,149	26.221
EVROS	306	332	271	257	231	193	181	163	170	190	200
%	17.91	17.35	13.45	12.45	10.89	10,18	10.37	10,17	10.70	11.97	12.50

Source: (HSA) Hellenic Statistical Authority

The secondary sector of R.U. Evros has shrunk considerably in recent years. Since 2008, the GVA started a downward course, showing a small increase from the years 2015 & 2016. The favorable incentives of the investment Law and the support of the co-financing of the actions of the community support frameworks, drastically developed the processing sector in the previous 10 years and industry in the industrial zone of the R.U. Evros. However, growth was followed by crisis, recession and deindustrialization, with consequences for employment and the general economy of the region. In recent years, production units and investment funds have relocated to neighboring countries, making use of the favorable conditions in taxation and entrepreneurship, skyrocketing the unemployment rate and shrinking the incomes of the -inhabitants.

TABLE 4 _Gross Added Value (GVA) of the Tertiary Sector R.U. Evros (million €)

AREA	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011*	2012*	2013*	2014*	2015*	2016*
HELLAS	145.5	156.3	169.1	169.,4	161.9	147.5	135.4	127.9	126.6	124.7	121.5
EVROS	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.3	1,285
%	75.5	75.9	80.5	82.1	83.6	83.9	83.5	82.8	82.3	81.5	80.4

Source: (HSA) Hellenic Statistical Authority

In contrast to the primary and secondary sectors, the tertiary sector shows a high rate of growth in the services sector and tourism in particular, with a rate of 80.4%. Based on the regional distribution of GDP and population statistics data (estimated population in the middle of the year) the per capita regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is calculated.
According to the available ELSTAT data, the GDP of R.U. Evros for 2016 was €12,403 million, marking an increase of €232 million compared to 2015 (€12,171 million), a price higher than the M.O. of the GDP of Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (€11,432 million).

AREA	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011*	2012*	2013*	2014*	2015*	2016*
HELLAS	19,769	21,061	21,845	21,386	20,324	18,643	17,311	16,475	16,402	16,381	16,378
REM-THR	13,535	14,741	15,568	15,272	15,057	13,320	12.403	11,498	11,324	11,281	11,432
EVROS	13.187	14,760	15,438	15,665	16,331	14,611	13,323	12.203	12.132	12.171	12.403

TABLE 5_ Per Capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) R.U. Evros (million €)

Source: (HSA) Hellenic Statistical Authority

TABLE 6_ Unemployment status by gender, age, municipality and level of education in R.U. Evros (million €) (8/2019)

		Total	Alex /polis	Didymoticho	Orestiada	Samothra Ki	Souffli
SEX	**Men**	**3,516**	1,907	457	815	42	295
	Women	**7,260**	4,140	848	1,656	88	528
AGE	**15-19**	**135**	67	32	23	2	11
	20-24	**733**	392	104	156	6	75
	25-29	**1,330**	728	186	288	22	106
	30-44	**4,418**	2,498	517	1,048	57	298
	45-54	**2,071**	1,233	210	450	29	149
	55-64	**1,749**	939	211	432	13	154
	65+	**340**	190	45	74	1	30
LEVEL	**A few elementary school classes**	**1,536**	937	322	226	14	37
EDUCATION	**First grade _**	**2,815**	1,301	374	753	34	353
	Second grade _	**4.178**	2,368	432	1,015	58	305
	Third grade _	**2,247**	1,441	177	477	24	128
TOTAL		**10,776**	**6,047**	**1,305**	**2,471**	**130**	**823**

Source: PES (Public Employment Service)

The lag of the labor force in specialization and skills reduces the competitiveness of the R.U. Evros which is already heavily affected by the recession prevailing in the primary and secondary sectors. Out of the total of 10,776 residents looking for work in August 2019, the highest number of unemployed is observed in Alexandroupolis (56%) and among women (67.37%) among people aged 30-44 and among people who have completed the secondary education.

2.1. Production structure[6]

Although the cross-border region is gradually transforming from an agricultural/industrial - economy to an industrial/service economy, this transformation has been rather slow. Compared to the Europe of 28 (EU28), the economy remains significantly more agricultural, less industrial and more dependent on services. However, this is by no means homogeneous.

[6] Formulation of Strategic and Development Plan of Evros Province (Diplomatic Thesis D.P.Th. 2019)

The Greek cross-border area is significantly less agricultural and industrial than the corresponding part of Bulgaria, and more service-oriented. This heterogeneity is even more pronounced at the level of companies, namely:

R.U. of Evros includes the municipalities of Alexandroupolis, Orestiada, Didymoticho, Soufli and Samothraki which have a high percentage of employment in the primary and tertiary sector and Alexandroupolis (capital) which is primarily an urban area and shows a high percentage of employment in the tertiary sector (see Table 7), while in the areas of the Bulgarian part and especially in Haskovo, industry and commerce dominate, while in Smolyan and Kardzali , industry and agriculture.

TABLE 7 _Employment rate of population R.U.. Evros by Production Sector (2011 data)

MUNICIPALITY	Primary Sector (%)	SECONDARY SECTOR (%)	TROTOGENIS AREA (%)
Alexandroupolis	7.57	12.77	79.66
Didymoticho	23.72	9.64	66.65
Orestiada	26.45	9.88	63,66
Samothraki	21.77	12.06	66.17
Souffli	35.74	11.23	53.03
TOTAL	**17,16**	**11.51**	**71.33**

Source: (HSA) Hellenic Statistical Authority

As can be seen from the table above, 71.33% of employees are employed in the tertiary - sector, followed by primary (17.16%) and secondary (11.51%).

2.2. Presence of homecrafting industry units and types of activity in R.U. of Evros

In recent years, the productive restructuring of the country has been presented as a necessary - condition for exiting the recession and restarting the development process on new bases. In the context of the requested shift towards an endogenous development model, the role of the primary sector appears to be pivotal. Especially in R.U. Evros, the primary sector is, over time, an important pillar of growth , given its significant participation in employment, its share in exports and the strong interconnection it presents with the secondary sector. The - primary sector is dominated by wheat crops, viticulture, maize, cotton, beets, asparagus, garlic and melons. Animal husbandry is stable and based on lambs. In the secondary sector, agricultural and livestock processing plants, asphalt mixture plants, paint industries and carpentry dominate. The tertiary sector relies heavily on tourism, commercial establishments - and the provision of services .

The significant interest that exists in homecrafting industry in R.U. Evros, which is shown by the already approved 41 homecraft businesses, shows an important and optimistic prospect for the development of the region[7]. The Director of DAEVM, Mr. Apostolos Xanthopoulos, estimates that there will be more applications, because farmers who produce products suitable for processing can take advantage of the economy, gaining their added value, without the existence of intermediaries. Among the processed products are: aromatic plants, Turkish delight with pomegranate and mastic, pastries with nuts, honey, cheese, mizithra, soap, - tomato sauce, candles, propolis tincture, beeswax and beeswax cosmetics and creams, combined with aromatic plants. The profile of the handcrafter is formed by farmers who until recently practiced another profession, but chose to turn to the family estates, aiming at handcrafting preparation. Usually producers start with small-scale home crafts in existing - privately owned buildings, which they shape accordingly, spending little money, so the residual cost is not high, so that they can join improvement projects or other programs that - require the same contribution time and study. Once they get a 'name', they may need to leverage funding tools through programs .The majority of products are promoted and marketed through social media. Some go to street markets, while some have agreements with stores, which means they have enough product to supply them. Also, DAEVM tries to - encourage their participation in exhibitions, so that they can discuss with traders and close agreements, even with department stores.

7 "Central Electronic Register of Home Craft Businesses (CERHB)" (Data from Mr. A. Tzimotoudis - Deputy Director of Directorate of Agricultural Economy & Veterinary Medicine of Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace) & https://www.evros-news.gr/2018/01/28/%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%BF-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CF%80%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%83%CF%8C%CF%84%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%BF-%CE%BD%CE%BF%CE%BC%CF%8C-%CE%AD%CE%B2%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%85-%CF%83%CF%84/

TABLE 8 _List of building trades R.U. of Evros

HANDCRAFTING UNITS IN R.U. EVROS					
N/A	**NAME**	**AREA**	**PHONE**	**E-MAIL**	**ACTIVITY**
1	AROMA EVROU CoinSep (a)	BALTOS D. ORESTIADAS	2552025022	aromaebrou@gmail.com	ORGANIC CULTIVATION - PROCESSING OF LAVENDER
2	GARDEN OF HEALTH	PALAGIA, ALEX/POLI	2551097389, 6945779762	info@kiposygeias.gr	HOUSEHOLD ORGANIC AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS
3	HOME THERAPY DIMITRIOS MATZIOURA	ORESTIADS THERAPY	6937069971 6972532909 2552113001	oikotexneiontherapeion@gmail.com Matzioura . dim @ gmail . com	TRADITIONAL HEBREW RED TRAHANAS, PASTA, COUS COUS , SPOON SWEETS, JAMS,, TOMATO SAUCES
4	EVROS NUTS	FERES EVROS	6977484071	evrosnuts@gmail.com	PRODUCTION-TRADE OF DRIED FRUITS
5	HOUSING GIANNAKIDI	PAPAFLESSA 3 TIMES EVRO	6948370714	loukoudreams@gmail.com	DELICIOUS TREATMENTS
6	BUROULITE SILK	EBRO SOUFLI	2554024168	bourouliti.silk@gmail.com	SILK GOODS
7	MELI VASILIADI	SUNDAY SOUFLI	2554081039	vasiliadis76@hotmail.gr	HONEY PRODUCTS
8	THEOGENES CounSep	JEW'S LUCK	2554111433	info@theogenis.gr	HEMP PRODUCTS
9	MYRSINE SILK	ALEX/DROUPOLI	2551031205	info@silkyhouse.gr	SILK GOODS
10	TAHINI ZEVELEKI	MAVROKKLISI OF EVROS		info@tzavelekis.gr	TAHINIO PRODUCTION
11	POLYZOID TAHINI	EMBROIDERED CHESTS	2551080487	info@samythos.gr	TAHINIO PRODUCTION
12	LAKORIF LIFE BRIDGE	FERES EVROS	6976105690	nikos.feres@gmail.com	TAHINE PRODUCTION
13	ORANGE HOUSING	FERES EVROS	6948946228	info@oikoportokalidis.gr	PARADISE SAUCE
14	GREEK TAHINI KONSTANTIMNOS CIRNAS	ELLINOHORI	6932310338 2553113127	tsirnaskostas@gmail.com kostastsirnas @ hotmail . com	PRODUCTION OF TAHINI, TRACHANS, PASTA, COUS-COUS, LENTILS, CHEESE, BEANS
15	CARNATION HONEY	ALEXANDROUPOLI	6974054619	karafillidis@gmail.com	HONEY PRODUCTS
16	LAMB TAHINI	KRIOS ORESTIADAS			TAHINIO PRODUCTION
17	LOVELY PEACE	FERES EVROS			PRODUCTION OF TAHINI - LEGUMES
18	LAMBRIDOU DAFNI	EMBROUS CLOVER			HONEY PRODUCTS
19	DIMITRIOS GOUTELIDIS	BAG OF JEWS	2552024789 6947277243	Dimigou69@gmail.com	HONEY PRODUCTS

Source: Secondary data (online research)

(a) Social Cooperative Enterprise: These are the new models of cooperatives that have now come to our country as part of the upgrading of the organization sector in the primary sector. A partnership that leads to collaborative schemes with other industries to better utilize know-how.

TABLE 9 _ Supplementary list of R.U. of Evros

	FULL NAME	LOCUS	PHONE
1	DAVOUDANIS NIKOS	BRING	6946284210
2	KAPOUTSIS CHRISTOS	BRING	6944538818
3	YIANNIS KALOGIANTSIDIS	ALEX/CITY	6945480977
4	PAPATHASIOU KIRANA	BRING	6936847933
5	GAIDATZI CHRYSOULA	ALEX/CITY	6988630831
6	SOKOLOVA VASILIOU BISTRA	LONG	6944236871
7	BOUROUZIDOU THEODORA	SOUFLI	6944612241
8	PAPAZOGLOU STEPHANOULAS	BRING	6974517618
9	MARMARA MARINA	LONG	6979099693
10	TSOUSIDOU SEVASTI	DAUGHTER-IN-LAW	6974964934
11	SANTA ORANGE	BRING	6948946228
12	KAZANTZIDIS IRACLES	ALEX/CITY	6936572390
13	ALEXIOU IRINI	SHEPHERD	6974415075
14	MANOUSI MARIA	BRING	6983725091
15	YANNAKIDIS YANNIS	BRING	6944717812
16	SEVASTATOS GEORGIOS	SAMOTHRACE	6978411505
17	KONSTANTINOS OULIANOUDIS	ALEX/CITY	6977939282
18	RAPTOPOULOS NIKOLAOS	ALEX/CITY	6973035110
19	BARVATZIKI MARINA	BRING	6974069558
20	LILOPOULOU PELAGIA	LONG	6934665559
21	BATILI MARIA	ALEX/CITY	6984865570
22	Tsakni Pelagia	ALEX/CITY	6949751291
23	GEORGIOS BRATSAS	SOUFLI	6942259536
24	BABALI ANGELIKI	ALEX/CITY	6947307678
25	LALIDOU OLGA	ALEX/CITY	6936728626
26	NIKOLAIDOU KIRIAKI	ALEX/CITY	6985631469
27	LONG SUNDAY	ALEX/CITY	6948826355
28	BHUTO'S TELECOMBAT	ALEX/CITY	6995778691
29	KARAGIANNIS CHRISTOS	ALEX/CITY	6977974629
30	RAPTI THEODORA	CORNOFOLIA	6977805076
31	ARABATZIS PASCHALIS	OLD	6947643339
32	GEORGIOS KOUKOUDIS	SOUFLI	6980486479
33	DIAMANTIDIS ANASTASIOS	VEIL	6987600833
34	HADIR HADIR	LONG	6973863819
35	MOOMIN SHABILE	PERAMA	6942874072
36	VRYZAS GEORGIOS	ALEX/CITY	6944639211
37	ELIZABETH BOTROTSOU	GARDENS	6970805396
38	KALEMTZIS CHARALAMPOS	ALEX/CITY	9674429322
39	METAL HASSAN	LONG	6938028052
40	BAKALOUDIS EVANGELOS	SOUFLI	6940795468
41	KHALIL ALPER	MIDDAY	6933332863

SOURCE: CERHB EVROS

TABLE 10 _List of agro-tourism and handcrafting cooperatives
R.U. of Evros

1	**"I WORTH IT"** Agri-ecotourism Women's Cooperative of Samothrace	2551041814,82270 2551041204.8970	Traditionally foods (pasta, sweets), woven
2	**"HANA"** Productive Women's Bath Cooperative of Trainoupoli Evros	25510/61070, 61004,61028 25510/61000, 61020	Restaurant, refreshment stand
3	**"EKABI"** Productive Partnership Women's Clothing Evros	2555022226, 22564 2555023411	Pasta, sweet spoon
4	**"Critics"** Female Agritourism Cooperative of Peplo	2555031901, 2555031285	Cafe-canteen, traditional foods
5	**"THE FALCON"** Agritourism Cooperative D dias Evros	2554032244, 32355 2554032463, 32244	traditional foods, pasta, pies, spoon sweets, elights
6	Agritourism Partnership Women's Lefkimis Evros	2554033244	Delights, sweet spoon
7	**"WATERMILL"** Agritourism Partnership Women's Lyra - Municipality of Tycheros Evros	2554061360, 61236	Traditional foods (pasta, pies, spoonsweets)
8	**"GAIA"** Rural Partnership Women's Triangle Evros	2556051500, 51541	Pasta, sweet spoon, Catering
9	Rural Tourism Cooperative Women's Aismi Evros	2551093154	Traditional foods (pasta, pies etc.), restaurant, tavern
10	**"WIN"** Rural Partnership Women of Samothrace	6977616661	Traditional dishes

SOURCE: Information from the Cooperative Education Service of "Panhellenic Confederation of Associations of Agricultural Cooperatives"

It should be pointed out that the finding of handcrafting units in R.U. of Evros, as well as information on society is a difficult process through the research of secondary information. Soufli is historically linked to silk and sericulture is the activity that made it known throughout the world. Until the beginning of the 80s, Soufli lived almost exclusively from sericulture and exported significant quantities of cocoons and silks [8]abroad. However, the current situation is not at positive levels for the revival of one of the largest productions, but this does not mean that it cannot have scope and prospects for improvement and further development. If the problem of processing the cocoon, which is currently done only in a few small workshops, is solved, then a large amount of silk will be able to be processed and many young people in the area will be able to find great and profitable employment opportunities in the subject this.

3. Geographical area of Bulgaria[9]

Bulgarian agriculture is in a bad state[10]. Bulgarian fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs, dairy and agricultural products are found in minimal amounts and almost all food comes mainly from Turkey, Greece, Poland, Serbia and North Macedonia. The production of essential oils, mainly rose oil and lavender, has also managed to stand on its own two feet and the country remains one of the first, on a global level, in this field. Bulgaria is also the largest producer of herbs and spices in the EU. According to Eurostat data, a total of 81,000 tons of aromatic and medicinal plants and spices were grown in Bulgaria in 2017 .

3.1 The existing handcrafting industry situation in the cross-border region of Bulgaria

In the eligible area of Bulgaria the primary sector is represented by agriculture and forestry. Agriculture is mainly characterized by intensive cultivation such as vegetable cultivation, viti-

[8]" The development and achievements of Sericulture in Soufli Evros Prospects for its further development" _Diplomatic Thesis E. Doupas _University of Thessaly_ Pg. 94_Volos2018

[9] https://socialforces.eu/index.php/el/etairoi

[10]https://bnr.bg/el/post/101084011

culture, tobacco, potato, cotton, fruit and cereal cultivation. The trend towards a significant decline in product production observed in the 1990s has started to turn in a positive direction. However, the problem of finding markets for agricultural products and organizing the sector remains and is an important inhibiting factor for the development of the region. The primary sector in the eligible area is significantly developed compared to the national average and is linked to the secondary sector focusing on both national consumption and exports . There is an inter– regional instability in the study of the primary sector, which can be easily explained by the profile of the eligible regions which, due to their geographical and demographic chara-cteristics, appear to have an important primary sector [11]. The primary sector in Haskovo, Smolyan and Kardzhali regions refers to agricultural and forestry activities and concentrated, intensive cultivation of vegetables, vines, tobacco, potatoes, cotton, fruits and cereals.

Until 1989 [12], the Bulgarian State Food Standards (BDS) were mandatory and strictly - controlled by the State Veterinary and Sanitary Control (SVSC) and the Sanitary-Epidemiological Inspection (HEI). With the privatization of the food industry, **Bulgarian state standards have essentially ceased to be met. Non-compliance with BDS has seriously affected the quality of food in the country**. With Bulgaria's accession to the EU and the abolition of customs duties on European food, Bulgarian consumers are steadily re - targeting imported food. Now it all depends on the farmers – whether they will meet the quality demands of the consumers. Farmers cannot compete with industrial producers through lower costs and at the expense of quality. Agricultural products are expensive, luxury products that compete with genuine quality, not low cost.

The proposed solution is to join production, processing or trade cooperations, so that farmers-producers can improve their economic situation. In-house processing of agricul-tural products, creating opportunities for direct delivery without intermediaries, and finding niche markets are ways in which farmers can add value to what they produce.

Farmers often do not have a high level of entrepreneurial skills. However, by engaging in handcrafting activities, they slowly acquire knowledge and develop these skills. Through other handcrafting production units it is possible to have a variety of recipes and to stimulate manufacturing production with the application of new cultivation methods and innovative activities of disposal and promotion of their products. It is a fact that the culture of public nutrition is constantly improving and gastronomic traditions are developing. The environmental impact is also positive, as carbon emissions are reduced because food is not transported thousands of kilometers to reach consumers. Farmers are also given the opportunity to implement more sustainable farming methods. The pattern of food production

[11] http://digilib.teiemt.gr/jspui/bitstream/123456789/7077/1/022011210.pdf

[12] https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WYszAzK5-0T0IsDCH9bjrTdPHwrILxxX?usp=share_link (Guide_BG_EN_2nd draft.pdf)

changes, the diversity of agricultural crops is preserved, while production with longer supply chains is usually limited to the most sought-after product, thus slowly and gradually reducing the varieties and types of consumption. These systems use less packaging, which also reduces the amount of waste.

In the regions of Haskovo, Smolyan and Kardzhali, internal processing of agricultural products is almost non-existent, with no significant interest on the part of farmers. There are also cases of farmers who have given up on their idea, due to bureaucratic procedures that - make it difficult to register, because numerous documents and legal documents are required. The requirements for compliance with hygiene rules are particularly strict for small traditional processing units. On the other hand, consumers' interest in this type of food is constantly increasing, and existing processors of their own agricultural products maintain electronic - stores that approach their customers throughout the country.

3. 2 Good practices in Haskovo, Smolyan and Kardzhali Region

In Bulgaria, **there is no Special Register of Farmers** who process their own products. A Register of Agricultural Producers is maintained, but it covers only those registered for the purpose of receiving subsidies for the use of agricultural land and livestock , and does not cover all companies and individuals involved in agriculture.

As it turns out, the main objective of **"QUALFARM"** is to improve the skills of farmers and existing businesses that will contribute to the internal processing of agricultural products in the areas of quality, innovation and marketing with the ultimate goal of stimulating future entrepreneurship in the sector of the internal processing of agricultural products, through guidance and personalized support.

Creating and promoting a cross-border market for agricultural products will increase public awareness of food quality and safety. **The exchange of best practices at the cross-border level will facilitate sustainable cooperation between stakeholders in the cross-border region.** After a relevant study and research, some good practices implemented by handcrafting units were identified, as presented below :

1. **“The Wild Farm” – Village Gorno Pole (Municipality Madzharovo)**
   https://divataferma.com/https://www.facebook.com/divataferma/

The family farm is the first in Bulgaria to produce organic beef. It started in 1994 with twelve sheep and goats and today more than 1,200 indigenous cattle are raised, which are free-range all year round. One of the owners of "Wild Farm" is a food technologist and author of recipes for delicacies. The products are produced entirely on the farm, which also houses the first organic certified slaughterhouse in Bulgaria and the first organic beef processing plant. The products offered are frozen organic beef, raw dried sausages, sterilized veal in jars, sazdarma (kefalotiri), broth, pate etc. The farmhouse has a large courtyard, as well as double and triple rooms (15 beds in total) for hosting guests, with private bathroom. In addition to accommodation, tours are offered in the area for various activities, such as wild bird watching, horse riding, gold mining with ancient methods, tour in search of hunters, wild bees etc.

2. **"The Forest Farm" - Village Malko Gradishte**
https://fermagorata.com/ https://www.facebook.com/fermagorata/

It has been operating since 2017 and is a multicultural farm. It consists of a group of 7 people. The owners believe that there is a way to raise animals in a free and natural way, instead of investing huge sums of money in an industrial farm. The animals get sick less and eat food that is natural and healthy that they get from the pastures. The products offered are frozen beef, pork, sausages, chicken with its own sauce, cheese, yellow cheese, canned fruit and vegetables.

3. **Ecological farm " Kehayovi "- Devin (Smolyan)**
https://www.facebook.com/vilakehayovi/

The owners of the family farm have found a successful formula to combine animal husbandry with the "closed" cycle of dairy production by combining production with agritourism. About 250 sheep, 60 goats, 12 dairy cows and 25 Karakachanska horses are bred on the farm. All the animals graze in pastures at an altitude of over 1,125 meters, on the slopes and meadows of the central Rhodope. The owners of the farm process their milk using traditional methods. They have built a dairy industry and equipped it with solar panels to use electricity from the sun. A small guest house has been built on the farm which attracts the interest of visitors and guests, having the opportunity, in addition to recreation, to see where the animals graze, how they are milked, how the cheese is made, and at the same time to genuine products.

4. **The " Basarea Villa"** (https://sakarwine.com/bg-catalog-details-4.html)

It was established in 2014 in the city of Harmanli. It produces small quantities of wine from local grapes, combining modern technology with tradition. The wines are from Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Pamid, Mavrud, Ta mi an ca, Muscat and Vio-gnier varieties. The vines are located in the mountains, which ensures the special character of the wines produced with classic technologies and a lot of manual work . Wine tastings are often organized at the winery, led by an expert wine technologist.

5. **"The Golden Farm" – Zlatograd (region Smolyan)**
https://www.facebook.com/zlatnafermazlatograd/

Lacon sheep breeding farm . The desire and ambition of the owners is to produce quality - dairy products from sheep's milk. A new cheese factory with a capacity of 500 liters is - planned to be built, which will only process milk from their own animals and will offer white brine cheese, yellow cheese and yogurt. The introduction of new technologies in production and the modernization of the production base will contribute to its increase, combined with the implementation of good production practices .

6. **" Stanchevi Bee Farm" – City Zlatograd (region Smolyan)**
https://www.facebook.com/FarmStanchevi/

The owner of the farm is a third generation beekeeper. At the moment the family apiary reaches 400 hives. Stanchevi Farm is located in an ecologically clean mountain area, in the heart of the Rhodopes. In addition to herbs and honey, bee glue (propolis), pollen, royal jelly, sticky tincture and bee ointments are offered. The farm also has an accommodation facility (Stancheva House), which has 6 double rooms and an apartment and is located 200 meters from the old town of Zlatograd.

LIST OF HOMECRAFT BUSINESSES IN HASKOVO

1. Mrs. Blagovesta Vasileva – Madzharovo , breeds cows and processes their meat, phone: +359 988 989 407, +359 877 975 569, https://divataferma.com

2. Mr. Georgi Shishkov – Tunkovo village , winegrower and winemaker, phone: +359 897 629 215

3. Mr. Ivan Vanchev – Tunkovo village , winegrower and winemaker, phone: +359 877 100 477

4. Mr. Petko Angelov Petko Ангелов , 089 743 9547, spelling producer, processes various spelling products, phone: +359 897 439 547, e- mail : eincorn@abv.bg

5. Mrs. Temenuga Mateva – Ivaylovgrad , Temenuga Матева , Ивайловград , producer " tarhana ", phone: +359 885 971 825

6. Mr. Erbil Halil – Stambolovo village , beekeeper, +359 879 635 805, erbil.halim@abv.bg

7. Mr. Muhlis Serbest – Stambolovo village , melon producer , +359 879 635 800, serbets95@abv.bg

8. Mr. Fariz Serbest – Stambolovo village , linseed producer, +359 888 385 053, fariz.serbest@gmail.com

9. Mr. Gyuner Serbest – Stambolovo village , grain producer, +359 887 956 510

10. Mr. Egemen Serbest – Stambolovo village , grain producer, +359 888 136 222, egemenserbest95@gmail.com

Source: Damian Staykov, PB3(RDU– Haskovo)
In Bulgaria, there is no register of this type of business, nor any official data on their activity.

II. CHAPTER – SWOT & PESTEL ANALYSIS R.U. OF EVROS

1. SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis is the English **acronym** for **Strengths** and Weaknesses, **Opportunities** and **Threats**.

In the initial stages of creating a business, it is necessary to carry out a pre- verification of the feasibility of the business idea, proceeding to a first review of the idea itself before it goes to the market. The data collected in this phase will be very useful for writing a small business plan. To verify if the idea is feasible, it is necessary to make a detailed analysis, as well as the risk involved in its implementation. There is no business without risk: the risk of something going wrong is inherent in the very idea of starting a business. Even risk cannot be eliminated, but it can be calculated and predicted to a great extent.

At this stage it is particularly appropriate to carry out a first "internal analysis " which allows:

. Evaluation of the “strong” and “weak” points of the business idea (risk factors) and the

. Assessment of the degree of overall risk, but also of the opportunities that exist.

Therefore, it is necessary to do a **SWOT** analysis that is to identify and analyze the strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities associated with the business. The **SWOT** analysis is a critical analysis for determining the best strategies to implement and/or improve a business.

The purpose of this technique is to analyze the impact of the main internal and external - factors of the company that affect its positioning compared to the competition, with the aim of developing a competitive and differentiated strategy . It is therefore necessary to distinguish between two types of analysis:

1. The internal and
2. The external one

Regarding the **internal** analysis, the company must identify precisely its strengths, but also its weaknesses. This is because strategies must focus on the possibility of enhancing strengths and eliminating or at least mitigating the negative effects of weaknesses.

On the contrary, with the **external** analysis, the company must identify all those factors coming from its external environment that can be considered opportunities or threats to its operation.

S **Strengths**

- The increased importance that the EU attaches to the future of rural areas and the solution to the demographic problem they face.
- The significant amount of resources that the country will receive from the Recovery Fund, the Structural Funds and the Just Transition Fund in the period 2021-2027[13]
- The realization by the economic and social partners of the necessity to change the development pattern of the country and the strengthening of the productive branches .
- Possibilities to further increase the degree of processing of agricultural production which can be a key development component of rural areas.
- Gradual improvement of labor productivity in the primary sector.
- Resilience of the rural areas of R.U. of Evros during the ten-year economic crisis.
- Hub of international importance for Greece: Connection with neighboring countries Bulgaria and Turkey.
- Intact and rich natural environment.
- Fertile agricultural land of large area.
- Production of valuable agricultural products.
- Experienced agricultural workforce.
- High participation of young farmers in dynamic branches of agriculture (horticulture, flowers, sheep farming, other permanent crops).
- Higher educational level of young farmers in relation to the whole of those employed in the primary sector.
- The majority of beneficiaries of the first settlement measure are under 35 years of age, effectively contributing to demographic renewal.
- The majority of new farmers settle in mountainous and disadvantaged areas.
- Satisfactory level of infrastructure (hydropower, geothermal, renewable energy sources, road and rail network , port infrastructure, air transport, health and telecommunications infrastructure) .
- The expansion of ultra-high-bandwidth infrastructure in rural areas.
- The promotion of a significant number of actions that are included in the achievement of the goal of digital governance.

[13] Report on the Strategic Plan of the CAP 2021-2027

- The high priority given at national level, but also at EU level, to promote the digital transition and the utilization of the very significant amount of the Recovery Fund resources that will be allocated for the digital transition.
- Important monuments of historical & cultural heritage.
- Hiking routes.
- Easy access to tourist developed areas.

W
Weaknesses

- Deterioration of the demographic composition in the primary sector and large regional variations in age and educational attainment.
- Population decline and aging.
- Higher percentage of elderly residents in the majority of the rural areas of R.U. Evros compared to the whole country.
- High youth and female unemployment rates.
- Higher than the national average, poverty rates in the rural areas of R.U. Evros.
- Not "recorded poverty".
- High school dropout compared to urban areas.
- Very high proportion of young people not in education, training, labor market (NE E - TS).[14]
- Low access to health services.
- Large disparity in educational level between urban and rural areas.
- Failure to alleviate the structural problems of Greek agriculture (small lot, underemployment).
- Low attractiveness of the farming profession.
- Low potential for innovation development and lack of networking.
- Inability to link tourism with local agricultural production.
- High seasonality of tourism and preservation of the traditional model "Sun–Sea".
- Low degree of processing of agricultural products.
- High dependence in terms of income and employment on the primary sector in the rural areas of R.U Evros.
- Obsolete crops.
- Insufficient processing of agricultural products.
- Insufficient organization of production.
- Limited verticalization in primary production.
- Low productivity – contraction of primary & secondary sector.

[14] The newly created term NEETs (young people not in education , employment or training) refers to young people aged 15 to 24 who refrain from any education, training and employment process, i.e. they are "absent" from any major institutional concern of the Welfare State

- High rate of urbanization - abandonment of countryside.
- Lack of tourist promotion.
- The very limited introduction of Payment and Communication Technologies in agriculture Absence of advisory support to young farmers.
- Limited provision of agricultural education.
- Outdated and problematic, in operation, system of providing agricultural education - lifelong learning and lack of networks.
- Difficulty accessing bank loans.
- Lack of organized channels for the promotion of agricultural products which leads to the fragmentation of quantities and the impossibility of negotiating better prices.
- Heavy dependence of agricultural holdings on agricultural subsidies.

O
Opportunities

- The importance that the EU attaches to tackling the problem of the demographic aging of rural areas and the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), especially in attracting young farmers.
- The creation of financial tools at the EU level aimed at the establishment of young farmers (Young farmers initiative).
- The utilization of the possibilities provided by the new Cooperation Measure of the CAP Strategic Plan 2021-2027 to promote succession to young farmers.
- New product development perspective.
- Promotion of local products and identification of local market.
- Implementation of National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2014-2020, 2021-2027 and other financial tools.
- Strengthening the promotion of alternative tourism (agro-food tourism, handcrafting tourism etc.).
- Utilization, in the context of Marketing, of the available forms of digital communication (media mix), such as:
    1. Creation of a presentation website for the company, as well as an e–shop.
    2. Online "display" advertising.
    3. Utilization of search engines through Search techniques Engine Optimization .
    4. Display via social networks to a targeted audience (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, LinkedIn etc.).
    5. E-mail marketing and sending e-newsletters.
    6. Advertising on a network of partner sites.
    7. Viral communication and sales promotion.
    8. Advertising through mobile devices and their applications (bulk sms , Viber , What's up etc.).

- Utilization of degree of organization of producers in collective schemes.
- Joining the agricultural profession, especially during the last decade, a significant number of young people with a high level of education and skills, as a result of the economic - crisis.
- Exploitation of the possibility given by the National Legislation to farmers for the creation of small processing units of agricultural products exclusively of own production, through the Central Electronic Register of Household Crafts YA 3638/92505/2015.
- Changing dietary patterns and increasing demand for Mediterranean and organic products .
- Participation in innovation competitions and specialized training seminars in order to create innovative products and processes.
- The implementation by the MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD of the institution of the Agricultural Advisor financed by the “AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 2014-2020” is expected to give farmers access to - specialist business and technical advice at little or no cost.
- The exploitation of the possibilities provided by new technology (especially information technology) leads to the adoption of modern farming methods, such as Precision Agriculture.
- Modern Branding approach with the aim of creating a distinct and at the same time attractive identity of agricultural products.
- Improvement of prices achieved by wider organizational forms (producer groups, agricultural cooperatives).
- Promotion of local products as PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN (PDO)/ PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (PGI).
- Conversion of the consumer public to the market of organic products with a low energy - footprint.
- Increasing global demand for better quality products and services.
- Changing dietary patterns and growing demand for Mediterranean and organic products.
- Participation with branded standardized products in industry exhibitions at local, regional, national and international level.
- Participation in innovation competitions and specialized training seminars with the aim of creating innovative products and processes.

T
Threats

- Serious threats from climate change, which can negatively affect the level and composition of agricultural production, yields per hectare, and therefore agricultural - income.
- Population aging and area desertification.

- The continuation of the depopulation of rural areas, as a result of the non-convergence of the level of quality of life with urban areas.
- Demographic population decline.
- The continuation of the absence of complementary national policy measures (tax, insurance) to facilitate the establishment of new farmers in the R.U.of Evros.
- The continuation of the low social recognition of the agricultural profession.
- Traditional farmers are characterized by a lack of flexibility and willingness to adapt to - new farming methods and crops (especially the older ones).
- Deterioration of economic climate.
- Intense price competition from neighboring countries with lower production costs (- labour, energy, supplies etc.).
- Intensity of Turkey-Bulgaria tourism product competition.
- The prolonging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy.
- The frequent destruction of production due to extreme weather conditions.
- Continuous increase in production costs (increases in the price of electricity, expected water pricing, oil price etc.).

2. PESTEL ANALYSIS

PESTEL analysis is an acronym and is a tool used to identify the macro (external) forces facing a business, agency or organization. Letters represent the words: **Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal.** It is perfectly combined with the **SWOT analysis** which examines and analyzes the internal environment of the company, while the **PESTEL analysis** the external (macro–environment) of the business. **SWOT analysis** provides more immediate and potentially achievable roadmaps, while **PESTLE analysis** can be of great value when it comes to formulating long-term business plans and business strategies. By controlling the external environment, a **PESTEL analysis** can identify and understand broad, long-term trends. This can support a range of business planning situations such as:

- **Strategic business planning**

It provides insights into business direction, brand positioning, growth goals and risks (like another pandemic) to productivity. It can help determine the validity of existing products and determine the development of new products.

- **Workforce planning**

It can help identify disruptive changes in business models that can profoundly affect the future employment landscape. It can identify skills gaps, new job roles, job cuts or redeployments.

- **Marketing planning**

It provides the 'climate' element in the situation analysis phase of the marketing planning process. It can help prioritize business activities to achieve specific marketing goals within a defined time frame.

- **Product development**

By monitoring external activity, it can help inform whether to enter or exit a route to market, determine whether a product still fills a market need, or when to launch a new product.

- **Organizational change**

It helps to understand the context for change and is most effective when used in conjunction with a **SWOT analysis** to understand the opportunities and threats surrounding changes at work, such as skills shortages or current workforce dynamics .

- **Strategies, reports and people projects**

It can be used as a framework to look outside the business to speculate what might happen in the future and what needs to be explored further. It is recommended to use it to study external scenarios when it is necessary to make certain fundamental decisions for the operation of the business, such as:

- When planning the launch of a new product
- When exploring new market strategies
- When we start selling in a new area

In all these cases, it is necessary to assess the potential impact of external factors on the business, both from an operational and a market perspective. The purpose of the **PESTEL analysis** is to identify problems that meet two basic criteria:

1. It is beyond the control of the business.
2. Will they have some degree of impact on the business?

Greece, after its severe debt crisis in 2009, is still plagued by numerous economic setbacks, due to the COVID–19 pandemic and the effects of the war in Ukraine which have brought successive shocks to the energy sector with a consequent rise in inflation, the burden of the cost of fuel, heating, lighting, consumer goods etc. Despite this, our country has a strong tourism industry, a large technological infrastructure and reasonable environmental policies.

Investors see the possibility of creating added value, a stable government with good chances of re-election, a reduction in taxation, an improvement in the regulatory environment, an improvement in the competitiveness of Greek businesses, a country with many natural comparative advantages, a country that is a pillar of stability covering an entire region, an EU member state.

PESTEL analysis for R.U. of Evros as follows:

1. Political environment

- The country is facing two electoral contests in 2023 (parliamentary & self –governance) that signal political developments and reshuffles.
- The relatively prolonged pre-election period creates trends of uncertainty and anxiety - about the final result which may have implications in the social and economic field.
- The country, after a 10-year memorial period, is once again in danger of a crisis (health, e-nergy, inflationary) that directly affects the standard of living of citizens and creates phe-nomena of insecurity and uncertainty for their survival.
- The government's policy on the issue of combating corruption and corruption shows an - inability to deal effectively with them, a fact that has an inhibiting effect on the creation of a climate of optimism, regarding the consolidation of meritocracy and transparency in the consciousness of citizens.
- The political thermometer for the case of surveillance is at its height, as a fierce conflict has erupted between the government and the opposition, creating intense concern and reflection in society about phenomena that disrupt the orderly functioning of the state.
- Despite the accuracy that affects the lives of all of us, VAT rates on basic necessities still remain high, along with the shadow economy, since Greece remains in the first places (4th) of the EU countries with the highest tax evasion in the VAT sector.
- Organized crime has been on the rise over time, with the result that the climate of - insecurity is constantly increasing and affecting the everyday life and quality of life of citizens.

2. Financial environment

- Despite the new slowdown in inflation, both in the Eurozone and in Greece during the first month of 2023, the fact that it remains at high levels is a cause for concern. In particular, inflation was 7,2% on January 2023 in Greece, while it reached 8,5% in the Eurozone, according to Eurostat 's preliminary estimates. Energy prices recorded an increase of 17,2%, food and alcohol by 14,1% and other goods increased by 6,9%, with the result that the income levels of citizens are constantly shrinking.

- Greece retains the title of the country with the second highest unemployment rate in the European Union, according to the Eurostat unemployment figures released (11,4% 9/1/-2023)[15].
- At the same time, our country is in second place with the highest unemployment rate among young people under the age of 25 (31,3% in November 2022) and in first place (together with Spain) with the highest rate among women (4,7% in November 2022, compared to 8,7% for men).
- Greek debt passes frequent tests, with forecasts showing its reduction in the coming years, as it is also estimated that a return to primary surpluses is possible. The European Commission's forecasts show that Greece will achieve the largest reduction of General Government debt in the EU at the end of 2023. Comparing the performance of states since 2019, Greece will reduce its debt as a percentage of GDP by 18,4 % reaching 161,9% of GDP at the end of 2023 from 180,3% in 2019. Due to the health crisis its debt peaked at 206,3% of GDP and then declined to 194,5% in 2021 and is expected to falling further to 171,1% of GDP this year and 161,9% at the end of 2023[16].
- The Commission "sees" Greek real GDP growing by 6% (very close to the Bank of Greece's estimate) for 2022, with the economy slowing sharply to just 1% next year. In total, the economies that share the euro will grow at a rate of 3,2% this year. In 2023, the euro zone will essentially be trapped in stagflation, since its GDP will grow only marginally (0,3%). 2024 will be a year of moderate recovery, with rates for Greece rising to 2% and for the Eurozone to 1,5% [17].
- In 2022, the three main problems faced by businesses in Greece were: the high cost of energy/fuel, the high cost of raw materials/ products and the decrease in turnover, combined with the difficulty of accessing bank loans (mainly small and medium businesses representing almost all businesses _99,8%_).
- Retail trade in the country is under strong pressure due, on the one hand, to intense competition from large chains and the ever-growing e-commerce, and on the other hand, to the reduction of consumers' disposable income.
- The tourism sector is a key pillar of the Greek economy, contributing in recent years, directly or indirectly, to approximately 25% of the country's GDP. Greece is a popular tourist destination for travelers from all countries of the planet with an estimated revenue of 18 billion for 2022 and arrivals of around 29 million, instead of around 33 million in 2019 [18].
- Tourism for R.U. of Evros is proving to be very important for the local economy, due to its large value chain. The strongly upward trends in international arrivals in the region , which reverse the traditional "introverted" image of the industry and give it a dynamic character, make the tourism sector "an emerging branch of the local economy with great

[15] https://www.naftemporiki.gr/finance/economy/1425614/eurostat-sto-114-i-anergia-stin-ellada-statheri-sto-65-stin-eyrozoni/
[16] https://www.ot.gr/2022/12/22/oikonomia/macro/elliniko-xreos-posa-tha-xrostame-se-38-xronia-ola-ta-senaria/
[17] https://www.naftemporiki.gr/finance/economy/1400415/komision-anaptyxi-6-fetos-kai-molis-1-to-2023-stin-ellada-megalo-agkathi-o-plithorismos/
[18] INSET data

room for improvement[19]. Thus, there is an additional need for focused possibilities of providing services for "alternative" or special forms of tourism, such as ecotourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism, as well as the revival of social tourism.

3. Sociocultural environment

- The R.U. of Evros has to present an important historical and cultural reserve which covers a large part of the historical and classical years. In the wider area, a significant number of areas have been registered and declared as protected monuments[20].
- The oldest petrified forest in Greece is located on the Evros in Lefkimmi and its findings, such as a 20 meter trunk, even reach an age of 40,000,000 years [21].
- The Byzantine, post-Byzantine and newer classical monuments and buildings of special architecture and religious, pilgrimage interest are noteworthy.
- Unfortunately, a large number of ancient monuments and areas of historical interest cannot be visited, either because of the peculiarity of the terrain, or because their restoration and maintenance has not yet been completed, or because excavation work is still being carried out[22].
- There are local folk events and events with annual periodicity that give the opportunity of temporary integration of the visitor into the culture, lifestyle and customs of the region.
- The local cuisine and gastronomy are a special mixture of ingredients and spices from recipes of the Turkish Kitchen, Eastern Thrace and Asia Minor combined with the Mediterranean diet and nutrition.
- According to the detailed data of the (HSA) Hellenic Statistical Authority 2021 census, the R.U. of Evros lost 14,085 people in ten years, which is primarily due to population migration (internal and external).
- According to data from (HSA) Hellenic Statistical Authority 2021 for the R.U. of Evros the deaths were 2,200, while in the opposite direction the births were only 987, with the negative difference recorded at 1,213 more deaths than births, the largest negative birth-death difference in PAM_Θ[23]
- R.U. of Evros has a total of 3,387 Businesses and Branches (percentage of 0.99%), second in the total number of businesses in Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace.
- R.U. of Evros has a total of 16,133 employees (percentage 0.74%) and again second in total employees in Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace.[24]
- In general, 78.2% of the population aged 15 and over state that they have very good or good health, 15.8% moderate health and 6.0% poor or very poor health.[25]

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[19] Formulation of the Strategic and Development Plan of the Prefecture of Evros (Diplomatic Thesis D.P.Th. 2019 _Page 69)
[20] https://www.alexpolisonline.com/p/blog-page_45.html#ixzz7raIZodL7
[21] https://www.mygreekheart.com/item/apolithomeno-dasos-lefkikimi-evros/
[22] Formulation of Strategic and Development Plan of Evros Province (Diplomatic Thesis D.P.Th. 2019)
[23] https://www.radioevros.gr/paravaseis-vevaiwse-i-troxaia-stin-amth-tin-proigoumeni-evdomada/
[24] ERGANI_Results of electronic registration of all applications and employees 1/10-30/11/ 2021

- Greece, in the relevant Eurostat survey (2020), is high in healthy life expectancy, both for men and women. The average healthy life of Greek women is 66.8 years and of men 65 years, numbers that rank our country in 6th place at EU level.[26]
- The Aging Index in R.U. of Evros appears particularly strengthened with a value of 159.9% (the 2nd largest in Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, after R.U. of Drama).
- A similar picture is presented by the Dependency Index (34.8%), i.e. people of non-productive age in relation to 100 people of productive age (the 2nd highest in Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. after the R.U. of Drama).
- The lag of the labor force in specialization and skills reduces the competitiveness of R.U. of Evros which is already heavily affected by the recession prevailing in the primary and secondary sectors. From the total of 10,776 residents who were looking for work in August 2019, the highest number of unemployed is observed in Alexandroupoli (56%) and among women (67.37%) among people aged 30-44 and among people who have completed secondary education si [27.]
- The number of Muslims in the wider area of Thrace is estimated at approximately 120,000 [28]with the existence of three ethnic groups:

  A) Turkic Muslims (religion Islam, Ottoman-Turkish origin, Turkish language).

  B) Pomaki (religion Islam, ancient Thracian origin, language Pomaki).

  C) Gypsies–Rom (religion Islam or Orthodox Christians, origin Rom, language Gypsies).
- The Muslim minority presents a different social and cultural identity as a whole. The factor that functions pre-eminently as the most unifying value is religion.
- A mixed education system is applied and students are taught from books from both countries, in two languages, Greek and Turkish.
- Another reason why students leave school is because they face serious difficulties in understanding the Greek language since in their close family and social environment they only speak Turkish[29]
- The lack of pre-school education in the minority areas of Thrace and the downgrading of the school by the family act as obstacles to the education of children. Most of the treatment is devoted to the recognition of the family principle and religious obligations. Thus we observe children of school age engaged in agricultural work and often absent from their lessons, as well as girls dropping out of Primary school because their family does not allow them.

[25] ELSTAT_Health Research (2019)_ Data for Northern Greece

[26] https://www.in.gr/2022/06/15/health/health-news/eurostat-poso-einai-prosdokimo-zois-gia-andres-kai- gynaikes-stin - ellada - ti - isxyei -se- alles - xores / (EC.EUROPA.EU/EUROSTAT)

[27] Formulation of Strategic and Development Plan of Evros Province (Diplomatic Thesis D.P.Th. 2019)

[28]https://www.e-stylianidis.gr/articles/%CE%B8%CF%81%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%B7-%CF%80%CF%81%CF%8C%CF%84%CF%85%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%BF%CE%B9%CF%87%CF%84%CE%AE%CF%82CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%BF%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82-%CE%BA%CE%BF %CE%B9%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%BD%CE%AF%CE%B1%CF%82

[29] AUTh_Theological Faculty_Postgraduate Thesis 2009 (http://ikee.lib.auth.gr/record/113462/files/Binder1.pdf)

- Muslim society is still under the influence of Islamic law. The patriarchal family dominates in which everyone's position is related to age but especially to gender.
- The woman is inferior in privileges in relation to the man, she is cut off from society to a great extent, there is a strong point of her subordination to the man and she is generally treated as an inferior being.
- Muslim clerics have a great influence on Muslim society and are decisive in the lives of the Muslims of Thrace. And in this area of administration of justice, women lag behind men, proving once again how weak her position in society is.
- Christians and Muslims coexist in the same geographical area and two cultures appear at the same time. These cultures are visible in all aspects of their social life, from education to their professional pursuits, cultural references and national beliefs.
- The cross-border region of R.U. Evros presents significantly higher percentages of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion (3-4 times higher) than the EU28[30]. The main reason for the large discrepancy is the relatively higher rates of long-term unemployment and the higher proportion of people living in areas with low work intensity and low income levels. Regarding the latter, the share of people living in areas with low labor intensity is progressively increasing in both Bulgarian and Greek territories.
- The large number of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion in the cross-border area is also due to the presence of various vulnerable groups, such as minorities, internal migrants, asylum seekers and foreigners receiving subsidiary protection. The higher risk of poverty and social exclusion among these groups is mainly linked to long-term unemployment.
- The increasing incidence of poverty has many social consequences, one of which is worsening public health conditions. Although the cross-border region enjoys the availability of basic healthcare resources (e.g. hospitals and doctors) at levels close to or even better in several cases than the EU28 average, average life expectancy is lower than EU28 levels and epidemiological indicators present high rates. Overall, Greek regions - have historically had higher life expectancy than Bulgarian regions, but since poverty forces more people to seek hospital care (more than a 20% increase has been documented in Greece after 2010), it appears that in the Greek regions healthcare conditions will likely deteriorate in the near future, thus reducing the overall levels of public health in the cross-border region.

4. Technological environment

- New technologies and their application in the primary sector is the only way to prevent farmers from leaving agriculture as a result of climate change which brings long periods

[30] https://remotecare2020.eu/?page_id=81

of drought, extreme weather events (heavy rains, floods, fires) resulting shrinking to evaporation of their harvest.

- In general, the adoption of new technologies in agriculture is limited compared to other sectors, while there is little effort in product innovation.[31]The tactic of creative copying in products and the way they are produced and distributed is mostly followed .
- There is an impossibility of connecting science with production, while this link is missing , which will transfer the technology to the field, to the factory etc.[32]
- The connection with the research potential of Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace is small to non-existent in order to explore ways of commercial exploitation of valuable research results or to solve problems of production and distribution of the products of the manufacturing sector .
- A high priority need is to upgrade the institutional capacity of the factors of the Regional Innovation System (Academic/Research, Production and Business Sector, Local and Regional Self-Government) and to strengthen the networking between them, so that the innovation system can function effectively.
- Problem of adaptation of elderly farmers to new technology and therefore stagnation in the adoption of innovative applications in agricultural production and processing with competitive disadvantages in their promotion.
- Orientation of young people in the agricultural sector, due to the economic crisis, who have greater familiarity with the adoption of new technologies, which allow long- term - planning with the ultimate goal of reducing the cost of production and operation of a business, up to the creation of new markets, the possible existence of barriers to entry into them or the acquisition of a comparative advantage.
- Need to replace aging equipment, as well as train farmers and their advisors.
- Strengthening the competitiveness of agricultural products and especially of R.U. Evros - requires the improvement of production methods, with the use of technology, to produce - safe, healthy, high quality products, produced under conditions of environmental protection and consumer protection.
- Developments in artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things[33], Blockchain [34]and other digital technologies, need to be exploited even more in agricultural production, but also in the entire value chain, as they provide solutions to address a number of challenges, such as labor shortages, forecasting accuracy, reduction of waste and the management of the entire supply chain.

[31] Regional Smart Specialization Innovation Strategy (Version 4.2_8th 2014)

[32] https://www.ethnos.gr/greece/article/138988/oineestexnologiesmpainoynstaxorafiatonagrotonsthstereaellada

[33] **IoT is** already offering solutions, which help to reduce the number of animals that die in childbirth, to monitor the performance of animals and improve their nutrition to increase their production, to manage crops , adverse weather conditions or even errors during sowing. Thus, daily agricultural work is facilitated, manual labor is reduced and risks are eliminated, offering safety, both for the workers and for the machines (https://www.kathimerini.gr/life/technology/927639/to-internet -of-things-metamorfonei-ton-agrotiko-tomea/).

[34] This technology enables extensive data collection, which - through precision agriculture - allows farmers to maximize yields with minimal resources, while reducing overall environmental impact .

- Urgent need to use precision farming systems, sensors (to measure moisture level, insolation and wind speed), robotics and drones that increases production and optimizes the use of resources, while at the same time reducing waste and ensuring traceability and quality of agricultural products food.
- The scale and complexity of the challenges require strong collaborative frameworks between producers, SMEs and larger companies, academia, regulatory bodies, as well as retailers and consumers.[35]

5. Natural environment

- Global climate change is an urgent threat to our planet that strengthens the "greenhouse" effect in the atmosphere, causing the earth's temperature to rise at an unprecedented rate and causing significant changes in the climate that affect areas such as health, security, crops, tourism, etc.
- The pollution of sea waters that comes from the excessive drilling of water for agricultural crops.
- Pesticide residues and organic waste from agricultural and livestock farms that threaten the marine environment.
- The very high rates of overfishing and reduction of fish diversity, which puts marine wealth at great risk.
- Poor performance of the country in waste management, recycling and the use of modern means for waste disposal.[36]
- The effort to increase the share of Greek Renewable Energy Sources (RES) from solar, wind and hydroelectric energy, from 42% (the first 8 months of 2022) to at least 70% of the energy mix by 2030 is in the right direction, [37]according to the EU Directives to further reduce emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and for a climate neutral continent by 2050.
- Destructive fires, due to high temperatures and strong winds, create huge atmospheric, health and ecological problems.
- The deterioration of the forests and green areas that constitute the " oxygen factory" of the planet and their destruction, combined with the smoke that pollutes the atmosphere, have negative consequences for public health.
- The lack of information and awareness of the population about the risks of human activity in the natural environment have an impact on the way businesses operate.

[35]These technologies enable food traceability, providing a complete picture of the supply chain. They also give farmers the possibility of accurately predicting demand, so that with appropriate planning they can save costs (https://www.naftemporiki.gr/afieromata/191667/psifiakes-technologies-kai-agrotiki-paragogi/)
[36] Greece produces 20 million tons of municipal waste every year and recycles only 17%, while Kombo makes only 2 % of this percentage (https://volton.gr/perivallontika-provlimata-stin-ellada-tropoi-antitimetopisis/) .
37https://www.huffingtonpost.gr/author/green-tank

- Education and training are required from an early age to create environmental awareness, so that we realize that the protection of the environment is the responsibility of all of us, without any exception.
- Environmental issues can also contribute to the creation of new markets, such as renewable energy sources and organic products.
- R.U. of Evros has significant wind potential and increased water resources. The climatic and geomorphological conditions in many regions of the prefecture favor the efficient and economically viable operation of wind farms.
- One of the three Wind Priority Areas (WPA) of the country, is located in R.U. of Evros, where it extends to the Municipality of Arrians of R.U. Rodopi and in the municipalities of Alexandroupolis and Soufli .[38]

6. Legal-Legislative environment

- Under the weight of the intense economic crisis and the high rates of unemployment recorded in the Greek economy, women's agricultural cooperatives are strengthening their social and economic role and projecting as an important image of hope for dignified - employment of rural women, especially in disadvantaged rural areas, but also as a driving force for stimulating the local economy and agritourism.
- Based on their founding framework (Law No 4673/ G.G. /52/11.3.20200), women's agricultural cooperatives are active in the utilization of local agricultural food products, which are processed into local gastronomy products (spoon sweets, jams , noodles, pasta, etc.), or are still engaged in collection, drying and trade aromatic plants and herbs. In particular, the branded local products strengthen the image of the local identity and help the tourism development of the region.
- The domestic producer-breeder has the possibility of support for the establishment, modernization or expansion of his unit through the Measures of the “AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 2014-2020”, and in particular through Submeasure 4.2 for the processing of agricultural products or through the local LEADER, which are to be announced during the current period.
- An important weakness of the social and solidarity sector in Greece is the low cooperative identity of the people who participate in social solidarity organizations. Greece presents similar characteristics to some Balkan states, such as Bulgaria and Romania, where the identity of cooperation is low and, moreover, social economy organizations still need guidance and capacity building to strengthen their internal governance structures and carry out their activities in a professional and responsible manner[39]

[38] Formulation of the Strategic and Development Plan of the Prefecture of Evros (Diplomatic Thesis D.P.I. 2019-p. 74)

[39] (Hadzi-Miceva & Bullain , 2007, p . 215).

- It is generally accepted that the introduction of the original Law 4019/2011 was the crucial factor for the development of social entrepreneurship in Greece[40] with three main - objectives : a) The creation of new employment and the provision of integration into the labor market for vulnerable groups b) The promotion of the coverage of social needs, in particular through the strengthening of the social and solidarity economy and the social and notomie and c) The promotion of local development and social cohesion.
- The Social Cooperative Enterprise (SCE) is an innovative form of private enterprise, recently established in Greece (Law No. 4430/2016). It is a form of urban partnership, where visionary investors join forces to create a jointly managed company. Everyone has a vote and thus each partner has a say in the management of the business. A partner in a SCE can be people from vulnerable social groups of any kind , such as homeless, long–term unemployed, people with disabilities (PWD), sufferers (with serious pathological problems, mental illnesses), released from prison, users and ex-users of addictive substances, HIV-positive, people from religious or cultural minorities, Roma / Gypsies, single-parent families, juvenile offenders, abused women, victims of trafficking, refugees, immigrants, returnees, victims of natural disasters and natural disasters (fire victims, earthquake victims, flood victims).

[40] h ttps://lawnet.gr/meletes-arthra/neo-nomiko-perivallon-tis-ellinikis-koinonikis-oikonomias-kai-oikonomias-allilengyis/

III. CHAPTER – PROPOSED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS FOR THE HANDCRAFTING INDUSTRY

In order to further develop the handcrafting industry in R.U. of Evros and to become a pole of attraction for young farmers, creating new dynamics, targeted actions and actions are required, which in brief are:

1. Utilization of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2023–2027 to promote local development in the rural areas of the R.U. Evros, strengthening the participation of young people and women in the production process, through the establishment of handcrafting industry units, as well as the activation of EU financial tools to alleviate the problem of their access to bank loans. Also, provision of tax (fuel tax refund) and insurance - incentives (exemption for a period of time) to attract new farmers (men and women).
2. Upgrading/expansion of provided agricultural education, consultancy and technical assistance to farmers engaged in handcrafting industries. Also strengthening training programs, including mentoring and exchange of best practices. The training will refer to the acquisition of general knowledge and skills in the field of financial management, personnel management, costing-pricing , innovation and competitiveness, quality systems and policies, preparation of a mixed business plan) of sales and marketing, PC usage and social management media, creating an e–shop, learning a foreign language, etc.
3. Organization and participation in promotional events (exhibitions, conferences, workshops) which can significantly help local production and inform consumers of the quality of the products produced.
4. Enhancing innovation, through collaboration with innovation consultants and research - institutions, by adopting new farming practices with a **"Farm to plate "** strategy and an immediate priority to reduce the use of chemical pesticides by 50% by 2030.
5. Promotion, communication and marketing techniques, including actions and market monitoring activities aimed in particular at raising awareness among consumers of certified handcrafting products, e.g. organic crops).
6. Further support for beekeeping, and in R.U.of Evros (Greece is third in the EU, after Spain and Romania) with the aim of managing to join the Premium category Brand, such as for example New Zealand honey with a price double the average (around €25/kg).[41]
7. Special emphasis on the strengthening of sericulture (with Soufli as a reference point) which contributes, on the one hand, to the social sustainability of the area and on the other, to the protection of the environment. Also, reinforcement of mulberry cultivation, as well as re -opening of the municipal rest center in Soufli, for the processing and unwinding of the silk fiber of the cocoon for the production of silk. Soufli is the first - Greek city to be declared" Best Tourism Village” in 2021 by the World Tourism - Organization.[42]

[41] New Common Agricultural Policy -2023-2027 (p.229)
[42] https://www.travel.gr/explore/sto-pagkosmio-soyfli-toy-metaxioy-k/

8. Development of agro-tourism which will contribute to the economic stimulation of the region and will be a motivation for young people to engage in the agricultural industry and create goodwill for the brand name of their produced products, through tourism.
9. Creating a culture of development of culinary tourism, through cooperative schemes and ecosystems, where all involved coexist and complement each other. The tourist visitor wants to taste a genuine local product that bears the characteristics of the local cuisine and highlights elements of tradition, gaining more value. In the small production of the handcrafting unit we find the revival of old crops, we meet the correct agricultural practice, as well as innovative ideas with inspiration and imagination.
10. Development of the institution of "Open Farms", where events will take place, in the form of picnic facilities, with tables scattered around the area of each estate. Each installation-table will be able to accommodate 2-4 people, with the possibility of serving up to 50 people per event . The visitor will have the opportunity to enjoy delicious food and drinks and/or wines in collaboration with local businesses. At the same time, the events will be accompanied by live music from local bands. The products of each farm, as well as of the collaborating companies, will be displayed for sale in the area.
11. Further promotion of the institution of handcrafting industry producer groups by strengthening the cooperative spirit to create networking groups of similar cottage industry units to achieve economies of scale and dynamic utilization of promotional - energies of the products produced.
12. Creation of cooperative schemes with local producers of similar products from the partners in Bulgaria with the aim of strengthening their promotional actions and extroversion to them, so that they can respond to a greater demand for their products, thus addressing more expanded markets.

IV. CHAPTER – FIELD RESEARCH

1. Field Research Planning / Identity

The field research was conducted with telephone interviews, with the help of the CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system, to 40 handcraft-producers in the Prefecture of Evros, through a list of 53 handcraft-producers created by secondary research (data from CERHB Evros). For the conduction of the research, a questionnaire was used with mainly closed-type, simple and multiple-choice questions (the questions are listed as headings in the research results). The main results of the survey are listed in the next section.

2. Results / Conclusions of the Field Research

Seventy percent of the businesses in the sample operate in the Municipality of Alexandroupolis, 18% in the Municipality of Soufli, 5% in the Municipalities of Didymoteicho and Orestiada and 2% in the Municipality of Samothraki.

The basic products produced by the handcrafting enterprises are given in the graph below:

- Products preserved by drying food of plant origin, especially fruits and vegetables, nuts, legumes, aromatic plants: **37,5%**
- Products of vegetable origin with sweetening substances, in particular spoon sweets, jams, compotes, fruit jellies, sweet fruit and vegetable spreads and sweet pastes, fruit and vegetable glazes, peimezi, mustaleuria, marzipan, contractors, carob honey and sesame products: **27,5%**
- Products preserved in salt, vinegar and oil foods of plant origin, especially table olives and olive products spreads, pickles, sauces: **20,0%**
- Products with extra virgin and virgin olive oils to which various aromatic plants, spices, essential oils, fruit juices, etc. have been added. food in a package of up to two (2) liters: **15,0%**
- Pasta with cereal flour (e.g. trachanas, noodles, lasagna, sourdough, etc.): **12,5%**
- Products with honey and nuts, dried fruits, mastic, yolk etc. Foods: **12,5%**
- Other foods e.g. vinegar, fruit & vegetable juices in packaging up to one (1) liter: **10,0%**
- Cereal products (oatmeal, bobota, etc.): **2,5%**

- Dairy products if the conditions set out in No. – 3724/162303/22.12.14 of the Official Gazette (Government Gazette 3438/B/2014) are met: **2,5%**

- Other: **35,0%**

In the "OTHER" category there were also mentioned: cocoon processing (bags, jewelry and handcrafts), hand embroidery/cross stitch, facial care products made from cocoons (silkworms), packaged grated pumpkin and traditional tomato sauce.

Only 8% of handcrafts also employ workers other than the family members of the producer - home craftsman. On average, 3 people – members of the producer's family (including himself), are employed in the sample's handcraft industries, with a maximum number of 6 people.

7 out of 10 handcraft units (68%) declare that they sell their products in retail businesses (supermarkets, grocery stores, greengrocers, etc.), 43% sell them on the premises of the unit itself and a similar percentage (43%) in street markets. Following with 23% are the markets of handcrafted goods producers, with 20% the various trade fairs and municipal events and with 18% catering businesses and hotels/accommodations. A particularly interesting finding of the research is the fact that 23% state that they have their products online through a website. Finally, only 1 in 40 units reported little export activity.

In general, the producers, in their vast majority, have not attended training programs or seminars regarding the organization of their units, the promotion of their products and innovative/organic crops. More specifically, just 3 out of 10 have attended a training program or seminar for the promotion and sales of their products, 2 out of 10 had some training on the organization of their unit and a corresponding percentage (22%) also had some training on innovative/organic crops.

The high cost of energy and raw materials is mentioned by 62% as the main problem that handcraft units face, followed by liquidity with 60%. To a lesser extent, the difficulty of finding buyers/customers (30%), the low prices of their products (25%), the lack of information about the organization of their units (25%) and the lack of information about sales techniques and sales promotion of their products (15%).

In relation to the most desirable support measures from the state and local authorities, the reduction of VAT rates on energy/raw materials (77%), the subsidy for participation in exhibitions and producers' markets (75%) stand out with very high percentages of reports, support for finding new markets (67%) and subsidizing energy costs (62%). These are followed by access to liquidity and affordable loans (37%) and training in sales and sales promotion (25%).

Finally, in relation to QUALFARM, only 10% state that they are aware of the project, however, 80% state that they would like to be informed about the QUALFARM project and participate in its actions.

Regarding the demographic characteristics of the sample, 35% were female and 65% male, 12% were up to 34 years old, 25% between 35 and 44 years old, 27% between 45 and 54 years old and 35% over 55 years old. In relation to the highest educational level within the handcraft units, only 5% are Primary School graduates, 28% are Secondary Education graduates, 23% are Post-Secondary Education graduates, 32% are University graduates while 12% are Masters holders or Doctoral degree holders.

<u>ОБОБЩЕН ДОКЛАД</u>
АРХИТЕКТУРА ПРЕДИСТОРИЯ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ
В ТРАНСГРАНИЧНАТА ЗОНА ГЪРЦИЯ-БЪЛГАРИЯ

Проектът е съфинансиран от Европейския Фонд за Регионално Развитие (ЕФРР) и с национални ресурси на страните, участващи в Програмата за Сътрудничество Interreg V-A „Гърция-България 2014-2020“

ДОСТАВЕН 6.2.1 - ПРОУЧВАНЕ НА ПРЕДИСТОРИЯ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ НА АРХИТЕКТУРАТА В ТРАНСГРАНИЧНИЯ РАЙОН

АПРИЛ 2023

www.qualfarm.eu

Значителният интерес, който съществува към домашния промишленост в Регионално звено Еврос– нещо, което се показва от вече (54) одобрени домашни занаяти (данни от Централен електронен регистър на домашните занаяти Evros и списък на селските домашно приготвени кооперации) – разкрива важна и оптимистична перспектива за развитие на региона. Сега фермерите, които произвеждат продукти, годни за преработка, могат да се възползват от домашния промишленост, като получат добавената им стойност, без да съществуват посредници. Сред преработените продукти са: билки, нар и локум, сладкиши с ядки, мед, сирена, мизитра, сапун, доматен сос, свещи, тинктура от прополис, пчелен восък и пчелна козметика, мехлеми и кремове, комбинирани с билки. Специално внимание трябва да се отбележи за коприната на Суфли, която през последните години успя да получи доста добро признание. В момента продуктите напускат не само в Европа, но и в други континенти, Америка и Австралия. По-голямата част от продуктите за подобряване на дома се рекламират и предлагат на пазара чрез социалните медии.

Първичният сектор в избираемата област на България (в областите Хасково, Смолян и Кърджали) се отнася до земеделски и горски дейности, а именно интензивно отглеждане на зеленчуци, лозя, тютюн, картофи, памук, плодове и зърнени култури. В тези райони почти липсва вътрешна преработка на селскостопанска продукция, без съществен интерес от страна на земеделските стопани, което се дължи най-вече на бюрократичните процедури, които затрудняват регистрацията. От друга страна, интересът на потребителите към този вид храни непрекъснато нараства, а съществуващите преработватели на собствена земеделска продукция поддържат онлайн магазини, които достигат до клиентите им в цялата страна. Предлаганото решение е обединяване в производствени, преработвателни или маркетингови кооперации, за да могат фермерите-производители да подобрят икономическото си състояние.

Силните страни на регионалното звено Еврос включват, наред с другото: a) Голямото участие на млади фермери в динамични отрасли на селското стопанство (градинарство, цветя, овцевъдство, други трайни насаждения) b) По-високото образователно ниво на младите фермери в сравнение с цялото на заетите в първичния сектор, както и склонността им да се заселват в планински и необлагодетелствани райони. Слабите страни, наред с други, включват: a) По-високият процент на възрастните жители в по-голямата част от селските райони на регионалната единица Еврос в сравнение с цялата страна b) Високият процент на урбанизация - изоставяне на провинцията c) Трудността на достъп до банкови заеми. Представените възможности, наред с другото, включват: a) Създаване на финансови инструменти - на ниво Европейски съюз - насочени към установяване на млади фермери (Инициатива за млади фермери) б) Насърчаване на алтернативен туризъм (селскостопански туризъм, еко- технически туризъм и др.) в.) Промяна на диетичните модели и нарастващо търсене на средиземноморски и органични продукти. Заплахите, наред с други, включват: a) Демографски спад и застаряване на населението, съчетано с тенденцията на района да запустее b) Често унищожаване на производството поради екстремни метеорологични условия c) Постоянно увеличаване на производствените разходи (увеличава в цената на електроенергията, очакваното ценообразуване на водата, цената на петрола и др.).

Макроикономическите цифри, наред с другото, се отнасят до: а) Страната е изправена пред две изборни надпревари през 2023 г. (парламентарни и самоадминистративни), които сигнализират за политически развития и пренареждания б) Изоставането на работната сила в специализация и умения намалява конкурентоспособността на P.E. Evros, който вече е силно засегнат от рецесията, преобладаваща в първичния и вторичния сектор.

Наред с други неща, следните са предложени като действия за развитието на домашната промишленост в регионалната единица на Еврос: а) Укрепване на иновациите чрез сътрудничество с консултанти по иновации и изследователски органи b) Модерни техники за промоция, комуникация и маркетинг c) Развитие на агротуризъм, който ще допринесе за икономическото стимулиране на района и ще бъде мотивация за младите хора да се занимават със селско стопанство г) Създаване на култура за развитие на кулинарен туризъм, чрез кооперативни схеми и екосистеми д) Развитие на институцията на „Отворен Ферми“, където ще се провеждат събития (обиколки, дегустации и продажби на продукти) в района на всяко имение.

От изследването на „Терен”, проведено с телефонни интервюта с 61 майстори-производители, статистическата обработка и анализ на констатациите, излиза следното:

- Основните продукти, произвеждани от екотехническите звена в префектура Еврос, са в ред:
    - 37,5% Продукти, консервирани чрез сушене на храни от растителен произход, особено плодове и зеленчуци, ядки, бобови растения, ароматни растения.
    - 27,5% Продукти от растителен произход с подсладители, по-специално бонбони, конфитюри, компоти, плодови желета, сладки пасти за мазане и сладки плодови и зеленчукови пасти, плодов глайс, петимези, мусталеврия, марципан, контрагенти, продукти от мед от рожков и сусам.
    - 20,0% Продукти, консервирани със сол, оцет и олио храни от растителен произход, особено трапезни маслини и маслинови продукти за мазане, кисели краставички, сосове.
- Само 8% от екотехническите звена наемат персонал извън семейната среда, със средно 3 служители.
- 7 от 10 единици за подобряване на дома продават продуктите си на дребно, 4 от 10 ги продават в своите помещения и подобен процент на публични и открити пазари.
- По-голямата част от собствениците на модули „Направи си сам“ не са посещавали никакви програми за образование/обучение.

- Високата цена на енергията и суровините, както и ликвидността, се очертават като най-сериозните проблеми пред строителните звена, които искат най-вече намаляване на ДДС върху енергията и суровините, както и субсидия за участие в изложения и пазарите на производителите.

ΣΥΝΟΠΤΙΚΗ ΑΝΑΦΟΡΑ
ΥΠΟΒΑΘΡΟ ΚΑΙ ΠΡΟΟΠΤΙΚΕΣ ΟΙΚΟΤΕΧΝΙΑΣ ΣΤΗ ΔΙΑΣΥΝΟΡΙΑΚΗ ΠΕΡΙΟΧΗ ΕΛΛΑΔΑΣ-ΒΟΥΛΓΑΡΙΑΣ

Το έργο συγχρηματοδοτείται από το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης (ΕΤΠΑ) και από εθνικούς πόρους των χωρών που συμμετέχουν στο Πρόγραμμα Συνεργασίας Interreg V-A «Ελλάδα-Βουλγαρία 2014-2020».

ΠΑΡΑΔΟΤΕΟ 6.2.1 ΜΕΛΕΤΗ ΥΠΟΒΑΘΡΟΥ & ΠΡΟΟΠΤΙΚΩΝ ΟΙΚΟΤΕΧΝΙΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΔΙΑΣΥΝΟΡΙΑΚΗ ΠΕΡΙΟΧΗ

ΑΠΡΙΛΙΟΣ 2023

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Το σημαντικό ενδιαφέρον που υπάρχει για την οικοτεχνία στην Π.Ε. Έβρου –κάτι που δείχνουν οι ήδη (54) εγκεκριμένες βιοτεχνίες οικοτεχνίας (στοιχεία από ΚΗΜΟ Έβρου και λίστα αγροτικών συνεταιρισμών οικοτεχνίας)– φανερώνει μια σημαντική και αισιόδοξη προοπτική ανάπτυξης της περιοχής. Οι γεωργοί πλέον, που παράγουν προϊόντα κατάλληλα για μεταποίηση, μπορούν να αξιοποιήσουν την οικοτεχνία κερδίζοντας την προστιθέμενη αξία αυτών, χωρίς την ύπαρξη μεσαζόντων. Ανάμεσα στα μεταποιημένα προϊόντα είναι: αρωματικά φυτά, λουκούμι με ρόδι και μαστίχα, παστέλια με ξηρούς καρπούς, μέλια, τυρί, μυζήθρα, σαπούνι, σάλτσα από ντοματάκι, κεριά, βάμμα πρόπολης, κηραλοιφές και καλλυντικά από τη μέλισσα αλοιφές και κρέμες, σε συνδυασμό με αρωματικά φυτά. Ειδική αναφορά γίνεται στα μεταξωτά του Σουφλίου που έχουν καταφέρει τα τελευταία χρόνια να διαθέτουν μια αρκετά καλή αναγνωρισιμότητα. Αυτή τη στιγμή φεύγουν προϊόντα, όχι μόνο στην Ευρώπη, αλλά και σε άλλες ηπείρους, στην Αμερική και στην Αυστραλία. Η πλειονότητα των προϊόντων οικοτεχνίας προβάλλεται και διακινείται από τα μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης.

Ο πρωτογενής τομέας στην επιλέξιμη περιοχή της Βουλγαρίας (στις περιοχές Χάσκοβο, Σμόλιαν και Κάρτζαλι) αναφέρεται σε γεωργικές και δασικές δραστηριότητες και συγκεκριμένα, εντατικές καλλιέργειες λαχανικών, αμπελιών, καπνού, πατάτας, βαμβακιού, φρούτων και δημητριακών. Στις περιοχές αυτές η εσωτερική μεταποίηση γεωργικών προϊόντων είναι σχεδόν ανύπαρκτη, χωρίς σημαντικό ενδιαφέρον εκ μέρους των αγροτών λόγω, κυρίως, γραφειοκρατικών διαδικασιών που δυσκολεύουν την εγγραφή τους. Από την άλλη όμως, το ενδιαφέρον των καταναλωτών γι΄ αυτό το είδος διατροφής αυξάνεται συνεχώς οι δε υφιστάμενοι μεταποιητές των δικών τους αγροτικών προϊόντων διατηρούν ηλεκτρονικά καταστήματα που προσεγγίζουν τους πελάτες τους σε ολόκληρη τη χώρα. Η προτεινόμενη λύση είναι η ένταξη σε συνεταιρισμούς παραγωγής, μεταποίησης ή εμπορίας, ώστε να μπορούν οι αγρότες–παραγωγοί να βελτιώνουν την οικονομική τους κατάσταση.

Στα **δυνατά σημεία** της Π.Ε. Έβρου, μεταξύ άλλων, συγκαταλέγονται: α) Η υψηλή συμμετοχή νέων γεωργών σε δυναμικούς κλάδους της γεωργίας (κηπευτικά, άνθη, προβατοτροφία, λοιπές μόνιμες καλλιέργειες) β) Το υψηλότερο μορφωτικό επίπεδο των νέων γεωργών σε σχέση με το σύνολο των απασχολούμενων στον πρωτογενή τομέα, καθώς και η τάση εγκατάστασής τους σε ορεινές και μειονεκτικές περιοχές. Στα **αδύνατα σημεία**, μεταξύ άλλων, συγκαταλέγονται: α)Το υψηλότερο ποσοστό ηλικιωμένων κατοίκων στην πλειονότητα των αγροτικών περιοχών Π.Ε. Έβρου σε σχέση με το σύνολο της χώρας β) Ο υψηλός ρυθμός αστικοποίησης– εγκατάλειψης της υπαίθρου γ) Η δυσκολία πρόσβασης σε τραπεζικό δανεισμό. Στις **ευκαιρίες** που παρουσιάζονται, μεταξύ άλλων, συγκαταλέγονται: α) Η δημιουργία χρηματοδοτικών εργαλείων –σε επίπεδο Ε.Ε–που στοχεύουν στην εγκατάσταση νέων γεωργών (Young farmers initiative)

β) Η ενίσχυση προώθησης εναλλακτικού τουρισμού (αγροδιατροφικός τουρισμός, οικοτεχνικός τουρισμός κτλ.) γ) Η αλλαγή διατροφικών προτύπων και αυξανόμενη ζήτηση για μεσογειακά και βιολογικά προϊόντα. Στις **απειλές**, μεταξύ άλλων, συγκαταλέγονται: α) Η δημογραφική μείωση και γήρανση του πληθυσμού, σε συνδυασμό με την τάση ερήμωσης της περιοχής β) Οι συχνές καταστροφές της παραγωγής εξαιτίας ακραίων καιρικών συνθηκών γ)

Η συνεχής αύξηση του κόστους παραγωγής (αυξήσεις στην τιμή του ρεύματος, αναμενόμενη τιμολόγηση νερού, τιμή πετρελαίου κτλ.).

Στα **μακροοικονομικά μεγέθη**, μεταξύ άλλων, αναφέρονται: α) Η Χώρα βρίσκεται ενώπιον δύο εκλογικών αναμετρήσεων εντός του 2023 (βουλευτικές & αυτοδιοικητικές) που σηματοδοτούν πολιτικές εξελίξεις και ανακατατάξεις β) Η υστέρηση του εργατικού δυναμικού σε εξειδίκευση και δεξιότητες μειώνει την ανταγωνιστικότητα της Π.Ε. Έβρου που πλήττεται ήδη σε μεγάλο βαθμό από την ύφεση που επικρατεί στον πρωτογενή και δευτερογενή τομέα

Ως **δράσεις ανάπτυξης της οικοτεχνίας** στην Π.Ε. Έβρου, μεταξύ άλλων, προτείνονται: α) Ενίσχυση της καινοτομίας, μέσω συνεργασίας με συμβούλους καινοτομίας και ερευνητικούς φορείς β) Σύγχρονες τεχνικές προώθησης, επικοινωνίας και μάρκετινγκ γ) Ανάπτυξη του αγροτουρισμού που θα συμβάλλει στην οικονομική τόνωση της περιοχής και θα αποτελέσει κίνητρο των νέων ατόμων να ασχοληθούν με την αγροτική οικοτεχνία δ) Δημιουργία κουλτούρας ανάπτυξης του γαστρονομικού τουρισμού, μέσω συνεργατικών σχημάτων και οικοσυστημάτων ε)Ανάπτυξη του θεσμού των «Open Farms», όπου θα λαμβάνουν χώρα εκδηλώσεις (περιηγητικές, γευσιγνωσίας και πώλησης προϊόντων) στο χώρο του κάθε κτήματος.

Από την **έρευνα «Πεδίου»**, που διεξήχθη με τηλεφωνικές συνεντεύξεις σε 61 οικοτέχνες – παραγωγούς, τη στατιστική επεξεργασία και ανάλυση των ευρημάτων, προκύπτουν τα εξής:

- Τα βασικά προϊόντα που παράγονται από τις οικοτεχνικές μονάδες στο Νομό Έβρου είναι κατά σειρά:
    - 37,5% Προϊόντα διατηρημένα με ξήρανση τρόφιμα φυτικής προέλευσης, ιδίως φρούτα και λαχανικά, ξηροί καρποί, όσπρια, αρωματικά φυτά
    - 27,5% Προϊόντα φυτικής προέλευσης με γλυκαντικές ύλες, ιδίως γλυκά κουταλιού, μαρμελάδες, κομπόστες, ζελέ φρούτων, γλυκά αλείμματα και γλυκές πάστες φρούτων & λαχανικών, φρουί γλασέ, πετιμέζι, μουσταλευριά, αμυγδαλωτά, εργολάβους, χαρουπόμελο και προϊόντα από σουσάμι
    - 20,0% Προϊόντα διατηρημένα με αλάτι, ξύδι και λάδι τρόφιμα φυτικής προέλευσης, ιδίως επιτραπέζιες ελιές και προϊόντα ελιάς αλείμματα, τουρσιά, σάλτσες
- Μόλις το 8% των οικοτεχνικών μονάδων απασχολούν προσωπικό εκτός του οικογενειακού περιβάλλοντος, με μέσο όρο συνόλου απασχολουμένων τους 3.
- 7 στις 10 οικοτεχνικές μονάδες διαθέτουν τα προϊόντα τους στο λιανεμπόριο, 4 στις 10 τα διαθέτουν εντός των εγκαταστάσεών τους και παρόμοιο ποσοστό σε λαϊκές και υπαίθριες αγορές.
- Η μεγάλη πλειοψηφία των ιδιοκτητών μονάδων οικοτεχνίας δεν έχουν παρακολουθήσει κάποια προγράμματα εκπαίδευσης/κατάρτισης.
- Το υψηλό κόστος ενέργειας και πρώτων υλών, καθώς και η ρευστότητα αναδεικνύονται ως τα σοβαρότερα προβλήματα που αντιμετωπίζουν οι μονάδες οικοτεχνίας, οι οποίες ζητούν κυρίως μείωση του ΦΠΑ σε ενέργεια και πρώτες ύλες, καθώς και επιδότηση για την συμμετοχή σε εκθέσεις και αγορές παραγωγών.