



D.5.2.4. – Capitalisation Actions for Sustainability

Responsible Beneficiary:

**SMALL ENTERPRISES' INSTITUTE OF THE HELLENIC
CONFEDERATION OF PROFESSIONALS CRAFTSMEN
AND MERCHANTS**

<https://agrofficiency.eu>

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union, the participating countries, the Managing Authority, and the Joint Secretariat of the Programme.



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



INTRODUCTION.....	1
Objectives	2
Capitalization Aims	4
Capitalization Implementation Methodology.....	5
Agroefficiency project implemented approach.....	6
Agroefficiency project expected impact	8
Agroefficiency project added value.....	8
Capitalizable Agroefficiency project’s results.....	9
Involved Target Groups & Stakeholders	11

INTRODUCTION

The project entitled: "Enhancing the Competitiveness and Sustainable Growth in the Agrofood Sector through the promotion of Circular Economy", acronym: "**AGROFFICIENCY**", is included in the Operational Programme "Interreg V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-20" (<https://agroefficiency.eu>).

This project aims to promote entrepreneurship in the agri-food sector in the common cross-border area between GREECE and BULGARIA, in particular by facilitating the exploitation of new ideas and promoting the creation of new businesses through the use of digital incubators. The areas of the Greek side in the common border area between GREECE and BULGARIA include the areas of Thessaloniki, Serres, Drama, Kavala, Xanthi, Rodopi, and Evros.

The specific deliverable refers to the assistance in the design, preparation, and participation in the implementation of the capitalization actions of the Agroefficiency project results.

Capitalization is the process which:

- ↳ ensures that interested stakeholders directly or indirectly touched by the project, can be aware of what is going on, as well as other projects tackling the same thematic.
- ↳ projects let their accumulated experience available for other programs or projects by transforming the acquired knowledge into information.
- ↳ More specific, the following capitalization objectives could be identified:
 - ↳ Make the knowledge and results generated by projects widely accessible,
 - ↳ Increase the impact of project results by promoting the reuse and transfer,
 - ↳ Help build know-how by raising awareness and improving communication of results in specific fields at local, regional and national level,
- ↳ Enhance Project impacts and future positioning.

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

In this respect the following Deliverable: “Capitalization Plan” is a key deliverable that will assist the project’s partnership to decide on further actions and plan the appropriate exploitation activities.

This Capitalization Plan provide recommendations and proposals for further exploitation and capitalization of the project’s outputs and outcomes by reaching all interested parties and stakeholders involved in Agrofood Sector.

Objectives

The **main objectives of Agroefficiency project** are:

- ✓ enhance support offered to established and newly established SMEs of the CB agrofood sector
- ✓ established the One-Stop-Shop business support center (BSC) (incubator)
- ✓ provide the necessary training, mentoring, one-to-one consulting and networking
- ✓ give the means and opportunity to local agri-food SMEs to develop their business tools, generate new ideas, and equip them with all the necessary know-how, properly manage, communicate and plan their operations,
- ✓ Create a competitive advantage that will make them more enticing to investors
- ✓ Educate the shareholders on cost efficiency strategies and methodologies to promote the integration of Circular Economy and Contemporary Logistics in their operations.
- ✓ The BSC intends to follow a cooperation based approach by acting as a bridge between the 2 countries and promoting innovation in the agrifood sector and its wider value chain
- ✓ Promote the value of information exchange

- ✓ Stimulate collaboration and synergies between the end-users of the 2 countries.
- ✓ Creation of co-operation network and strengthen partnerships between SMEs, professional associations from the agro-food sector, Research Institutions and Public Authorities
- ✓ Development of innovative mechanisms and tools aiming at the amplification of the collaboration between the participant countries' SMEs and the reinforcement of their ability to do business abroad
- ✓ Establishment of the BSC 's profile
- ✓ Development of innovative transnational business networking
- ✓ Development and dissemination of knowledge, aiming at improving the competitiveness of agro-food SMEs
- ✓ Reinforcement of the services that promote the innovation and the sustainable growth of agro-food SMEs
- ✓ Link farmers, agro-food companies and logistics as a transnational vertically intergraded chain
- ✓ Create awareness about the reuse of waste products
- ✓ Raise awareness on food waste
- ✓ Informing about the application of the principles of the Circular Economy in agri-food SMEs

The **added value** of Agroefficiency project is very high due to the fact that the implemented cooperation and networking approach of all responsible stakeholders at regional/national/transnational level is absolutely necessary for the achievement of the following project's objectives:

- ↳ face the common territorial challenges,
- ↳ design and implement common solutions,
- ↳ “break” the barriers between the participant countries,
- ↳ facilitate the design and implementation of common intraregional co-operative and networking activities between agro-food SMEs.

Capitalization Aims

Significant emphasis is placed by the partnership on the impact of Agrofficiency project and on ensuring that the project's outcomes will be widely known and widely used. The results generated, lessons learned and the experience gained by Agrofficiency project can be made available to the widest possible community.

Capitalization is a planned **process** of:

- a) transferring the successful project's results to appropriate decision-makers in regulated local, regional, national or European systems,
- b) convincing individual end-users to adopt and/or apply the project's results of programmes and initiatives,
- c) maximizing the potential of the funded activities, so that the results to be used beyond the lifetime of the project.

In this respect, the main capitalization **objectives** of Agrofficiency project are:

- To maximize the potential of project's activities, so that the project's outcomes could be used beyond the lifetime of the project.
- To spread and embed the project's results to other relevant stakeholders, apart from the project's partnership
- To influence the relevant national and European policies and systems.

In terms of capitalization, it is important to think about how results can make a difference to the project, end- users, peers or policy makers.

Moreover, the main capitalization **impact** could be summarized to:

- ☞ positive reputational effects for the participating organizations,
- ☞ increased awareness on a theme, target or area of work;
- ☞ increased financial support by other supporters or donors;

↪ Increased influencing on policy and practice.

Finally, regarding Agroefficiency project, the **partnership** could:

- a) Transfer the knowhow and experience of the project
- b) Further use of the project's outcomes by other end-users and stakeholders
- c) Capitalize the project's outcomes in policy making

Capitalization Implementation Methodology

Capitalisation Plan is one of the main deliverable of Agroefficiency project in order to:

1. investigate

- ↪ The lasting effect of project's main outcomes beyond project duration.
- ↪ How project's outputs will be further used once the project has been finalized and who will be responsible and/or who will be the owner of project's outputs.
- ↪ How project's outcomes could be applicable and replicable by other organizations/regions/countries outside of the current partnership.
- ↪ The potential influence of the project to ongoing policy making and territorial governance tools/procedures. To maximize the potential of project's activities, so that the project's outcomes to be used beyond the lifetime of the project.
- ↪ To spread and embed project's results to other relevant stakeholders, apart from the project's partnership
- ↪ To influence the relevant national and European policies and systems.

2. propose

- ↳ Specific actions for further development and subsequent exploitation & capitalization of the project's outcomes during and after the project's life cycle.
- ↳ Concrete measures (including institutional structures, financial resources, etc.) taken during and after project implementation to ensure and/or strengthen the sustainability and transferability of the project's outputs.

Agroefficiency project implemented approach

Agroefficiency project tries to face the above territorial challenges arising from the SWOT Analysis, by capitalizing the existing experience from previous success or not success regional/ national/cross-border relevant efforts (e.g. networks, clusters, initiatives) in order to provide a real new interregional approach in the field of Competitiveness, Sustainable Growth and promotion of Circular Economy in the Agrofood Sector, combining:

- a) Utilization of **business support center (BSC)** that will work as an incubator, providing the necessary training, mentoring, one-to-one consulting and networking during the project's implementation, giving the means and opportunity to local agri-food SMEs to develop their business tools, generate new ideas, and equip them with all the necessary know-how, properly manage, communicate and plan their operations, while creating a competitive advantage that will make them more enticing to investors.
- b) Establishment of a **Hybrid Networking & innovation forums** for Agrofood Sector Stakeholder, linking farmers, agro-food enterprises and logistics, as a transnational vertically intergraded chain,
- c) Promotion of sustainable growth practices and proposals for the application of the principles of the **Circular Economy** in agri-food enterprises (Circularity Strategies for SMEs Handbook)

The implemented approach fosters experiences and knowledge, as well as facilitating mainly small agro-food companies and small regional authorities, gaining a significant space in the international contexts.

Moreover, Agroefficiency has provided new approaches aiming both the Competitiveness and the Sustainable Growth in the Agrofood Sector through the promotion of Circular Economy. To be more specific, as food markets have shifted from local to global, Agroefficiency has provided information and facilitated the establishment of networks and feasible clusters.

More specific,

- a **holistic approach** is followed (i.e., thematic networking workshops with the participation of very different agrofood SMEs that discuss common problems/topics regardless their regions or product) during the implementation of the networking workshops.
- lots of **best practices, methods, and tools** (such as best practices and applications of the circular economy with emphasis on the agri-food sector in each area) are presented during the networking workshops from both countries (Educational programmes and material)
- the implemented workshops bring **partners** from common sectors on topics that are identified as potentially good and needed and promote the circular economy in the agro food sector by promoting the cooperation among Research Institutes and Public Authorities.
- the implemented **events** provide the participating agrofood SMEs, and relevant stakeholders significant opportunities for further cooperation and networking (Awareness events and promotional material)

Consequently, Agroefficiency project is a valuable platform for networking of agro-industry between different countries. Especially the networking is useful for developing business tools, generating new ideas, and equip them with all the necessary know-how, properly managing, communicating and planning

operations, while creating a competitive advantage between different entities in the study region.

Agroefficiency project expected impact

Given the fact that Agroefficiency project is intended to help agrofood SMEs to enhance their competitiveness and their sustainable growth through the promotion of Circular Economy, a major outcome would be the development of a common framework on traditional and innovative agro-food products and services and the development of a **Transnational Cooperation Network** in agro-food sector.

Moreover, the developed services will be provided through internet in order to deliver **strategic information** about the targeted markets, the normative and legislative issues about the same markets' access, and strategic marketing actions.

Certainly, the **transfer of know-how** is fundamental to the development agrofood SMEs, through these design tools, the entrepreneurial fabric has succeeded in setting up an export-oriented production plan, capable of acknowledging the needs and transforming them into opportunities.

Consequently, **exchange of good practices, deep knowledge** of local agricultural products, **opportunities for cooperation** with business support institutions (Chambers of commerce), gaining knowledge through use of e-learning module are the main expected impact.

Agroefficiency project added value

Significant added value elements of **Agroefficiency** project are:

- ☑ The **design of the supporting tools / mechanisms** take into account the particular needs of each participant country's stakeholders and for this reason are more useful to them.
- ☑ **Communication with foreign partners from** common businesses and similar products and services introduce **new ideas** and makes **more space for creative and innovative** modification to ongoing businesses.
- ☑ The **exchange of knowhow and good practices** among EU territories and bringing together participants from different level of development, but still with significant capacities for enrichment of existing EU practices in food production and services. Also, makes new space from establishment of network between stakeholders from different countries in EU.
- ☑ The **export of good practices** matured regarding the penetration of foreign markets through the involvement of associative structures having particular interests in the territory of origin and therefore becoming **fundamental promotional testimonials**.

Finally, another added value at the territorial level is the possibility of (mutual) knowledge of traditions, habits, customs, uniqueness of the territory and agrofood sector allowing the possibility of expanding the knowledge of one's own territory in ways other than those traditionally used.

Capitalizable Agroefficiency project's results

In the framework of the Agroefficiency project the partnership develops a considerable number of main deliverables, such as:

- ☞ Elaboration of SWOT analysis in the agrofood sector
- ☞ Production of a Best Practices Guide

- ∅ Organisation of Hybrid Networking & innovation forums for Agrofood Sector Stakeholder
- ∅ Transnational Networking Workshops accompanied with a booklet included main guidelines and conclusions,
- ∅ Organisation of Events
- ∅ The Collection of the necessary primary and secondary data
- ∅ Development of E-Support Platform
- ∅ Create a One-Stop-Shop business support center (BSC) that will work in an incubator-like model for the newly established and potential SMEs)
- ∅ development of business tools,
- ∅ offer a holistic set of services
- ∅ direct support of newly established SMEs.
- ∅ Its focus on businesses operating in the agri-food chain and its wider ecosystem contributes to its innovative side.
- ∅ the holistic character of the whole venture will create added value to the CB sectors of Agri-food, RES and Logistics

The **main preconditions for the further capitalisation** of the project's outcomes are:

- ↳ The project's outcomes to be dynamic and not static,
- ↳ There are no significant own financial contribution of the participated institutions,
- ↳ The assurance of the necessary financial sources for their maintenance,
- ↳ List of companies and promotional events could be used in further work.
- ↳ The elaborated SWOT could be used to locate companies with innovative potential for making partnerships for joint project preparations.

- ↳ Manuals should be at disposal on the internet platform and interested companies could use it in order to improve their actions and performance.
- ↳ The offer of really new services and not strictly related to traditional agricultural and livestock production

Consequently, there are strong possibilities for further use of the main project's outcomes by the partnership, and also by other stakeholders outside the project's partnership after the end of the project's life-cycle.

Furthermore, there are significant opportunities for transfer of these outcomes to other territories facilitating the existing partnership and the future Agroefficiency Network to influence Regional/ National/EU agro-food policies and “advocate” project's results for more political commitment.

Involved Target Groups & Stakeholders

The following specific **target groups and stakeholders** could be benefited from the capitalisation of the above project outcomes:

- **SMEs in agrofood sector**, through the participation in promotional, clustering, and branding activities, the use of information and tools from BSC, and the exchange of knowhow and experiences.
- **Chambers, Business Associations, Cooperatives, Clusters in the agrofood sector**, through the participation in Agroefficiency Network and the relevant dissemination and networking events, dealing with the promotion and competitiveness of Agrofood SMEs,
- **Universities and Research Institutions**, through the participation in networking events, dealing with the transfer of new technologies into Agrofood SMEs,

- **Local/Regional/National Authorities**, through the participation in networking events, dealing with policy making in the agro-food sector,
- **Farmers** through the use of BSC, the transfer of knowhow and the participation in dissemination activities dealing with the application of the principles of the Circular Economy in agri-food SMEs
- **Local/Regional development agencies** through the participation through the participation in networking events dealing with the promotion of sustainable local & regional development,
- **NGO's and Consumer Associations** by participating in Agroefficiency Network and other activities raising the awareness of the citizens, consumers, and of the general audience on food waste and the reuse of waste products

Finally, the **most important needs** of the above target groups and stakeholders are:

- ✓ Scientific support and information on circular economy issues,
- ✓ Strengthening the Co-operation, networking, clustering, and business exchange,
- ✓ Access to new markets and financing sources,
- ✓ Useful contacts of Research institutes and innovative SMEs,
- ✓ Practical tools and manuals for small agrofood companies dealing with business development, improvement and competitiveness