

ENTREPRENEURIAL DISCOVERY FOCUS GROUP ON WINE IN EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE

18-19 November 2014, Kouros Hotel, Drama, Greece

Overview

Organised under the aegis of the European Parliament Preparatory Action "Actual and desired state of the economic potential in regions outside the Greek capital Athens," this event focused on the wine sector in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (REMTh) and on selected activities which can contribute to its future development. Organised by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in collaboration with the Managing Authority of the region, the main aims of this focus group were threefold, namely:

- To bring together relevant stakeholders in the sector, going beyond the core value chain to explore and catalyse the dynamics of the entrepreneurial process of discovery;
- To examine the key criteria to identify and pursue relevant projects for the region; and
- To refine the focus group approach for its future application to other key sectors identified under the RIS3 strategy of the region.

These aims align with one of the core activities of the preparatory action: to test and optimise the entrepreneurial discovery process (EDP) within selected sectors under the broader RIS3 strategy of the region.

Over the course of two days, the focus group meeting combined plenary and parallel sessions, with interventions by regional, national, and international experts. Within the wine sector, the following *a priori* themes for discussion were identified:

- Research and innovation focusing on technological improvements in wine;
- Research and innovation focusing on by-products of grapes and wines;
- Research and innovation related environmental sustainability and the wine sector;
- Research and innovation in wine tourism.

In the opening session, the aims and approach of the preparatory action were set out by JRC-IPTS Aiming to facilitate the refinement and implementation of the RIS3 strategy in a region heavily hit by the crisis, while also serving as a model for other convergence regions in Greece and Europe, the project centres on the provision of "hands-on" support to the REMTh RIS3 implementation process. In addition to developing the process, the envisaged outcomes include the support for the launch of concrete projects in the region and consequent absorption of structural funds. In view of this primary aim, this event represents an important step along this path.

Two concrete concerns for the EDP were emphasised by JRC-IPTS in the introductory session. First was the issue of whether it is best for ideas to match the funding available or whether a more ambitious search for ideas should be undertaken based on potential, for which it is

better to then seek appropriate funding. Second, the need to better engage with international networks was emphasised.

In order to fully explore the value chain of wine production, a variety of international and national experts were invited to make presentations centred on each of the four themes identified above. To further examine ideas and opportunities in each of these areas, parallel working groups were organised, following a common participatory methodology. These centred on the generation of ideas, and the selection of the most feasible for further discussion. Moderators and rapporteurs were appointed for each group to oversee the application of the methodology and report the outcomes.

The participation and engagement in the event, in terms of both level and quality, were high. More than 70 stakeholders from within the region and beyond participated. Both the plenary and parallel sessions saw active engagement by both invited experts and stakeholders from the region and beyond.

A key issue identified by the region during the RIS3 preparation was the lack of business involvement. A key positive outcome of this event was the level of business participation: more than half of the participants came from the private sector, and actively engaged in proposal formulations for future collaboration.

This generation and exchange of ideas were key elements of the meeting. The outcomes of the working groups were highly constructive, with a number of feasible ideas, proposed and thought through during the second day. The participatory process used for this worked smoothly, with participants actively engaging in the tasks, and with lessons emerging for its refinement in the subsequent such events envisaged under the preparatory action. The overall perception of participants was highly positive.

A key issue of the meeting was the making and reinforcement of linkages, and the importance of subsequent joint efforts, on both bilateral and multilateral bases. The good levels of engagement between the stakeholders should be followed up.

As the first event of its kind, it has also generated valuable lessons in how to refine the EDP focus group methodology and the overall strategic approach of the project. This also aligns with the second objective of the project, in generating lessons that can be applied to other regions.

Outcomes: Participation

In planning the event, a broad mix of potential participants was identified, based on an initial value chain analysis. The main stakeholder groups included:

- Individual grape growers and regional associations;
- Wineries and distilleries.
- Researchers and experts on the primary activities of the value chain (e.g., agronomists, oenologists, biologists)

- Experts on the secondary activities of the value chain (e.g., suppliers of equipment, packaging, fertilisers, marketers, distributors)
- Representatives of other value chains that provide mutually beneficial opportunities, i.e. tourism and cultural events.
- Chambers of Commerce.
- Representatives of regional and national administration.

To provide a broader perspective, 13 national and international experts were also participated, having been invited to share their knowledge and expertise on:

- Marketing and promotion of Greek wine in foreign markets
- Access to European funding and how to get involved in international project consortia
- Support programmes for the Wine Sector in the Context of the Common Agricultural Policy
- Aspects of the four key themes of the EDP.

In total, 73 participants registered for the event, and while not all eventually participated, the event was publicised locally and on-line, bringing the total number of participants to almost 100.

Outcomes: Parallel Working Groups

For each of the four themes listed above, a parallel working group was organised, based on the participant preferences expressed by all participants during the on-line registration process. Each group followed the same basic procedure, guided by a moderator and with the support of a rapporteur:

- An introductory presentation by a local or national expert on the theme.
- A brainstorming session in which each member of the group was asked to generate an idea under the thematic area of the work group (task 1).
- The presentation of the ideas by each participant to the rest of the group (task 2).
- The discussion and selection of most favourable ideas leading to the formation of “innovation partnerships”, sub-groups within the main working group (task 3).
- The development of ideas by the partnerships and initial reflections on issues to be tackled for ideas to be transformed into concrete projects (task 4).
- The presentation of ideas within the working group and then to the plenary session.

There was some deviation from the four workgroups initially envisaged. As the level of interest for the environmental sustainability theme was relatively low and that for wine tourism very high, the environmental sustainability working group was replaced by a second working group on tourism. The four EDP working groups were attended by 46 participants (excluding moderators and rapporteurs) divided among the stakeholder groups as follows:

- 30 from industry
- 10 from research / academia
- 6 from public administration (national and/or regional)

Table 1 summarise the main outcomes of the working groups.

Table 1: Main outcomes of the participatory exercise

Working Group	Idea/Partnership Name	Brief description	Expected results/outcomes
R&I focusing on technological improvements in wine	Research and exploitation of local wine grape varieties	Research on 6-7 local wine grape varieties aiming at the definition of their oenological potential and its enhancement during the grape and wine production process	Definition of the varietal character/potential of each variety Enhancement of the initial potential during all stages of wine production, from vineyard site evaluation to the marketing of the final products
	Development of a network for collecting and management of data on wine grape cultivation	Development of a vineyard network within REMTh using GIS tools. The aim is the monitoring and collection of vineyard data (soil, climate, in-situ sensors) and their management with the use of adapted software	Development of an interactive platform designed to assist vine growers in decision-making Assistance to Regional Administration to designate areas of predilection for vine growing and wine production
	Exploitation of indigenous microbiota in the production of local wines	Exploitation of local grape microflora for the quality improvement and diversification of local wines	Contribution for the improvement of local wine identity
	Methods to prevent the growth of Dekkera/Brettanomyces bruxellensis against wine spoilage	Prevention of spoilage of local wines by the yeast Dekkera/Brettanomyces bruxellensis since it is often associated with the local wine industry	Productivity improvement for local grape producers
R&I focusing on by-products of grapes and wine	Energy Production using by-products of winemaking or distilling	Use of the biomass of the entire wine producing value chain to produce biogas through anaerobic fermentation	Implementation of an environmentally friendly alternative method for energy production
	Food Supplements and Cosmetics	Production of food supplements and cosmetics using extracts from by-products of the various stages of the wine or tsipouro production process	Exploitation of a low capacity plant to extract useful substances from by-products of wine and tsipouro production

Working Group	Idea/Partnership Name	Brief description	Expected results/outcomes
	Using distillery by-products as organic fertiliser	Use of "giparta", the key by-product of the tsipouro-distilling process, as a low-cost organic fertilizer	Production of an organic fertilizer based on an organic residue rich in N ₂
	Using by-products of winemaking or distilling for animal feeds	Production of animal feeds using extracts from by-products of the various stages of the wine or tsipouro production process	Exploitation of a low capacity plant to extract useful substances from by-products of wine and tsipouro production and sell to animal feed manufacturers
	Tsipouro-based Liqueurs	Introduction to the market of tsipouro-based liqueurs flavoured by pomegranate, dogwood berries, honey or similar local products	Creation and development of a completely new to the market product family based on a traditional production technique
Wine tourism (combined outcome of two working groups)	Identification and preservation of local wine varieties and related cultural assets	Adoption of selected wine varieties, cultivation and wine making practices and methodologies in order to disseminate this knowledge to all businesses and interested individuals	Establishment of relations of local communities with local culture and wine making with the overall aim to increase accessibility, and visibility of wine, wineries and vineyards
	Creation and branding of an integrated tourist product based on wine, gastronomy and cultural heritage	Exploitation of regional wines, gastronomy and cultural assets in order to create a strong image of REMTh.	Integration of wine-tourism in touristic and agricultural strategy of the Region Creation of a "unique touristic offer" to the market Development of a highly recognised touristic destination
	Formation of a "wine value chain" cluster within REMTh	Creation of strong linkages among the various players of the wine value chain within the Region	Foundation of a model based on economies of scale for the creation of sustainable touristic product

Detailed Outcomes: Working Group on technological improvements in wine

Moderator:	Mr Konstantinos KOKKINOPLITIS
Presentation by:	Dr Aspasia NISIOTOU – ELGO “DEMETER” / Wine Institute of Athens
Industry:	10 representatives
Academia/Research community:	5 representatives

In the initial brainstorming, 13 ideas were generated and presented. Given the proximity of some of them, the group clustered them into six main ideas for subsequent ranking, formation of partnerships and further discussion:

1. Research and exploitation of local wine grape varieties
2. Development of a network for collecting and management of data on wine grape cultivation
3. Exploitation of indigenous microbiota in the production of local wines
4. Grape must acidification by using green harvest grapes
5. Study for management of water use for wine production
6. Methods to prevent the growth of *Dekkera/Brettanomyces bruxellensis* against wine spoilage

From these six, the participants were asked to rank the three ideas in which they would most like to participate. Idea no. 1 (Research and exploitation of local wine grape varieties) was thus perceived as the primary focus of the group, where ideas 2, 3 and 6 were recognised as equally important. Consequently, the whole group first discussed the elaboration of the specific partnership for idea no.1, and then ideas 2, 3 and 6 in smaller groups, according to preferences. The main outcomes of these discussions are described below.

1. Research and exploitation of local wine grape varieties (idea 1)

Partnership composition: 10 from industry and 5 from research/academic community

1.1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea focuses on research on 6-7 local wine grape varieties, aiming at the definition of their oenological potential and its enhancement during the grape and wine production process. The implementation of the idea comprises two steps: (a) the definition of the varietal character/potential of each variety and (b) the ways to enhance/maximize the initial potential during all stages of wine production, from vineyard site evaluation to the marketing of the final products.

1.2. Contribution of the different partners

The research will focus on varieties existing in established vineyards but can be extended to the discovery of lesser known ones. Collection and description (both ampelographic and molecular) will be performed by specialized scientists and institutes (molecular biologists, plant pathologists and viticulture specialists). Nursery facilities will join the project to assure the propagation and delivery of the planting stock.

For the definition of the varietal character (for both existing and promising varieties), laboratories specialised in grape and wine chemical analysis will be needed and tasting panels must be assembled and trained.

To maximise varietal potential, viticulture and oenology experts will be necessary to plan and implement experimental protocols and evaluate the results.

Grape growers and wine producers in the region will participate by providing vineyards and wineries for experimental implementation (experimental vineyard blocks, micro-vinifications).

1.3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

The main perceived obstacle to the implementation of the idea is the current legal framework, limiting the expansion of vineyards. Within the region, there are grape and wine producers that can support the idea with tangible assets (experimental cultivations and pilot wine-making process) and human capital. Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) could also support the action with the participation of specialised labs. Reservations regarding the lack of infrastructure of the department of oenology at Drama might be solved by the participation of other well equipped labs in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) and the Agricultural University of Athens.

1.4. First financial considerations

As the duration of the action at full scale deployment would be at least four years, only rough estimates of budget are feasible, and would be in the order of € 2M.

1.5. Identification of first “next” steps

These include: state of the art analysis regarding current knowledge on local varieties; evaluation of planting material and nursery facilities; and definition of areas and most important varieties for further research.

2. Research and exploitation of local wine grape varieties (Idea 2)

Partnership composition: 5 from industry and 2 from research/academic community (see Table 2, blue team)

2.1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea refers to the development of a vineyard network within REMTh using GIS tools. The aim is the monitoring and collection of vineyard data (soil, climate, in-situ sensors) and their management with the use of adapted software. The results will be uploaded on an interactive platform designed to assist vine growers in decision making. The network will also help the Regional Administration to better designate areas for vine growing and wine production

2.2. Contribution of the different partners

It is critical a responsible organisation (e.g. Regional Authority and/or association of producers) assumes responsibility for organising the network.

Research activities will be based on expertise in Precision Agriculture assisted by adapted technological equipment.

Hardware suppliers (weather stations, sensors etc.) are also necessary, as are IT providers with relevant experience and expertise complement the task force of the action.

2.3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

No legal obstacles are evident. However, there is a need for agronomists, IT staff and specialised scientists within the domain of precision farming. The regional pool of experts could be supported by specialised institutions from other regions. There is also the need for local agronomists to follow specialised training programmes prior to the implementation of the action.

Local grape and wine producers would generally be willing to participate in the network. Regional Authorities will support the action, as it will be a useful tool for policy making in the sector.

2.4. First financial considerations

The duration of the action at full scale deployment would be at least three years. An initial budget estimate is €2M.

2.5. Identification of first “next” steps

Grouping of current vineyard and neighbouring ones, and development of the core for implementation.

3. Exploitation of indigenous microbiota in the production of local wines (Idea 3)

Partnership composition: 5 from industry and 3 from research/academic community (see Table 2, orange team)

3.1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is to exploit local grape microflora for quality improvement and diversification of local wines. For this purpose, native microbiota from important viticultural regions within REMTh will be assessed. Elite strains will be selected based on their technological characteristics and performance in experimental and pilot plant scale fermentations. The wines will be examined through chemical, sensory, microbiological and molecular analyses.

3.2. Contribution of the different partners

Local grape and wine producers constitute the final beneficiaries.

Research activities will be based on research institutes of domains relevant to the action proposed.

3.3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

No legal obstacles were envisaged. There is a need for qualified oenologists, chemists, agronomists and molecular biologists. The regional pool of experts could be supported by specialised institutions from other regions.

3.4. First financial considerations

The duration of the action at full scale deployment would be at least three years. An initial budget estimate is €2M.

3.5. Identification of first “next” steps

- Identification of viticulture zones of interest
- Site and cultivar selections within zones for sampling
- Isolation of microbial
- Molecular characterization
- Selection of microbial
- Pilot vinifications
- Evaluation

4. Methods to prevent the growth of *Dekkera/Brettanomyces bruxel-lensis* against wine spoilage (idea 6)

Partnership composition: 5 from industry and 3 from research/academic community (see Table 2, orange team)

4.1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is to better prevent spoilage of local wines by the yeast *Dekkera/Brettanomyces bruxellensis* since it is often associated with the local wine industry. Research activities will include the isolation of *Dekkera bruxellensis* from local wines, the genetic and physiological characterisation of the isolates, the development of detection methods, and the development of control protocols to be transferred to the producers.

4.2. Contribution of the different partners

- Local grape and wine producers constitute the final beneficiaries group.
- Research activities will be based on research institutes of domains relevant to the action proposed.

4.3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

No legal obstacles were envisaged. There is a need for qualified oenologists, chemists, agronomists and molecular biologists. The regional pool of experts could be supported by specialised institutions from other regions.

4.4. First financial considerations

The duration of the action at full scale deployment would be at least three years. An initial budget estimate is €1.5M.

4.5. Identification of first “next” steps

- Identification of infected sites
- Collection of red wine samples from all the local wineries
- Wine tasting by experts
- Analytical identification of the compounds affecting the flavour of the wines
- Identification of the Brett strains/ molecular biology tools
- Methods for addressing the problem

Detailed Outcomes: Working Group on Grapes and Wine by-products

Moderator:	Mr Vasileios PITSINIGKOS
Presentation by:	Prof. Dimitrios KOURETAS – University of Thessaly
Industry:	9 representatives
Academic / Research community:	1 representative
Public Administration:	1 representative
Total participants:	11

Eight ideas were initially generated and presented:

1. Using by-products for energy production;
2. Using by-products to extract essential oils for the perfume industry;
3. Using by-products to extract substances for the cosmetics industry;
4. Using by-products to create organic fertiliser;
5. Using by-products to extract substances for food supplements;
6. Using by-products to extract substances for animal feeds;
7. Using plant residues as biomass;
8. Creating tsipouro-based flavoured liqueurs.

From these, the participants were asked to rank the three ideas in which they would most like to participate. Partnerships to take ideas further forward thus focused on “food supplements and cosmetics,” which combined ideas 3 & 5, and on ideas 1, 4, 6 and 8. The main outcomes of these more focused discussions are described below.

1. Energy Production using by-products of winemaking or distilling (idea 1)

Partnership composition: 2 from industry

1.1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is to use the biomass of the entire wine producing value chain (grape residues, winery residues, distillery residues) to produce biogas through anaerobic fermentation and then, energy.

1.2. Contribution of the different partners

The following key partners are needed to implement the idea:

- A research organisation to assess the energy producing efficiency of the grape/wine/tsipouro by-products biomass.
- An engineering consultancy or a research organisation to design the process of converting the said biomass to energy (the anaerobic fermentation tanks, the biogas boiler, etc).
- Grape yards, wineries and distilleries to provide biomass.

1.3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

- No legal problems foreseen.
- Positive environmental impact.
- Sustainability of the entire value chain.
- The skills for running the energy plant are available in the Region.

1.4. First financial considerations

- An initial budget estimate for setting up a new 100 kW plant is in the range of €300k.
- The cost of inputs is very low, since wine producers and distillers actively seek appropriate and environmental-friendly means to discard waste.
- The thermal energy produced in the process can be used by greenhouses.
- Revenues of selling electricity to the national distribution network of approximately €80-100k/yr.

1.5. Identification of first “next” steps

- Verification of the amount of biogas produced per unit of biomass.
- Feasibility study.
- Seek funding.

2. Food Supplements and Cosmetics (ideas 3 and 5)

Partnership composition: 2 from industry, 1 from public administration

2.1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is to produce food supplements and cosmetics using extracts from by-products of the various stages of the wine or tsipouro production processes.

The implementation of the idea consists of (a) establishing a local network of wine / tsipouro producers to collect the by-products; (b) setting up a low capacity plant to extract useful substances from by-products and (c) establishing a distribution network.

2.2. Contribution of the different partners

The following key partners are needed to implement the idea:

- A research organisation to analyse the availability of useful substances in by-products, classify them in terms of market / application potential and design a process to extract them.
- A local network of wine/tsipouro producers to supply the inputs to the process and manage the business of running the plant and selling substances.
- A distribution network, initially at the local level, to supply the extracts to their users or, at a later stage, agreements with pharmaceutical and cosmetics firms for the procurement of extracts.

2.3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

- The legal framework for setting up such a plant is not clear to the participants, and must be reviewed, especially in terms on environmental regulations, plant specifications, hygiene and safety and quality control for final products.
- In terms of human resources, the critical skills required for the plant's operation are a process engineer, a quality and a marketing manager. These can both be sourced in the local market.

2.4. First financial considerations

- An initial budget estimate for setting up a new plant is in the range of €500k, but this can be reduced if an existing winery or distillery is expanded to perform this task, assuming that the licensing framework permits this.
- The cost of inputs is very low, since wine producers and distillers actively seek appropriate and environmental-friendly means to discard their waste.

2.5. Identification of first "next" steps

- First, an applied research product to conduct analyses, specify marketable substances content in winery/distillery by-products and design an extraction process.
- Second, assessment of the market potential and the revenue streams for the results of step one, and
- Third, elaborate a business model that would result into positive cash flows from the operation of the plant.

3. Using distillery by-products as organic fertilizer (idea 4)

Partnership composition: 2 from industry

3.1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The so-called "giparta", the key by-product of the tsipouro-distilling process, is an organic residue rich in N₂ that can be used as a low-cost organic fertilizer.

3.2. Contribution of the different partners

For the idea to be implemented, the following contributions are needed:

- A network of tsipouro distillers that would provide adequate quantities of "giparta".
- A plant to reduce the water content of giparta, reduce humidity below 10%, homogenize, pack and distribute the final product.

- A lab to certify the final product in terms of N-P-K concentration.

3.3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

- No legal issues and no special skills and knowledge required.

3.4. First financial considerations

No data available so far.

3.5. Identification of first “next” steps

- A network of tsipouro distillers to provide adequate quantities of giparta.
- Pilot production and certification of the final product.
- A market survey.

4. Using by-products of winemaking or distilling for animal feeds (idea 6)

Partnership composition: 1 from industry, 1 researcher

4.1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is about producing animal feeds using extracts from by-products of the various stages of the wine or tsipouro production process.

The implementation of the idea consists of (a) establishing a local network of wine / tsipouro producers to collect the by-products; (b) setting up a low capacity plant to extract useful substances from by-products and (c) sell the substances to animal feed manufacturers.

The idea is a derivative of another idea on using substances for food supplements (see above for details) and therefore uses the same approach in its development.

5. Tsipouro-based Liqueurs (idea 8)

Partnership composition: 2 from industry

4.1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is about bringing to the market tsipouro-based liqueurs flavoured by pomegranate, dogwood berries, honey or similar local produce. Tsipouro itself is a strong distilled spirit containing 40-45% alcohol by volume that is produced from the pomace (the residue of the wine press).

Tsipouro-based flavoured liqueurs are traditionally produced and consumed in households throughout the Region, but their market opportunity has not been considered so far for various reasons discussed below.

4.2. Contribution of the different partners

The main idea is to be implemented through a collaborative partnership of 'amateur distillers' that would collectively produce and market such liqueurs using a pre-specified protocol.

Local orchard growers and beekeepers would be an essential part of the partnership.

4.3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

- The legal framework regarding taxation of liqueurs inhibits large-scale production.
- 'Amateur distillers' possess, by tradition, all the necessary skills to make the product; only some seminars are needed to provide the necessary extra knowledge.
- The implementation of the idea would require a local "Novemberfest" event to attract customers.

4.4. First financial considerations

- Other than the cost of prototyping a production protocol that would guarantee a stable product, the only cost is procuring the flavouring agents.
- The partnership estimates that a stable product would be sold at 4x the current price.
- An initial assessment of the customers' profile is already available.

4.5. Identification of first "next" steps

- A cluster-like scheme of amateur distillers has to be formed
- A production protocol has to be agreed among collaborating partners to guarantee product stability and specifications, including bottling and labelling.
- The integration of the aggregated production into a local marketing event.

Detailed Outcomes: Working Groups on Wine Tourism

Wine tourism working group 1

Moderator:	Mr Panagiotis KOUDOUMAKIS
Presentation by:	Mrs Maria ALEBAKI – Hellenic Agricultural Organization Demeter
Industry:	2 representatives
Academic / Research community:	2 representative
Public Administration:	3 representative
Total participants:	7

The initial brainstorming session in this working group yielded 10 ideas:

1. Regional vinery for all. Vineyard adopted/rented by citizens to take part and produce their own wine (cooperative undertaking between research, wineries, firms, local authorities, etc.) outward looking approach (community-based agriculture; community vineyard)
2. Local varieties and local history. Promotion of historical sites in REMTh; local produce; local qualities; varieties; combine wine food and local history; need wide training incl. restaurants, etc. Public intervention to improve framework conditions; cooperation with research
3. Combined wine-tourism. Combine wine tourism and leisure (horse riding, bike riding, entertainment); public-private collaboration; accessibility issue (needs public intervention); More specialised wine exhibitions promoting, raising awareness, and attracting not only exhibiting; public-private collaboration – more targeted, well-organised and informed events

4. Local wines and local gastronomy identity. Promotion of local wines through local products and gastronomy (mapping of vineries, exchange of knowledge, networking / collaboration, research and databases to be created supported by firms and associations and regional auth.; take on board chefs, sommeliers, etc.: non-tech innovations important in this group)
5. Accessibility and local wine identity. Sustainability through visibility/accessibility and local identity for local wine; promotion of multi-cultural background of region; target education in all age ranges; involve regional authority, tourist agents, museums, etc.
6. Gastronomy mapping platform of EMTh. Gastronomy profile of the region; online platform supported by local agreement for raising awareness / promoting; food and wine pairing; mobile apps
7. Promotion train for all products of the region touring all around Greece; private support
8. Thematic park for wine and food showing historical evolution and diversity of products
9. Integration of wine-tourism in regional tourism strategy. Connection of accessible wineries and wine roads; combination with tourist packages, local festivals; involve regional authority, Greek Tourism Organisation, chambers, tourist operators / associations, research into reasons people select a place to visit and ways to connect wineries with tourist packages; JTI application on internet: an application showing all touristic locations (incl. wine) in REMTh and two Bulgarian neighbouring regions
10. Platform for touristic actions for exploitation of wine-makers. Databases and promotion tools for different target groups to be exploited / adjusted by vineries to build their own customised/ local promotion programme.

From these 10 ideas, the participants were asked to rank the three ideas in which they would most like to participate. Ideas 2 and 10 were highest ranked, although 10 was considered by the group more as cross-cutting tool that could complement the other ideas. The second sub group was therefore focused on developing idea 4 (local wine and gastronomy identity).

1. Local varieties & local histories (idea 2)

Partnership composition: 1 from industry, 1 researcher and 2 from public administration

1.1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

Local vineyards should be selected and 'adopted' to 'save' and spread certain varieties and cultivation and wine making practices and methodologies from extinction but also in order to disseminate this knowledge to all businesses and interested individuals. The idea also includes building up relations with the local cultural identity, history, cuisine, gastronomy alongside maintaining, and spreading local recipes as well as producing new wine and by-products. Mapping gastronomical profiles of the region is also important in a specific platform to promote local products. The overall integration of wine-tourism in touristic and agricultural strategy of the region is crucial.

1.2. Contribution of the different partners

The main idea is to build relations of local communities with local culture and wine making with the overall aim to increase accessibility, and visibility of wine, wineries and vineyards. Restaurants, research bodies, education, IT users, wine specialists, producers, social media should be brought on board.

1.3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education etc.

- Legal issues: bureaucracy and establishment limitations of wineries (e.g. not all varieties are included in the national wine variety registry so that their cultivation is licensed); rules and regulations encouraging new forms of tourism and agro-tourism
- Wine training in the service sectors; relevant courses in school curricula
- Task forces including research, industry and local/regional authorities
- Financing tools, funding instrument, private funds should be made available; voluntarism can also be exploited in communicating / raising awareness.

1.4. First financial considerations

Not developed by the partnership.

1.5. Identification of first “next” steps

- Follow up meeting of this group to see what has been done, how to move on
- Collection of needed data and knowledge through MSc or PhD research
- Launch of programme - calls for proposals.

2. Wine, gastronomy, culture, entertainment combined (idea 4)

Partnership composition: 1 from industry, 1 researcher and 1 from public administration

2.1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

Combination of wine – gastronomy – entertainment and culture (including, sports, local customs, art, etc.) at the regional level; research needed on varieties and on producing a wine - gastronomy – culture mapping for the specific region; other prototype regions should also be examined/mapped; the exchange of ideas and knowledge with other regions is important.

2.2. Contribution of the different partners

Engagement of the Greek Tourism Organisation is necessary as well as of local authorities for promotion, also restaurants, alternative tourism sector, social enterprises (KOINSEP); initiatives should be co-funded by the private sector too.

2.3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education, etc.

- Consulting / training on the themes involved (tourism-gastronomy-leisure-culture)

- Networking of local authorities, industry and research community but also civic society (NGOs for food, environment, cultural issues)
- The private sector should be in the driving seat; the right balance needed across wine, alternative, agro-tourism so that one form of tourism does not jeopardise the value of the other.

2.4. First financial considerations

Estimated cost for preliminary research for mapping and a pilot action: 500K Euro.

2.5. Identification of first “next” steps

- Clusters or think tanks (involving all key actors: policy-business-research-society) to be created and continued.
- The private sector should utilise online communication, including also social media for both internal and external communication and recording / collection of relevant data (ERP type of platform).
- On line tools and platform building should be enabled through public procurement.
- Communication / collaboration with schools, vulnerable groups, certain festivals for raising awareness and engagement.

Wine tourism working group 2

Moderator:	Prof. Lena TSIPOURI
Presentation by:	Mrs Maria ALEBAKI – Hellenic Agricultural Organization Demeter
Industry:	9 representatives ¹
Academic / Research community:	2 representative ²
Public Administration:	2 representative
Total participants:	13

17 ideas were initially generated and presented:

1. Wine tourism hookup with ICT
2. “My Wine Visit Planet” (ICT solution)
3. Utilization of Social Media
4. Your Wine Bottle, ICT solution
5. Branding
6. Branding combined with other local & tourist products & accessibility
7. Wine tourism hooked up with other local & tourist products
8. Creation of tourist product
9. Drama wine producers cluster
10. Drama as Wine & Culinary Destination
11. Devise the exploitation of results

¹ 5 entrepreneurs, 1 trader, 1 (entrepreneurial) professional association, 2 consultants

² 1 academic, 1 researcher

12. Engagement of public administration in promotional activities
13. Calendar of events
14. Wine festival, with parallel events
15. Festivals
16. Targeted multi-sensory experiences
17. Local Quality Pact

Following the ranking exercise, three pairs of these ideas (namely 5 & 6, 7 & 8 and 9 & 10) were merged to form more three solid partnerships.

1. Branding (ideas 5& 6)

Partnership composition: 4 from industry

1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is to capitalize on the assets of regional wines with cultural and touristic characteristics in order to create a strong image of REMTh as far as wine tourism is concerned. The next step would be the planning of a solid promotion campaign creating awareness of the Region, hence positioning it as a highly recognised touristic destination.

2. Contribution of the different partners

Engagement of wine producers, cultural bodies, hotels, restaurants and tourist organisations was acknowledged as critical for the success of the partnership.

3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education, etc.

- Training and education
- Interaction among various organizations to reach the goals.

4. First financial considerations

Hard to estimate. Very roughly ~ 1M€

5. Identification of first “next” steps

- Mobilisation in regional level
- Effective co-ordination

2. Creation of tourist product "Wine-Gastronomy / Cultural Tourism" (ideas 7& 8)

Partnership composition: 3 from industry and 2 from public administration

1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The idea is related to the previous one. The main marginal aspect is the recording of small elements that could be linked to form the basic product portfolio in terms of a “unique touristic offer” to the market.

2. Contribution of the different partners

Every link of the value chain of wine making along with cultural heritage, food industry based on local tastes, natural resources, local identity translated into interactive tools and techniques for attracting tourists.

3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education, etc.

Accessibility to knowledge and regional characteristics in order to be recorded and be processed is considered as the most critical issue.

4. First financial considerations

Hard to estimate: very roughly ~ 10M€

5. Identification of first “next” steps

- 1) Road map for suitable interventions.

3. Formation of “wine value chain” cluster (ideas 9 & 10)

Partnership composition: 2 from industry and 2 researchers

1. Brief description of the idea-partnership

The formation of a wine cluster could create stronger linkages among the various players of the value chain within the Region. At the same time it is recognized as the main tool to create economies of scale since most of the enterprises of the sectors involved are small/very small firms, and therefore cannot handle the costs associated with the necessary action to create a sustainable touristic product with a regional dimension.

2. Contribution of the different partners

It is natural that for the specific partnership to be effective, actors of every link of the value chain need to contribute: grape farmers, wine makers, local and regional authorities, point of sales, tourism and culture bodies, food and hospitality firms, research institutes, education and training, legal support entities, marketing support, management and logistics.

3. First considerations on framework conditions: legal problems, needs for human capital, capacities, education, etc.

- Legal form of the cluster has to be investigated
- Required human resources have to be investigated
- There will be great needs for training on various aspects.

4. First financial considerations

Hard to estimate. Very roughly ~ 1M€

5. Identification of first “next” steps

- Shared Concept & Vision
- Best practices acknowledgment
- Business Model Plan
- Steering Committee.

Common Conclusions from Wine Tourism Working Groups

Although there were differences in terms of logistics of the process, there were some ideas in common between the working groups. The following table summarizes the common ideas:

Table 2: Common ideas on wine tourism

Idea	Brief description	Expected results/outcomes
Identification and preservation of local wine varieties and related cultural assets	Adoption of selected wine varieties, cultivation and wine making practices and methodologies in order to disseminate this knowledge to all businesses and interested individuals	Establishment of relations of local communities with local culture and wine making with the overall aim to increase accessibility, and visibility of wine, wineries and vineyards
Creation and branding of an integrated tourist product based on wine, gastronomy and cultural heritage	Exploitation of regional wines, gastronomy and cultural assets in order to create a strong image of REMTh.	Integration of wine-tourism in touristic and agricultural strategy of the Region Creation of a “unique touristic offer” to the market Development of a highly recognised touristic destination
Formation of a “wine value chain” cluster within EMTh	Creation of strong linkages among the various players of the wine value chain within the Region	Foundation of a model based on economies of scale for the creation of sustainable touristic product

- There is a strong notion that wine tourism within REMTh is in a very weak position for the moment. Only common efforts could lead to a sustainable growth model.
- Formation of a cluster that might cover the whole “wine value chain” is considered as an effective tool to achieve the growth goal. This could establish economies of scale since most of the firms operating within the value chain are small.
- Identification and preservation of local wine varieties might lead to the differentiation of the wine tourism model. Linking this with the cultural heritage and natural habitat assets of the region could create value to the model of alternative tourism in the market.
- The integrated tourism product based on wine, gastronomy and cultural heritage should be the focal point for the creation of a different proposition to the touristic market that the current one.

Assessment

This section provides an initial assessment of the outcomes of the first EDP focus group drawing on the opinions expressed by participants and recorded by the four working group rapporteurs.

Overall, the participants enjoyed the process and expressed very positive comments. They were keen to learn the final outcomes from all the working groups. Workshops encouraging local actors to work together to generate ideas and agree priorities and action plans are dependent on local culture and idiosyncrasies. A flexible methodology is therefore necessary, which takes into consideration and builds on the specific local and sectoral characteristics. The engagement of local participants in the roles of moderators and rapporteurs and allowing a degree of flexibility in the methodology were seen to contribute to the success of the workshop.

The positive mentality, real interest and willingness of participants underpinned their engagement in the process and led to the generation and detailed consideration of useful ideas, with clear potential for further development. Momentum has also been created, on which the regional authorities should build to design and facilitate bottom-up governance structures that include all key stakeholders in generating ideas, building networks and collaborations and translating these into concrete actions. The interest and enthusiasm of the participants to get involved and to take things further (overcoming longstanding hindrances, institutional conditions and other problems) is highly encouraging. Continued discussion and follow up of ideas are both desirable and necessary to ensure that this activity has real and lasting impacts. The local television news (TVD) covered the event, and broadcasted interviews with the Governor and MA of REMTh. The journalists noted that the importance of what the event produces and its impact.

The working groups included all types of key actors of the triple helix but, in general, civil society was underrepresented. The role of the voluntary sector however was mentioned in one of the tourism working groups. Relevant NGOs and societal organisations that are interested in issues of food, environment and culture exist in the region, and could usefully contribute to future such activities.

This event marked an important step in a process, which will be followed up in two main ways:

1. Follow up the ideas and linkages developed in the event. The concrete ideas emerging from the EDP focus groups are envisaged to be followed up through implementation focus groups in 2015. These will take into account more practical human and financial resource issues, also being explicitly addressed by the project.
2. Reflection and refinement of the process for subsequent application in the other priority areas of the region's RIS3, through planned focus groups in other areas including dairy and meat production and tourism.