IDEA 1. Local wine grape varieties
Research and exploitation of local wine grape varieties

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.

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).

3. First considerations on framework conditions

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 processes) 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 at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) and the Agricultural University of Athens.

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.

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.

6. Initial interest of partners: 10 from industry and 5 from research/academic community