

LOCAL ACTION GROUP: AITOLIKI DEVELOPMENT AGENCY S.A.

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Communication languages: English

Aitoliki Development Agency S.A. was established in 1994 by Local Administration organizations with the intention to contribute in the social and economic growth of the area and more specifically in the growth of the disadvantaged regions of the mountainous volume of its area of intervention.

The agency's area of intervention consists of the municipality of Karpenisi, the Municipality of Nafpaktia and the Municipality of Messolonghi that constitute the former municipalities of Nafpaktos, Apodotia, Platanos, Pylini, Antirrio, Chalkia, Messolonghi, Aetoliko and Oiniades and the Municipality of Thermo.

The area forms a combination of mountainous and coastal scenery, including rocky mountains, the Messolonghi-Aetoliko Lagoon (Natura 2000 and Ramsar areas), beautiful dentelated coastline, traditional villages, archaeological, cultural and natural monuments, which constitute its comparative advantage and attraction for local and foreign visitors.

The suggested transnational cooperation project (**PROAGRITOUR II**) exploits the results of PROAGRITOUR/INNOREF/INTERREGIIC/EAST project, through which the first transnational label in the field of alternative tourism was created, with the cooperation of transnational partners from Italy and Czech Republic, through which the Local Productive System is driven towards the application of quality standards, networking, environmental conscience and exploitation of local resources. At the same time, the improvement of the area's image, the application of contemporary marketing methods, the extroversion of the Local Productive System and the promotion of each area's local identity is achieved.

The PROAGRITOUR label has been registered at European level (No 006034995/05-06-08, CLASSE 35,41,43) and concerns alternative tourism units (agritourism, rural tourism etc), restaurants and recreation units, production of organic products, production of local products and local traditional feasts.

The indicative actions suggested within the project framework are the following:

- integration of new fields of application, so that the label refers to agricultural products' processing – packaging units and production units of alimentary goods after the first processing.
- elaboration of informative material regarding “PROAGRITOUR” label
- elaboration of educational material for training members of the “PROAGRITOUR” network and local stakeholders.
- training of “PROAGRITOUR” members on the inspection and evaluation of the criteria and procedures, as well as on marketing issues, through seminars.
- training of local stakeholders, regarding the exploitation of “PROAGRITOUR” label and marketing issues, through seminars.
- elaboration of necessary material for the label disposal (labels, particular documents etc)
- certification of institutions with “PROAGRITOUR” label, after evaluation.
- formation of a transnational network of institutions certified with PROAGRITOUR label
- promotion of institutions certified with “PROAGRITOUR” label (printed material, website, articles in the press etc)
- participation in international, national and local expositions, under “PROAGRITOUR” label
- organisation of particular promotional events, under “PROAGRITOUR” label, with the participation of people well known to the wide public
- formation of special tourist packages with targeted references to institutions certified with “PROAGRITOUR” label and destinations.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR THE AREA

- promotion of the area's identity
- increased disposal of organic products in the market
- improvement of the alimentary chain of touristic units
- improvement of the touristic product image

- increase in touristic business
- improvement of the Local Productive System's extroversion

So far the partnership, apart from Aitoliki Development Agency S.A. is formed by an Italian partner (LAG Ternano), two LAGs from Greece (Development Agencies of Kavala and Olympia) and a Cypriot LAG (Development Agency of the Province of Pafos).

The project budget is subject to change, but for the time being, is 50.000€ for Aitoliki Development Agency S.A., 20.656,10 € for LAG Ternano and 40.000€ for the Development Agency of Kavala.

The suggested timetable is 24 months following its approval.