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Conducting Research: “Local and National priorities in conjunction with Social Economy”

Project:

**“Interregional Social Enterprise Empowerment”
with acronym “I SEE”**



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Introduction

The present study is carried out in the framework of the European project “Interregional Social Enterprise Empowerment” with acronym “I SEE” of the Interreg Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 program, and is based on the research carried out in the area of implementation of the project, and more particularly in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, which is also the project's lead partner. The topic of the study is Social Entrepreneurship and in particular the concepts of Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation will be analyzed, the current state of the social economy in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace will be described and solutions for improvement and development of social cooperative enterprise clusters will be proposed.

Disclaimer

“The contents of this study are sole responsibility of Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union, the participating countries the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat”.

Executive summary

The scope of the current study is to conduct research based on data analysis and data process regarding the investigation of the existing needs and opportunities to the social entrepreneurship in the implementation area and specifically in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The current study is conducting in the framework of the European Project ““Interregional Social Enterprise Empowerment” aka “I-SEE” – Programme Greece – Bulgaria 2014 – 2020.

The main issues analyzed by the study are presented below:

- Literature overview of the Social Cooperative Enterprises
- Institutional framework for the process of Social Cooperative Enterprises in Greece and the EU’s policies
- Description of the Social Economy’s ecosystem at REMTH
- Social Entrepreneurship Programmes
- Problems and opportunities of Social Cooperative Enterprises at REMTH

For the achievement of the study’s scope, a methodology of the afore mentioned issues was conducted as well as a field work was held to the Social Cooperative Enterprises of the related region through questionnaire surveys.

The outcome of the study is analyzed below:

- The initial major problem that Social Cooperative Enterprises are facing up is the lack of the economic funding support. Bureaucracy, lack of government’s support, economy, and lack of every kind information to (either the citizens or the Social Cooperative Enterprises).
- The REMTH presents important development opportunities in several fields such as the exports, the tourism, and the energy
- The vote of the law for the Social Entrepreneurship in 2011 was the first significant step from the recognition of the social entrepreneurship in Greece.
- The indications given by Europe regarding the enforcement of the social economy to the states – members through the European strategy 2020 and the community initiatives constitute a significant opportunity for development

Moreover, the significant proposals being extracted from the survey are presenting below:

- Creation and development of clusters among specific parts of social enterprises of REMTH, related to the educational institutions and local governments.

- Loyalty Card's creation aiming to the attraction and maintenance of visitors and citizens.
- Development of touristic routes to cities which has historic centers or touristic destinations
- Development of policies for the enforcement of the social enterprises at national, regional and local level"
 - Development of a common logic of what constitutions and enterprises of social economy
 - Improvement of the progress of the enterprises and institutions of the social economy and of their characteristics
 - Measurement and further documentation of the social economy' impact and of the effectiveness of the implementation for socio-economic growth
 - Provision of a better ecosystem for the development of enterprises and social economy's institutions, their support for funding, as well as their establishing of the essential legal framework which allows them to fully operate even in transnational level
 - Furthermore, integration of the social economy to the funds and EU's programmes, such as the Cohesion Fund, the National Documentation Centre, and the European Regional Development Fund
 - Implementation of the role of the social economy at the EU's external actions
 - Establishment and implementation of a permanent well-structured dialogue between institutions and social economy

Methodology of the study

In this stage, the research method, the data handling, the sample choice, and the restrictions of the research are analyzed. The method that was conducted in relation with this study was already applied. There is enough literature regarding the social entrepreneurship in Greece and on abroad. Therefore, the current study has the form of a new study in the implemented area of the project in specific in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace based on an existing research. For achieving the aims of the study, a questionnaire survey was conducted to the social enterprises of the Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The aim of the research was to study the needs and opportunities existed in the region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace regarding the social entrepreneurship.

The research method that was used to the current study, was based both on literature review and on questionnaire survey. The main data handling method was based on the questionnaires and interviews. The sample included 35 social enterprises of the region of the Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The theoretical framework on which the results were evaluated and analyzed, related to the international literature in the field of social entrepreneurship.

Researchers can evenly address to the objects of the survey related with their opinion on certain issues, though questionnaires. Moreover, questionnaires are achieving to gather various data extracted from respondents, their anonymity, and the ability of gathering information for unobtrusive indications. However, at the same time the restrictions earned by the questionnaires are the unregistered details, the lack of checking the reliability of responses and the understanding of questions.

A questionnaire was conducted for the measurement and register of the quantitative and qualitative data for the current study. The questionnaire included 16 questions, closed type (multiple choices, classification) and open type (completion, development), and was about the type of the Socio-Coop Enterprises, the number of their members and employees, their sector, their finances, their social and economic targets, their factors, as well as problems and their proposed solutions. This questionnaire is considered comprehensive, short and up to date without affecting the respondents. The results were extracted though Google forms.

1. Social Economy-Entrepreneurship

According to the national, European and international scientific literature, terms that relate to and/ or overlap with the concept of Social Economy are, among others, the following: "Non-Profit Sector", "Third System", "Third Sector" and "Solidarity Economy". However, none of these terms has a uniform and universally accepted conceptual determination. Among the above, the term Social Economy is the most widespread term, mainly in Europe. According to the scientific literature, even though there isn't a uniform and universally accepted definition, social economy characterizes the area of the economy that is placed between the public and private sectors, develops when these traditional sectors (state and market) are either weak or they do not wish to develop economic activity and civil society takes over the needs that arise. It is based on the principles of justice, independence, democracy, freedom of participation, priority of the individual, solidarity, equality and sustainability, and comprises a wide range of actions and initiatives aiming at producing products and services for the gratification of collective social and economic needs of the local community and its members.

Social economy and entrepreneurship, as a coherent implementation decision, institutionally and politically, appeared at the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Member States Conference in June 1998. The conference clarified the political and economic substance and content of the social economy as a guiding principle for its Member States. In Greece, it became law of the state by Law 4019 / 30-9-2011, Government Gazette 216A. Thus, the term social economy and entrepreneurship includes economic activities that are neither public nor private but are organized by individuals and groups of individuals.

These are and are called 'social' because they do not aim at profitability, but at the service of society as a whole, in accordance with the following principles:

- a) Priority of the individual and the social objective over capital
- b) Voluntary and open citizen participation system
- c) Exercising democratic control over members
- d) Combining members of the common interest
- e) Advocating principles of solidarity and responsibility
- f) Independent management and independence from public authorities
- g) Social use surpluses to achieve the social objective

In general, social economy organizations are based on providing services to their members and society rather than pursuing profit, they have independent administration, they apply democratic decision-making processes, and they prioritize individuals and work over capital and income distribution.

The report of the International Centre of Research and Information on the Public, Social and Cooperative Economy (CIRIEC) prepared for the European Economic and Social Committee in 2013 showed that: *«The set of private, formally-organised enterprises, with autonomy of decision and freedom of membership, created to meet their members' needs through the market by producing goods and providing services, insurance and finance, where decision-making and any distribution of profits or surpluses among the members are not directly linked to the capital or fees contributed by each member, each of whom has one vote. The social economy also includes private, formally-organised entities with autonomy of decision and freedom of membership that produce non-market services for households and whose surpluses, if any, cannot be appropriated by the economic agents that create, control or finance them».*

Social entrepreneurship characterizes a wide range of relationships, activities and business initiatives that explicitly pursue a social objective that brings social benefits and aims at resolving social problems, in particular, which the state cannot cover and where the market does not want to intervene. The social enterprise is made up of "formations" that are created "from scratch" in order to develop a new form of entrepreneurship between Cooperatives and Non-Profit Organizations.

Social enterprises are characterized by their autonomous operation, the development of new flexible forms of employment, their competitiveness, their financial risk taking and their continued social and economic activity, they can be set up by a person or entity based on income-seeking social strategies, they mainly employ people from vulnerable social groups in their business and are managed in an "open" manner, meaning with the involvement of all parties (members, employees, etc.), without limiting the involvement of "charismatic" leaders. Accordingly, a recent European Commission definition of a social enterprise has indicated that it is: *«a body within the social economy whose main objective is to have a positive social impact, rather than a profit, on the owners or shareholders. It works by supplying goods and services to the market in a business and innovative way and, using its profits, primarily to achieve social goals. It is managed in an open, responsible manner and, in particular, with the involvement of employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities».*

According to the European Network for Social Economy (EMES), the following nine economic and social characteristics must be met in order to identify social enterprises. Their economic characteristics are:

- a) continuous production of goods and services
- b) a high degree of administrative and administrative autonomy
- c) undertaking business and financial risk
- d) the existence of paid and insured work

Following are their social characteristics:

- a) their aim to benefit their members and the community
- b) the collective dimension of the operation
- c) the participation of members in decisions
- d) multi-partnership
- e) the restriction on the distribution of surplus and profits

Social Entrepreneurship or the Third Sector of the Economy contains, simultaneously, a dynamic transformation of the relations of production - distribution and change into the economic base itself, which gives the Third Sector a dimension from a deeper perspective of social change. In addition, the social economy, which refers to all production, distribution and consumption activities at both local and global levels, can be seen as a form of escape from the laws of the dominant economy and the memorandum policy that has created many unemployed and precarious workers but, more importantly, can be a suggestion for an alternative way of organizing production. In addition, social entrepreneurship is a proposal of organizing economic life that is not based on competition and individualism that lead to the complete alienation of the individual, but is based on equality, democracy, individual and collective freedoms, solidarity relations and collectivity.

Social entrepreneurship has a local character and is developed locally. This should not be regarded as a negative feature. Most problems in society have general characteristics and could be considered to require general solutions. However, social entrepreneurship in many cases allows local solutions to be adapted to general problems, and precisely because it searches for viable solutions that are applicable, it aims both at developing actions and at achieving results. For these reasons, social entrepreneurship is an important factor in ensuring social cohesion, without which regional competitiveness and sustainable development would not be possible. Thus, social innovation diffuses and spreads across different fields, often interconnected and thus has a complex character.

2. Social Cooperative Enterprises

Law 4430/2016 of the Ministry of Labor (Article 14) establishes as a Social Cooperative Enterprise urban cooperatives of the Law 1667/1986, which have as a constitutional purpose the collective and social benefit and they have a legal commercial status.

Depending on their particular purpose, Social Cooperative Enterprises are divided into the following categories:

a) Social Cooperative Enterprises of Integration

Aiming at integrating into the economic and social life of persons that belong to vulnerable population groups, namely persons with disabilities (physical or psychic or mentally or sensory), currently or former substance abusers, seropositive, prisoners/ detainees and juvenile offenders). These Social Cooperative Enterprises are respectively divided into the following two subcategories:

- a. Social Cooperative Enterprises of vulnerable groups, who seek to integrate persons belonging to vulnerable social groups into economic and social life. A minimum of 30% of the members and employees of these companies necessarily belong to these categories.
- b. Social Cooperative Enterprises of special groups, which seek to integrate persons belonging to the special population groups into economic and social life. A minimum of 50% of the members and employees of these companies necessarily belong to these categories.

b) Social Cooperative Enterprises of Collective and Social Benefits

They develop “sustainable development” activities, or provide “social services of general interest”. They are related with the production of products and the provision of services in areas such as culture, environment, ecology, education, utilities, exploiting local products, maintaining traditional activities and professions etc.

3. The basic institutional framework, the new provisions, the Ministerial Decisions, the circulars etc. related to the operation of b) Social Cooperative Enterprises in Greece

- Law 4430/2016 (Government Gazette 205/ A/ 31-10-2016) "Social and Solidarity Economy and Development of its Institutions and Other Provisions"
- Law 4019/11 (Government Gazette 216 A/ 30-9-2011): "Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship and other provisions"
- Decision of the Minister of Labor No. 2.2250/ 04.4.105/ 12 (Government Gazette - 221 B/ 9-2-2012) on: "Maintenance and operation of the General Register of Social Economy of Law 4019/ 2011 (Government Gazette 216/ A) "Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship and other provisions".
- Decision of the Minister of Labor No 2.9621/ no.4.1200/ 12 (Government Gazette 1360 B/ 25-4-2012) on: "Amendment of no 2.2250/ no.4.105/ 02/02/2012 (Official Gazette) 221 / B / 09-02-2012) Ministerial Decision: "Maintenance and operation of the General Register of Social Economy of Law 4019/ 2011 (Government Gazette 216/ A') "Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship and other provisions".
- Circular No. 49/ 16.10.12 OAAE (APA: B43A4691Ω3-B6Φ) on the subject: "Revocation of no. 20/12 of the circular on the part concerning Social Cooperative Enterprises"

Social Cooperative Enterprise Resources

Article 8 provides the resources on which social enterprises are based. The combination of grants and donations is indicative for social enterprises, dominating at traditional social economy operators, with revenue from commercial activities traditionally undertaken by businesses. The Model Statute classifies the resources of a Social Cooperative Enterprise as follows:

- The founding capital and the capital resulting from the disposal of new co-operative units
- Revenue from the activities of the cooperative and the exploitation of its assets
- Grants from Public Investment Program, the EU, international or national agencies, or local government agencies A and B grade, and revenue from other programs
- Funds from bequests, third party donations and asset concessions

Profit distribution of Social Cooperative Enterprises of Collective and Social Benefits

The distribution of profits Social Cooperative Enterprises is available as a percentage, annually, as follows:

- 5% for reserve formation,
- up to 35% is distributed to employees as a productivity incentive
- the rest (at least 60%) is devoted to business activities and job creation

Financial support measures

Many agree that the development of social economy and social entrepreneurship is based on financial incentives and support measures. Article 10 provides for certain incentives and measures for further financial support to social enterprises. More specifically:

- Employees of Social Cooperative Enterprises that belong to vulnerable groups and receive welfare or reintegration benefits, or any other form of benefit, they continue to receive these benefits at the same time as their remuneration by the Social Cooperative Enterprise.
- Social Cooperative Enterprises are not subject to taxation on the percentage of the revenue disposed of as a reserve and on the business activities and job creation. However, Law 4110/2013 abolishes this tax exemption. There is income tax withholding for the percentage of profits distributed to employees. If employees belong to vulnerable groups, after tax withholding there is no other tax liability.
- Social Cooperative Enterprises can be integrated into entrepreneurship support programs, work support programs by OAED and all kinds of active employment policies. In practice, we can see that Social Cooperative Enterprises were supported by two programs: TOPSA (Local Employment Plans and TOPEKO (Local Action for Vulnerable Groups), that were finalized. These programs are funded by OAED and EU funds and are aimed at integrating or reintegrating the unemployed into the labor market, especially those belonging to vulnerable social groups (European Commission, 2014).

4. Agricultural production as a social form of employment

Social agricultural production can be identified as an innovative, participatory and creative model of integrating agricultural practices that entails and promotes rejuvenation, education, training, and support services. Social agricultural production aims at the social and occupational integration of people with disabilities and strengthens the social protection net. Through agricultural production practices, people with disabilities can contribute to food production and agricultural production in general. According to a recent report on social agricultural production, experiences in social agricultural production have productive prosperity characteristics, since they aim to develop practices for diverse development of intervention areas, supporting the development, skills and professionalism of people at the social risk of exclusion. Social agricultural production provides the tools to create coherent smart and competitive communities that can provide key responses to the needs of the population and the productive industry. Important social agricultural production initiatives have been developed in Italy since the early 1970s. Quite later, in the early 2000s, the model was expanded with bodies from people in various fields (applied sciences, social sciences, farmers, cooperatives) forming a network of informal practices and experiences, which was developed at a level that in 2011 it was established at the National Forum for Social Agriculture. The model of social agriculture was introduced in the Tuscany Region in Italy in 2009 where one of the initiatives focused on children and young people (including summer activities such as outdoor camps and opportunities for children and young people in order to experience first-hand the relation with nature and agricultural work, through rural laboratories teaching up to 65 young people on the cycle of plants and animals, gardening and beekeeping).

The development of social agricultural production actions is particularly important in vulnerable populations such as the functional disabled, who can work in collaboration with the general rural population and scientists (agronomists, social scientists, etc.) in rural work, in order to be socially integrated within the context of working in the real economy. This improves the mental state of the relatives of people with disabilities, as well as contributes to the personal development of the people involved in the general population. Particularly Social Enterprises of Integration, Social Cooperative Limited or the Associations of people with disabilities can be important players in the development of such actions. As stated in the conclusions of a major social agricultural production project, it turns out that social rural production is a realistic option for achieving better quality of life for people receiving social services and health services and for rural families, by enhancing social inclusion and interconnection of farmers with communities. Social agricultural production benefits:

- a) income diversification and opportunities for rural families
- b) the public health system by expanding the range of opportunities particularly given to the countryside and possibly by a better value-for-money ratio
- c) social inclusion with greater involvement of recipient health care services in local communities

Beneficiaries of such services benefit:

- a) their health and well-being
- b) better integration into local communities
- c) skills development
- d) enhancing confidence and
- e) the setting of objectives

An important factor is the farmers who support, encourage and motivate recipients of social and health services. In the long run, the benefits include reducing recipients' dependence on health services for some recipients and reducing costs in the national health system. Benefits include additional assistance in farm work for farmers, companionship during work and greater awareness of the capabilities and needs of participants.

5. Clusters of Social Enterprises

The concept of Cluster and its benefits

In recent years, and especially during the period of economic crisis, practices of solidarity and social self-action have appeared urgently in the Greek territory. The creation of cooperative production units as well as the creation of structures of social solidarity, are social initiatives, which go back to the depth of the historical course of Greek society and depending on the current socio-economic conditions, have played and continue to play an important role in covering productive and social . AS Social And Solidarity Economy, therefore, describes all economic activities based on a democratic, equal, solidarity and cooperative form of organization of relations of production, distribution, consumption and reinvestment, as they are developed with absolute respect for the natural environment and human value (National Observatory for Small and Medium Enterprises, 2009).

The aforementioned activities, internationally described as "Social and Solidarity Economy" include cooperative and collaborative forms of product production or service delivery, which develop either in the context of the market economy or between networks outside the formal private market. They also include activities developed by associations of individuals at the local level, which with the voluntary offer of participants seek to meet unsatisfied, by the state or the private market, social needs of individuals participating in the aforementioned associations, while claiming the growing social participation in them or active state support either to themselves or to the social needs they seek to meet.

The creation of networks and clusters of social enterprises, aims to strengthen the economic activities of enterprises and to maximize the social benefit produced, primarily seeking the satisfaction of conditions and conditions of satisfaction of collective and social benefit. The ultimate goal is to create a collaborative formation with a distinct position that will enhance synergies and create economies of scale.

Two or more Institutions of Social and Solidarity Economy may establish a second or higher degree cooperative to undertake an economic activity in the interest of their member Institutions. In addition, the cooperation with university and research institutes for the participation and monitoring of research programs and studies is supported. Best examples of clusters are presented in Annex II.

Cluster was first introduced as a concept in the early 1990s by Michael Porter and is a form of collaboration between businesses and other stakeholders. Virtually Cluster is called a business cluster that promotes innovation and competitiveness. Clusters are an excellent horizontal policy tool to stimulate local economies and redefine a region's growth model.

Today the term cluster has acquired its own dynamics and affects almost all analyzes made at the level of policymaking for regional development and economic prosperity. Business cluster theory has now been extended to a more complex system of relationships and interactions, including universities, research centers, support organizations, investors, and education providers.

Indicative of the importance now attached internationally to clusters is the fact that global organizations, such as the World Bank, the United Nations and the European Commission, as well as many developed or developing countries, have reduced business clusters to key points in economic analysis. developing and promoting innovation.

Businesses involved in clusters tend to be more innovative, patent more patents and trademarks, and collaborate more. 38% of European jobs are based on clusters. The European strategy for growth through clusters is based on 3 pillars:

1. Clusters as accelerators for innovation and industrial change
2. Interregional and international cooperation in the field of clusters
3. Excellence of clusters

Additionally, the European Clusters Cooperation Platform ECCP connects organizations participating in clusters.

Common features of Clusters

- ✓ The geographical proximity of interconnected companies, suppliers, operators etc.
- ✓ Equal stakeholder participation in the Cluster
- ✓ The existence of common goals aimed at the mutual benefit of the participants (maintaining mutually beneficial relationships)
- ✓ The independence of Cluster participants (businesses, operators, etc.)

It is worth mentioned that it is not necessary for a Cluster to be a company. It can function as a partnership with commonly accepted terms and objectives.

Benefits

- ✓ Helps disseminate knowledge (exchange of knowledge, good practices etc.)
- ✓ Achieve economies of scale (sharing of facilities, infrastructures, services etc.)
- ✓ Easily access for specialized staff
- ✓ Creates favorable conditions for research and development (R&D)
- ✓ Improves the Operational Efficiency of businesses
- ✓ Improves the bargaining ability of businesses
- ✓ Achieves internal organizational improvements
- ✓ Encourages business extroversion

- ✓ Enhances innovation
- ✓ Predicts the creation of new companies mainly through spin-offs (the creation of a new company through the distribution or sale of shares of the “mom” company)
- ✓ Accelerates the creation of "social capital"
- ✓ Provides Opportunities for easier access to financial resources
- ✓ Helps reduce unemployment

Success factors of a cluster

- ✓ Business flexibility
- ✓ Existence of financial resources
- ✓ Clear and common understanding of the changes and challenges of the external environment of businesses that want to work together
- ✓ Members / partners readiness
- ✓ Local factor that favors the development of collaborative business forms
- ✓ Equal participation of members
- ✓ Technological maturity
- ✓ A climate of cooperation and trust
- ✓ Availability of general infrastructure (transport network, telecommunications, banking system, etc.)

Steps for Developing Social Business Clusters

Step 1st Developing common understanding and goals (Stage of Information)

- Finding businesses to participate in
- Information workshops
- Presentation of mutual benefits
- Presenting potential weaknesses
- Trust Building between members who want to participate

Step 2nd Developing Strategic Links (Partnership Stage)

- Determine the competitive advantage of the EMTH region
- Identify the skills of members of a cluster
- Identification of shortcomings
- Developing strategic / formal partnerships
- Cluster structure determination

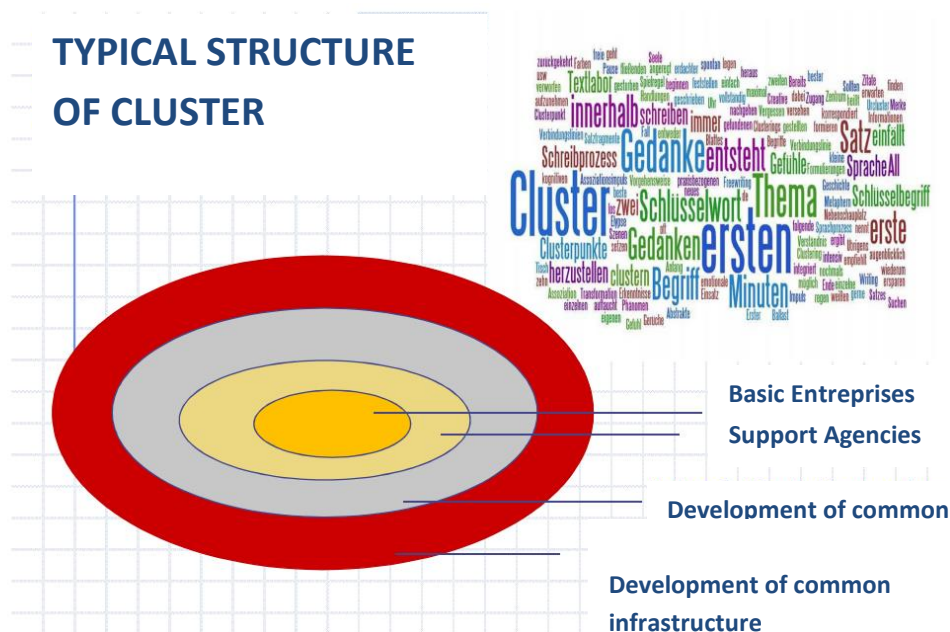
Step 3rd Strategy Development and Vision Link (Planning Stage)

- Shaping a common vision, goal and strategy

- Capture the current situation
- Determining market needs for the future
- Interview with experienced people
- Discussions between stakeholders and market experts
- Exchange of ideas
- Vision determination

Step 4th Cluster Implementation (Maturity Stage)

- Development of an Action Plan and Initiatives
- Determination of expected results
- Recognition of required resources
- Identify which members of the cluster have the know-how and skills
- Management recommendation
- Establish a task force involving at least one member of the leadership group.



How a Cluster works

The facilitator is the one who takes the first steps to develop the cluster. The "inspirer" of a cluster can be either a professional "network broker" or one of the future "partners" of the cluster. He gets in touch with the first companies that will be the clusters and tries to encourage them to participate in it. At the same time, it

undertakes initiatives for the other necessary partners of the cluster (research institutes, universities, etc.).

The cluster management team, which at first may be informal, is mainly made up of executives of the core companies that make up the cluster and the inspirer. The inspirer participates in the management team in order to ensure that the cluster takes initiatives in the common interest of the members. The group is usually recommended in the later stages of cluster development, as in the first steps the required actions are implemented by the inspirer. The chairman / director of the cluster is usually appointed from within the management team, while the mechanisms for the appointment of the members of the management and the director are decided later, during its operation.

The selection of the "manager" of the cluster is crucial for its further smooth development. In cases where it is not clear who among the members of the group will take on this role, the inspirer either nominates a member for this position or, if there is no candidacy, takes over himself, always with the consent of its members administration. In some clusters, positions are provided, such as that of deputy director, where the position of director is held by an executive from the cluster core companies and the position of deputy director is held by the regional companies that provide know-how to the cluster. Under the supervision of the management team, task force teams can be developed to meet the needs of the cluster in the context of projects being implemented. At least one member of the management team participates in these teams, in order to give directions and control the progress of the projects implemented by the team.

The efficient operation of the clusters is needed by the appropriate executives. It is required to have a leader of these executives as well as the executives who will participate to be competent and with the appropriate skills. But in addition to the management, the members and the executives that will make up the cluster, it is necessary to have a committee, which will control the cluster of companies in terms of its activities. An important factor for the proper and successful operation of the cluster is the financing to cover its costs. Various sources of revenue-funding are the state or the members-companies themselves. By securing resources, the success of the cluster is more favorable because it will be easier to achieve its predetermined goals. Therefore, factors that will affect the success of the cluster are the correct formulation and understanding of the pre-determined goals, the existence of an organizational structure to facilitate better communication between the members of the cluster, the existence of flexibility in the way it works the cluster, the existence of interest by the companies themselves to better achieve the goals and the common treatment of problems.

Dissemination of Knowledge and Technology

One of the reasons that companies accept to participate in business clusters is because they aim to better transmit information and spread knowledge among them. Businesses, government agencies, government agencies and various institutions are involved in business clusters. In other words, there is a difference between organizations and this benefits the most effective problem solving and therefore the transmission of information. Universities and research institutions produce knowledge and help disseminate it. Government agencies, on the other hand, have a wealth of knowledge of the national and regional economic conditions and the state legislation available to cooperating companies. In addition, the transfer of knowledge is affected by the accumulation of labor in the cluster of companies as well as the high mobility of employees. Senior staff, academics and research staff create new businesses, and these new businesses tend to be created within the cluster to benefit from knowledge dissemination.

Technology plays a leading role in clusters, since its proper utilization helps to improve the maintenance of contacts between companies (customers - suppliers). When the whole cluster of companies uses advanced technological means, it becomes highly competitive and may have a greater business impact than individual companies.

According to Porter, participating in a cluster creates an advantage in the perception of new technology as well as in the operational and distribution capabilities of each company. Participants in a formation learn quickly and continuously about developments in technology, the availability of new machines through contact with other members of the cluster and daily interaction. The communication between the members of the cluster enables them to act immediately and flexibly in the opportunities that arise.

General principles of systematization of funding sources

Securing funding is a key factor in the development and successful operation of clusters. The sources of funding for business clusters are the state, member companies and financial institutions. In most cases, the financing of clusters, especially in the first steps of their development, comes from initiatives to support the clusters implemented by the state (project clusters). Most programs provide support for the cluster establishment and development phase (eg for a period of about 18 months) and the operation phase (eg for an additional 18 months). The aim is to cover the first costs of the organization and to implement initial actions which will highlight the role of the clusters and the benefits of the companies resulting from their participation in it, so that in the future it will be possible to self-finance its actions. After the first period of operation, the member companies of the clusters are required to pay membership fees in exchange for the services and benefits they enjoy. Subscriptions are an obligation of the members, they are provided on a

regular basis and their amount is fixed. On a flat-rate and voluntary basis, the most robust companies can provide sponsorships. In exceptional cases, where the cluster arises through the market, the financing of its actions comes from the beginning from its members (business clusters). It is obvious that the stronger the base of the cluster (the more members) the more revenue and the greater the capacity for funding and new actions for the benefit of its members. If the cluster is in the form of a company it can take a bank loan to finance specific actions, utilize assets, participate in co-financed projects and generally enjoy all the rights and obligations arising from the partnership.

Proposals for the creation and development of Clusters at REMTH

By reviewing the relevant literature and conducting online research to determine best practices for creating and developing Clusters, it can be concluded that creating and developing Clusters can be developed based on the existing resources of a particular site. Widely and even internationally recognizable products, locations, manners and customs, and companies operating in the same industry can be used for this purpose. In addition, the assistance of educational institutions (Universities, etc.) is considered important for conducting targeted research.

In conclusion, a possible creation of a cluster between the following branches of social enterprises of EMTH and institutions can support and promote the Social Economy in REMTH social enterprises that are active in the cultivation of wine grapes and the Department of Agricultural Biotechnology and Oenology of the International University of Greece social enterprises that provide web design services to the Department of Computer and Electronic Systems Engineering or the Department of Computer Engineering, Computer and Telecommunications of the International University of Greece and the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering of Democritus University

- social enterprises that provide environmental research services to the Department of Environmental Engineering of the International University of Greece and the Department of Forestry and Environmental and Natural Resources Management or the Department of Environmental Engineering of the Democritus University of Thrace
- social enterprises that provide tourism promotion services and the Department of Language, Philology and Culture of the Black Sea Countries of the Democritus University of Thrace
- social enterprises that provide day care services for children and the School of Education (Department of Primary Education, Department of Preschool Education) of the Democritus University of Thrace

Furthermore, the Clusters can be attended by the respective Municipalities of the Region as well as companies with complementary activities aimed at promoting Social Enterprises.

In addition, to strengthen the commercial market, a Loyalty card can be developed that can be redeemed in all member stores of the cluster, in order to attract and retain visitors and residents. The expected benefits include the increase of the turnover of the stores, the increase of the reputation and the clientele of the stores and the promotion of the area. Actions that can contribute to the success of the endeavor include promoting and promoting action to gain social support, attracting members to nearby shopping streets, developing bonds of mutual trust, and committing members to the success of the endeavor.

Also, managing visitors to cities with historic centers or tourist destinations can promote the Social Economy in the Region. The aim will be the development of thematic routes in the historic center based on historical, cultural and other interests (leisure, museums, traditional folk art, local cuisine, etc.), the rearrangement of traffic and operation of shops, the development of printed material and office network information on the tourist destination, the development of multilingual electronic content, the possibility of online closing of cultural or other events. In this action can participate and trade associations, as well as all forms of tourist infrastructure, tourist entrepreneurs in the area, other companies with additional activities (tourist buses, parking management, TAXI, travel agencies, etc.). The expected benefits include the increase of the turnover of the commercial stores and the respective companies, the creation of a positive brand-name of the city, the multi-channel promotion of the action in selected tourist markets. Actions that can contribute to the success of the effort include the planning of the action with local consultation and active participation of the companies, the search for international good practices and the transfer / adoption of those that are in line with the specificity of the area, the activation and participation of local authorities, chambers and other bodies, the continuous improvement and enrichment of the services provided.

6. European Union Policies on Social Innovation

In the European Union, Social Innovation is developing, as it is supported by social (and economic) development. The European Commission's actions in the field of Social Innovation were mainly based on the initiative of the Union of Innovation and Social Investment Action. The philosophy of social innovation is now at the heart of the Commission's political agenda and the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

An important element in the rise of Social Innovation is the positive political approach to the interconnection of social issues and economic policy, with capital and investment transformed into social policy tools and charity giving room for integration, thereby allowing the development of the social market economy safeguarding the place of Social Innovation at the heart of European Union policies. The European Commission places great emphasis on developing strong partnerships, networking and sharing of good practices in the EU as they contribute to those involved in Social Innovation, seeking new ways of supporting people to go to training or find a job and to be better integrated in the labor market, as well as policies to support the development of co-creation action (eg activating various sectors with public service partnerships with social enterprises or associations) usefulness etc.) to develop the concept of eco-systems. Of course, developing a methodology for measuring the impact on society is a difficult but important tool for developing Social Innovation, as it can demonstrate documented successful or unsuccessful action efforts, by linking expected and tangible results to a specific social approach.

Therefore, support for Social Innovation policies as a key element of social and economic development strategy, support for ecosystems that enable Social Innovation initiatives to emerge and formulate a methodology for measuring the impact of their respective interventions, initiatives and actions is a powerful combination. Appropriate scientific support can shape the environment where Social Innovation can emerge, addressing specific needs issues v of human communities (systemic and long basis). In this context, stakeholders (social and solidarity actors, social entrepreneurs, scientists, local political actors, citizens in general) are changing and developing, the approach of local, regional and national authorities to supportive issues such as financing modern methods of dealing with social issues), while leveraging Internet tools it is easier to exchange and communicate ideas as well as to bring together many people on issues of common interest that can more easily lead to the formation of appropriate groups and subgroups working together on a local and broader level.

For the European Commission, Social Innovation could achieve the five (5) key objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy by:

- (a) can provide new, more efficient responses to increased social needs
- (b) can provide local responses to complex social challenges by mobilizing local actors (people, resources, actors, societies)
- (c) has the potential to bring together various stakeholders on specific social issues through new ways of working together and collaborating and involving users (end-users) and
- (d) with proper implementation it can make use of fewer resources, a particularly important issue at a time when public spending is reduced and private capital is shrinking.

Social Innovation is not just a solution to a very specific problem. It may be that, however, part of the appeal of the concept of innovation in general comes from the fact that it can act as an umbrella for discovering solutions and integrating them into social life in a creative and positive way.

According to Pulford (2013) an important form of the Social Innovation Europe Initiative, Social Innovation must be integrated (as a process) in all structures, in all societies. For the countries of the European Union it should be clear that we cannot find all the answers in our countries. It is a process of learning from the successes and mistakes, and it should not be left out of the private sector, as it has great potential for Social Innovation.

According to Han and Andor (2013), Social Innovation is embedded in a wide range of European Commission policy initiatives such as the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, the Innovation Union, the Social Entrepreneurship Initiative, employment and social packages. , the Digital Agenda, the new industry policy, the Health and Aging Innovation Partnership, and cohesion policy. Several Social Innovation initiatives have already received funding from NSRF (NSRF) programs, while in the current 2014-2020 period the opportunities have been integrated into the relevant NSRF programs, creating an environment of greater opportunities for Member States and regions to invest in Social Innovation through of the ERDF and the ESF.

The process of Social Innovation is characterized by the involvement of all stakeholders from the public sector, the business world, civil society organizations, local communities, and citizens. The key elements of the Social Innovation process are:

- (a) Identifying new, unanswered, or inadequately addressed social needs
- (b) developing new solutions in response to these social needs

(c) evaluating the effectiveness of new (proposed) solutions to specific social needs

(d) escalating / further developing effective Social Innovations. The ultimate goal is to create social change with new or improved ways of designing and producing services. The process tends to involve different entities and entities and make use of social design techniques through collaboration, experimentation and prototyping

7. Indicative Social Entrepreneurship-Innovation Programs in the European Union

The European Union cohesion policy is one of the key tools for the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. EU Member States can identify a specific priority axis where they intend to develop Social Entrepreneurship and contribute to the respective specific objectives of this axis. The following are some indicative European programs promoting social entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

Horizon 2020

The HORIZON 2020 research program offers opportunities to develop social entrepreneurship and social experimentation activities. Features typically include:

- a) The Work Program 2016-2017, SC6, where the individual calls relate to a range of Social Entrepreneurship opportunities for the following challenges:
 - a. economic recovery, integration and sustainable long-term development with a focus on co-creation for development and integration with the involvement of citizens, users, the academic community, social partners, public authorities, businesses, creative industries and social enterprises
 - b. reducing inequalities in societies by less exclusion
 - c. the ever evolving/ changing wider environment of the European Union (the non-EU environment)
 - d. a better understanding of Europe's cultural and social diversity
- b) The Work Program 2018-2020, SC6, which following the SC6 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 programs, the individual calls relate to a range of Social Entrepreneurship opportunities for the following challenges:
 - a. Immigration
 - b. socio-economic and cultural transformations in the fourth industrial revolution
 - c. administration for the future.

It is worth mentioned that HORIZON 2020 each year announces social innovation competitions, with great emphasis on utilizing Collective Information Sustainability and Social Innovation Platforms.

EaSI (Employment and Social Innovation)

The program, which comes as a sequel of the PROGRESS program, is a financial instrument supporting employment, social policy and mobility of workers in the European Union. Its main objective is to more effectively support the growth of new jobs and sustainable development through Social Entrepreneurship. It is worth

noting that around € 10-14m of the program budget each year are allocated for youth-related Social Innovation projects. The total program budget is 920m.€.

SocialChallenges.eu

It is a platform that aims to create an environment where active social challenges can be approached by powerful innovative solutions. It is an opportunity that allows different groups of people and individuals to form a collaborative ecosystem where challenges are transformed into business opportunities. The platform supports dedicated public authorities, private companies, stakeholders in the third sector of the economy, prioritizing social and environmental challenges and posting them on the platform.

The program encourages the involvement of socially innovative people, Startups, SMEs, to identify, fund and test specific solutions to the specific reporting needs of the relevant proposals submitted. The program provides funding up to € 30,000 and support for selected proposals. The European Commission also provides support such as:

- a) networking between organizations and sharing experiences through the Social Innovation Community portal
- b) improving the conditions for social innovation and social entrepreneurship, as well as attracting private investors through actions such as:
 - the Social Business Initiative action launched in 2011
 - the Start-up and Scale-up Initiative action
 - the specific initiative to set up the expert group on social entrepreneurship, GECES
 - mapping the current state of the social economy in the countries of the European Union
- c) documentation of the benefits of Social Innovation and their dissemination and methodologies for measuring results
- d) supporting the development of incubators for Social Innovation in Europe
- e) supporting scientific work on new ideas or areas of social innovation

Action Plan for Social Entrepreneurship Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020

The project Action Plan for Social Entrepreneurship- "Cross border Action Plan for the Development and Operation of an Executive Mechanism for the Support and Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in the context of Social Economy and Social Innovation" is implemented in the framework of the 2nd call of the European Program Cross-Border Cooperation "INTERREG VA GREECE - BULGARIA 2014-2020" and belongs to the 4th Priority Axis and the Investment Priority "Providing support for social enterprises". The Department of Economics of the Democritus University

of Thrace participates as a project partner from the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The main objective of the project is the development and operation of an Executive Mechanism for the Support and Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in the context of Social Economy and Social Innovation. Expected results of the project are the improvement of the effectiveness of policies and measures for the social economy and the overall strengthening of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises, which will arise as a consequence of the services provided by the Social Entrepreneurship Support Structure that will be created within the project. The main Beneficiaries of the project are on the one hand the existing social enterprises and their executives and on the other hand the social enterprises that will be established in the future and need information on all developments and news in the field of Social Economy. In addition, beneficiaries of the Program are members of vulnerable groups in both the Greek and Bulgarian regions included in the Cross-Border Action Plan.

Social Forces Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020

The project Social Forces- "ReinFORCE SOCIAL Entrepreneurial Spirit through setting up Innovative Support Structures in the cross-border Territory" is implemented in the framework of the 2nd call of the European Cross-Border Cooperation Program "INTERREG VA GREECE - BULGARIA 2014-2020" and belongs to the 4th Priority Axis and in the Investment Priority "Providing support for social enterprises". From the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, the Development Partner of Rodopi participates as the main partner of the project and as partners the Chamber of Xanthi and the Chamber of Drama. The overall objective of the project is to enhance the effectiveness of regional policies and local initiatives to promote and support social entrepreneurship through the design of joint social economy awareness activities and cooperation to establish an innovative support structure that will function as E-Help Desk social entrepreneurship in Greece and Bulgaria, as an advantage for local economic development and territorial competitiveness. The project also encourages the transfer of knowledge about social enterprises, in order to become familiar with good management and marketing, examples and information exchange, knowing the specifics of social enterprises. The target groups and beneficiaries of the project are mainly unemployed, existing NGOs and related stakeholders interested in the social economy and entrepreneurship for the entire cross-border area.

SOSEDEE Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020

The Sosedee project - "Support of Social Enterprises Development & Enhancement of Employment" is implemented within the framework of the 2nd call of the European Cross-Border Cooperation Program "INTERREG VA GREECE - BULGARIA 2014-2020" and belongs to the 4th Priority Axis and the Investment Priority

"Providing support for social enterprises ». From the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace participates as a project partner the Department of Business Administration of the Technological Educational Institution of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The main results of the project are the development of a knowledge base of the current profile of Social Enterprises in the project area, the training and online learning of 120 potential and existing Social Entrepreneurs, the establishment and operation of two Social Enterprises in the field of green economy and the creation 8 new job opportunities. The direct beneficiaries are the long-term unemployed, people from vulnerable social groups, existing social enterprises and potentially Social Entrepreneurs.

Growing Social Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020

The project Growing Social- "Enhancement of social entrepreneurship through the establishment of support structures in the CB area" is implemented in the framework of the 2nd call of the European Cross-Border Cooperation Program "INTERREG VA GREECE - BULGARIA 2014-2020" and belongs to the 4th Priority Axis and the Investment Priority "Providing support for social enterprises". Expected results of the project are the creation of 2 new Social Enterprises with at least 5 members each, the training of 100 people in matters of administration of Social Cooperative Enterprises and the participation of 300 students in interactive awareness workshops in matters of social entrepreneurship. The direct beneficiaries of the project are secondary school students, who will be trained in social entrepreneurship in order to be provided with appropriate supplies for their future. Direct beneficiaries are also potentially unemployed entrepreneurs who will have the opportunity to take advantage of the new structures formed within the project, namely the local social entrepreneurship support office of the Municipality of Pylaia Chortiatis, the online interactive office and the incubator of Technopolis ICT Business Park, to create social enterprises.

I SEE Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020

Project "I see: Interregional Social Enterprise Empowerment" is being implemented under the European Territorial Cooperation Program INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020. Project main objective is the Support of social entrepreneurship in Eastern Macedonia - Thrace and Smolyan CBC regions by encouragement of social entrepreneurship and social inclusion and increasing employment in social groups in risk.

The project specific objectives are:

- to establish support structures for social entrepreneurship
- to develop support mechanism and appropriate tools for social enterprises

- to build the capacity of social entrepreneurship consultants
- to raise awareness for social entrepreneurship

+ RESILIENT Interreg Mediterranean

The + RESILIENT project is based on the cooperation of 4-speed propellers from 8 European countries in the Mediterranean to address the need for innovation that helps increase the competitiveness of SMEs and stimulate new jobs, especially for companies operating in the social economy .

The aim of the project is to launch a policy change process at regional level in the regions involved, for the successful integration of Cohesion Policy (Europe 2020+).

The overall goal of the project is to positively influence and adapt / change the various structural elements of the policy governing the "Highly Oriented and Responsive Collaborative Formations (SVRC)" by harnessing the dynamic, technology-driven, open innovation databases and successful models with social significance and impact, creating social value chains at transnational level.

8. Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

The Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace is located in the Northeast corner of Greece. It has excellent geostrategic, economic and development value, with great comparative advantages.

Picture 1: Geographic position of Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace in Greece



The Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace is one of the most important factors in developing the area and improving the quality of life of its residents. Operational planning and its actions need to be efficient with emphasis on a number of critical issues that plague the region, such as the high poverty rate of its residents and the high unemployment rates, especially at the youth level. Employment is one of the most important issues that the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace has to address in its area of responsibilities, not only to tackle unemployment but also to enhance social cohesion by targeted support for vulnerable social groups, such as vulnerable groups of the population (ie people with disabilities, former or current addicts, and also special groups of the population (unemployed, illiterate, people in remote locations etc).

A key feature of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace is its border position at national and European Union levels, which until three decades ago imposed significant restrictions on mobility in the east and north. In the last decade, the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace has become a "critical region" into a "gateway - crossing the country and the EU", through the completion of the Egnatia

Motorway and its Vertical Axes, the transit of major energy networks through its territory, and through the enlargement of EU with neighboring states (Bulgaria, Romania).

The Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace presents a significant natural capital, wealth of species and habitats, due to the combination of the estuaries of two large rivers, the extensive coastal zone, and the mountainous area. Geomorphologically, the region is distinguished in Eastern Macedonia by fertile basins enclosed in hilly streams, the mountainous Thrace that is geomorphologically identified with the Rhodope massif, while the coastal areas are lowland with the characteristic Deltaic systems of Nestos and Evros. The areas of the region also include the two islands of Thassos and Samothrace which with their unique characteristics create particular interest in their endemic and natural capital. Despite its relatively small size, the Region has 34 sites officially included in the Natura 2000 National List of Protected Areas. In addition, it includes two areas along the Nestos and Evros rivers that are part of the RAMSAR Treaty.

In addition, the geographical position of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace in relation to the Balkan countries, the Black Sea Republics, and in relation to the Asian continent and the Mediterranean, presents significant development opportunities in sectors such as exports, tourism and energy. From the surrounding geographical area, Turkey, Bulgaria, FYROM and Romania stand out as trading partners being important export destinations (Operational Program "Eastern Macedonia and Thrace" 2014 - 2020, 2014).

Population is the most important program size of development and spatial planning, but it remains one of the most unbalanced factors. Positive population development is linked to social and economic development, while population stagnation, or worse, population decline, leads to social and economic degradation. Its permanent population amounts to 608,170 inhabitants according to the final results of the 2011 census, thus covering 5.54% of the total population of the country. As urban population is characterized by 59.1% of the total population and shows increasing trends, while as rural 40.9%, and shows decreasing trends.

In addition, regarding the current economic situation compared to the other Regions of the Country, the economy of REMTH is distinguished by three main characteristics:

- historically low growth rates,
- traditional production structure with a strong agricultural orientation
- significant accumulation of invested capital mainly in the form of transport and energy infrastructure.

On the other hand, taking into account the rich endogenous potential of REMTH in terms of natural and cultural resources and human resources, significant growth opportunities are recorded. In particular, REMTH is characterized by the following strengths:

- relatively wide production base,
- a relatively recent dynamics of its business activity in R&D,
- broad diversification and rich development resources, including water resources, renewable energy and other energy resources, rich natural environment and ecological reserves, cultural and mineral resources,
 - well-developed road transport infrastructure and prospects for interconnection with the Trans-European Networks,
- significant in quantity and balanced developed infrastructures of industrial concentration (INDUSTRY / INDUSTRY),
- strong identity of the main urban centers,

Interculturalism and

- relative consolidation of a spirit guided by the sustainable approach
- development and quality of life.

9. Description of the ecosystem of the Social Economy of the Region of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace

The ecosystem of the Social Economy of the REMTH consists of active social enterprises, the Social Cooperative Enterprises' Network. Of EMTH, the members, the employees, the community around them, the suppliers and the customers, the projects implemented by various public sector bodies, the financial tools and the grants for the establishment of new and the development of existing Social And Solidarity Economy bodies. The ecosystem of Social And Solidarity Economy continues to be at an early stage of development and highlights the urgent need to improve the viability of its institutions. Nevertheless, the economic ecosystem created by the Social and Solidarity Economy is distinguished by stability, timelessness, high resistance to external shocks and can mobilize social resources with great reciprocity, in terms of job creation and endogenous development of the productive fabric. An economic ecosystem must be dynamic, in order to be able to support new initiatives, and to connect the local with the international environment.

Supporting Social Innovation policies as a key element of the social and economic development strategy, supporting ecosystems that enable the emergence of Social Innovation initiatives and developing a methodology for measuring the impact of the respective interventions, initiatives and actions is an appropriate combination that support can shape the environment in which Social Innovation can emerge, addressing specific needs of human communities (systemic and long-term in principle).

The bodies of Social And Solidarity Economy in the Region seek to contribute dynamically to address some of the most important challenges in the region, such as poverty and unemployment, but also to highlight and promote an alternative economic model.

In addition, the Network of Social Cooperative Enterprises of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (EMTH Coin Network) was established and operates at EMTH since 2015, with the goal of getting to know, networking and cooperating Social Cooperative Enterprises. of the EMTH Region. The Social Cooperative Enterprises. Network EMTH actively participates in public consultations on the social economy and entrepreneurship and implements actions to inform social entrepreneurs and raise public awareness of the benefits of social entrepreneurship, especially in the field of sustainable inclusive development.

At the same time, in addition to the I-SEE project, other co-financed projects aimed at the development of social enterprises (such as SoSEDEE, Social Forces,+RESILIENT) are being implemented in the Region during the current programming period.

The registered social enterprises of the Region of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace are

active in the following sectors:

- Athletic activities
- Cultural education services
- Services for organizing conferences and artistic events
- Tourist promotion services
- Retail trade of groceries
- Mental health services
- Alternative treatment services
- Cultural education services
- Food Services
- Business consulting and other management consulting activities
- Services of cultural associations and associations
- Training services through training seminars
- Business consulting and other management consulting activities
- Web design services
- Retail sale of raw agricultural products, dairy products, nuts and general foodstuffs
- Environmental research services
- Research and experimental development services in engineering and technology, other than biotechnology
- Daily care services for children
- Services of protected natural habitats, including the protection of wild fauna and flora
- Services provided by a refreshment room
- Engineering services for energy projects
- Catering services with full restaurant service
- Sheep and goat breeding
- Cultivation of common winemaking grapes
- General cleaning services of buildings

In the Region of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace, the majority of active Social And Solidarity Economy bodies are active in the category of collective and productive purpose, while the categories of integration, KOISPE and social care gather significantly fewer active bodies.

According to the data resulting from the Annual Reports of 2017 of the Institutions of Social and Solidarity Economy with data for the year 2016, the Region of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace gathers 6% of the active institutions of Social and Solidarity Economy country. From the data of the annual reports it appears that in the year 2016 the percentages of the active bodies in the thirteen regions of the country

differed in relation to the year 2015. More specifically, in 2016 the percentage of active bodies in the region of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace decreased by 2%, of the total. In 2016, the distribution of active actors seems to continue to be largely related to the population characteristics of the region. In general, it could be assumed that the lag of the region, in terms of the development of the Social and Solidarity Economy sector, is probably due to the more limited possibilities and opportunities given compared to the capital, to the more difficult access to information about the sector, as well as the small degree of development of the cooperative consciousness and the culture in solidarity of the respective local communities.

In 2015, the active actors of the region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace had other sources of funding (€ 33.8 thousand), which, however, decreased significantly the following year.

Regarding the human resources of the region, there is a significant range of intangible knowledge in the livestock sector, and full academic composition of the academic sector, with strong scientific expertise in the field of ICT, and particularly positive trends in extroversion, academic productivity and public productivity. funding to the research sector. At the same time, the low participation of the population in the labour market, high unemployment among young people, women and the long-term unemployed, the phenomena of exclusion and poverty that reduce social cohesion, the particularly low percentage of higher education graduates in the total population both nationally as well as the European average. and high school dropout rates, high levels of digital illiteracy, the dependence of the research sector on direct or indirect public funding, with low performance in competing European research and technological development projects, and particularly limited evidence of research excellence, low results and lack of systematicity in the process of technology transfer from public research or academic organizations to companies, are characteristics of the Region (Special Secretariat for Social and Solidarity Economy, 2018).

According to the General Register of Institutions of Social and Solidarity Economy, in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace there are about 68 Social Cooperative Enterprises:

NAME	DISTINCTIVE TITLE	MAIN ACTIVITY	REGIONAL UNITY	MUNICIPALITY
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SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS Varades	Varades SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Alternative tourism-camping	EVROS	SAMOTHRACE
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE Go Forest	Go forest SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Other sports activities	DRAMAS	DRAMAS
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS KRIFLA	KRIFLA SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Cultural education services	DRAMAS	DOXATO
PYTHIA SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT	PYTHIA	Conference services	KAVALA	PAGGAIUOY
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF DIGITAL PRODUCTION AND COMMUNICATION	THRAX SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Tourist promotion and visitor information services	EVROS	ALEXANDROUP OLI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT SYLLOGI	SYLLOGI SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Collection of edible products of native plants	XANTHI	XANTHI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS SPIRA	InSpiral SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Tourism and culture promotion activities	RODOPI	KOMOTINI
SOCIAL CONSUMER COOPERATIVE OF XANTHI SYN.PE.	MAZI	Retail sale of groceries	XANTHI	XANTHI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE LIMITED LIABILITY MENTAL HEALTH SECTOR OF KAVALA PREFECTURE		Mental health services	KAVALA	KAVALA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS (THRAKIS BAKERIES SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISES	THRAKI BAKERIES SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Structure design or business restructuring services	EVROS	ALEXANDROUP OLI

SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT IFIGENEIA	IFIGENEIA	Alternative therapy services	EVROS	ORESTIADA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT "ERGO CULTURE / HUMAN TRACES"	ERGO CULTURE/HUMAN TRACES SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	General staffing services for the public	KAVALA	KAVALA
COOPERATIVE OF EMPLOYEES SELF-MANAGEED CAFE-BOOKSTORE	SYNERGEIO	Cultural education services	DRAMAS	DRAMAS
BENDREDIN SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT	MPENTRENTIN SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Services provided by a traditional cafe	EVROS	ORESTIADA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT OF ANTHROPOU FYSIS	ANTHROPOU FYSIS SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Training services through training seminars	DRAMAS	DRAMAS
SCIENTIFIC TEAM OPSOMETHA IN PHILIPPOS	SCIENTIFIC TEAM OPSOMETHA IN PHILIPPOS	Services provided by cultural and entertainment associations	KAVALA	KAVALA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT O2	O2 SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Business consulting and other management consulting activities	XANTHI	XANTHI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS IDONIS	IDONIS SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Wholesale of dairy products	DRAMAS	DRAMAS

SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS MYRODATO	MYRODATO SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Production of processed and preserved nuts, peanuts, roasted, salted, or otherwise prepared	XANTHI	XANTHI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS WebD	WebD SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Web design services	KAVALA	KAVALA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE	AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Production organization consulting services	RODOPI	KOMOTINI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS ILIODORA	ILIODORA SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Cultural education services	DRAMAS	DOXATO
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT OF TECHNOLOGY OF SPORTS EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTAL CULTURE	TECHNOLOGY OF SPORTS EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTAL CULTURE. SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Sports and recreational education services	KAVALA	KAVALA
SPARTAKOS SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT	SPARTAKOS SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Production of spaghetti, lasagna, couscous and similar flour products	RODOPI	KOMOTINI

SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS HELLENIC OPTIMUM FOODS	HELLENIC OPTIMUM FOODS SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Retail sale of raw agricultural products nec	KAVALA	NESTOS
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT KOUKLOTOPIA	KOUKLOTOPIA SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Puppet show services	KAVALA	KAVALA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS EPARKEIA	EPARKEIA	Production of cereals and vegetable flours; mixtures thereof	XANTHI	XANTHI
NORTH HELLENIC AGROCANNABIS SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT	HELLENIC BIO AGROCANNABIS SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES		XANTHI	XANTHI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS EUKALYPSIS	EUKALYPSIS SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Non-hazardous waste disposal services	KAVALA	KAVALA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE RESEARCH-DEVELOPMENT-PRODUCTION OF NEW IDEA AND EDUCATION PRODUCTS	PROMITHEAS SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Research and experimental development services in engineering and technology, except biotechnology	EVROS	ORESTIADA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT OURANIO TOXO	OURANIO TOXO SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.		EVROS	ALEXANDROUP OLI

SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT CITIZENS 'INITIATIVE FOR THE RESCUE OF THE FOREST VILLAGE OF PANGAI	FOREST VILLAGE OF PANGAIO SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Services of protected natural habitats, including wildlife protection	KAVALA	PANGAIYOU
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT OF PROMOTING LOCAL IDENTITY SAMOTHRAKIS ZATHE	ZATHE SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Refreshment services	EVROS	SAMOTHRACE
EKALYPSIS ENERGY SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE	EUKALYPSIS – ENERGEIAKI SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Engineering services for energy projects	KAVALA	KAVALA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT DRATTO	DRATTO SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES		DRAMAS	DRAMAS
VERTIGO SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF SOCIAL AND COLLECTIVE BENEFIT	VERTIGO SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Production of web portals content	EVROS	ORESTIADA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS SYNERGO - KOINONIKA	SYNERGO - KOINONIKA SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Sub-contracted operations as part of manufacturing of other textiles nec	XANTHI	XANTHI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT PANAGIA THASSOS	PANAGIA THASSOS SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	General staffing services for the public	THASOS	THASOS
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS KYTTARO ORESTIADA	KYTARRO ORESTIADA SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Other perennial crops	EVROS	ORESTIADA

SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT THRACIAN HELLENIC BIO HEMP	HELLENIC BIO HEMP SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Environmental research services	XANTHI	AVDIRON
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE BUSINESS OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS ATHLOUMAI	ATHLOUMAI SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	General staffing services for the public	KAVALA	KAVALA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT OF THEOGENIS	THEOGENIS SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Web portals	EVROS	SOUFLI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT Eco Active	Eco Active SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Activities of other organizations nec	RODOPI	KOMOTINI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT Maistrali	Maistrali SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES		EVROS	ALEXANDROUP OLI
Social Coop Enterprises. Collective and Social Benefit Amadryades	Amadryades	Catering services with full restaurant service	XANTHI	MYKI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT GENISEA	GENISEA SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES 3	Sugarcane cultivation	XANTHI	ΑΒΔΗΡΩΝ
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS Made in My Country	MadeIn - MyCountry GR SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Retail sale of foodstuffs in general	EVROS	DIDIMOTEIXOS
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT PHILADELPHOS	PHILADELPHOS ΚΟΙΝΣΕΠ	Retail trade super market, with emphasis on food trade	DRAMAS	DRAMAS

SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS GNOROS	"GNOROS"	Sheep and goat breeding	XANTHI	TOPEIROU
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT WINE - WINERY OF THRACE	WINE - WINERY OF THRACE SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Growing of wineries	EVROS	ALEXANDROUP OLI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF THRACE MOTIVATION	THRA.CE.. SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Business consulting and other management consulting activities	RODOPI	KOMOTINI
NETWORK KOINSEP OF EASTERN MACEDONIA THRACE	NETWORK KOINSEP OF EASTERN MACEDONIA THRACE	Services of cultural associations and unions	RODOPI	KOMOTINI
SOCIAL COOPERATION LIMITED LIABILITY MENTAL HEALTH SECTOR RODOPI EVROS	NAUTILOS	General cleaning services for buildings	EVROS	ALEXANDROUP OLI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT OF NESTOS	NESTOS SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	General staffing services for the public	KAVALA	NESTOS
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT Panspermia Foods	Panspermia Foods SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.	Sales agents who mediate in the sale of food	KAVALA	NESTOS
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS HOP HOP, PLAYFUL EVERYDAY LIFE	hop hop SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES		RODOPI	KOMOTINI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS DIDIMOTEIXO 2020	D2020 SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Organizing services for scientific or cultural events	EVROS	DIDIMOTEIXOS

SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS RODI	RODI SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Services provided by cultural and entertainment associations	RODOPI	KOMOTINI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS "Orpheus Network - Orpheus Net"	"Orpheus Network - Orpheus Net" SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES."	Support services related to sports and leisure activities	EVROS	ALEXANDROUP OLI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE COMPANY INCLUDING LIMITED LIABILITY FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL SKILLS "ALLILENGIA DRASI"	"ALLILENGIA DRASI"	Services provided by a traditional cafe	DRAMAS	DRAMAS
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT OF CHION	CHION SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Ski resort services	DRAMAS	DRAMAS
Social Cooperative Utility "KRINO OF RODOPI	KRINO OF RODOPI KOINΣEΠ	Training seminar organization services	XANTHI	XANTHI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS KIVOTOS	KIVOTOS SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES		KAVALA	KAVALA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS DIKAION FARM	DIKAION FARM SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Cultivation of other non-perennial plants	EVROS	ORESTIADA
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFIT Association of Farmers and Employees of Paggaiο Kavala	Association of Farmers and Employees of Paggaiο Kavala SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES.		KAVALA	PANGAIΟΥ

Social Cooperative Enterprise of Collective and Social Benefit Sparmacheto	SPARMATSETO SOCIAL COOP ENTERPRISES	Services of other non-governmental organizations	XANTHI	XANTHI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS PLETENO	PLETENO KOINSEP	Other support services to improve the lives of citizens and upgrade general living conditions	XANTHI	MYKI
SOCIAL COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE OF COLLECTIVE AND SOCIAL BENEFITS Aisimi Farm	Aisimi Farm KOINSEP	Meat retail	EVROS	ALEXANDROUP OLI

10. Figures Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (Hellenic Statistical Authority)

This chapter presents figures of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, such as population data by Regional Unit, labor force and unemployment rates for the years 2014-2018, per capita GDP compared to other regions of Greece, overnight stays in accommodation hotel and camping for the years 2017 and 2018, the distribution of the used agricultural area in basic categories of use and business structure indicators for the year 2018 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019).

Table 1 Permanent population at REMTH by age group and employment

Description of place of residence/ age groups	Total	Economically active			Economically inactive		
		Total	Employed	Unemployed	Total	Pensioners	Other
Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace	608.182	234.579	187.306	47.273	373.603	153.356	220.247
Regional Unit of Rhodope	112.039	43.013	35.798	7.215	69.026	25.883	43.143
0-14	15.744	0	0	0	15.744	0	15.744
15-34	30.765	14.965	10.985	3.980	15.800	0	15.800
35-54	29.635	21.804	19.112	2.692	7.831	1.359	6.472
55+	35.895	6.244	5.701	543	29.651	24.524	5.127
Regional Unit of Drama	98.287	36.720	28.020	8.700	61.567	28.445	33.122
0-14	13.920	0	0	0	13.920	0	13.920
15-34	20.968	11.889	7.523	4.366	9.079	0	9.079
35-54	27.361	20.640	16.947	3.693	6.721	1.419	5.302
55+	36.038	4.191	3.550	641	31.847	27.026	4.821
Regional Unit of Evros	147.947	57.337	48.443	8.894	90.610	40.513	50.097
0-14	20.814	0	0	0	20.814	0	20.814

15-34	38.237	21.780	16.967	4.813	16.457	0	16.457
35-54	37.409	28.515	25.116	3.399	8.894	2.064	6.830
55+	51.487	7.042	6.360	682	44.445	38.449	5.996
Regional Unit of Thassos	13.770	5.468	4.478	990	8.302	3.918	4.384
0-14	1.980	0	0	0	1.980	0	1.980
15-34	2.749	1.763	1.263	500	986	0	986
35-54	3.853	2.965	2.559	406	888	173	715
55+	5.188	740	656	84	4.448	3.745	703
Regional Unit of Kavala	124.917	48.782	38.942	9.840	76.135	33.031	43.104
0-14	18.013	0	0	0	18.013	0	18.013
15-34	27.870	15.878	11.056	4.822	11.992	0	11.992
35-54	35.380	27.379	23.076	4.303	8.001	1.644	6.357
55+	43.654	5.525	4.810	715	38.129	31.387	6.742
Regional Unit of Xanthi	111.222	43.259	31.625	11.634	67.963	21.566	46.397
0-14	20.477	0	0	0	20.477	0	20.477
15-34	30.987	16.800	10.780	6.020	14.187	0	14.187
35-54	30.664	21.927	17.187	4.740	8.737	1.686	7.051
55+	29.094	4.532	3.658	874	24.562	19.880	4.682

Table 2: Labor force and unemployment rate at REMTH 2014-2018 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019)

Labour force (in thousands) and unemployment rate (%), in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, 2014 - 2018					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Workforce	257,1	258	259,9	255,6	253,8
Employed	195	198	200,7	205,8	213,4
Unemployed	62,2	60	59,2	49,8	40,4

Unemployment rate	24,2	23,3	22,8	19,5	15,9
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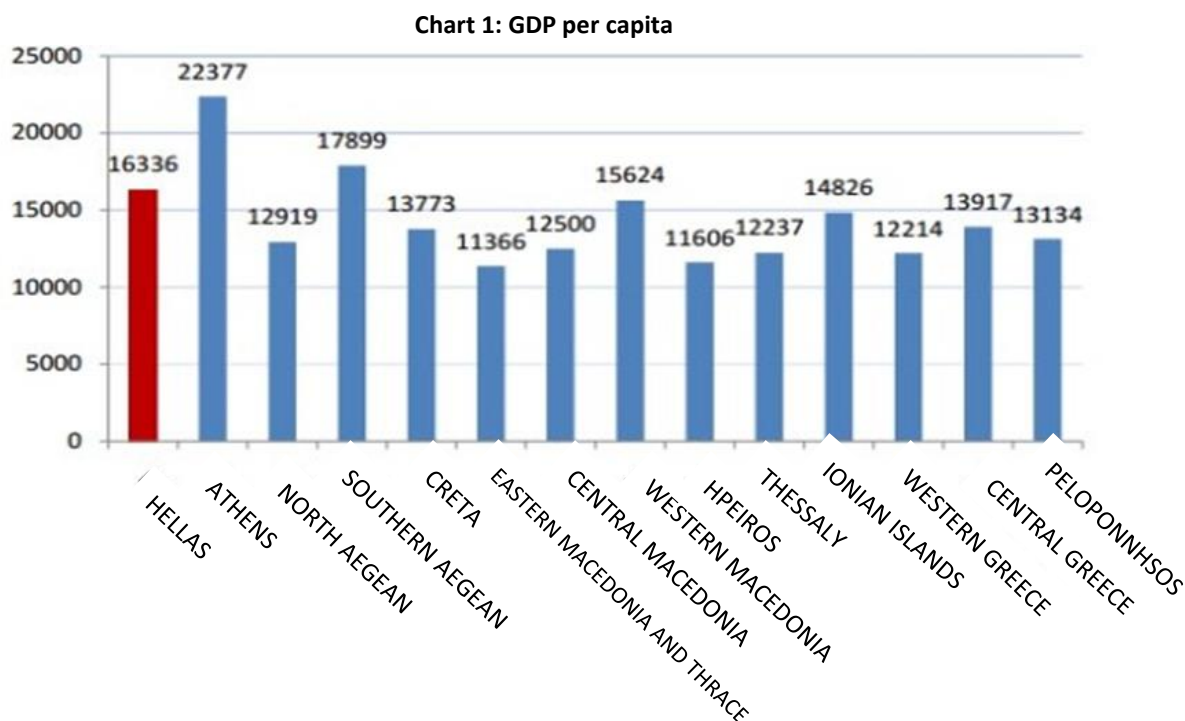


Chart 1 shows the per capita Gross Domestic Product by region. The highest GDP per capita is observed in the Region of Attiki. The lowest GDP per capita is observed in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace which is almost one half of the GDP per capita in Attiki. These data show a significant lag in the Region of Western Greece compared to the other Regions of the country.

Table 3: Night stays in hotel type accommodation and camping in REMTH 2018 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019)

Overnight stays of Greeks and foreigners (in thousands) in the accommodations hotel and camping in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, 2018				
2017	2018			Change of % of total nights 2018/2017
	Total	Ratio%	Bed occupancy %	
2110	2101	2,3	36,2	-0,4

Table 3 shows the overnight stays in thousands in the accommodation of the Region. Overnight stays at REMTH in 2018 decreased by 0.4% compared to 2017. This

indicator is linked to the historic centers and tourist destinations in the Region.

Table 4: Distribution of the used agricultural area by basic categories of use in REMTH 2016 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019)

Distribution of the used agricultural area in thousands of acres, according to basic categories of use in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, 2016							
Annual cultivations		Vines and raisins		Trees cultivations		Other areas	
Holdings	Areas	Holdings	Areas	Holdings	Areas	Holdings	Areas
40.478	3.062	4.092	40	15.283	175	24.392	357

Table 4 shows the distribution of agricultural land into categories of use (annual cultivations, vines and raisins, tree cultivations, other areas). Most of the land area is used for annual cultivations, while the fewest for viticulture.

Table 5: List of business indicators in EMTH for the year 2018 based on the annual report of the Institute of Commerce and Services of ESEE

List of business indicators in EMTH for the year 2018 based on the annual report of the Institute of Commerce and Services of ESEE	
Assets	0.7% of total funds
Asset turnover speed	1,2:1
Sales	270,3 million €
Gross profit	17,2%
Net Profit before taxes	5,9 million €
Capital	220 million €
General liquidity	1,33
Instant liquidity	0,69

In the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, the assets of the companies covered 0.7% of the total capital and their sales 0.6% of their total turnover. The sales of the

companies showed a marginal decrease by 0.6% in 2018 and amounted to 270.3 million euros. The reduction of gross profits by 4.2% resulted in the gross profit margin being reduced to 17.2%. However, the increase in operating income led to an improvement in the operating result by 2.0% in 2018. Finally, net pre-tax profits amounted to 5.9 million euros, showing an increase of 1.1% compared to the previous year. Net profit and return on equity ratios remained virtually unchanged.

In addition, total funds increased by 5.6% in 2018 and amounted to approximately 220 million euros. The turnover of assets decreased marginally to 1.2: 1. Finally, the equity of the companies of the Region increased by 3.1% in 2018, while liabilities increased at a faster rate (6.9%), resulting in the index debt burden to rise to 65.8%. The short-term charge increased to 4.6: 1, while the share of bank liabilities to the total amounted to 51.1%. General and direct liquidity had a declining trend and amounted to 1.33 and 0.69 respectively in 2018.

Furthermore, at this point it is worth to make a reference in the field of Research and Development. The production of R&D statistics for Greece is carried out by the National Documentation Center, body and national authority of the Hellenic Statistical System, in collaboration with the Hellenic Statistical Authority.

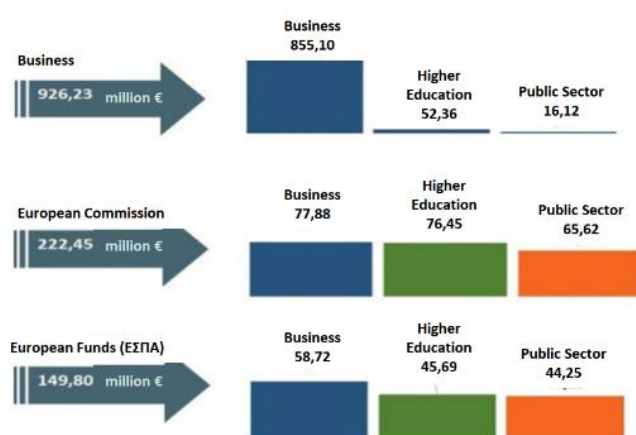
The most well-known indicator extracted from R&D statistics, as a percentage (%) of R&D expenditure on GDP, is the "R&D intensity" which reflects the goal of the EU2020 strategy to achieve R&D investment in a percentage 3% of the European Union GDP. Total R&D expenditures in Greece in 2018 (€ 2,174.67 million) were 6.9% higher than in 2017 (€ 2,038.43 million), as shown in the chart below. R&D expenditure is included in the country's GDP as, according to the revised European System of Accounts ESA 2010, it is recorded as fixed capital expenditure. The increase in R&D expenditure results to the increase of the "R&D Intensity" index to 1.18% in 2018 from 1.13% in 2017.

Chart 2: The Evolution of Expenditures in the Research & Development sector in the period 2011-2018 (Eurostat, 2019)



Moreover, in terms of the sources from which the 2018 R&D expenditures were financed, the largest amount, 926.23 million euros (42.6% of the total), came from companies. Most of this amount, 855.10 million euros, was invested in R&D carried out by the companies themselves. The European Union is the second largest source of R&D funding, with € 222.45 million (10.2% of the total), almost at the same level as in 2017. The EU has funded research projects in all areas, mainly in the of Horizon 2020, the current Program for Research and Innovation, in which Greek institutions have achieved high performance over time.

Chart 3: Main sources of business financing in the Research & Development sector for the year 2018 (Eurostat, 2019)



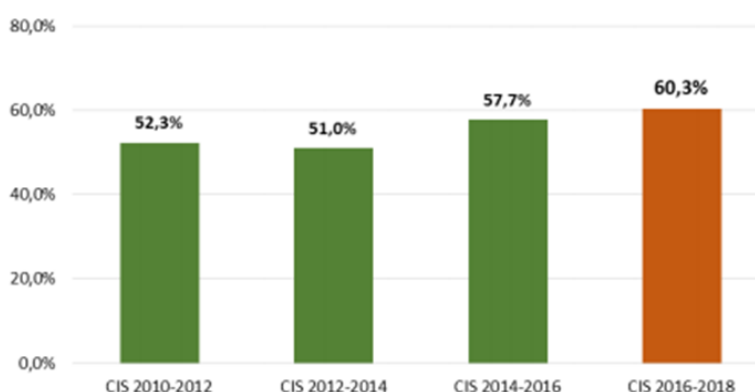
Regarding the staff engaged in R&D activities, there is an increase in the full-time

equivalents of total R&D staff and researchers. More specifically, the total R&D staff in Greece in 2017 reaches to 48,226 employees, showing an increase of 15.4% compared to 2016. There is also an increase in the category of researchers, who in 2017 reach the 35,185 (increased by 19.7%) compared to more specifically, in the business sector, in 2017 the total R&D staff is 14,749, recording an increase of 62.0% compared to 2016. Researchers increased by 90.1% compared to 2016 (10,663 in 2017, while 5,608 in 2016).

Apart from the Research & Development sector, the Innovation sector in our country is also of interest.

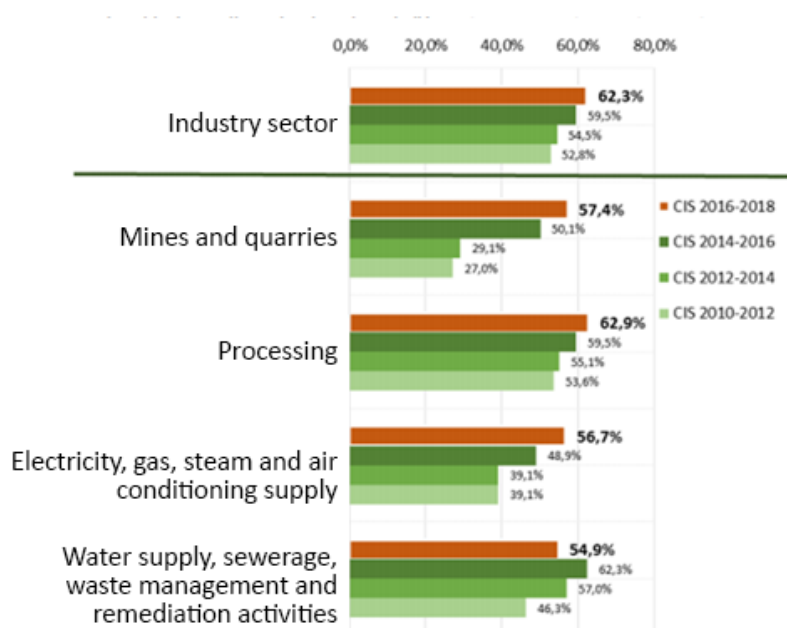
In the period 2016-2018, the percentage of innovative companies in Greece amounts to 60.3%, showing an increase of 2.6 percentage points compared to the immediately preceding three years 2014-2016, as shown in the chart below.

Chart 4: Percentages (%) of Innovative Enterprises every three years in Greece (Eurostat, 2019)



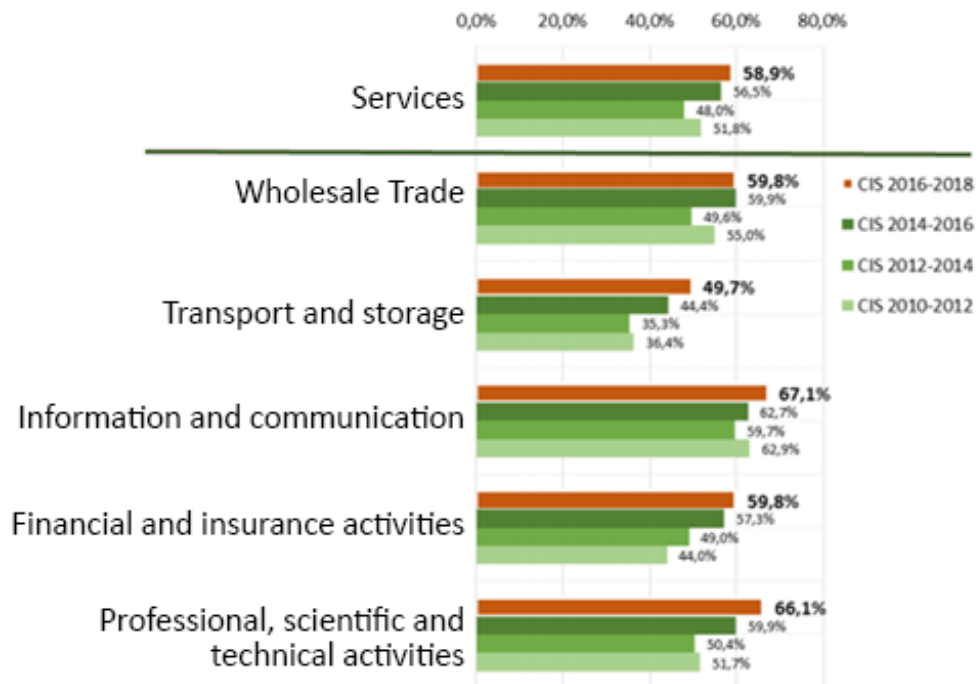
The improvement of the percentage of innovative enterprises concerns both Industry and Services. Specifically, in the Industry sector, the percentage of innovative companies in the period 2016-2018 amounts to 62.3%, compared to 59.5% in the period 2014-2016, showing an increase of 2.8 percentage points. An increase is also recorded in the sub-sectors "Processing", "Mines and quarries" and "Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply", where there is an increase in percentages, over time, between 2010 and 2018. The highest percentage of innovative enterprises (62, 9%) has the largest manufacturing sector.

Chart 5: Shares (%) of Innovative Enterprises by primary sector - Economic Activity in Industry in Greece (Eurostat, 2019)



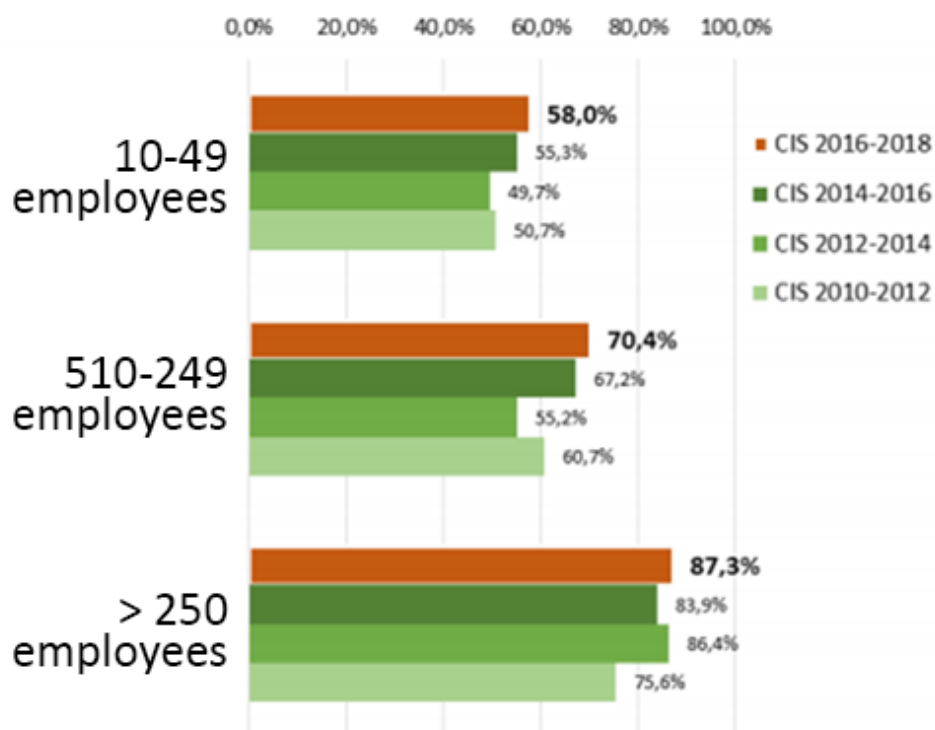
In the Services sector, the percentage of innovative companies in the period 2016-2018 amounts to 58.9%, compared to 56.5% in the period 2014-2016, showing an increase of 2.4 percentage points. Innovation rates show an increase in the sub-sectors "Transport and storage", "Information and communication", "Financial and insurance activities" and "Professional, scientific and technical activities". The highest percentage of innovative companies (67.1%) is recorded in the "Information and communication" sector. The "Information and communication" sector has the highest percentage of innovation in all four periods. The numerous branches of "Wholesale Trade" are at the same levels as in the last three years.

Chart 6: Percentages (%) of Innovative Enterprises by primary sector economic activity in Services in Greece (Eurostat, 2019)



Finally, the chart below shows the innovation rates of companies depending on the number of employees. The rate of innovation increases with the size of the business. 58.0% of companies has up to 10-49 employees, while 70.4% in companies with occupies 510-249 employees and reaches the 87.3% in companies with more than 250 employees.

Chart 7: Percentages (%) of Innovative Enterprises per size class of employees in Greece (Eurostat, 2019)



It is worth mentioned that updated indicators and approved figures for the Social Enterprises of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace were not available.

11. PESTEL Analysis of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace for Social Entrepreneurship

PESTEL analysis is an important tool that can play a key role in identifying the coincidence, divergence or approach of particular topics that are analyzed in relation to important factors being out of our immediate sphere of influence but influencing the operation or development of specific solutions or suggestions.

Political factors	Economical factors
<p>Attractive incentives for attracting investment (eg Developmental Law)</p> <p>Multiannual operation within the limitations of the memorandum requirements</p> <p>Upcoming exit from the strict framework of the rescue policies of the National Economy (Memoranda)</p> <p>Dynamic presence of Chambers of all Regional Units of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace</p> <p>Election Environment 2019 (National, Euro-Elections, Municipal, Regional)</p> <p>Difficult political environment in the neighboring country of Turkey and persistent tensions</p> <p>Refugee flows due to instability and wars in the wider region</p> <p>Stable political environment in Bulgaria</p> <p>Upgrading of the TEI of Thessaloniki to International Hellenic University¹ and the</p>	<p>High contribution requirements (Tax Office, Insurance)</p> <p>Significant increase in tourist flows every year (mainly during the summer season)</p> <p>Reduction of Unemployment, however still at high levels</p> <p>GDP per capita relatively low²</p> <p>Existence of two international airports³</p> <p>Existence of two important ports⁴ and other smaller ones</p> <p>Improvement of corporate financing (lending) by the Banking system, however there is still a lag compared to the desired level</p> <p>Stock of quality producers (wine, etc.) as well as a generally important agricultural and livestock sector, as well as a very important contribution of fisheries to local</p>

¹ Merger with the International University of Thessaloniki and the TEI of Central Macedonia

² In the 20 poorest regions of the European Union according to Eurostat data for 2013 (50% of the Average).

³ Kavala and Alexandroupolis. Kavala airport is now under the management of FRAPORT, with a special investment development plan in progress.

<p>existence of two major Universities in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (Democritus University of Thrace and International Hellenic University)</p> <p>Cross-border cooperation mainly with Bulgaria and secondarily with Turkey.</p> <p>Institutionalized quadripartite Summit of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania on the development of the region.</p>	<p>economies</p> <p>Existence of important thermal springs⁵ which can be utilized by Social Enterprises</p>
Social factors	Technological factors
<p>Demographic problems - aging population</p> <p>A relatively small number of social enterprises at REMTPH</p> <p>There are special population groups (ROMA, Muslim minority, immigrants)</p> <p>Significant number of voluntary cultural operators as well as other private and public literacy and arts organizations with significant timeless work</p>	<p>The weakness of many companies to adequately respond to technological developments makes them vulnerable to international competition.</p> <p>Opportunities for further technology development and research expenditure through ESPA, INTERREG, HORIZON 2020, and other co-financed programs</p>
Environmental factors	Legal factors
<p>Climate Change and Natural Disasters/ Flooding in plains and settlements</p> <p>Enhancement of recycling by developing both private and third sector economic structures (such as for fried oils, etc)⁶</p>	<p>Upgrading the role of SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY bodies through the almost unanimous vote of Law 4430/2016⁷</p> <p>Support the development of cooperation actions, with a social impact, between the public and social and solidarity actors</p> <p>Anticipated creation of social entrepreneurship support structures in the</p>

⁴ Kavala and Alexandroupolis

⁵ Such as Krinides, Traianoupoli, Paranesti, Xanthi, Samothrace

⁶ BODIES KALO

⁷ Social and Solidarity Economy

	<p>Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace</p> <p>Support for the Social Economy under the INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 program</p>
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12. SWOT Analysis of the Social Innovation in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Production System	<p>Notable lowlands, pastures, forest and fisheries resources,</p> <p>Extensive geothermal fields and other energy sources mainly from renewable sources, and</p> <p>Significant cultural and environmental resources suitable for the development of both traditional and alternative forms of tourism,</p> <p>Concentration of businesses in sectors with comparative advantages due to uniqueness and/ or top quality raw materials, and the existence of individual enterprises with excellent performance in emerging sectors,</p> <p>Existence of a significant number of high value products in the primary sector (eg Protected Designation of Origin),</p> <p>High degree of coverage of the processing needs of local raw materials.</p>	<p>Production system with multiple structural and temporal weaknesses, such as:</p> <p>Small and fragmented size of farms that disproportionately burden production costs,</p> <p>Breakdown of the production chain due to de-industrialization in the agri-food sector,</p> <p>Small-scale family-owned manufacturing companies, and an organizational structure that does not guarantee robustness in strategic addressing of challenges,</p> <p>Lack of business clusters formations,</p> <p>Weak collective mechanisms for promotion and marketing of agricultural products,</p> <p>Specialization in crops whose demand is not dynamic (cotton, beet, tobacco) and aging of the rural population,</p> <p>Low utilization of natural resources (geothermal fields, pastures, forests, fishery resources),</p> <p>Low performance in most categories of competitiveness of the tourism sector compared to other regions of Greece and lack of single tourist “destinations” with characteristics that satisfy corresponding groups of tourists,</p> <p>Minimal product innovation effort (creative copying is mainly used) and extremely low overall R&D spending compared to other European regions. However, the positive trend in the R&D expenditure ratio in business for the period 2005-2011 is positive.</p>
Supporting	Significant infrastructures	Limited intermodality of the transport system /

infrastructure	(tangible and intangible) to support entrepreneurship (soil map, industrial sites in good position and sufficient capacity available, satisfactory road links between the main growth poles).	<p>Limited degree of connection of the Egnatia Motorway with the rest of the Trans-European axes,</p> <p>Problems of inadequacy of the education and health infrastructure,</p> <p>Lack of intermediaries to support innovation and knowledge sharing (eg, Technology Parks, Incubators, BICs, accelerators, etc.),</p> <p>Limited strategic and operational planning capabilities in terms of Regional Authorities, Local Authorities and local collective bodies of entrepreneurship.</p>
Knowledge and Human Resources	<p>Significant range of intangible knowledge in the livestock sector,</p> <p>Full academic structure of the academic field, with strong scientific specialization in the ICT sector, and particularly positive trends in extroversion, academic productivity (publications) and funding flows to the research sector.</p>	<p>Low participation of the population in the labor market, high unemployment rates among young people, women and long-term unemployed,</p> <p>Exclusion and poverty that reduce social cohesion,</p> <p>Particularly low percentage of tertiary education graduates across the population in both national and European average and high rate of school dropouts, high levels of digital illiteracy,</p> <p>Significant, almost exclusively, dependence of the research sector on direct or indirect public funding, with low performance in European competing research and technological development projects, and extremely limited evidence of research excellence,</p> <p>Low results and lack of systematic in the process of technology transfer from public research or academic organizations to enterprises.</p>
Wider Environment		<p>Lack of high-risk financing business structures.</p> <p>Low ICT services offered by companies in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace with no signs of specialization and technological maturity, lagging in all ICT indicators in terms of national and European performance.</p>
Opportunities		Threats

<p>National Environment</p>	<p>Utilizing the RIS3 approach to design a truly regional Research, Technological Development, and Innovation policy</p> <p>Low level of self-sufficiency in animal products at national level,</p> <p>Maximizing the impact of the TAP pipeline route through the Region.</p>	<p>Weak demand and private consumption at national level, without direct recovery forecasts,</p> <p>Negative environment for entrepreneurship in Greece (legislation, bureaucracy, taxation, access to finance),</p> <p>Risk of loss of know-how in the agricultural sector due to abandonment of crops,</p> <p>A gradual shift to funding research based on excellence at European level,</p> <p>Trend in reducing public spending on research (staff, facilities, equipment),</p> <p>High vulnerability to the effects of climate change (high risk of floods and forest fires),</p> <p>Ineffective management of protected natural areas (inability to resolve land use conflicts mainly in coastal areas, lack of Management Plans).</p>
<p>European environment</p>	<p>Transforming the character of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace from a "near the borders area" into a "gateway to the country and the EU" thanks to EU enlargement policy,</p> <p>Recovery of the economic climate in the Eurozone,</p> <p>Incentives for the new Common Agricultural Policy for restructuring crops on business criteria rather than subsidies,</p> <p>New Common Agricultural Policy incentives for rural development, infrastructure improvement, etc.,</p> <p>Utilizing the Horizon2020 program to support excellent research teams,</p> <p>Utilizing researcher mobility</p>	<p>Exposure to competition with other areas characterized by increased productivity or cheaper costs,</p> <p>Having over 100 European regions with the same structural characteristics as the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace limits the opportunities for diversification,</p> <p>Further reduction of subsidies (and therefore incomes) due to the new Common Agricultural Policy,</p> <p>Brain drain to more attractive Greek or European regions.</p>

	<p>programs to enhance the Region's knowledge base,</p> <p>Positive trends in the development of tourist flow to the Greek market based on the changes observed in the period 2011-2013.</p>	
International environment	<p>Increasing demand from overseas markets in sectors where the Region has a strong critical mass and a wide variety of top quality raw materials,</p> <p>Emergence of new alternative crops,</p> <p>The dynamics of the aquaculture industry on the international market.</p> <p>Continuous development of demand for tourism models of specific forms of tourism.</p>	<p>Overpriced Euro currency slows export growth outside the Eurozone,</p> <p>Global increase in the prices of agricultural supplies and fuel.</p>

13. Active national employment policies and priorities in the field of Social Economy

The main active employment and inclusion policies for the sector of the Social Economy are promoted by the Special Secretariat for Social and Solidarity Economy of the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity, and are legislated by the Greek Parliament. The purpose of law 4430/2016 Social and Solidarity Economy and development of its bodies and other provisions, is the creation of the legislative framework for the Social and Solidarity Economy, as an alternative form of economic activities. In particular, the law aims at the diffusion of the Social and Solidarity Economy in all possible sectors of economic activity, and at the support and strengthening of productive self-management projects and collective social entrepreneurship. This law regulates issues related to the establishment, operation and administrative supervision of the Social and Solidarity Economy Bodies. The law defines issues related to the General Register of Institutions of Social and Solidarity Economy, the participation of the Institutions of Social and Solidarity Economy in support measures and program contracts, the Economic Cooperation of the Institutions of Social and Solidarity Economy, Non-Economic Relations members, the Associations of Social and Solidarity Economy Bodies, the Social Economy Fund, the Audit of Social and Solidarity Economy Bodies and sanctions, the National and the Coordinating Committee for the Social and Solidarity Economy, the Social Cooperative Enterprises, the Establishment and Operation of the Social Cooperative Enterprise, and others.

The implementation of the institutional framework for Social And Solidarity Economy (Law 4430/2016), highlighted some challenges, which began to be addressed with article 44 of Law 4554/2018 and relate to the following:

- **Right to participate in Social Cooperative Enterprises. Adult integration without full legal capacity**

The purpose of the "Social Cooperative Enterprises (Social Cooperative Enterprises) Integration of Vulnerable Groups", is the integration into the economic and social life of people belonging to the "vulnerable" groups of the population. Especially for people whose equal integration in social and economic life is hindered by physical and / or mental causes, it is often the case that they do not have legal capacity, as a result of which they cannot acquire the status of a member of the Social Cooperative Enterprises. . Integration of Vulnerable Groups, in which they participate and / or work. This runs counter to the relevant provision of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure the smooth exercise of all rights under the EU Treaties and legislation for persons with disabilities have lost their self-representation. To remove this contradiction, individuals who have lost their

self-representation are now allowed to become members of the Social Cooperative Enterprises. Integration of Vulnerable Groups.

- **Reduction of the threshold for the imposition of fines on the Social and Solidarity Economy Bodies**

Paragraph 5 of Article 11 of Law 4430/2016 provides for an authorizing provision for the determination of fines, which entail the violation of the obligations set by law for the legal operation of Social and Solidarity Economy bodies. Specifically, the second paragraph of this law provided that in any case the fine imposed could not be less than one thousand euros and more than fifty thousand (50,000) euros. Because the threshold of one thousand (1,000) euros was deemed too high, it was decided to reduce it to two hundred (200) euros.

- **Recast of the insurance obligations of the members of the Employees' Cooperatives**

Paragraph 6 of article 26 was clearly reworded, which concerned the insurance obligations of the members of the Employees 'Cooperatives, according to the provisions of law 4387/2016 (A' 85), while it was allowed to members of the Cooperative practicing on its behalf technical or construction operations, for the performance of which are subject to the special provisions of the FDC Chapter of the Insurance Regulation of the former IKA - ETAM, to continue to be subject to the insurance of the former IKA - ETAM for main insurance and health care and the former ETEAM for auxiliary and insurance from 1.1.2017 in the insurance of EFKA and ETEAEP.

- **Legislative developments regarding the concession of movable and immovable property by first- and second-degree local authorities to Social and Solidarity Economy bodies**

Article 196 of "Klesthenis" now provides for the possibility to grant the use of municipal property free of charge to a Social And Solidarity Economy Body, which has its headquarters or carries out its activity in the specific Municipality, with a decision taken by an absolute majority of all members of the municipal council for a period of up to five years. After the end of the five years, the direct lease of the specific property to the Agency is allowed. Article 281 of the same law provides the same possibility for those cases where the property belongs to a region.

- **The public contracts of social reference (article 20 and articles 107-110 of Law 4412/2016)**

"Socially responsible public procurement" contributes to markets that contain socially beneficial products, either by expanding existing markets or by creating new

markets for goods and services that support the achievement of social goals. Therefore, they are a model for consumers by offering them standards and information. Socially responsible public procurement sets the example and influences the market. Through such "socially responsible contracts", public authorities are called upon to promote employment opportunities, decent work, social inclusion, and access to the labor market. They are also called upon to promote planning for all, ethical commerce, and adherence to social values. Socially Responsible Public Procurement can be a model for how economic and social demands can reinforce and serve each other. Law 4412/2016 on public procurement is an opportunity to promote public procurement with social references. That is why specific articles of the law have specific references to bodies that are part of the field of social and solidarity economy. According to the conclusions that have emerged or will emerge from the meetings of the Special Secretariat Social And Solidarity Economy with the General Secretariat of Commerce and the Independent Public Procurement Authority, the final decisions will be taken for the necessary interventions, so that the Social And Solidarity Economy bodies can participate freely in public procurement public procurement.

In addition, our country in the framework of the "Europe 2020" Strategy and the National Reform Framework set the following priorities at the social level:

- ✓ Stopping unemployment by creating or maintaining jobs
- ✓ Reintegration of socially excluded groups (people with disabilities, migrants, drug addicts, etc.) and the fight against discrimination
- ✓ Strengthening entrepreneurship and in particular the social economy
- ✓ Support and creation of quality social services
- ✓ Combating child poverty by absorbing jobs of unemployed family members with children
- ✓ Strengthening local development

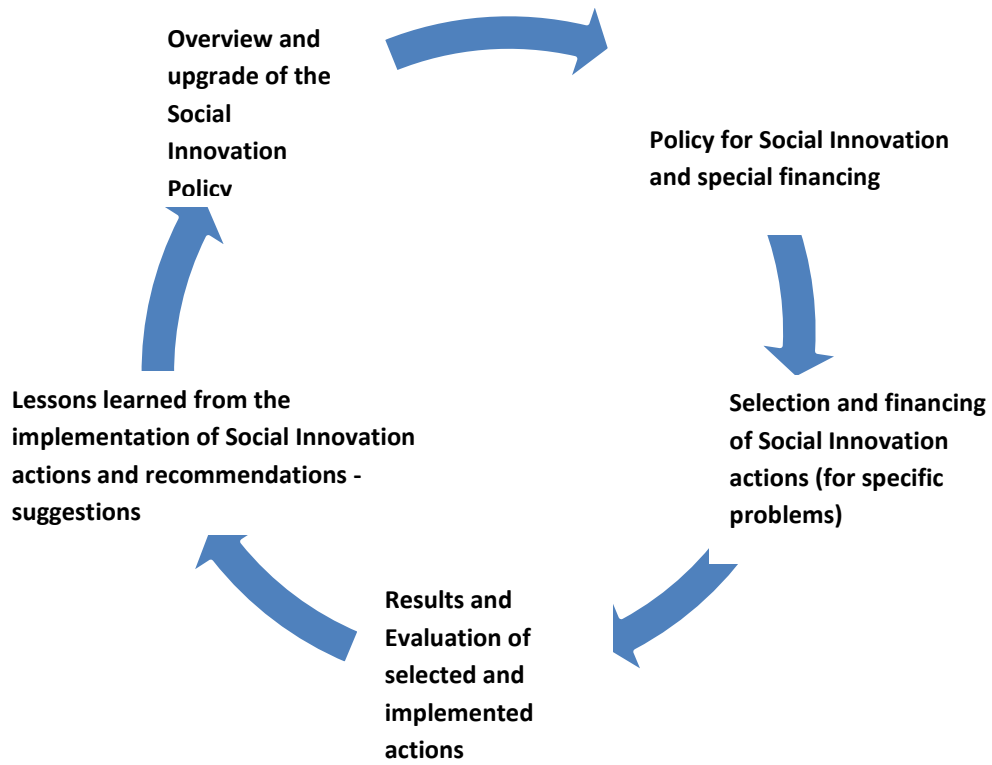
14. Development of a Social Innovation Action Plan in REMTH

For the Social Innovation Action Plan in REMTH, account should be taken of: (a) the current situation, (b) the conclusions of the PESTEL analyzes, and SWOT, (c) the introduction of new technologies into everyday life and the opportunities that (d) European Union-wide initiatives on the subject, (f) the available Social Innovation but also social and solidarity networks and opportunities for cooperation. in National, European party and generally internationally, (f) financial instruments, (h) the speed with which constantly bringing new changes.

The approach of this text is that the key is to be aware from the outset that the development of Social Innovation actions is not just a project that receives funding, is implemented and completed, but an open process that can be gradually developed with the ever increasing (essential) involvement of civil society actors, various population groups, the private sector, the third sector of the economy, the public and the wider public sector, citizens. According to Waasdorp and de Ruijter (2011), open interaction between government / public, private sector, knowledge providers and social organizations is a prerequisite. A process that gives scope for degrees of freedom, inspiration, collective design, testing possible scenarios - solutions to problems with a social dimension, transforming successful pilot projects into applications, improving and extending them throughout their lifecycle, regardless of their lifespan. Such a dynamic process should be able to obtain financial support at all stages, including preliminary ones (publicity, awareness raising, motivation, creation of a transparent implementation framework).

For Waasdorp and de Ruijter (2011), in this regard, and in view of the barriers identified in practice, significant challenges for the policy to be implemented (for the development of Social Innovation) are: (a) the development of an integrated approach to scientific, social and economic challenges, (b) the development of a coherent exploitation policy (resources and ideas), (c) the promotion of innovative entrepreneurship, (d) the search for new arrangements for partnerships, (e) focus on the role of public administration (the state) as an important customer (recipient of services) and (f) identify appropriate incentives for all stakeholders to participate and contribute (to the development of Social Innovation). According to Harayama and Nitta (2011), social innovations often come from isolated experiments aimed at solving specific social challenges, and there is a huge opportunity cost in not exploiting the wealth of knowledge generated by this wealth of experimentation testing different approaches and approaches social innovations. Thus, as they argue, the (public) information system should be more open and it would be very useful for policies to be improved through sharing and comparison, given that these experimentation initiatives are developed at a micro level (very local).

The above procedure is summarized in the following diagram:



15. Proposed Social Entrepreneurship-Innovation Actions at REMTH - Proposed Strategic Action Plan

Social Innovation and employment

The key directions of the European Union are Employment Enhancement and Social Innovation with emphasis on testing and social experimentation and the development of innovative ideas and models that highlight and propose solutions to social needs related to employment and education. Social innovation for employment is significantly related to social entrepreneurship in the search for new solutions to social issues (e.g. provision of wider social services and considerably basic health services, employment of people with disabilities and social inclusion, etc.).

The approach concerns most of cases involving actions by local communities to tackle local employment problems, which according to the European Commission is particularly important in remote areas or minority communities (e.g. ROMA). Cooperation between relevant stakeholders has been found to be key to the development of Social Innovation actions that have a positive impact on employment, as well as a new understanding of the management of organizations with democracy and the co-operation of management and employees or their representative bodies. The combination of utilizing Social Innovation with technological and other developments (refugee, etc.) enables the development of actions in support of new ideas (in combination with collaborative spaces, incubators, etc.) that face everyday problems and favor its involvement. private sector, including social entities, in finding solutions to specific issues, which will include the creation of new jobs.

Pillars of actions

- ✓ Transformation of agri-food complex
- ✓ Improving regional added value by adapting and using mature process, organizational and promotional innovations, including the use of ICT, enhancing sources of uniqueness (e.g. PDO products) and upgrading human resources
- ✓ Creation of a unified system for the organization, operation, and management of the integration of the products of the natural and cultural environment, the agri-food and craft sector in the tourism / culture network of REMTH.

Collaborative Spaces for the Development of Social Innovation

The action will focus on developing well-formed collaborative spaces for people who have ideas or want to test their involvement in developing ideas for others who are interested in collaborating within an innovative idea that comes up with a problem. Appropriately designed and accessible spaces for both people who already have specific ideas that could be developed, and for people who may not have specific ideas but are interested in collaborating or simply experimenting with available good practices and applications of Social Innovation implemented in other areas.

The spaces, in addition to their configuration and equipment, will be supported by a team of executives who can:

- (a) present specific Social Innovation applications implemented elsewhere, such as conception, conversion into action and work, development, difficulties and management of situations and results
- (b) To support the communication of young people wishing to engage in similar actions and the organization of working groups
- (c) Support the processes of transforming an idea into an action plan.
- (d) Support the communication and presentation of an idea transformed into an action plan to appropriate stakeholders that could be involved.
- (e) Support the development of the business plan of some of the actions being developed
- (f) Encourage networking with other partners and with people who innovate socially in other areas of the Region and beyond
- (g) Ensure publicity of the action and raise awareness of the local community through a specific publicity and awareness project.

Collaborative sites may have a specialized thematic approach or be of general interest and will be friendly for disabled people.

Pillars of Actions

- ✓ Growth and consolidation of emerging sectors of the regional economy
- ✓ Expanding the tourism product through organizational and promotional innovations
- ✓ Attracting or supporting investment in service providers serving the entrenched or emerging sectors of the regional economy

Social Innovation and Ecosystems

The Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace has very large areas of protected areas (RAMSAR, Natura 2000) and even within Management Entities. Specifically the Management Agencies of the main protected areas are:

- (1) Forest Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Management Body
- (2) The Evros Delta National Park Management Body
- (3) The Nestos Vistonida-Ismarida Delta Management Agency
- (4) The Rhodope Mountain Range Management Body

The accumulation of very large areas of protected areas very often creates tensions between residents, professionals and agencies as well as other State and Local Government A and B levels. In the European Union it is estimated that 7% of all jobs are directly dependent on biodiversity. This is expected to increase further by 2020 as a result of the new institutionalized biodiversity priorities. The new opportunities that emerge can be an important approach in supporting young people to grow.

Social Entrepreneurship Actions could be developed for the environment, and especially for protected areas, by developing actions that respect regulations that would allow for actions that are contradictory and partially productive, such as healthy ecosystems providing food for societies, fuel, timber, but also leisure activities and the opportunity for everyone to enjoy the beauties of nature.

The action could involve private non-profit organizations (NGOs), public partnerships, non-profit partnerships of NGOs, the private sector, public sector bodies. The actions will be aimed at involving residents in existing activities (eg nature observation, green walks, awareness raising events) and should include, amongst the main themes, a series of consultations and the development of creative communication between stakeholders. Both the common goals and the contradictory approaches emerge.

Employment and Social Inclusion for Functional People with Disabilities

The European Union's key guidelines for the 2014-2020 programming period are Employment Enhancement and Social Innovation focuses on testing and developing innovative ideas and models that highlight and propose solutions to social needs related to employment and education. Social Innovation for Employment is significantly related to social entrepreneurship in the search for new solutions to social issues (eg provision of wider social services and very basic health services, employment of people with disabilities and social inclusion, etc).

The approach concerns the social inclusion of People with Disabilities who are functional and can deliver in the real economy through work. As mentioned in the

example with School Meals in Kavala and KOISPE Kavala but also in many other cases, it is possible to co-operate in the workplace and co-operate with people with disabilities and the general population, with multiple positive effects.

The action provides for the so-called co-production where provision for specific cases of service needs will be provided by the cooperatives of the Social Cooperative Empowerment Enterprises and / or KOSEPE with State bodies and other bodies (including other Social And Solidarity Economy entities) utilizing the provision of Law 4412 / 2016 (a) for contracts exclusively and (b) for programmatic contracts with a participation plan for the (disabled) workforce and the general population. Constant support will be provided at all levels, including "measuring" the impact on employees and their families. Actions may be combined with OAED employment programs.

Proposed Strategic Action Plan for the Region of Eastern Macedonia Thrace

Axis 1: Financial support for the start of activity of Social Cooperative Enterprises.

Action 1 Pre start-up of Social Cooperative Enterprises

The purpose of this action is to facilitate the candidates of social entrepreneurs in the establishment of Social Cooperative Enterprises and to support the newly established Social Cooperative Enterprises. in their first steps.

Beneficiaries may be natural persons who wish to implement their business ideas by establishing a Social Cooperative Enterprise. These persons can gain experience in a social enterprise that operates in a related field abroad, with the method of practice, while at the same time they will be supported by the elaboration of their business plan, as well as by the execution of all the procedures for the establishment of the Social Cooperative Enterprises and apply for funding before it is fully operational. The groups of candidate social entrepreneurs will receive entrepreneurship consulting, information and education services for the Social Economy, promotion in training programs related to the object of activity of Social Cooperative Enterprises. and business plan development.

The action will be addressed to natural persons - candidates for social entrepreneurs and will include:

1a. Internship for young social entrepreneurs in the form of Erasmus

The existing Erasmus program provides for the travel and accommodation expenses covered during the candidate social entrepreneur's visit abroad. The grant is paid from the local contact point selected by the new entrepreneur (registered in the online application). The new entrepreneur and his / her local point of contact sign a contract, which specifies the amount of funding provided during his / her stay and

how it will be paid in practice. Financial support is calculated on a monthly basis and reflects the overall cost of living in the country of residence.

The selection and approach of the Social Enterprises outside Greece, in which the candidate social entrepreneurs will carry out an internship, will be done with the assistance of the Regional Mechanism. The PM will provide additional funding (in the form of a scholarship) to the beneficiaries, which will amount to € 1,000 for a 4-month internship. It is desirable to train at least 1 social entrepreneur per supported Social Cooperative Enterprises. Aim to participate in the action of at least 20 local social enterprises.

Implementation-completion schedule: 4-6 months

1b. Preparation of a business plan and execution of procedures for the establishment of Social Cooperative Enterprises.

The Regional Mechanism in collaboration with external consultants will help those interested to prepare a business plan, submit a complete grant dossier and meet all the procedures for registration in the Social Economy Register and start-up. For the consulting services that will be provided by private consultants, a Voucher will be granted to the Candidates of Social Cooperative Enterprises. The coupon will be awarded to the Beneficiaries if their business plan is evaluated positively and only then the independent consultants will receive the agreed fee. The costing of the provided services cannot exceed the cost of providing the same services by the Regional Mechanism (3,000 € per established Social Cooperative Enterprises.). Aim to participate in the action of at least 20 local social enterprises.

Implementation-completion schedule: 6-12 months

Action 2 Vouchers in support of Social Cooperative Enterprises. with incubator services

The action concerns the support services of Social Cooperative Enterprises. during their operation phase, which will be provided through the support structures that will operate in the form of an incubator for social enterprises. The incubators will either be integrated in the operation of the Regional Mechanism or will be provided by individuals, with the obligation to adopt tools and procedures that will be produced by the Regional Mechanism, in the framework of subsidy actions of the Social Cooperative Enterprises. Beneficiaries-beneficiaries of this action are Social Cooperative Enterprises. established under Law 4019/2011 and have been registered in the Register of Social Economy.

The main purpose is the interaction of social enterprises with the aim of achieving economies of scale (accounting, secretariat, common procurement, logistics,

warehouses, etc.), access to resources (capital markets, development and transfer of knowledge, specialized staff), direct and timely information and in general the undertaking of initiatives for the reduction of production costs, the improvement of the business operation (improvement of the level of service, increase of the added value of products / services) expecting their consolidation in the market and the assurance of their viability.

Suggested Services:

- Accounting, tax, financial support services
- Legal support services
- Support services for participation in co-financed programs
- Training seminars for the needs of the incubator members
- Services for the adoption of new communication technologies (internet, e-mail, website, etc.)
- Network with other incubators, technology parks, business networks at regional, national and international level
- Coaching services - mentoring in matters of service provision

It is aimed to participate in the action of at least 20 local social enterprises.

Estimated budget: € 140,000

Implementation-completion schedule: 24 months

Action 3 Distance learning of employees in Social Cooperative Enterprises.

The training of the employees is considered an important factor for the efficient operation of Social Cooperative Enterprises, because a professionally trained staff completes its work on time and efficiently. Due to the recent global data that have changed due to the pandemic, e-learning has become particularly important and is proposed to be used as a safe method of education.

This action concerns the distance education services for employees of Social Enterprises in matters of Social Economy, Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The Regional Mechanism in collaboration with external consultants will take care of the planning and processing of the training and the issuance of certificates of attendance. Aim to participate in the action of at least 20 local social enterprises (5 executives per enterprise with 2 courses per week)

Estimated budget: € 60,000

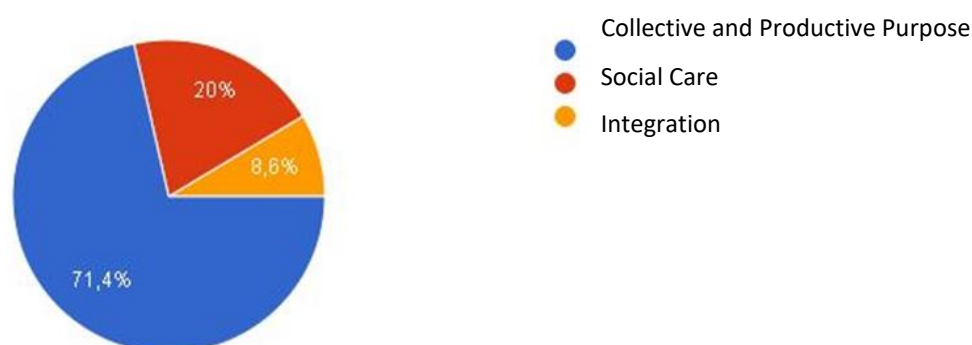
Implementation-completion schedule: 6 months

16. Existing Situation of Social Enterprises in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (analysis of primary research results)

In the framework of this study, a questionnaire was compiled and distributed to the Social Enterprises of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and the following results were obtained from the 35 completed questionnaires.

Question 1. Your Social Cooperative Enterprise is:

Q1. Your Social Cooperative Enterprise is:



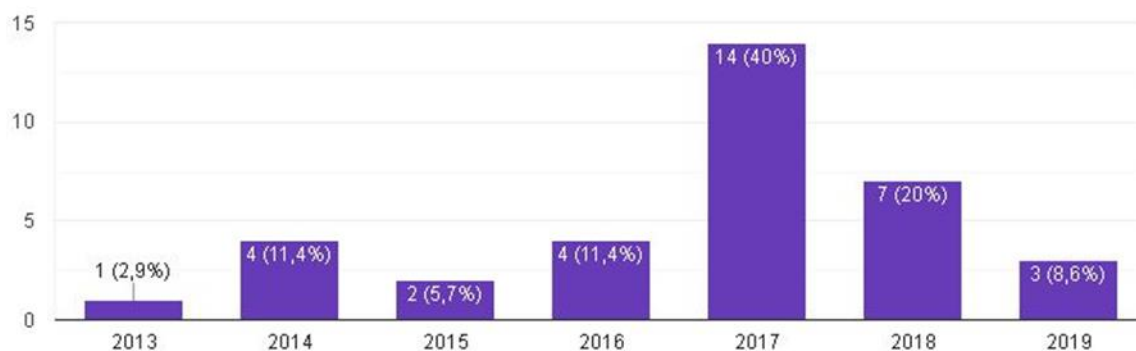
Most of the Social Cooperative Enterprises. (71.4%) in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace belong to the category "Collective and Productive Purpose". Following are the Social Cooperative Enterprises. Social Care with 20%, while the fewest (8.6%) are Social Integration Enterprises.

Question 2. Year of establishment

Based on the answers to the distributed questionnaire, it follows that most of the Social Cooperative Enterprises. who were interviewed (40%) were established in the year 2017, a year which followed the enactment of law 4430/2016 Social and Solidarity Economy and development of its bodies and other provisions. This law established the legal framework for the Social and Solidarity Economy, as a form of alternative organization of economic activities.

Q2. Year of Establishment

35 answers



Question 3. The Way of establishment of your Social Cooperative Enterprise

Q3. Your Social Cooperative Enterprise was established:

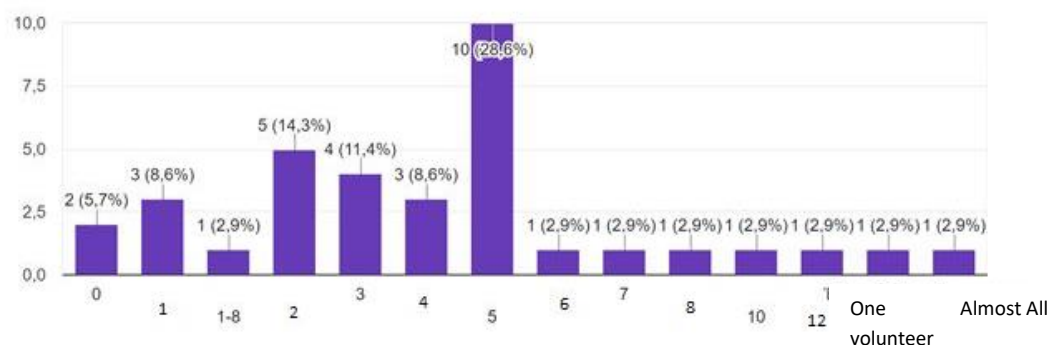
35 answers



The answers of the respondents show that 77.1% of the Social Enterprises in the region were established by personal initiative and not through European Programs or due to the encouragement of the local public authorities. The establishment of Social Cooperative Enterprises, at the instigation of the local authorities, it gathers 8.6%, while the establishment through a European Program amounts to 14.3%. Therefore, it follows that most of the Social Cooperative Enterprises, were founded because the founders themselves considered it beneficial. The low start-up rate through a European Program shows the low utilization of the available financial tools.

Question 4. How many of your members work:

Q4. How many of your members work in Social Cooperative Enterprises:

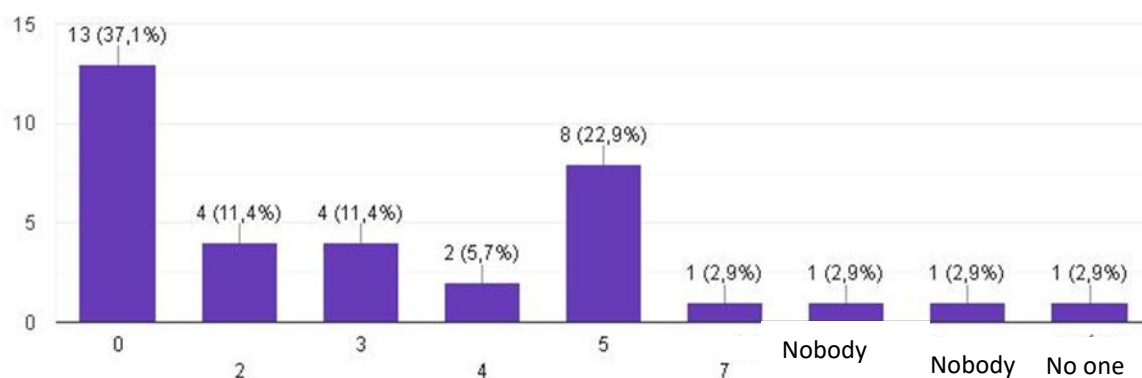


In all Social Cooperative Enterprises. at REMTH the members who simultaneously hold and the status of employee are at least 1, with the exception of 2 companies whose members do not work in Social Cooperative Enterprises . Therefore, it is obvious that the members themselves choose to offer personal work to Social Coop Enterprises

Question 5. How many of employees are not members:

Q5. How many of employees are not members:

35 answers



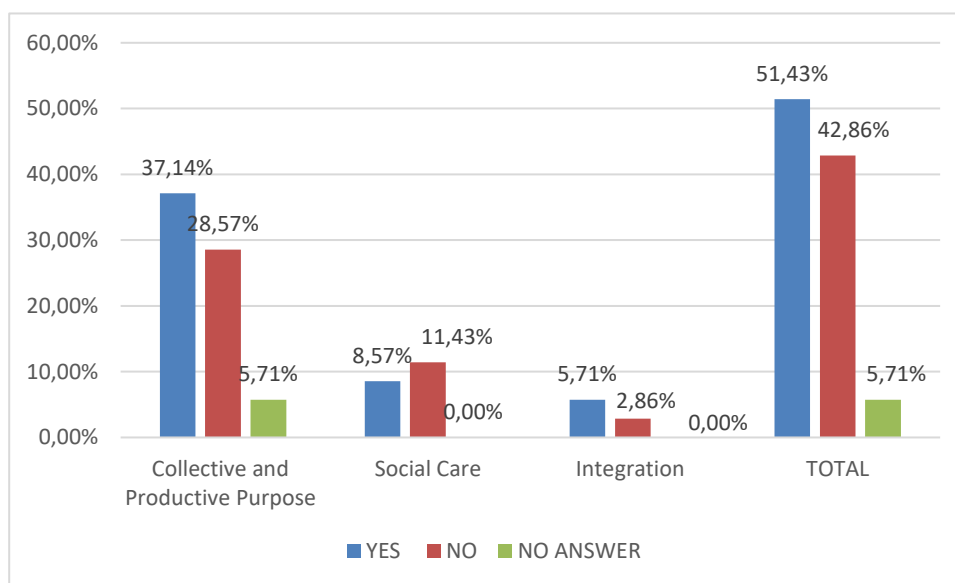
Respectively, 13 of the 35 Social Cooperative Enterprises. who were interviewed there is no employee who is not a member of the company, while 8 of the 35 Social

Cooperative Enterprises occupies 5 employees who are not at the same time members of these companies. This fact reinforces the results of the previous Question 4 that the members themselves choose to offer personal work to Social Cooperative Enterprises.

Question 6. Are there any volunteers:

Q6. Are there any volunteers:

33 answers



As it results from the above diagram, volunteers participate in 18 of the 35 Social Cooperative Enterprises, while the remaining 15 Social Cooperative Enterprises (two unanswered questions) do not collaborate with volunteers. Thus, volunteers participate in the 51.43% of Social Cooperative Enterprises, while in 46.86% they do not. The percentages are almost the same. Therefore, no conclusion can be drawn regarding the volunteers' participation in the Social Cooperative Enterprises of REMTH. In the affirmative answers, it was stated that one volunteer is participating from abroad. This fact shows the impact and successful connectivity of this company with people outside the geographical borders. It is interesting to note the participation of volunteers by category. As expected, the largest percentage of positive responses, relatively to the negative ones of the same category of Social Cooperative Enterprises, appears in Social Cooperative Enterprises related to Integration.

Question 7. How/why did you decide to establish your enterprise:

Q7. How/why did you decide to establish your enterprise:

35 answers

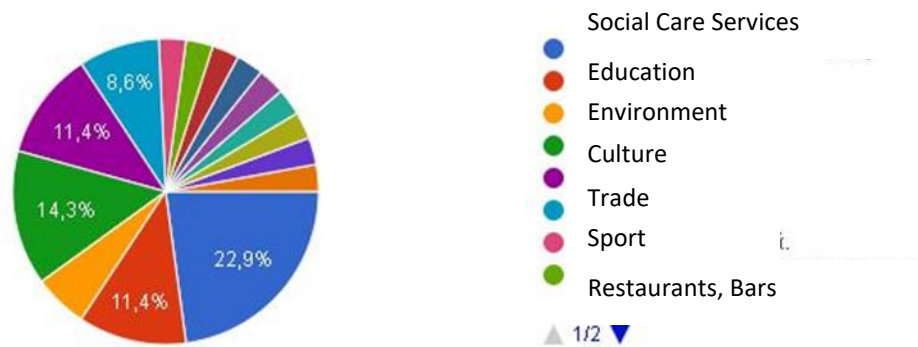


Most Social Enterprises (37.1%) identified a gap, a need for new services at the local level, which was the reason for their establishment. In addition, important motivating factors for the start of a Social Cooperative Enterprises. at REMTH were the unemployment of members (20% of cases) and the analysis and discussion of the issue with friends or acquaintances (26.8%). The percentages of the recognition of the need at local level and analysis of the issue, show that the choice for the establishment was made consciously though a relevant research by the founders (for this reason a local need was identified) and a discussion through which the founders were able to extract more information than they had or to evaluate the views of other people on the subject.

Question 8. Field of activity:

Q8. Field of activity:

35 answers

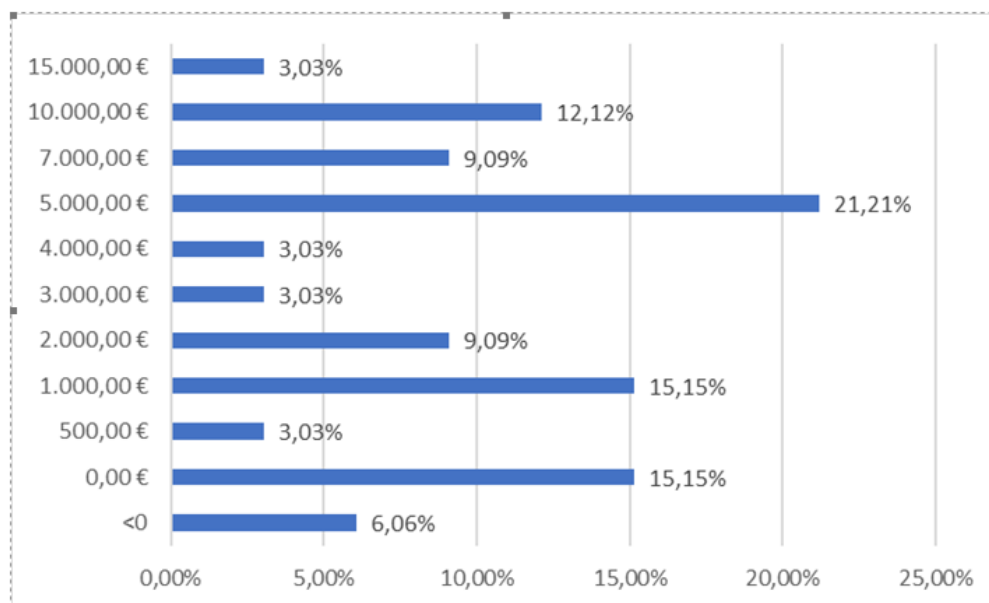


The Social Cooperative Enterprises at REMTH are active in the fields of Social Care Services, Culture, Education, Trade, Sports, Environment, Catering / Food / Tourism, and Technical Services. Specifically, in the field of Social Care Services there are 8 companies, of Culture 5, of Education 5, of Trade 4, of Sports 3, of Environment 2, of Catering / Catering / Tourism 7, and of Technical Services 1. Therefore, it is obvious that most Social Cooperative Enterprises opt for Social Care Services perhaps because of some need they identified locally.

Question 9. Average profits per year (2017,2018):

Q9. Average profits per year (2017,2018):

33 answers

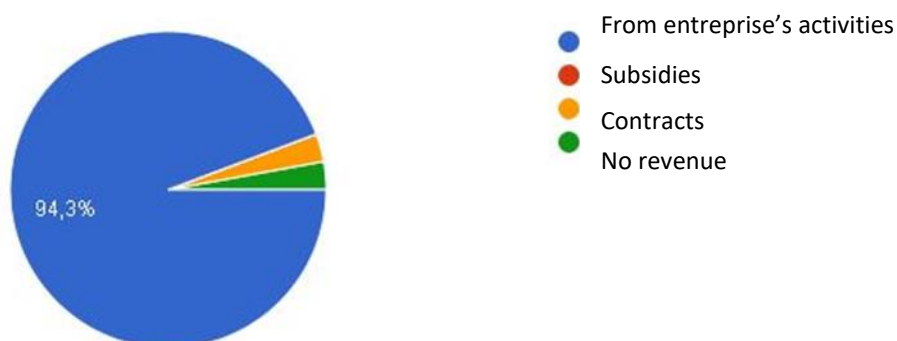


The weighted average of the annual profits calculated from the 33 answers (two unanswered questions) for the years 2017-2018 is €3,924.24 (weighted with the corresponding percentages). This is to be expected, since, if we observe the percentages of the above bar chart, the largest percentage (21.21%) of the Social Cooperative Enterprises presents annual profits of €5,000. However, it is noteworthy that there is also a percentage of zero profits (15.15%) as well as negative profits (losses) (6,06%). Despite of the abovementioned, 3% of the Social Cooperative Enterprises depict profits of € 15,000.

Question 10. Your income comes from:

Q10. Your income comes from:

35 answers



For the 33 of the 35 Social Cooperative Enterprises. of REMTH the income comes from their activities. None of the Social Cooperative Enterprises. has no revenue from grants, while one in 35 has revenue from contracts with public bodies. These data show that the Social Cooperative Enterprises. REMTH does not take advantage of the available financial tools.

Question 11. Do you believe that the following factors are affecting the Social Cooperatives Limited:

35 answers 1=not at all 7=very much

Characterization	Rate	Bureaucracy	Difficulty of accessing financing programs / tools	Lack of support mechanisms (eg business incubators)	Lack of financial resources	Lack of required skills / knowledge
Not at all	1	0	0	2	1	1
Almost none	2	0	0	3	0	14
Very little	3	3	1	1	0	4
A little bit	4	1	1	1	0	3
Enough	5	2	2	3	2	4
Very little	6	5	4	4	6	4
Absolutely	7	24	27	21	26	5
Total		35	35	35	35	35

Characterization	Rate	Lack of know-how	Lack of support of the local community	Intense competition	The unstable legal environment	The existing tax system
Not at all	1	3	0	1	1	1
Almost none	2	14	5	7	3	2
Very little	3	5	4	1	2	4
A little bit	4	3	6	1	2	2
Enough	5	2	1	5	4	1
Very little	6	6	11	13	4	6
Absolutely	7	2	8	7	19	19
Total		35	35	35	35	35

Characterization	Rate	The unstable economic environment	The speed of decision-making within the Social Cooperatives	Inefficient networking between Social Cooperatives	The difficulty of cooperation between members	The difficulty of cooperation between members
Not at all	1	2	10	6	12	7
Almost none	2	1	17	15	16	10
Very little	3	1	3	5	3	6
A little bit	4	3	2	3	0	6
Enough	5	3	1	0	2	2
Very little	6	5	1	4	0	3
Absolutely	7	20	1	2	2	1
Total		35	35	35	35	35

According to the interviewed Social Cooperative Enterprises., the following factors completely affect Social Cooperative Enterprises.:

- bureaucracy
- difficulty accessing funding programs / tools
- lack of support mechanisms (eg incubators)
- lack of financial resources

- unstable legal environment
- existing tax system
- unstable economic environment

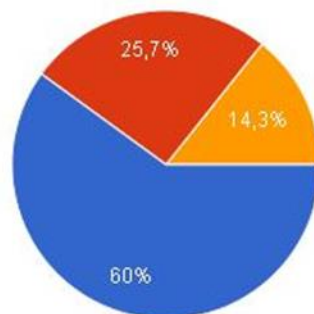
The answers given indicate that the lack of support from the local community and the intense competition have very little effect on Social Cooperative Enterprises .. Finally, Social Cooperative Enterprises. throw the least weight stating that the following factors have almost no effect on the Social Cooperative Enterprises .:

- Lack of required skills / knowledge
- Lack of know-how
- Speed of decision making within Social Cooperative Enterprises.
- Inefficient networking between Social Cooperative Enterprises.
- Difficulty of cooperation of its members
- Inability to offer innovative products / services

Question 12. Do you believe that your enterprise is:

Q12.Do you believe that your enterprise is:

35 answers



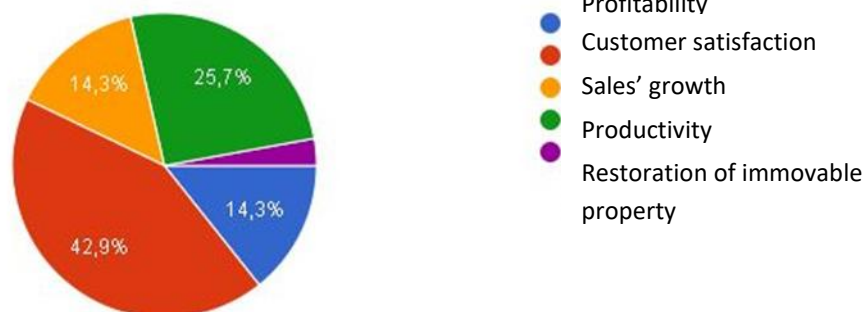
- You have set and pursue a common vision
- All share the same goals
- Everyone is committed to achieving social goals

60% of respondents believe that members and employees have set and are pursuing a common vision, while 25.7% believe that everyone shares the same goals. 14.3% of respondents answer that everyone is committed to achieving common goals. Indeed, it is especially important for the members and employees of a company to set specific goals and pursue the fulfillment of a common vision, elements that will promote the development and profitability of the company.

Question 13. Your financial goals are:

Q13.Your financial goals are:

35 answers



42.9% of Social Cooperative Enterprises. at REMTH state that the financial goal they have set is to meet the needs of customers, a fact that is in line with the majority of answers to Question 7 (37.1% of Social Enterprises identified a gap, a need for new services at the local level , which was the reason for their establishment). Productivity has been set as an economic target for 25.7 & of the respondents Social Cooperative Enterprises .. Finally, sales growth and profitability account for the same percentage, 14.3%. Therefore, the Social Cooperative Enterprises. They also set financial goals, like any business, with the goal of profit, since increasing customer satisfaction also means increasing sales and profitability.

Question 14. Your social goals are:

Q14.Your social goals are:

35 answers



The majority of Social Cooperative Enterprises. (51.4%) have set as a social goal the development of the local community through employment, social cohesion, the development of new economic sectors, the improvement of the quality of life of the local populations, the strengthening of social ties, the stimulation of creativity and of innovation. In addition, several Social Cooperative Enterprises. at REMTH aim to tackle unemployment, an expected result as a social enterprise is an important

means of solving many social problems, such as unemployment and social exclusion, from the labor market and society, of disadvantaged people. Finally, 17.1% of Social Cooperative Enterprises. at REMTH aim at the development of social entrepreneurship in the region.

Question 15. Report specific problems you are experiencing:

Low demand
Failure to support the local government of A & B grade and the state. Financing from programs for social economy and the green fund without own financial participation when there is public property (public heritage).
Bureaucracy, lack of funding
Non-existent fund for the Social Cooperative Enterprises
The unstable existing tax system
Legal framework, unspecified members' employment relationship, lack of updated corporate framework for Social Cooperative Enterprises
Lack of resources
Lack of cooperation with the Local Authorities
Capital, small number of authorized staff (50% of members) ie only 2.5 employees. Also the issue of financing from banks.
Public awareness
Inadequate information for citizens on social issues
Lack of incentives for more profits
Limited subsidies for equipment
Inadequate government assistance, incapacity for state machinery
Inadequate support from the state's part for the first time starting a social enterprise
Limited incentives from the state to open a social enterprise
Lack of capital

Categorizing the answers of the respondents Social Cooperative Enterprises., financial assistance in the form of financing is the main problem faced by these companies. This is followed by bureaucracy and lack of state support. In addition, the economy and the lack of any kind of information (either to the citizens or to the Social Cooperative Enterprises.) are also pointed out as problems.

Question 16. Suggest solutions to tackle the above problems:

Answers

Ongoing consultations and discussions
Reduce taxes and increase salaries and pensions
It is self-evident to rely on social enterprises that restore public real estate. The questionnaire should be addressed by the local authorities and transferred to the central authority, since they have frequent contacts, which the social enterprises cannot do de facto.
Better organization of institutions
Creating a financial institution for access to financial instruments
First and second-degree local authority needs to develop cooperation with the Social Cooperative Enterprises to make a significant contribution to local development. The region can secure programs and funding, and municipalities can delegate many of their actions to Social Cooperative Enterprises
Initiatives of organizations on a serious basis and flexibility
Clearer legal environment and improvement of the tax system, abolition of business tax
Newsletters, networking, division of Social Cooperative Enterprises by specific criteria
Local government information
Aid from financial instruments
Changing the law on the rate of recruitment, bank funding to all Social Cooperative Enterprises that are profitable or are part of a subsidized program. Social Cooperative Enterprises should also be assisted by OAED programs to recruit people with disabilities
The Greek state system must simplify bureaucratic processes and favor social

enterprises
Dissemination of social entrepreneurship
Raising public awareness to support social enterprises
Financial support of social enterprises by the state
Tax reduction
Financial Support of social entrepreneurship by the state
Quick approval of grants
Financing of new businesses by the state
More incentives for creation and business action
Greater support from the state, elimination of bureaucracy
More financial assistance from the state
Awareness of the local community, financial assistance from the state mechanism
Elimination of bureaucracy, financial support of social enterprises
Assistance from the state mechanism
Support from the local community, more information
More help and support from the local community and the state
Programs
More help from the state, support from the local community
Support for local public authorities and citizens
Local community support, financial support from the state
Support from local community (financial - dissemination)

Most Social Cooperative Enterprises. proposed as a solution to the declared problems the financial support of Social Cooperative Enterprises. and the financing tools, the dissemination of social entrepreneurship and its importance, but also the support of Social Cooperative Enterprises. both by the state and by society. In addition, tax cuts and various amendments were mentioned.

17. Guideline of Entrepreneurship

The Guideline of Entrepreneurship aims at presenting the results of the initial research (questionnaires) which was held in the framework of the European programme "I-SEE". In specific, the problems of social enterprises that were extracted from the respondents/entrepreneurs, the opportunities and the proposed solutions will be analyzed. In the final part of this Guideline, they will be described the stages that an entrepreneur needs to follow in order to establish a Social Cooperative Entrepreneurship.

The Guideline of Entrepreneurship is addressed to those have already a social entrepreneurship and would like to broaden their activities and to those that are interested in starting up their own social entrepreneurship and would like to get informed about the existing situation at this sector.

Problems

At first stage, regarding the internal weaknesses of the social enterprises, the first one is about the limited knowledge of the social entrepreneurship about their roles within the society, the economic system, and their own relationship with the citizens. Even though there is a well-established ability for the management of the large number of the social enterprises' targets, the lack of inform blocks sometimes the social entrepreneurs from adopting suitable strategies of management and growth and contributes to their vulnerability. A second one weakness is the tend to the isomorphism, which is the development to the organized forms that are better orientated, legally powerful and more social accepted, without being able to maintain and progress their innovative characteristics in higher level. Nowadays, the most spreading danger is the fact that the social enterprises are transforming to organizations and therefore they are aiming to fully satisfy the exclusive interests of their employees whilst they are losing the connectivity of the community and the ability of full use of social capital. The danger seems to be related with the increase of the capability of the public funds and the following reduction of the autonomy and the possibility of redistribution of social enterprises. A third weakness is the high cost at the management of social enterprises which comes from their own characters as organizations. Their obvious advantage, which is the participation of different stakeholders (clients, volunteers, representatives of local community) in the production and in the process of taking decisions, seems to be the cause of the inefficiency when the conflicting interests limit the ability of the fast reaction in a variable environment. Moreover, it's well worth to be mentioned that the social enterprises are small - medium sized businesses, which can block their ability of successfully corresponding to the biggest challenges of the external environment and their popularity out of the local community.

Subsequently, regarding the external obstacles that cause problems to the social enterprises, the absence of a total clearer regulatory framework, the unstable tax system, and the incomplete update of the stakeholders regarding the current legal framework. The applied arrangements for the organizations and the enterprises of social economy are totally different compared to those that applying to all other enterprises that do not belong to the framework of social economy. Furthermore, the established arrangements differ from country to country, and as a result they are preventing the growth of those organizations and enterprises. In some countries, the entrance of social economy's organizations prevails where their recovery is mostly owned by the below, without being existed any political support or any regulatory framework that will ensure their further growth. In addition, the organizations and the enterprises of social economy face up a serious problem on funding, due to their characteristics which are totally different from all the other enterprises that do not belong to the framework of the social economy. The lack of the initial capital for establishing a social enterprise and the restricted assets prevents the potential entrepreneurs to being active. Also, the entrepreneurs stated that first and second grade local authority and the state do not give the necessary support in the field of Social Economy, do not raise awareness to the citizens regarding social issues and this leads to the limited demand of social enterprises' services. The higher percentage of the respondents said about the time-consuming bureaucratic procedures, the incompetence of the state mechanism to support the social enterprises and the restricted motives to establish a social enterprise.

Opportunities

In the modern age of business liquidity, the development of financial ideas and the expansion of the existing social enterprises play an important role to the enforcement of the social economy. Each social entrepreneur should have to seize the opportunities that come from all sectors to develop both in finance and business, such as the available financial resources and the impressive dynamic of the internet.

Initially, the meaning of the innovation as required by the challenges of the times and the conditions of competition has the leading role in the effective promotion of the business ideas. For that reason, each entrepreneur is worth to inflate the principles of creativity and avant - garde to each new project targeting to the high differentiation in parallel with the establishment in the field of Social Economy. Moreover, the placement of the business idea in the "map" of business, will show the path through which the points of excellence of a new venture will be displayed to the public. Also, because of the modernization of the season, the actions Brand Development and Branding give an important value to the process of developing the business ideas and determine the image of a new project to the target audience.

It is well worth to mention the opportunities for funding of the social enterprises given by the government. The young unemployed aged 18 -29 and the women are the social groups which are vulnerable in the sector of entrepreneurship and are struggling either to get occupied or to start up their own business. Therefore, the Manpower Employment Organization aka “OAED”, is expected to implement a new programme for the enforcement of young people and mainly women in the first semester of 2020. Based on that programme, a subsidy up to 17.000 euros will be provided to 2.500 unemployed who are willing to start up their own business. Specifically, young unemployed aged 18-29 and mainly women, where there are the highest rates of unemployment, will be subsidized by the programme to move to more sustainable business plans. The total cost of the programme amounts to 43 million euros. The grant will be two speed depending on the time each beneficiary needs to establish his business. Being in the programme for 12 months and for 18 months will give a subsidy of 10.000 euros and 17.000 euros, respectively. This aims at least the 60% of the beneficiaries to be women.

Moreover, as the environmental pollution of the planet has grown rapidly the last two decades, the government promotes more the “green investments”. In particular, the programme “Strengthening Green Enterprises and Recycling” foresees the funding of investment projects of medium, small and very small enterprises in order to reduce their environmental footprint and increase their competitiveness as well as the enforcement of businesses in the sector of recycling. In the framework of that programme, investment plans of 25.000 to 300.000 euros budget with a subsidy rate of up to 55% for medium-sized enterprises and up to 65% for small and micro-enterprises. This means that the highest subsidy can be up to 195.000 euros.

Solutions

The proposed solutions, based on literature review and mainly on the responses from the social enterprises in the area of REMT, include the simplification of the bureaucratic procedures, the fast approval of funding, the better organization of the institutions, the tax reduction, the increase of the minimum wage, the improvement of the tax system and the abolition of the feat fee. Additionally, the Local Authority of first and second class is proposed to cooperate with the Social Economic Enterprises so as its contribution to the local development to be significant and there is a need for the Social Economic Enterprises to take more responsibilities. Also, the introduction of a new financial specialist to the social enterprises for the easier access to the financial tools and the utilization of European programmes. Finally, the update of the citizens (newsletters, network, seminars) regarding the Social Economy and the encouragement of the supporting the social enterprises contributes significantly to the success of the Social Entrepreneurship.

Proposals

Further to the afore mentioned solutions, there are also proposed the below for the increase of the awareness and the promotion of the Social Entrepreneurship. At first stage, it would be more beneficial the foundation of national center for the Social and Solidarity Economy to undertake some certain basic roles:

- Undertake the conduct of research or the role of observatory, utilizing the data for the Social and Solidarity Economy that are extracted from various studies
- Coordinate and organize events, conferences, and networks to support the bodies of Social and Solidarity Economy
- Support local business hubs and development centres that do the same work locally and regionally
- Represent the field of Social and Solidarity Economy in front of key targeted actors (using methods such as case studies)
- Provide a clear route of communication against government ministries
- Provide information and knowledge to the bodies of Social and Solidarity Economy at all stages

Moreover, creating a communication and diffusion strategy so as to increase the awareness around the Social Enterprises is quite important. The following actions could be more effective:

- To investigate the possibility of creating a program of Ambassadors of Social Enterprises. In many countries, they are applying programmes, in order to distinguish leaders of Social and Solidarity Economy (people with a great history, great expectations or a great institution) and work with them to create communication material and opportunities for information, in order to highlight their profile and that of the wider movement Social And Solidarity Economy. This kind of example helps to create a leadership group on behalf of the movement comprising of people coming from that, and can enhance the communication and raise the awareness in specific focus groups that are prioritized
- The creation of case studies (and their presentation) through videos and social networks to maximize scope and awareness. Either in conjunction with an Ambassadors program, or in collaboration with existing networks, an economically viable way to raise awareness is to create short videos and stories of some of Social And Solidarity Economy's leaders in order to inform the public about what they are doing, people who help and the difference they make with their work. Social networking platforms can be used to encourage stakeholders to support the communication effort.

- The organization and support of local exhibitions and awareness days. A common method of raising awareness in different countries is to organize a campaign at the same time as World Entrepreneurship Week, in the form of a Social Enterprise Day. Such events encourage the public, politicians and others to visit a social enterprise and shop. Such campaigns are usually more successful when they take place locally, where local media and local networks can be mobilized around a range of local events.

In addition, specialized training programs for specialized start-ups that support a certain number of individuals-groups across the country should be introduced and adapted in order to be trained, in order to be able to manage their Social Enterprises. Also, it is considered critical to improve the accessibility of Social and Solidarity Economy bodies in the dominant government business support programs, either in the existing ones or in those that are planned for the future. As with funding, a common problem in various countries is that CSOs are treated differently than small, small and medium-sized enterprises and other enterprises. For this reason, providing access to all CSOs to the planned and future business support programs and networks can help make the most of these initiatives, and increase the recognition of Social Enterprises as part of the wider economy. Finally, the bodies of Social and Solidarity Economy, the networks, and the government should seek the cooperation with the universities and the lyceums to integrate the Social Entrepreneurship in various study programs / courses. Given the high level of education of many of the leaders of Social Enterprises and those involved in this field, as well as the importance given to education in Greece, educational institutions should be considered as a high priority area for providing support, increasing raising awareness and generating knowledge around Social Entrepreneurship.

The following are the steps for establishing a Social Enterprise in Greece.

Steps of creating a Social Enterprise

Step 1st: Founding members - Drafting of Articles of Association

The Social Cooperatives Enterprises, depending on their category, require a certain number of founding members. More specifically, the Integration Communities are established by at least 7 members and the minimum employment rate of employees coming from vulnerable groups of the population must amount to 40%. On the contrary, the Social Cooperative Enterprises of Social Care and Productive-Collective purpose are founded by at least 5 members. Each member must have at least one mandatory cooperative portion and up to five optional cooperative portions. The paid cooperatives are only those members who work in the cooperative.

Then, before registering in the General Register of Social Economy, Social Cooperative Enterprises must have a clear Statute, a template of which is available at the following link <https://www.taxheaven.gr/attachment/4719>

Step 2nd: Registration in the General Register of Social Economy

Stage 1st: Submit a registration request

The candidate Social Cooperative Enterprises. submits to the Department of Social Economy Register:

- The statute of Social Cooperative Enterprises. signed by the founding members
- Registration application completed
- Responsible statement signed separately by each founding member, about participation or not in another Social Cooperative Enterprises.
- (Only the Integration Communities) Responsible statement on the observance of the employment criterion of persons from vulnerable groups of the population at a rate of at least 40%
- Other relevant supporting documents (where required)

The Registry Department checks the submitted data and proceeds to:

- Registration of Social Cooperative Enterprises. in the Register
- Issuance of a Registration Certificate which is valid only for starting an activity at the Tax Office
- Marking of the articles of association and sending it to Social Cooperative Enterprises.

Stage 2nd: Submission of additional data

The Social Cooperative Enterprises. submits to the Department of Social Economy Register:

- Application for registration of additional data (exact address of its registered office, the Tax Office to which it belongs, VAT and CAD, the annual program of activities and the composition of the Administrative Committee)
- Certificate of Commencement of Activity at the Tax Office.
- Minutes of the formation of a body of the Steering Committee

The Registry Department checks the submitted data and proceeds to:

- Approval of the request for registration of additional data

- Issuance of Registration Certificate (valid until the submission of the first Annual Program of Activities and Report, in which case it is replaced by the Registry Member Certificate)

With the completion, therefore, of the second stage in the registration process of Social Cooperative Enterprises. in the General Register of Social Economy (approval of the request for registration of additional data and issuance of a Certificate of Registration), the establishment of the company is completed.

Step 3rd: Establishment of Social Cooperative Enterprises

After the above approval by the General Register of Social Economy and within 1 month, the members must submit to the Tax Office, where the seat of Social Cooperative Enterprises. belongs, the following supporting documents, in order to complete the initiation process:

- Commencement / Change of work of Non-Natural Person M3
- Taxpayer details M7
- Declaration of members of a non-natural person M8 (in case legal entities participate in the Social Cooperative Enterprises.)
- Minutes of the establishment of the first Steering Committee
- Valid and certified articles of association
- Certificate of registration in the Social Economy Register
- Lease of concession of the company's headquarters

After the start of Social Cooperative Enterprises. in the tax office, the next step is the completion of the establishment process in the Social Economy Register. The necessary documents for this second visit to the Register of Social Economy are:

- Request for additional information (available on the site of the Social Economy Register)
- The three books to be considered described in the articles of association
- The beginning of the tax office
- The minutes of the first General Assembly
- The minutes of the formation of the first Steering Committee

After this second visit to the Register of Social Economy, the process of establishing Social Cooperative Enterprises. is completed.

Conclusion

Social enterprises have an added value to a country's economy and claim a role in complementary social needs. The Social Economy indicates as the main axes of the structures of the social policy the increase of the national product, the redistribution of the income, the local development, and the promotion of programs of social character. Therefore, as other sectors of the economy have developed, there is an urgent need to update the Social Enterprise ecosystem, to inform citizens about cooperation and government services for the Social Economy, and to form similar structures to allow tools of the Social Economy to operate and perform.

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Annex I. Questionnaire



"Empowerment of interregional social enterprises"

I-SEE

Questionnaire to Social Enterprises

This questionnaire was created in the framework of the project "Interregional Social Enterprise Empowerment / Empowerment of interregional social enterprises" with the acronym I-SEE of the Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020 program on behalf of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace which participates as a partner in the project and concerns Social Enterprises of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The questionnaire is strictly anonymous, complies with the standards of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the collected data will be used for the preparation of a study on Social Entrepreneurship in the area of application.

Question 1. The Social Cooperative Enterprises. you are:

- Collective and Productive Purpose
- Social Care
- Integration

Question 2. Year of establishment:

Question 3. The Social Cooperative Enterprises. was founded for you

- On your own initiative
- After the encouragement of the local authorities
- Through a European program (eg TopSa, TOPECO)
- Other

Question 4. How many of your members work:

Question 5. How many of your employees are not members:

Question 6. Do you have any volunteers:

Question 7. How was the idea for the establishment of Social Cooperative Enterprises.

After a conversation with friends or acquaintances

- Having identified a need at the local level
- Following a proposal by a specialist (eg accountant, lawyer) due to the favourable (e.g. legal, tax) framework governing the operation of Social Cooperative Enterprises
- Having researched the market and knowing that, although there is demand, it is not covered
- Unemployment of members
- Utilization of knowledge and skills of members
- Other

Question 8. Area of activity of your Social Cooperative Enterprises

- Social Care Services
- Education
- Environment
- Civilization
- Trade
- Other

Question 9. Average profits per year (years 2018,2017)

Question 10. If you have income in Social Cooperative Enterprises. you, these come from:

- Your activities
- Subsidies
- Contracts (eg with local authorities)
- Other

Question 11. Do you think that the following factors affect Social Cooperative Enterprises:

1=Not at all και 7= Absolutely

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.1 Bureaucracy							
11.2 The difficulty of accessing financing programs / tools							
11.3 Lack of support mechanisms (eg incubators))							

11.4 The lack of financial resources							
11.5 The lack of required skills / knowledge							
11.6 The lack of know-how							
11.7 The lack of support from the local community							
11.8 Intense competition							
11.9 The unstable legal environment							
11.10 The existing tax system							
11.11 The unstable economic environment							
11.12 The speed of decision making within Social Cooperative Enterprises.							
11.13 The inefficient networking between Social Cooperative Enterprises.							
11.14 The difficulty of cooperation of its members							
11.15 The inability to offer innovative products / services							

Question 12. Do you believe that in your Social Cooperative Enterprises:

- You have "set" and seek a common vision
- Everyone shares the same goals
- Everyone is committed to achieving common goals

Question 13 . Financial objectives set:

- Profitability
- Customers' satisfaction
- Sales growth
- Productivity
- Other _____

Question 14. Social goals set:

- Tackling unemployment
- Local community development
- Environmental Protection
- Development of social entrepreneurship

Promotion of Greek goods-services



Social integration of employees / members



Other _____

Question 15. List specific problems you face:

Question 16. Suggest solutions to address the above issues:

Annex II. Best examples of clusters

There are some best examples of business clusters below.

- The Social E. and the 120 United Factories

In the early 1980s, the furniture industry demonstrated a major innovation, namely the establishment and operation of Furniture Centers, which was essentially carried out to enhance domestic furniture production. These are secondary associations of factories - handicrafts with the aim of optimal and more competitive promotion and joint promotion of products. The start was made from the Furniture Center 40 and today in Attiki there are 6 Furniture Centers. The creation of Furniture Centers can be described as a revolution for the furniture industry. The necessity of their creation came, mainly, from the need for the abolition of the informal economy and the exploitation of the craftsman by the merchant. Thus, after their creation, the relationship "Producer - Intermediary - Consumer" was completely reversed.

The Furniture Center "120 United Factories" was the 2nd Furniture Center created in Greece (1984) and has managed to maintain the first place among the other Centers (in number of members) and to be placed in a very good position in the wider competitive space. It is a Limited Liability Cooperative (SYN.PE.), which has 106 members - productive companies in the furniture sector. With its operation, the established way of disposing and promoting the furniture was significantly differentiated, succeeding in gaining the preference of the consumers, offering them a wide variety of high-quality designs at affordable prices.

The main objectives of the Network from the beginning were:

- Marketing and promotion of members' products
 - Creating sales reports of members' products
 - Equal cooperation and mutual assistance of the partners
 - Export promotion
 - Provision of technical and organizational assistance
 - Provision of guarantees or other financial facilities
 - Provision of accounting services
 - Joint advertising of members
 - Staff training
 - Warehouse sharing
 - Joint supply of raw materials
- Supply Cooperative of Pharmacists of Attiki

The Supply Cooperative of Pharmacists of Attiki was founded in 1981 by pharmacists with a vision. Initially, 25 pharmacies in Attiki participated. Gradually more were

added. Today it has 1300 members and is constantly expanding. All members are equal. The members are partners in a company that essentially operates as a limited liability company. If the cooperative has profits at the end of the year, it will distribute them to the partners, ie to its member pharmacies. The supply cooperative was originally established to organize the supplies of pharmacies. Today it has in its member pharmacies a wide variety of drugs at better prices than the market and the possibility of delivery within the same day. It also provides free horizontal services, such as information on co-financed programs, software for the organization of the pharmacy warehouse, electronic ordering, and training seminars according to the needs. The supply cooperative is mainly self-financed, ie it is financed by the subscriptions of the members and by the sales of products to its members. Recently, however, the expansion and equipment of the subsidiary of the subsidiary operating in Alimos was financed under the 3rd CSF.

- Cluster of Bioeconomics and Environment of Western Macedonia (CLuBE)

The Bioeconomy and Environment Cluster of Western Macedonia is a platform for cooperation of the three pillars of the regional economy: the public sector, research and entrepreneurship. The Cluster seeks to develop synergies between local and regional actors and businesses in the bioenergy and environment sectors, with the aim of introducing and developing innovation in the sector and increasing its added value.

Cluster is a non-profit company established in 2014 between local agencies and companies in the Region of Western Macedonia. It is a result of the continuous cooperation of local bodies in the framework of European and National projects in the fields of bioenergy, biomass and environment. In the framework of these projects, analyzes were carried out, among others, on the potential of biomass in the Region, on the basic structures of Clusters and Regional Innovation Systems in the energy sector, etc. CluBE aims at the development of business activities and Research and Development in its fields. bioenergy and the environment, in order to strengthen the green and circular economy in the Region of Western Macedonia and its neighboring areas. More specifically, the strategic objectives of the Cluster include:

- The energy utilization of biomass for domestic and industrial use.
- The energy utilization of biomass in district heating of municipalities and / or settlements and / or production units, services, etc.
- The mixed combustion with lignite in the existing Steam Power Plants of PPC or in future mixed combustion units for the production of heat and / or electricity.
- Optimizing the efficiency of heating systems.
- Energy savings in the domestic sector.

- Energy savings in business and services.
- The utilization of waste (forest, agricultural, urban and waste of food industries) for the production of clean energy.

Annex III. Example of Good Social Entrepreneurship Practice (School Lunches in Kavala and the Social Cooperative Limited of Kavala 2017)

This program was a collaboration between the Ministry of Labor, the Social Security and Social Solidarity, the National Bank of Greece (through the crowdfunding platform Act4Greece⁸) and the Social Cooperative Limited of the Mental Health Sector of Kavala Prefecture with the substantial assistance of the Directorate of Primary Education of Kavala and of the General Hospital of Kavala, and started operating in mid-January of 2017 and until the end of the school year.

"School Lunches" promotes the necessary and proper nutrition by providing children with energy and nutrients, contributing to good physical and mental functioning, development, laying the foundations for good health. At the same time, lunch at school promotes sociality, teamwork and mental health. It also helps lay the foundations of the Mediterranean diet, creating a healthy perception of the value of a healthy, homemade meal. The needs for hot, healthy lunches in elementary schools are covered through the Welfare, Health and Social Solidarity Program. The Agricultural University of Athens (Department of Food and Nutrition Sciences) determined the nutrition program, hygiene rules and specifications of the dining areas at all stages of meal preparation and distribution.

The Social Cooperative Limited of Kavala, operating since 2013⁹, is an official body of Social Entrepreneurship, overseen and controlled by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity. The financial support of the "School Lunches" program was provided through the online platform Act4Greece¹⁰ while Grant Thornton International, an international consulting firm, oversaw full transparency of management. The budget for "School Lunches" in Kavala (up to 1,183 pupils) amounted to € 290,000 for the period of operation. The project was prepared since the summer of 2016 and was implemented in nine (9) schools, selected by the Directorate of Primary Education and the Ministry of Education

⁸ The crowdfunding act4Greece program strengthens the program of the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity to provide meals to primary school students. Following the successful first phase of the action "School Meals in West Attica", it was deemed expedient to extend the program to other parts of the country.

⁹ Approval of establishment by the Ministry of Health in 2011.

¹⁰ The National Bank of Greece's Act4Greece action raises money from individuals, businesses and organizations from Greece and abroad, which it uses to support welfare, health and solidarity programs, social economy and entrepreneurship, culture and cultural entrepreneurship, research, Education and Training as well as Youth & Innovation Entrepreneurship, the Environment and Sustainability. The action also has strategic partners: (a) the Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, (b) the John Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, (c) the Bodosaki Foundation, (e) the Greek National Commission for UNESCO, and (f) the Greek Network for Corporate social responsibility

based on general social criteria, within and outside the urban territory. All free lunches (hot lunch, salad, bread, feta etc.) offered to pupils in those All-day Primary Schools until the end of the school year 2016-2017 (starting date 16/01/2017 – end date 31/05/2017), it was about 90,000 meals (85 days in total).

This project created eleven (11) new jobs for the implementation of the action, six (6) of which belonged to the first category of members of the Social Cooperative Limited of Kavala (people with disabilities/ disabled people) and were mostly working full time. It is noted that the work was therapeutic for the members of the 1st category of the Social Cooperative Limited of Kavala, as they became more efficient and self-confident, while at the same time they had the opportunity to further their training with EFET seminars and gain special certifications. This action, in the context of the real economy, has had a positive impact on the families of people with disabilities, both financially and psychologically, as well as on the general population with whom they worked together in the same premises.

Thus, achieved a social intervention (school lunches) that reinforced the socialization of children and the promotion of healthy nutrition, while simultaneously integrating social inclusion through the work of disabled people and meeting the funding needs through crowdfunding (private assistance), with the involvement of many different stakeholders.

Social Cooperative Enterprises "Genisea"

Social Cooperative Enterprises "Genisea" is a Women's Association which was founded in 1999 in Genisea Xanthi with many purposes, one of them was the revival of customs and traditions of the older generations. Having knowledge about the way of cultivation and the processing of the sugar cane, the women of the Association decided to restore this product and its processing process, in the same way as it was done 50 years ago. Starting with the cultivation of sugar cane, the older ones revived the cultivation and processing of this product and the younger ones got to know up close what this product offers and all the effort it takes to reach its final form. At the beginning of the operation of Social Cooperative Enterprises, a special machine was made for the processing of the product and many working hours are spent daily, in order to cover the route from sowing to the preparation of the product. The first seeds to start the cultivation of sugarcane were collected from Pontos and today products are produced such as sugarcane petimezi and peanut butter with petimezi. The products of "Genisea" have been legally registered and have received approval from the State Chemist as well as individual certifications based on chemical analyzes by Universities. More specifically, the products have been certified by the American School of Agriculture, Harokopio University, the Industrial Property Organization and the ITEGP of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food.

Social Cooperative Enterprises Sufficiency

Social Cooperative Enterprises "Eperkia" is based in Palia Myrsini of Xanthi and based on the principles of nutritional, ideological, energy and cultural self-sufficiency produces products and services aimed at upgrading the quality of food and consequently human life , enhancing traditional crops, traditional arts and gentle processing methods. Its main activity in the beginning was the production of durum wheat, which is processed in home-made machines and after peeling it is ground in a stone mill. With durum wheat as a base, they prepare products such as semolina, cork, trachana, oatmeal and pasta. In the process, the operation of a workshop of ceramics-sculpture, pottery, jewelry in its headquarters to promote natural construction with the bioclimatic method cob. This Social Enterprise managed in 2018 to innovate in the field of hemp flour factor rich in protein from residues hemp oil that is not easily found on the market.