

PILOT ACTION. *Testing the development of a Digital Innovation Hub in the Agri-Food sector.*

1st Interregional Interaction



ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑΚΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗΣ
ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΗΣ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑΣ
ΓΙΑ ΛΟΓΑΡΙΑΣΜΟ ΤΗΣ ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑΣ
ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΗΣ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑΣ



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Deliverable 1A: *Report of the 1st Interregional Meeting*

Project: *Pilot action of the project
“RUMORE-Rural-Urban
Partnerships Motivating
Regional Economies”*



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Περίληψη

Στις 5 Μαρτίου 2021, το Περιφερειακό Ταμείο Ανάπτυξης Κεντρικής Μακεδονίας για λογαριασμό της Περιφέρειας Κεντρικής Μακεδονίας σε συνεργασία με τον Ελληνικό Γεωργικό Οργανισμό ΔΗΜΗΤΡΑ διοργάνωσαν την πρώτη Διαπεριφερειακή αλληλεπίδραση στο πλαίσιο της Πιλοτικής εφαρμογής του έργου “RUMORE-Rural-Urban Partnerships Motivating Regional Economies”. Στόχος της αυτής της συνάντησης ήταν οι διαπεριφερειακές αλληλεπιδράσεις που αφορούν τον τομέα του ρυζιού. Στην εκδήλωση συμμετείχαν εμπειρογνώμονες και εμπλεκόμενοι φορείς από την Περιφέρεια της Λομβαρδίας και την Περιφέρεια Κεντρικής Μακεδονίας.

Στο πλαίσιο της συνάντησης παρουσιάστηκαν εν συντομία ο σκοπός και οι δράσεις της πιλοτικής εφαρμογής «Δοκιμή της ανάπτυξης ενός Ψηφιακού Κόμβου Καινοτομίας στον τομέα της Αγροδιατροφής» που υλοποιεί το ΠΤΑ ΚΜ, όπως επίσης και οι καλές πρακτικές που εφαρμόζονται στην Περιφέρεια της Λομβαρδίας και αφορούν στην αλυσίδα αξίας του ρυζιού.

Ακολούθησε εποικοδομητική συζήτηση μεταξύ των συμμετεχόντων σχετικά με τα εργαλεία και τις καλές πρακτικές που παρουσιάστηκαν. Επισημάνθηκε η σημαντικότητα της χρήσης εργαλείων όπως του blockchain και της ανάλυσης DNA για συγκεκριμένο σκοπό όπως επίσης και της στενής συνεργασίας με τους εμπλεκόμενους φορείς στο πλαίσιο της υλοποίησης της πιλοτικής εφαρμογής. Επιπλέον θέματα που συζητήθηκαν και επισημάνθηκαν ήταν:

- η ενσωμάτωση της καινοτομίας όχι μόνο στα εργαλεία αλλά επίσης στον τομέα της διαχείρισης του προϊόντος και της διεργασίας του.
- μία πρόκληση που αντιμετωπίζουν και οι δύο περιφέρειες είναι πως μπορούν να εγγυηθούν οι ερευνητικοί φορείς και οι Περιφέρειες ότι τα συλλεγόμενα στοιχεία από τους εμπλεκόμενους φορείς είναι αξιόπιστα χωρίς να απαιτείται η εξέταση της ασφάλειας.
- Ένας βασικός στόχος της διαπεριφερειακής αλληλεπίδρασης είναι η μετέπειτα συνεργασία των δύο Περιφερειών με σκοπό την παραγωγή υψηλής ποιότητας προϊόντων ρυζιού στην Ευρώπη ώστε να είναι ανταγωνιστικά σε σχέση με τις εισαγωγές από τρίτες χώρες.
- Για το σκοπό αυτό, στο πλαίσιο της συνεργασίας των δύο Περιφερειών θα πρέπει να καθοριστούν πρώτα οι κοινές προκλήσεις και στόχοι και στη συνέχεια με τη χρήση διάφορων εργαλείων να αντιμετωπιστούν με στόχο την αύξηση της ανταγωνιστικότητας.

Introduction

The Deliverable 1A “Report of the first Interregional Meeting” is implemented in the context of the implementation of the pilot action of the project “RUMORE-Rural-Urban Partnerships Motivating Regional Economies” which co-financed by the European Interregional Cooperation Program INTERREG EUROPE 2014-2020».

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the state of emergency announced in all partners’ countries, the first Interregional Meeting was transformed into an online event and held on March 5th, 2021. The main aim of this meeting is the interregional interactions between the Region of Central Macedonia and the Region of Lombardy concerning the rice value chain. Representatives of both Regions and of stakeholders were attended the meeting and discussed fruitfully about the current pilot action and the potential of collaboration for a common goal.

Minutes

On March 5, 2021, an interregional meeting was organized by the Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia in cooperation with the Hellenic Agricultural Organization – DEMETER and hosted by the Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia. The aim of this meeting was the interregional interactions concerning rice agri-sector. Experts and stakeholders from Lombardy Region and the Region of Central Macedonia were participated in this event. From the Greek side, representatives from the RDFCM, the technical expert of RDFCM, the DEMETER organization and CERTH attended the meeting, while from the Italian side representatives from the Region of Lombardy, the “Rice and Frogs Rural District” were participated. Also representative from the Lead partner of RUMORE project (HafenCity University Hamburg) was participated as well.

Mr Ioannis Spandos, welcomed the participants and presented in brief the aim of the meeting. Afterwards, Mr Dimitris Katsantonis presented the details about the pilot action entitled “Testing the development of a Digital Innovation Hub in the Agri-Food sector through a field research and a digital application in the rice value chain”. More specifically, the five stages of the pilot implementation were presented that include the field research (stage 1), the digital application specifications, design, planning and development (stage 2), the development of the Digital Integration Platform and subsystems (stage 3), the initial DIH blockchain application verification, assessment and evaluation (stage 4) and the DIH Strategic roadmap (stage 5). Then, a brief description of the implemented activities till February 2021 from all partners was made.

After a brief welcome by the Vice governor of Agricultural Economy, Mr Sotiris Batos, the participants from the Lombardy Region made their comments on the issues presented related to the pilot action. More specifically, Mr Andrea Patrucco started

with some considerations in relation to the pilot action described by the Greek partners. Firstly, he remarked that the identification of a strategic roadmap is the first point that should be put in place. Then he pointed out that the pilot action presented is a niche project that could be scalable with other materials and products. Some other remarks from Mr Patrucco about the blockchain tool concerned the importance of using such tools for a specific goal. He also pointed out the importance of working so closely with the stakeholders such as the agricultural entrepreneurs within this pilot project as it is usually a very crucial problem.

Additionally, in a rural district, a territorial organization can help entrepreneurs to incorporate innovation not only on tools but also on management and processing. For example, “Rice and frogs Rural District” focuses more on management innovation. He also pointed out that it is very important that the consumer through the QR code, that will be implemented in the pilot action presented will be aware of information such as who and when cultivated, who packaged it, and several other important data. The demand for innovation is not only in the marketing but also regarding the quality of the rice product related to the variety. In this direction the Rice and Frogs district is working on a project related to DNA control of rice.

Another aspect that is very important according to Mr Patruzzo is the collection of data from agriculture entrepreneurs regarding the quality and quantity of their products. The development of the cloud-based web platform will help in this direction.

In relation to the digital tools that could help the stakeholders to provide innovation, Mr Angelo Gatto presented some insights of their regional innovation open platform with the goal of providing an environment for collaboration of various professionals and more specifically providing a platform to all activities related to research, innovation and sustainable development of the region. This platform is considered very successful as it has more than 20.000 participants, the majority of whom are citizens. The service and tools provided by this platform is offered to several regional, national and international projects to start and manage working groups and communities, to disseminate results and engage participants. Then, he presented an example of using such a platform in a very niche project and more specifically a territorial project that connects the production area and the city through traceability of animal products i.e. milk with the employment of blockchain. One main output of the project that came out from a survey that was conducted was that the consumers want to know all the information about the origin of the products also for short supply chains and the blockchain is a tool that can help this need of information. Mr Gatto also pointed out that an additional added value of this platform is that there is a very strong network encompassing both the technical people and the solution providers. In this point, Mr Spandos also pointed out the fact that this open innovation platform of Lombardy is supporting interregional cooperation.

Then a point was raised from Mr Katsantonis with respect to the reliability of collected data from the farmers. In this regard, he mentioned that the success of the current

pilot action would depend on the fact that the farmers will provide with real data after persuading them that the traceability with such of data would give them added value. In this direction Mrs Sofia Terzi, added that the involvement of organizations such as DEMETER and CERTH that can verify and certify such products as well as the governmental involvement that adds the legality in this project gives the certainty to the consumer that there is added value. Mrs Terzi also referred to the importance of tracing products in regard to food safety. So, the challenge is how we can guarantee that the collected data are really connected to the quality without testing the safety.

Afterwards, as all the above-mentioned tools and technologies are referring to the businesses and consumers in order for them to be both in the short term and long term competitive, Mr Kravvas the only representative of the business sector of this area referred to two basin issues. Firstly, he mentioned that the exhausted official checks carried out of the product's quality don't reflect always the real situation. The second main issue Mr Kravvas was mentioned to, was that the imports of rice product from non-EU countries are not accompanied by relevant checks of the production procedures and product quality.

Mr Spandos mentioned in this point that the ultimate goal of the effort is taken place for the interregional cooperation between the two regions is to produce high quality European rice product in order to compete the products originating in non-EU countries.

The next topic that was presented by the Italian participants was related to two successful good practices taking place in Lombardy and are "The controlled DNA rice in Milan Metropolitan Area" and "Local rice for Milan school canteens", implemented by the "Rice and Frogs Rural District: of the Metropolitan Area of Milan. The "Controlled DNA" certifies, through a DNA analysis, that the rice in each package produced by the brand "Rural Districts Rice and Frogs" fit to the type indicated in the label and this analysis guarantees the consumer about the real consistency and presence of specific types in its packages. The specific good practice is transferable to other contexts and could be a source of inspiration and can be applied to many territorial products.

After relative question made by Mr Katsantonis, Mr Patrucco mentioned that the study of genotype of rice product aims to the identification of the specific rice product with the historical characteristic. There is no other layer of information put on the DNA label control.

Another interesting thing that they are trying to do in Lombardy is not just to connect the free market with the producer but also the public canteen. The main goal of this project is to sell the products directly and not through intermediaries that do not guarantee the right remuneration to the real value of the product in the framework of the Food Policy of Milan. One important issue about this practice, according to Mr Marko Magni is that the rural district guarantees the price of the rice and the quality

for all the producers. After a relative question of Mr Mantzanakis, Mr Magni mentioned that they are working on this opportunity of internalization of their products especially through some networking activities.

Subsequently, Mr Mantzanakis stressed out that having in mind that technology is changing too fast, businesses have difficulties in competing in the global markets, the aim of the current pilot project is to link the businesses and identifying their needs in order to be more compete. The next goal concerns the collaboration of the two regions and finding of common challenges, goals and risks against the global market. In this direction, Mr Vassilis Tsanidis, agreeing to the above, stressed also that the setting up and operation of a European Digital Innovation Hub on rice is the means to a collaboration of the most productive regions in terms of rice production. In this regard, firstly it is needed to be identified some common needs and then address these common needs in view of becoming competitive in global level.

Then Mrs Maria Goulaptsi, pointed out that the One Stop Liaison Office could play a vital role in this whole process.

Afterwards, Mr Spandos informed all the participants about a discussion that took place with the JRC about the capitalization of the idea of setting up a DIH on rice, and potential funding sources such as the interregional partnerships. In this direction, Mr Spandos presented his preliminary ideas that sketched an Action plan and a strategy. This plan includes various steps such as the connection of the whole rice value chain with the local DIH on rice if exists or to establish a new one. Secondly, all local DIHs collaborate with each other in order to setup quality standards and technologies exploiting EU funding such as Interregional Innovation Investments or other. But as Mr Manzanakis indicated, the first step before all the above is to explore if both regions have the same challenges. From the Greek side, Mr Mamtzanakis mentioned that through the pilot actions it will be identified the needs of the stakeholders and this requires a few weeks.

Additionally, Mrs Sofia Terzi proposed that there will be possible collaboration in the part of the innovation platform that has presented by Mr Gatto and the upcoming platform that will be developed within the pilot project.

Regarding the needs of the stakeholders, Mr Kravvas pointed out that from technological aspect Greek farmers are in high level, and as a result high quantity of production, they lack though in product's quality. Also, what that Greek stakeholders need from the collaboration with Lombardy region, that is the leader of rice production in Europe and very well organized, is to teach them their mentality.

Mr Mantzanakis then indicated that the two regions are using different tools (blockchain and DNA analysis), and in this regard the two regions should find points of synergy. The reaction of Mr Patrucco was that a common challenge could be found while the tool in order to address this challenge could be different.

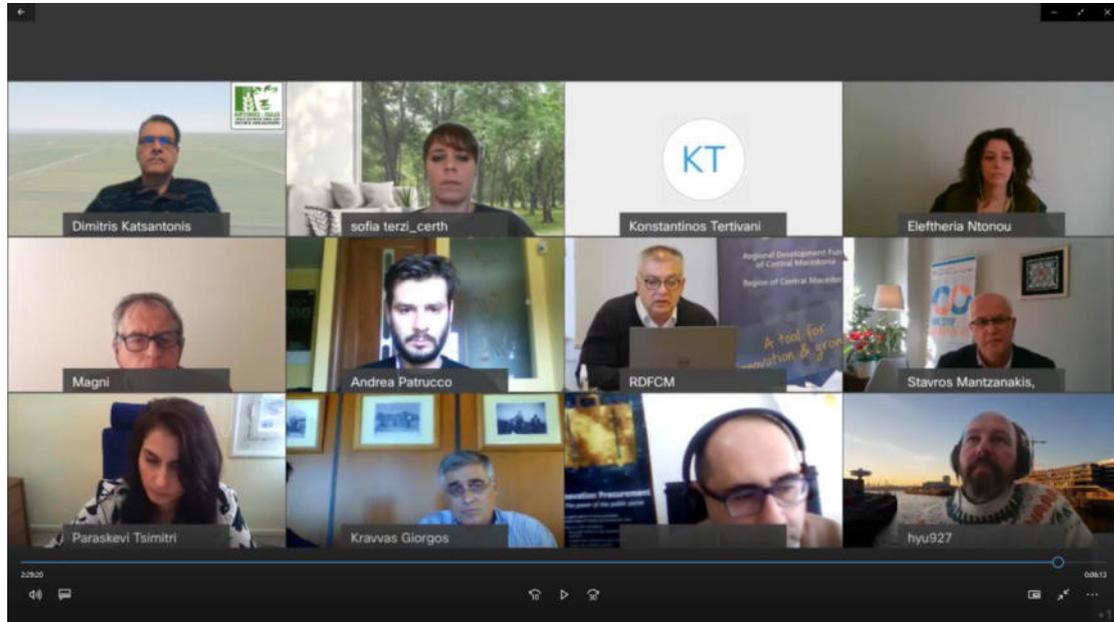
At the end, Mr Andreas Obersteg pointed out that this idea could be a very good outcome of RUMORE project and he hopes that the results of the pilot action could be exploited by other regions as well.

Main points

The main points discussed, and main outputs of the interregional meeting include the followings:

- Using tools such as blockchain and DNA analysis in rice product value chain is important in order to achieve specific goals.
- It is very important the close collaboration with the stakeholders such as the agricultural entrepreneurs within this pilot project as it is usually a very crucial problem.
- In a rural district, a territorial organization can help entrepreneurs to incorporate innovation not only on tools but also on management and processing.
- The challenge is how we can guarantee that the collected data are really connected to the quality without testing the safety.
- The ultimate goal of the effort is taken place for the interregional cooperation between the two regions is to produce high quality European rice product in order to compete the products originating in non-EU countries.
- Firstly, some common needs and challenges should be identified and then address these common needs using different tools in view of becoming competitive in global level.

Photos



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5. Designin and management of the Greek pilot in close collaboration with RDFCM. (Task 2.1)
6. On-site farmers interviews and phone interviews for the completion of the questionnaires with rice farmers (Task 1.2)
7. After harvesting 10 collaborators delivered to special facility variety "GLORIA" and DEMETER collected samples for quality analysis (undergoing) (Task 2.2) and genotyping (CERTH)
8. All questionnaires and grain samples were delivered to CERTH

Zoom meeting grid showing participants: Dimitris Katsarinos, VT, and others.

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TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

- PILOT IMLEMENTATION, QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- EXCHANGE BETWEEN REGIONS FOR THE ENCHANCEMENT AND COMPLETION OF THIS DIH (DIGITAL SERVICES, ETC)
- EXISTING SITUATION OF DIH IN AGRI-FOOD, STRATEGY AND VISION IN THE TWO REGIONS
 - PAN EUROPEAN VISION

Thank you for your kind attention!

Zoom meeting grid showing participants: Sami Bana, VT, and others.

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TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

- PILOT IMLEMENTATION, QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- EXCHANGE BETWEEN REGIONS FOR THE ENCHANCEMENT AND COMPLETION OF THIS DIH (DIGITAL SERVICES, ETC)
- EXISTING SITUATION OF DIH IN AGRI-FOOD, STRATEGY AND VISION IN THE TWO REGIONS
 - PAN EUROPEAN VISION

Thank you for your kind attention!

Zoom meeting grid showing participants: RDFCM (Hercules), VT, and others.

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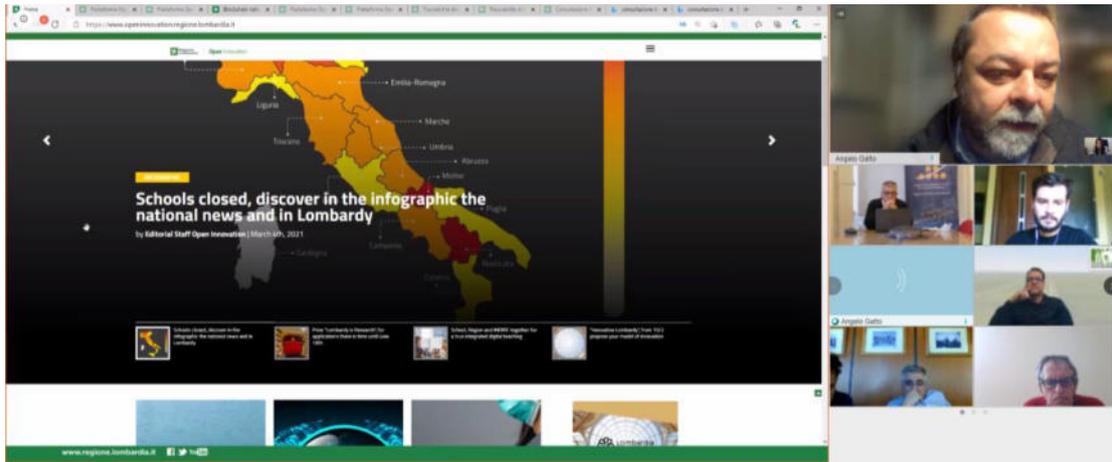
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TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

- PILOT IMLEMENTATION, QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- EXCHANGE BETWEEN REGIONS FOR THE ENCHANCEMENT AND COMPLETION OF THIS DIH (DIGITAL SERVICES, ETC)
- EXISTING SITUATION OF DIH IN AGRI-FOOD, STRATEGY AND VISION IN THE TWO REGIONS
 - PAN EUROPEAN VISION

Thank you for your kind attention!

Zoom meeting grid showing participants: Andrea Pafros, VT, and others.



PILOT ACTION. *Testing the development of a Digital Innovation Hub in the Agrifood sector.*

2nd Interregional Interaction



ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑΚΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗΣ
ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΗΣ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑΣ
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Deliverable 1B: *Report of the 2nd Interregional Meeting*

Project: *Pilot action of the project
“RUMORE-Rural-Urban
Partnerships Motivating
Regional Economies”*



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Περίληψη

Στις 21 Οκτωβρίου 2021, διοργανώθηκε από το Περιφερειακό Ταμείο Ανάπτυξης Κεντρικής Μακεδονίας για λογαριασμό της Περιφέρειας Κεντρικής Μακεδονίας, σε συνεργασία με τον Ελληνικό Γεωργικό Οργανισμό ΔΗΜΗΤΡΑ η 2^η Διαπεριφερειακή Συνάντηση στο πλαίσιο της Πιλοτικής εφαρμογής του έργου “RUMORE-Rural-Urban Partnerships Motivating Regional Economies”. Στόχος αυτής της συνάντησης ήταν η διαπεριφερειακή αλληλεπίδραση στον τομέα του ρυζιού. Στην εκδήλωση συμμετείχαν εμπειρογνώμονες και εμπλεκόμενοι φορείς από την Περιφέρεια της Λομβαρδίας και την Περιφέρεια Κεντρικής Μακεδονίας.

Στο πλαίσιο της συνάντησης παρουσιάστηκαν από τον ΕΛΓΟ-ΔΗΜΗΤΡΑ και το ΕΚΕΤΑ αναλυτικά η δομή του εργαλείου blockchain και ο τρόπος που αναπτύχθηκε όπως επίσης και η πλατφόρμα του blockchain με όλα τα χαρακτηριστικά της. Ειδικότερα, παρουσιάστηκαν τα στάδια του blockchain και ποιοι εμπλέκονται σε καθένα από αυτά και με ποιον τρόπο, και ενδεικτικά παρουσιάστηκαν τα χαρακτηριστικά που απαιτούνται σε κάθε στάδιο παραγωγής για το εργαλείο. Επιπλέον, παρουσιάστηκε η αυτοματοποιημένη πλατφόρμα και τα συγκεκριμένα χαρακτηριστικά που θα πρέπει να εισάγονται από τον παραγωγό ή τον Συνεταιρισμό κατά τη διάρκεια όλων των σταδίων παραγωγής, ώστε να παραχθεί ο μοναδικός QR κωδικός για κάθε προϊόν.

Ακολούθησε εποικοδομητική συζήτηση μεταξύ των συμμετεχόντων σχετικά με το εργαλείο που παρουσιάστηκε, η δυνατότητα προσαρμογής του για χρήση στην Περιφέρεια της Λομβαρδίας, αλλά και πιθανή μελλοντική συνεργασία μεταξύ των δύο Περιφερειών στο τομέα της αλυσίδας αξίας ρυζιού στο πλαίσιο ενός έργου. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, συζητήθηκε το θέμα του ελέγχου και της αξιοπιστίας των εισαγόμενων δεδομένων, όπως επίσης και το θέμα της ποιότητας του προϊόντος το οποίο θα πρέπει να περιγράφεται ιδιαίτερα στο εργαλείο. Επιπλέον, περιγράφηκε το Σύμφωνο Συνεργασίας που υπογράφηκε μεταξύ της ΠΚΜ, του ΕΛΓΟ-ΔΗΜΗΤΡΑ, του ΕΚΕΤΑ και των τριών Αγροτικών Συνεταιρισμών. Και οι δύο περιφέρειες που συμμετείχαν στη συνάντηση συμφώνησαν στην προσπάθεια μιας μελλοντικής συνεργασίας.

Introduction

The Deliverable 1B “Report of the second Interregional Meeting” is implemented in the context of the implementation of the pilot action of the project “RUMORE-Rural-Urban Partnerships Motivating Regional Economies” which co-financed by the European Interregional Cooperation Program INTERREG EUROPE 2014-2020».

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the state of emergency announced in all partners’ countries, the first Interregional Meeting was transformed into an online event and held on October 21st, 2021. Though, some of the Greek attendees participated on-site in the premises of the Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia. The main aim of this meeting is the interregional interactions between the Region of Central Macedonia and the Region of Lombardy concerning the rice value chain. Representatives of both Regions and of stakeholders were attended the meeting and discussed fruitfully about the current pilot action and the potential of collaboration for a common goal.

Minutes

On October 21, 2021, an interregional Meeting was organized by the Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia in cooperation with the Hellenic Agricultural Organization – DEMETER and hosted by the Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia. The aim of this meeting was the interregional interactions concerning rice agri-sector. Experts and stakeholders from Lombardy Region and the Region of Central Macedonia were participated in this event. From the Greek side, representatives from the three partners that implement the pilot action of RUMORE project, that RDFCM and the technical expert of RDFCM, the DEMETER organization, CERTH, as well as local producers from the rice Associations attended the meeting. While from the Italian side representatives from the Region of Lombardy and the “Rice and Frogs Rural District” were participated.

Mr. Ioannis Spandos, welcomed the participants and presented in brief the aim of the meeting. Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the state of emergency announced in both countries the interregional meeting was held partly via digital platform. Additionally, Mr. Nikos Tzollas, the Regional Councilor in Region of Central Macedonia, welcomed and greeted the participants.

Afterwards, Mr. Dimitris Katsantonis presented some details about the progress of the pilot action entitled “Testing the development of a Digital Innovation Hub in the Agri-Food sector through field research and a digital application in the rice value chain”. Firstly, he started giving more details about the structure of the rice blockchain that was developed in the frame of the pilot action of RUMORE project. More specifically, he briefly described the aim of this blockchain and the way it works

from the perspective of the user and the consumer. A more detailed description was given about the structure of the blockchain. Producers, associations, traders, rice mills/processors, retailers and consumers are involved in different stages of the whole process of the blockchain. The blockchain is structured in two basic parts: primary and secondary production. For each part, at least 30 traits can be recorded in the blockchain to ensure the traceability of production activities. At the end of the presentation Mr. Katsantonis extended special thanks to the producers that have been involved in the process of the development of the blockchain by giving the required data and information.

Following the presentation, Mr. Andrea Patruzzo, representative of the Region of Lombardy, expressed some questions regarding the implementation of the blockchain. Firstly, he made practical question regarding the time needed for the design and the whole implementation (testing and monitoring of the tool) of the blockchain within the specific project. Mr. Spandos and Mr. Katsantonis answered that taking into consideration the difficulties they faced in regard to COVID-19 and the communication with all parties of the rice value chain, the whole procedure took them one year and the process of testing phase followed the process of rice production (6-9 months).

Also, Mr. Katsantonis, after relative question made by Mr. Patruzzo, clarified that the 30 traits that are recorded during the secondary production, were selected after the request of the bigger traders and it was highlighted the importance of taking into consideration the opinion of the market in the process of developing the system. Also, Mr. Katsantonis pointed out that the tool is designed for being used for the international market as well and during its design they gave great emphasis on the quality of the product.

Afterwards, Mr. Patenidis from CERTH presented in more detail the blockchain tool which tries to automate the whole procedure. More specifically, he presented all the required data that must be put in the specific platform by the different types of users, which are the producers and associations. The user can register firstly some general information about his parcel. The input data that are required concern the sowing (before sowing preparation, information about the cultural practices), production (including fertilization, insects and disease control), harvesting (including the production amount, transporting and storage logistics), the disposal of production and nutritional content. From this platform and after inputting all data a unique QR code is produced, which can be used for monitoring any transaction and registration on the parcel and production. It was highlighted that the input data cannot be altered by anyone and can be put through a mobile or web application. Also, Mr. Spandos pointed out that the attributes that will be shown through the QR code will take into account the opinion and demand of both the consumers and stakeholders. Mr. Patruzzo mentioned that in a similar track and trace tool that is used in Lombardy Region, only the indirect stakeholders got involved in its design.

After the presentation, Mr. Patruzzo asked if there is another control in order to confirm the reliability of the data. There is no conflict of interest between the producer and the association or the traders. So, there is no need for an external audit and control. Though, ELGO-DEMETER certifies the product and the procedures followed by the producers before the start of the blockchain procedure and confirmed by the Association, without monitoring every transaction. At this point, Mr. Spandos added that there will be also a DNA control, as this will be an additional attribute of the system.

Afterwards, Mr. Spandos informed the representatives of Lombardy Region about the MoU that will be signed by RDFCM, ELGO-DEMETER, CERTH and the agricultural associations indicated that all parties agreed to collaborate for at least one more year in order to test the blockchain tool that was developed, to add more attributes and check the functionality of the system in real conditions.

A discussion followed between the RDFCM and Mr. Magni, the representative of “Rice and Frogs Rural District” of Region of Lombardy. Following the relative questions by the RDFCM and ELGO-DEMETER, Mr. Magni mentioned that considering the Italian rice production, the attributes they would need to put in a similar tool developed by the Greek partners are the indication of the local variety, that is the most important, the specific locality of the seed and if it is certified and some information that demonstrate that the producer uses techniques and methods that reduce the environmental impact. The latter is very important for both environmental and economic point of view.

Subsequently, Mr. Spandos also asked Mr. Magni about the possibility and the way that both Regions could collaborate in the field of digitalization of the rice value chain in order to produce European rice. He pointed out that this is the initial goal of the interregional interactions within the pilot action. Mr. Magni firstly underlined that there is very important that both regions have a common strategy and view to face the problem of competitiveness with non-european rice. In relation to the establishment of common protocols concerning digitalization and labelling in the frame of European Strategies, Policies and standards, Mr. Magni, emphasized on the aspect of product quality and that the label and the digitalization should contain specific information that could prove the quality of the production.

At the end of this meeting, both parts discussed about the possibility of collaborating in the near future, in the frame of a new project, in order to promote the common strategies in rice value chain. As they discussed, the next steps of this project could be the gathering of all European regions producing rice and, in this regard, the two attending regions could start a close collaboration in this direction. All attendees agreed in arranging a meeting where they will discuss in a more concrete way about this collaboration and the opportunities that may exist in relation to the sustainability and quality of regions’ rice production taking into account the history and the culture of European rice, that is differentiate it from non-european rice products. Also, from

the Greek side, RCM, ELGO-DEMETE, CERTH and agricultural association will be the partners of this future collaboration, while from the Lombardy's side, it was suggested that Lombardy Region and more technical entities (i.e. University of Milan-Faculty of Agriculture, PTP Science Park, CNR – National Research Council) as well as market stakeholders could participate in this.

In this context, both regions decided to have a new meeting in a couple of months, after having the first results from the testing of blockchain tool.

According to Mr. Tzollas comment that the next step is the connection of the platform with a custom-made label (green product, organic etc.) in order to achieve the best price of the product, Mr. Patruzzo mentioned that this is a big challenge for both regions.

Main points

The main points discussed, and main outputs of the interregional meeting include the followings:

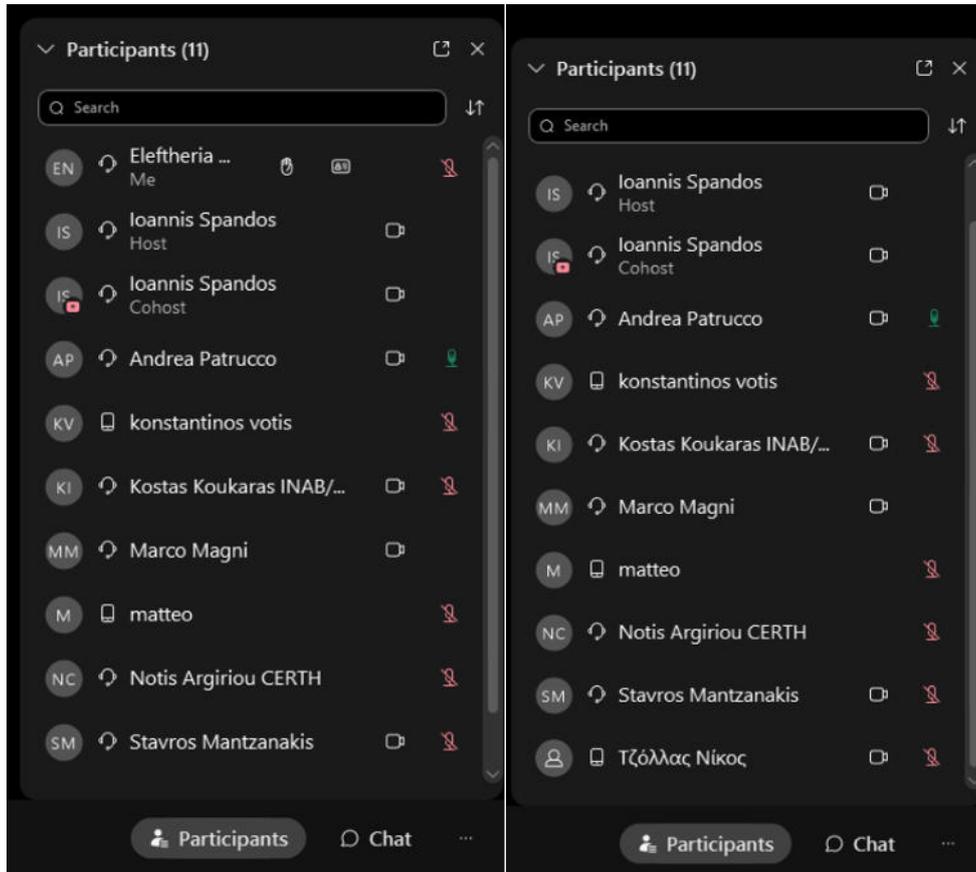
- It was developed and automated procedure for the transaction in rice value chain
- During the process of developing the system, both consumers and stakeholders got involved.
- An MOU will be signed by RDFCM, ELGO-DEMETER, CERTH and the agricultural associations for continuing for at least 1 year in order to test the functionality of the system in real conditions.
- It was highlighted the importance of the quality, the origin and the culture of the European rice product to be reflected in digitalization and labelling.
- Both regions agreed that they should continue their collaboration under a new project in order to establish common protocols of digitalization and labelling according to European standards for more sustainable and competitive European rice production.

List of Participants

	Name	Organization	email
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18	Andrea Patrucco	Region of Lombardy	and.patrucco@gmail.com
19	Marko Magni	"Rice and Frogs Rural District" of Region of Lombardy	

The following participants attended the meeting via WEBEX platform.



The participants that attended the meeting in-person in the premises of RDFCM are presented in the following table.

		
RUMORE Rural-Urban Partnerships Motivating Regional Economies		
RUMORE Pilot Action "Testing the development of a Digital Innovation Hub in the Agri-Food sector"		
Second Interregional interaction Online meeting between the Regions of Lombardy and Central Macedonia 21 October 2021, 18:00 CET		
List of attendees		
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Photos

