

PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IN THESSALY

The HNV-Link project in the Thessaly (or Thessalia) Learning Area (LA), Greece, is represented by the team from the University of Thessaly's Laboratory of Rural Space. The laboratory studies pastoral livestock farming as the traditional main livelihood in the Pindos Mountains. The participatory process is based on a long the long-term relationships and trust of the team members and collaborators with a diverse group of stakeholders. Stakeholders are directly involved in gathering information and sharing knowledge to achieve project aims through informal bilateral meetings, group discussions at farmer training events, and workshops.

Already at the design of the HNV-Link project, the team consulted with key development agency stakeholders in the Pindos Mountains. Other stakeholders, including municipalities and local environmental associations, have been involved during the project implementation. The team also initiated discussions with a broad range of other actors: breeders, young farmers, and higher education institutions (University of Thessaly, Agricultural University of Athens, AgroParisTech).



To date, efforts have focused on 1) mapping farming systems (researchers of AgroParisTech supervised by the University of Thessaly) and identifying the HNV qualities in a large area of the central LA and, 2) creating an HNV Vision for the LA Thessaly. As part of the HNV Vision process, the team used participatory processes such as consultation with stakeholders to gather data for a baseline assessment and to develop a business as usual scenario, on one hand, and the Vision for the area, on the other.

The consultations with multiple stakeholder groups facilitated identification of the innovation gaps which must be addressed for LA Thessaly to realise the agreed HNV vision for the area. Following these consultations and in collaboration with the Agricultural University of Athens, the team developed a series of trainings for producers in the following sectors: sheep and goat farming, beekeeping, aromatic plants and legumes.



Additionally, and in cooperation with the PINDOS Network (a Local Government Network), the team aims to create a Coordination and Support Centre of the HNV Systems. In this context, the team is working with PINDOS Network members for: (a) the conception, configuration and planning of this Centre

and (b) the activation of RDP funding for the region. Four farmer leaders were selected to implement, in a demonstrative pilot form, innovations (technological, organizational) in the context of publicizing those innovations and enhancing the innovation “Participatory Guarantee System” with HNV farming character.

Finally, the Greek HNV-Link team held meetings with producers for the aim of increasing understanding on the potential benefits of organization and to encourage the creation of a farmers’ network for HNV farming.

Table 1: List of participatory events in LA Thessaly, Greece

Activity	Number of participants	Date
Meeting with proposed PINDOS Network	22	February 2017
Meeting with local actors and producers	60	March 2017
Mapping the LA's farming systems with stakeholders	20	March – August 2017
Interviews with key stakeholders	15	March – June 2017
Innovation seminar	38	July 2017
Meeting with PINDOS Network	10	November 2017- April 2018
Producers training	6	February – June 2018
Bilateral meetings with producer-leaders on the innovations	10	January 2018 - ongoing

Links

Baseline assessment process (in Greek with English subtitles)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1LMqbMRXAY>

Report from the innovation seminar (national language)

http://www.hnmlink.eu/download/GR_NationalLanguageReport_innovationseminar_Thessalia.docx.pdf

Press: Meeting between the Laboratory of Rural Space and Mayors of Western Thessaly for High Nature Value Areas <http://www.uth.gr/en/news/490-20170217-eax2>

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