


**Project “Agro and tourism
business academy – SME support
system”**

Acronym: Agro Business Academy

The project Agro Business Academy is Co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Cooperation Programme Interreg VA. “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020”. The contents of this material are sole responsibility of Association Prosperity and development for Bulgaria 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.



The project
“Agro and tourism business academy – SME support system” has a budget of 503,838.25 euro and is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and by the national funds of the countries participating in Interreg V-A Cooperation Program “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020”.

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Agro Business Academy

Addressing common challenges, the project develops an innovative approach based on international achievements and business trends to provide a support system for SMEs.

Agro tourism Business Academy will develop and provide professional lessons and video training for entrepreneurs and employees; seedlings will be provided to farmers; an innovative mobile application for alternative tourism will be developed, allowing users to create their own itineraries. The application will expand the

marketability of regional products and services and encourage alternative tourist visits. The web portal will provide digitized materials and scientific know-how to support the business development of SMEs. The Academy will continue to provide consulting and training even after the project is completed.

An Academy for Agro tourism will be established to assist entrepreneurs with administrative and professional support.



<http://www.greece-bulgaria.eu/>

Benefits for Business

Competitiveness

Increasing competitiveness in the local and international market by presenting exceptional products from unique varieties that have their own history and terroir.

Diversification of entrepreneurs' products and services, which will strengthen their competitiveness.

Added economic value

Adding additional economic value in terms of acquiring know-how, knowledge and new practices in winemaking and wine tourism.

Adding additional economic value to the land and increasing its price.

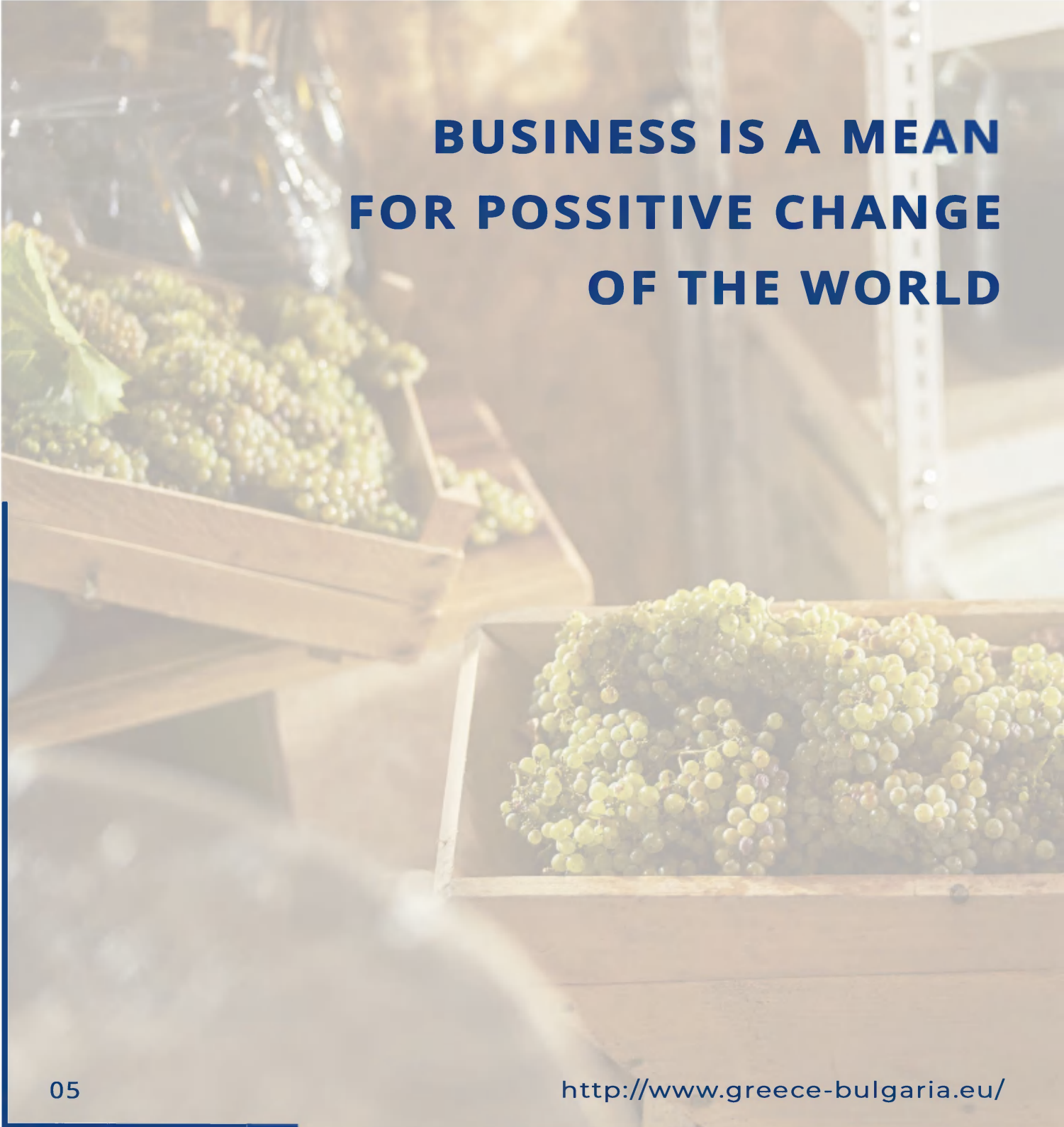
Tourism

Possibilities for organic wine tourism.

Development of a new business niche - organic and agro tourism, organic wine tourism.

Increased skills and knowledge of human capital in the HORECA and tourism business.





**BUSINESS IS A MEAN
FOR POSSITIVE CHANGE
OF THE WORLD**

The cross-border region



The Greece - Bulgaria cross-border region covers 40,202 km² and has a total population of 2.7 million inhabitants.

It includes the regions of Evros, Kavala, Xanthi, Rodopi, Thessaloniki, Drama, Serres on the Greek side and the regions of Blagoevgrad, Smolyan, Kardjali and Haskovo on the Bulgarian side.

The region is part of the most south-eastern non-island area of the EU and is located between three seas: the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Ionian-Adriatic Sea.

It is located at the crossroads of strategic fossil fuel pipelines supplying the EU market as well as transport axes.

The settlement structure of the district is characterized by the presence of 10 medium-sized towns with up to about 50,000 inhabitants, which generate 38.2% of the total population, and 25 small towns with between 10,000-50,000 inhabitants.

Although relatively little funding has been allocated to this area over the years, the neighboring towns and districts have built a long history of cooperation and exchange.



One of the main objectives of the project is to support the tourism and agricultural sectors.

Entrepreneurs from the targeted sectors will get access to specific trainings, a new thematic smart application, Digital Academy and more.

The project has been developed by the idea of several organizations from Bulgaria and Greece with successful previous experience in developing project proposals in the tourism and agricultural sectors. The leading beneficiary is Eurointegra Association, and the partner from the Greek side is Agripreneurship organization with extensive experience in the field.



The Association "Prosperity and Development for Bulgaria" is the other partner of the project from the Bulgarian side.

Agro Business Academy

The planned initiatives positively contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the local and international markets by presenting exceptional products - organic wines from local varieties, bio-agro-wine tourism products and others.

The special varieties that will be examined during events and trainings have their own history and terroir.

It is these varieties that offer exclusivity of flavors and aromas that attract the attention of consumers of premium goods.

In this way, by developing a niche market in the cross-border territory, unique biological products will be presented, part of the bio-agro tourism sector.

Choosing a niche and unique product leads to extremely good business development.

Project participants will have the opportunity to get to know and enter new markets, expand their production and increase production capacity.



**VIRTUAL REALITY,
INNOVATIVE SMART APPLICATION AND
BUSINESS ACADEMY FOR AGRO TOURISM
WILL HELP ENTREPRENEURS
IN THE CROSS-BORDER AREA
BULGARIA - GREECE**



New technologies to support business

It would be great if the agro business locations were digitally accessible, and visitors could easily find suggestions for organic agro and wine tourism routes, wouldn't it?

This is exactly the function of the innovative application, which will connect users and businesses from the cross-border region in an accessible interactive way. The development of at least 10 interesting routes for agro and wine tourism is planned. And what's even better is that through the application tourists will be able to create their own routes. This is a completely innovative approach to developing a business

system serving entrepreneurs and consumers in the region. The application will expand the marketability of regional products and services and encourage alternative tourist visits. The web portal will provide digitized materials and scientific know-how to support the business development of SMEs. The Academy will continue to provide consulting and training even after the project is completed.

The application will provide support for a number of companies from the cross-border region Bulgaria - Greece, as part of the database and part of the interactive map. And a minimum of 9 enterprises will receive non-financial support.





The Digital Business Academy for Agro tourism is also under development. It will include 4 educational modules and lessons. Some of the topics that the modules will cover are related to the diversification of the products and services of entrepreneurs and the development of a new business niche, namely - bio agro wine tourism.

The trainings will include video lessons, which in turn would help develop the skills of entrepreneurs and improve the conditions for entrepreneurship in the HORECA sector.

Through the Agro Business Academy, during the implementation of the project, 9 companies will be supported and will receive specialized business support through access to the digital training modules.

All training materials will be available for use in the virtual Agro Business Academy.



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**PLANTING MATERIAL
WILL BE PROVIDED
FREE OF CHARGE
TO VINE GROWERS
AND WINEMAKERS**

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New plantings

In addition to access to specialized training, part of the digital academy, winemakers and vine growers will receive young plantings completely free of charge.

It is planned to create 2 experimental fields for the cultivation and distribution of seedlings for the vine growers. Research and analysis will be conducted.

One of the significant results of the project is the development and establishment of experimental fields for local vine varieties and production of young plants. Businesses will receive planting material to reintroduce local branding.

It is expected that at least 30 farmers from Bulgaria and Greece will receive their new plantings by the end of the project implementation.

The varieties that will be particularly emphasized on the Bulgarian side are: the local varieties Melnik 55, Shiroka Melnishka Loza, Ruen and Keratsuda.



The project partners, Eurointegra Association, Prosperity and Development for Bulgaria Association and Agripreneurship organization, have extensive experience in the field. Both previously implemented projects „Danube winery places“ (CBC Romania-Bulgaria 2007-2013) and VINESOS (INTERREG VA Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020) are an extremely good basis for upgrading and using the already achieved results and successes.

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Previous projects

"Danube winery places" set the stage for the development of wine tourism. It provided new development opportunities for the tourism industry, wine producers, vine growers, tour operators, wine traders and restaurateurs.

During the project, 10 sommelier trainings were conducted, involving over 300 professionals from the restaurant and hotel business sectors. An interactive wine map and a trilingual multimedia tourism guide were created. Two business tours were

held in Bulgaria and Romania in order to exchange experience and good practices. A Bulgarian-Romanian wine festival was also held, which opened the Romanian market for Bulgarian wines, as well as the Bulgarian market for Romanian ones.

"Eurointegra" Association implemented the "Danube winery places" project in the period between 2007 and 2013.





The Greek project partners from the organization AgriEntrepreneurship have successfully implemented an AgriEnt Accelerator project. This is a very interesting accelerator program to support businesses in the agricultural sector, which includes coaching, mentoring, opportunity to make useful business contacts, training, follow-up support and more.

The project is aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and innovation in the agricultural sector, for example agro-startups, innovative enterprises with good environmental and sustainable practices, implementation of new technologies in agriculture. Excellent conditions



were created for networking and building national and international collaborations. This program is the only one of its kind in Greece, aimed specifically at agribusiness. The participants were given the opportunity to gain experience and good practices from experts in agricultural business.

Pervious projects


The project "SOS for endangered traditional vine varieties" of the Association "Prosperity and Development for Bulgaria" provided an opportunity for long-term conservation of vineyards, especially those in "Natura 2000" and for improvement of the conservation status of local vine varieties.

Joint DNA analysis and research, joint trainings and workshops for representatives of the target group were undertaken during the project, as well as the development of an Integrated Strategy for the Management of Local Biodiversity in relation to traditional grape varieties.

The project included the development of joint recommendations to the relevant authorities, the development of experimental fields for traditional vineyards and a specialized ampelographic book. Also during the project, the Protected Designation of Origin procedure was launched. In this way, the vineyards of the cross-border region received a unique identification and image at the world level. Specialized Braille brochures and guidelines on sustainable agricultural practices were also developed.

A Training Center was also established to provide online and offline training to the interested parties.





**Unity is strength.
When there is teamwork
and cooperation,
wonderful things
can be achieved.**

Beneficiaries

Leading beneficiary

Eurointegra Association

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Beneficiary 2

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Thank you for your attention!

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