



MedStrategy Project - Integrated Strategy for Sustainable Development of Mediterranean Rural Areas

Project reference no.: 2G-MED09-282

C5 – STRATEGIC PLANNING IN MED RURAL AREAS

Phase 1 – Definition of the Local Pilot Operative Plans for the integrated development of rural areas

“Local Pilot Operative Plan” Archanon-Asterousion Municipality



Archanon – Asterousion
Municipality



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1.0 Introduction – The MedStrategy project

1.1 Description and objectives

MedStrategy is a project financed through the EU MED Programme. It aims to address and improve the local policies in Mediterranean rural areas towards new models of territorial governance, through an innovative integrated Planning Model, based on a participative approach and on sustainable development principles.

The process focuses on 3 aspects:

- The integration of the economic, social, environmental dimensions of sustainability in planning
- The development of integrated & shared strategies and actions through the cooperation of local authorities and the engagement of local communities (key actors, stakeholders) for the innovation of territorial governance
- The setting up of common objectives & activities (preservation of cultural and natural heritage, competitiveness of territorial system, social & gender equality etc.) for local and transnational synergies of rural areas

Today rural areas are subjected to a number of common problems, such as institution fragmentation, demographic inclination (migration of young people towards urban centres), poor infrastructures and services, weak economic activities as well as lack of know-how and scarce innovation capacity both in technical and governance terms. On the other hand, rural areas have an extremely valuable natural and cultural heritage representing local identity, but not driven by appropriate governance for this territorial level.

In this context, the MedStrategy project intends to experiment with an integrated planning methodology for supporting the sustainable development of Mediterranean rural areas. The sustainability concept ensures that the nature conservation and the improvement of living conditions for people are taken into consideration equally.

In the search for balanced and shared solutions, the key actors and local stakeholders need to be intensively involved. The collaboration of all local actors represents the basis for the development of integrated local plans. Transnational cooperation between the project participants, will allow to reach common and shared outputs and to pass on experience and results to other Mediterranean areas, and rural areas in particular.

1.2 Partnership

The participating countries / partners in the project are:

Partners	
Italy	Intermunicipal Consortium Tindari-Nebrodi (Sicily)
	ANCI Sicilia (National Association of Sicilian Municipalities)
Greece	Municipality of Archanon-Asterousion (Crete)
	CRES – Centre for Renewable Energy Sources and Saving
Spain	Province of Teruel (Aragón)
	Foundation for the Social Development (Aragón)
Malta	Pembroke Local Council (Malta)
Associated Partners	
Italy	Region of Sicily Tourism Department
	Province of Messina – Department of Territorial Policies, Infrastructures Planning, Parks and Natural Reserves, Civil Protection
Greece	Region of Crete
Spain	Environment Department of the Regional Government of Aragón
Malta	Local Council Association of Malta

1.3 Geographic coverage

The project involves rural territories of the Mediterranean area in Italy, Greece, Spain and Malta.

The involved areas are:

- The territory of Tindari-Nebrodi, including 16 Municipalities in the Province of Messina (Sicily)
- The territory of Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, including 59 communities in the Prefecture of Heraklion (Crete)
- The territory of Teruel including 10 Municipalities in the Province of Teruel (Aragón)
- The territory around Pembroke, with Pembroke Local Council being “project leader” for the Majistral Local Council, including 13 Municipalities in the District of Northern Harbour - Malta Majistral (Malta)

2.0 Steps towards developing the “Local Pilot Operative Plan”

The territory of Archanon-Asterousion Municipality was selected as the area of intervention under assessment for the Greek participation in the MedStrategy programme.

The Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, in collaboration with CRES, followed the project methodology, with a particular focus on the agricultural sector which is of vital importance to the territory.

The following stepped process and activities were undertaken as part of the project, ultimately leading to the development of a Local Operative Plan for the Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, focused on the agricultural sector:

2.1 Analysis of the Territorial context

This involved an assessment of the 3 dimensions of sustainability (economic-social-environmental) through appropriate indicators and using GIS applications, for identifying trends and conditions, root causes of problems.

The analysis of the Territorial context was undertaken by the Archanon-Asterousion Municipality and by CRES, and is presented in the document “*Framework Document - Archanon-Asterousion Municipality*”, available on the MedStrategy project website.

2.2 Analysis of the Institutional context

This involved an audit of local authorities’ governance systems for identifying weaknesses and strengths of the present institutional system.

The analysis of the Institutional context was undertaken by the Archanon-Asterousion Municipality and is presented in the document “*Report on the Institutional Framework - Archanon-Asterousion Municipality*”, available on the MedStrategy project website.

2.3 SWOT Analysis of the territorial and institutional context

On the basis of the territorial and institutional analyses undertaken, a SWOT analysis was carried out, in order to identify the key strengths and opportunities, as well as weaknesses and threats, in developing territorial plans aimed at sustainability.

The findings of the SWOT analyses for the Archanon-Asterousion Municipality are summarised in the documents “*SWOT Institutional Analysis Archanon-Asterousion Municipality*” and “*SWOT Territorial Analysis Archanon-Asterousion Municipality*”, available on the MedStrategy project website.

2.4 Establishment of community participation process

A participation process was activated in the Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, in line with the project methodology, setting up local forums that involved key actors and local stakeholders (citizens, local administration representatives, private sector representatives, local associations, cooperatives etc.) in order to develop a common vision for the local sustainable development of the territory, and propose target interventions in order to implement this vision.

The methodology that was followed during the participation process, the discussions that took place in each of the forums, and the results / findings that derived from the process, with “target” and “key” interventions identified, are described in the “*Final report on participation process (Greece)*”, which contains the deliverables “*Report from local EASW*” and “*Minutes of Forum meetings and workshops*”. The report is available on the MedStrategy project website.

The Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, jointly with CRES, prepared and facilitated the participation process forum meetings and elaborated the results from the meetings. In addition, suitable external experts in aspects of sustainable development were involved, in order to support the participation process dialogue and the identification of strategies, targets and key interventions.

2.5 Drawing up of a Local Pilot Operative Plan

Based on the territorial and institutional analysis undertaken, and based on the outcomes of the participation process and the involvement of all key local stakeholders, a Local Pilot Operative Plan was drawn, for the planning of local development of the Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, oriented to sustainability.

The Local Pilot Operative Plan that was developed is presented in the following section (3.0) of this report.

3.0 The “Local Pilot Operative Plan”

The Local Pilot Operative Plan (LPOP) focused on the agricultural sector, that was developed for the Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, is presented in the pages that follow.

The LPOP includes:

- The vision for the local development, focused on the agricultural sector
- The key strategies through which this vision can be implemented
- The target actions / interventions proposed in order to effectively realise the key strategies

Archanon-Asterousion Municipality
Local Pilot Operative Plan
Agricultural sector

Objectives (Vision)	Strategies	Actions/ Target Interventions (What)	Actors (Who)
Improve the environmental sustainability of the territory and of the agricultural sector in particular	Introduce and adopt latest technological tools to encourage the sustainable growth of the agricultural sector	Create strong links between research/education bodies (e.g. University of Crete, Crete Science and Technology Park, research centres etc.) and the production	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete, Research/Education bodies, private sector (e.g. producers, packagers, local collectives, associations, cooperatives)
		Effective adoption of new technologies / tools to optimise the development of local resources / products, such as spatial planning of production	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Research/Education bodies, private sector (e.g. expert consultants in new technologies and spatial planning of rural activities, producers)
		Co-create value with producers building up knowledge regarding developments in the agricultural sector and the value of new tools	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Research/Education bodies, private sector (e.g. producers, packagers, local collectives, associations, cooperatives)
		Educate local producers on modern farming practices to encourage their greater adoption	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Research/Education bodies, private sector (e.g. experts on farming practices, farmers, producers, packagers, local collectives, associations, cooperatives)
		Focus research on the balance between protection of natural resources, and geographical planning for rural activities	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete, Research/Education bodies, private sector
	Promote innovative actions aimed at the local sustainable development, benefiting from the territory's resources	Actions to promote environmentally friendly technologies (e.g. energy saving technologies, other “green” technologies) for buildings and rural activities, e.g. develop pilot projects to show their benefits to the local territory	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, private sector (e.g. expert consultants in EE and “green” technologies, suppliers of EE / “green” technologies)
		Explore the potential for the use of RES in the agricultural sector	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete, private sector (e.g. expert consultants in RES technologies, local collectives, associations, cooperatives)
		Improve management of waste from agricultural activities so as to reduce environmental and financial impacts	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete, private sector (e.g. expert consultants in waste management, producers, packagers)

Objectives (Vision)	Strategies	Actions/ Target Interventions (What)	Actors (Who)
<p>Improve the way public administration draws territorial plans</p>	<p>Integrate a participative approach and sustainability criteria</p>	<p>Adopt a holistic vision and approach for the territory, considering spatial planning for agricultural activities</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, private sector (e.g. expert consultants in spatial planning of rural activities)</p>
		<p>Integrate sustainability criteria in local and regional plans, bringing together existing know-how and technical expertise within the region</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete, Research/Education bodies, private sector</p>
		<p>Consider major social and environmental challenges as a driver in encouraging innovation within the territorial plans</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality</p>
		<p>Consider the needs of the public sector as a driver in encouraging innovation within the territorial plans</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete</p>
		<p>Place emphasis on accessing productive resources, implementing relevant policies and promoting flagship projects</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete</p>
		<p>Making best use of the geographic advantages of the territory (climate, accessibility etc.) in developing sustainable plans</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete</p>
		<p>Adopt participatory planning through a “bottom down” approach involving all local stakeholders</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality</p>
<p>Create / strengthen forms of collaboration and synergetic actions</p>	<p>Improve internal operations within public administration</p>	<p>Improve cooperation between local administration and other local government bodies (Regional Authority, Centres for Lifelong learning etc.) as well as other bodies e.g. local development agencies etc.</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete, local Government bodies</p>
	<p>Encourage synergies between all relevant stakeholders of the agricultural sector, for continuously evaluating and developing local development plans</p>	<p>Provide direction to all who are involved in agriculture as a vital industry</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality</p>
		<p>Creation of a Local Point of Coordination and Organisation</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality</p>
		<p>Improve communication between the public administration and all stakeholders involved in agriculture, through more “flexible” communication methods (overcoming bureaucracy)</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete, Research/Education bodies, private sector (e.g. farmers, producers, packagers, local collectives, associations, cooperatives)</p>
		<p>Encourage the creation of new networks / clusters and strengthen the operation of existing local collaborative schemes e.g. local cooperatives etc.</p>	
		<p>Encourage private sector participation in the delivery of development plans</p>	
		<p>Empower farmer organisations and communities to participate in the development of plans</p>	
		<p>Strengthen stakeholder partnerships (e.g. between producers and packagers or suppliers) – organise regular forums, discussions, networks etc.</p>	
	<p>Food industries to work closely with cooperatives and the private sector</p>		

Objectives (Vision)	Strategies	Actions/ Target Interventions (What)	Actors (Who)
<p>Raise awareness regarding environmental sustainability and the opportunities associated with it</p>	<p>To increase global provision of knowledge</p>	<p>Train local authorities' technical / managing personnel in the opportunities of developing strategic and innovative projects, participating in EU programs</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Research/Education bodies, private sector (e.g. expert consultants in EU programs targeted towards sustainability)</p>
		<p>Raise awareness (seminars, events, leaflets etc.), regarding sustainability, energy efficiency and the use of RES, for the local activities and infrastructure</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Research/Education bodies, private sector (e.g. representatives with market demand experience for agricultural products, expert consultants in EE/RES etc.)</p>
		<p>Organise awareness raising events, regarding best practice examples in agriculture from other regions/countries</p>	
		<p>Raise awareness (e.g. open demonstration events etc.) regarding existing RES applications in the region (e.g. photovoltaic park)</p>	
		<p>Raise awareness/education of local producers on market demands, from individuals/bodies with relevant knowledge and experience</p>	
		<p>Raise awareness on benefits to local environment, from better management of rural activities</p>	
		<p>Demonstrate good practice sustainability initiatives / projects by the Municipality, "leading by example"</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality</p>
		<p>Create educational programs for children, raising awareness on sustainability and the local territory's resources</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Research/Education bodies, schools</p>
<p>Improve the management, promotion and competitiveness of the territory's agro-food sector</p> <p><i>(continued...)</i></p>	<p>Prepare an organised plan to market and promote local agricultural products</p>	<p>Organise and/or participate in exhibitions, events, fairs, promoting local agricultural products</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, private sector</p>
		<p>Develop a common platform for promotion of local agricultural products, e.g. through common website, common vending point for cooperatives products etc.</p>	
		<p>Create an information point for visitors / tourists, regarding local products and activities</p>	
		<p>Use local products in local schools cantines</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete, private sector</p>
		<p>Place recognisable signage in restaurants / shops using local products</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete, private sector</p>
		<p>Initiatives at regional level to create a 'brand-name' for Cretan products</p>	<p>Region of Crete</p>
		<p>Encourage a mentality of collectiveness and support of local products</p>	<p>Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, Region of Crete, local collectives, associations, cooperatives</p>

Objectives (Vision)	Strategies	Actions/ Target Interventions (What)	Actors (Who)
<p>(...continued)</p> <p>Improve the management, promotion and competitiveness of the territory's agro-food sector</p>	<p>Improve competitive productivity in the local agriculture sector</p>	Commercialise enterprises	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, private sector (entrepreneurs, producing companies, packaging companies etc.)
		Reform and streamline agricultural institutions	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, private sector (local agricultural institutions, collectives, associations, cooperatives)
		Encourage farmers to shift from subsistence to market-oriented production	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, private sector (farmers, local collectives, associations, cooperatives)
		Encourage quality and environmental certification schemes for local products (e.g. ISO 9001, 14001 etc.)	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, private sector
		Put emphasis on the distinguished qualities of local products	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, private sector
		Create / strengthen larger networks / schemes of producers, open to a wider target population, for better promotion of local products	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, private sector
		Explore potential for export of local products	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, private sector
		Explore opportunities for growing sector of organic farming	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, private sector
	<p>Increase integration of agriculture with other sectors in the economy</p>	Develop a local plan aiming at attracting new / diversified economic activities (e.g. agro-tourism), encouraging people's involvement in such activities	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, local public sector bodies, private sector (tourist operators, local associations etc.)
		Promote a diverse tourist offer for the territory benefiting from its unique natural resources and cultural heritage (e.g. promote traditional agricultural products, arts and crafts, archaeological sites, natural resources etc.),	Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, local public sector bodies, private sector (tourist operators, local associations etc.)

4.0 Identification of Key Interventions

Within the Local Pilot Operative Plan, a set of target interventions have been proposed, for planning the sustainable development of the territory. These were generated through the participation process forum meetings 3 and 4, and relate to the needs of the territory in relation to the agricultural sector, as expressed by the local stakeholders, citizens and policy makers, supported by the contribution of external experts that were involved in the process.

At forum meeting 4, the participants were asked to evaluate the proposed interventions, prioritizing them on a scale from 1 to 10.

Based on the results of this evaluation and considerations derived from the discussions amongst the participants at forum meetings 4 and 5, the four most highly rated interventions were identified as “key interventions”, in relation to developing a new planning methodology for local agricultural development and strengthening the local agricultural sector.

The area covered by Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, is a sheer agricultural area dependent mainly on the grape and olive production. As a result, the four key fields of intervention identified, demonstrated the following issues as being essential for the development of the territory:

- Sustainability is recognized as an important aspect, and pilot projects need to be developed to demonstrate how the local rural communities can become more sustainable, being self-sufficient in their energy needs.

Key field of intervention: actions to promote environmentally friendly technologies (energy saving technologies, renewable energy sources) for buildings and rural activities (e.g. develop pilot projects)

- There is a strong need for coordinated spatial planning of local agricultural activities, which can be assisted by using new technology tools that are available. For example, new opportunities are available by using new methods of cultivation based on ground analysis (example factors: ground relief, fertility, climate, special conditions etc.) and a detailed analysis on those would be of real benefit and assist decision-making.

Key field of intervention: Effective adoption of new technology tools and developments in spatial planning for local production

- An organised plan is considered essential, for improving the development and marketing of local agricultural products like table grapes.

Key field of intervention: Prepare an organised plan to improve the development and marketing of local agricultural products

- The use of Renewable Energy Sources is an upcoming issue, and the need was identified to explore the possibilities of applying RES technologies to the local agricultural sector, considering the protection of the area’s natural resources and special biodiversity.

Key field of intervention: Explore the potential for the use of RES in agricultural activities

Following the identification of these key fields of intervention, the scientific experts that were involved in the participation process (appointed by the Municipality of Archanon-Asterousion and by CRES), were asked to produce a feasibility study report on each of the four proposed interventions, describing:

- the technical and administrative requirements for the implementation of each key intervention
- the financial and human resources required to realise each intervention

Upon completion, the feasibility study reports would be handed to the Municipality officials – policy makers, for evaluating and planning future actions.

The executive summaries of the reports that were produced on the four key interventions, are available on the MedStrategy website. These reports are titled:

- ***“Report (Exec.Summary) on Key Intervention 1 (Sustainable Development Action Plan for a rural Community at Archanon-Asterousion Municipality)”***
- ***“Report (Exec.Summary) on Key Intervention 2 (Creation of Soil Map for Decision Support in Agricultural Management)”***
- ***“Report (Exec.Summary) on Key Intervention 3 (Research for Strategic Plan and Development in the Table Grapes Market of the Municipality of Archanon-Asterousion)”***
- ***“Report (Exec.Summary) on Key Intervention 4 (Exploitation of biomass-type residues and by-products in the greater Archanon-Asterousion Municipality in an integrated plant and expected synergies)”***

5.0 Future approach

Using the methodology applied through the MedStrategy project, a Local Pilot Operative Plan (LPOP) was developed for the Archanon-Asterousion Municipality, focused on the agricultural sector, as a pilot and vital sector of intervention for the territory. The LPOP and identified key interventions were discussed and approved by the participation process participants during the 6th forum meeting.

The Municipality commits to taking the LPOP and the feasibility reports on the key interventions forward, and adopting the methodology implemented during the MedStrategy project, extending to a widely applied approach in its future development and evolution of territorial planning policies.