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**TASK 5: Integration of Socio-economic Aspects  
Deliverable 5D3: Executive Summary and Conclusions  
of the Local Society's Attitude**

**Study for Local Development Perspectives**

**PREFECTURE OF LAKONIA**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

This study is about the demographic, economic and social characteristics of the Prefecture of Lakonia (PL), focusing on the Evrotas Riverside Area (ERA). An analysis of the local development perspectives is presented, together with the investigation of the development guidelines that appear to be of crucial importance for planning the development in the area concerned.

In brief, the findings of the study are summarized in the following sections.

## **1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS AND LOCAL CONDITIONS**

### **1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

The demographic changes of the population in the PL do not reflect the economic and social evolution. The population increase in the capital Municipality of Sparti is attributed to the residential mobility of the residents of the rural areas. However, this movement does not mean that former rural residents stop to undertake economic activities and to participate in the social life of their villages of origin. For example, a remarkable population decrease is observed in the Municipality of Skala, despite the considerable tourist development and the increase of the number of local agricultural units (greenhouses).

On the other hand, the birth rate of the PL is below the death rate in recent years, bringing unsettling indices about future demographic perspectives and the social potential. In 2002 the number of the Elementary Schools (*dimotika*) presented a decrease of 15% compared with that of 1994. On the contrary, in 2002 there were 21 Secondary Schools (*gymnasia*) and 22 High Schools (*lykeia*), compared with 18 and 15 respectively in 1994. In any case the student population retains a crucial size, thus constituting an important target group for the dissemination of the Project objectives and results, through adequate Environmental Education (EE) courses, already established in the schools of the country.

Concerning the health sector recent changes seem to be positive, as the number of bed in hospitals and medical centers increased by 21% and the number of doctors per 1,000 thousands by 56%. Further improvement in social infrastructure will contribute to the management of current problems and to the exploitation of development opportunities.

### **1.2 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DATA**

The dominant sector of employment in the area is that of the primary (and especially agricultural) activities. Employment in manufacture is rather weak, limited at only 4.5% of resident population. This percentage is lower than that of people employed in Public Administration (even excluding public education and health agencies).

The local employment structure is a useful guide for any approach of the social profile and indicates local problems and perspectives. Agricultural production in Greece faces several problems and the restructuring of the economy is under permanent discussion, calling for the implementation of informed policies. At the local scale, any initiative should exploit the local

comparative advantages, especially concerning secure and certified quality agricultural products.

Data analysis in the ERA shows that the biggest part of the population work in agriculture: the percentage varies between 62% and 66% in the Municipalities of Skala, Therapnai, Elos and Krokees, while important percentages also emerge in the rest. In the capital Municipality of Sparti the percentage is significantly lower (18.5%), as there is considerable concentration in the public administration, education and health sectors.

The secondary sector is generally low. Constructions sector prevails, especially concentrating in the Municipalities of Sparti and Mystras. Other manufacture activities concern almost exclusively food industries, concentrating in the same area.

Sustainable agricultural development is of large importance in order to maintain the local population. Moreover, many researchers argue that agricultural production is not sufficient, proposing solutions that focus on multiple and complementary activities.

Although current data show that the possibilities for multiple employments are found mainly in the tertiary sector (in services as well as in commerce), the small share of manufacture and the potential for vertical organization in some industries mean that the secondary sector should be considered too. In general, the ERA presents common problems with other similar agricultural areas in Greece but with specific perspectives.

Regarding occupational structure the largest single category is that of specialized arm workers. Despite any reservations about the reliability of statistical data, this is a positive indication, in terms of a local productive system that incorporates local skills, experience, knowledge and flexibility. Once the percentage of those employed in professional job positions is added, the general picture becomes even more promising.

On the other hand specific local conditions seem to endanger the possibility that most productive socioprofessional groups remain in the area and specific measures should be taken. The total surface of cultivated land is being reduced, while at the same time agricultural production is still dominated by citrus trees.

The decrease in agricultural production is directly connected with the Project objectives. The transformation of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) calls for secure quality agricultural products. Rational water use in the ERA is meant to provide an environment where new initiatives for agricultural development could occur, through dissemination of information and

technology. Moreover, secure quality products result to reduced and more rational use of chemical additives, a prerequisite for the increase of agricultural income as well as the effective waste management in Evrotas.

### **1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES. EXPLOITATION ANTIFOULING PROJECTS**

In summer 2007, among other areas of Greece, the PL suffered the consequences of extensive fire disasters. These consequences concern not only economic conditions but also the social cohesion of the area, thus calling for specific measures in order to restore development perspectives.

The estimated areas confronting erosion danger (of high, medium or small degree) have a total surface of 232.677 km<sup>2</sup>. Proposed measures against erosion and soil degrading include a) measures for the improvement of the flora (in agricultural land, breeding grounds and forestland), b) constructions against erosion and c) erosion control measures. The total budget of the proposed measures rises at €9,503,455.

#### **1.3.1 WATER RESOURCES PROTECTION**

The fire-stricken areas have may cause water quality problems in the Evrotas basin. Negative effects include:

- Diminution of breeding use water
- Land sliding in agricultural areas
- Land sliding in pasturelands and stockbreeding units
- Water shortage in mountainous areas
- Water shortage in irrigation systems
- Major land gliding

Proposed measures include aiming at the confrontation of these anticipated effects include:

- Bargaining of water tanks with capacity of 1.000 m<sup>3</sup> for 6 months for stockbreeding use.
- Rehabilitation of 30 water drills in mountainous areas
- Construction of 10 small water dams with capacity of at least 1,500 m<sup>3</sup>
- Protection of streams and slopes
- Drainage works
- Water transportation and storage for six months
- Construction of 8 new water drills of average depth 200 m in areas where the altitude is lower than 200 m

- Works against gliding in six places

The total estimated cost rises at €6,165,000.

### 1.3.2 FIRE CONSEQUENCES MANAGEMENT AND FOREST PROTECTION

The most affected Municipalities are those of Therapnai (Municipal Districts of Ag. Anargyroi, Chrysafai and Goritsa), Krokees (MDs of Krokees and Dafni), Oitylon (MD of Aeropoli) and Geronthrai (MD of Kallithea).

The total surface of the fire-stricken MDs is 1,425.7 km<sup>2</sup>, about 39.2% of the total area of the PL. Their population represents 54% of the PL population. They include an important percentage of farmers (31%), a relatively big percentage of routine occupations (13.8%), while about 30% is equally shared by specialized technicians, those employed in services and clerks. Their cultivated agricultural land (CAL) rises at 585.6 km<sup>2</sup>, 43.5% of the total CAL of the PL.

1,847 applications for reparation have been submitted to the Greek Organization for Agricultural Insurance (*EI/A*), concerning 17.64 km<sup>2</sup>, i.e. 1.3% of the CAL. The real disaster may be even greater than described, because fire-stricken breeding grounds were not declared. Olive trees units seem to have suffered more, as they represent 98.4% of the fire-stricken agricultural land. The loss was 0.6% in the sheep and goats segment and 5.6% in the cattle sector, mainly in the Municipality of Anatoliki Mani (MD of Kokkalas) and the Municipality of Oitylon (MD of Aeropoli). The loss in forestland was 170 km<sup>2</sup>, representing 9.7% of the forestland of the PL.

Immediate activities in the forestland of the PL include:

- Antifouling projects together (corm and bough webs) following woodcutting works
- Temporary flood-preventing projects (wooden dams)
- Permanent flood-preventing projects (cement and stone dams)

Further intervention is also needed concerning:

- Maintenance of the forest road network
- Maintenance and construction of fire-preventing zones
- Reforestation works
- Breeding grounds restoration and improvement

The total cost of these projects rises at €23.200.000.

## **2 DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES IN THE PREFECTURE OF LAKONIA**

The hierarchical context for the development perspectives of the area was elaborated through the analysis of the existing demographic, economic and social conditions, also exploiting information obtained in contacts and meetings with representatives of local agencies and by the surveys on the opinions of a) residents and professionals and b) local representatives in the municipal councils. The contribution of personal contacts with residents and stakeholders during the dissemination process was of great importance.

Existing natural and human resources as well as the intentions and objectives of local agencies were investigated. The integration of economic development objectives with environmental protection and maintenance goals was attempted on this basis. Thus the following framework of investment proposals was concluded.

### **2.1 PRIMARY SECTOR**

Agricultural production in the PL is concentrated in specific products (olives, olive oil, oranges) that are characterized by increased demand and an organized distribution system. However, future development is connected with the production of organic products.

In the context of the Single European Market there is strong competition regarding the traditional agricultural products. Moreover, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is already directed to the elimination of subsidies concerning these products. Consequently, a general reorientation of the productive priorities is needed.

#### **2.1.1 ORGANIC PRODUCTS**

According to the record of cultivators of organic products as kept by one relevant certification agency (DEO, ΔΗΩ), the PL counts 310 cultivators. Registries started in 1992 and, although the annual variation was important, the general trend was one of increase. The biggest increase was observed during last years. There were 62 new entries in one single year (2006), while more than 50% of the cultivators entered the market after 2004.

Same trends are recorded at the national level, reflecting international shifts. The demand for organic products is increasing, as a bigger proportion of the consumers is involved, although reservation concerning the increase prices still exist.

The traditional products of Lakonia (olives, olive oil, oranges) already belong to the group of the most demanded organic products, while being exported to other countries. Advanced package, standardization and marketing activities are needed.

### **2.1.2 PROTECTED DESTINATION OF ORIGIN (PDO) PRODUCTS**

The Protected Destination of Origin as well as the Protection of Geographical Indication (PGI) were institutionalised by the European Union in the Regulation 2081/92. The Regulation 2082/92 established the certification of traditional specialty guaranteed agricultural products. These two Regulations were replaced by Regulations 510/06 and 509/06 respectively, without altering the scope of implementation.

According to this legal framework and in the CAP context cultivators have the possibility to exploit opportunities for integrated rural development, through the differentiation of agricultural production. Cultivators (especially those in remote areas) are able to place specialized products in the market, thus achieving better prices. Consumers on the other hand can purchase quality products of guaranteed geographic origin.

In more detail, the basic categories of certified agricultural products are:

a) Destination of Origin

“Destination of Origin” is the name of a territory, a specific place or in some cases of a country used for the description of an agricultural product or foodstuff originating from this territory, when the quality or the characteristics of this product are exclusively or mainly attributed to the geographic environment, including natural and human conditions, of the territory. The production, manufacture and processing of the product have to take place in the same area.

b) Geographical Indication

“Geographical Indication” is the name of a territory, a specific place or in some cases of a country used for the description of an agricultural product or foodstuff originating from this territory, when the quality, the reputation or a specific characteristic of this product may attributed to this geographic origin. The production and/or the manufacture and/or the processing of the product have to take place in the same area.

c) Traditional Specialty Guaranteed Agricultural Product

A “Traditional Specialty Guaranteed Agricultural Product” is an agricultural product or foodstuff with intrinsic characteristics that differentiate it from other similar products and which has been present in the common market for a period that proves intergenerational

transmission. Intrinsic characteristics may concern physical, chemical, biological or organoleptic features or the production methods and conditions. The traditional character may concern the raw materials, the ingredients, the method of production or manufacture. The name has also to be peculiar or to express the peculiar character of the product.

Since 1.6.2006 the Organization for Certification and Surveillance of Agricultural Products (*OEFEIT*), under the distinctive title AGROCERT is responsible for the approval of relevant applications by enterprises concerned, the monitoring of production processes in collaboration with the Agricultural Directorates of the Prefectures, the observance of the prescriptions, the certification of products and the record of PDO and PGI holders.

### **2.1.3 OTHER DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES IN PRIMARY SECTOR**

Non-stabling stockbreeding. There is a possibility to establish larger units (stockbreeding parks) of integral and organic character. During the Project process a specific study on the potential establishment of stockbreeding parks in Lakonia was elaborated, using the existing stockbreeding park in Grevena (Prefecture of Pella, Northern Greece) as an example.

Other investment opportunities include the exploitation of wind energy and the energy production capacity of oil-factory waste.

The possibility to exploit the existing lead deposit in the Municipality of Molaoi has to be investigated. Lead and silver mines operated in the area in the past (even during the '90s) but today their efficiency is contested.

## **2.2 SECONDARY SECTOR**

Branches with development capacities:

Olive processing, focusing on edible olives standardization, seed-oil exploitation for electricity production and other contiguous activities such as environmental protection (biological cleaning) and quality certification.

Possibilities for the establishment of wind energy parks in Mt. Parnon

## **2.3 TERTIARY SECTOR**

Branches with development capacities:

As the PL lacks hotel units, especially those of high standards, there still is enough space for further tourist development. Concerning high quality tourist services as well as ecotourist activities on Mt. Parnon and Taygetos.

Existing tourist facilities in the ERA include:

- Four hostels in the Municipality of Faris: One in Toriza (MD of Xerokampi) with a restaurant, tavern and café; one in Paleopanagia (MD of Paleopnagia) in a 200,000 m<sup>2</sup> plot with walnut and chestnut trees, near the Byzantine monastery of Gola; one in Rahivi (MD of Vassiliki); and one in the MD of Arna.
- Seven on the Mt. Taygetos: one municipal hostel in Georgitsi, the oldest in the area; one in Kastori, near a medieval castle characterized as archaeological site; one in Karyes; one in Polydroso (Tzitzina); two in Anavryti, one of which remains closed as an investor is requested' and one in Mystras - a traditional mansion that is going to be uses as a Vernacular Art Museum.

Additionally there are several mountain shelters in Parnon and Taygetos that are used for the excursions organized by the Greek Mountaineering Club. Ecotourist activities and mountaineering offer the opportunity to extend the tourist season beyond summer months and to increase tourist services demand in remote areas of the PL.

### **3 EVALUATION OF THE LIFE\EnviFriendly PROJECT IN THE DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE**

#### **3.1 LIFE\EnviFriendly OBJECTIVES**

According to the initial planning and schedule of the Projects, its objectives included:

- a) To select, plan and implement environmentally friendly technologies in order to reduce pollution caused in the ERA by agricultural activities, industrial and urban waste.
- b) To develop and demonstrate tools of technological restoration of water quality and to propose methods to incorporate these tools in the Evrotas basin and coastline Master Plans.
- c) To provide the context for the integration of these technologies and tools in the socio-economic activities of the area and to promote the social acceptance of the proposed measures.
- d) The sensitisation of the local population against sustainable development and environmental protection through dissemination of adequate information.

#### **3.2 EVALUATION OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS**

a) During the materialization of the Project the specific conditions of the area were investigated, the main sources of pollution were detected and alternative solutions for cleaning were planned and proposed.

In collaboration with agencies responsible for water resources management a comprehensive plan for pollution and the problems caused by natural factors (floods, water shortage etc.) was elaborated. The comprehensive model was presented in several information meetings and scientific conferences. The acceptance of the proposals by the specialists of local agencies and by wider parts of the local population was encouraging and thus provided the ground for the next step, that is for the elaboration of the integrated plan for water resources management in the ERA.

b) The adoption and demonstration of technical solutions based on environmental friendly technologies has been presented in detail, focusing on the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative proposal and method. Certain manufacture units in the area have implemented antilitter technologies, exhibiting satisfactory results. They also participated in demonstration events.

The overall process of the final management plans included repeated contacts and meetings with representatives of local agencies (especially the Local Organizations for Land Improvement, *TOEB*). This constant process of public consultation was remarkably fruitful, giving the floor to express local views of all actors involved and to incorporate local specificities. This was crucial in order to widen social acceptance and consensus, as the local agencies participate in the formation of local views.

On the other hand, the problem of personal responsibility remains, due to insufficient information and the social cost of effectively taking proactive and suppressive measures at the individual level. In any case the Project methods and practices provided all local participants with new ideas and stronger arguments.

c) The establishment of adequate conditions for the incorporation of the Project interventions in the overall local socio-economic process has been attempted through:

- The conduction of two repeated surveys in the resident population and professionals of the ERA and in the focus group of the representatives in Municipal Councils.
- Ad hoc studies about specific local problems and conditions including the consequences of natural phenomena (fire disasters, floods, water shortage), suggested measures (stockbreeding parks) and other intervention for environmental improvement (recycling).
- Regular meetings with representatives of the participant Municipalities and with other agents about specific issues.
- The organization of public informative and scientific events and the participation in events organized by other local agents. More generally through the establishment of permanent public dialogue process.

The surveys' results, the findings of the studies and the relevant feedback obtained by local agents exhibit the achievement of the above goals. More precisely, the overall picture shows that the local society has adopted the proposed interventions, agrees with the hierarchical classification of priorities and thinks that the Project demonstrates future directions and the preconditions for the successful materialization of other development projects. Furthermore, these projects should embrace the Projects' objectives, which are considered important for the development perspective of the area.

d) The sensitization of the local population against sustainable development and environmental production has been incorporated in the Project through several activities. More precisely:

- The production of printed and digital informative material either presenting the immediate objectives and methods or other contiguous subjects of environmental management. The material was regularly distributed.
- The distribution of material from the above mentioned studies and relevant presentations in several occasions.
- The collaboration with the local EE agencies, together with the exploitation of the long-standing involvement of the NCSR in the central planning of EE at the national level. Several local events and conferences were organized.

The evaluation of the results in these fields is very positive, especially in the field of EE. That is because EE has already established adequate structures of information and because activities in schools of every level have multiple effects in the, as the sensitization of students disseminates in other groups of the local society.

Concerning the local population as a total, evaluation of the results is also positive, although certain gaps of information have been recorded. The absence of relevant policies and information in the past has been important at this point. However the Project as well as other interventions have made a contribution towards this direction. Nonetheless, a more comprehensive national strategy seems to be of relevance, in order to integrate the objectives of single projects.

### **3.3 DEMONSTRATIVE AND TRANSFERABLE 'GOOD PRACTICES' OF LIFE/EnviFriendly PROJECT**

The implementation process of the Project indicated the need to adopt interventions and practices that could be used as experimental 'good practices', also suitable to contribute to development objectives in other areas, Prefectures and Regions of the country.

The main issues around which these interventions and practices were undertaken are as follows:

- The Water Resources Management Plans, aiming at the adaptation of the existing legal framework and of actual management practices in the field to EU Directive. The implementation of the Directive is obligatory for all member-states and a precondition for rational water use.

The Integrated Water Resources Management Plan was elaborated and completed after taking into account the analysis of local conditions. Accordingly, more than being a tool for local development in the ERA, it can be used as a model application in order to support similar plans in other water basins. Thus, it can be used as a Development Guide, after adequate revisions and adaptations to specific local conditions.

- The public consultation process was implemented in the ERA according to local social specificities. Similar specificities emerge at the most agricultural areas of Greece.

The acceptance and the effectiveness of the public consultation process were found to depend on the ability to exploit local social networks. Thus, instead of a simple guidance by the Project team that would merely follow the guidelines of the central Dissemination Plan, more decentralized methods were adopted, in order both to exhibit local conditions and to correspond to the local potential at the micro-scale.

Based on this ground, the informal meetings with representatives of a wide range of local institutions and agencies and the dissemination of the Projects achievements and progress in local social life spaces and events (the coffee bars [*kafeneia*], celebrations and annual festivals) proved to be of major importance for the mobilization and the participation of parts of the local society.

The Observatory for Local Development will act as a field for the coordination of the Local Organizations for Land Improvement, where the synthesis of the above mentioned 'inputs' (the Water Resources Management Plans and the consultation process) will be materialized.

Moreover, the operation of the Observatory in the auspices of the Prefecture of Lakonia facilitates the cooperation with the Land Improvement Agency (LIA) and consequently the common planning of the Water Resources Management Plan. The LIA is in permanent contact with the Municipalities of the ERA and the respective TOEBs, having entrusted the latter with the management of water resources at the local level. However the LIA also retains the capacity for central intervention when water resources management fails and management problems occur. Periodic and ad hoc meetings (on specific managerial problems) under the responsibility of the Observatory are proposed.

This scheme guarantees the connection between the implementation of the management system and the broader development in the ERA. At the same time it gives the opportunity for sustainable public participation, since the Observatory will have become the basic dissemination mechanism in the local society.

In brief, the Observatory will be responsible for the practical organization of the continuous public consultation process, thus providing the ground for the expression of the views of different social groups and their integration into an overall development strategy.

These 'Good Practices' can be used as paradigmatic cases for development plans and the respective necessary procedures in other areas.

### 3.4 FUTURE PLANNING ON THE BASIS OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

One of the aims of the project has been to extend its objectives beyond the period of materialization. Accordingly, certain preconditions for future exploitation of its results should be constructed.

It is in this context that the creation of the Observatory for Local Development has been planned. It is expected to be an information center for local agencies and residents and a node for the coordination of investments, contributing to the investigation and planning of development activities. Up to now the overall operation of the Observatory is positive, despite functional problems and delays that occurred. However, the Observatory should be staffed with permanent employees, as this would reassure its sustainability after the end of the Project. The Prefecture of Lakonia and other involved agencies should maintain its activities. Another development perspective of the Project has been that of organic agricultural products, in the context of Codes of Equitable Agricultural Practice. Present conditions seem to be promising, if one judges from the experience of existing organic agricultural units and their efficacy. International and national trends provide an environment where profitable exports of quality products can be achieved. Organic agricultural production can be combined with eco- and agrotourist activities, thus providing one of the most directions for sustainable development.

The developmental role of antilitter technologies should be stressed too. Antilitter activities in the industries of the area would contribute significantly to the amelioration of local environmental conditions. Furthermore they can be exploited as an added value in the promotion of local products and contribute to the increase and amelioration of tourist activities.

Finally, such investments attract high national and supranational subsidies, while the so-called 'green products' are expected to dominate in the near future, thus linking the sustainability of localities with the establishment of green economic units.