



MOVING
MOUNTAIN VALORISATION THROUGH
INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND GREEN GROWTH

MOVING

European foresight exercise

Strategic Option 'Terra Thessalia'

Theodosia Anthopoulou (Panteion University, Greece)
Dimitris Goussios (Univeristy of Thessaly, Greece)

11 January 2024

Brussels Workshop



MOVING receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 818194. The content of this document does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the author(s).



TERRA THESSALIA:

Cooperation of small dairy territories in the Region of Thessaly



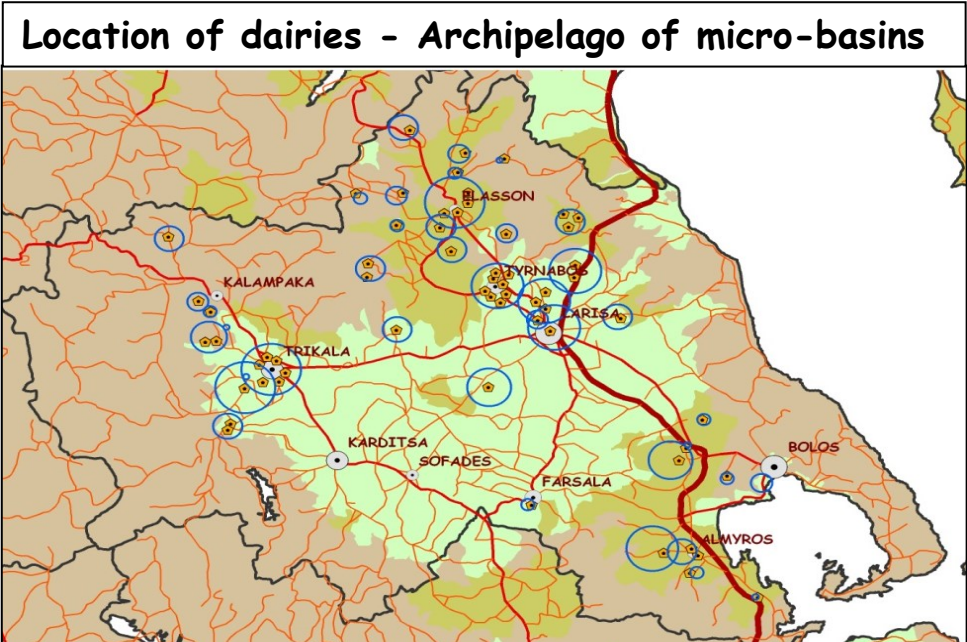
MOVING
MOUNTAIN VALORISATION THROUGH
INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND GREEN GROWTH

**TERRA THESSALIA
ECONOMY**



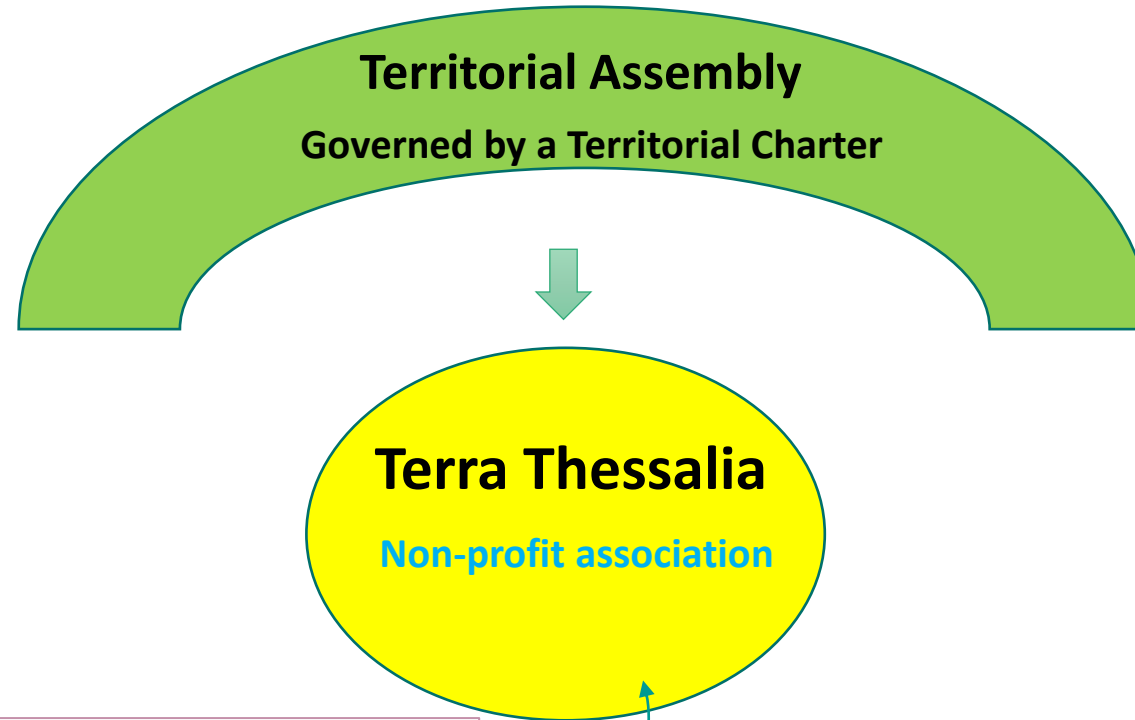
LACTIMED aims to strengthen the production and distribution of traditional and innovative dairy products in the Mediterranean by the organization of local chains, the support of producers in their development projects and the creation of new markets for their products.

Project launched in 2013 aimed at the valorization of typical dairy products through innovative sectors within the European LACTIMED program



Completion in 2016 with the creation of a territorial dairy cluster comprising a core of artisanal cheese factories (7 in number, representing different dairy micro-basins) and dairy producers (2 breeder cooperatives)

Territorial Coordination: Linking dairy territories, territorial actors and consumers

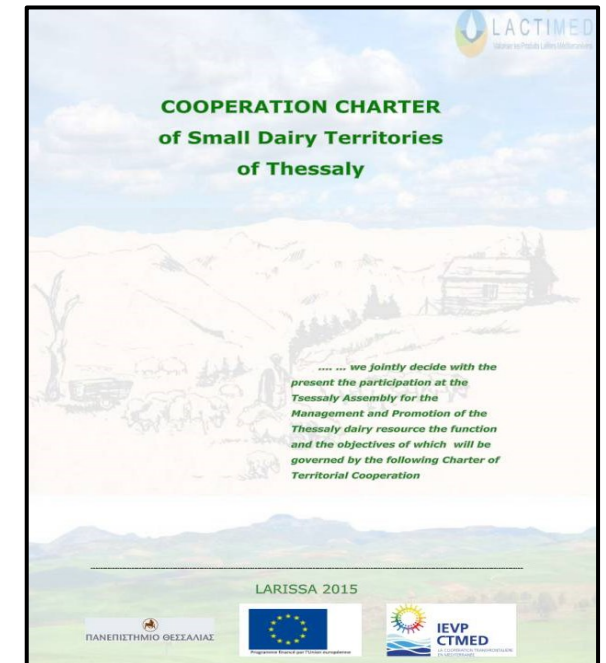


Members of the Assembly : All actors involved in the VC; associative- private-public sector (*social control*)

cheesemakers and stockbreeders, Local development agencies (2), cooperative banks (2), municipalities, local consumer representatives, Region, 3 Universities (10 laboratories)

Partners

Laboratory of Rural Space, University of Thessaly,
Cheese makers (7) and stockbreeder associations (2)
Local Development Agencies (2),
Local Cooperative Banks (2),
Association of Thessalian Enterprises and Industries,
Institute of Entrepreneurship,
Union Of Hellenic Chambers Of Commerce



Achievements of Terra Thessalia (non-profit association)



MOVING
MOUNTAIN VALORISATION THROUGH
INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND GREEN GROWTH

- ✓ Creation of a **territorial dairy cluster**; governed by the **Territorial Assembly** including all actors involved (private, cooperative, municipal, regional) and a **Cooperation Charter**
- ✓ A **territorial quality mark: Terra Thessalia**
- ✓ A **territorial participatory guarantee system** (authentic place-based quality)
- ✓ **Market promotion** of small feta cheese quantities into niche markets Europe-Athens (through alternative and solidarity networks; informal networks of the Greek diaspora); however, stagnation after the covid-period





**Economic
Driven**

Narrative

Development is based on *(targeted)* market growth (*informed loyal consumers seeking authentic place-based quality*) and remunerative prices

Theory of change

IF the **climate change** has moderate impacts, IF the **markets** are good enough, and IF **decentralisation** regulations enable **local-scale decision-making**

Trade-offs

Market success vs. livestock farming shrinkage, mountain decline (*loss of biodiversity, of dairy traditional know-how and pastoral management practices*)

The 2050 perspective of the **dairy value chain** is secured THROUGH sufficient demand and good and **fair remuneration of the products within an integrated territorial project** (agro-ecological and social economy scope)

Long term forces

Market (demand & fairness)
Climate Change
Returns to “the village” (innovators)

done / ongoing!

Place-based quality reputation (*eg Feta*)
New technologies (*to support quality claims; PGS; marketing*)
Collective action (*coop and social enterprises, AFN & solidarity markets*)

Key variables

Strategic Option

Terra Thessalia in Greece (1)



Region: Thessaly

Challenges addressed by the Strategic Option

1. Climate Change (repetitive floods; droughts) and degradation of pastoral ecosystems (in addition to plain mono-cropping and groundwater overexploitation) both affecting the livestock farming activities
 - ➔ *vision towards agro-ecological transition*
2. Market distortions – Bringing fairness to farmers and local dairy producers; strengthening market competition of artisanal cheesemakers through origin-based quality (vs. standard industrial quality and usurpation of the origin designation e.g. Feta cheese)
 - ➔ *collective action and social economy (and control); territ. cooperation of actors involved*
3. Loss of cultural heritage resources & identity (know-how; techniques; pastures management)
 - ➔ *hybridization of traditional knowledge and innovation*
4. Stabilization and regaining of young farmers
 - ➔ *public policies enabling young rural people settlement*

Strategic Option Terra Thessalia in Greece (2)



Objectives

1. Adapting to Climate Change

Restructuration of Thessaly agrifood production systems towards (re)localization, agri-environmental schemes, and territorial cooperation between mountain – plain to gain territorial cohesion

2. Establishing the Value Chain governance that allows transparency and fairness

Multi-actor participatory procedures through Terra Thessalia association

3. Developing a specific branding and certification to distinguish the Thessaly mountain dairy products

Set-up of a territorial Participative Guarantee System (PGT) (<http://www.terrathessalia.gr/>)

Governance

A territorial dairy cluster, governed by the Assembly (all stakeholders involved) and a territorial charter

Funding

Launched by European funds (LACTIMED EU program); some private funds (grants for small investments and outreach) and self-financing (cheese makers)

Strategic Option - Terra Thessalia in Greece (3)

(8 years of cum. experience after the dairy cluster est.)



Interventions

*Beyond the dairy sector, and building on this experience, **T.T. association proved to be both a Living Learning Lab and a Hub** networking local actors - local authorities – academia- international stakeholders*

T.T. faces several challenges also common to other locally-based value chains in the region.

In fact, Terra Thessalia responds to and facilitates new cooperative initiatives, social innovation and territorial synergies expanding the territorial range of production chains by **calling for the restructuring of farming systems from an agro-ecological scope**; after recent extreme weather conditions (esp. flooding) **farmers more susceptible to change the existing model**

Facts and feats of Terra Thessalia

Support services to ENIPEAS agricultural cooperative (Farsala, est. 2017, intercommunal structure, 100 farmers, 4 value chains)

Aiming at enhancing added value of crop production through prudent farm management and sustainable ecosystem:

- (i) organic cow milk;
- (ii) regenerative farming of cotton (pilot);
- (iii) origin-based quality chickpeas;
- (iv) local variety of durum wheat; and shortly, fodder production for local breeding

Strategic Option

Terra Thessalia in Greece (4)



Interventions (support to ENIPEAS agric. cooperative)

Implementation of a **Regenerative Agriculture pilot program for cotton** (2021), in collaboration with the Earthworm Foundation; product already ginned and sent as yarn to a major French clothing company

Regenerative agriculture project is successfully expanding and will soon cover legumes too

Prospective **synergy between regenerative agriculture and pastoral livestock farming** based on fodder co-cultures (under consideration)

Labeling by territorial quality mark for cotton and chickpeas (in progress)

On-site sales of packaged cooperative products and **collaboration with other cooperatives in Greece to mutually ensure fair trade** for raw materials (fodder) and non-locally produced products

Trading **contracts with large Greek agri-food companies at preferential prices**, thanks to superior quality (pasta industry and regional dairy industry) as well as with delicatessens (all over Greece)

Funding: Cooperation with the **Cooperative Bank** of Karditsa (regional)

Key variables

Place-based quality
New technologies
(hybridization; SPG; marketing traceability)
Collective action *(coop and social enterprises)*

Long term forces

Market *(demand & fairness)*
Climate Change
Returnees to "the village" *(innovators)*

Conclusions-Discussion



How “to build capacities and co-develop relevant policy frameworks across Europe for the establishment of value chains (VCs) that contribute to the resilience and sustainability of mountain areas to climate change”

For the value chain to be resilient (and constructive) in a resilient (and prosperous) mountain, it is necessary :

- 1) **VC to be integrated in a territorial project from an agro-ecological perspective**; interconnections and synergies between VCs (e.g. pastoral livestock farming -regenerative agriculture - fodder cultivation); interconnections and synergies mountain - plain (balanced natural resources management, milk raw material as specific resource, markets, hybridization of traditional knowledge etc.)
- 2) **VC to be integrated and solidified into a territorial social and solidarity ecosystem** (cooperativism, democratic VC governance, fair trade, alternative food networks)
- 3) to have regulatory institutional framework at all administrative top-down scales (national- regional- local) for an effective **decentralized decision-making** and creation of an environment conducive to changes and transitions
- 4) to have a **policy of welcoming young people and enabling the establishment of young farmers** in the mountainous and rural areas



Thank you !