

GREECE

Diversification & Job creation

Location

Astypalea

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

Measure

M06 – Farm & business development

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 191 317.00

EAFRD 81 309.72

National/Regional 14 348.78

Private 95 658.50

Project duration

2010 – 2016

Project promoter

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A bakery in a small Aegean island used Rural Development Programme (RDP) support to modernise its workshop and expand its production capacity to provide high quality local products.

Summary

The butterfly-shaped island of Astypalea lies between the Cycladic and Dodecanese groups of islands in the middle of the Aegean sea. The barren part of the island is covered with thyme, oregano, alisfakia (Greek sage) and several other herbs. In recent years, a tourist boom on Astypalea has brought thousands of visitors from all over the world – and one reason for this is the local cuisine and traditional tastes.

The owners of the ‘Dimitris Petridenas & Co General Partnership’ decided to take advantage of the raw materials which the island generously provides and to make traditional baked products using local recipes from the Eliana bakery. The workshop acquired new modern bakery production equipment, which significantly increased its production capacity.



Results

The bakery increased its capacity and expanded its sales to other markets throughout Greece and abroad.

In parallel, jobs for young people have been created and new families have established themselves on the island.

Through the promotion of Astypalean tastes, the company advertises the island with the aim of increasing tourism not only in the summer but also in the winter.

Context

The butterfly-shaped island of Astypalea lies between the Cycladic and Dodecanese clusters of islands and although administratively it belongs to the latter group, geographically and architecturally it is more akin to the Cyclades. The main settlement of Astypalea, the picturesque hill-top village of Chora, is crowned by an imposing 15th century Venetian castle, built on the site of the ancient acropolis. Most of its surface is barren with only small parts of fertile land. The surrounding sea is particularly rich in fish and seafood, giving the island the nickname “fish-bearing”.

The driest part of the island is covered with thyme, oregano, alisfakia (Greek sage) and several other herbs. The locally produced thyme honey is well-known for its strong and dominating aroma and nutritional value. Wild saffron grows spontaneously in the northern parts of the island and is hand-picked during autumn. All over the island, more than 17 000 goats and sheep scamper around the rocky mountain slopes, producing large quantities of milk used by the locals to prepare the delicious local soft cheese, Chlora.

The owners of the ‘Dimitris Petridenas & Co General Partnership’, in response to the island’s tourist boom, wished to take advantage of local natural ingredients to produce and sell traditional baked products. They collected the unique recipes of Astypalea - which are centuries old and have been passed from generation to generation - with the aim of sharing these flavours on and beyond the island. They proceeded to invest in and build their workshop in the island capital and establish the traditional bakery called ‘Eliana’.

Objectives

The investor’s main objective was to increase the production capacity of the company to adequately meet demand and needs, while maintaining the higher quality and traditional character of their products.

The making of a traditional product is a very special process for the company. The objective is that every product that comes out of their workshop should remind people of the traditional flavours and the smells they grew up with. That is why they use only the island’s pure ingredients, such as the excellent Crocus (saffron), Chlora (raw cheese), wild thyme and the wild Horgani – a herb specific to Greece.

Activities

The company is virtually the only one on the island of Astypalaia in this field of activity. However, there are other small enterprises with similar activities which produce items traditionally (handmade), without mass production equipment. Therefore, the introduction of new technology into the company also involves the introduction of new technology on the island. The workshop acquired new modern bakery equipment, which significantly increased its production capacity. The equipment enables production to be standardised, creates economies of scale and at the same time provides consistently high-quality goods. The entire production process consumes far less energy compared to the older equipment, and as the project included the installation of a solar water heater to produce hot water, has saved even more energy.

The company also acquired computers for handling its bookkeeping (invoices, electronic submissions, etc.), warehouse management control and website and e-mail management. All the related equipment is supported by a local network and there is an Internet connection at the current high speed of 24 Mbps.

The effective implementation of the ISO 22000 Food Safety Management System (CSF – Critical Success Factor) standard guarantees that the highest quality of services are made available to customers. It also improved the overall organisation of the business by including processes which continuously enhance the system and ensured compliance with both customer requirements for safe food and applicable regulatory requirements.



Main Results

The bakery increased its capacity and expanded its sales to other markets throughout Greece and abroad. In parallel, jobs for young people have been created and new families have established themselves on the island. Through the promotion of Astypalean flavours, the company advertises the island with the aim of increasing tourism not only in the summer but also in the winter. The bakery's products are now well-known by chefs and many articles in magazines have been written about them.

Most of the raw materials used in the business come from local producers. Therefore, the investment indirectly helped local businesses to develop further, including the possibility of employing additional staff.

The modernisation of the company resulted in:

- standardisation of the production processes and products according to clearly defined and controlled specifications;
- cost reduction/profit growth as a result of early detection, prevention or recovery of any problems obtained in raw materials, suppliers and products;

- compliance with the modern legislative framework;
- minimising the likelihood of food quality issues affecting the business' customers that could have a significant impact (sanctions, damages, public image, customer dissatisfaction, etc.) on the business;
- optimal allocation of resources within the enterprise and the food chain;
- dynamic communication with suppliers, customers, authorities and other stakeholders;
- the creation of trust and credibility due to the management system which ensures the conditions for achieving stable results, i.e. administrative processes and resource allocation and supervisory functions; and
- the creation of new jobs and stimulation of the local economy.

The new modern equipment performs very well and uses less energy than earlier comparable equipment. As a result, the production process is more energy efficient, which means significant energy savings. Energy savings also make a major contribution to protecting the environment.



Additional sources of information

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCyydRyUPXI
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaLkT0Yy9nU
- <https://vimeo.com/278157772>
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7Mkf0otqLw