



The AGRO-START Project



Jointly for our common future

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University of Molise



(2008-2013) vice Chair **ISHS**
Commission on **Irrigation and Water Relations**

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AGRO-START

Facilitation of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Develop the enabling environment for innovative entrepreneurship

1st of December 2012 to the end of November 2014 (**24 months**)

Total budget: 1,713,000.00 Euro

Partners: 12, 7 Countries (SEE)

Implementation areas: Animal breeding and horticulture sectors

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Horticulture?

- Pome and Stone Fruit 
- Vine and Berry Fruits 
- Nuts and Mediterranean Climate Fruits 
- Tropical and Subtropical Fruits 
- Medicinal and Aromatic Plants
- Ornamental Plants 
- Root and Tuber Crops 
- Vegetables 
- Citrus 
- Banana 



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**SOUTH EAST
EUROPE**

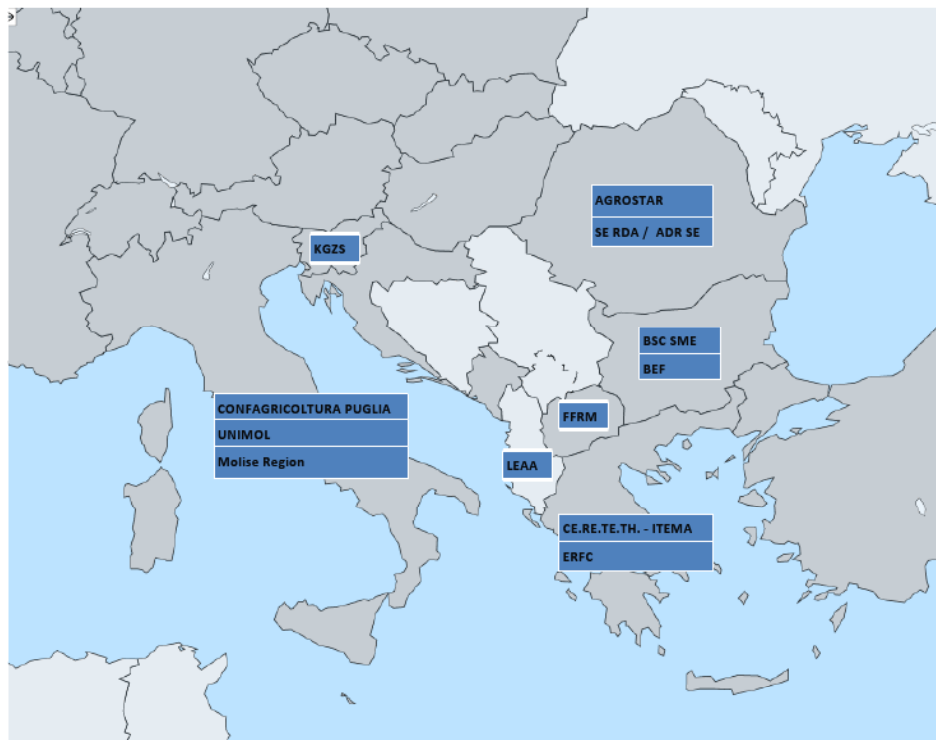
Transnational Cooperation Programme



Programme co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION



AGROSTAR Federation in Partnership with:



The Regional Development Agency
of the South-East Development
Region
SE RDA / ADR SE
Romania



Centre for Research and Technology
- Thessaly - Institute of Technology
and Management of Agricultural
Ecosystems
C.E.R.E.TE.TH. - ITEMA
Greece



Business Support Centre for Small
and Medium Enterprises – Ruse
BSC SME
Bulgaria



Bulgarian Economic Forum
BEF
Bulgaria



Chamber of Agriculture and
Forestry of Slovenia
KGZS
Slovenia



Regional Federation Of Farmers
Puglia
CONFAGRICOLTURA PUGLIA
Italy



E.R.F.C. (European Regional
Framework Co-operation)
ERFC
Greece



University of Molise
UNIMOL
Italy



Molise Region
MOLISE REGION
Italy



Centre for Business and
Parliamentary Dialog
CBPD
Albania



Federation of the Farmers in the
Republic of Macedonia
FFRM
Former Yugoslav Republic of
Macedonia

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special greetings to

Diana Alexandru



The Regional Development Agency
of the South-East Development
Region
SE-RDA/ADR-SE
Romania



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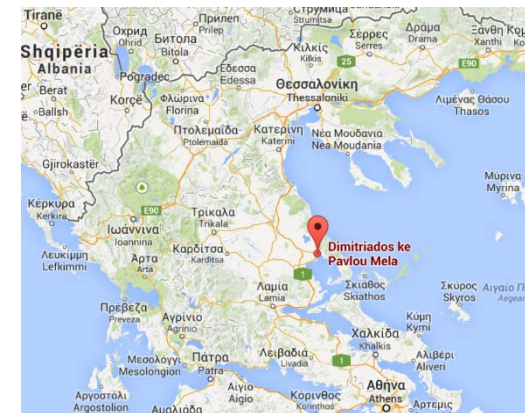


I.RE.TE.TH.

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY, THESSALY

- **Constantinos Kittas** – Project coordinator
- **Thomas Bartzanas** – Researcher and Tech expert
- **Stavroula Divane** – Project management and dissemination

Volos

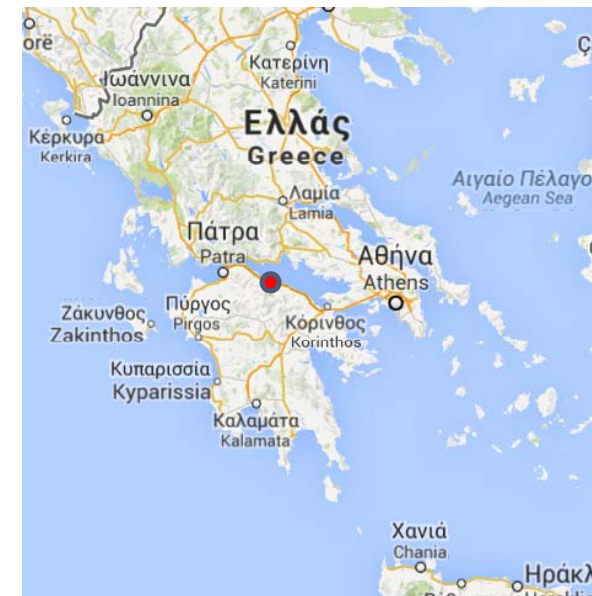
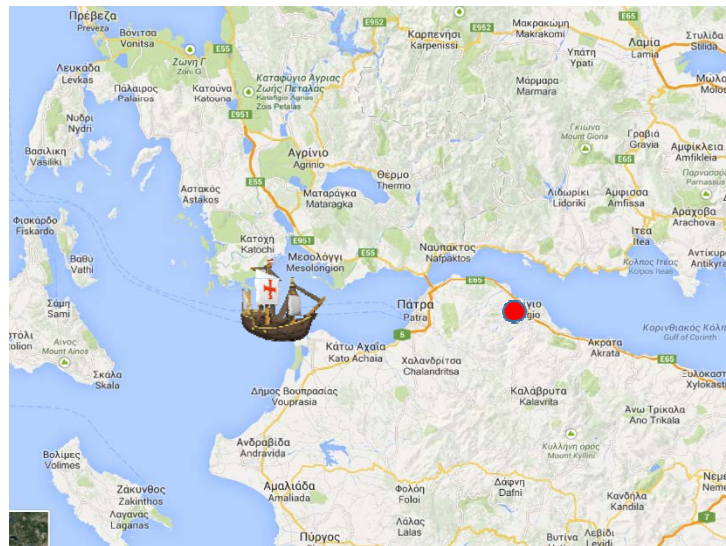


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Aegion, Achaia, Western Greece

- **Nikolas Petropoulos** – Project coordinator
- **Katerina Sotiropoulou** - Financial manager
- **George Soulos** – Project manager



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Target

To give answers to the **needs of support Services for SMEs** that adopt an integrated transnational approach

Objective

To increase the **SMEs competitiveness** to promote and facilitate an **innovative entrepreneurship**

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Context of the project

SMEs face severe common problems in sustainably keeping up their competitiveness in their national and on the EU market, as follows:

Lack of effective support services that offer practical help and expert knowledge to entrepreneurs and experienced enterprises to foster innovative approaches;

- **New technologies** are not well exploited;
- Difficulties in **entering new markets**;
- **Marketing networks** are poorly developed;
- **Low level of cooperation** between undertakings;
- **Low level of internationalization**

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Target Groups

- **Business support organizations and services** that provide assistance to SMEs of the SEE economic area, active in the horticulture and animal breeding sector, including: **Business Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Promotion Organisations and other public and private Agencies, consultancies, Trade Unions, NGOs, workers' and employers' federations and all other relevant stakeholders;**
- is it also directed at **regional public authorities** of the SEE area competent in the field;
- **final beneficiaries** and **stakeholders**, such as **SMEs and entrepreneurs** of the SEE area that are active in the **animal breeding and horticulture sectors**

Tools generated by AGRO-START

- **Good Practices Manual**
- **Data Base**
- **Auto-Diagnostic tool**
- **WEB Constructor**
- **SEE Protocol**
- **E-learning courses**
- **SEE Kit for Entrepreneurs**



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Tools: The best Practices Guide

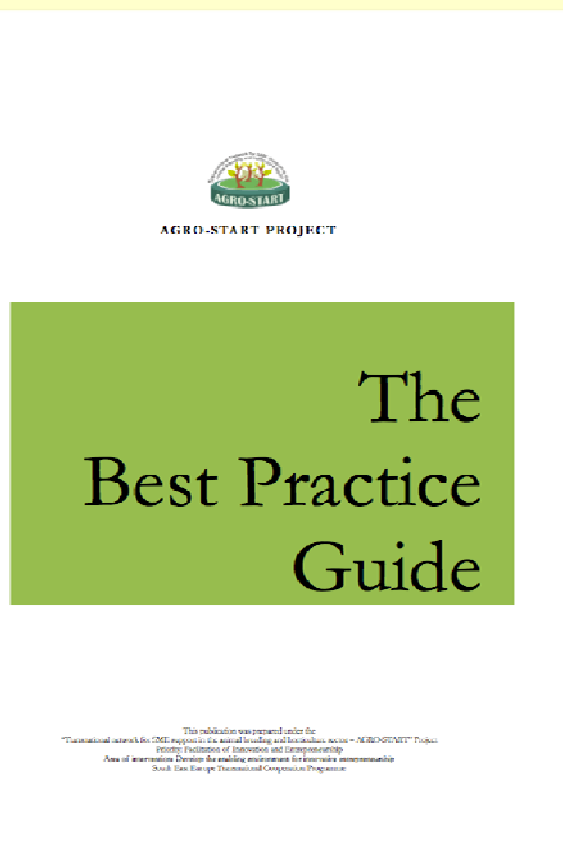


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Tools: **The best Practices Guide**

Good examples have been selected with
a two-step procedure during **5 workshops**
in 2013



Romania, May



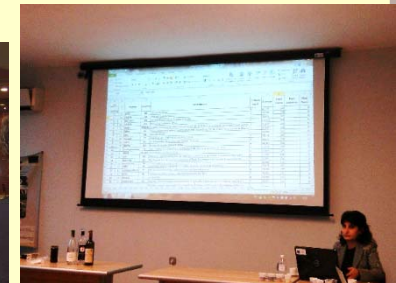
- Molise July



Greece Sept.



Albania Oct.



Bulgaria Nov.

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Tools: **The best Practices Guide**




Workshops aimed at finding **Effective**
Approaches for

1. **diagnostic and assessment services**
2. **financial support tools for SMEs**
3. **technology and innovation transfer to SMEs;**
4. **promoting and facilitating entrepreneurship in the target sectors;**
5. to assess on **entering new markets**, meeting European quality standard, promotion of products and facilitate the **internationalization** of SMEs.

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Tools: The best Practices Guide

THE BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

ISMEA – BUSINESS PLAN ONLINE
Presented by: UNIMOL

Name of the Company	Ismea, Institute of Study, Research and Information on the Agricultural and Agrofood Market		
Type of Company	Public, economic body established by DPR (Decree of the President of the Republic) number 278 of May 28 1987 that works on behalf and under the overview of Agricultural Ministry.		
Address	183, Via Nomentana	Postal code	00161
City and Region	Roma	Country	Italy
Phone	(+39) 0685568400	Fax	(+39) 0685568 663
E-mail		Website	www.ismea.it

DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

General description of the practice

The service Business Plan Online (BPOL), prepared by the Institute for Agricultural Market Services and Food (Ismea) as part of the activities funded by the National Rural Network, shared arises from the need to respond to the growing demands within the RDP (Rural Development Programmes), tools that can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public actions in favor of agricultural enterprises, including through a more convenient and accurate assessment of investment projects proposed.

For those needs that the ISMEA realized the BPOL, a web application that allows the preparation of a real business plan for agricultural, agro-industrial and other sectors, ensuring an appreciable simplification of procedures for submission of the development of business plans associated with RDP funding requests, as well as greater uniformity and simplicity of evaluation of investment projects.

However, as will be described later, the BPOL is not limited to a web platform of the build, but it is a more comprehensive service, which combines the on-line facility, training and technical assistance and continuous with full support for its users (administration, technical compilers, etc.).




The experience gained over the past two years as a means of support for the major investment measures under the RDP regions of Veneto, Molise, Piemonte, represented the essential field test of the actual functionality of the BPOL, allowing – to same time – a first dissemination of knowledge of economic and financial analysis to the agricultural sector, still not accustomed to the use of tools that are widely used instead in other sectors.

It emphasizes that in accordance with the objective of dissemination of knowledge, priority action in the National Rural Network, Ismea is starting with the academic conventions by putting the BPOL. and the annexed experience to support teaching.

Description of the diagnose/assessment service

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THE BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

In detail, the application consists of a section of a qualitative and quantitative complementary to each other (2). The qualitative section, consisting of descriptive masks charges, allows the compiler to provide a concise, but representative description of the company, the market in which it operates, the project idea and the dynamics forecasting.

The quantitative part, however, is composed of a greater number of distinct input masks in the possible areas of activity of the agricultural (crop, livestock, farm, etc.). In practical terms, the compiler is required, first, to detail the investment, the sources of funding and any access to facilitation measures. You must then provide for the compilation of the screens relating to the production data for the historic years and forecasts. In particular, the compiler will indicate all business operations susceptible of detection for the preparation of plans and providing financial statements, based on a simple guided tour, all the information of a productive, economic and monetary-financial need. Given that the aim of the BPOL is to acquire the actual data and specific to the individual company, it is interesting to note that in the process of filling out some forms, the user can compare with other available data sources. For example, during the allocation of data on crop production, be able to view the agricultural area used by the agricultural (data holding file), the average values of price (data ISMEA) and yield (ISTAT) for the province in which the entity operates. Still, in the form of labor will find indication on the use of average working days required for the specific cultivation and mask of the machinery and equipment will benefit from the import file, if any, of the budget of machinery and equipment of the company.

Completed data entry, the system returns the actual financial statements for the last two years ended, and budget estimate for different periods of time phasing out of the investment. The financial statements are divided into the three income statement, balance sheet and cash flow according to specific patterns reclassified to the agricultural enterprise. It should be noted that the wording of the two balance sheets occurs from the individual elementary charges of historical data or on the basis of the official budget figures, depending on whether the company is a simplified accounting or ordinary.

To enrich the output represented by the actual and forecasted financial statements of the agricultural, provide different elaborations made by the BPOL. In particular, the system is able to return analysis reports for various business activities (crops, livestock and related activities) as well as by type of management (operational, capital, financial, non-feature). In addition, the application returns to the user useful indicators of profitability, solidity and efficiency. The set of output allows you to proceed to the analysis of economic and financial performance of the company overall, with particular attention to the effects of the investment project on the production structure and results of current business.

Innovative elements used in providing diagnose/assessment service

The tool has several levels of innovation:

- Allows the reconstruction of the financial forecast driven budget (including historical ones in the case of companies with no budget) by filling in on line through the web;
- Is based on principles and methods of forecasting analysis shared by agriculture, agribusiness and banking;
- Interfaces with the online file management and with the databases on prices, yields, labor, land values.

From the point of view of the platform, the BPOL is a web application that can be used by any computer with a web browser.

The backup of the data entered by the compiler on the remote server allows viewing time as well as facilitating immediate assistance to the compilation phase.

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Tools: The best Practices Guide

TITLE

Presented by: NAME OF THE PARTNER

CONTACT DETAILS

SHEET DETAILS

THE BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

ISMEA – BUSINESS PLAN ONLINE

Presented by: UNIMCL Speaker: Adolfo Fabrizio Colagiovanni

Name of the Company	Imesa, Institute of Study, Research and Information on the Agricultural and Agrofood Market		
Type of Company	Public, economic body established by DPR (Decree of the President of the Republic) number 278 of May 28 1987 that works on behalf and under the overview of Agricultural Ministry		
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It emphasizes that in accordance with the objective of dissemination of knowledge, priority action in the National Rural Network, Imesa is starting with the academic communities by putting the BPOL and the assessed experience to support teaching.

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Tools: **The best Practices Guide**

Information provided:

■ **DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOOD PRACTICE**

- General description of the practice
- Description of the diagnose/assessment service

■ **DESCRIPTION OF THE NECESSARY RESOURCES TO PROVIDE ASSESMENT SERVICES**

- Financial resources required
- Staff
- Know-how

■ **OBSTACLES**

- Technical, financial problems, etc. that have occurred
- Adopted measures in order to overcome the obstacles

■ **STARTING POINT AND SITUATION NOW**

■ **TRANSFER OF THE PRACTICE**

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Tools: The best Practices Guide

31 practices have been selected

Partner	Nation	GP select proposed and approved				
Unimol (research)	Italy	2	1	2	2	1
I.Re.TE.TH (research)	Greece	2		1	1	1
Eur Regional Framework for Cooperation	Greece	1	1	1	1	1
Business Support Centre for SMEs	Bulgaria		1	1	1	1
Bulgaria Economic Forum	Bulgaria	1		1	1	
Agrostar	Romania					
Fed. of the Farmers	Macedonia		2			1
Chamber of Agriculture	Slovenia			1		
CBPD	Albania					1
Regione Molise / Unimol	Italy		1			
Total		6	6	7	6	6

Transnational Conference (Sofia Bulgaria)

in conjunction of **Bulgaria Economic Forum**



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Tools: **DATA BASE**

It includes data on:

- **specialized business support services,**
- **service and product suppliers** from the complete supply and value chain of the targeted SMEs:

seed providers, tool providers, construction providers for the construction of specific building related to the target sectors (logistics, marketing companies, etc).



Tools: **DATA BASE**

1. helps the **business support services** to actively provide assessment for SMEs that plan to internationalize by facilitating them the contact data of specific services and providers in the participating countries.
2. is providing an intuitive interface and a **search function by categories.**

SMEs and entrepreneurs can either consult the information on their own or access it with the help of a Agro-start partner.



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Tools: **DATA BASE**

3. is crucial for the business support services to provide assessment of all opportunities offered by the SEE economic area.
4. a broad supplier base that goes beyond national data and includes service and product providers of the participating countries.



Tools: **Auto-Diagnostic**



- This tool will be made available on the project's website in English and all partners' languages
- Purpose: put SMEs in contact with their corresponding business support services in order to provide them a more detailed diagnostic and assessment.
- Depending on the auto-diagnostic results, the tool will automatically assign **one of 3 different Auto-Diagnostic Recommendations.**

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Tools: **Auto-Diagnostic**



- It is based on prior findings of the thematic workshops.
- The diagnostic and the assessment of SMEs will be implemented considering the following two aspects:

a)Market opportunities:

- i. detection of the market in which the SME is already selling its products,
- ii. detection of new possible markets,
- iii. measure and means for effective product promotion,
- iv. strategies for market access, internationalization strategies, etc.

b)detection of innovation opportunities in relation to operational and product process innovation as well as technological innovation.

Tools: Auto-Diagnostic

1. General Information

- → Human potential
- → Products and Services

2. Production Process

- → Production Capacity
- → Production Model / Automation
- → Products Packaging
- → Quality Control

DIAGNOSTIC AND ASSESSMENT OF SME'S
QUESTIONNAIRE ON HORTICULTURE AND
ANIMAL BREEDING SECTORS

3. Innovative and Technological Profile, Research, Development and Innovation

3.1. Research, Development and Innovation

3.2. Product Innovation

4. → Innovation Activities and Costs of implementing Innovative Processes or Products

- 4.1. → During the last three years the Enterprise got involved in the following innovations (other than the ones mentioned above)
- 4.2. → Calculation of costs for each of the categories described in 4.1
- 4.3. → Have you received during the last three years public support for innovation activities?

5. → Sources of Information and Cooperation for Product or Process Innovation

- 5.1. → From which source have you drawn information about the innovation that you have developed?

6. → Object of Product Innovations

7. Factors that function as obstacles to innovation activities

8. Evaluation Form

Tools: **WEB Constructor**

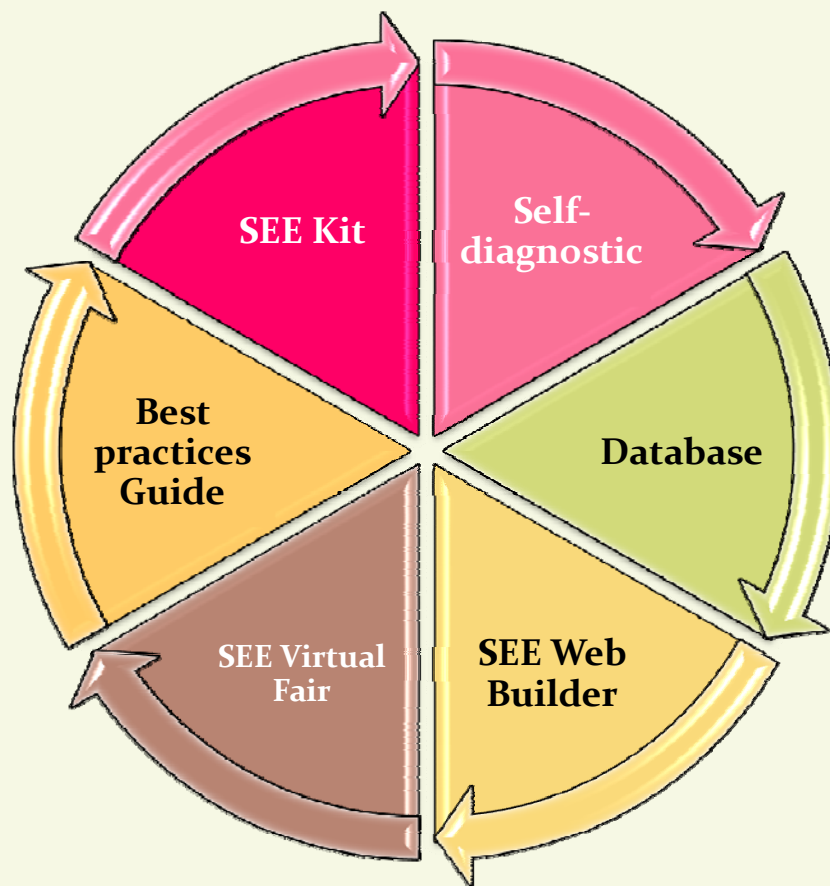
- A user guide that will enable SMEs to **create their own website and increase their visibility on market** and thus, provide a condition to improve their competitiveness.
- The user guide will be available in English and in all project partners' languages and the web builder will be integrated into the project's website.

SEE Kit for Entrepreneurs

- a tools that gets together at **national, regional and EU level**:
 - **legislation,**
 - **financial support for entrepreneurs initiatives information,**
 - **contact points for entrepreneurship,**
 - **business plan conditions and requirements,**
 - **networks or agricultural innovation clusters,**
 - **relevant statistics, official quality standards,**
 - **any other relevant and helpful information, etc**

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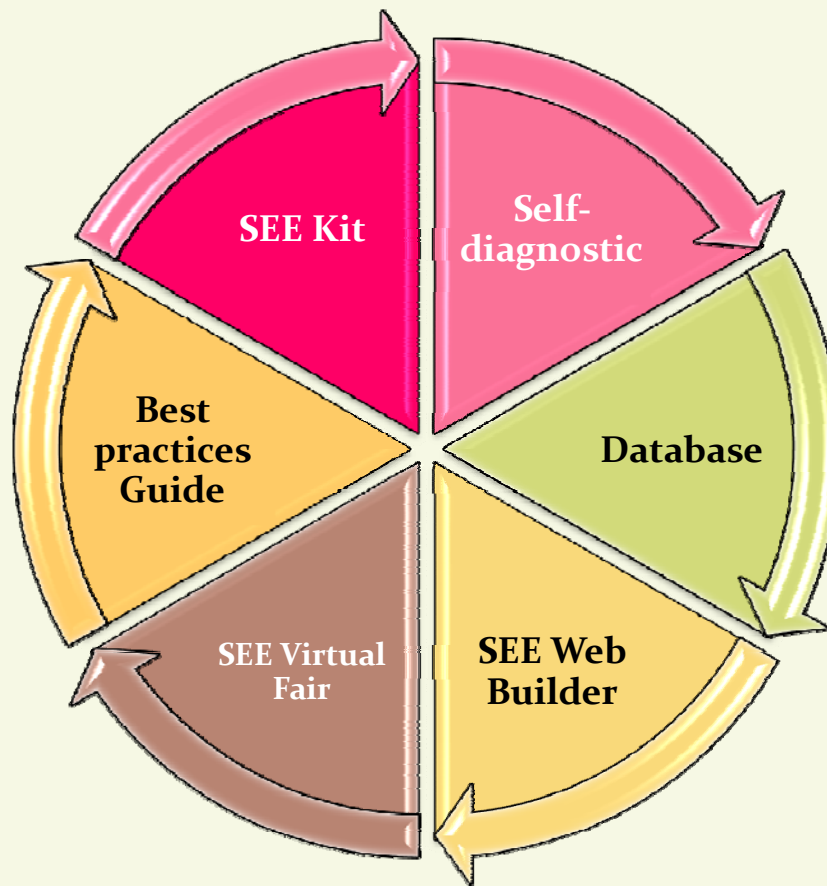
Tools: two **E-learning courses**



The 1st is addressed to **entrepreneurs** and will provide the necessary knowledge to undertake innovative and successful entrepreneurs' initiatives

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Tools: two **E-learning courses**



The 2nd is addressed to **employees of business support organizations** for the effective implementation of the SEE Support Service Protocol and therefore it will increase the quality of the support services.

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Ups and downs

Pros:

- Networking



Cons:

- Unimol: difficult dialog with target groups
(e.g., Business support organizations and services that provide assistance to SMEs)
- Bureaucracy (at national and EU level)
 - ⇒ EU Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
 - ⇒ upfront payments
 - Negative affects: some partners had no advance funds, so they saved money (uselessly)
 - Solution: **bank loan**, unfortunately overlooked



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Impact of the Project

- Will help BSS to SMEs in stimulating entrepreneurship



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The best is coming from ...



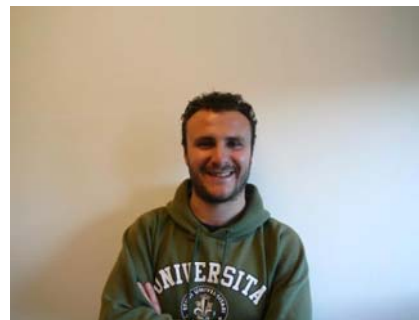
Adolfo Colagiovanni



Stefano Marino



Daniele Marinelli



Francesco Di Lucia

wanted

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Many thanks from Molise Region



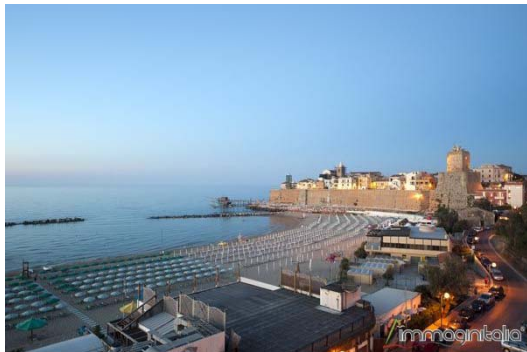
Pietrabbondante (sanniti)



Cerro al Volturno (longobardi)



Altilia / Sepino



Termoli



Castel San Vincenzo (*mid-fifth century*)



Civitacampomariano

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