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## Philoxenia Project

by Jimmy Magro

Since March 2009, the Local Councils' Association (LCA) has been an active partner in the EU funded project called Philoxenia that is being led by a Greek Partner. The project is being funded under the MED programme with a total budget of approximately e1.8 million. The LCA has a budget of e269,940. The project has duration of three years and will come to an end in March 2012.

The partners of the project come from: Greece (2), Sardinia, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta. The ultimate objective of the project is the setting up of 90 micro-enterprises in the regions of the partners; in Malta we will endeavor to set up 18 micro-enterprises commencing from April 2010 when the official call for assistance under the project will be made public.

The document is being implemented on the Common Operational Plan (COP) drafted by Em.Loc, one of the Greek partners, and which has been adopted for the local characteristics. The Greek partner is in the process of preparing the Toolbox, which is the package of documents connected with the issue of the public call from entrepreneurs to be considered for assistance from the project.

As part of the COP, the LCA has set up a consultative Steering Committee composed of the General Retailers and Traders Union, Department of Commerce, Employment and Training Corporation, Bank of Valletta plc, Young Enterprise, Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs, Malta Enterprise and the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Steering Committee held a meeting on 21 January in order to create the required networking between the project and the members of the Steering Committee.

The project entails the normal initiatives of an EU funded project: project management, financial management, communications strategy, auditing, and submission of financial claims to the Managing Authority in order to receive the EU contributions. The LCA has also been able to secure assistance from the EU co-financing fund operated through the Parliamentary Secretary the Hon Chris Said.

A salient characteristic of this project is that the LCA will be offering assistance in kind to the tune of e4500 per approved micro-enterprise, as well as a series of other benefits through the network. The project will also provide special business training to the approved entrepreneurs through an external consultant that has been engaged by the LCA.

The LCA will host the third project Steering Committee in Malta in March, whereby representatives from all partners will be present together with a representative of the MED Managing Authority. We are proud to be an active partner in this project and take this opportunity to thank all the stakeholders that have extended their co-operation in the implementation of this project.

We urge interested entrepreneurs to keep a watchful eye on our public communications and announcements in order to be able to benefit from this EU funded project.

Jimmy Magro

Project Manager

Philoxenia Project

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