



# Pilot action «A snorkel on the mountain» “Mediterranean Experience of Eco-Tourism” (MEET) Program

## Management Body of Samaria National Park

### 2nd Report

Dimitris Poursanidis

<http://www.terrasolutions.eu/>



Financed by:



Project  
funded by the  
**EUROPEAN UNION**



Co-financed by:



*Pilot Action*

*«A snorkel on the mountain»*

*In the framework of the Project*

*“Mediterranean Experience of Eco-Tourism” (MEET)*

*2nd Report*



Financed by:



Project  
funded by the  
**EUROPEAN UNION**



Co-financed by:



## Table of contents

The 1st Participatory Meeting .....	4
Basic Principles of Ecotourism Development Strategy (ASAO) in the National Park of Samaria and Action Plan (AP) strategy for the development of ecotourism in the National Park of Samaria .....	5
The final ecotourism package .....	10
Feasibility proposal and outline interventions for enhancement and restoration of infrastructure and creation of new .....	15
Appendix 1 – Technical data for the proposed interventions .....	17
Appendix 2 – Presentations of the 1st participatory meeting .....	22

## The 1st Participatory Meeting

The 1st participatory meeting during the project “MEET” or “Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism” has been implemented on the 31st of July 2014 at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (M.A.I.Ch.). Representatives from public agencies, private businesses, private citizens and the media participated.

The program of the meeting included:

### A' Part – Presentations

09:30 – 10:00 Registration of participants

10:00 – 10:15 Welcome from the President of the Board of the Management Body of Samaria National Park, Dr. Petros Lyberakis

10:15 – 10:30 "National Park of Samaria: UNESCO World Natural Heritage - Planning and Managing a Sustainable Tourism Development", Dimitris Michelogiannis, Environment Layer, Regional representative of Region of Crete

10:30 – 10:45 The «European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas» Antonis Barnias, Management Body of National Park of Samaria

10:45 – 11:30 Presentation of the results of the first Report of the Pilot Action «A snorkel on the mountain» Dimitris Poursanidis, Consultant of the Pilot Action.

11:30 – 11:45 Discussion

11:45 – 12:00 Coffee Break

12:00 -12:15 The less traveled road - authentic experiences in the countryside and gastronomy of Crete, Antonis Anitsakis, Natour-Lab

12:15 – 12:30 The quality as a way of life, the example of St. John- Sfakia, Antonis Georgedakis, owner of guesthouse “ALONIA”

12:30 – 12:45 Key challenges in the development of agrotourism, Frantzeskakis Nikos, President of the Association of Unions of Agrotourism in Greece

12:45 – 13:00 Discussion

### B' Part - Open discussion

13:00 – 13:45 Ecotourism Development Strategy of the White Mountains - Action Plan

13:45 – 14:00 Summary of results

14:00 – 14:45 Development of an Ecotourism Package

14:45 – 15:00 Summary of results

### Closure of the Meeting - Launch at MAICH

Before the completion of the meeting, all the relevant interesting parties in the area of the National Park of Samaria have been informed through brochure and poster dispatch, designed for this project, as well as by personal, e-mail and phone approach.

Πρόγραμμα 1<sup>ος</sup> Συμμετοχικής Διεργασίας  
Παρασκευή 25 Ιουλίου – ΜΑΙΧ

Α' ΜΕΡΟΣ – ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΕΙΣ	
09:30 – 10:00	Εγγραφές συμμετεχόντων
10:00 – 10:15	Χαιρετισμός Προέδρου Φορέα Διαχείρισης κου. Λυμπεράκη Πέτρου
10:15 – 10:30	«Εθνικός Δρυμός Σαμαριάς: Μνημείο Παγκόσμιας Φυσικής Κληρονομιάς- Σχεδιασμός και Διαχείριση μίας Βιώσιμης Τουριστικής Ανάπτυξης» Δημήτρης Μιχαηλιδάκης, Νομικός Περιβάλλοντος – Περιφερειακός Σύμβουλος Κρήτης
10:30 – 10:45	To «European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas» Αντώνης Μπαρνιάς, Φορέας Διαχείρισης Εθνικού Δρυμού Σαμαριάς
10:45 – 11:30	Παρουσίαση των αποτελεσμάτων της 1ης Αναφοράς της Πιλοτικής Δράσης «a snorkel on the mountain» Δημήτρης Πουρσανίδης, Εξωτερικός Σύμβουλος Υποστήριξης της πιλοτικής δράσης
11:30 – 11:45	Συζήτηση
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 – 12:15	Ο λιγότερο ταξιδεμένος δρόμος - αυθεντικές εμπειρίες στην ύπαιθρο και τη γαστρονομία της Κρήτης Αντώνης Ανατσάκης, Natour Lab - Κοιν.Σ.Επ.
12:15 – 12:30	Η ποιότητα ως τρόπος ζωής, το παράδειγμα του Άη Γιάννη Σφακιών Αντώνης Γεωργελάκης, ξενώνας ΑΛΩΝΙΑ
12:30 – 12:45	Οι βασικές προκλήσεις στην ανάπτυξη του Αγροτουρισμού Φραντζεσκάκης Νίκος, Πρόεδρος του Συνδέσμου Ενώσεων Αγροτουρισμού Ελλάδας
12:45 – 13:00	Συζήτηση
Β' ΜΕΡΟΣ - ΣΤΡΟΓΓΥΛΗ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΑ – ΑΝΟΙΚΤΗ ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΗ	
13:00 – 13:45	Ανάπτυξη Οικοτουριστικής Στρατηγικής για τα Λευκά Όρη - Σχέδιο Δράσεων
13:45 – 14:00	Σύνοψη αποτελεσμάτων
14:00 – 14:45	Ανάπτυξη Πρώτου Οικοτουριστικού Πακέτου
14:45 – 15:00	Σύνοψη αποτελεσμάτων
ΚΛΕΙΣΙΜΟ ΣΥΝΑΝΤΗΣΗΣ - ΓΕΥΜΑ ΣΤΟ ΧΩΡΟ ΤΟΥ ΜΑΙΧ	

Fig 1. The 1st Participation Process Meeting programme

The first meeting had 2 core sessions. The first's objective was to inform the participants for the project "MEET" and the Pilot action "A snorkel on the mountain", for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, which is the basis of the ideological approach of the project, for "good practices" of ecotourism that are already applied in the protected area, for the challenges of ecotourism as an idea and the parameters of it that concern the National Park and its potential in the tourism sector. The data that were collected during Phase 1 of the project have also been presented in this meeting (1<sup>st</sup> Report).

The second session objective was the open participation of people and the open juxtaposition of views about the ecotourism strategy that has to be followed, the proposed action plan for the implementation of the strategy and the development of the ecotourism package that has been presented during the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the research. Apparently, before the start of the discussion the proposals about the strategy, the action plan and the ecotourism package have been presented in order to prepare the audience for the discussion.

The presentations of the first stage of the meeting are included in the Appendix 2 of this report.

## Basic Principles of Ecotourism Development Strategy (ASAO) in the National Park of Samaria and Action Plan (AP) strategy for the development of ecotourism in the National Park of Samaria

The conclusions and opinions expressed in the Second Part of the participatory process can be summarized in the following:

- I) The strategic development of ecotourism in the area should follow the pattern **"We don't want to attract tourists. We want to attract voyagers"**
- II) It is important to educate local people in the tourism and eco-tourism sector by specialized agencies and experts.

- III) Important step for an integrated success of any venture related to ecotourism is networking of the local entrepreneurs. One way to do this would be through the Certificate of Quality for Products and Services which the Management Body recently began to promote. Also, the cooperation of enterprises does not need to gain any legal form.
- IV) Any SME (small-medium enterprise) can and should undertake the protection of the natural environment around each one in order to eventually protect the entire area.
- V) All activities that take place in the National Park and are related to ecotourism either from the side of the enterprises or from the side of the travelers should follow the historical rules of the nature.
- VI) Interventions to existing trails and restoration of traditional "mitata" (traditional structures for cheese) should be a separate chapter in the development of any ecotourism strategy.
- VII) The local products should have an identity of certification in order to increase the awareness and confidence.
- VIII) There is a gap in the "umbrella" businesses that could promote ecotourism in a single package.
- IX) Prerequisite is the activation of cooperatives, manufacturing companies and associations. It is known that collectivity is regarded in a positive way by foreign visitors.
- X) The promotion of ecotourism products should start from and rely on the place and its nature and not from the hosting infrastructure.

- XI) The development of infrastructures should be done under conditions and with clear boundaries. It is preferable not to develop rather than to face a super massive development.
- XII) Is important to develop synergies between the private sector and the public sector.
- XIII) Volunteering is a dynamic concept in the field of ecotourism.
- XIV) The primary sector should play a central role in the development of eco-tourism.

Taking into account the abovementioned statements and the proposed principles of the ecotourism development which have been presented in the 1<sup>st</sup> report, we can come out to a primary draft on the Basic Principles of Ecotourism Development Strategy in the National Park of Samaria and an Action Plan Strategy on the development of ecotourism in agreement with the comments of the participants of the first meeting.

So, in conclusion we have:

**✚ 1st PRINCIPLE STRATEGY for the DEVELOPMENT of ECOTOURISM**

**▶ Protection, Support and Enhancement of Quality of Life of Local Society**

**▶ Action Plan**

- 1) *Development, consolidation and dynamic operation of a Roundtable (forum), consisting mainly of representatives of the local community and stakeholders associated with ecotourism at local and regional level, for the dynamic view of the strategy of the ecotourism in the White Mountains. The forum, which can be an informal body, will meet at least once a*

year in a different part of the area of the National Park where it will develop issues of ecotourism in the White Mountains.

II) *Development of Ecotourism Package through the cooperation of local businesses in each territorial unit of the National Park.*

Cooperation between different SME's (Small and Medium Enterprises) to provide products and services in the area which will provide an additional validity to an ecotourism package, yielding the cultural identity of the region in an integrated framework. The networking is not necessary to be under a specific legal framework.

III) *Encouraging the employment of local residents in particular sectors of ecotourism.* The employment of local residents will create additional jobs in the area and will further strengthen the cultural background of each ecotourism package.

IV) *Strengthening the local primary economy by integrating agro-pastoral activities in ecotourism activities.* The inclusion of selected agro-pastoral, bee or other activities of the primary sector as discrete actions within ecotourism packages will bring extra income to the local community and also enhance the cultural profile of ecotourism in the region.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> PRINCIPLE STRATEGY for the DEVELOPMENT of ECOTOURISM**

▶ *Protection and Promotion of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the National Park*

▶ **ACTION PLAN**

I) *Continuation of the monitoring projects of the natural environment of the National Park and promotion of the results to selected international destinations in order to attract visitors having the natural environment as the main driving force for their choice of destination.* The monitoring projects of the species and habitats of the National Park and their presentation to as many operators, apart from the obvious scientific interest, will become a magnet for visitors who choose destinations according to the specific elements of nature.

II) *Information and training of local tourism businesses on using best practices to reduce the environmental impact of their operation.* The profile of eco-tourists dictates the choice of destinations and infrastructure should be led to a demonstrably sustainable use of natural resources. Furthermore, the application of practices for reducing the environmental cost of operation for each tourism infrastructure will enhance the economic viability of businesses. All the activities of the development of ecotourism should lay on the rules of nature.

III) *Creation (where required) of environmental awareness infrastructures with emphasis on low-cost methods and minimal visual impact as well as maintenance of the existing ones.* Signs and signaling environmental content, adapted to the natural environment and the peculiarity of the area with targeted content, minimalist brochures, developing ICT applications for

environmental information (e.g. smartphone applications) etc. will highlight with clarity and adequacy the information an eco-tourist is looking for while giving a clear message on the issue of development and implementation of sustainable methods of viewing.

**IV) *Creation and promotion of the environmental interpretation systems through terrestrial and underwater paths.*** The routes of environmental interpretation and especially underwater trails will place the White Mountains on the map of contemporary eco-tourism destinations while simultaneously act as an indirect means of protecting sensitive areas.

**V) *Adaptation of ecotourism products to the management requirements of the National Park.*** Any ecotourism activity must be perfectly adapted to the objectives and requirements of the Management Plan of the area and provisions on the conditions of the proper use of land and natural resources.

**VI) *Integration of friendly methods of traveling as an integral element in any ecotourism package.*** Using methods of environmentally friendly (eg bicycle) travelling would bring a major prestige to the ecotourism package; provide an interesting and desired activity while reducing the environmental and financial costs of the package.

**VII) *Redefinition of the authentic cultural identity of the area by local businesses providing products and tourist services.*** The ecotourism packages must highlight the cultural identity of

the area. Eco-tourists choose destinations in order to come into contact with the local culture, cuisine, architecture, processes, etc. The tourism infrastructure must comply with this eco-friendly profile in a direct manner, avoid adaptation to certain habits of tourists but "impose" the specificity of their identity.

**VIII) *The integration of the authentic cultural identity of the region in every newly-designed tourism infrastructure.***

**IX) *Development and promotion of an eco-tourism product with reciprocal economic benefits to the natural environment.*** One of the practices that were applied internationally in tourist products implemented in protected areas is the direct link of the revenue collected from the sale of the product with actions to protect and promote the natural environment of the area. Thus, a transfer rate of about 5% or less, of the net proceeds of the sale of the tourism product in action e.g. cleaning and marking trails, wildlife protection, etc. while communicating this process to prospective ecotourism package will enhance the profile of any environmental - friendly product.

**X) *Maintenance and upgrading of existing infrastructure with an emphasis on trails and traditional structures for cheese making (mitata).*** These structures will provide a significant advantage in the strategic development of ecotourism as an integral cultural capital of the place.



3<sup>rd</sup> **PRINCIPLE STRATEGY for the DEVELOPMENT of ECOTOURISM**

► **Development and dynamic improvement of the Ecotourism Experience**

► **ACTION PLAN**

- I) *Development and promotion of ecotourism packages for small groups and targeted recipients. **Emphasis should be given to the substitution of tourism concept by the meaning of journey.** Ecotourism will not replace the existing form of tourism. On the contrary, it will strengthen and improve it. The activities within the scope of ecotourism should best be implemented in small groups and must be tailored to the profile of the ecotourists who choose them*
- II) *Development and promotion of ecotourism packages oriented to providing quality experiences, products and services within a reasonable period of time while taking into account the area's potential and the experiences offered regionally. It is beyond dispute that ecotourists who choose the White Mountains, and particularly those from overseas markets, will try to combine their experience with a visit to other local, regional or national destinations (Knossos, Chania, Rethymno, Acropolis etc.). Each ecotourism package should take this into account and adjust the time limits respectively. This raises additional requirements in the case of the White Mountains.*

- III) *Development and integration of combinatorial activities (mountain - sea sports - gastronomy, activities day - night) in each ecotourism package. The White Mountains can offer a plethora of experiences. The inclusion of, if possibly, most of the activities in a balanced development will highlight the area's identity.*
- IV) *Continuous training of local business in the world market trends of ecotourism by experts in the area of tourism. The ecotourism market, like any tourism market is changeable and based on strong social, political and economic factors both in the country of destination and the countries of origin. The business area should be constantly aware of current market trends in order to take timely decisions on any adjustment to their products.*
- V) *Continuous recording of the opinions of ecotourists, optimal adaptation to the requirements of the latter, development of a visitor service "after the experience» (after sales). The provision of tourism products and services requires recording the user's views both during and after the use of products in order to be able to make the necessary adjustments and improvements. Providing a guest service system "after the experience» (after sales) will greatly enhance the visitor's trust and act positively in promoting the business.*
- VI) *Development and integration of short ecotourism activities (small ecotourism*

packages) to the existing mass tourism services. The ecotourism packages are not intended to substitute the existing product form of the White Mountains. Instead, the aim is to act cooperatively in order to improve it. In this context, the integration of existing tourism services with short ecotourism activities will significantly improve the elapsed experience, an enterprise which does not aim at modifying the existing shape.

**VII) Responsibility from each SME to protect and manage the natural area that surrounds it and development of a common management system.**

**VIII) Integration the concept of volunteering in ecotourism products.**

#### **4th PRINCIPLE STRATEGY for the DEVELOPMENT of ECOTOURISM**

##### **Promoting the Ecotourism Experience**

###### **▶ ACTION PLAN**

**I) Certification of local ecotourism services and products within a quality system of certification.** The certification of products and services in one unified system acts, generally, positively in a propellant level and improves customer loyalty to the service provider. The quality certification of products and services developed by the Management Body of the National Park can be a direct, cost-free, solution for businesses that do not have the qualifications nor the financial ability to be certified by a system with strict criteria.

**II) Targeted promotion of the natural and cultural features of the region in international ecotourism destination promotion media, mainly focusing on web applications.** The internet has proven to be the main source of information for visitors of the National Park. Furthermore, it is imperative that to create a web platform where each tourism infrastructure of the area will be able to advertise their tourism products and ecotourism packages.

**III) Promotion of ecotourism packages to selected tourism operators and businesses, nationally and internationally.** The ecotourism packages should be targeted at a specific audience and as a result, tour operators in this sector ought to be different from those of mass tourism. Businesses, organizations (private and governmental) must look at these markets, develop networks and promote ecotourism products. The MEET project and the actions that will develop during and after the completion of the program will greatly assist in this measure.

**IV) Development and promotion of ecotourism products from "umbrella" business that have already developed or are in the process of developing standards of ecotourism products.**

## **The final ecotourism package**

After the consultation and planning with the partners, the Management Body propose a specific

ecotourism package with similar composition to the original proposed package by adding an extra day. The final basic package was as follows:

### **BASIC ECOTOURISM PACKAGE**

**Title: A snorkel on the mountain**

**Characteristics: Integrated marine and terrestrial/mountainous experience combined with seminars on gastronomy - wine tasting and strong local cultural interaction in the National Park of Samaria.**

**Target group: 8 people, families with children aged over 12, with medium to good fitness, moderate hiking experience, good knowledge of swimming skills for children.**

**Duration: Six days (five nights)**

**Period: 7-12 October**

**Program:**

**DAY 1.** (Chania Airport – Chania - Guided tour and settlement in the city of Chania)

The 1st day's program is strongly dependant on the arrival hours and location of arrival of all participants. And since we don't want to give you a hard time nor keep you waiting for other participants of the group to arrive we decided to have the chance to view one of the most beautiful cities in Greece. So the 1st day you arrive in Crete (Chania International Airport) we meet with our guide – manager of the group at the airport. Then we transfer to the city of Chania, which is about 20km from the airport and settle to a hotel at the centre of the city where we will spend the night. The 1st day is concluded though with guided tour (from a professional guide) around the city of Chania in various

city sights and archaeological monuments (preferably in the multicultural old town of Chania) as well as dinner at a local restaurant in the old and picturesque harbour of Chania.

**DAY 2.** (Chania – Omalos plateau – Gorge of Samaria – Agya Roumeli – Hiking activities)

Morning:

We depart at approximately 07:00 from Chania and take the 40-km road to the Omalos plateau ant 1.250 meters a.s.l. where the north entrance of the Gorge is. At the entrance of the Gorge of Samaria we take a short visit (about 1 hour) to the Samaria National Park Information Centre so that we can take a small idea of what we are about to see.

Then we enter the 18km Gorge and begin the hike. Keep in mind that the area is one of the most multidesignated protected areas in Greece such as National Park, Wildlife Refuge, Biosphere Reserve through the MAB Programme of UNESCO, Biogenetic Reserve (CoE), Important Bird Area (IBA) and has received the European Diploma of Protected Areas from the Council of Europe. It is especially rich in geomorphologic configurations, ecosystems, endemic species of fauna and flora and supports the continuum of traditional human activities. During our crossing we will take several stops along the beautiful scenery and surely one big stop at the old and abandoned village of Samaria where we rest for a while and take a short briefing about the daily way of life of the old residents of the Gorge.

Late Afternoon:

After a long hike we arrive at the coastal village of Agya Roumeli (or "Greek Waters"), swim to the Libyan Sea

and settle to a local lodge where we will spend the night. (Remember: we start our hike at 1.250 metres a.s.l. and end up to the sea!).

Evening:

We'll have a traditional dinner at a local restaurant.

**DAY 3.** (Agya Roumeli – Lykos – Phoenix – Loutro – Sea activities)

Morning

Breakfast with local products of the area.

Noon

Then we gather at the harbour of Agya Roumeli from where we transfer with boat taxi (diving centre boat) to the wider area of Lykos (which basically means “Wolf”) - Phoenix – Loutro. A short briefing about the underwater natural environment of the National Park by our local diving centre master diver and then snorkelling in a prescribed "trail" where we will have the chance to discover the underwater flora and fauna of the Libyan Sea

Afternoon

We return by boat to the beach of Lykos to settle in a local small lodge, where we will spend the night.

Evening

We'll have a traditional dinner at a local restaurant.

**DAY 4.** (Lykos – Loutro – Anopoli – Aradena – Saint John - Hiking activities)

Morning:

Breakfast with local products of the area.

Then we start to hike the coastal path from Lykos to Loutro and then start climbing the trail to Anopolis (which basically means “the city above”). This trail has

an amazing view of the Libyan Sea. From Anopolis we board a 4X4 wheel-drive vehicle with direction to the 138-meters steel-wooden bridge of Aradena and the surrounding old settlement where we will take a guided tour and familiarization with the area.

Afternoon

We transfer to the mountain village of Saint John - which is the last village on the foothills of the White Mountains - settle in a local traditional hostel where we will spend the night and take some time to rest.

Evening

We'll have a traditional dinner at the hostel.

**DAY 5.** (Saint John – Kakos Poros - Saint John – Cooking activities)

Morning:

Breakfast with local products of the area.

Then we start hiking the trail from Saint John to the site called “Kakos Poros” or “Bad Entrance” (which is truly not bad at all..). This trail is of unique natural beauty and with magnificent views.

Afternoon

In the afternoon we return to the old village of Saint John and take part in a “Gastronomy Seminar” or cooking lesson where we will learn how to prepare our own local dinner with products of the area.

Evening

A video about the unique environment of the National Park will be presented and discussed

**DAY 6.** (Saint John – Anopolis – Askifou plateau – Vrysses – Chania Airport – return)

Morning:

Breakfast with local products of the area.

Then we will (unfortunately) depart from the old village of Saint John and head back to the city of Chania. On the way back though we will cross several villages of the historic region of Sfakia and make a small stop at the War Museum in Askifou plateau where several exhibits from the 2nd World War are preserved. Then we make another stop at the Dourakis Winery in Vrysses ("Fountains") village for a short introduction to the art of winery and wine testing. From there we continue to the city of Chania and the Chania International Airport where our tour around the nature and culture of the Cretan White Mountains comes to an end!

#### **END OF BASIC PACKAGE**

The alternative ecotourism package was configured for a case of failure to carry out the crossing of the National Park and the transport from Agya Roumeli due to adverse weather conditions. It is an indicator solution and in each case the choice of an alternative package should be an emergency solution.

#### **ALTERNATIVE ECOTOURISM PACKAGE**

**Characteristics: Integrated marine and terrestrial/mountainous experience combined with seminars on gastronomy - wine tasting and strong local cultural interaction in the National Park of Samaria.**

**Target group: 8 people, families with children aged over 12, with medium to good fitness, moderate**

**hiking experience, good knowledge of swimming skills for children.**

**Duration: five days (four nights)**

**Period: 7-11 October**

**Program:**

**Πρόγραμμα:**

**Day 1st (Chania Airport – Chania – settling in the hotels and city tour in Chania town)**

The 1st day's program is strongly dependant on the arrival hours and location of arrival of all participants. And since we don't want to give you a hard time nor keep you waiting for other participants of the group to arrive we decided to have the chance to view one of the most beautiful cities in Greece. So the 1st day you arrive in Crete (Chania International Airport) we meet with our guide – manager of the group at the airport. Then we transfer to the city of Chania, which is about 20km from the airport and settle to a hotel at the centre of the city where we will spend the night. The 1st day is concluded though with guided tour (from a professional guide) around the city of Chania in various city sights and archaeological monuments (preferably in the multicultural old town of Chania) as well as dinner at a local restaurant in the old and picturesque harbour of Chania.

**DAY 2nd (Chania - Agios Ioannis - Aradaina - mountain and sea activities)**

*Morning:*

We will depart at about 07:00 in the morning from Chania towards the village of Agios Ioannis in Sfakia. From there, we will move to Aradaina where we will begin our journey to the majestic canyon of Aradaina leading to the beach at Marmara area. There and if the

weather conditions are safe, we will have the opportunity to discover the hidden gems of the marine biodiversity of the Libyan Sea.

*Late in the afternoon:*

From Marmama and driving a 4-wheel drive we will return to Agios Ioannis at a local guesthouse where we will stay overnight.

*Night:*

Traditional dinner in a local taverna.

### **DAY 3rd (Agios Ioannis - Kakos Poros - Agios Ioannis - culinary activities)**

*Morning:*

Breakfast with local products.

Then we will start our hike on the trail from St. John to the location "Kakos Poros" (which actually is not at all "bad"). The path is of outstanding natural beauty with breathtaking views.

*Afternoon:*

In the afternoon we return to the old village of St. John where we will take part in a culinary workshop where you will learn to prepare our dinner with local produce.

*Night:*

We will watch and discuss a video for the National Park.

### **Day 4th (Agios Ioannis - Paxnes - Agios Ioannis)**

*Morning:*

Breakfast with local products.

Thereafter we will move to Ammoutsera where we started our walk up on the trail to Pachnes, the highest peak of the White Mountains (2.453 meters a.s.l.). The trails is of outstanding natural beauty with amazing views.

*Noon:*

In the afternoon we return to the old village of Agios Ioannis where we will rest.

### **Day 5th (Agios Ioannis - Anopolis - Askifou plateau - Vrysses - Chania airport)**

*Morning:*

Breakfast with local products.

Then we will (unfortunately) depart from the old village of Saint John and head back to the city of Chania. On the way back though we will cross several villages of the historic region of Sfakia and make a small stop at the War Museum in Askifou plateau where several exhibits from the 2nd World War are preserved. Then we make another stop at the Dourakis Winery in Vrysses ("Fountains") village for a short introduction to the art of winery and wine testing. From there we continue to the city of Chania and the Chania International Airport where our tour around the nature and culture of the Cretan White Mountains comes to an end!

## Feasibility proposal and outline interventions for enhancement and restoration of infrastructure and creation of new

According to the Financial Agreement signed by the Management Body with the MedPAN Association for the implementation of the Pilot Action «A snorkel on the mountain», there is a possibility of implementing small interventions to enhance and restore structures as part of the operation. This section describes proposed interventions related to both the improvement of existing and new infrastructure for the implementation of the ecotourism package, and interventions related to the proposed Ecotourism Development Strategy and Action Plan specifically.

Given that the financial framework for the implementation of interventions is relatively limited for extensive works (about 10.000 €) and the implementation period is narrow, proposed interventions enabled deployment, low cost and with the main objective to serve as a pilot and incentives for further development of interventions under other programs or initiatives.

So at this stage, the proposed interventions aimed at improving the current situation, in particular in the following areas of the Action Plan:

1) *Creation (where required) of environmental awareness infrastructures with emphasis on low-cost methods and minimal visual impact as well as maintenance of the existing ones.* Signs and signaling environmental content, adapted to the natural

environment and the peculiarity of the area with targeted content, minimalist brochures, developing ICT applications for environmental information (e.g. smartphone applications) etc. will highlight with clarity and adequacy the information an eco-tourist is looking for while giving a clear message on the issue of development and implementation of sustainable methods of viewing. *(Principle 2, Action III)*

2) *Creation and promotion of the environmental interpretation systems through terrestrial and underwater paths.* The routes of environmental interpretation and especially underwater trails will place the White Mountains on the map of contemporary eco-tourism destinations while simultaneously act as an indirect means of protecting sensitive areas. *(Principle 2, Action IV)*

3) *Maintenance and upgrading of existing infrastructure with an emphasis on trails and traditional structures for cheese making (mitata).* These structures will provide a significant advantage in the strategic development of ecotourism as an integral cultural capital of the place. *(Principle 2, Action X)*.

Given that the total budget for the implementation of actions for the renovation and/or the creation of new structures and supply instruments for the proper implementation of the Pilot Action is approximately EUR 10.000,00 €, the interventions proposed are minimal. Of course, the goal is not to create a full ecotourism infrastructure but to demonstrate creative tools and infrastructure that will serve as examples of "good practices".

Interventions and supplies proposed are listed below:

Table 1. Table of proposed interventions - infrastructure and procurement for implementation of the Pilot Project "A Snorkel on the Mountain"

Action	Title	Description	Budget	Duration		
				SEPT	OCT	NOV
Service	Promotion of paths - mountain routes for the ecotourism experience	<p>The service includes the maintenance, cleaning and minor improvement - promotion, in two mountainous trails in Saint John (Agios Ioannis). It consists of two paths that start from Agios Ioannis and lead, in the first place to "Kakos Poros" (length 1,300 meters) and the second on the summit "Papa Kefala" (approximately 2,560 meters). Both routes can easily join and support any ecotourism package since they are short, of low to moderate difficulty, do not require major interventions, end up in sites with exceptional views and are positioned close to ecotourism units.</p> <p>What is required is cleaning the paths from pine needles and branches without disturbing the equilibrium of the ecosystem, the debranching at certain positions, the creation of a small number of steps at selected positions (about 20 steps), a short bypass on one of the two paths, the signaling with small signs marking (signaling - directional tags - 30 total), transport and placement of table benches, two (one on each ending position of each path), one wooden fence in a pit (located along a path) for the protection of visitors and the promotion of the site.</p>	<p>Cleaning - Signage - Improvement - Emergence: 5.313,60 € (45 working mandays)</p> <p>Materials wood (fence and stairs) - signaling signs - tables: 1.800,00 €</p> <p><b>TOTAL BUDGET: 7.113,60 €</b></p>			
Supply – Service	Informational signs of the Pilot Action «a snorkel on the mountain" of the Programme MEET	<p>The action involves the construction; printing and placement at the start and end of the pilot ecotourism package route of two signs of A0 dimension (one at the entrance of the gorge of Samaria and on at Sfakia - Agios Ioannis) with specific standards and two signs with information on the marine environment in Agya Roumeli and the Lykos beach. All signs will have information on the MEET Project, the Pilot Action, partners of the package and cartographic information content.</p>	<p><b>TOTAL BUDGET: 2.676,40 €</b></p>			
Supply	Purchase books for the interpretation of the underwater environment	<p>The action involves the purchase of 20 copies of the book «Explore while snorkelling - The Mediterranean Fish - An underwater field guide» as well as 60 copies of the waterproof plastic identification card on fishes. Both the book and the card will be used by the participants of the ecotourism package and will be given to the partners of the Management Body in the framework of the Pilot Action.</p>	<p><b>TOTAL BUDGET: 210,00 €</b></p>			
<b>Total budget of the actions</b>			<b>10.000,00 € (including taxes and detention)</b>			



## Appendix 1 – Technical data for the proposed interventions

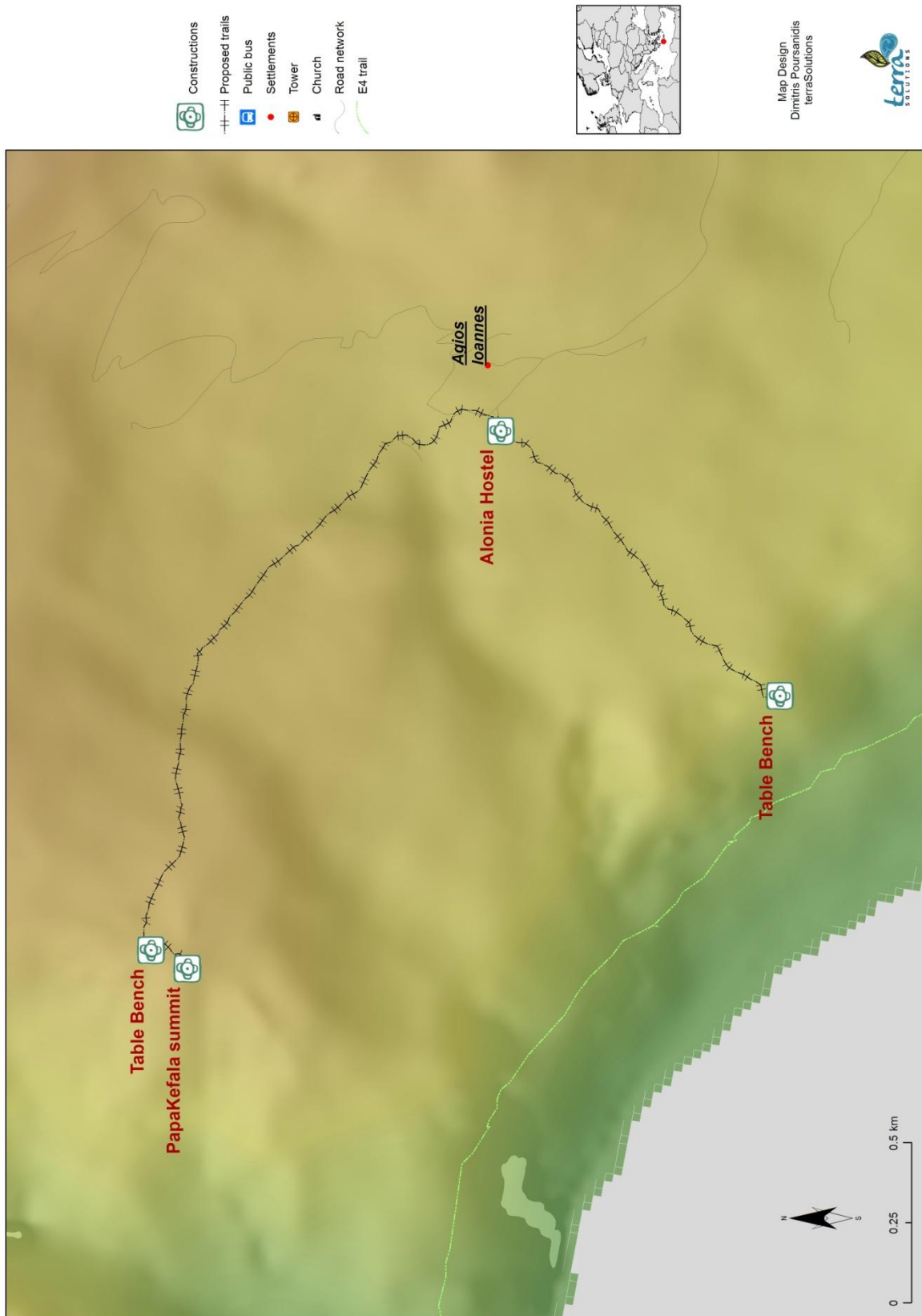
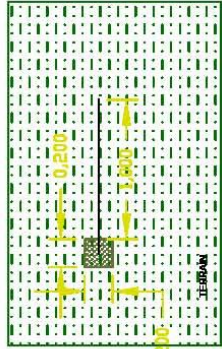


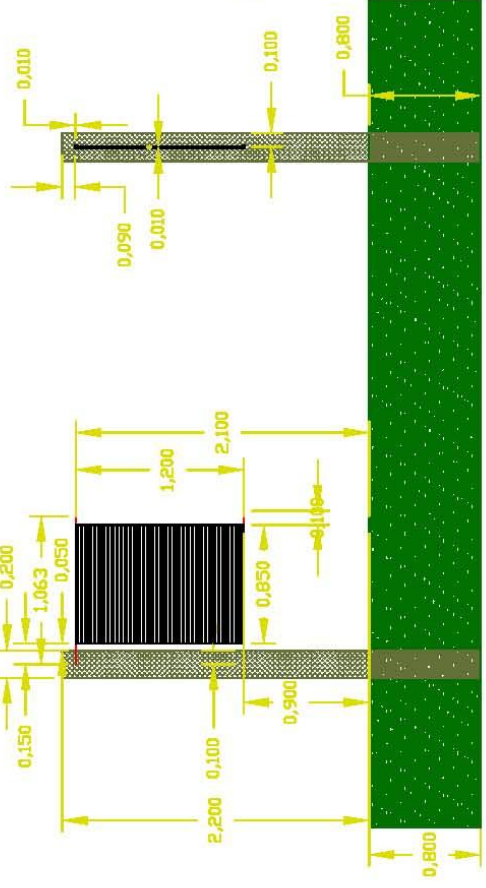
Figure 2. Map of the proposed interventions in Agios Ioannes area

# SIGN A0

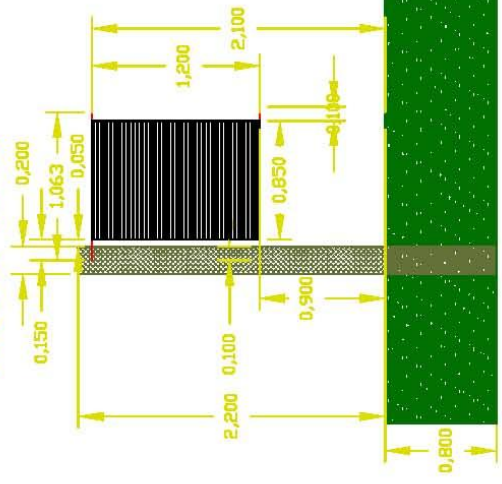
TOP VIEW



SIDE VIEW



FRONT VIEW



# MEET Project



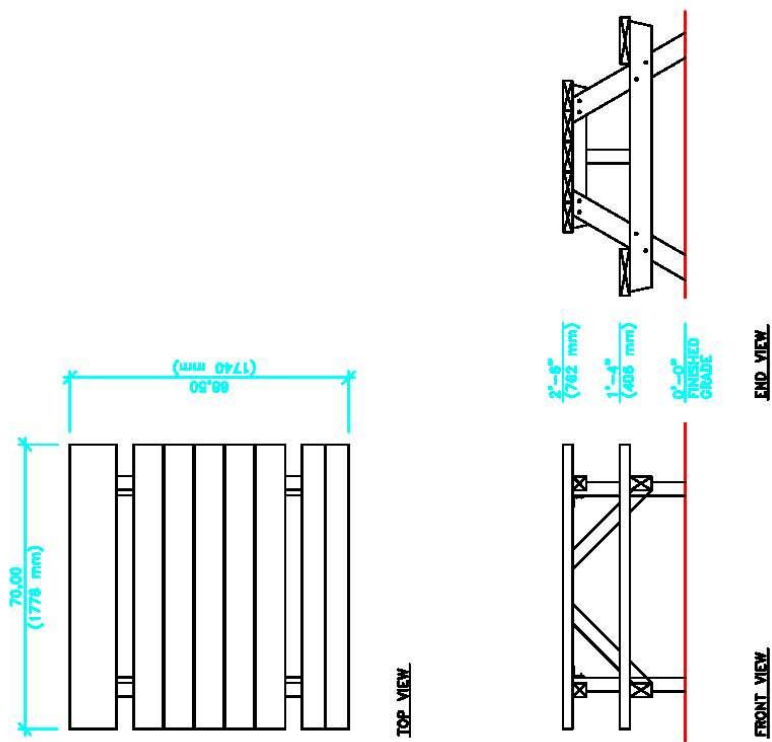
Mediterranean Experience of Cooperation

financed by ENPI CBCMED



Co-financed by MAVA

Figure 3. Information board A0 design



# MEET Project



Figure 41. Table bench for outdoor activities design





Figure 6. Book for interpretation of the marine life.

## Appendix 2 – Presentations of the 1st participatory meeting

*Pilot Action*

*«A snorkel on the mountain»*

*In the framework of the Project*

*“Mediterranean Experience of Eco-Tourism” (MEET)*

*2nd Report*



Financed by:



Project  
funded by the  
**EUROPEAN UNION**



Co-financed by:

