

Wine Roads in Greece: A Cooperation for the Development of Local Tourism in Rural Areas

by

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Abstract

An association of Wine Roads was developed in Greece at the beginning of the 1990s in an attempt to boost rural tourism. The association was created by wine producers in the regions of Macedonia and was then extended to Epirus, Thessaly and Thrace. Its main purpose has been the promotion of wine companies and the association's regional members, while its specific targets have been the development of local tourism, the support of cultural heritage and the improvement of product quality and related services. The Wine Roads initiative has received substantial financial support from the European Union and the State of Greece, mainly through the LEADER II program. However, socioeconomic results for the participating companies and regions appear to differ. An assessment using a questionnaire showed a positive effect on the enhancement of relations among members, the increase in tourist visits, publicity for the regions and cultural events. In contrast, there have been no significant positive effects on employment. Finally, it should be noted that some of the participating districts and companies have been more active and have taken better advantage of this initiative.

Key words: Wine roads, rural tourism, cooperation, financing, LEADER program, Greece.