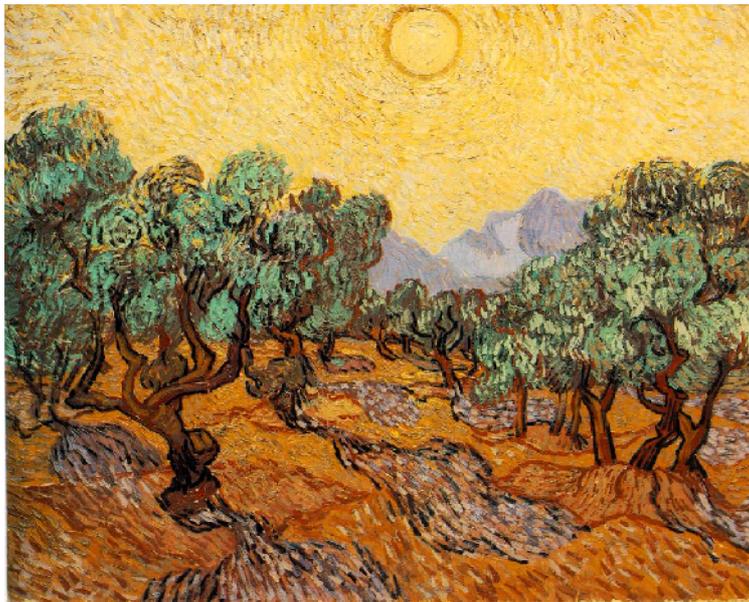


## Case Study of The Routes of the Olive Tree by Dr. Diane Dodd



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## 1. SUMMARY

### 1.1 Reasons for highlighting this case

The Routes of the Olive Tree is a significant case study because it has at its heart 'products from the olive tree' and thus an important opportunity exists to work with, stimulate and create SME's. The Routes of the Olive Tree is an interesting initiative in that it draws attention to the greater story of civilization, peace, humanity and heritage in order to support contemporary elements of production, design and tourism.

### 1.2 Synopsis

Participating Countries	Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, Albania, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco
Programme participation period	2005 – present
Sectors covered	Heritage, Museums, Festivals, Olive Tree products, Arts and crafts, Philosophy.
Activity Focus	Rural production and heritage, creative industries, intercultural dialogue, safeguarding of natural landscape.
Main Partners	Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce, Costa Navarino, Greek Ministry of Development, Greek Ministry of Culture, Museum of Mediterranean Civilisation (Marseille), Agropole Olivier (Meknes).
Funding Sources	National government via Chamber of Commerce, private funding, self-funding EU project funding
Principal impacts	Foundation; Olive Tree Shop (including product development); International network; Knowledge bank on sustainable rural economies; Training and support for SME's; Intercultural dialogue.



Economically, the Olive Tree is of major agricultural importance in the Mediterranean region, mainly as a source of Olive Oil. The ten largest producing countries in the World, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization, are all located in the Mediterranean region (with the exception of Argentina, located in South America). Mediterranean countries jointly produce more than 95% of the world's olives and the EU is both the chief consumer and exporter of Olive Oil in the World.

Main countries of production (Year 2009 per FAOSTAT)

Rank	Country/Region	Production (in tons)	Cultivated area (in hectares)	Yield (q/Ha)
—	World	13,241,809	9,522,836	13.383
1	 Spain	6,204,700	2,600,000	24.818
2	 Italy	3,600,500	1,154,000	31.065
3	 Greece	2,444,230 (2007)	765,000	31.4
4	 Turkey	1,290,654	727,513	17.740
5	 Syria	885,942	635,691	13.936
6	 Morocco	770,000	550,000	14.000
7	 Tunisia	750,000	2,300,000	3.260
8	 Egypt	500,000	110,000	45.454
9	 Nigeria	475,162	283,442	15.474
10	 Portugal	362,600	380,700	9.524
11	 Jordan	189,000	125,000	
12	 Libya	180,000		
13	 Argentina	160,000	52,000	30.769

## 2.2 Introduction to the Routes of the Olive Tree

Georges Karabatos, President of the Messinia Chamber of Commerce and Industry recognized that to improve knowledge, share distribution costs, expand markets and open new avenues for the sustainability of small producers it would be essential to develop a cultural network. Building a network amongst competing producers both locally and internationally is a challenge that requires a greater story than economics, packaging and marketing.

Georges Karabatos is quoted as saying "The best packaging of a product is its civilization and its history"

The Routes of the Olive Tree are not one route but rather a network stretching across 18 countries and encompassing many Chambers of Commerce, museums, festivals, SME's and other private and third sector organizations. Since its creation in 2002, the Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree" (hereafter referred to as the Foundation) has each year organized a specific itinerary devised with the aim to transmit the idea of sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, rediscovery and recognition of natural heritage linked by the symbolic presence of the Olive Tree. The aim of these

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itineraries in the early years was to develop the network membership whereas in the latter years the aim has been to give visibility to the route in third countries (both northern European countries and as far afield as China).

The Olive Tree in the context of the itineraries is a symbol of the economic, social and cultural development of Mediterranean communities and a unifying element in the current quest for solidarity and unity. As Georges Karabatas said, "Once it was trade that promoted culture, now it is the culture that promotes trade"

## 2.3 Summary objectives of the Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree"

The statutes of the Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree" lists more than 20 objectives (see Annex I Statutes of Cultural Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree", Kalalmeta, 2003). In summary, the objectives are quoted from the website as being:

"...to create "interactive synergies" between conservation, tourism and development by:

- favouring dialogue between the regions concerned, between developed areas and those in difficulty, between urban and rural spaces
- encouraging thematic tourism and sustainable development through setting up exemplary initiatives in oil-producing regions
- carrying out an inventory of the material and immaterial heritage of the olive tree, and increasing its value
- contributing to public awareness and educating young people
- leading specialized, multidisciplinary research on the widened theme of the olive tree."

## 2.4 Management Structure of the Routes of the Olive Tree

The Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree" is principally organized by the Homonymous Cultural Foundation which has a strong relationship with the Chamber of Commerce in Messenia (Greece). It has also been placed under the aegis of the International Oil-producing Council, the Hellenic Ministries of Culture, Development, Tourism and Foreign Affairs and of the Peloponnesian Region of Athens' City Council. The Route has a range of international partners with strong collaborations happening through as many as 100 Chambers of Commerce. (See Annex IV for a list of members).

The Assembly elects, by secret vote, an Executive Director from among its members, to serve for ten years. The Executive Director to date has been Georges Karabatos, President of the Messinia Chamber of Commerce and Industry and thus the connection between the Foundation and the Chamber of Commerce is solid. Furthermore, Kalamata (Messenia, Greece) is defined as the permanent base of the Foundation and its offices are in close proximity to the Messinian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the historical centre of the city.

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The Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree" employs 2 full-time staff members and 5-6 part-time staff members and has a team of volunteers (4 permanent). The Foundation also awards temporary contracts to fulfill important roles for the implementation of the annual itineraries. One full-time staff member manages and runs the Olive Tree Shop (which covers its costs) and the Foundation is a permanent client of two part-time webmasters (out sourced).

## 2.5 Summary actions of the "Routes of the Olive Tree"

The number of events organized directly by the Foundation each year varies and in addition to the annual itinerary, includes seminars, meetings, workshops, study visits, working meetings, training sessions etc. In 2009, the Foundation organized on behalf of the network more than 30 events. In addition to this, network members of the Foundation organized their own local events so the total number of events related to the route could easily number more than 100 each year.

### 2.5.1 Annual Itinerary

The itineraries of the Routes of the Olive Tree are usually held once a year and consisted originally of a relay race across all the Mediterranean olive-growing countries, with the participation of the "Friends of the Routes of the Olive Tree" (most often recruited through motorcycle clubs). The routes have varied considerably both in countries visited and objectives however they tend to be long and have usually aimed to cross a number of countries by motorbike (once by boat). A minibus and a truck for heavy loads are specially designed to follow the course and meet the needs of participants during the trip.



\*Itineraries 1 and 2

The annual itineraries are the cornerstone of the Foundation's activities. They have enabled the Foundation to develop an inventory of olive tree heritage as well as conduct scientific research on the ground, through the whole Mediterranean basin, to better define the cultural and tourist impact of the olive tree, as tree and landscape, product, popular tradition and symbol.

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The course is divided into several stages and includes several town/city destinations. The meeting with the messengers of the Olive Tree is usually celebrated with events organized in cooperation with local network member organizations. Each itinerary includes various landmarks related to the presence of the olive tree in the region crossed. The stopping posts aim to include heritage, cultural, social, economic, industrial, craft and environmental initiatives. Destinations may include well-known cultural tourism sites or monuments however many of the stopping posts include lesser known historical sites such as oil mills, natural landscapes and ancient sites associated with the olive tree. Awareness of environmental protection of olive-growing areas, enhancement and recognition of cultural sites and natural landscapes of olive trees, gastronomy tourism around the products of the olive tree, as well as handicrafts are fundamentals and thus there is an emphasis on regional traditional know-how.

The itineraries are limited in terms of number of participants (between 30 and 50 maximum). Food and accommodation is decided in consultation with network members on the ground. The aim is to adhere with sustainable development aims of local regions, selecting producers and local farmers (for oil mills and olive groves, for example), ways of alternative catering and accommodation (with emphasis on local offers for small groups: inns, taverns, etc. The organizer claims to strive to augment tourism in oil-producing regions, whether it is tourism for culture, or discovery and appreciation of landscapes, traditional know-how and history.

In general the financial participation of each participant in an itinerary is set after the call of the Foundation to potential sponsors. Once the budget is re-assessed on the basis of sponsorship levels and according to the amount that the Foundation itself can invest in the trip, the cost of participation is calculated (this has varied considerably). Gasoline and subsidiary transportation taxes (such as motorway tolls) are in principle given free to bikers, as well as some group meals and some accommodation. If there is a participation fee it is usually to cover accommodation and/or meals that cannot be supported by the Foundation's budget.

Each annual itinerary has so far been distinct but on average 10 additional full-time temporary employment contracts are provided during the lead-up and implementation of the itinerary (these are additional to the Foundation's regular staff). These contracts are for skilled professionals to carry out the logistical and operational aspects of the itinerary for example: administrative staff (used prior to the route to organise, research and develop the route), route manager; equipment manager; events manager; museographer/graphic designer (director of informative material for events along the Road: flyers, exhibition panels, etc...); artists (to create gifts and objects related to the routes for official meetings); driver (truck/bus); press secretary (journalist); doctor; translator; photographer; mechanic and cook.

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In addition, for specific parts of the itinerary additional staff are employed in order to organize a specific event, to welcome participants, to guide or assist in certain countries. Mostly these are qualified people proposed to the Foundation by the local network members and paid for from the budget of either the Foundation or directly by the local network member.

## 2.5.2 Training session

Training sessions are regularly organized by the Foundation however the quantity varies according to funding possibilities. In 2009, the Foundation directly organized two training sessions. The Foundation also oversees the provision of training activities in Greek schools and has supported the development of a travelling library to provide Greek schools with books and videos about the olive tree.

The Chamber of Commerce of Messinia, which is a principal network member, also provides a Center for Education and Training (CET). It undertakes training programs that are usually co-financed by the central or the regional government. The Center helps associations representing different branches of the local economy and prepares courses that each association feels are needed by its members. This year the CET is expected to offer training to 920 people through co-financed programs alone.

The Chamber of Commerce of Messinia, in collaboration with the Foundation, additionally provided open cookery lessons, in a hotel in Kalamata, to help children understand and appreciate their culinary heritage.

## 2.5.3 Contest

The Foundation organizes in cooperation with the Greek Consumers Secretariat of the Ministry of Development, the Greek Society of Tasters of Olive Oil products and the network of Greek Olive Oil Producing Cities, the Penhellenic Contest of Standardized Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Olive Oil Packaging. The contest, held in Athens, began in 2004 and brings together more than 28 Greek companies and unions to compete.

Other network members also hold competitions however it is unclear how involved the Foundation is in these events.

The Chamber of Commerce of Messinia, is a network member operating in close proximity and therefore they held a competition in collaboration with the Foundation to select from older women of Messinia the best recipes using olive oil products. They gathered more than 265 original local recipes, which will soon be presented during a special gastronomy and tourism journalist event. There are 10 prizes for the best recipes and these will be selected by a committee of well-known chefs and gastronomy critics. This is considered as an initiative of the Foundation, the Chamber and a well known magazine of Athens (Athinorama) and it will be sponsored by the Costa Navarino hotel resort. A longer term aim is to integrate these traditional recipes

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into the menu of local hotels, restaurants and taverns (through seminars in which these recipes will be taught to cuisine staff). The best recipes will also be published first, as a manual for catering professionals and secondly as a coffee table edition.

## 2.5.4 Exhibitions

Many exhibitions have been organized by the Foundation. In 2009, the Foundation directly organized four exhibitions and tastings. The exhibition/tastings were organized by regular staff members of the Foundation. In addition a graphic artists was provided with a temporary contract to produce the exhibitions.

The Foundation in cooperation with the Musée de Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée (Paris) and the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR) of the Council of Europe also produced a travelling exhibition. It was produced for the Cultural Itinerary of the Olive Tree Routes in 2008 and was presented in 10 cities in Central Asia and in Balkan countries. It consisted of 18 big banners presenting the history, symbolism and civilization of the olive tree and the importance of intercultural dialogue. The exhibition was produced in 3 languages (Russian, Chinese and English).

## 2.5.5 Specific missions

The annual agenda of the Foundation includes participation in dozens of congresses in several European and Mediterranean countries related to the Olive Tree for example protection of traditions, cultural heritage, natural knowledge in olive producing regions, sustainable development, thematic tourism etc. In addition, the Foundation is often consulted on special activities of the network members. For example in 2009, four specific missions were undertaken to support members of the network and in 2008-2009 network members undertook four heritage rehabilitation projects during which the Foundation was consulted.

## 2.5.6 Knowledge products

During the period 2008 – 2009, the Foundation produced more than 23 publications. Many of these have been distributed freely amongst the network and include guides, books, articles, website content and DVDs.

Some of the books produced by the Foundation are available for purchase including Ode to the Olive Tree, a book dedicated to the Olive Tree, assembled by the Academy of Athens, the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre and the General Secretariat for the Olympic Games (2004); Le guide des routes de l'olivier, a book that discusses the Olive Tree as a symbol (1994); 12 months with the Olive Tree, a history of the Olive Tree, the financial and social importance for the Greeks and all the Mediterranean people; On the routes of the Olive Tree and the Mediterranean, selected work of great photographers on the subject of the Olive Tree. (For more information see Annex V)

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Short contracts have been provided for photographers, graphic designers and printing houses but there is insufficient information to assess the overall employment value of these initiatives.

## 2.5.7 Seminars and network meetings

4 seminars and 2 network meetings were organized in 2009 but further information about these was unavailable.

## 2.5.8 Festivals

Each year the Foundation collaborates in the organization of at least one festival. From 2008 until 2011, festivals have taken place in at least 8 different countries. In 2009, the Foundation supported the organization of 12 simultaneous festivals throughout Greece.

### Example:

The first Feast of the Olive Road ran from 14-19 December 2004 in the heart of Athens (exhibition in the main hall of the metro station "Syntagma"). It included several workshops that included "Thousand and two flavors": a tasting workshop, "Draw me an olive tree": an educational workshop for children, "Small musical bridges of the olive tree": a musical workshop and exhibitions of photography, "Olive tree, the favorite tree of the Greeks, " Following the Olive Tree "and "Journey around the Olive Tree in the Mediterranean through words and images". A roundtable was organized on "The olive tree as a factor of civilization and sustainable development" and the "National Olive Oil Extra Virgin Competition" was conceived.

Each festival is organized by the Foundation in cooperation with the local network member and thus employment is difficult to calculate. Normally, the Foundation commits between 5-10 people to support the event as well as provides exhibitions, books and products.

## 2.5.9 Olive Tree Shop

The Foundation has been involved in the field of responsible trade through the Routes of the Olive Tree Store, located in the heart of Athens, which sells agricultural and traditional crafts products selected on the basis of authenticity and quality. The shop is an initiative created by and now managed by the Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree".

The Olive Tree shop sells olives from Kalamata, extra virgin olive oil, traditional delicatessen products such as stuffed olives, stuffed peppers, pâté, cheese, black olive pâté, green olive pâté), honey, traditional cakes, aromatic plants and herbs, wines and spirits, vinegars, mustards, thyme, oregano, tomato products, basil, sesame cakes, olive oil soap, cosmetics made with olive oil, art works using the theme of the olive tree or olive, stationary products with an olive tree design including photo boxes, note blocks, CD cases, folders, telephone books etc., exclusive series of jewelry created with the olive tree motif, the foundations publications, t-shirts, good luck olive charms, rosary beads, with an exclusive olive tree design, pottery with the olive tree design,, aprons and cotton bags with the olive tree design.

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The Olive Tree Shop employs one full-time shop manager. Two part-time contracts have also been given to two individual artists to design and make goods exclusively for the shop (a jewelry artist and a stationary designer).

The Foundation's annual budget sheets suggest that the Routes of the Olive Tree Shop is currently covering its costs and in its first year of operations provided a profit (see Annex V: budget sheets for the Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree")

## 2.6 The legal basis

The organizers of the Cultural Tour "The Routes of the Olive Tree" (1997- 2002), the Messinian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and all the Greek Chambers aided by the Chambers of Production, Transformation, Trade and Services of all Mediterranean countries, cultural institutions, non-governmental organizations and other individuals from the countries of the Mediterranean decided to establish a non-profit and non-governmental organisation titled: Cultural Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree"

The Management Board consists of the Executive Director as President, two Vice-Presidents, five elected members and 22 ex officio members representing the Chambers of Commerce from the olive-producing Mediterranean countries: Greece, Albania, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Turkey and Malta.

In case of absence of representatives, the Cultural or Commercial Attaché of the respective Embassy in Greece or his/her representative can participate instead. The Mediterranean Committees (through the Attachés) promote the objectives of the Cultural Foundation in their own countries, according to the Statute and laws of each respective country. Countries in which Mediterranean Committees already operate or have been created are:

<b>No.</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>BASE CITY</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>BASE CITY</b>
1	CYPRUS	LEMESSOS	11	SPAIN	JAÉN
2	TURKEY	SMYRNA	12	PORTUGAL	MOURA
3	SYRIA	ALEPO	13	FRANCE	MARSEILLE
4	LEBANON	ANFE	14	ITALY	IMPERIA
5	JORDAN	AMMAN	15	SLOVENIA	KÔPER
6	EGYPT	ALEXANDRIA	16	CROATIA	DUBROVNIK
7	LIBYA	TOBRUK	17	MONTENEGRO	PODGORITSA
8	TUNISIA	SFAX	18	ALBANIA	TIRANA
9	ALGERIA	ALGIERS	19	MALTA	VALETA
10	MOROCCO	RABAT	20	ISRAEL	TEL AVIV
			21	PALESTINE	GAZA

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### 3. SOURCES OF FUNDING

The Routes of the Olive Tree is an interesting example as it was founded with the backing and support of the Chamber of Commerce in Messenia which indicates an early realization that unifying olive tree industries may benefit SMEs across Greece.

The Routes of the Olive Tree program is supported in Greece by the Ministry of Regional Development and Competitiveness, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and of the City of Athens. They support permanently the Foundation and are an essential aid to grants, funding and recognition of the Route.

In terms of balance between public/private support the overall budget of the Foundation, is (see Annex V: Balance sheets for the Foundation years 2006, 2007 and 2009):

- 30% (contributions from network members and friends of the Routes of the Olive Tree)
- 20% (income of editions and the "Routes of The Olive Tree" Shop)
- 50% (external grants including grants from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Messinia (Peloponnese, Greece) which belongs to the Public Sector and other ICC grants from the Hellenic Ministry of Development and the Peloponnese Region and private sponsors, whose majority are SME's)

Regarding private sponsors, the list of companies that supported the Foundation in pursuing its goals since the founding of the Foundation in 2002 is not exhaustive. It develops according to the routes followed and the topics addressed by the Foundation. It includes both local and national partners in and beyond Greece and some multinationals (e.g. IKEA, Nivea). Funding from these partnerships do not affect the operation of the Foundation itself, but arise as part of events and activities carried out by it (namely, for the implementation of the annual cultural itineraries but also for some specific events such as exhibitions and conferences).

The help of sponsors can be financial or in kind, for example during an itinerary offers for lodging and transport, logistics equipment, provision of food and water, motor bikes and cars equipment, petrol, etc. are not uncommon.

Some significant sponsors who regularly support the Foundation are:

Baxevanis, <http://www.baxevanismoto.com/>

TEMES, <http://www.temes.gr/>

Costa Navarino, <http://www.costanavarino.com/>

Karelia Foundation <http://www.baxevanismoto.com/>

#### 4. COORDINATION WITH OTHER LABELS

The Routes of the Olive Tree was elected the 2nd World Cultural Itinerary by UNESCO in 2003.

On the 4th March 2005, the Council of Europe also gave The Routes of the Olive Tree the title Major Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. This honorary distinction was awarded following a proposal by the Direction of International Relations and Organizations of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture.

According to Audrey Guittard, (Permanent collaborator of the Foundation - see Annex IX) there are few synergies, if any, between the Council of Europe label and the UNESCO label but both are considered to give added value to the Foundation's work.

Some UNESCO World Heritage Sites are included in the itineraries if these fit into the Route and the objectives of the itinerary (for examples the archaeological site of Volubilis in Morocco, the Acropolis of Athens or the archaeological site of Delphi).

To date there has been no formal collaboration with other European Cultural Routes.

The collaboration with the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR) of the Council of Europe has been considered particularly useful for the Foundation. Regular and valuable contact has taken place between the Foundation and the EICR. Audrey Guittard felt that the EICR had played a vital role in transferring policy "talk" into "practical" actions that could be translated to operators working on the cultural route. She also cited as important, their help in finding an outlet for the sale of goods from the Olive Tree Shop in Luxembourg.

The Foundation holds relations with other networks that operate in the Mediterranean such as the Anna Lindh Network and Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue among Cultures.

#### 5. LEVELS OF COOPERATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING WITH AND BETWEEN SME'S

International, national and local networking is strongly in evidence in The Routes of the Olive Tree project and involves a wide array of institutions. This Foundation has negotiated co-operation agreements between the Greek and other Mediterranean Chambers of Industry and Commerce, European and Mediterranean Universities, European Research Centres, Museums and Non-Governmental Organizations from more than 18 olive-growing countries.

The Routes of the Olive Tree are not one but several itineraries that have taken place since as early as 1997. The itineraries were initially developed with the objective of

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nurturing relations between the many actors operating at national or regional level in the Mediterranean countries. In some ways, the different regional and national members of the network are competitors and yet the objectives of the Foundation seem to resonate. The complexity of encouraging co-operation in competing countries cannot be under-estimated. The value of this project is seen to be the driving home of the cultural and historical symbolic link.

National interest is always likely to take precedence. The added-value of existing as one clearly defined European and/or Mediterranean route has little resonance. However, there are some initiatives currently taking place in regions to develop regional mini-routes. It is too early to say if in the future these could be cross-marketed.

## 5.1 SMEs involvement

The Routes of the Olive Tree has a special relationship with producers from olive growing regions and as such attracts a number of SME's to its activities. Having said this, SME involvement in the network is less formal – normally as receptors of the participants on the itinerary or as participants at stands during festivals organized by the network members.

The Foundation has a special relationship with the Federation of Motorcycling (FOM). Through the FOM, each annual itinerary is publicized and it is normally members from this motorcycling club that are enlisted as participants (“messengers”).

A further sponsorship agreement has been set up with the Costa Navarino, which is a luxury hotel resort with private residences, golf courses and boasting an unspoiled coastline with 4,500 years of history. The owner of this resort recognizes the importance of the Routes of the Olive Tree initiative as giving additional context and value to the Costa Navarino aims and objectives.

## 5.2 Bilateral agreements

It is important to note that the Routes of the Olive Tree project was specifically mentioned in a bilateral agreement signed on Friday 14th of May 2010 by the Minister of Culture and Tourism Mr. Pavlos Geroulanos and his Turkish counterpart Mr. Ertugrul Gunay, in the framework of the Constitutive Assembly of the Superior Council of Cooperation between Greece and Turkey. The Routes of the Olive Tree was specifically included at Turkey's request and in consultation with the Chamber of Commerce of Izmir which is a member of the Foundation.

Normally bilateral agreements are directly undertaken between the Foundation and the institution concerned (which may be a department, university, museum, local entity etc.). For example: a protocol was signed during a Routes of the Olive Tree

itinerary with the Ministry of Agriculture in Algeria, and a collaboration was officially opened, but only between the Foundation itself and the Ministry.

The Foundation has signed more than 28 bilateral protocols (figure provided in March 2010). These protocols refer to exploring possibilities of cooperation in the sector of cultural tourism around the Olive Tree theme, mainly through cultural itineraries. The protocol acknowledges the contribution of the Cultural Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree" to the promotion of sustainable development, dialogue and peace among people and civilizations, as mentioned in the Memorandum of the Foundation.

The bilateral aspect of the Routes of the Olive Tree is quite clear however there are also some very good examples whereby the Foundation has also provided connections between partners in different countries and these have led to bilateral partnerships in other countries (i.e. not via the Foundation in Greece). For example, a network partner in Jaen (Spain) was visited twice during the itineraries in 2000 and 2003. The Foundation helped to build a strong relationship between them and another partner l'Agropôle Olivier from Meknès, Morocco. They now have a permanent collaboration for congresses and scientific research.

### 5.3 Integrated partnerships and third sector organizations

Aside from longer term protocol agreements, shorter term collaboration agreements are signed for the purpose of organizing specific events or for a specific itinerary.

The Network of the Routes of the Olive Tree includes more than 145 institutions from Mediterranean countries (excluding the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the individual members, scientists and others) so these agreements are varied according to need.

For example, during festivals organized by network partners, the Foundation holds host to cycles of arts, music, information and historical information. These include the work of third sector organizations and SMEs.

## 6. NEW MARKETING ACTIVITIES AND PLATFORMS

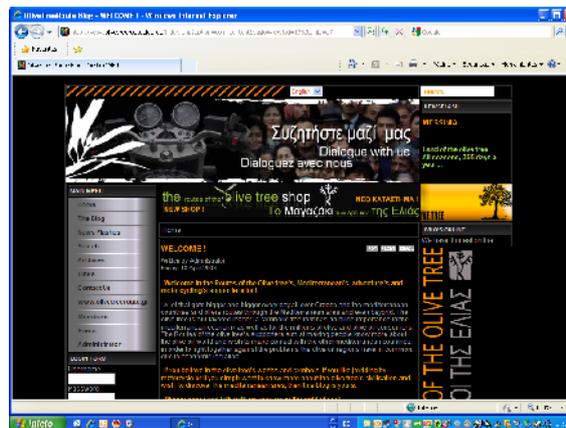
The itineraries of the Routes of the Olive Tree are largely made up of rural settings and the emphasis is on local traditions and customs. This study did not uncover any research specifically geared towards assessing the value of the Routes in tourism terms. Through the EICR the Foundation has been exploring the concept of sustainable tourism and regional network members are gathering tools to provide sustainable tourism packages through their own local itineraries.

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The Chamber of Commerce of Messinia, in an effort to direct support for tourism in the area has created the Bureau for Alternative Tourism. The Bureau is under the umbrella of the Chamber for financial reasons however the Foundation's staff have done most of the ground work. The Bureau is also a business tourism meeting point providing infrastructure to attract business demand (meetings, seminars, other events related to the area etc.). A key tool is the bureau's website, which is about to be launched to the trade and media, and it provides general tourism information and specialized information, addressed to business tourism professionals and the operators of other thematic forms of tourism. Local enterprises from all fields are listed (not only tourist SME's such as hotels, travel agencies, car rental services, restaurants, etc. but also local producers). In fact, the site content is estimated to be 99% related to SMEs.

## 6.1 Internet visibility

The website of the Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree" is visually pleasing and available in four languages however it has very little traffic (see Annex III: internet analysis).



Searching on the key terms "The Routes of the Olive Tree" and the "Olive Tree Route" returns the projects website in the number one or two spot in four key search engines. However, searching on eight other random related key terms (such as olive oil, olive tree products etc.) the rating is below 100 which indicates a favorable rating only if the client is specifically searching for the route and a disturbing lack of presence in related search terms. This low internet presence translates to missed opportunities for the projects' visibility.

Website traffic opportunities are also lost on partner websites. Neither the International Federation of Motocyclists (FOM), nor the Costa Navarino websites provide hyperlinks to the "Routes of the Olive Tree" website.

## 6.2 Participation in international fairs

From 4-7 November 2010, the Foundation participated in the 16th edition of the International Heritage Show in Paris. The Show was dedicated to Mediterranean Heritage. The Foundation presented an information stand on its activities and proposed tasting of products from Olive Oil produced in the regions that it crosses.

## 6.3 Taking the Route beyond the Mediterranean

Initially the annual itinerary was developed around the theme of the Mediterranean countries with the aim to consolidate partnerships and sign agreements amongst interested parties in the region. However, in more recent years the Foundation has developed itineraries that take the Route beyond the Mediterranean. These latter itineraries have been aimed to develop new markets for Olive Tree products. For example, the Foundation presented a grand event in Stockholm, Sweden, 22-23 October which consisted of an exhibition and conference under the title "Routes of the Olive Tree: an itinerary for intercultural dialogue and development of international cooperation". This event took place in the Museum of the Mediterranean of Stockholm and was organized in cooperation with the Greek Embassy and the Club of Swedish Friends of the Institute of Athens and the Greek Academy in Sweden.

## 7. FREQUENCY OF CONTACTS BETWEEN PARTNERS

The Foundation carries out many partnerships and participates in many projects. Not all contacts however come through the Foundation and are undertaken by the network members themselves. Also, some partnerships are more profound than others. Three examples of the work of network partners are supplied below to demonstrate the wide variety of activities being developed under the umbrella of the Routes of the Olive Tree.

### Case study : collaboration with France

The French network is important in the cultural field itself. It offers a network of museums and cultural/research institutions. The Foundation makes regular use of French professionals for creating expositions and the development of research work. There is a privileged partnership with the Museum of Civilizations of Europe which is in the process of being moved from Paris to Marseille and it will soon house an exhibition dedicated to the Routes of the Olive Tree. Also there is sustainable and effective collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Marseille-Provence.

The collaboration between the Foundation and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Marseille-Provence began during one of the itineraries that went through and stopped briefly in Marseille, France. For this occasion, several common events were undertaken such as an exhibition at the Palais de la Bourse, a tasting of Olive Oil, the planting of an Olive Tree symbolizing the passage of the Foundation and the Franco-Greek friendship in a square of the city, meetings, etc. Since then, the Foundation has participated in several European projects coordinated between the Chamber of

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Commerce of Marseilles and Chamber of Commerce of Messinia in Greece, both of them active members of the Foundation. The Foundation was asked to respond to several calls for tender as a subcontractor in this context.

## Case study: collaboration with Morocco

This is one of the most active partnerships. Agropôle Olivier is from the region of Meknes (one of the traditional olive-growing areas of Morocco). This network member collaborates with the Foundation several times a year, through various events and projects including EU projects, festivals of the Olive Tree, agricultural fairs, tourist events, scientific and economic conferences and symposia etc. Meknes was a reference point on one of the itineraries of the Routes of the Olive Tree in the south Mediterranean. The Foundation also maintains good relations with several other institutions in Morocco, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Rabat, the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Morocco and the Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Hassan II. Morocco is the partner country most active in the Maghreb region.

## Case study: collaboration with Turkey

Partnerships between Turkey and the Foundation are very special given the complex political situation existing between the two countries. The Foundation is part of the cultural institutions that try to bring as closely as possible the two national entities through the organization of joint cultural programs. The Olive Tree's symbolic role is a dynamic and highly effective one. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Izmir has made a very important contribution to the Routes of the Olive Tree, through several itineraries of the Foundation and several joint events. The Foundation: Routes of the Olive Tree was included in the Joint Declaration on Tourism and Culture, signed Friday, May 14, 2010 by the Minister of Culture and Tourism of Greece, Mr Pavlos Geroulanos and his Turkish counterpart, Mr. Ertugrul Gunay, as part of the Inaugural Session of the Supreme Council for Cooperation between Greece and Turkey.

## Case study: other collaborations

Members of the Foundation sometimes apply for EU funding. These are usually time-limited projects that operate independently of the Route or include a partner role for the Foundation. For example see Annex XIII: on the KNOLEUM and OLEOTOURISME projects.

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## 8. TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND SME INVOLVEMENT

The Foundation has been involved in some training programs for SMEs but these have tended to be centered in the local region. Reluctance on the part of regional entities to work together in a coordinated manner is a constant challenge for the Foundation.

*Elisabeth Chatzinikolaou, a Tourism Consultant for the Chamber of Commerce of Messinia noted “there are many differences in the political system and situation, the economy, the institutions, local authorities, religions, customs etc. of these countries and these differences are reflected in their participation in the Route. The partners are not equivalent authorities, bodies, institutions and associations..... There are also many differences in the oil producing regions of participating countries in terms of development and especially tourism development.....Tourism and tourism development remains, also as far as EU member-states are concerned, a national or, as it is mostly the case, a regional matter (a competence of the Regions, a regional responsibility). Regions can use in many cases EU funding for developing tourism but the development planning itself remains on the regional level. The same applies for marketing etc*  
***These are the reasons why there cannot be central planning (from the part of the Route) for all regions involved everywhere along the Route. There can be national or regional planning for public infrastructure, private investment, clustering, marketing etc and especially for the development of alternative forms of tourism, that are “compatible” with oil producing regions (for instance cultural tourism, nature tourism-ecotourism, marine tourism, agrotourism, religious tourism etc). It is only reasonable that each region chooses those forms of tourism and creates alternative tourist products, for which it has comparative advantages.***  
*(See Annex*

Network members are clearly operating at a regional level in terms of training programmes and SME involvement. For example, the Chamber of Commerce of Messinia began a campaign “Alliance for the Messinian Market” that involves a set of actions that ensure the commitment of local entrepreneurs and consumers in an effort to improve the quality and prices in the local market. One of the goals of the campaign is to contribute significantly to an overall quality for goods and services that might be attractive for tourists.

### Support for short cultural itineraries “The Olive Tree Routes”

Journeys of discovery have been devised by the scientific team of the Olive Tree Routes in several regions, including Meknes in Morocco, south-west Greece, Syria and Lebanon. These are relatively new ventures and thus an evaluation of their success over time would be interesting.

### Support for individual artists

The Foundation has helped artistic creation through the involvement of artists in its exhibitions, for the creation of exclusive products for the Olive Tree shop (souvenirs, stationery, jewelry, etc.), and by inviting artists to participate in festivals and in the itineraries. In terms of visibility, artists have appeared in the catalogues of the Foundation. The Foundation is also involved in sponsorship to help artists who collaborated with the Routes of the Olive Tree, through financial subsidies to edit their exhibition catalogue, their albums, or the opening reception (e.g. for an exhibition).

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More recently, the Foundation set up a project to create an art gallery around the theme of the olive tree. In an effort to promote young artists inspired by the olive tree, the Foundation has created its own collection. The Gallery of the Routes of the Olive Tree presents the work of young artists (so far only on the internet) but art work has been bought as a result of this initiative.

## 9. SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR SMES

The Foundation has a scientific committee that can be consulted on technical areas of Olive Tree production. Other than this, information sources tend to be locally based.

The Chamber of Commerce of Messinia provides for example an “on-line consultant for entrepreneurs”. This platform offers information on entrepreneurship and green entrepreneurship, on line consultancy, e-marketing for tourism and local products, consultancy on e-shopping, a National Guide for Enterprises, one stop shop services etc. This initiative aims to provide local entrepreneurs with everything they might need from tax regulations to state aids or to consultancy on marketing of goods and services.

## 10. MERCHANDISING ACTIVITIES

The products sold at the Routes of the Olive Tree shop are mostly purchased from local producers and crafts people in Greece. In addition, a number of publications have been made by the Foundation and these are now for sale in the Olive Tree Shop. (See Annex VI: Olive Tree Products and Books)

Approximately 20-30% of stock in the Olive Tree shop are imported products (mainly from Portugal, Italy, Jordan and Lebanon). Audrey Guittard noted that there are difficulties in the acquisition and sale of imported products as a result of:

- ✓ high import taxes because the products are not purchased in large quantities.
- ✓ prohibitive cost of transport (e.g. failure to import soap from Lebanon for the reason mentioned)
- ✓ stock replenishment (irregularity in production and delivery)

The aim is however to open shops in other countries and these are being considered on a case by case basis. The status of each store could change according to the opportunities for selling products of the Foundation. It could be a shop belonging to the Foundation or a shop run by a partner of the network (in this case, the partner would own it and have permission to sell the Foundations products alongside their own).

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A six month (sale or return) contract was signed on 22 January 2011, for the sale of products from the collection of the Foundation in the European Institute of Cultural Routes shop in Luxembourg. A sale or return contract has been agreed and prices fixed with a percentage profit return for the shop in Luxembourg. The pilot project is currently underway. (See Annex XI: Contract for Sale of the Foundation Products. Between the Foundation, the European Institute of Cultural Routes and the Cultural Centre of Neumünster).

The Foundation is looking into other agreements to develop the Olive Tree Shop initiative. Partners in Lebanon and Meknes (Morocco) are interested in opening their own shops. Merchandising sales are hoped to increase with the opening of these new outlets.

## 11. PLANNED FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The Foundation has been approached recently by several tour operators to develop, together with its itineraries, tourism products that would be offered this time by travel agencies. As such, three pilot "small itineraries" have been planned in the Peloponnese, southern Greece province of Ilia - Messinia - Laconia, and a first contact was made with Greek partners wishing to promote the local heritage of the Olive Tree and integrate it into a local thematic itinerary.

A project is also currently being studied for a joint exhibition between the Marseille Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Commerce of Messinia, in order to enhance trade relations which have existed between the City of Marseille and that of Kalamata and also other Mediterranean ports. The Foundation will curate and coordinate this initiative.

## 12. CLOSING REMARKS

The cultural routes of the Council of Europe were set up as intrinsic heritage, cultural and educational projects and this is certainly the case for the "Routes of the Olive Tree." As with the other Cultural Routes, this project was not set up with the specific aim of generating SME's however, it is an interesting case as it has a strong dimension related to sustainable development.

The Chambers of Commerce (principal partners within the Foundation) are willing to join forces to guarantee the survival and identity of olive growing regions. The Route of the Olive Tree is clearly seen as a useful tool by the Chambers of Commerce; possibly as a spring board from which to give added-value to more localized initiatives on the same theme.

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The projects main value is in increasing the appreciation of valuable European products derived from olive tree farming. The project has a limited impact on SME generation, but despite the significant problems in measuring the indirect impact of the Routes of the Olive Tree there is evidence that the Route is able to contribute considerably to the development of existing SMEs. It should be noted that the SME's concerned with this Route, exist in rural environments where even a small input has a large impact on the local economy.

The Foundations running costs are low if the relative value of all its activities are taken into account and even more so if one considers the spin-off effects of this initiative. The Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree's" annual budget is under 200,000€ therefore the "Route" represents significant value for money. It also clearly represents value in educational, networking, rural economic and heritage terms.

Visibility is a key problem highlighted in all the partner responses. The internet has not been fully exploited, traffic levels are very low and therefore there is a lot of work that could be done to build context for the project and the project's partner websites. Developing cross-marketing initiatives at a very basic level could have a real impact on visitor interest to local initiatives.

The problem is that finance is low and often dependent on regional agencies that only have an interest in the 'local'. Partners of the Foundation do occasionally apply for EU funding and sometimes build synergies into the Cultural Route but there is no guarantee.

Cross-marketing and increased networking could make a real difference over time (it should be noted that this project is still comparatively young). However, without strong investment in practical projects for the real strengthening of the network it would be hard for the Foundation to operate beyond its current capacity.

The work that the Foundation undertakes to encourage partnerships and promote sustainable small economies, are areas that could positively influence SME development in the future.