



# The GuardEn Newsletter

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**“GuardEn”: Guardians of Environment Framework: An Integrated Approach of Strategies for Prevention of Soil Pollution and Rehabilitation of Harmed Territories”**

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## Now farms know how to be “GUARDIAN OF ENVIRONMENT”

After the first period of analysis of situation, with specific regard to environmental risk for soil and water contamination and to social responsibility of enterprises, a second step of involvement of experts and farmers in order to give tools for better understanding of challenges, finally it was well defined what is required to a farm to be qualified as “Guardian of Environment”.

During last period from June till now GuardEn Standard was set up for each pilot area, was presented to stakeholder and is ready to be applied: this is the main output and result of GuardEn Project activities. A network was activated and could continue to work towards the application of the Protocol that the Project created: all these last outlines were the main topic of final national conferences that each partner held for its own pilot area.

## Final territorial conferences

### 1. Hungary

The GuardEn territorial conference for Hungary was intitled „*Environment friendly farming - Soil and water protection in agriculture*” and was held in the House of Arts, Gödöllő.

During the conference the role of agriculture in soil and water protection was discussed through some presentation about typical erosion problems in Hungarian agriculture, Water protection challenges in agriculture, the experiences of authorities in practices of cross compliance. Then some results of the GuardEn project were presented with highlighs on European added value and domestic, on Voluntary solutions in agriculture given by the GuardEn Standard, and on relations of agricultural support measures and environmental requirements in the new financial period. A wide discussion followed the presentation of the main finding and outputs of the GuardEn project.



### 2. Romania

GuardEn Territorial Conference of Romanian partner was held in Bucharest - Ilfov the 24th of September 2014.

Some aspects related with soil and water contamination was faced by speakers such as Chemical contaminants with carcinogenic potential identified in agrofood production, Multifunctionality species of medicinal and aromatic plants and their use in practice (remediation of degraded soils, raw materials for food supplements), situation of contamination and decontamination of soils in Romania and voluntary solutions, NGO's experience involved in environment protection.



### 3. Croatia

The GuardEn Project National conference in Croatia was held in Zadar on October 7th 2014. As the activity is a key of the project's dissemination-mainstreaming strategy, the core stakeholders, beneficiaries and actors were invited.



The conference gathered 65 active participants. Among those were the representatives of other GuardEn project partner institutions, namely Irecoop Veneto, ARPAV Veneto and Veneto Agricoltura, as well as undergraduate students of Applied Ecology in Agriculture, of the University of Zadar. On the national conference the results and outputs of activities implemented by the project have been presented, as well as their importance on 3 levels - the partnership, national and local level. The participants were open for discussion and motivated for further exploitation of the topic. The feedback received was very positive.

### 4. Slovenia

On the 24<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2014 the Slovenian territorial conference took place in Ljubljana. 134 persons participated representing a large variety of target groups-entrepreneurs, experts, agricultures.



The conference covered also a number of important topics like the Environmental sustainability, agricultural activities, social responsibility and other related issues. The event was a mix of plenary speakers, lectures and a high impact round table.

## 5. Italia - Veneto

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 the Veneto Region territorial conference took place in Padua. Representatives of farmers, cooperatives, experts, insurance company, universities and regional administration participated to give their contribution in improving the GuardEn Standard that was proposed by the GuardEn project partners. During the conference environmental risks that Veneto territory is facing were described with some explanations about which are the good practices that could prevent soil and water contamination.



Results of GuardEn activity led by Veneto Agricoltura about implementation of mutual funds instead of insecticides treatments were deeply discussed. It stands on the principle that if the risk is low the insurance approach is convenient and much safer for people and environment.

Advantages for farmers in adopting mutual funds were detailed: reduction of costs/ha, coverage of risks due to mistakes or difficulties in Integrated Pest Management implementation, possible coverage of other risks such as flooding, drought etc, reduction of health risk for farmers since they will not get in touch with insecticides at all, avoidance of negative impact of insecticides on soil functions, avoidance of pollution risks for soils and water resources, avoidance of risks for bees and other wild pollinators and more generally reduction of risks for fauna, risk coverage with any climatic conditions while soil insecticides may fail.

## Greece - Project Final Conference

The final conference of the GuardEn project "GREEN YOUR MIND! Aqua & Terra" took place in Thessaloniki on the 26-27<sup>th</sup> of November 2014. It was organized by the Federation of Industries of Northern Greece, the American Farm School of Thessaloniki, and the Region of Peloponnese with the support of University of Macedonia.



Starting from the point that project goal is the transition from the environmental risks management to the establishment of a culture that prevents and minimizes environmental risks arising from the agrofood sector, steps to become Guardians of the Environment were discussed with stakeholders (enterprises, organizations, authorities, etc.).



In this respect the main contribution of the Conference was to create those conditions that will foster this transition through:

- The formation of policy proposals for the enhancement of existing policies and practices in the respective field, which will leverage the sustainability and competitiveness of SMEs of the Agrofood Sector.
- A paneuropean public debate on the adoption of principles and activities of social responsibility in the agrofood sector.
- An open consultation and exchange of experiences of stakeholders, under the new international conditions on the protection of the environment.

## Dissemination events

### ***Environmental Protection and Management of Environmental Risks Seminar, June 23rd and 24th 2014, Benkovac, Zadar County, Croatia (EN)***

The 2-day seminar was organized in Benkovac near Zadar, as this part of the county is known as most agriculture-intensive, and the project partner and experts wanted to bring the training to the very right target group. This, second seminar/training was designed for those actively involved in the primary and secondary sector of agriculture. The training gathered 15 important representatives of the sectors, to which the training materials, designed in the correspondence to their needs, were delivered.

### ***Hungary - Validation workshop with farmers***

Hungarian partner organized the 27/5/2014 a Validation workshop during which the findings of the trial audit was consulted with inspectors and consultants in agriculture. The possible ways of controlling farmers' environmental performances were discussed in detail.



### ***Training Seminars in Greece***



On 16th June 2014, the 1st training of trainees in environmental protection and risks' management on producers and experts of Agrofood sector took place at hotel Aiges Melathron, Veria and was organized by the American Farm school.

On 26th June 2014 the 2nd training on environmental protection and risks' management targeting producers and experts of Agrofood sector took place at Saint Mamas, Chalkidiki and the subject focused on "Contemporary farming practices in olives".

### *Greece - Athens workshop*

On 13/11/2014 a workshop was organized in the premises of Business an Innovation Centre of Attika in Athens, Greece, entitled “Environmental management in the vineyard and the winery”. The workshop focused on the following topics:

- Suggestions for the improvement of environmental management in vineyards through the implementation of the GuardEN standard
- European environmental policies and the new Common Agricultural Policy
- Smartphone applications and sustainable production in vineyards
- Applications of precision agriculture and GIS systems in vineyards
- Carbon footprint management in vineyards and wineries
- Biological agriculture - Application of the biological precision agriculture model
- Example of the application of the GuardEN standard



The event was addressed to winemakers and oenologists that are active in the region of Attica, who showed great interest in the topics presented, due to their specialization in the field. A lively discussion followed, during which the participants deepened their knowledge in issues related to the thematic of the GuardEN project.

**Results of the project are available on GuardEn website:**

[www.guarden.eu](http://www.guarden.eu)