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AGREEN

CROSS-BORDER ALLIANCE FOR CLIMATE-SMART AND GREEN AGRICULTURE IN THE BLACK SEA BASIN

Subsidy Contract No. BSB 1135

PARTNERSHIP MEMORANDUM

BETWEEN

ASSOCIATION DOBRUDZHA AGRARIAN AND BUSINESS SCHOOL (DABS), BULGARIA
(PP1/LP)

AND

"OVIDIUS" UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA (OUC), ROMANIA (PP2)

AND

TEKIRDAG NAMIK KEMAL UNIVERSITY (T-NKU), TURKEY (PP3)

AND

BIOLOGICAL FARMING ASSOCIATION ELKANA (ELKANA), GEORGIA (PP4)

AND

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRIBUSINESS RESEARCH AND EDUCATION (ICARE),
ARMENIA (PP5)

AND

ANATOLIKI S.A. - ORGANISATION FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT, GREECE (PP6)

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I. ESTABLISHMENT

The “AGREEN” ALLIANCE (further referred to as “the Alliance” or “the AGREEN Alliance”) is established within the framework of an international project “*Cross-Border Alliance for Climate-Smart and Green Agriculture in the Black Sea Basin*” (further referred to as “AGREEN project”), Ref. No. BSB 1135, funded by the Joint Operational Program for Cross-Border Cooperation under the European Neighbourhood Instrument “Black Sea Basin 2014-2020”, Priority 1.2 “Increasing cross-border opportunities for trade and modernization of agriculture and related sectors”.

The project aims to build capacities for networking and transnational knowledge transfer of the development of climate-smart agriculture in the Black Sea Basin, in view of increasing the trade opportunities, economic and social performance of the sector as a development driver in the Black Sea Basin.

For this purpose, the project pools the efforts of **6 project partners** - among which there are higher education institutions, business support organization, interested groups and a sectoral agency - to build a **network of organizations for transnational cooperation** with high added value, capable to mobilize the capacity of the regional actors and leading to tailor-made solutions, economic and social viability in agriculture.

Thus, the GREEN Alliance is defined as a sustainable cooperation network of organizations for development of regional branding, internet connectivity and learning in climate-smart agriculture (CSA).

Respectively, the organization **founders** of this network (AGREEN Alliance) are the 6 partners (organizations) who are involved in the implementation of the AGREEN project (further referred to as “project partners”, “founding partners”, “founders” or “AGREEN partners”). In details:

1. ASSOCIATION DOBRUDZHA AGRARIAN AND BUSINESS SCHOOL (DABS) - BULGARIA - Lead Beneficiary / Project Partner 1
2. "OVIDIUS" UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA (OUC) - ROMANIA - Project Partner 2
3. TEKIRDAG NAMIK KEMAL UNIVERSITY (T-NKU) - TURKEY, Project Partner 3
4. BIOLOGICAL FARMING ASSOCIATION ELKANA - GEORGIA, Project Partner 4
5. INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRIBUSINESS RESEARCH AND EDUCATION (ICARE) - ARMENIA, Project Partner 5
6. ANATOLIKI S.A. - ORGANISATION FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT - GREECE, Project Partner 6

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More information about the founder organizations, together with their contacts and areas of activities/cooperation/interests, is given in **ANNEX 1** to this Partnership Memorandum (AGREEN Alliance Network Portfolio)

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The AGREEN Alliance is a network of organizations that unite resources and efforts of the member organizations to provide support and expertise to sustain the AGREEN project's development goals throughout the duration of the project and beyond its completion.

The membership in the Alliance is based on interests, activity and achievements in the climate-smart, and sustainable agriculture in general, in the Black Sea Basin region.

The membership in the Alliance (in addition to the founders) is open to any type of stakeholder organization without limitations - business, education, research, policy-making, other - as long as the organizations applying to participation in the network:

- have interest and/or are active in the field of sustainable development of agriculture;
- are established organizations registered as legal entities within the BSB CBC Programme area.

The cooperation between the parties within the AGREEN Alliance and network is expected to develop valuable synergies, multiplier effects and economies of scale in the critical area of regional sustainable agriculture development, which will contribute to the upgrading of local government business operations and the well-being of the BSB citizens.

In terms of the development of partnerships within and outside the country, the exchange of good practices and knowledge sharing, training and consultancy, the use of financial instruments for capacity building actions for producers and distributors, as well as other stakeholders, can be particularly valuable elements in strengthening the local economy and the employment and retention of young people in the countryside.

The work of the Alliance will be governed and supervised by a joint **Advisory Board** consisting of at least one representative from each AGREEN partner country (Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Greece). At the point of establishment of the AGREEN Alliance, its founders are by right represented in the Advisory Board with one person, nominated by each project partner.

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In case one or more of the founders withdraw its membership in the AGREEN network, its representation in the Advisory Board will be terminated. If there is another member-organization participating in the network from the same country willing to nominate its representative, and upon agreement of the Advisory board, a new representative may be accepted.

This Partnership Memorandum sets forth the working relationship of the member organizations including their roles and responsibilities as part of their involvement in the AGREEN Alliance network.

Nothing in this Memorandum will be construed as creating any legal relationship among the parties. The Memorandum is a statement of intent by the members of the Alliance and is intended to encourage mutual cooperation. Should any organizations decide to enter into financial or other types of arrangement among themselves, they will sign a separate agreement.

III. GENERAL OBLIGATIONS

Notwithstanding the legally non-binding nature of this Memorandum, the members of the AGREEN Alliance will perform their responsibilities and assigned tasks professionally and competently and will use their best endeavors to achieve the purpose of the Alliance. AGREEN Alliance members will aim at preventing actions that could damage the prestige and authority of the founding partners and/or Alliance members.

Member organizations (founders included) agree to cooperate with each other, be transparent in their communication and treat each other with mutual respect, courtesy and honesty in order to pursue the purpose.

Each organization shall develop and submit to the Advisory Board a brief profile under the form of short presentation describing the organization's background, expertise and achievements in the field of sustainable agriculture, contact details and areas of activity/cooperation/interests. The profiles will be published on the project website.

All messages shall follow the visualization requirements of the Black Sea Basin Program, including the incorporation of disclaimers, and shall use the visual brand that is developed for the project. The AGREEN Alliance will use the document templates provided as an annexes to this Memorandum.

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The AGREEN Alliance members (founders included) undertake the following roles and responsibilities:

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1. Support the AGREEN project development activities and the development and promotion of the regional brand for Climate Smart Agricultural (CSA) products originating in the Black Sea Basin (BSB).
2. Disseminate in the partner countries information about innovations in the area of CSA through the AGREEN website, the AGREEN Internet platform and members' partner networks and communication channels.
3. Use the AGREEN website and Internet platform to announce and promote the activities and achievements of the member organizations in the Alliance.
4. Provide suggestions and recommendations for the upgrade of the structure and scope of the Internet platform.
5. Freely exchange knowledge and expertise among themselves through formal and informal meetings and/or workshops.
6. Share identified and applied good practices in the partner countries through the Internet platform.
7. If requested, establish expert working groups on voluntary basis to support the work of the Advisory Board on a particular activity.
8. Work in close cooperation with AGREEN Community of Practice (COP) members and contact points.
9. Identify logistic centers in the partner countries for wholesale and/or retail trade in sustainably delivered agricultural products and provide information to the Advisory board to be published to complement the AGREEN Interactive map within the Internet platform.
10. Invite and encourage other interested organizations with expertise in sustainable agriculture and/or CSA to take part in the Alliance.
11. Continue to provide consultations and support after the end of the project to regional, national or local stakeholders, if requested by the Advisory Board.
12. Sustain and promote the entrepreneurial learning for CSA.
13. Encourage and assist with the organization of training courses for young professionals (and other interested stakeholders) in CSA in the partner countries after the completion of the project.
14. Encourage the stakeholders to contribute to the post-project sustainability activities as described in ANNEX 2 by providing information for innovations and/or good practices in CSA and sustainable agriculture.
15. Provide the interested parties with information and support for the usage of the common brand for agricultural products originating in the Black Sea Basin and produced in a climate-smart way - within the scope of the blueprint for regional brand and branding strategy - upon declared interest.

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16. Inform the national, regional and local authorities of the project outputs and deliverables, relevant to their area of interventions and governance (upon request).
17. Mobilize their institutional networks and other stakeholder institutions in the Black Sea Basin (and beyond) to participate and/or facilitate the knowledge transfer in CSA in BSB.
18. Meet periodically online to discuss issues related to the development of CSA in the BSB. The dates/period of the AGREEN Alliance meetings will be coordinated, agreed and communicated (to all members) by the Advisory board.
19. Undertaking other actions to strengthen and promote cooperation within the network.
20. Accept other assignments related to the AGREEN project objectives and outputs, upon request from the Advisory Board.

V. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Any dispute or difference whatsoever arising out of or in connection with this Memorandum shall be submitted to the Advisory Board.

Arguments, criticism and disagreements are to be settled by means of civilized methods and in open communication.

VI. ADMISSION OF NEW AGREEN ALLIANCE MEMBERS

The network has the objective to be expanded to the aim of:

- building a wide network of organizations in the BSB countries, strengthening the cooperation and diversification of the experience and expertise of the participating members and
- facilitating the Internet connectivity, sharing the achievements and dissemination the results and deliverables of the AGREEN project.

As mentioned in art. II the membership in the Alliance is **open to any type of stakeholder organization** - business, education, research, policy-making, other - as long as the organizations applying to participation in the network meet these 2 criteria:

- have interest and/or are active in the field of sustainable development of agriculture;
- are established organizations, registered as legal entities within the BSB CBC Programme area.

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In this sense all founding partners have the aim to include at least one partner to the network through signing the attached template (ANNEX 3) where interest for joining the Alliance will be expressed and commitment to the provisions of the present Memorandum will be declared.

Approval of the applications is set at the responsibilities of the respective founding partner from the country of origin of the applicant organization (who will perform a check for confirmation of the eligibility of the organization according to the two criteria listed above). Each approved application will be communicated (together with the information needed for publication of the member in the Alliance portfolio on the project website) to the Lead Beneficiary and shall be published on the AGREEN website within 20 working days.

VII. MODIFICATION AND TERMINATION

This Memorandum can be amended and new organizations added at any time following the steps described in the previous article.

Any changes to the Memorandum must be made in writing and must be agreed on by the Advisory board and/or signing parties before becoming effective. If the case, the changes will be communicated to all members by the Advisory board.

This Memorandum can be terminated by any party provided not less than thirty days (30) written notice of intent to terminate is given to the Advisory Board. Such notice shall state the effective date of termination and include any outstanding performance requirements. The termination of the membership will be respectively reflected in the information on the AGREEN website.

This Memorandum will remain in effect after the project end date and no end date is set for this agreement.

VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE AND SIGNATURE

This Memorandum shall be effective upon the signature of all AGREEN Alliance members.

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