

Varvakeios Agora

The Athens' Central Market

URBACT Markets Local Action Plan



December 2014

INTRODUCTION

Background and objective of the Local Action Plan

The proposed Local Action Plan for Varvakeios Agora – the Central Market of Athens- has been developed in the context of the Urbact Markets project, designed to understand and explore the role of urban markets as key drivers of change in terms of local economic development, regeneration and sustainable living. Attica wants to develop Varvakeios Agora in order to promote local economic sustainable development, as well as the generation of economic wealth and jobs. They will do this by way of the so-called Policy Instrument of Standardization, which is designed to position Varvakeios at the centre of the national and local agro-food supply chain, whilst developing a discrete Quality Label focused around the concept of Sustainable Food Products. A dynamic and multicultural Sustainable Food Products' Cluster will be developed in the historic centre of Athens thanks to this new standardization-certification scheme.

At the same time, activities will be organised to diversify the product and services mix of Varvakeios Agora to promote a Hellenic 'sustainable food products' portfolio. A permanent Gastronomy Route named 'A walk in Varvakeios: A Ramble in the Flavour of the World' will be set up, bringing advantages to business activity in the wider area of the historic centre.

The Policy Instrument of Standardization is recognized as a tool enabling top-down change in the target groups' behaviour, attitudes, values and personal strategies in a context of voluntary and informed compliance. But it needs the active involvement and participation of several stakeholders at the stages of formulation, application and evaluation of the new standardization-certification scheme. The consultation process, as well as the principles of transparency and accountability, are at the heart of the philosophy of this instrument.

Given an environment of networked stakeholders, the application of the entire process facilitates a structured transfer and sharing of knowledge, ensuring integration of any final proposed policy, program or plan. The Policy Instrument of Standardization permits a combination of different dimensions and principles in the context of a holistic intervention. In the case of Varvakeios' Local Action Plan, the dimensions of quality, sustainability, social responsibility, product diversification, multi-level governance and participation have been integrated into the process. These will help build, complement and follow up the development of the Varvakeios quality label.

Adopting and promoting the concept of multi-level governance processes in public spaces (without confusing the notion of 'state' spaces) through this Policy Instrument of Standardization is primarily a strategic policy choice.

Finally, the Local Action Plan has taken into consideration the current economic and social environment and the legislative framework, as well as the experience gathered by some of the key Varvakeios stakeholders from other projects. The Region of Attica and Municipality of Athens are committed to funding the renovation of Varvakeios Market's technical infrastructure. The adoption of more business-oriented strategic choices seems to be the most rational option given this background.

Development process of the Local Action Plan

The methodological approach for developing the Local Action Plan involves desk research, such as literature review, secondary data usage (coming from relevant studies and reports). In addition, semi-structured interviews with Stakeholders have been undertaken, namely:

- Departments of the Region of Attica directly or indirectly involved
- Municipality of Athens
- Athens Municipality Development Company
- Unions of Professionals representing the Entrepreneurs of the "Varvakeios Agora"
- Athens Chamber of Professionals
- Hellenic Food Authority
- Technical Chamber of Greece
- Consumers' Unions
- NGOs and Citizens' Associations (including economic migrants' associations and entities representing Athens' Inhabitants whose origin is from different Greek Territories)
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of Tourism
- Ministry of Competitiveness
- National Technical University of Athens
- Agricultural University of Athens.
- Institute of Urban Environment and Human Resources of Panteion University
- Hellenic Tourism Organization
- Athens Organization of Central Market
- Attica Public Market Organization
- Pan-Hellenic Confederation of Unions of Agricultural Co-operatives
- Hellenic Accreditation System

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VARVAKEIOS AGORA: THE CENTRAL MARKET OF ATHENS

Brief description & characteristics of the Varvakeios Market

'Varvakeios Agora' is the central Athens Market; a well-balanced blend of eastern souk markets and western wholesale trade centres. Opened in 1876, the market is in the heart of Athens' historic centre, near prestigious monuments and landmarks. It is the biggest food market in Greece, where thousands gather every day, buying meat, fish, fruits and vegetables, nuts and olive oil, cheese. Supervised by Athens Municipality, it has a Meat Market (120 Shops), Fish Market (90 Shops) Fruits and Vegetables Market (90 Shops). There are also numerous traditional restaurants within the market, and surrounds. Athens Central Market does not possess a coherent development strategy with traditional commercial activities in conjunction with complementary actions relating to tourism, F&B services, recreational activities and in general the implication of creative industries. The lack of an integrated strategy is seen by the absence of links to economic and social activity in the City Centre. Athens Central Market is focused on its main commercial activity and there is no conjunction with other complementary activities.

Main challenges

- Positioning Varvakeios in the local Agro-food Chain and strengthening its role as a commercial focal point for visitors and as a central point of attraction.
- Setting Consumer and Employees' Hygiene/Health and Safety issues at the centre of market strategy together with the values of sustainability and social responsibility.
- Setting the Policy Instrument of Standardization in the centre of Varvakeios' development model.
- Investigating the potential of cross-sector clustering and the establishment of broad local partnerships with the active involvement of all the potential stakeholders.
- Identifying the links and the potential synergies between Varvakeios' business activity and the economic activity in Athens' historic centre, and emphasizing migrants' economic activity in the wider area.
- Increasing the potential for new business activity, tourism and its position in the Agro-food chain.
- Voicing the need for potential renovation / improvement of buildings and relevant equipment giving a greener and environmentally-friendly orientation to the Market.
- Building a multidimensional connection between Athens Central Market with the city's cultural scene.
- Targeting special 'markets' and 'citizens' groups: such as tourists, Athens' inhabitants – shop keepers in the wider territory, migrants, ...
- Setting parameters for the assessment of the economic and social impact of Varvakeios' 'new business and development' model.
- Proposing a financial scheme for the development plan of Athens Central Market

VARVAKEIOS AGORA SWOT

		Helpful	Harmful
Internal	S	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic position in the centre of Athens' trade center 2. Proximity to major historic and cultural sites and tourist attractions 3. Easily accessible by all means of transportation 4. Regroups major and diverse economic and trade professionals and activities 5. Excellent value for money products 6. Diverse FnB services and recreational activities 7. Abundant state-of-the-art accommodation facilities near by 8. A modern, European style "souq" 	W <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infrastructure needs improvement 2. Lack of integrated development strategy 3. Absence of systemic interactions with other type of services and products (e.g. tourism, culture, trade) 4. Minimum promotional actions 5. Traditional view of a central market's role 6. Lack of a systemic quality assurance and certification scheme
		External	O

VARVAKEIOS AGORA VISION

“In 2020, Varvakeios Market will have been established itself as a sustainable, multi-level governed market with a distinct quality footprint and leading role in the Greek agro-food chain and economy”

The establishment of a permanent Gastronomic Route named ‘**A walk in Varvakeios: A Ramble in the Flavor of the World**’, will be the umbrella under which the key elements of the Varvakeios’ new development model will co-exist, interact and develop and the ‘symbolic’ result of the implementation of the current Local Action Plan.

The vision will be satisfied by achieving three (3) objectives, listed below:

1. Developing a ‘Quality Mark’ standard for products sold in the market of Varvakeios,
2. Diversifying Varvakeios’ product and services mix
3. Creating the identity of a ‘Greek Food Meeting Point’ and promoting the market as a centre of Gastronomy

Given the above, and taking into consideration the fact that

- traditional food products from all Greek territories are present in Varvakeios and
- economic migrants from various countries live and work in the wider area of Varvakeios

and

- helping (both Varvakeios businessmen and consumers) understand the concept and practices of Sustainable Food Products’ promotion-distribution and consumption.

After the implementation of this plan, a multi-cultural Sustainable Food Products’ Cluster is expected to be created in the area of the historic centre of Athens. This cluster will be an active and lively centre, attracting locals and tourists to visit the wider area of Varvakeios market, spending their days there, working and investing.

VARVAKEIOS AGORA ACTION PLAN

1. Establishment of the Varvakeios Market's Quality Mark

- To diversify Varvakeios' product and services' mix.
- To position Varvakeios at the centre's of the local agro-food chain and strengthen its role as a commercial focal point for visitors.
- To set consumer and employee hygiene/health and safety issues at the centre of its strategy and develop a model based on values of sustainability and social responsibility.
- To exploit the benefits of the Policy Instrument of Standardization as a tool that transforms markets and stakeholders values and habits in a context of consultation, participation and voluntary compliance.
- To promote this to other markets.

Objectives & Actions

Objective	Action
<p><u>Setting specific regulations, standards and hygiene rules under the concept of a more targeted quality label named Varvakeios Quality Label. The new quality label will set out specific features for products and services delivered by the entities acting in the Athens Central Market and these will contribute to the diversification of the market's product mix. The values of sustainability and of social responsibility will be of the main dimensions of the label.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the Department for Quality Control, well equipped, with the necessary facilities and in close and daily cooperation with Hellenic Food Authorities • Permanent collaboration with Hellenic Food Authorities (EFET-FSA, Hygiene Departments) and Hellenic Accreditation System under a form of a permanent partnership • Development of a quality data-base regarding vendors and shops in Varvakeios, updated with information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Certification from the competent authorized organization(s). ○ Facilities and the processes followed. ○ Standard inspections and audits. ○ Certificates for inbound raw material. • Development of a comprehensive normative document of main characteristics, functional features, etc. certified with Varvakeios' quality label, accompanied by an audit methodology and an application guide. • Consultation, awareness and training activities regarding the application of the standardization-certification scheme. • New standardization-certification applied by firms and vendors. • Establishment of a 'Sustainable Food Products Network' with the participation of certified firms and Varvakeios' stakeholders.

VARVAKEIOS AGORA ACTION PLAN

2. Diversification of Varvakeios' Product and Services Mix

(Establishment of 'Sustainable Food Products Cluster' in the historic centre of Athens)

- To target special 'market' and 'citizens' groups: such as tourists, Athenians – shop keepers in the wider territory and business migrants.
- To take advantage of cross-sector clustering and permanent partnerships and networks with:
 - Breeders/farmers in Greece specialized in typical and / or traditional food products
 - F&B businessmen in the wider area around Varvakeios Market and the historic centre
 - migrants as consumers, vendors, partners and business people
- To identify and exploit links and synergies between Varvakeios' businesses and the economic activity in Athens' historic centre, especially the business activity of migrants in the wider area.
- Increase the potential for new business activities that can be found in related businesses, tourism and as such position Athens Central Market in the Agro-food chain.

Objective	Action
<p><u>Diversification of Varvakeios' product and services mix, building on the results of the 1st axis of the LAP – particularly on the effects and the promotion of Varvakeios' Quality Label – and via a series of networking actions targeting Varvakeios' stakeholders: businessmen (locals and migrants) in the wider area around the Market, owners of innovative parts of the Hellenic 'sustainable food products' portfolio.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping the Hellenic 'sustainable food products' portfolio in terms of Hellenic products with Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PDO) and Traditional Specialty Guarantee (TSG), of Hellenic races of livestock (cattle, sheep, pigs ...) and their products and alternative techniques of agriculture and their 'owners'. • Mapping adjacent business activity and identifying the potential for new business activity in the wider area • Networking Varvakeios' businessmen with the 'owners' of innovative (new to the market or to the world) parts of the 'sustainable food products' portfolio. • Diversification of Varvakeios' product mix. • Awareness campaign regarding the benefits gained from the consumption/exploitation of 'sustainable food products' when adopting a Varvakeios' quality label. • Development of strategic partnerships F&B businessmen in the wider area adapting Varvakeios' quality label and undertaking joint business activities, and owners of restaurants in the historic centre in order to provide them with 'sustainable' raw materials (in the context of the new standardization-certification scheme).

VARVAKEIOS AGORA ACTION PLAN

3. Emergence of Varvakeios as a Greek Food Meeting Point and as a magnet for gastronomy tourism

- Establishment of a permanent Gastronomy Route named 'A walk in Varvakeios: A Ramble in the Flavour of the World'.
- Build upon the achievements of the priority action plan areas noted in points 1 and 2.
- Use marketing techniques (events, workshops, demonstrations).
- Invest in the multidimensional connection of Athens Central Market with the cultural scene of the city.
- Invest in the multicultural personality of the historical centre of Athens.
- Focus on improvements to Varvakeios' attractiveness for inhabitants and tourists.

Objective	Action
<p><u>Emergence of Varvakeios as Greece's Food Meeting Point and as a magnet for gastronomy tourism, building on the results of the two prior LAP objectives and on a series of marketing actions targeting special 'market' and 'citizens' groups: such as tourists, Athenians – shop keepers in the wider area, business migrants.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of a Sustainable Food Products concept at the local level by organising several events (Cooking Schools) and events like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshops for tasting, cooking and presenting local recipes. ○ Demonstrations on food processing techniques ○ Seminars on nutritional value and the preservation of specific foods. ○ Seminars on oenology, baby food, Mediterranean Diet, ancient Greek cooking, food allergies, etc. ○ Meals with local producers (combined with visits to their farms). ○ Workshops and seminars for children. • Organization of an annual Festival of 'Sustainable Food Products' (inside and outside Varvakeios Agora) • Organization of 'Migrant' cuisine events • Creation of an immigrants' food corner named 'The corner of the Flavor of the World' in Varvakeios Market. • Organization of cultural events (concerts, one night / weekend exhibitions)

<u>Communication activities</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishment of Department of Public Relations and Communication or hiring external expertise specialized in these fields.• Development of Varvakeios' web portal.
<u>Establishment of a permanent gastronomic route named 'A walk in Varvakeios: A Ramble in the Flavor of the World'</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of tourism packages that will focus on the establishment of a permanent gastronomic route named 'A walk in Varvakeios: A Ramble in the Flavor of the World'

VARVAKEIOS AGORA: LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Field of action								
Objective	#	Project title + description	Responsibility (stakeholders to involve)	Financial resources until 2020)	Funding by	Financing secured	Time schedule	Links to other projects
Objective 1 Establishment of Varvakeios' Market Quality Label	1.1	Establishment of Varvakeios Market's Quality Label	Athens Organization of Central Market	150,000 €	Varvakeios' budget		2015	
	1.2	Permanent partnership with Hellenic Food Authorities (EFET-FSA, Hygiene Departments) and Hellenic Accreditation System	Athens Organization of Central Market, Hellenic Food Authority, Hellenic Accreditation System, Region of Attica, Municipality of Athens	- €	Varvakeios' budget		2015	
	1.3	Development of a quality data-base for vendors of shops in Varvakeios	Athens Organization of Central Market, Hellenic Food Authority, Unions of Professionals representing the Entrepreneurs of the "Varvakeios Agora"	24,600 €	"Rural Development" Operational Program 2014 – 2020		2015 - 2017	

	1.4	Development of a regulations document showing the main characteristics, functional features, etc. of an entity certified with a Varvakeios' quality label, accompanied by audit methodology and an application guide	Athens Organization of Central Market Hellenic Accreditation System ,EFET-FSA, Hygiene Departments of Region of Attica, and Ministry of Agriculture and Foods	120,000 €	"Rural Development" Operational Program 2014 – 2020		2015 - 2018	
	1.5	Consultation, awareness and training activities regarding the application of a standardization-certification scheme	Athens Organization of Central Market, Hellenic Accreditation System ,EFET-FSA, Region of Attica, Municipality of Athens, Athens Organization of Central Market, Ministry of Agriculture and Foods, Unions of Professionals representing the Entrepreneurs of the "Varvakeios Agora"	15,000 €	'Rural Development' Operational Program 2014 – 2020		2015 - 2018	

	1.6	Application of the new standardization-certification scheme on the existing enterprises of Varvakeios as well as on their vendors (400 units)	Athens Organization of Central Market, Hellenic Accreditation System ,EFET-FSA, Hygiene Departments of Region of Attica and Ministry of Agriculture and Foods, Unions of Professionals representing the Entrepreneurs of the 'Varvakeios Agora'	320,000 €	'Rural Development' Operational Program 2014 – 2020 / Varvakeios' budget / PP funding scheme		2015 - 2020	
	1.7	Establishment of a 'Sustainable Food Products' Network' with the participation of the certified enterprises and the Varvakeios' stakeholders	Athens Organization of Central Market, Hellenic Accreditation System ,EFET-FSA, Hygiene Departments of Region of Attica and Ministry of Agriculture and Foods, Pan-Hellenic Confederation of Unions of Agricultural Co-operatives, Private companies, local manufacturers	80,000 €	Varvakeios' budget		2016 -	

Objective2 Diversification of Varvakeios' product and services mix	2.1	Mapping the Hellenic 'sustainable food products' portfolio	Athens Organization of Central Market, Ministry of Agriculture and Foods, Pan- Hellenic Confederation of Unions of Agricultural Co- operatives	98,400 €	"Rural Development" Operational Program 2014 – 2020		2015-2016	
	2.2	Mapping of adjacent business activity and identifying the potential for new business activity in the wider area	Athens Organization of Central Market, Region of Attica	20,000 €	Entrepreneurs hip - Competitivene ss - Innovation Operational Program 2014 – 2020		2015-2016	
	2.3	Diversification of Varvakeios' product mix - Networking with innovative Sustainable Foods 'owners'	Athens Organization of Central Market, Region of Attica	73,800 €	'Rural Development' Operational Program 2014 – 2020 / Varvakeios' budget		2016 - 2019	

	2.4	Awareness campaign regarding the benefits gained from the consumption / exploitation of the 'sustainable food products' products and from the adoption of Varvakeios' quality label	Athens Organization of Central Market, Athens Municipality Development Company	50,000 €	Entrepreneurs hip - Competitiveness - Innovation Operational Program 2014 – 2020		2016 - 2019	
	2.5	Development of strategic partnerships (F&B entrepreneurs and restaurants)	Athens Organization of Central Market	12,000 €	Varvakeios' budget		2016-2020	
Objective 3 Emergence of Varvakeios as Greek Food Meeting Point and as a pole of Gastronomic Tourism	3.1	Promotion of the Sustainable Food Products concept at local level by organising several events (Cooking Schools)	Athens Organization of Central Market, Athens Municipality Development Company, Region of Attica, entities representing Athens' inhabitants whose origin is from different Greek Territories	50,000 €	Varvakeios' budget - Co-funded by Region of Attica and Athens Municipality Development Company		2015 - 2020	

	3.2	Organization of an annual Festival of 'Sustainable Food Products'	Athens Organization of Central Market, Athens Municipality Development Company, Region of Attica	40,000 €	Varvakeios' budget - Co-funded by Region of Attica and Athens Municipality Development Company	2018 - 2020	
	3.3	Organization of 'Migrant cooking' events	Athens Organization of Central Market, Athens Municipality Development Company, Region of Attica, Economic migrants' associations	50.000 €	Varvakeios' budget - Co-funded by Region of Attica and Athens Municipality Development Company	2015 - 2020	
	3.4	Creation of an immigrants' corner part of the 'The corner of the Flavor of the World' in Varvakeios Market.	Athens Organization of Central Market, Unions of Professionals representing the Entrepreneurs of the "Varvakeios Agora"	18.000 €	Varvakeios' budget - Co-funded by Region of Attica and Athens Municipality Development	2015 - 2020	

					Company			
	3.5	Organization of cultural events (concerts, one night / weekend exhibitions)	Athens Organization of Central Market, Athens Municipality Development Company, Region of Attica, Ministry of Culture	50.000 €	Varvakeios' budget - Co-funded by Region of Attica and Athens Municipality Development Company		2015 - 2020	
Usual communication activities	3.6	Establishment of Department of Public Relations and Communication or hiring of external expertx specialized in these fields	Athens Organization of Central Market	210.000 €	Varvakeios' budget - Co-funded by Region of Attica and Athens Municipality Development Company		2015	
	3.7	Development of Varvakeios' web portal	Athens Organization of Central Market	15.000 €	Varvakeios' budget - Co-funded by Region of		2015	

					Attica and Athens Municipality Development Company			
Establishment of a permanent Gastronomic Route named A walk in Varvakeios: A Ramble in the Flavor of the World	3.8	Development of tourism packages that will focus on the establishment of a permanent gastronomy route named 'A walk in Varvakeios: A Ramble in the Flavor of the World'.	Athens Organization of Central Market, Athens Municipality Development Company, Region of Attica, Greek Tourism Organization	30.000 €	Varvakeios' budget - Co-funded by Region of Attica and Athens Municipality Development Company		2016 - 2020	
TOTAL BUDGET				1.426.800 €				

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