

Highlights of the Kythera Smart Village Strategy

Greece



About Kythera

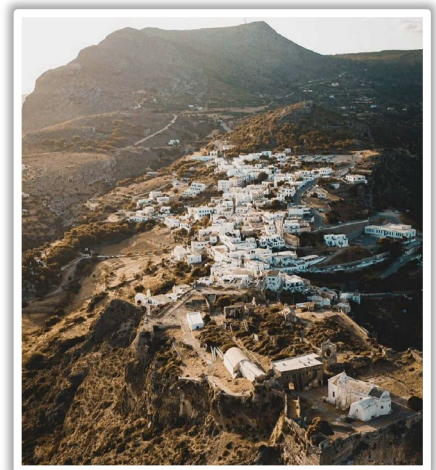
The island of Kythera, or otherwise known as Tsirigo, lies at the crossroads of three seas – the Ionian, Aegean and the Cretan Sea. It is known as the birthplace of the ancient Greek goddess Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. Kythera is characterised by mild Mediterranean climate, humidity and strong winds, especially in winter time. The frequent alternation of landscapes of this mountainous island with numerous valleys leading into the sea results in many beautiful beaches.

Kythera has a large number of settlements and a population of 4 000 inhabitants, the villages are many and small, scattered throughout their geographic area. The island is administratively organised into a municipality with the community of Antikythera, the eponymous neighbouring island, under the Province of Kythera, which belongs to Region of Attica. The island's economy is based on rural life and tourism, while many locals are employed in services, trade and public organisations.

Key challenges & assets

The ageing population and outmigration of young people for educational and work opportunities is an important challenge for the island. This is also affecting the island's economy, as it becomes more difficult to open businesses, strengthen existing ones, import and export products and boost tourism. Due to its geographical location, Kythera has no access to markets as its nearest coast is two hours away by boat and faces difficulties when transport links are restricted.

On the other hand, Kythera presents various advantages and opportunities. Its unique natural environment is its most important asset, along with the social consciousness and involvement of the locals, willing to improve the island at the cultural, economic and social levels. Quality of life, the beauty of nature, the sensitised society, fertile land, local and recognised products and the island's history are some of its main advantages. It is worth mentioning that the island of Antikythera also belongs to the municipality of Kythera.



Main objectives of smart village strategy

The **overall objective**, and at the same time the greatest expectation for Kythera, is to keep its youth on the island, by creating the appropriate conditions for young and active people to live and work there.

1. **Objective 1:** Keep young people on the island
2. **Objective 2:** Improve agriculture and promote local production

Introduce new technologies in agriculture and smart farming solutions; Improve collaboration between producers under the umbrella of the existing agricultural associations; Introduce standards, certificates and labelling of local products (olive-oil and honey).

3. **Objective 3:** Improve environmental sustainability
4. **Objective 4:** Support entrepreneurial activities
5. **Objective 5:** Increase quality tourism

Support alternative forms of tourism & promote the area as touristic destination; Promote it as a safe destination thanks to existing hospital.

6. **Objective 6:** Improve services (Transportation, Education and Health)

Improve the education and health services, Improve transport linkages.

What is smart?

Community Participation in Strategy Development

The main advantage of Kythera in terms of strategy development is its citizens. There are many active associations and organisations on the island. Local stakeholders, people involved in local government, but also in various unions and associations operating on the island responded to the call and were willing to collaborate. They provided information about the main problems that everyone faces in their industry, the important advantages that the island has, as well as ideas for development.

Links to other strategies

In general, the Municipality of Kythera is very active and tries to find smart solutions for sustainable plans and strategies that help the development of the island. At this point, there are three main strategies that are about to take action on the Island or are under consideration: 'Sustainable Energy Action Plan', 'Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan' and 'Water Resources Management Plan'.

Municipality of Kythera strategies and projects are also aligned to National Strategies to be eligible for funding. The main national strategies that are taken into consideration when a new strategy or project is being planned are:

- ✓ Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework 2014-2020: the main strategic plan for growth in Greece with the contribution of significant resources from the EU's European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).
- ✓ Greek Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 (ΠΑΑ), whose main priorities are 'Development of a competitive and viable agri-food economy' and 'Development of sustainable and multifunctional rural areas'.
- ✓ Greek Operational Programme Fisheries and Maritime 2014-2020, one of whose priorities is the 'Protection of sea environments and sustainable use of its resources'.

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- ✓ Operational Programme of Attica Region and its Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3), whose main priorities are 'Sustainable Economy', 'Blue Economy' and 'Creative Economy'.
- ✓ Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) of NATURA 2000 areas.
- ✓ LEADER/CLLD Strategy for Attica islands.

What smart actions are implemented and planned?

- ✓ A 'Standardisation, Certification, and Labelling' framework is required for local products that are of premium quality and high value, such as olive oil and honey. According to this framework, such products will be labelled with a unique label 'Kytherian product', which could also lead to certifying some of the local produce with a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) identity.
- ✓ The Kytherian Foundation for Culture and Development ([KIPA](#)), with the support of the Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos ([MedINA](#)), has launched actions to promote Kytherian olive oil by creating a list of producers on the island. For this purpose, the foundation is constantly looking and applying for funding.
- ✓ Collaborate with universities and research organisations in the aim of submitting project proposals to: a) train producers on precision farming systems; and b) implement and monitor specific agricultural practices that benefit both production and biodiversity on the island.



A smart action that we are planning...

- ✓ Introduce new technologies in agriculture and smart farming solutions;
- ✓ Improve collaboration between producers under the umbrella of the existing agricultural associations;
- ✓ Introduce standards, certificates and labelling on local products (olive oil and honey);
- ✓ Create a marketing strategy.

