

Chapter 1

The Case of Region Marketing of a Greek Southwestern City: Building a New Image and Personality of Open Innovation and Creativity

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The examination of the municipal broadband and building a “digital city” for a southwestern Greek city is the heart of this case study in terms of city’s repositioning through open innovation and creativity. The paradigm of the first successful Greek digital city (“e-Trikala”) shows to every Greek that the Digital City ICT applications can improve everyday life by simplifying public transactions in regional urban centers, reducing telecommunication costs, and by delivering new services related to the local way of life (Heeks, 2010). However, every SME has its own social, economic, geographic, or political characteristics (Foster & Heeks, 2010). For this reason, the digital city can vary from region to region, so that ICT applications enhance local characteristics rather than detract from them. The author’s objective is to create an independent case study that can be used as the basis for class discussion. The case of repositioning of Kalamata, a Greek southwestern city, as an open innovative and creative city through the new municipal broadband infrastructure presents a situation that requires the readers of this case study to develop and evaluate solutions. The case may be also meaningfully discussed, presented, or analyzed with reference to other cases. It can be used by itself without creating false impressions. In this case study, Kalamata’s municipal leadership believes that a short-term promotion campaign for the benefit of the city’s digitalization is enough to build a new image and personality for the city: the image and personality of an open, innovative, and creative city, an ideal location to visit, do business, and live. The development of a short-term promotion campaign in order to achieve the repositioning of a city is a major strategic pitfall. The municipal leaders must realize that transforming the city as an

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open innovative and creative city, needs a new philosophy. The achievement of such a strategic goal prerequisites an overall transformation of all the protagonists (from citizens to municipal administrators to entrepreneurs) as the following strategic issues must be managed: the introduction of an open innovation model, the choice of an innovation scenario for the local economy, and the strategy in order to address the way of urban innovation through the municipal broadband infrastructure. However, the question remains whether transformative learning and building critical reflection are the paths for building a new image and personality for Kalamata as an open innovative and creative city.

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE

Kalamata is the second-largest city of the Peloponnese (about 65,000 inhabitants) in southern Greece. The capital and chief port of the Messinia prefecture, it lies along the Nedon River at the head of the Messinian Gulf. Located near the ancient city of Pharai mentioned by Homer, it lies 238 km SW of Athens, about 60 km W of Sparta and 715 km south of Thessaloniki. Figure 1 shows the location of the city.

The city revolves around the economic activity of its port. Before the destructive earthquakes of 1986, it was one of the most dynamic cities of Greece. The city has now been entirely rebuilt, and includes industries specialized in manufacturing and construction, although the services remains the most important sector. Kalamata is also well known for the production of olive oil, figs and wines. Oil, figs and wines are shipped directly

from the port throughout the world. Even cruise ships or Cargo can dock in Kalamata, while a marina is ready to shelter and host all forms of yachts and pleasure craft. Kalamata is part of a Larger Urban Zone (LUZ) of 170,000 inhabitants. Kalamata's municipal council administers the city and represents the inhabitants of Kalamata. However, central government is still responsible for areas such as planning, economic development and the environment.

Any visitor of Kalamata enjoys the cultural and leisure experience of wandering how Kalamata became a modern city nestled between the foothills of the historic Taygetos Mountain and the Messiniakos gulf, combining its historical past of the ancient city Farai with the modern present and future characterized by the organizing of many cultural events and its excellent street-plan, extended to the 4 km. beach. It is impossible not to reflect on how much this city is opened up. Once the fear and rivalry amongst neighbour cities or countries is overcome, Kalamata has jumped over their old defensive walls and extended apparently endlessly across land, sometimes so much as to touch and even merge with other cities, creating extensive metropolitan areas or complex urban networks. Kalamata has also opened up to people from elsewhere, absorbing new cultures, styles and traditions.

As happened to many cities, Kalamata once was famous for single traditional sectors seem that it is forced to open up to new SMEs and services, such as tourism and culture. However, let one see the characteristics of the economy and how this city faces the socio-economic transformation in

Figure 1. Location of Kalamata



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