

network

enterprise europe

success stories

Converting to a greener future: Greek SME paves the way for cleaner transport



Keeping up with new trends and adapting to the times is what successful entrepreneurship is all about, and even more so when times are tough. But when a company decides to step out of its comfort zone entirely and try something completely new, then that step can go beyond the boundaries of a calculated risk. Entrepreneur Gregory Skodras had been in the fashion industry for over two decades, but had watched the sector rapidly declining, both in Greece and all across Europe, and knew that it was time to take drastic measures. Suddenly green was starting to take on a whole new meaning – it was no longer just a colour, it was a concept. And that's how SPLENDID BIKES began. But as a recently-established business unit venturing into a totally new sector (environmentally-friendly electric bikes), the company needed targeted information and customised assistance. Mr. Skodras heard about the Network and contacted his local office at the Federation of Industries of Northern Greece (FING) in order to take advantage of their support services.

The Greek company required assistance to find specialised technology and expertise for the assembly of e-bikes at their production facilities in Greece. This would mean major modifications, both in terms of the human resource skills required, as well as in terms of adapting the existing facilities. So Mr. Skodras turned to FING for support in order to find a suitable partner (preferably from the Greek company's priority target market, China) who could provide the expertise and technical know-how to be introduced onto the Greek market.

Mr. Skodras explains: "This is a completely new area for us, and one which demands specific technical knowledge and expertise. So we wanted to have the most specialised support to be sure we had the greatest chance of getting the best results."

The FING Network staff prepared and submitted the company's technology profile to the Network database and conducted a search for potential business partners, particularly targeting China. The ideal match was found with Hangzhou Morakot Electric Vehicle Manufacture and it was



arranged for Mr. Skodras to visit the Chinese company's premises in order for the two sides to discuss all the technical details and close the deal. Mr. Skodras was given a tour of the factory by the Head of Sales, Mr. Kevisa Li, and in particular the production facilities and assembly line, in order to familiarise himself with all the relevant technical issues.

As a result of the specialised innovation and technology transfer services provided by FING Network staff, SPLENDID BIKES was able to meet a suitable Chinese partner who could provide the new environmentally-friendly technology for the assembly of e-bikes in Greece and to commercialise them as exclusive distributor on the Greek market. There is also the potential for further growth in the future, through the acquisition of specialised technical expertise and know-how in order to assemble e-bike conversion kits for conventional bicycles here in Greece, using the technology acquired from Hangzhou Morakot.

"It is satisfying to know that not only have we helped a company to branch out into a completely new field, but we have also helped it contribute to protecting the environment," comments FING Director of International Affairs, Katerina Tzitzinou.

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