

Host organization: Institute of Organic Chemistry with Centre of Phytochemistry – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IOCCP-BAS)

Country: Bulgaria

Organization role: Beneficiary/ WP leader

Project Acronym: EXANDAS (Grant No 691247 – Exploitation of Aromatic plants' by-products for the development of novel cosmeceuticals and food Supplements)

Project start and end date: 01.03.2016 – 01.03.2020

Type of MSC action, H2020: RISE



Your story:

Project objectives and research field:

EXANDAS aims to apply emerging and cutting edge technologies in the field of Natural Product Chemistry in order to fully and efficiently exploit the therapeutic potential of medicinal and aromatic processing waste and by-products, for development of novel cosmeceuticals and food supplements.

Tell us why the topic is important and/ or how it brings to advancement in your research field:

Southeastern Europe is a region of rich biodiversity with several medicinal and aromatic plant species. Many of the collected wild or cultivated plants are subjected to distillations to obtain essential oils, creating a significant amount of hydrolate and herbal residue. The residue is considered waste and is disposed in landfills. Those by-products contain a large number of valuable bioactive secondary metabolites, representing a vast reservoir of valuable compounds, the exact composition of which is not always known. In addition, 'mastic gum' is the resin of *Pistacia lentiscus* (L.), a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) product originating from the Greek island of Chios. The chemical profile and biological activities of Mastic gum residue, named "kolophony", are unknown and these facts hamper its further exploitation. Thus, those processing waste and by-products are a promising rich source of healthy compounds.

What are the benefits of participating in a MSC action?

The implementation of EXANDAS project will develop a successful and sustainable international and intersectoral collaboration model, which will contribute to the

innovation potential of Europe for the most effective exploitation of natural resources and the development of novel cosmeceuticals and food supplements. The staff secondments between academia and SME ensure transfer of knowledge as well as personal training of researchers to get various new skills.

Did you encounter any challenges during application/ implementation and did you get any help?

Until now, the only difficulty in the implementation of the project was a delay in the regular budget transfer to beneficiaries which caused some changes in the secondments schedule and thus disturbed to a certain extent the preliminary work plan.

Would you recommend others to apply? What useful advice/ tips can you give them?

I would recommend others to apply for RISE projects. It would be better if some of the potential partners had already established any cooperation between themselves as well as with some SME.

What strategies did your organization use to attract the fellow/s? Are they in line with national strategies supporting the widening EC policy?

Invitation for participation in the EXANDAS project was a result of preliminary successful cooperation between scientists from IOCCP-BAS and the project coordinator from University of Athens, Greece. Then the RISE model created new contacts between all beneficiaries and developed their active collaboration.

The strategy of IOCCP-BAS is to promote EXANDAS aims and achievements and thus to attract researchers from the institute. For them, the implementation of EXANDAS ensures mobility to SME abroad which is very helpful giving new knowledge about work organisation in a company and new experience in cooperation with colleagues from industry.