

ALBANIAN  
DEVELOPMENT FUND

## 2-nd Learning and Exchange Visit

5-6 February 2025

Thessaloniki, Greece

Project Partner No. 2, KEPA, hosted the **2nd Learning and Exchange Visit** in Thessaloniki, Greece, on February 5-th and 6-th, 2025. The event served as a platform for knowledge exchange, fostering collaboration, and exploring innovative approaches to the green transition and SME sustainability.



The first day featured expert discussions on key topics, including green transition, innovation, bioeconomy, and waste management. The representative of the One Stop Liaison Office (Region of Central Macedonia), shared strategies for fostering innovation and strengthening the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Zoi Mili, Programme Manager at KEPA, provided an in-depth look at the green transition of SMEs in Central Macedonia, highlighting both challenges and funding opportunities for sustainable development. The following discussion was represented from the Administrator of the Bioeconomy Network as well as the President/CEO of Elliniki Eteria Bioeconomias (Hellenic Bioeconomy). There was examined the role of biotechnology in agriculture, emphasizing its impact on sustainability and sector advancements.

During the activity the representatives of the project partners paid visits to the following:

**Town Hall of Thessaloniki**, where representative from the Municipality of Thessaloniki's Department of Operational Planning and Development Programmes Monitoring (Resilience Office) provided insights into local sustainability initiatives.

**Centre for Research & Technology Hellas (CERTH)**, which includes **the Hellenic Institute of Transport**. The institute focuses on cutting-edge research and driving innovation in the transport sector in Greece and across Europe. During the visit, project attendees gained valuable insights into the institute's work, data management processes, and the functioning of smart mobility solutions.

CERTH is also home to the **Information Technologies Institute**, one of Greece's leading institutions in the fields of informatics, telematics, and telecommunications. As part of their visit, project participants had the opportunity to explore *The Smart House*—a unique energy-efficient building constructed with state-of-the-art materials, such as advanced insulation and glass panes. Equipped with smart technologies, it serves as a research hub for exploring various ICT domains.

**American Farm School**, nonprofit educational institution dedicated to sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship and rural development. Project participants were welcomed by the institution's leadership and guided through the campus. The tour provided a comprehensive overview of how the institution integrates innovation, education, and hands-on training to prepare future professionals for the challenges of sustainable agriculture.