



Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

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Creainnovation

Create sustainable Innovation in SMEs using creative methods and processes

Countries:

Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain

Target Groups:

SMEs, Business support organisations, Higher education and research institutions, Sectoral agencies, Local and regional public authorities, National public authorities, Interest groups including NGOs

Theme:

Eco-Innovation

Keywords:

Creativity processes, creativity-driven innovation, Green SMEs, creativity labs

Starting and Ending Dates:

February 2018 - January 2022

Creainnovation stands for Creativity-driven Innovation and it aims to create sustainable innovation in SMEs using creative methods and processes. By adopting a 'creative entrepreneurship' approach to innovation, SMEs can cost-effectively tackle many of the challenges they face in growing their business. Creativity and innovation are important indicators of process development, balanced growth and strengthening of a company's profile.

Creainnovation aims to stimulate knowledge-driven growth and provide Mediterranean Green SMEs - that often lack innovation capabilities - with the necessary creativity tools and practices in their everyday activities. The goals are to extend and deepen the knowledge and practice of creative methodologies and processes using Creative Problem Solving (CPS) or Creative Solution Finding (CSF) approaches (Alex Osborn and Sydney Parnes) in MED Green SMEs.

Creainnovation address green rural SMEs to encourage them to adopt and manage creativity to tap into hidden capacity for growth and improved competitiveness.

Challenges

Creainnovation addresses the following challenges:

- **MED SMEs** have to compete in a globalised and highly competitive world where their unique skills and knowledge enabling them to respond to external pressures.
- **SMEs** have to implement innovation systems to become competitive, enabling them to improve their products, processes and services.
- **SMEs'** ability to learn and share knowledge depends on their level of innovation and competitiveness,

Solutions

Creainnovation developed and tested business innovation capabilities through the practice of creativity methodologies, tools and processes through creativity workshops with the MED SMEs, involving creativity experts, external managers and young students. The project tested the creativity workshop model, which will be used for young

students and managers to contact SMEs for potential further employment and to define new policies to support the development of Green SMEs. Testing the power of creativity workshops will allow stakeholders to confidently adopt these policies to implement innovation capabilities in SMEs and thus contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy.

Creainnovation Pilot Projects



Recommendations

- Encourage people to learn and apply creativity stimulation techniques and lateral thinking
- Raise awareness of the power of the creative process in generating new ideas and solutions to problems or new market opportunities
- Offer training courses on creative methods and processes in schools, universities, and through specialisation courses
- Share the pleasure, fun and satisfaction that participants experienced in creative workshops

Greater valorisation of creative processes and methods could be gained through:

- Subsidised financing programmes for innovative projects with social and environmental objectives
- Facilitation policies and economic support for SMEs to support participation in creativity for innovation
- Establishment of widespread territorial Permanent Creativity Laboratories where SMEs can learn innovation processes
- Specialisation courses to develop a “forma mentis” and provide transversal tools

Green Growth and the EU Green Deal

Creainnovation contributes to generating green jobs and increases innovation in Green Med SMEs, supporting the transition to a green economy within the framework of the EU Green Deal.

Partners:



The InterregMED Green Growth Community

Green Growth is a thematic community that promotes sustainable development in the Mediterranean within the framework of the Interreg Med Programme. It supports the sound management of natural resources by enhancing cross-sectoral innovation practices through an integrated, territorially-based cooperation approach.

The community supports its projects in communicating and capitalising on their results to increase their impact at the policy level and ensure their potential transfer into other territories.

Visit our website:
green-growth.interreg-med.eu

Join the Green Growth Capitalisation Platform:
interregmedgreengrowth.eu

Further Information:

Creainnovation Website:
creainnovation.interreg-med.eu/

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Social Media Channels:



Project of interest:
<https://creainnovation.rasip.fer.hr/>



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CreaInnovation

Type of the result:

- Guideline
- Methodology
- Offline tools

Language(s) in which the result is developed:

English

What is the most appropriate level for its use/ implementation?

Local, national and transnational level

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESULTS

State of the art of creativity resources for SMEs' innovation

This methodology states the existing knowledge and practice of creative methods in the nine countries represented by the project partners. This document reports on various approaches to creativity as a structured practice used by companies to solve problems (creative problem solving) or to develop new ways of operating (processes, markets, products, etc.). There are also references to schools and relevant educational events, as well as consultancy companies and professionals with experience in using creative methods to support companies in becoming more innovative.

Handbook for CreaInnovation LABs design, management and implementation

The handbook is a guideline to design national and transnational creativity workshops within the CreaInnovation project; it describes the requirements and methodology that the creativity experts and facilitators should follow. The handbook can also support MSMEs (micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises) interested in learning about creative techniques used in these workshops to generate new innovative ideas. The handbook also includes a section on the Creativity Laboratories, as the most appropriate facilities in which to run the workshops.

Sustainability Assessment Model of regional and transnational innovation projects

The Sustainability Assessment Model is a tool with two uses: first, it can be used for the qualitative assessment of the economic, social and environmental sustainability of projects, and second, it can be used as a checklist of sustainability criteria for developing innovation projects. People generating new ideas - whether a product, process, market, or organisation - can consult the Ciset (CreaInnovation Sustainability Evaluation Tool) to find the criteria to ensure the outcome's sustainability. Following this, the posteriori model allows users to evaluate the sustainability of their results. The simplicity of this model allows all users to evaluate their projects both in the design and implementation phase of their projects.



PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION BY END-USERS

Creainnovation Project codified, tested and documented the effectiveness of creative methods and processes to generate 135 sustainable innovation ideas in 59 SMEs from 9 countries, and 22 new co-business ideas for 9 SMEs in 3 transnational creativity laboratories. 12 creativity consultants led 53 creative work sessions with

250 SME employees, 45 external managers and 92 students in innovation and sustainability. The workshops were preceded and followed by a sustainability self-assessment (economic, social and environmental) of the company and the innovative ideas generated, supported by the Ciset model developed by the project.

WHAT IS THE TRANSFER POTENTIAL?

The handbook is a useful guideline ready to be implemented. The reports and guidelines for carrying out creativity workshops for innovation in SMEs are available to be transferred and used. Reports on the effectiveness of the approach demonstrated in the 53 working sessions with 59 SMEs are also available as evidence of the processes followed, problems faced, and results obtained. The description of the tools and design of Creativity Laboratories and the sustainability assessment model are ready to be used by institutional initiatives across countries.

Making creative methods for innovation widely available to SMEs depends on institutional initiatives in the various countries. Developing a business model to justify and create the Creativity Laboratories is yet to be done, as well as the identification of resources.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT REPLICABILITY?

The results produced and the indicators provided by the project are fully replicable at the local, national and transnational level. This is made possible by using processes and techniques (more than 150 creativity techniques - rational, associative, projective, analogical) that stimulate creative ability and develop problem-solving skills. On average, in a one-day creative workshop, 8-15 participants can generate 10-15 innovative ideas, at least 3 of which are significantly disruptive.

It is essential to carry out trainings for others to adopt creative methods. Possible activities could include an annual dissemination event, the creation of specific courses in academic institutions, and even offering basic trainings in elementary, primary, and high schools.

WHAT CHALLENGES MAY ARISE?

Three main challenges have been identified:

1. There is a lack of awareness about the potential of these approaches on behalf of both SMEs and institutions; it is necessary to address preconceptions and encourage participants to understand the value of these team activities.
2. Some institutions are reluctant to maintain operational spaces (Creativity Laboratories for innovation) for SMEs, even though they may have a high social and economic return.
3. Lastly, there is a lack of funding and resources for these activities.