



Output 2.6

Info points for consultation of SMEs



NATIONAL TECHNICAL
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FUTURE



PIONEERS
Empowering Communities

INNOMED-UP

Promoting UPcycling in Circular Economy through INNnovation and education for creative industries in MEDiterranean cities

Work Package (WP2): Communication Output 2.6: Info points for consultation of SMEs

Activities:	<p>A 2.6.1 Establishing & Operating Info point in MPC > Amman, Jordan</p> <p>A 2.6.2 Establishing & Operating Info point in EUMC > Palermo, Italy</p>														
Output Participating Partners:	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 790 997 913">National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Greece</td> <td data-bbox="1000 790 1418 913">Lead Beneficiary (BEN) WP1 Coordinator</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 918 997 1025">Environmental Planning Engineering and Management (EPEM SA), Greece</td> <td data-bbox="1000 918 1418 1025">Project Partner 1 (PP01)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1030 997 1093">Municipality of Prato (MoP), Italy</td> <td data-bbox="1000 1030 1418 1093">Project Partner 2 (PP02)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1097 997 1205">Centre for Economic and Social Research for the South of Italy (CRESM), Italy</td> <td data-bbox="1000 1097 1418 1205">Project Partner 3 (PP03)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1209 997 1272">Municipality of Tunis, Tunisia</td> <td data-bbox="1000 1209 1418 1272">Project Partner 4 (PP04)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1276 997 1339">Birzeit University (BZU), Palestinian Authority</td> <td data-bbox="1000 1276 1418 1339">Project Partner 5 (PP05)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="400 1344 997 1462">Future Pioneers for Empowering Communities' Members in the environmental and educational fields (FPEC), Jordan</td> <td data-bbox="1000 1344 1418 1462">Project Partner 6 (PP06)</td> </tr> </table>	National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Greece	Lead Beneficiary (BEN) WP1 Coordinator	Environmental Planning Engineering and Management (EPEM SA), Greece	Project Partner 1 (PP01)	Municipality of Prato (MoP), Italy	Project Partner 2 (PP02)	Centre for Economic and Social Research for the South of Italy (CRESM), Italy	Project Partner 3 (PP03)	Municipality of Tunis, Tunisia	Project Partner 4 (PP04)	Birzeit University (BZU), Palestinian Authority	Project Partner 5 (PP05)	Future Pioneers for Empowering Communities' Members in the environmental and educational fields (FPEC), Jordan	Project Partner 6 (PP06)
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1 ACTIVITIES 2.6.1 & 2.6.2: ESTABLISHING & OPERATING INFO POINTS IN MPC (AMMAN, JORDAN) AND IN EUMC (PALERMO, ITALY)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Background

Mediterranean Cities are in deep need to tackle the challenge of waste production, including its associated negative economic and environmental impacts; necessitating effective and immediate actions. The INNOMED-UP project is implemented over three years' period in partnership between seven organizations in six cities and between five different countries: Athens (Greece), Prato (Italy), Palermo (Italy), Tunis (Tunisia), Hebron (Palestine), Amman (Jordan) to promote circular economy.

Recently, Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) represent a remarkable percentage of urban production in city centers; hence the involvement of CCIs in Circular Economy schemes is of great importance. Although, there are disparities between cities in the North and the South of the Mediterranean Sea, Mediterranean cities share common cultural characteristics. Therefore, by building on their common identity, integrating into their productive schemes the principles of circular economy and engaging with other related parties, the Mediterranean Cities can create resilient urban environments and communities while establishing a supportive framework for CCIs Small & Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) clusters. INNOMED-UP proposes to work with CCIs to shift local urban economies towards a circular production and consumption paradigm including optimal use of material resources, innovation enhancement for Small & Medium Enterprises (SME), knowledge transfer among Med-Cities, social inclusion and citizens' engagement.

1.1.2 Circular Economy Definition

The World Economic Forum defined circular economy as “an industrial system that is restorative or regenerative by intention and design”. It replaces the end-of-life concept with restoration, shifts towards the use of renewable energy, eliminates the use of toxic chemicals, which impair reuse and return to the biosphere, and aims at the elimination of waste through the superior design of materials, products, systems, and business models.

The European Commission provides a broader definition for the circular economy, which states that this alternative economic system focuses on “creating products and utilizing materials for as long as possible”. The model's position is that when waste and resources are minimized and when a product reaches the end of its life cycle; it is to be used again. This system leads to economic growth over time through contributing to innovation and the creation of job opportunities.

A circular economy model has the means of designing out waste. In fact, a circular economy is based on the idea that there is no such thing as waste, resulting in zero waste production. In order to achieve this, products are designed to last longer through the use of good quality materials, and optimized for a cycle of disassembly which will make them easier to handle the transformation process of reuse, recycle, lease, repair, refurbish or share. Implementing a circular economic model that would have several benefits for the environment, economy and businesses, including but not limited to: Creating new businesses, lowering input costs, the potential to create entirely new profit streams, turning businesses to become more

resilient, and prepare them to deal with unexpected changes (risks and threats). Moreover, it will encourage effective communications to build positive long-lasting relationships among stakeholders, including the customers and local communities.

1.1.3 SMEs

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) are businesses whose personnel numbers fall below certain limits. In any given national economy, SMEs sometimes outnumber large companies by a wide margin to also employ many more people.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the economy and a key player to steer our economy towards a more circular model. However, their small size means that they face unique challenges on the path to closing loops and improving resources management efficiency.

1.2 INFO POINTS FOR CONSULTATION OF SMEs OBJECTIVES

The info-point is a self-contained unit, containing hardware and software that enables the project stakeholders to easily access the INNOMED-UP project information and interpretation. The online info-points can be easily accessible either on computers or on smartphones.

Two info points were established; one in Palermo by PP3; CRESM and one by PP6; Future Pioneers. More details are clarified in the below section.

Additionally, videos have been developed to provide visual clarification for the info points.

Relevant posts have been published on the project social media and the CBC website.

Here is the link: <https://www.enicbcmcd.eu/2-innomed-info-points-boost-circular-economy-mediterranean-cities>

Also, press releases were published in Jordan and Italy.

Objectives

- The info points will operate as consultation offices for the CCI SMEs in order to access foreign investments, such as European funding, bank loans or other initiatives (I. e. European funding, bank loans, Switchers, The next society, etc.).
- Enhance community and stakeholders' engagement.

1.3 INFO POINT IN PALERMO BY PP03

The Innomed-up Infopoint for consultation of SMEs has been presented in Palermo on June 15th 2021 and has been launched on June 16th 2021. It has been operating online until October 25th 2021 when it officially started face-to-face activities.

It is located in NOZ, a multifunctional space where other services dedicated to SMEs, in particular in the framework of eco-design, are available. NOZ is a project of CRESM for promoting the innovative transition of creative local SMEs. It includes:

- A traditional wood workshop.
- A digital fabrication workshop (with a CNC milling machine, a laser cutter machine and several 3D printers).
- A pottery workshop.

The Innomed-up Infopoint for consultation of SMEs completes the NOZ offer for supporting creative SMEs in the framework of sustainable and circular economy.



Info point in Italy

1.3.1 Needs assessment and target group

The creative craft sector represents a crucial segment in the CCI sector in Palermo and in Sicily.

As shown in the report produced in the framework of Activity 4.2, it includes several SMEs, mostly located in the historic city-centers and often organized in the form of non-profit organizations. They are often family-run, drawing on a solid family tradition.

Manufacturing skills of creative craft SMEs, moreover, often come from these family traditions. Innovation,

thus, is a very important need we identified. Digital fabrication tools are not very common yet. On the other hand, the renovation of traditional techniques represents an interesting path in terms of market positioning, cultural heritage protection and reintroduction of traditional eco-sustainable materials.

Creative craft SMEs often have a quite high environmental awareness resulting in the choice of natural materials. Nevertheless there is a very low awareness about the concepts of Circular Economy and about the life-cycle management in production systems. Up-cycling examples are just isolated experimentation.

At the same time, the local regulation about waste management (cf. O3.2, 4.1 and 4.2) does not promote up-cycling and re-use of secondary raw materials. Very high costs for regular waste management, moreover, nearly encourage illegal disposal, in particular for very small businesses. In this sense, creative craft SMEs are interested in Circular Economy practices also for economic reasons.

Green and circular transition, nevertheless, generates the fear of higher costs related to waste disposal and/or equipment required (such as air-treatment equipment).

Creative craft SMEs often usually have no entrepreneurial education or experience and struggle in reaching economic sustainability, heavily relying on tourism flows. Networking skills are often lacking.

Support networks and knowledge exchange are not common in the target group: despite they declare the desire to cooperate, they do not recognize the advantages of sharing information.

Collaboration is rare also in the production processes that are mostly managed internally.

In order to face fears and resistances related to innovation, networking and green/circular transitions, the Innomed-up InfoPoint will experiment with the chaperones that will support and guide local SMEs in finding an efficient sustainable business model.

1.3.2 Operating model

The Innomed-up infopoint aims at supporting creative SMEs on a double level. On the one hand it fosters their sustainable and circular transition drawing on their disposition to innovation. On the other hand, the Infopoint supports SMEs in designing effective long-term sustainability strategies, crucial for emerging on the market in a difficult economic conjuncture.

The Innomed-up InfoPoint addresses both these topics operating on two different and synergic sides:

- The help-desk offers consultation on:
 - Sustainable and circular transition of SMEs, supporting the development of new business models.
 - Economic long-term sustainability of SMEs, supporting the access to funding and the development of effective business plans.
- A dedicated area in the factories of NOZ is available as a place to promote knowledge exchange, experimenting materials and upcycling processes, prototypes testing, product development, networking.

Both these activities benefit from the long-lasting experience of CRESM in the framework of local development and support to SMEs, as well as from CRESM’s network at local, national and international level.

1.3.3 Achievements

Until the present day, 100 SMEs accessed the Innomed-up InfoPoint. They are mostly located in the city center of Palermo. Only some of them are from other areas in Sicily.

A group of 6 SMEs is cooperating in developing innovative products from upcycled materials.

10 SMEs applied for funding aimed at developing circular economy projects.



1.4 INFO POINT IN AMMAN BY PP06

1.4.1 Info-points Establishment Process

The establishment of the info points have been accomplished through the following stages

- A specialized person in websites development was hired to create the needed platform, support in content creation and uploaded all details within.
- **CCI SMEs identification:** A list of CCI SMEs in Jordan was identified (people and/or organizations). Information collected included addresses, establishment details, localities, etc.
- **Defining foreign investments sources:** A list of potential foreign investments sources has been identified; details were collected and summarized. This data support the project stakeholders in defining and finding financing tools
- **Defining local and private sources:** A list of possible local resources such as Ministry of Environment, CSR and others were collected. Also, we have identified the commercials who are willing to donate the produced waste for these SMEs to facilitate the supply chain.

- **Online website creation and development:** A separate specific page on FPEC website has been established, that includes all the details collected regarding CCI SMEs, foreign and/or local investments. That will enable targeted and interested people and/ or organizations to access to information, explore opportunities and the available funding resources. The website is readable on smartphones and linked to the project social media outlets.
- Website released: All project materials, publications and related information are released on the website. The written materials include leaflets, achievements' brochures, videos, and press releases.
- Design and publish of info-graphs about circular economy, which are added to the website

1.4.2 Operation and Outreach

On April 2021, FEPC launched the info-point successfully in two languages, English and Arabic, to encourage the expansion and reach of the circular economy concept through innovation and education for creative industries in Mediterranean cities. This platform aims to acquaint those in charge and workers in SMEs with the available financial opportunities in order to facilitate their access of these projects. It also aims to demonstrate the importance of circular economics in enhancing the work mechanisms of SMEs.

The link for the first info-point released can be found here: <http://future-pioneers.org/innomedup/>

Jordan's info-point was highlighted in Jordan's press release, which can be accessed through the link below:

<http://alrai.com/article/10585638/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%A7%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%86>

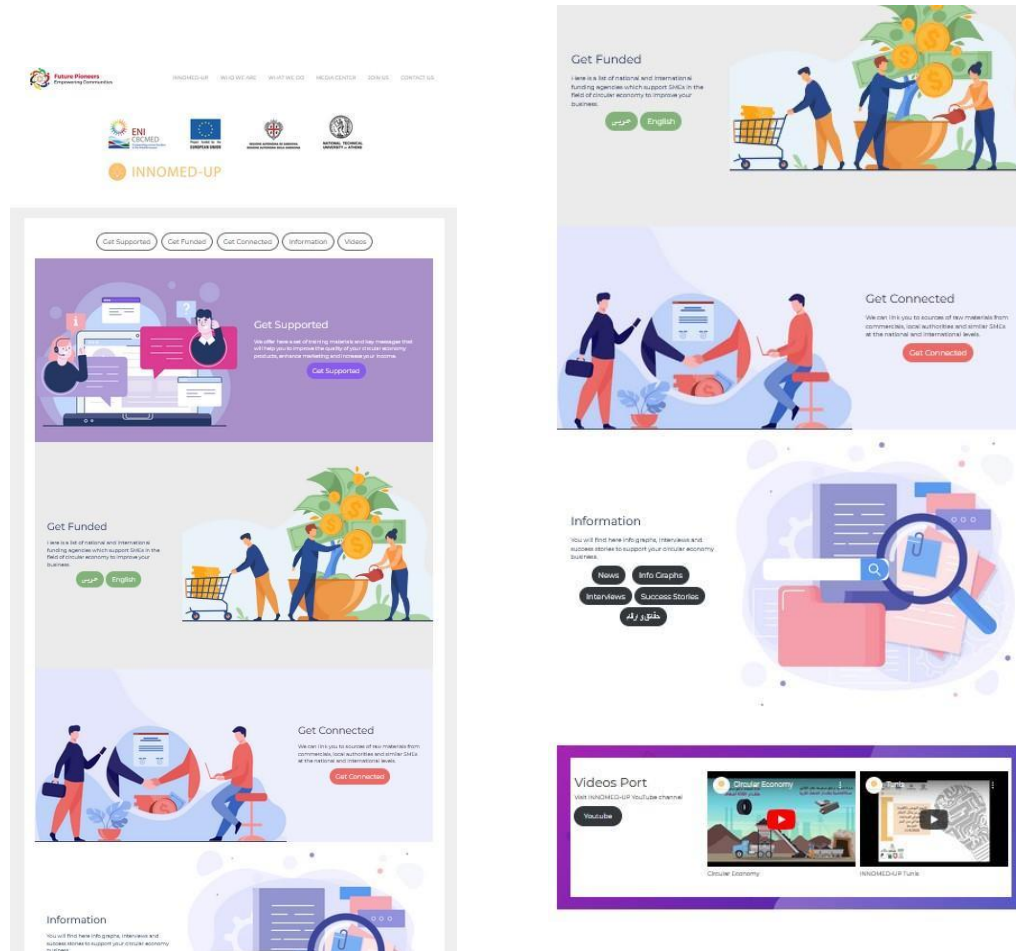


Figure 1: Project Website Page

At a later stage, a physical premises has been launched for the info point in cooperation and full synergies of the project "EU Support to the implementation of the National Solid Waste Management Strategy – Informal Sector Integration and Awareness Raising (ISAR)", funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is co-funded by European Union.

These premises hosted the technical circular economy training for the targeted SMEs and became well known destination for them. The Info Point will support the SMEs in adopting circular economy principles within their business through access to information, networking, funding opportunities, and technical training.

The property contains a small and attractive exhibition for the products that have been fully shaped by the participants whom benefited from the project training. The linkages that FEPC has achieved between the training program, products development and the property establishment is a true success story that will raise the profile of circular economy in Jordan.

The official launching was announced on social-media through the following video indicating the location and contact information for interested SMEs. Relevant posts have been published on the project social media and the CBC website. <https://youtu.be/-HDQTy3v6Zc>



Figure 2: Info point in Amman

The experience proved that the physical premises for the info point is more welcomed by the SMEs as they can visit it and ask for information face to face especially that majority of them are not highly educated . Nevertheless, we kept the on-line info-point even if the number of visitors is small.

The location hosted several events that made it popular

1. Training activities for SMEs under INNOMED-UP
2. Socio-urban workshop
3. Training activities under CARISMED project
4. Awareness activities under CARISMED
5. Awareness activities under UNDP project for green business
6. Awareness activities under GIZ for solid waste management

Total number of SMEs that got fund through such networking and connections are

- 30 grants through INNOMED-UP
- 10 grants through UNDP
- One grant through GIZ
- 10 short term working opportunities through CARISMED



Future pioneers will keep this info-point active through organizing continuous similar activities.