

Interreg
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SOCIAL & CREATIVE

Policy Briefing n. 8

LIVING LABS AND COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY

Project co-financed by the European
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COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY IN THE CREATIVE AND SOCIAL INNOVATION COMMUNITY

Collective Creativity is, as mentioned above, a common element transversal to the methods and activities of projects and pilot experiments across the Creative and Social Innovation Community. Indeed, creativity is easily recognized once it has already happened – namely through a new, elegant, innovative outcome – but the real challenge for those responsible for local development, from cluster managers to regional policy makers, is to anticipate the need for creativity and create the conditions for it to happen.

In this context, we can identify initiatives in the MED Programme that focus more on the method-based approach, adopting specific participatory tools as a means to produce creative solutions. The methods adopted include design thinking, co-creation, and participatory approaches, while specific tools can include brainstorming, World Cafés, or specific methods designed ad hoc.

The **CO-CREATE** project is a good example of the method-based approach for facilitating cross-innovation and cross-fertilization through applying methods and tools of co-design and design thinking. More specifically, the project has organized Creative Camps for developing new concepts for clusters in traditional sectors such as mechanics, furniture and construction. The process has culminated in an International Creative Camp producing 20 project ideas that have been exhibited at the Milan Design Week in April 2018.

For more information: <https://co-create.interreg-med.eu/>

Complementary to this is the setting-based approach, which combines mechanisms to aggregate creative talents with creating the contextual conditions conducive to the generation of emergent solutions. The former generally follow a cluster or hub model, with a reference place people can go to, while the latter can consist in events, competitions, or any form of open format for group collaboration.

The **CreativeWear** project is a good example of the setting-based approach applied to help revitalize the Textile and Clothing industry in the Mediterranean through new inflows of creativity, design and artisan/small-scale production. The project has set up a network of five Hubs – expanded to 12 through Open Calls – each focusing on a different type of catalyst for urban creativity: community, culture, heritage, technology, urban art, etc.

For more information: <https://creativewear.interreg-med.eu/>

Several projects in the Social and Cultural Innovation Community make specific reference to the Living Lab approach. In some cases, the Living Lab model is seen in its more institutional dimension, for instance as a way of improving the contribution of open innovation to existing creative clusters.

The **ChIMERA** project aims to enforce innovation of Cultural and Creative Industries through the development of transnational clusters, European networks, and territorial synergies. It adopts the Living Lab model to extend cluster partnerships to the full ‘Quadruple Helix’ of companies, research centres, public authorities and civil society.

For more information: <https://chimera.interreg-med.eu/>

Other cases adopt the Living Lab model in its more methodological dimension, as a tool to bring actors together to foster new forms of collaboration. This can be particularly important in situations where local development requires the valorisation of local territorial assets, especially in insular, remote and/or rural contexts.

The **MD.NET** project aims to build on the Mediterranean Diet – a UNESCO World Heritage for immaterial culture – to address the severe natural and demographic problems faced by Mediterranean rural regions. The baseline for transnational cooperation is a platform to transfer experiences from regional level Living Labs and Community-Led Local Development initiatives. For more information: <https://mdnet.interreg-med.eu/>

The Social and Creative Community of the MED Programme is working to connect these different methods and approaches as the driver for building a transnational network of nodes of Collective Creativity. While these may take different forms – building on existing clusters, adopting models such as Living Labs, Impact Hubs, and the like, etc. – they are all working towards a common goal and can benefit from the exchange of methods, tools, and insights.

The Social and Creative Community came together for an **International Seminar in Palermo** (IT), held in the context of the CreativeWear project's Vestino event, a city-wide exhibit of transnational contamination of creatives and textiles. The event was hosted by the TECLA Living Lab, established as a Business Lab in the H2020 TCBL Project. In addition to sharing experiences and witnessing hands-on the local initiative of the Palermo CreativeWear Hub, the SCI Community projects participated in a World Café organised to explore new concepts and definitions for the role of Collective Creativity in the MED Innovation Vision. For more information: <https://social-and-creative.interreg-med.eu/press-room/events/detail/actualites/med-creativity-for-inclusive-innovation/>



POLICY TIPS

The on-going work in the MED Programme demonstrates the central role of Collective Creativity in developing the kind of innovative products and services that can make a significant contribution to sustainable regional development. On the basis of the insights gained to date, we can make the following suggestions for local authorities, cluster managers, regional policy makers, and all those responsible for promoting regional well-being.

1. See what's going on locally. Identify creative initiatives, especially on-going MED Programme pilots in your area, and see what steps can be taken to help them connect and exchange experiences and best practice. The players themselves should be able to suggest the best means to do this, if they are properly invited to contribute to the regional policy discourse.

2. Discover local centres of competence in design thinking and co-creation methods and approaches. These may be in area Universities or Design Schools as well as working in the private sector or local NGOs. It is useful for them to come together, and they constitute an important resource to call on for initiatives you may wish to organize.

3. Make a census of local creative hubs, clusters, and settings where creative people come together. This can include a co-working space, a jazz club, a FabLab or any similar venture. Such venues often constitute recognized places that can easily attract creative people.

4. Evaluate the relevance of the Living Lab and Quadruple Helix approaches for existing and on-going policy strategies and measures and their possible contribution towards gaining greater impact. If appropriate, you can combine the elements you have identified in the previous points to create the conditions for innovative solutions and new connections that can easily have a spill-over effect on other institutional structures and policy initiatives.

5. Evaluate the relevance of the Living Lab and Quadruple Helix approaches for existing and on-going policy strategies and measures and their possible contribution towards gaining greater impact. If appropriate, you can combine the elements you have identified in the previous points to create the conditions for innovative solutions and new connections that can easily have a spill-over effect on other institutional structures and policy initiatives.



THE INTERREG MED PROGRAMME'S SOCIAL AND CREATIVE INNOVATION COMMUNITY

The coherence and impact of Social and Creative Innovation initiatives in the Interreg MED programme are supported by the TALIA project: Territorial Appropriation of Leading-edge Innovation Actions. The TALIA workplan foresees three strands of action:

- **Engagement and support:** Liaison and interaction with modular projects and their local and transnational networks, with the purpose of community building as well as helping them to interact with each other and their target audiences.
- **Communication:** This includes the web spaces for interaction and dissemination among researchers, practitioners, and policy makers, as well as regular events at the local and national levels.
- **Attaining impact:** This involves the identification of opportunities to extend the most prominent results across the MED space and the EU thematic policy agendas.

TALIA builds on these on-going activities to translate results as they unfold – in real time, so to speak – into useful instruments for policy action, through a series of intermediate steps:

- An **aggregation of evidence**, scaling up from the granular level of specific pilot interventions to the operational scale of policy actions.
- The development and testing of relevant **indicators for creative and social innovation**, including context, process, result, and impact dimensions.
- Application of thematic frameworks based on a **TALIA common model of Mediterranean innovation**, to facilitate access to MED innovation project resources and players when and where needed.

The regular production of policy briefings and roadmaps contributes to key debates in national and international forums, and in parallel helps partners and participants in MED innovation projects to align their work to on-going policy priorities.

We also remind you that one of the opportunities offered by the Social&Creative Community to regional and national policy makers is to receive a fresh and frequent update of the transnational activities supported by the Interreg MED programme that can help enhance and reinforce the effectiveness of innovation policies.

Want to stay up to date with activities and events related to Social&Creative Community in the MED programme? **Sign up to the newsletter at** <https://us14.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=7c0acc36fc6130b0cd2231719&id=ab07710453>



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