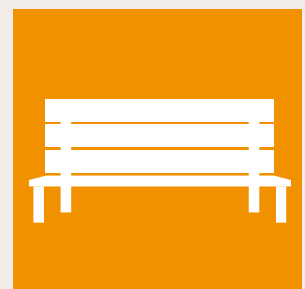
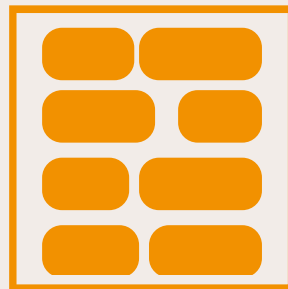
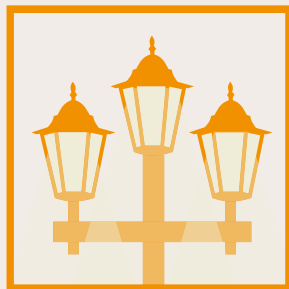




CARISMED

CApitalization for Re-setting Innovation and Sustainability in MED-Cities (CARISMED)

Guide for clusters resetting to cross-border cooperation and access to financing tools



Guide for Clusters Re-setting to Cross-border Cooperation and Access to Financing Tools

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“The 2014-2020 ENI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme is a multilateral Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) initiative funded by the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI). The Programme objective is to foster fair, equitable and sustainable economic, social, and territorial development, which may advance cross-border integration and valorise participating countries’ territories and values. The following 13 countries participate in the Programme: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia. The Managing Authority (JMA) is the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy). Official Programme languages are Arabic, English, and French. For more information, please visit: www.enicbcmed.eu”.

Statement about the EU:

“The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources, and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance, and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders”.



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The toolkit/advisory guide on up-cycling buildings through CCI SMEs clustering comes as a culmination of continuous and diligent efforts made by CARISMED project partners to study and analyze this topic within the scope of the project " CAPITALISATION FOR RE-SETTING INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY IN MED-CITIES", a project aiming to provide a strategy for the revitalization of Mediterranean cities through capitalization on the results achieved by several projects conducted in the Mediterranean basin, and analyze their outcomes to come up with recommendations and propose an appropriate methodology for dealing with components of the built environment in the old areas of the Mediterranean cities. Furthermore, it supports education, research, technological development and innovation (Promote economic and social development) with special emphasis on support SMEs in accessing research and innovation.

The project is implemented in six countries and six Mediterranean cities: Hebron in Palestine, Athens in Greece, Murcia in Spain, Palermo in Italy, the city of Tunis in Tunisia, and Irbed in Jordan. The project's lead partner is Birzeit University in Birzeit (BZU). The project's duration is two years from November 2021 until November 2023.

Promoting innovative approaches/ CE methodologies for re-setting the built environment at Med-Cities (both the building shell and its technological and business content), establishing targeted pilot creative workshops at regional and national level in order to reach and involve new target groups and making use of asynchronous e-learning platforms to improve sustainability and integrate innovation of CCI SMEs Clustering into the urban setting at Med- Cities have been the main sub-objectives for achieving the main goal of the project: to develop urban policies for improving sustainability and integrating innovation into the urban setting of Mediterranean cities in order to effectively re-structure living and working conditions..

The Guide for clusters resetting to cross-border cooperation and access to financing tools includes all the available information obtained for SMEs Clustering roadmaps and capacity building as a result from identifying, analysis and promoting the CCIs SMEs clusters in the participating Med cities: Med-Cities and to build their capacities in Smart and sustainable production. Yet, it highlights the tools that CCI SMEs could access (National/Mediterranean/European/International funding opportunities) and will be available in two languages (English – Arabic). This approach is expected to ensure the projected cross-bordering and synergy at the desired levels.

Guidelines for implementing training programs for CCI innovative SMEs, clusters resetting for internal cooperation and the external cross-border cooperation best practices had been all the main promoters/ fields that the present guide is aiming to provide for the various categories of readers: stakeholders, SMEs, policy-makers, community workers...etc. a group of directions extracted from different local environments that might help them tracking the most appropriate approach for building their transnational and financial roads.

The access to mentorship networks and cross-border cooperation networks is crucial for the growth and innovation of smart, green and innovative clusters in the Mediterranean and consequently for the economic success of Med-cities and capitalization of project. Therefore, CARISMED supports the piloted clusters that participate in the project to establish cross-border mentorship schemes and explore the best practices to provide financial support. As a result, it is expected that this guide is one valuable step to set up concrete forms of institutional cooperation between involved stakeholders for the meta-project period.

This guide, as well as the other guides produced by CARISMED, includes the capitalization activities for reassuring the transferability, feasibility, sustainability & compatibility of the three successful projects that were capitalized in this project. The required interaction between project results has been established, in addition to their effective use by local communities, other stakeholders & mainstreaming for other Mediterranean cities.

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December, 2023



1. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The CARISMED project is implemented under the ENI CBC “*Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme*” (<http://www.enicbcmmed.eu>). Its total budget is **1.1 million Euro** and it is financed for an amount of **1 million Euro by the European Union through the European Neighborhood Instrument**. The project is implemented in six countries and six Mediterranean cities: Hebron in Palestine, Athens in Greece, Murcia in Spain, Palermo in Italy, the city of Tunis in Tunisia, and Irbed in Jordan. The project’s lead partner is Birzeit University in Birzeit (BZU). The project’s duration is two years from November 2021 until November 2023.

The project overall objective is to develop urban policies for improving sustainability and integrating innovation into the urban setting of Mediterranean cities in order to effectively re-structure living and working conditions. This objective will be achieved through the following specific objectives:

- . Promoting innovative approaches/ CE methodologies for re-setting the built environment at Med-Cities (both the building shell and its technological and business content) by developing a toolkit/advisory guide on upcycling buildings/areas of the built environment through CCI SMEs clustering.
- . Establishing targeted pilot creative workshops at regional and national level in order to reach and involve new target groups/type of stakeholders through expertise outreach and advocacy of policymakers, local authorities, key sector stakeholders, organizations and SMEs, i.e., cross-border level.
- . Making use of asynchronous e-learning platforms where knowledge and resources pooling results foster the mainstreaming of good practices towards central principles for planning interventions, improve sustainability and integrate innovation of CCI SMEs Clustering into the urban setting at Med-Cities.

CARISMED promotes the uptake of results achieved by 3 ongoing ENI CBC MED projects to develop policies for improving sustainability and integrating innovation into the urban settings of Mediterranean cities, through the capitalization of circular economy (CE) and creative approaches. Towards a more sustainable and smart urban development, a low-cost Adaptive Reuse Strategy will use MAIA-TAQA innovation practices and interlinks with policymakers, and INNOMED-UP model for CE procedures within Cultural Creative Industry (CCI) SMEs. CE supply chain will address urban challenges while creating business opportunities for SMEs by using INNOMED-UP model and SME4SMARTCITIES smart tools and techniques through ‘ready to deploy’ solutions as well as the outcomes obtained by the project UNDERGROUND4VALUE to enable cross-sector/border level cooperation between the Mediterranean cities. Cooperation agreements among cluster members will be further built up to enhance collaborative innovation schemes based on MAIA-TAQA policy instruments, SME4SMARTCITIES framework for collaboration between the public and private sector, and INNOMED-UP framework for CCI SMEs clustering. The synergy with MAIA-TAQA and SME4SMARTCITIES will be pursued in terms of policymaking & best practices adoption. A great deal of experience in re-setting the existing environment is provided by these projects through refurbishment and re-using underutilized or abandoned urban stock.

Therefore, CARISMED plan is to develop an integrated Urban Policy for improving sustainability and integrating innovation into the urban settings at med cities through capitalization of already acquired conceptual and systematic approaches as regards circular economy and creativity, policy and decision-makers to be reached. Around 8-10 SMEs from each participating city will benefit from being involved in the project and from their cooperation with researchers. Moreover, the digital e-learning platform made the knowledge and resources pooling results and good practices available for mainstreaming and dissemination at cross-border level during the project lifetime and after its end.

The CARISMED consortium enjoyed a highly qualified & well-balanced partnership, capable to address systematically cross-border leverage of CCI SMEs' production novelties, synergies, and cooperation through the implementation of circular economy principles. Smart technology and green architecture approaches. Towards this target, a range of key factors were involved to generate new knowledge or turn knowledge into new products, methodologies and procedures, building an effective system that added value to societies and promote social inclusion through community engagement.

Birzeit University (BZU)- the Lead Beneficiary and the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) are Universities with great project implementation experience and expertise in the fields of engineering, urban planning, creative economy, waste management, and institutional capacity building. They undertook the responsibilities of methodological issues, integration of new technologies and access to innovation through training. The Centre for Renewable Energy Sources and Saving (CRESES) the European Business and Innovation Center of Murcia (CEEIM), the Center for Economic and Social Research for the South of Italy (CRESM), the Institute for Studies on the Mediterranean (CNR-ISMed), Creatif Collectif of Tunis (CC) and Future Pioneers for Empowering Communities' Members in the environmental and educational fields (FPEC-Irbed) all are valuable partners that utilised their significant experience in the various fields of community policy and legislation, the protection of the environment and sustainable development, the entrepreneurial culture, business innovation in society, training and transfer of best practices and experiences, boosting the raising of intelligent capital and the professionalization of private investors the dynamics of the processes of growth and socio-economic development of the countries of the Mediterranean area.

Through primary and secondary research, it was possible to identify CCI SMEs clusters and value chains to understand previous experience on circular economy, innovation and smart tools. With this information, specific training activities on LCARS have been developed, taking into account local specificities. In addition, for a set of selected CCI SMEs, guidance and mentoring activities were developed to promote forms of Mediterranean cooperation.

The organisation of clusters was expecting to play a fundamental role in the capitalisation process achieving the objectives of the project through:

- . Increasing awareness and commitment to integration;
- . Identifying common challenges and opportunities;
- . Promoting the exchange of experiences;
- . Starting a collaboration with existing clusters on common goals.



For this purpose, each partner assessed and identified potential CCI SMEs clusters in the participating Med-City. A Strategic framework among CCI SMEs clusters at cross-border level was drafted to be used by all partners. A general guideline for training activities on targeted topics Was developed and each partner organised awareness training activities on LCARS in each chosen CCI cluster city.

This process paved the way for the pilot creative studios/labs that are operated by CCI SMEs clusters participated in the training and became part of the cross-border cooperation frame. Main phases in this developmental process were the SMEs Clusters assessment report that provided general guidelines for CCI SMEs clusters in Med-cities, the assessment Report per participating city, and the development of a Strategic framework among CCISMEs clusters at cross-border level (EUMC/MPC).

The Awareness and training activities on LCARS took place in the participating cities, where local CCI SMEs (at least 8) participated in this activity implementation. Involvement of experts was considered necessary. The training addressed issues, such as: introduction into the notion of Circular Economy and the role of CCIs in cities, skills development in the use of innovative methods and tools for upcycling capacity building in innovative business models and design for circularity training in the use of Project's clustering tools.



2. Guidelines for implementing training programs for CCI innovative SMEs

2.1 Hebron

Based on A4.2.1 Guidelines for training activities on targeted topics shared by PP5 (CNR- ISMed, Italy), and the world café workshop at the city of Hebron with the participation of 10 CCI SMEs and 5 local stakeholders on Nov. 6th, 2022, the awareness and training activities on LCARS focused on:

1. Introduction to the notion of Circular Economy and the role of CCIs in cities.
2. Skills development in the use of innovative methods and tools for upcycling capacity building in innovative business models and design for circularity training in the use of Project's clustering tools.

It was also important to stimulate the engagement of business development organisations as well as public institutions in order to promote similar training programs in the future.

Training workshops framework and implementation plan:

. Networking & Clustering:

- . Project introduction and capitalization
- . Clustering and sectoral coordination
- . Studio labs: what and why?
- . Green Building; concept and implementation
- . Urban sustainability strategies
- . Smart buildings practices
- . Adaptive reuse of buildings: what and why?

. Circular, Smart, Green, and Sustainable Practices:

- . Sustainability in MSMEs, Intellectual property and legal aspects in Palestine
- . Green Economy
- . Circular Economy in handcrafts
- . Waste management in MSME's as an environmental and economic opportunity
- . Creativity vs Innovation, Human centred design, and Product portfolio

. Proximity Spatial Re-use

- . LCARS: What and why?
 - Designing for Adaptive Reuse
 - Exploring Circular Economy Strategies
 - Guidelines and Practices Adaptive Design for Buildings Reuse
 - Assessing the Economic Viability of Adaptive Reuse Projects
 - Circular Supply Chain Strategies for Adaptive Reuse Projects

. Community Engagement Strategies for Adaptive Reuse Projects:

- How to engage and involve local communities in the adaptive reuse process, and how to educate the public about the benefits of circular economy principles.
- How to involve local communities' members in identifying and salvaging building materials, how to create public spaces that encourage sharing and reuse.
- Monitoring and Evaluating the Environmental Impact of Adaptive Reuse Projects.

13 SMEs completed the training program and they were working in the field of:

Handmade Accessories and gifts, Crochet, Cactus gardens, embroidery, Wooden and mosaic works, Landscaping, Mosaic, Wooden works, Engraving on stone, Ceramic, Handmade leather products.



Opening session of the training workshop on LCARS, 2023.



Parts of LCARS training workshop activities during the second day, 2023.



Parts of LCARS training workshop activities during the third day, 2023.



Parts of LCARS training workshop activities during the fourth day, 2023.

Evaluation

The training workshops had been evaluated using evaluation tool that measures the following aspects:

- . Program, content and methodology:

- . To what degree did the training workshop meet trainees' basic information needs about the training topics?
- . To what degree was the content of the training suitable for the participants level?
- . To what extent was the content of the training relevant to the scope of small or medium-sized organisation's work?
- . To what extent was the duration of the training workshop appropriate for the training content?
- . To what extent did the training workshop achieve the training objectives?
- . Do participants feel that they are able to apply what they have learned in the training workshop to their work?

. Facilitators:

- . To what extent were the trainers able to convey the training content to the trainees?
- . How suitable were the training activities and methods for the training workshop's content?
- . To what extent were the trainers able to provide somewhat comprehensive answers to participants questions?
- . How effective were the trainers in communicating with the trainees during the training workshop?

. Venue and logistics:

- . Level of satisfaction with the overall management of the training workshop.
- . Level of satisfaction with the training venue.
- . Level of satisfaction with the equipment, tools, training aids, and logistics.

Outcomes

The training workshops were able to achieve the training objectives through the following training journey:

- .Building a Foundation for Sustainable Projects
- .Fostering Collaboration and Coordination
- .The Role of Studio Labs
- .Embracing Green Building Principles
- .Crafting Urban Sustainability Strategies
- .Making Buildings Smarter
- .The Benefits of Adaptive Reuse
- .Sustainability in MSMEs and Legal Considerations
- .Applying Circular Economy Principles
- .Waste Management for MSMEs
- .Fostering Creativity and Innovation
- .Strategies for a Circular Economy
- .Establishing Circular Supply Chains
- .Engaging Local Communities
- .Measuring Environmental Impact

It's highly recommended to propose advanced training programs in:

- .Building a Foundation for Sustainable Projects
- .Fostering Collaboration and Coordination
- .The Role of Studio Labs
- .Embracing Green Building Principles

2.2 Athens

Following the analysis and scope of the CARISMED project in the case of Athens, the Local Culture and Creative Industries engaged are coming from the construction sector, and architecture practices. The needs highlighted towards the efficiency of the trainings are connected with the subjects of sustainability, circular economy practices, computational design, and participatory design processes.

On the one hand the expectations of Local CCI SMEs are concentrated on the theoretical aspect and understanding of methodologies and good practices. The configuration of analogies in practice of action in the same context, both physical and legislative, is implied as a thematic of great interest.

On the other hand, the constant doubt of local practices gathers the question of how they will be able to adopt new technologies which could potentially promote circular economy and sustainability. Towards this uncertainty, new design tools such as BIM softwares (Building Information Models) could improve their performance.

Training activities were successfully completed through collaboration of the two Greek partners, the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) and the Centre for Renewable Energy Sources and Saving (CRES).

Experts from the sectors of architecture, spatial development, circular economy and recycling were present to spread the important axis of circularity through different aspects. The training activities' selection of topics was made based on the needs expressed by CCI SMEs during the World Café held in Athens in Nov.2022, related to: 1. Networking & clustering, 2. Circular, smart, green and/or sustainable practices and 3. Proximity & spatial reuse. The main topics introduced during the training activities were:

A. Circular Economy practices and tools for the urban environment in Mediterranean Cities – The CARISMED ENI CBC project.

B. Improving the energy efficiency performance of buildings through a Building Information Model (BIM)

C. Circular economy policies and examples of good circular economy practices

D. Examples of participatory design

The courses took place both physically and remotely, according to online synchronous e- learning, in December 2023, with one physical-presence training (11/12/2023), hosted by CRES and three online courses of 6 hours length (12, 13, 14/12/2023), hosted by NTUA, encouraging people to participate even during working hours. The activities were organised in Athens from National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), and Centre for Renewable Energy Sources and Saving (CRES) both partners of CARISMED project.



Pic_1: Training Seminar_Circular Economy practices and tools for the urban environment in Mediterranean Cities

Λειτουργία με κυκλική νοοτροπία

R E U S E

R E D U S E

R E C Y C L E

Προτεραιότητα στην αποδοτικότητα των πόρων: Παρακολούθηση της κατανάλωσης ενέργειας και νερού για τον εντοπισμό τομέων στους οποίους μπορεί να βελτιωθεί η απόδοση.

Εφαρμογή προγραμμάτων ανακύκλωσης: Εφαρμογή προγραμμάτων ανακύκλωσης για την ενθάρρυνση των χρηστών να ανακυκλώνουν υλικά όπως χαρτί, πλαστικό και αλουμίνιο.

Μείωση αποβλήτων: Εφαρμογή πρωτοβουλιών μείωσης των απορριμμάτων, όπως η κομποστοποίηση οργανικών απορριμμάτων και η μείωση των ειδών μιας χρήσης, όπως χάρτινα ποτήρια και πλαστικά σκεύη.

The feedback achieved had a multifaceted aspect and is characterised by the high level of the participant Local CCI SMEs' interest in the subjects discussed. The outcome of the trainings was very encouraging, mainly for the interest expressed to all the three topics of the activities. The participant Local CCI SMEs was able at the same time to evaluate the need of new computational tools in order to achieve a more efficient building performance, to recognize circular economy as a method to face climate change, and to understand the character of social engagement through participatory practices and procedures.

These trainings were a considerable success as the number of participants exceeded the minimum target of eight local SMEs representatives. In total across the four-day events around 25 attendees participated in the trainings, including representatives of SMEs based in the city of Athens, University students and researchers in the fields of architecture and engineering, public officers from Municipalities and Governmental authorities, and other interested stakeholders. Also, as these trainings were filmed, this will enable other interested parties to attend them.

The interest developed through the CARISMED trainings program presents the need of Local CCI SMEs for further initiatives. After the introduction on the above topics made during the training activities the essence of the Local CCI SMEs practices should be focused on the further and profound development. The clear interest shown, could be addressed to a constant channel of communication for further trainings, seminars, workshops, and events promoting the objectives of the CARISMED project.

2.3 Murcia

The local Culture and Creative Industries sector is composed of entities developing different types of activities that offer physical products or services and and/or digital ones, and the question of sustainability is becoming essential for their business.

The preliminary analysis showed a need to reinforce awareness on business sustainability and practices in the CCI at all stages, from the design to the production. There is great interest to improve understanding on the concepts of circularity and sustainability together with levelling up staff skills on these topics. In other terms, the need assessment pinpoints the necessity to go beyond the theoretical approach towards the concrete adoption/implementation of efficient measures, targeting specifically the CCI sector and addressing its specificities.

The demand expressed was mainly on accessing practical information, tools and methodologies to be easily implemented and additionally having a monitoring system to measure the efficiency of the actions taken at all levels (environment, social, economic...).

This implies specific support/mentorship for the application of the concepts to the professional practices, for concrete tailor-made action plan with a clear business orientation and guidance on funding opportunities access.

On the other hand, the importance of establishing institutionalised connections and setting up collaboration pathways between the SMEs and different entities involved in similar sectors, was enhanced to mutualize resources, and contribute to the reduction of the environment impact and to lower the costs for materials or equipment.

Following this assessment, a tailor-made training programme for the CCI has been designed with experts and includes, on one hand, the key concepts linked to circular economy, sustainability practices and innovation in urban settings, addressing business transformation and digitalization. On the other hand, it brought in practical focus to allow the participants to take the most out of it and be able to transfer this knowledge to their daily professional practices. The two main axes of the course were sustainability and innovation and it covered topics such as circular economy, eco-design, and circular design of products, LCARS, or circular business models.

The course was organised in September 2023 in a hybrid format, with 6 online sessions of 2hours and 2 in-presence sessions of 4 hours organised at CEEIM, in Murcia, to encourage extensive exchanges between participants and create cluster spirit. In total, a 20-hour training, divided into 5 modules, was provided by different experts.

The methodology was deliberately highly practical which is why each of the modules consisted of various sequences: the first part was dedicated to theoretical framework with concepts, definitions and expert insights, and the second part was composed of participatory application exercises, making use of the proposed tools/templates and building teams for group exchanges.

The results of the training course can be evaluated at different levels. The assessment reveals overall positive feedback and high degree of satisfaction of the course and it also reflects the acknowledgement of the relevance of contents for participants professional practices. Additionally, participants expressed that thanks to this training, they improved knowledge, competences and skills in this area. The programme contributed to foster greener awareness and practices among participants, as they had the opportunity to explore and better understand the different concepts and make the use of tools to facilitate the implementation of impacting measures. It was about understanding how concrete measures can be applied in one personal and specific professional environment.

Beyond upskilling, the training course was also meaningful to build collaborative space where participants could exchange on their own practices/experience and challenges they face to apply sustainability into their sector/business. The methodology and the group work contribute to the consolidation of action plans/measures that were elaborated by the participants and improved during the course with the support of experts. Finally, they had the chance to pitch their action plans during the consolidation workshop organised in October 2023.

Another benefit for the participants was the opportunity to explore further collaboration pathways between them.

The feedback received from participants shows a clear interest for such sectoral and thematic training and workshops at local level, targeting the specificities, challenges and opportunities of the CCI. It also demonstrates the importance of establishing collaborative channels with initiatives that already exist in terms of sustainability and developing joint new initiatives, especially at local and regional levels.

In order to pave the way to sustainability, SMEs emphasise the importance of applying those concepts to their own activities, services and products. For this reason, the demand is placed on specific incubation programmes to provide business support approach/mentoring on sustainability that would also include monitoring measures and impact assessment.



Similar training programmes and practical workshops could be set up in the future within the creative studio to foster those practices with the support of local stakeholders. Among the key areas where sustainable practices and innovation could be significant for this sector, we can underline: Circular economy business models including circular design and production (design, materials selection, energy efficiency, waste reduction...), Product life cycle; Funding opportunities, Digital innovation; Heritage preservation; Collaboration schemes and partnerships between experts in business, Innovation and sustainability and creative professionals; Innovation labs/incubators, or local sourcing.

2.4 Palermo

The analysis conducted in the framework of WP3 and WP4 of the CARISMED project, identified the peculiarities of the pilot case area, in terms of business models, models of cooperation and urban fabric, as well as the training needs of SMEs.

In Palermo and Sicily Circular Economy constitutes an important opportunity for facing the challenging problem of waste management, promoting, at the same time, the local CCI SMEs networks. Public policies, nevertheless, currently do not (at national, regional and local level) include any small-scale local-based solutions or clear paths for a circular transition.

The analysis, in particular, was carried out according to the three topics settled by the partnerships and identified the following main areas of interests:

. Networking & clustering:

- . Model of cooperation: sharing of equipment, knowledge and skills.
- . Challenges: low awareness on CE, regional legislation in the field of waste collection and re-use.

. Circular, smart, green and/or sustainable practices:

- . Focus: Digital fabrication for material waste reduction.
- . Level of expertise / awareness: Medium and not even.
- . Challenges: Need for education and information, Lack of efficient policies.

. Proximity & spatial re-use:

- . Experience: Medium.
- . Main opportunities in sharing: Sharing equipment, secondary raw material, bureaucratic effort.
- . Main challenges: Competition, Environmental law for plants in the city-centres.

Despite the lack of encouraging public policies, some creative craft SMEs are experimenting with upcycling processes based on a mix of traditional and innovative techniques using mainly wood and high density cardboard. Instead, in the construction and architectural field, sustainable practices are only recently being introduced.

CCI SMEs experimenting with CE are mostly in the craft sector and have a great interest in low cost and low tech practices. In the building sector the interest is, in particular, on DIY practices. A great variety of traditional construction or craft techniques are based on natural materials, optimise the use of resources and are potentially useful in a renovation project.

SMEs are often organised in non-profit legal forms and have a low level of entrepreneurial culture. Despite the strong cooperation networks, there is a low awareness of the advantages of clustering.

The context and need analysis conducted with the target groups, moreover, showed the importance of focusing on low-budget practices. For these reasons it seemed important to foster the product design skills and the clustering attitude.

CRESM and CNR-ISMed, thus, focused LCARS trainings on the following topics:

- Circular design and ecological transition (CRESM). The training gave CCI SMEs some design skills based on a circular economy perspective, as well as some information and suggestions about the national and local environmental regulations.
- Network management and marketing in the Cultural and Creative Industry (CNR- ISMed). The training developed CCI SMEs skills about internal and network management in order both to fill their gap in entrepreneurial culture and to overcome doubts and fears about clustering.

Moreover, both the trainings have been designed according to the experiential learning approach.

As a result, new SMEs have been involved in the local cluster. All participants (a total of 16 SMEs) gained new skills at a very good level. The skills developed in the framework of circular design were also applied in a collaborative workshop for the construction of some furniture for the new studio-lab.

2.5 Tunis

In assessing the needs of local Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) SMEs in the Medina of Tunis, it was evident that a demand existed for targeted training in abandoned buildings repurposing. The community expressed a keen interest in developing skills related to sustainable urban development, preservation of cultural heritage, and innovative approaches to repurposing spaces. Consultancy needs revolved around understanding local regulations, accessing funding opportunities, and fostering community engagement in repurposing initiatives.

Furthermore, it became apparent during the needs assessment that the SMEs in the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) within the Medina of Tunis were not only seeking training and consultancy support for abandoned buildings repurposing but also desired a more holistic approach to community engagement and sustainable development. Specifically, the SMEs expressed a collective interest in establishing a dynamic and collaborative environment, centred around a designated space that could serve as a regular or frequent meeting and working spot.

The SMEs conveyed a vision of working together to define a strategic advocacy approach towards repurposing various other spaces within Medina, whether publicly or privately owned. This collaborative effort aimed at creating a positive impact on the local community by revitalising and optimising underutilised spaces. Moreover, the SMEs emphasised the importance of incorporating social and environmental concerns into their business model.

The methodology adopted in the training activities was carefully designed to align with the chosen framework of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) business model, reflecting the SMEs commitment to social and environmental responsibility and their goal of positively impacting the community and preserving cultural heritage. In light of these principles, the training and consultancy programs were crafted to go beyond the mere technical aspects of repurposing, incorporating essential elements of community building, strategic advocacy, and sustainability, all in harmony with the SSE model.

The training program followed an interactive and participatory approach. The 20-hour workshop aimed to enrich participants' understanding of circular economy practices, LCARS, and sustainable models within the SSE sector. Through a combination of case studies, interactive discussions, and collaborative activities, the sessions provided a platform for participants to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios. This approach ensured that the training not only imparted theoretical insights but also facilitated the practical application of learned concepts, fostering a deeper and more comprehensive understanding among the SMEs involved.

The training initiatives yielded significant results, empowering a minimum of 8 participants from small and micro-enterprises in the Cultural and Creative Industries, Social and Solidarity Economy, and related sectors. Notably, participants showcased an augmented comprehension of circular economy principles, Local Cultural and Creative Industries Regeneration Strategies (LCARS), and sustainable business models. The workshop, designed to be interactive and participatory, played a crucial role in fostering a collaborative environment, ultimately equipping participants with the skills to apply their newfound knowledge to real-world scenarios.

A unique aspect of the training program was its practical orientation, culminating in the collaborative development of an event that could serve as a frequent and inclusive platform for all participating SMEs. This envisioned event not only highlighted the commercial exhibition activities of cluster members but also featured an exhibition component showcasing the outcomes of the CARISMED desk review, mapping, and awareness efforts.

Two distinct groups emerged from the workshop, each presenting a model for the proposed event. One group focused on combining commercial exhibition activities, shedding light on the diverse activities of cluster members. The other group proposed an exhibition component dedicated to showcasing the tangible results of the CARISMED desk review, mapping, and awareness initiatives. This collaborative event concept aimed to not only amplify the visibility of the participating SMEs but also underscore the potential of space revival through the Cultural and Creative Industries cluster dynamic. Overall, the results achieved extend beyond individual skill enhancement to encompass the collaborative generation of innovative ideas for community engagement and urban development.



Suggestions for Future Similar Training Programs:

Customization: Future training programs should be meticulously tailored to address the unique challenges faced by SMEs in the Medina of Tunis, emphasising topics such as navigating local regulations and securing community buy-in for repurposing projects.

Continued Collaboration: It is imperative to encourage ongoing collaboration among participants, fostering the formation of a robust support network. This network can serve as a valuable resource for addressing evolving challenges in repurposing projects and promoting collective problem-solving.

Practical Application: Enhance the effectiveness of training programs by incorporating more hands-on activities and site visits. This approach will reinforce theoretical knowledge and provide participants with practical skills in abandoned building repurposing, aligning with the interactive and participatory methodology proven successful in this program.

Extended Duration: Consider extending the duration of future training programs to allow for a more in-depth exploration of specific topics. This extended timeframe will facilitate deeper collaboration among participants and provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies involved in sustainable urban development and inclusive economic models.

Post-Training Support: Ensure the long-term impact of training programs by implementing post-training support mechanisms. Options such as mentorship programs or follow-up sessions can contribute to the sustained application of knowledge gained during the training, promoting continued growth and development.

2.6 Irbid

Irbid enterprises are distributed in diversified sectors, mainly commercial and industrial.

Major domains are identified between the surveyed SMEs as follows: Metalwork, Furniture making, Wood turning, Glass Crafts, Paper craft, Jewellery making, Woodcrafts, Ceramics, Commercial and consumer photograph production, Engineering services, Distribution and retail activities, Performance rights, Graphic Design, Publishing of books, wholesaler and distributor of books, magazines, newspapers, Retail of magazines and newspapers and books, Sales of videos and DVDs.

Very few SMEs are aware of the circular economy and its framework. When participants were given a clear definition of circular economy, involving aspects such as the re-use and recovery of waste materials, the majority responded that they were making efforts to recycle and repair. On the other hand, the main challenges that prevent the SMEs from adopting green practices is the lack of technical knowledge/capacity and the financial support.

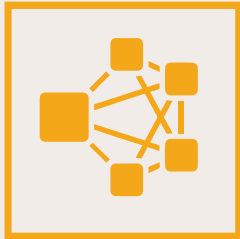
The training topics were developed to adopt the best practices of the projects INNOMED-UP Urban Strategy-State of the art review on CCI SMEs, as well as the MAIA-TAQA innovation practices and policy instruments in the area of Resource Efficiency (RE) services, the SME4SMARTCITIES new products and services that generate “ready to deploy” solutions to address smart cities challenges, while creating business opportunities for SMEs, the COST Action Underground Built Heritage as a catalyzer for Community Valorization (UNDERGROUND4VALUE) CA18110 dissemination of knowledge on underground culture to assist local communities’ decision-making, etc.



The course &Capitalization - to restore the place of innovation and sustainability in the cities of the Mediterranean Basin" was completed, in which twelve participants from various professional and craft sectors from small and medium enterprises in the north of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan participated. The training was over seven days, six days were theoretical while the seventh day was practical took place at the building of Al-Zahra'a park that was provided by Irbid municipality to rehabilitate into a studio lab for the SMEs using LCARS measures.

Results were very good and promising in general which triggered the need for future similar programs to include more SMEs. This could be done at the studio lab in cooperation with the trained SMEs and the municipality.





3. Clusters resetting for internal cooperation

3.1 Hebron

The experience and attitude of local CCI SMEs towards cooperation and shared spaces exhibit a mixed landscape. While some SMEs actively engage in collaborative endeavours, a significant portion operates independently, leading to an unstructured collaborative environment. Some SMEs consolidate their work at a single location, while others lack dedicated spaces and rely on shared facilities. This variance impacts the overall collaborative landscape.

Challenges and opportunities exist within the local context regarding cooperation and shared spaces for CCI SMEs. Challenges encompass limited access to adequate spaces, funding constraints, and inconsistent engagement levels. However, opportunities emerge through the potential for knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and collective growth. Access to finance remains a critical aspect, and identifying and tapping into available financial opportunities is pivotal for fostering collaboration and sustaining shared spaces for CCI SMEs.

Opportunities:

- The CCI in Occupied Palestine has good awareness by most sectors specially between the governmental sector, NGO'S and municipalities which are closely linked to the workshops and productions of CCI industry.
- The CCI industry plays an important role in presenting the history and culture of Palestinian people and it is a critical part of the local and international tourism sector especially because it is a major site for religious pilgrimage.

Challenges:

- The political and industrial challenges greatly affected the industry by the reduction in the number of tourists which forced related shops like souvenirs to shut down and lay off workers.
- Main reasons that CCI SMEs face difficulties in access to funding: Absence of national and regional CCI strategies.
- The lack of funding programs.
- The absence of needed information and the changing of the selection criteria.

Since CCI SMEs face difficulties funding and development, support is expected to be done by the supporting organisations to rescue this industry and attract the future generations to develop CCIs such as: adopting creative and new business ideas, increasing quality, meeting international standards, improving exhibitions and marketing strategies and finally legislation laws which support collaborations.

Moreover, it is expected from chambers of commerce, NGOs and private sector to play an active role in supporting CCI by funding the expenses, developing modern forms of production, packaging and presentations, and supporting business owners to participate in local or international exhibitions by covering costs and facilitations.

Organisations that are involved in supporting CCIs and SMEs focus on capacity building, training, networking and providing grants to supply machinery or raw materials etc..

A sample list of main players in supporting CCI SMEs that usually have programs:

- .Ministry of National Economy. www.mne.gov.ps**
- .Hebron Chamber of Commerce <https://hebroncci.org/new/>**
- .The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
<https://www.unido.org/>**
- .The European Union (EU) https://european-union.europa.eu/index_en**
- .Palestinian Energy and Natural Resources Authority (PENRA)
<http://www.penra.gov.ps/>**
- .The World Bank <https://www.worldbank.org/en/home>**
- .CARE International <https://www.care-international.org/>**
- .Near East Foundation <https://www.neareast.org/>**
- .Palestinian Business Women Forum <https://bwf.ps/>**
- .Taawon organisation <https://www.taawon.org/en>**
- .Department of Architectural Engineering and Planning- Birzeit University
<https://www.birzeit.edu/en/content/architectural-engineering-and-planning>**
- .Business development centres and incubators at local universities, e.g.: Birzeit**
- .University Business Hub <https://www.birzeit.edu/en/b-hub>**

The current group has collaborated to prepare a site owned by the Hebron municipality to serve as a shared crafts studio. Here, various crafts are collectively designed, with each artisan completing their specific part in their own workshop. Additionally, the site functions as a product display area and a space for meetings with supporting institutions and sponsors.

Artisans have contributed their own products to equip and organise this space, ensuring it meets all necessary requirements. These collective efforts will have significantly contributed to advancing the handicraft industry in the area and fostering cooperation and innovation within this context.

It is essential to keep and encourage the role of supporting organisations and stakeholders like:

The Municipality of Hebron, Hebron Chamber of Commerce, Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities/ Hebron office, Environment Quality Authority/ Hebron office, Hebron Governorate, Ministry of National Economy, NGOs and Private sector. Aligning and integrating these entities will not only strengthen the ongoing collaborative efforts but also enhance their effectiveness.

By harmonising efforts and integrating support from these key institutions, the collective aim would be to foster an environment conducive to sustained collaboration and growth in the creative and cultural industries.

Enhancing these aspects will not only strengthen local cooperation networks but also contribute to the sustainability and growth of the creative and cultural industries within the region.



Part of the introductory meeting with the main stakeholders, Academic Institution, and private sectors in Hebron, 2022.



A meeting between SMEs and different Institutions in Hebron, discussing the implementation processes of the project, 2022.



BZU team conduct A debate meeting with SMEs and Private institutions to execute the Studio Lab in Hebron, 2023.

To fortify local cooperation networks, several strategies can be implemented. These include establishing a centralised platform or digital hub for resource sharing and communication, organising structured workshops to educate SMEs on the benefits of collaboration, creating incentive programs to encourage participation, and fostering partnerships with financial institutions to facilitate access to funding opportunities. Furthermore, emphasising the importance of networking events, mentorship programs, and actively promoting a culture of collaboration could significantly enhance the local cooperative landscape.

The present experience serves as a valuable blueprint for expansion and knowledge dissemination. Initiating awareness programs becomes crucial in this regard, aimed at sharing success stories and the lessons learned from the current collaborative endeavour.

These programs will play a pivotal role in amplifying the impact and reach of the existing cooperative model.

3.2 Athens

The World Café which took place in Athens installed the basis for the understanding of Local CCI SMEs needs for the further development of the cluster. Information used for the support of the training program and the establishment of the CARISMED project as a communication channel to promote synergies in the creative sector, are the main important outcomes of the World Café. Through World Café, an important feedback regarding the Local CCI SMEs' activities, practices, and needs was included in the general frame of understanding referring to the Athenian case.



Pic_3: World Cafe – meeting at the NTUA



Pic 4: World Cafe – representative of a CCI SME

Unfortunately, referring to the very short timeline of the project's duration and administrative delays due to both Greek partners being public entities with specific procedures for implementing activities and tendering processes, the Consolidation Workshops were not able to be concluded.

Suggestions for future collaborative initiatives on behalf of the CARISMED project's initiatives could be evaluated, significantly based on the success of the training program. The interest faced during the trainings on the subjects of sustainability and circular economy, which were incorporated in a wide frame of Local CCI SMEs utilities, is encouraging for further activities in the future. Experts from the sectors of architecture, spatial development, circular economy and recycle were present to spread the important axis of circularity through different aspects.

The training activities were developed in axes related to: 1. Networking & clustering, 2. Circular, smart, green and/or sustainable practices and 3. Proximity & spatial reuse.

The main topics introduced during the training activities were:

A. Circular Economy practices and tools for the urban environment in Mediterranean Cities - The CARISMED ENI CBC project.

B. Improving the energy efficiency performance of buildings through a Building Information Model (BIM)

C. Circular economy policies and examples of good circular economy practices

D. Examples of participatory design

The interest developed through the CARISMED trainings program presents the need of Local CCI SMEs for further initiatives. After the introduction on the above topics made during the training activities the essence of the Local CCI SMEs practices should be focused on the further and profound development. The clear interest shown, could be addressed to a constant channel of communication for further trainings, seminars, workshops, and events promoting the objectives of the CARISMED project.

3.3 Murcia

In Murcia, cooperation in the sector of CCI is promoted through professionals' sectoral associations and also counts with the support of the Regional Institute of Cultural Industry and Arts (ICA) and its collaborating entities.

During the local activities, a strong interest emerged from the discussions between the entities involved in strengthening existing cooperation ties and creating new channels. In the world café, 3 topics were tackled: Networking and clustering, Circular, smart, green and/or sustainable practices and Proximity and spatial re-use. It especially enhanced the importance of collaborative models within the same sector of activity but also the importance of establishing new pathways to promote multi-sectoral cooperation, considering also the social and economic impact at local level.

Synergies are important for local actors taking advantage of geographical proximity to move towards sustainable transformation. The mutualization of resources, equipment, services and premises or the reuse of materials are among the commented topics/options in views of reducing costs and ensuring more sustainability in the urban area. Such practices seem to be still underdeveloped, and could be then generalised establishing a structured framework.

SMEs value positively the opportunity to cooperate with other local entities in sharing spaces, for various reasons. For budget matters, as it can contribute to lower the renting and maintenance costs. Setting up dedicated space open to ICC entities, such as a creative incubator that could provide dedicated business and innovation support services, is assessed as a good option. Sharing/renewing locations is considered as a win-win strategy to promote cultural activities and secure business sustainability for ICC professionals. Beyond the space itself, shared access to materials/devices/IT equipment through renting/loan procedure is also an element of interest to support production and innovation in creative processes.

Another benefit is to develop complementarity schemes at business level, through access to direct information and exchange of best practices and expertise with similar entities/professionals.

It is necessary to ensure smooth collaboration pathways to establish protocols for resources/equipment/space sharing, considering logistical and legal considerations.

Another challenge at stake is the selection criteria/requirement to enter collaborative spaces and the further management of the space. The question of building ownership and secure funding is a key element when it comes to shared premises and its management.

Additionally, although financial business support schemes/programmes exist at regional level, an interesting opportunity could be to include specific incentives for those entities that adopt sustainable practices.

Local cooperation networks can be further developed by strengthening initiatives among the different existing networks of the ICC at regional level on specific questions applied to business development.

3.4 Palermo

Cooperation in the CCI sector in Palermo is not highly developed. The exception is in the framework of not for profit activities. CCI SMEs, in fact, have a tight link with the not for profit sector, as they often have a non profit legal form, at least in the start up phase.

Generally speaking, the common lack of entrepreneurial culture does not help CCI SMEs to understand the advantages of clustering and collaboration. Concerns related to intellectual property and competition are widely present. Co-location, moreover, is often considered unnecessary or problematic.

The experience of CCI SMEs in cooperation and space sharing, thus, is mostly linked to non- business-related activities, such as the social ones.

The general low awareness of Circular Economy principles and practices, moreover, does not contribute to the development of cooperation networks.

The activity of the Info-point for consultation of SMEs (before in the framework of the INNOMED-UP project and later of the CARISMED project), as well as the LCARS training activities, contributed to the pilot clustering of some CCI SMEs.

Considering the hesitancy, the cluster has not been based on the idea of a full-time shared space. The pilot, instead, gives the opportunity to share innovative equipment and the knowledge to use it for developing innovative products and, as a consequence, innovative business models based on Circular Economy. The exchange of secondary raw materials has been developed as well.

Existing cooperation networks (based on non-profit activities) and new ones found additional rationales for collaboration and are now working on common projects.

Access to finance is still a challenge, as often CCI SMEs are too small to face the administrative effort of managing a funded project.

Nevertheless, the pilot cluster achieved important results and some SMEs are collaborating in applying for fundings.

Supporting SMEs in developing cooperation networks requires the availability of professional consulting in order to enhance their entrepreneurial culture and their soft skills, such as the project-led approach, as well as to overcome doubts and resistances.

3.5 Tunis

Local CCI SMEs in the Medina of Tunis have exhibited a positive and collaborative attitude towards cooperation and sharing spaces. Through the needs assessment conducted, it became evident that SMEs were actively seeking opportunities to work together and create a dynamic environment anchored in a designated space. The aim is to foster frequent collaboration and serve as a meeting and working spot. This desire aligns with their vision of collectively defining advocacy strategies for repurposing various spaces within the Medina.

The workshops conducted as part of the CARISMED project played a crucial role in translating these aspirations into tangible outcomes. The training program successfully empowered at least 8 participants from local CCI SMEs, enhancing their understanding of circular economy principles, Local Cultural and Creative Industries Regeneration Strategies (LCARS), and sustainable business models. The collaborative nature of the sessions facilitated the formulation of innovative approaches to abandoned building repurposing, contributing to the development of a shared vision among the SMEs.

The experience of engaging in a dynamic and participatory training environment has not only equipped SMEs with the necessary knowledge but has also fostered a sense of community and shared purpose. This was further emphasised through the collaborative development of an event concept during the workshops, aiming to showcase the commercial activities of cluster members and exhibit the results of CARISMEDs desk review, mapping, and awareness initiatives.



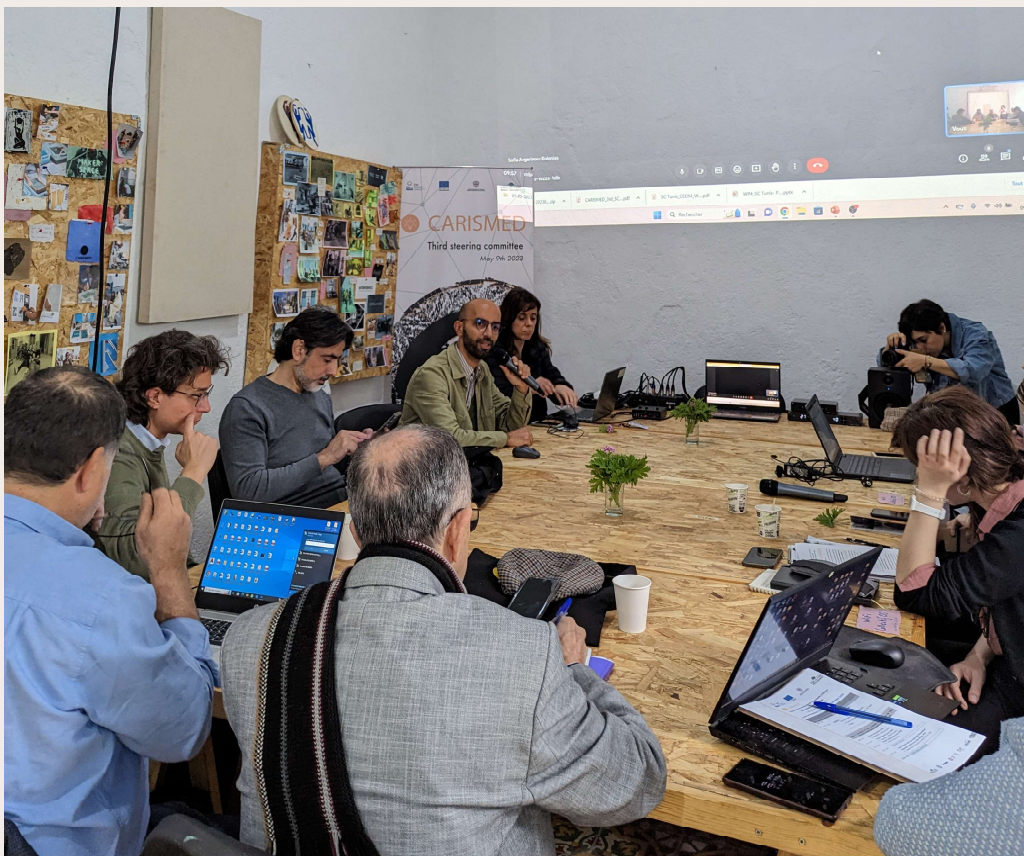
Challenges in local cooperation and space-sharing were identified, including the need to navigate local regulations and secure community buy-in for repurposing projects. However, these challenges were viewed as opportunities for growth and collaboration. The chosen Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) business model reflects the SMEs commitment to social and environmental responsibility, aligning with their goal of contributing to community well-being and cultural heritage preservation.

Access to finance opportunities was recognized as a significant challenge. In response, the training program emphasised strategies for understanding local regulations and accessing funding opportunities. Nevertheless, there remains a need for continued efforts to address financial barriers and create more accessible pathways for CCI SMEs to secure funding for their initiatives.

The results achieved by the local cluster demonstrate not only enhanced individual skills but also the collective generation of ideas for community engagement and urban development.

The proposed event concept reflects the potential for sustained collaboration and community-building, showcasing the impact of the training program on the local CCI SME ecosystem.

Moving forward, suggestions for further developing local cooperation networks include customization of future training programs to address specific challenges faced by SMEs in the Medina of Tunis. Ongoing collaboration among participants should be encouraged, fostering the creation of a support network to address evolving challenges in repurposing projects. Practical application, extended training durations, and post-training support mechanisms, such as mentorship programs, are recommended to ensure the sustained application of knowledge and foster continued growth in the local CCI SME sector.



In conclusion, the local experience in cooperation and space-sharing has been marked by a positive and collaborative attitude, with challenges viewed as opportunities for growth. The achieved results reflect the success of the training program in empowering SMEs and fostering a shared vision for the revitalization of the Medina of Tunis. Moving forward, careful consideration of the identified challenges and opportunities will be crucial for further developing robust and sustainable local cooperation networks.

3.6 Irbid

The SMES participating in this project are part of INNOMED-UP trained SMEs and previously established clusters. We have two clusters among the participants and these two clusters have been established through INNOMED-UP project where we have distributed (8) smart bins connected to the smart bicycle in one cluster that includes several of our SMEs that have been trained through INNOMED-UP and provided with grants to produce innovative products benefiting from their gained knowledge and skills during the training.

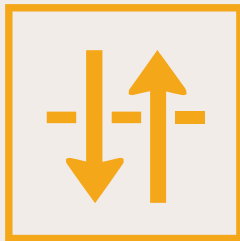
Another cluster includes two smart bins connected to one smart bicycle. This area is an ancient and historical area visited by the tourists which was very important for our cluster who are focusing on producing recycled souvenirs from banana leaves and honey bee waste. We have established and distributed the two clusters to ensure that they are located near each other in Irbid and the movement of the smart bicycles will be smooth to move the collected recyclables. The selected people from the local community to host the smart bins are gathering from their neighbours different types of recyclables that could be used in the production of innovative products by one of the SMEs such as shopping plastic bags, old clothes, plastic bottles, papers and old books and others.



Based on the above, these SMEs have already identified for their businesses the market they need, their efficient value chain where they can get their recyclables and raw materials either through smart bins, from neighbours, and close shops. Additionally, these SMEs shared one of the shops established by one of the SMEs to exhibit their products. This facilitated the marketing of their products as they are working from home. Other SMEs are sharing the same room to produce their products .

Accordingly, geographical proximity is an important factor for the SMEs as it facilitates acquiring the raw materials and marketing their products as well. This has opened the discussion about the possibility of having an old building and doing some maintenance activities following LCARS to be a shared location for these SMEs. This is a valuable opportunity for the involved SMEs as the majority of them are managing their businesses from home. The shared location will also facilitate the marketing and exhibiting of their products, the only issue is the location which should be close to the majority of them as they can't afford paying transportation fees every day.

On the other hand, it was clarified to the SMEs the added value of utilising an old building provided by the municipality, and located in the city centre for exhibiting and marketing their products in an attractive way.



4. External cross-border cooperation best practices

4.1 Hebron

Establishing collaborative creative studio lab schemes within the local context entails crafting a strategic plan to engage and partner effectively with various entities. For instance, partnering with the Smart College, Birzeit University, and the Polytechnic University as educational institutions, alongside entities like the Ministry of Economy, the Reconstruction Committee of Hebron, the Municipality, and the Ministry of Culture, represents a comprehensive approach. This involves forging robust relationships, organising joint events, sharing resources, and offering mentorship programs. Aligning mutual objectives and leveraging collective strengths among these educational institutions and governmental bodies will be pivotal in nurturing a vibrant local creative ecosystem.

The main objectives of this partnership and cooperation highlighted by pilot cluster were:

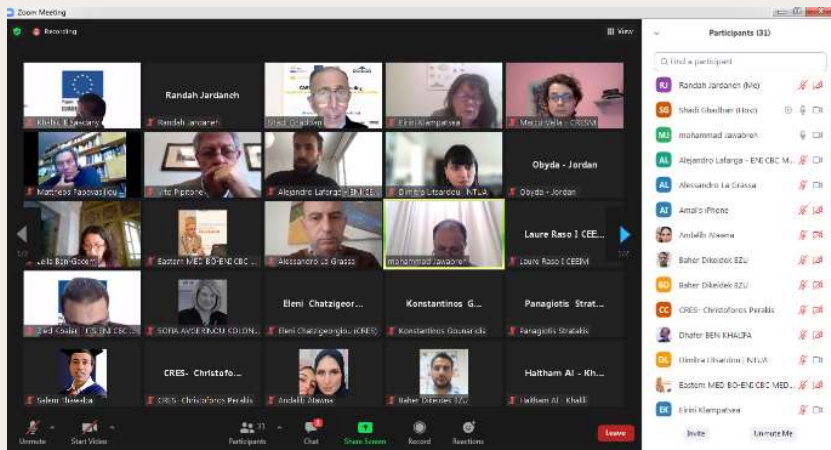
- Facilitating the work of the laboratory and developing its activities
- Improving financing and financial planning strategies
- Developing work team skills

Institutions that can contribute to the success of the laboratory and facilitate its work:

- Governmental centres and institutions
- Cultural, artistic and technical associations and civil society organisations
- Craftsmen unions
- Local companies and industries (private sector)
- Financial institutions and investors
- Universities and technological research and development centres

Expanding cooperation of creative studio labs beyond borders requires a comprehensive strategy. Educational and cultural institutions in Palestine, such as Birzeit University, the Polytechnic University, and government entities like the Ministry of Economy, the Reconstruction Committee of Hebron, the Municipality, and the Ministry of Culture, play a pivotal role in fostering global partnerships. Collaborating with international art councils, global creative networks, and cross-border cultural platforms enables joint projects, knowledge exchange, collaborative research initiatives, and potential co-funded programs.

Leveraging these partnerships enriches the creative process and fosters cultural exchange, driving innovative outcomes on a global scale. The role of Palestinian educational and cultural entities in forging global collaborations is a key element in promoting a vibrant creative landscape.



PPs- Kick-Off Meeting /Official Opening of Carismed – Attendees, 2022.



LB (BZU) participated in a workshop organized by Business Women Forum Palestine (BWF), as part of the regional series events of CLUSTER, gathering Palestinian MSMEs, 2023.

4.2 Athens

Unfortunately, referring to the very short timeline of the project’s duration and administrative delays due to both Greek partners being public entities with specific procedures for implementing activities and tendering processes, the Consolidation Workshops were not able to be concluded.

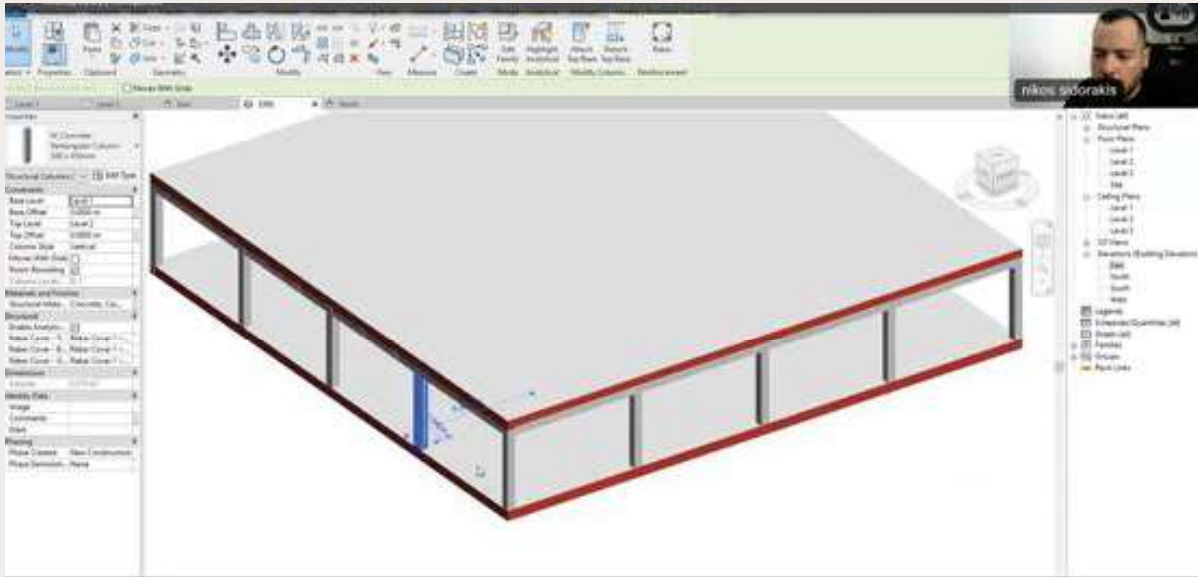
Suggestions for future collaborative initiatives on behalf of the CARISMED project’s initiatives could be evaluated, significantly based on the success of the training program. The interest faced during the trainings on the subjects of sustainability and circular economy, which were incorporated in a wide frame of Local CCI SMEs utilities, is encouraging for further activities in the future. Experts from the sectors of architecture, spatial development, circular economy and recycle were present to spread the important axis of circularity through different aspects.

The training activities were developed in axes related to: 1. Networking & clustering, 2. Circular, smart, green and/or sustainable practices and 3. Proximity & spatial reuse.

The main topics introduced during the training activities were:

- A. Improving the energy efficiency performance of buildings through a Building Information Model (BIM)
- B. Circular economy policies and examples of good circular economy practices
- C. Examples of participatory design

The interest developed through the CARISMED trainings program presents the need of Local CCI SMEs for further initiatives. After the introduction on the above topics made during the training activities the essence of the Local CCI SMEs practices should be focused on the further and profound development. The clear interest shown, could be addressed to a constant channel of communication for further trainings, seminars, workshops, and events promoting the objectives of the CARISMED project.



Pic_5: Training Seminar_ Improving the energy efficiency performance of buildings through a Building Information Model (BIM)



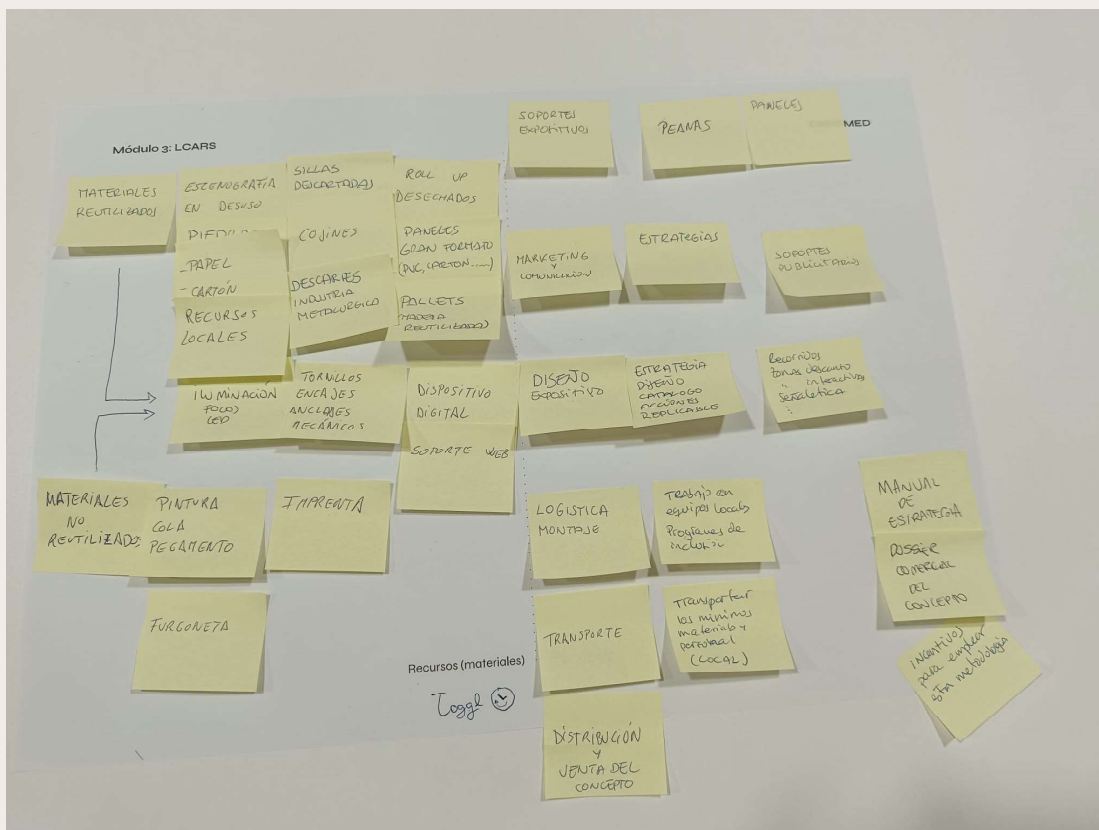
Pic_6: Training Seminar_ Examples of participatory design

4.3 Murcia

CEEIM, as incubator for technology-based start-ups and companies, supports entrepreneurship and innovation providing business advice. The creative studio located at CEEIM where LCARS has been implemented, is at the heart of the planned local cooperation scheme. It showcases best practices on how to apply LCARS and a sustainable approach at the service of creativity in urban settings. This space is thought to be an instrument to foster entrepreneurship (co-working area) and innovation at local level.

The strategy envisions the consolidation of the mapping of local public and private institutions active in the CCIs, especially those working in the digital sector, aligned with CEEIM's core mission, and considering also business support organisations, experts, government agencies, and nonprofits that can contribute through expertise and technical support. It implies the definition of the areas where collaboration with local supporting organisations is especially relevant. This can be done through meetings or stakeholders' workshops to discuss mutual interests, potential benefits, and collaboration opportunities.

Additionally, the development of activities and participatory events, aligned with the programme of activities conducted by CEEIM (events, webinars, meet-ups...), will be considered to enhance skills, foster innovation, and promote knowledge exchange that facilitate collaborative learning and idea generation and where professionals from creative, innovation and entrepreneurship sectors come together to share insights and expertise. This approach would also emphasise upskilling and re-skilling on topics relevant to the industries, through specific mentorship activities.



In that regard, the signature of convention/MOU between parties is a key point to acknowledge the commitment and establish clear objectives and priorities, appointing the key interlocutors on behalf of each party. It also ensures the definition of roles, responsibilities, and expectations from all parties to be adopted within the creative studio.

In conclusion, the creative studio can be a useful instrument to raise awareness and foster sustainable practices in urban settings at local level.

CEEIM collaborates with different associations active in the CCIIs (e.g. makers, video games...) and it is also involved in different networks at regional, national and European levels. Connections will be sought with other relevant initiatives to establish further cooperation and develop new projects to promote local companies' services and products.

This can provide opportunities to access new audiences, explore international markets, and increase visibility on a global scale. Cross-border cooperation can also be a way to access international funding and tenders and support for creative projects.

4.4 Palermo

CRESM has a long lasting experience in creating networks for local development and for support to small and young entrepreneurs. NOZ – Nuove Officine Zisa, where both the Infopoint for consultation of SMEs and the studio-lab are located, offers several opportunities, from consulting to the use of various equipment, that attract students and young professionals, as well as NGOs. Over the time, a community has been developing, opening up to several collaborations. The collaboration with CNR-ISMed and its researchers contributes to enlarge and enhance the network.

This community was the main ground for developing the local cluster in the framework of the CARISMED project. Moreover, it is still creating occasions to start new projects, as well as to raise awareness on the Circular Economy principles and practices.

The exchange among different actors also fosters the debate on common challenges. It offers the opportunity to engage the University, the CNR, research organisations, as well as several other stakeholders in the production of shared documents and position papers for asking public authorities to address some significant issues, in particular about waste management and environmental regulations impacting the possibility to develop Circular Economy Practices. These topics were also addressed in the framework of the Consolidation Workshops held in December 2023 and are the object of MoUs.

The cooperative project-led approach that the CARISMED partners in Palermo are fostering will also bring the possibility to develop cross-border collaborations further. The new cooperation programs to be launched in the next few months will be the occasion to promote existing partnerships, as well as new ones, for sharing best practices and cooperation models.

This cooperative approach constitutes a key strategy for the Studio-lab, in order to make it a real innovation hub.

4.5 Tunis

The nature of the creative collective's activities draws a community of designers, architects, and artists, many of whom are unfamiliar with the Medina and only visit during events organised by our association. Numerous designers express a keen interest in collaborating with local artisans but struggle to find a structured framework beyond sporadic calls from dedicated entities. The presence of the cluster within our space serves as a catalyst for fostering and facilitating these meaningful encounters.

Our strategy involves facilitating experimental collaborations with students from art and design schools in Tunis. Moreover, we have established connections with incubators, inviting them to participate in specific events such as "DawerZero" to encourage active networking.

By creating an environment conducive to these interactions, we aim to bridge the gap between creatives, artisans, and the broader local community.

The studio labs of the CARISMED project in six countries constitute a crucial foundation for establishing remote synergies. This involves sharing governance models of clusters, organising virtual events, and exchanging best practices to enhance collaborative efforts.

Concurrently, our association, the creative collective, has established connections with foreign design collectives such as Okörauch in Germany. Our plan is to involve them in joint initiatives, ultimately expanding the cluster and engaging non-traditional actors.

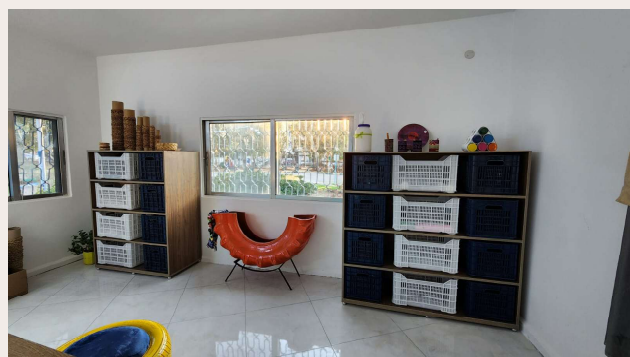
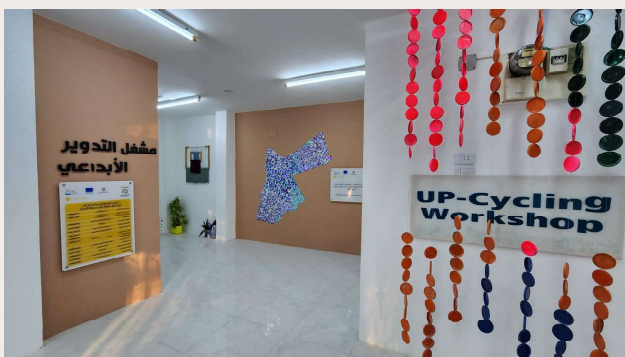
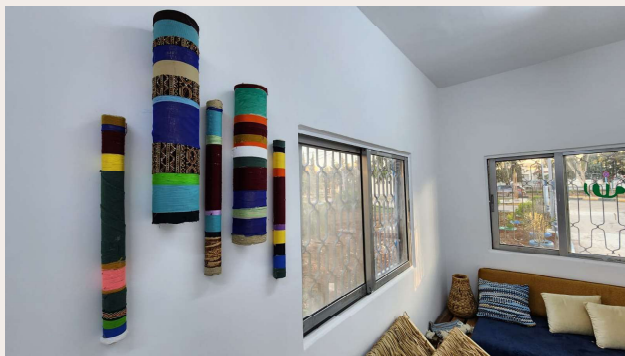


Through strategic outreach and collaborative initiatives, we aim to create a dynamic network that transcends borders. This proactive approach ensures that the Creative Studio Lab becomes a hub for innovation, fostering connections both locally and globally.

4.6 Irbid

Future Pioneers has signed an MOU with Greater Irbid Municipality in order to rehabilitate the building of Al-Zahara'a Park using LCARS measures in order to be used as a studio lab for the SMEs. The municipality was chosen in order to ensure that this building that is located in the centre of the city and can be easily accessed will be opened for all SMEs and ensure its sustainability.

The LCARS measures that are planned for the building have been proposed by the trained SMEs, the municipality engineering team and Future pioneers architectural consultant. The initial rehabilitation plans for the culture and awareness building located in Al-Zahra Park in Irbid were also reviewed and discussed with the relevant stakeholders and SMEs. One of the most important matters were the ideas, contributions and suggestions of participating craftsmen, and craftswomen.



The centre is intended for education and research practices through computers connected to the Internet and information platforms. The centre will be under the supervision of trainers that volunteer, it will include a coffee station and a workshop space to encourage culture and knowledge exchange in the fields of recycling, sustainability and rehabilitation.

A display corner for items produced by participants will be showcased as well as a storage space and bathrooms for visitors, in order to achieve all goals set forth by the municipality. Outdoor private guest bathrooms will be available in the garden as well.

Cooperation between craft workers and the Greater Irbid Municipality will be an integral aspect, where the municipality committed to provide all types of unwanted materials and unused items they have in their warehouses that were originally intended for disposal as such resources are important in the process of rehabilitating the building.

Several relationships were established between craft workers and representatives of the municipality with the aim of cooperating with each other in the handicraft bazaars that the Irbid municipality holds on a seasonal basis.

Further Cross-border cooperation will be sought with similar initiatives at local and regional levels within CARISMED project and other projects.





5. Conclusion

The purpose of this Guide is to provide an overview of the best practices developed and implemented in the framework of the CARISMED project.

Drawing on previous experiences and on the results of many ENI CBC MED projects, as well as on empirical research and case studies, this Guide benefits from the multiple perspectives of six different urban contexts in the Mediterranean area.

Each partner had to find a local path to deal with challenges – such as involving CCI SME in the renovation of a shared space – and opportunities – such as the development of a Circular Economy cluster – provided by the project. Not only each city has its unique cultural ground, but also each local CCI SMEs fabric is different. The wide world of cultural and creative industries expresses small traditional handicraft workshops as well as young professionals’ studios, together with innovative digital fabrication activities and NGOs dedicated to sustainable economy communication. During the field research each actor revealed individual, local-based needs, as well as some common concerns, such as the difficulty to survive on the contemporary quickly evolving market, in the current economic context.

The general approach and methodology, thus, had to be adapted to local peculiarities, in order to achieve the expected results and to generate a positive impact on the target groups, with the awareness that small entrepreneurs need, today, a wide range of skills.

As a result, this Guide provides a systematic framework for developing training and support programs for innovative CCI SMEs working in the framework of the Circular and Green economy.

The training activities proposed Circular Economy and Low Cost Adaptive Reuse practices (LCARS) both as tools for a green transition of the production chains and as solutions for reducing costs of raw materials and waste management. Highlighting the economic advantages of reusing and recycling has been also a strategy to face some fears and resistances linked to the idea that “green solutions” are expensive and difficult to implement. LCARS, on the contrary, have often a low-tech approach based on traditional practices or materials.

Cooperation has also been promoted within the local clusters, both at local and cross-border level. SMEs are often new to this field and need to be supported in order to appreciate the potential advantages of sharing knowledge and spaces, as well as of establishing cross-border networks. The Guide shows how the clustering process operated in defining collaborations grounded on sharing equipment or marketing strategies, on designing innovative products integrating different skills, on developing new business models or just short/medium term projects for accessing funding.

Despite local peculiarities, the need of CCI SMEs for support and consultancy arises without any doubts in each urban context touched by the project. In this sense, the CARISMED project offered the opportunity to develop and experiment – through the pilot cluster – a ground-based methodology that is now available to be adapted and applied all over the Mediterranean area.

We expect that the best practices within this Guide will be a useful tool for other organisations operating in the framework of SMEs support, as well as for decision-makers and public authorities working on public policies for local-based Circular Economy strategies.

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