



Fostering Creativity and Innovation  
in the Mediterranean Area  
as Key elements for Regional Sustainable Development :  
**CreaMed Alliance**



# Newsletter

October 2011



Project cofinanced by the  
European Regional Development Fund

## Dear Readers,

This is the second newsletter of our CreaMed “Fostering Creativity and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area as key elements for Regional Sustainable Development: CreaMED Alliance” ([www.creativity4med.eu](http://www.creativity4med.eu)) project, funded by the MED Programme.

In this newsletter you will find interesting information about the “CreaSeminars” that we conducted in Spain, Italy, Greece, Portugal, France, Cyprus, Slovenia and Malta that aimed to:

- ☀ transfer and exchange knowledge between public and private bodies, SMEs and various stakeholders devoted to the promotion of creativity and innovation;
- ☀ urge and commit regional stakeholders to generate new ideas and common solutions for improving and consolidating the development of their Regional Innovation Systems;
- ☀ gather ideas, conclusions, interventions and lessons learnt that will be published in the CreaMED Open Book.

Embedding creativity to organizational culture is not such an easy task especially in the current economic environment that financial sustainability is the primary aim of the vast majority of enterprises. We hope our seminars, held around the Mediterranean area, to have achieved making the attendants conceive the importance of creativity in innovation processes and have persuaded them to invest on creative techniques usage in order to relish multiple benefits on personal, team and organisational level.

We hope you will find interesting and illuminating our experiences from the CreaSeminars.

Enjoy your reading!  
The CreaMed team









## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
<i>CreaSeminars Key Points .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Algarve CreaSeminar (Portugal) .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Toscana CreaSeminar (Italy).....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Andalusian CreaSeminar (Spain).....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Central Macedonia CreaSeminar (Greece) .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Catalonia CreaSeminar (Spain).....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Malta CreaSeminar (Malta).....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Limassol CreaSeminar (Cyprus).....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Abruzzo CreaSeminar (Italy).....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Pomurje CreaSeminar (Slovenia).....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>PACA CreaSeminar (France).....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>International Conference in Faro .....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>CreaMed Partners.....</i>	<i>18</i>



## *CreaSeminars Key Points*

From the implementation of the *CreaSeminars*, the following key points were identified as crucial for the successful completion of creativity related seminars:

-  ***Ensure attendance of top managers:*** in promoting public policy or organizational innovation, managers define a general orientation to innovation, allocate the necessary resources to a project team and measure the results in terms of their impact in the company's/region's "profits". Thus, their presence and commitment to the seminars is vital.
-  ***Commit managers to achieve specific results:*** real innovation comes from solving many problems during (project) implementation, which requires persistence, imagination, knowledge and, above all, team work and management support.
-  ***Appoint everyone with a single project during the session:*** all participants need to have a specific task during the session, no matter what their responsibilities or knowledge diversity may be.
-  ***Maintain participants' connection afterwards:*** it is equally important, after the end of the session, for the members to continue their communication.
-  ***Get a sound diversity of organisations and specialists:*** innovation surfaces from different knowledge and creativity capabilities. Also, all those who can oppose, support or be affected by a decision should take part in the respective discussions.
-  ***Create a project that may give rise to other projects:*** participants should consider the seminars as part of an important project that could (and should) lead to future activities.

## CreaSeminars Key Points

- ☀ **Get people interested so as to expand the creativity community:** if someone starts working with a creativity method that recognizes it improves certain aspects of their individual creativity, it is likely that this person will become more interested in the subject and in meeting more people related with the issue.
- ☀ **Get the proper environment in order to bring the best conditions for creative work:** sometimes it is better to move away from work area. The place where the meeting takes place should/should offer some symbolic meaning that would remind team members that there are more important things than organisation's problems (e.g. social care centre).
- ☀ **Use a group method:** it may get work done in a very short time and it will increase the commitment towards the project and initiate creative development, in terms of divergent thinking.
- ☀ **Stay focused on the problem throughout project implementation:** it seems trivial but it's not! As the action plan lists tasks to be executed by different sub-teams, it is easy for people to concentrate in the tasks and forget the bigger problem they are trying to solve.
- ☀ **Write down as much as possible:** all the steps carried out to execute the project should be notated, so that tacit knowledge may become explicit for other people in future projects.



## Regional Experiences – CreaSeminars



## Region: Algarve – Portugal

APGICO, the Portuguese Association of Creativity and Innovation, organized its CreaSeminar on June 6, 2011 that aimed at building an innovation project for a private regional museum. 25 managers, artists and technicians, from public, private and non-profit organisations participated in the seminar held at the community-centre of a remote village.



The event was organised around the Museu do Trajo (Costume Museum), which faces serious difficulties.

The seminar started with some preparatory activities – the pre-consult session – in which the administration people were interviewed in order to draw the objective of the intervention. During the CreaSeminar, the facilitators used the problem solving method “*Problemaction*” with which they listed the problems referring to the accomplishment of the objective of the project, followed by an emotional linkage between members, during the convergent phase of problem definition. Then, an action planning was performed where team creativity expressed itself during the “how to” develop each planned task, including its acceptance by external people and factors.

According to the evaluation of the seminar, two main impacts were gained by the participants:

Divergent-thinking evaluation: the ‘*Problemaction*’ method was considered effective in changing the participants’ perspectives. In fact, a significant difference occurred in the factor “Deferral of judgment”, meaning that team members improved their tolerance to others’ ideas, an essential element in seeing problems from a different angle.

Project-commitment evaluation: the session contributed in increasing the group’s commitment towards the project, which is mandatory for project execution.



## *Region : Toscana - Italy*

The Eurobic Toscana Sud organized its first workshop entitled “Be creative and reinvent your business” in Florence on July 26, 2011. In line with the creative vocation of the CreaMed project, the workshop was carried out at the “Casa della Creatività”, a place that gave an edge to the implementation of the seminar through its colours and its very special backgrounds.

The programme of the event focused on the following topics:

- ☀ presentation of project activities and future goals,
- ☀ individual interpretation of the concepts of creativity and innovation in the application context of participants' companies, organizations, initiatives and projects,
- ☀ elements of comparison and synthesis that make it possible to refer to an innovation and sustainable development in a broader context such as the Tuscany Region.



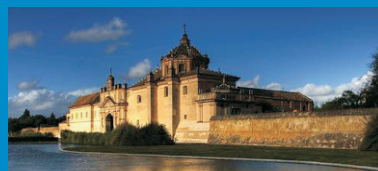
The day was moderated by Alberto De Minin, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, and opened with the speech of welcome and general description of aims and objectives of the project by Serena Cesarini Sforza from Eurobic





## Region: Andalusia – Spain

IAT together with **General Direction of Research, Technology and Enterprise (Andalusian Regional Government of Economy, Innovation and Science)**, organized their CreaSeminar entitled *“CreaMED Conference. Reinvent your business: “opportunities to be competitive”* on June 9, 2011 at the Cartuja Monastery.




A number of key local actors were invited to the seminar and performed speeches related to the issues of the local knowledge system and the role public and regional actors have in it; the main public initiatives promoted by the Economy, Innovation and Science Ministry to support and finance the creation and consolidation of innovative SMEs in Andalusia and the importance of innovation in the sustainability of SMEs. A debate followed the presentations involving identification of ideas and actions that can further improve the knowledge-based system of the area.

 The main conclusions reached were:

Considering Innovation as the ability of “doing” new things and Creativity as the ability of “thinking” new things, the strong link among them is more than evident. Anyway the context is (public or private) it is not possible to carry out new “things” if they have not been previously thought. Given this situation, the relevance of Creativity as a driver for Innovation should be assumed by the actors who play an important role in the sustainable development and economic growth of our regions.



 The decision to go for Creativity and Innovation is not easy and it constitutes only the beginning of a long (and sometimes uncertain) way, in which knowledge management, research, constant search for new alternatives, etc. are also needed. To innovate, not only good ideas are needed. It is necessary to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that allow us to translate these ideas into added value for the region and for the company. Innovation needs to enhance value to the knowledge generated by the creative process.



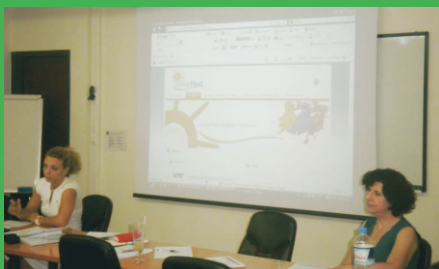
The Andalusian innovation system needs to recognise creativity as a valuable tool to generate more and better solutions and to enhance socio-economic growth in the region. Government, agents and companies must be aware of the need to invest in innovation to continue to tackle the complexity of our business and productive reality.

## Region: Central Macedonia – Greece

CERTH organized on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2011 its CreaSeminar at which around 20 people, representatives of the most important policy makers of the regional innovation system in Central Macedonia, were invited and attended it.

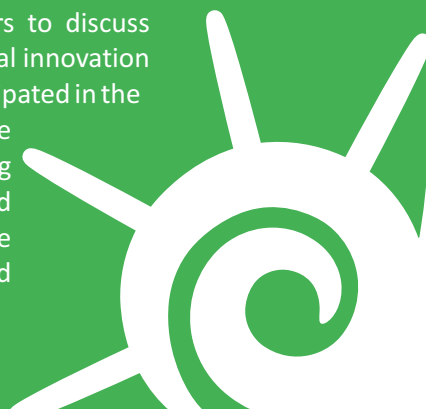


Initially, CreaMed project concept and main results were presented giving pace for discussion. The attendants took the opportunity and held a 2hour discussion giving their feedback and ideas on the improvement of the regional innovation system. In order to improve the flow of ideas and discussion, some best practices and creativity promotion initiatives were chosen to be presented (Cyprus, Italy and France), which were considered very interesting by the participants, according to their comments. Following that the vivid discussion, a set of recommendations and improvement measures, as described in the respective report of the project, were presented and the participants expressed their opinions about their suitability to the Central Macedonia region.



The most important output of the seminar was that it triggered a vivid discussion among the participating regional policy makers about the overall policy implementation gaps and the needs of the regional innovation system of the Central Macedonia.

As stated by the participants of the seminar, it was highly appreciated that CERTH took the opportunity to invite all regional stakeholders to discuss together about the strengths and the weaknesses of their regional innovation system and also the opportunities and threats that should be anticipated in the forthcoming years. The success of the seminar was such that the participants suggested to keep holding an informal type of meeting periodically in order to exchange experiences, suggestions and ideas and enforce the converge effort to further support the regional innovation system, competitiveness and entrepreneurship.



## Region: Catalonia – Spain

Ascam Technology Centre organized together with AMEC, a non-profit business association with over 35 years of experience in the promotion of exports and the internationalization of companies, its CreaSeminar entitled “Creativity, Innovation and new challenges for the company” on June 28, 2011. The event was hosted near the Vallès Technology Park (PTV), a scientific and business park next to the Synchrotron Light Facility Park and Autònoma University.



The Seminar aimed to:

- ☀ exchange knowledge among public bodies and SMEs about the improvement of the innovation process through creativity,
- ☀ improve awareness on the importance of creativity in the innovation process, and to
- ☀ teach participants how to implement joint innovation strategies in their teams, departments and firms.

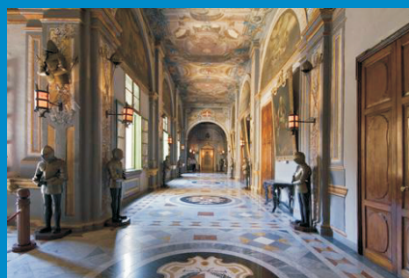
During the conference, it was identified that a significant challenge for many organisation is how to focus their strategic creativity process. As discussed, the generation of a plethora of ideas that are not properly focused can be a nightmare for the management team. In order to maximize the creative potential of an idea generation activity, it should be collaborative.



This means to open the boundaries of the firm and collaborate with universities, technology centres and even other firms in order to exchange knowledge. The attendants also pointed out that bringing new ideas to the market often needs radical organisational changes, and since these can affect significantly different areas of the organizations the involvement of the team management is essential.

## Region: Malta

Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit (FTZ) organized its CreaSeminar entitled *"Igniting the Mediterranean Innovation Society"* on May 24, 2011. The event was held at the House of Representatives, Palace Malta. The participants of the Seminar were mainly SMEs, University students, Government representatives and various stakeholders.



Throughout the workshop sessions FTZ divided the audience into 4 groups along with 4 facilitators per groups and the creativity technique "Six Thinking Hats", created by prof. Edward de Bono, was used. During the seminar, the main question posed was how to ignite the Mediterranean Innovation Society.

During the sessions, facilitators used the both the "Green Hat" and the "Blue Hat" method. The "Green Hat" was associated with thinking new thoughts and creativity through provocation and identifying new possibilities. The "Blue Hat" aimed to identify how to get past the barriers or obstacles.



Professor Edward de Bono pointed that the key to a successful use of the Six Think Hats methodology is the deliberate focusing of the discussion on a particular approach, as done during the CreaSeminar sessions. For instance, a meeting may be called to review a particular problem and to develop a solution for the problem. The Six Thinking Hats method could then be used in sequence to first of all explore the problem, then develop a set of solutions and finally choose a solution through critical examination of the solution set.

Professor Edward de Bono pointed that the key to a successful use of the Six Think Hats methodology is the deliberate focusing of the discussion on a particular approach, as done during the CreaSeminar sessions. For instance, a meeting may be called to review a particular problem and to develop a solution for the problem. The Six Thinking Hats method could then be used in sequence to first of all explore the problem, then develop a set of solutions and finally choose a solution through critical examination of the solution set.



## Region: Limassol - Cyprus

The region of Agios Athanasios organized its CreaSeminar event on June 29, 2011 at the premises of the Agios Athanasios Municipality, with the title: *"Innovation and creativity – Basic concepts for sustainable socioeconomic development"*.



The agenda included – together with the presentation of the Creamed project – a total of 14 presentations organized in 3 axes:

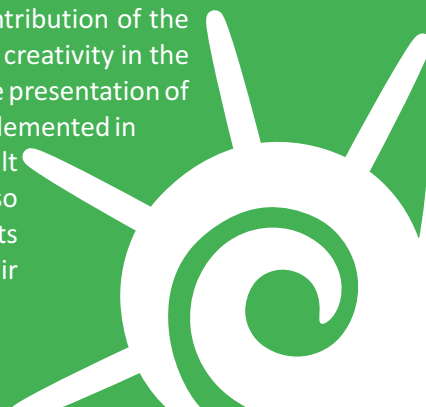
- A. Creativity and Innovation in Entrepreneurs
- B. Innovative Technological Tools
- C. Development of Creativity and Innovation skills

As discussed, the general system of governmental authorities, agents and companies in Cyprus needs to cooperate further towards the recognition of Creativity as a valuable tool for generating more and better solutions and enhancing socioeconomic growth. Also, the inadequate degree of funding and opportunities offered from current innovation policies for the cultivation of creative thinkers was pointed as another significant issue. A step towards this direction could be the acknowledgement of the rationale and the long-term benefits of initializing a process of exchanging knowledge and expertise among public or private bodies and SMEs, together with the value added by the contribution of important stakeholders. The improvement of innovation policies and the promotion of creativity



should be targeted at a regional level. The country has the financial and human resources necessary for such advancements; it only needs to organise more effectively and efficiently its assets and resources.

Overall, it was acknowledged that the contribution of the CreaSeminar in promoting innovation and creativity in the region was very important. In particular, the presentation of novel technological tools that could be implemented in participants' own environments and offer innovative solutions to difficult problems was considered a significantly interesting aspect of it. It should also be noted that the organizing committee gave the opportunity to the participants to present their own innovative initiatives and practices that also enhanced their interest.



## Region: Abruzzo - Italy

Region Abruzzo organised its CreaSeminar on July 28, 2011 in Pescara in the Congress Centre Serena Majestic. In total 58 people, representatives of the most important policy makers, local operators and businesses of the regional innovation system in Abruzzo, attended the seminar.



The main aims of the CreaSeminar were:

- ☀ How can the regional innovation policies attract more investments and support the implementation of innovation in businesses?
- ☀ How can regional stakeholders work together to give input to policy strategies through a collaborative bottomup system?
- ☀ How can the region forward the innovation, creativity and authenticity notions to its businesses, which are mainly SMEs and often family run?



As acknowledged by all participants, despite the problems the Abruzzo region faces, it needs to create a strong and solid business system with peaks of extraordinary excellence. To this end, direct actions should be implemented for the support of the development of creativity in SMEs. The idea is to identify tools in collaboration with the actors of the economic system after analysing information about the needs of the institutions that will participate in the forthcoming CreaMed workshops.

The most important outcome of the meeting was that, for the first time, it was acknowledged and emphasized that political attention should be put on the promotion of creativity in the development of the innovation capacity of SMEs, which represent the majority of enterprises in Abruzzo. Such an emphasis constitutes an important policy step for the current – traditional – regional entrepreneurial supporting policies.



## Region: Pomurje - Slovenia

The Regional Development Agency Mura organized on August 23, 2011 its CreaSeminar at the Youth Cultural Center in the Castle of Murska Sobota. The Seminar aimed to bring closer to SMEs, stakeholders and other interested parties, the idea and concept of creativity as leverage for innovation. The CreaSeminar was attended by more than 90 participants, not only from the Pomurje region but also from other parts of Slovenia, showing that the selected topics presented and discussed are an answer to the needs and demand of SMEs and other organisations.



Pomurje region is one of the less developed in Slovenia, facing brain drain, no higher education facilities (although there are 6 colleges in the area), no theatre (only amateur ones) and is mainly rural area with no big cities (the biggest town has only 25.000 inhabitants). However, important writers, painters, musicians, actors, designers, architects and other creative people have come from the region.



During the roundtable a number of good practices of regional companies were presented that showed that the utilisation of creative approaches and creative techniques can encourage employees to be creative and improve their organisations. Overall, it was acknowledged and appreciated that the enterprises that are already using such creative techniques have much higher levels of innovation capacity.

An important issue, pointed by the participants was how to choose the right idea to develop further. Some industries do not need specific tools for further developing or checking an idea, but other ideas need specific tools for their realisation.

The main outcome of the seminar was the improvement of awareness and appreciation of companies of creativity as a significant parameter in innovation processes.



## Region: PACA - France

On June 24, 2011 Mediterranee Technologies organise its local CreaSeminar that aimed to

- ✦ Debunk the idea that creativity equals innovation;
- ✦ Illustrate the way creativity can be thought as a 3-axis concept: creativity as a field of economy (creative industries), creativity as a process (from R&D to design) and creativity as an emerging collective phenomenon (creative cities);
- ✦ Extract the creativity resting in public research laboratories.



The first presenter, a Professor at a local University, showed some the results from interviews with 25 professional designers in testing the inner representation of creativity, openness to new ideas, appreciation of aesthetics, etc. She demonstrated how these representations work in vivo by showing a case based on the design of a new type of chair dedicated to internet cafes. Afterwards, three managers of clusters and incubators presented their own examples

of creativity actions. The first manager explained how the Marseille Innovation Incubator invited a dozen contemporary artists to collaborate with an equal number of start-ups and each artist was responsible for the creation of a unique piece representing the corresponding start-up. In the end, the companies realized that the artistic process is quite similar to their innovation process. The second manager presented 2 different spaces that will soon be available for members of the regional photonics cluster: Optopolis will serve as an artists' residence and Optolab will provide the necessary materials and expertise to carry out new frontier research talked about 2 new specialized and ultra creative mini-clusters: one about "3D environments" (new sensory experiments for entertainment) and the other about "design dedicated to digital objects surrounding us" (including robots or consumer electronic equipments). The last presentation was performed from the founding director of MateriO that provides its design related members with an online database of materials with specific properties, ultra creative books, contemporary art pieces and photographs as well as with 5 showrooms across Europe.

At the wrap-up of the CreaSeminar, the hosting organization informed the participants about their upcoming initiative, the Creative Valley. 3 neighboring cities (Sophia-Antipolis, Cannes and Grasse) have been invited to pool together their efforts in order to create a "Creative Valley" that will be based on existing creative industries. This action could lead to a new brand for the French Riviera and also to the creation of several spaces dedicated to creativity and innovation.





## The CREAMED “International Conference”, an egg hatched inside the buzzing nest of ECCI in Faro

The fact that Apgico was both the organizer of the 12<sup>th</sup> EACI conference in Faro (ECCI XII) and a member of the CREAMED alliance couldn't pass unnoticed. It was soon decided that the CREAMED « International Conference », a half-day of dissemination about our project starring guest speakers, would find its way into the burgeoning 3-days program of that creativity major event in September.

The goal was indeed manifold for our consortium. First, having a unique chance to attend this very particular 3-days event and to get to know the EACI tribe (do you know how to pronounce the name of Dr Cziksentsmihalyi, father of the « flow » concept? Have you ever tried « random slide show karaoke » ?) was definitely a boon for all of us. Then, of course, the core ambition of this CREAMED conference was to widely disseminate information about the results achieved and the work in progress. As for our invited guest speakers, the aim was higher than just speeches, getting to know them and try them out in vivo, and make sure we keep them as « external experts » for the remaining months of CREAMED. Needless to say, this conference was not one-way, and turned into a

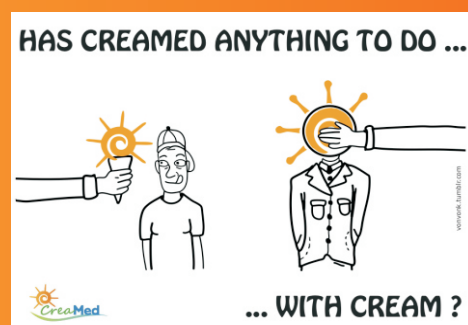
perfect opportunity to collect new ideas from the audience, and start fuelling the second year of CREAMED. We should not forget either that these 3 days together in Faro served us as a « permanent steering committee », since we could discuss many details about the project between members. Icing on the cake, we were also able to liaise and exchange with colleagues from another sibling consortium, CreaNET.

More than 50 people attended the CREAMED (double) morning session on Sept. 15th, some having been lured by our creative « street marketing » index cards, a series of 16 illustrated catchy questions, that were distributed around the Faro conference site on the previous day.

If you were there, now you know how it's possible to turn used cooking oil into gas for your car (S. Bezergianni) and why Renault keeps paying way more car designers than it should (T. Paris). If you were there, now you know the best way to generate original ideas by the truckload (N. Mulej) and the way a Shakespearian skull can act as a hook for creativity (D. Cerda). If you weren't and you still want to know the answers, rush to the CREAMED webpage and find out ! Many other topics were addressed during that morning, like creativity under strong constraints (time, raw material, money, freedom), like the renewal of creativity and innovation prizes (probably one of the best incentives ever), like the growing number of naysayers who are convinced that creativity is a just another myth (ideas are everywhere, what it takes is courage and obsession to drive any good idea to its ultimate endpoint).

The CREAMED International Conference, little russian doll nested into the big and colourful one of the ECCI XII Faro conference, was a success, and our project got large exposure, enjoyed some fruitful discussions, and we could even publicly debunk the idea that CREAMED had anything to do ... with cream !

Next stop for the CREAMED tour : Malta in January 2012.





Innovation and Technology

[Andalusian Institute of Technology \(IAT\) / Spain](#)



[Centre for Research and Technology Hellas \(CERTH\) / Greece](#)



[General Direction of Research, Technology and Enterprise / Spain](#)



[Temi Zammit Foundation / Malta](#)



[Portuguese Association for Innovation & Creativity Management in organizations / Portugal](#)



[Regional Development Agency Mura \(RDA Mura\) / Slovenia](#)



[ASCAMM Technology Centre / Spain](#)



[Eurobic Toscana SUD / Italy](#)



[Agios Athanasios Municipality / Cyprus](#)



[Mediterranean Technologies / France](#)



[Abruzzo Region / Italy](#)