

CreaMED

***“Fostering Creativity and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area
as key elements for Regional Sustainable Development: CreaMED
Alliance”***

Component	C3 – PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL POLICIES BASED ON CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION
Task	C3.1 – Identification of MED Regional Policies based on Creativity and Innovation
Title	Identification of successful experiences at regional level – Qualitative analysis
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TEMPLATE FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCES AT REGIONAL LEVEL – Qualitative analysis

Analysed region:

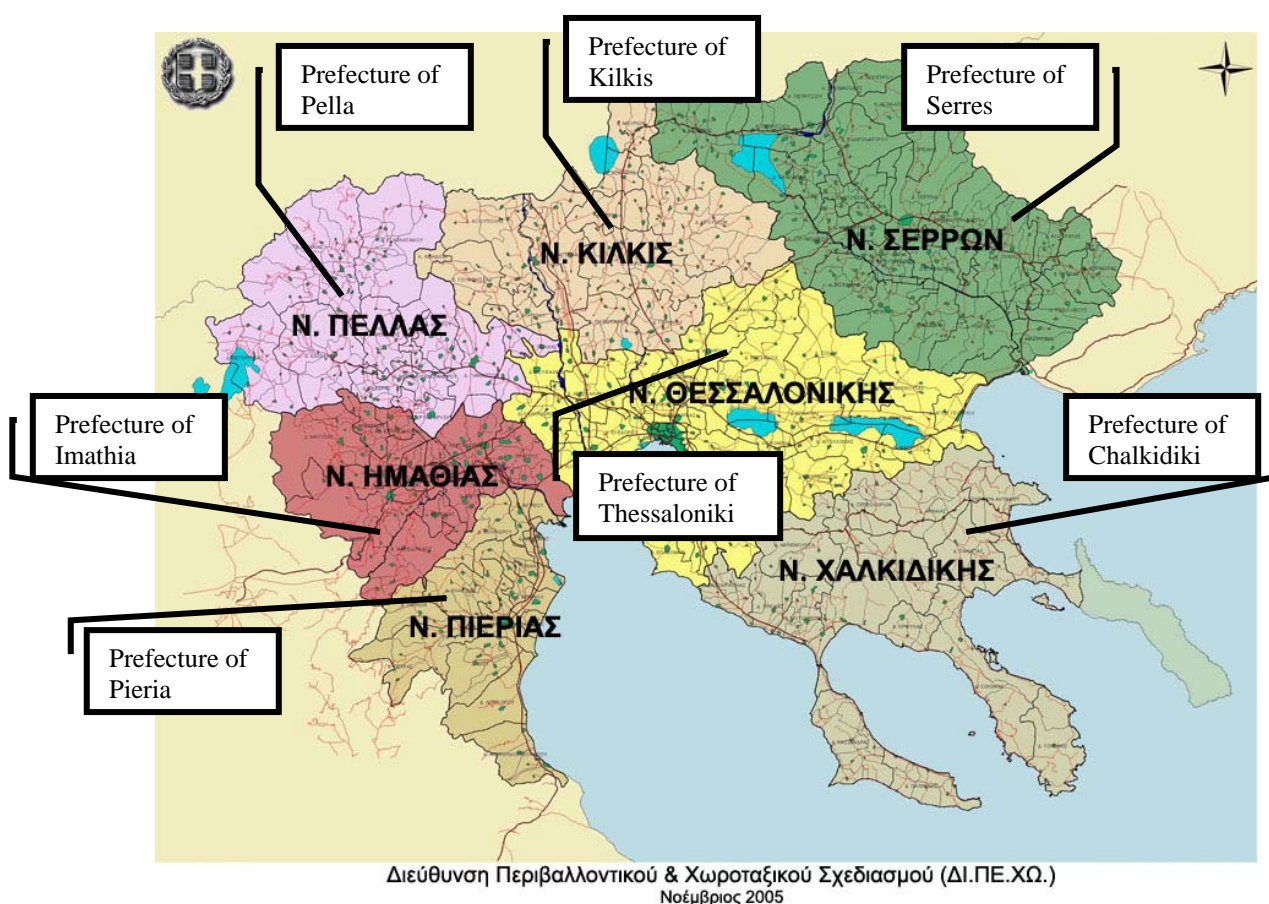
- 1. Regional network for the promotion of C&I - Key Innovation actors, public bodies and relevant SMEs, technology centre, Development agencies, relevant institutions/associations/foundations**

The main purpose of this chapter is that of providing a general overview of the regional network for the promotion of C&I: public and private relevant key actors/ institutions/ organizations. The way they foster C&I and the connections between them

General Overview of the region

To have an overview of the situation in the region of Central Macedonia (RCM) primarily it has to be mentioned that it constitutes the biggest region in Greece. It is situated in Northern Greece and is formed of seven prefectures. The region also shares borders with Albania, Bulgaria and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Figure 1: Geographical representation of region of Central Macedonia



Source: Region of Central Macedonia (www.rcm.gr)

RCM's geographical position given its cross-regional, cross-Balkans and cross-European position provides easy access to the Balkans through road and railway networks. Large ports connect RCM to other Greek and foreign harbours for the transportation of goods and people. Despite its significant infrastructure developments it has promoted over the past years, the region still needs to further develop and finalise many necessary transport infrastructures such as the metro construction in Thessaloniki, the capital of the region.

The region of Central Macedonia has a population of 1,875,000 inhabitants, representing 17% of the country's overall population and produces 17% of the GDP. The percentage of national GDP produced by the region has remained almost stable over the period 2000-2009 and is considered high enough to give RCM a vital role supporting the national GDP.

Concerning the composition of production in the Region it follows the national pattern. More specifically, in 2009, 12% of the Gross Value Added (GVA) came from the primary sector, 22% from the secondary sector and 66% from the tertiary sector. Employment composition in Central Macedonia follows the patterns of the national distribution: in according to statistics of 2006, 19% of the total workforce was employed in the primary sector, 26% in the secondary sector and 55% in the tertiary sector. Unemployment rate had initially increased between 1999-2004 (reaching 12%), but concerning the period 2004 - 2009 it has decreased reaching a much better level (9,5%), which still needs to be improved and reached the lowest unemployment rates of all other Greek regions. Despite the positive progress of the region, Thessaloniki (the region's capital city), is characterised by the highest unemployment rates compared to other large Greek cities and needs to strive in order to decrease it.

From a sectorial point of view, Chemicals, Metal industry, Food & Beverage, Textile & Clothing (in whole region), Higher Education, Health Services, and Commerce are the most developed sectors in the region. New knowledge intensive sectors like Biotechnology, Medicines, ICT have started also to be flourish yet extra support measures as a result of regional consensus among innovation actors and policy makers are required.

On a national level three regions, Attica, Central Macedonia and Peloponnesus concentrate over 75% of the total Greek export activity, while the rest regions share the remaining 25%. More specifically, Athens had the majority of Greek exports for 2006 (45%) and the region of Central Macedonia was second with a share of 22%.

As mentioned in a recent study¹, the investments performed over the past 15 years on road and rail infrastructure in the region led to a substantial improvement of the state of mobility as well as the accessibility potential of RCM with other main transportation nodes and important urban centres within Greece and elsewhere. Alongside the improvement of these regional transportation assets some basic social and economic figures have marked a significant positive change also: population has increased with a higher than national rate, the region itself has become the host of migrated movements mainly for working purposes

¹ INTERREG IIIB, ARCHIMED: SIMCODE IGT: Spatial impacts of multimodal corridor development in Gateway areas: Italy, Greece, Turkey. Spatial Impact Assessment on Region of Central Macedonia (Project funded by Interreg IIIB, Archimed)

and the per capita income have increased although with a pace lower than the country's average. Finally, despite the not obvious linear relationship between transport endowment and development, the observed parallel trends indicate the accessibility improvement may have positive impacts on the circulation of factors of production, which create added values to the local economies and the general social improvement.

R&D Situation of the region

Greece is encountered among the countries with the lowest spending on R&D both in absolute values and as a percentage of GDP, according to a number of national and European studies. The overall spending in 2006 amounted approximately to €1.2 billion, accounting for only 0,6% of the aggregate EU-27 R&D expenditures, while the R&D intensity (measured as a percentage of GDP) has remained around 0,58% which is significantly below the EU average of 1,84%.² In more detail, the Gross Domestic Expenditure for Research and Technological Development (GERD) represented 0,63% of GDP in 2003³, while the business R&D expenditures (BERD) constituted 0,20% of the GDP or 32% of GERD. The GERD indicator shows a small but steady decrease from 1999 onwards. According to the Greek Innovation System report, this “...*fact does not reflect a decrease of the expenditure in real terms (the absolute GERD values are steadily increasing with time), but to the fact that GERD growth rate cannot follow the GDP pace that remains one of the highest in Europe during the last decade*”⁴.

The region of Central Macedonia, according to the Regional Innovation Scoreboard of 2009⁵, is enlisted as a “medium to low innovation” performer, resembling more the performance of the new EU Member States coming from Eastern Europe rather than the performers (even from the South) of EU 15. In 2006, the region was enlisted amongst the “medium to high” innovation performers. The difference in the positioning is not due to the deterioration of the region's innovation performance but to the change of the calculation of innovation performance.

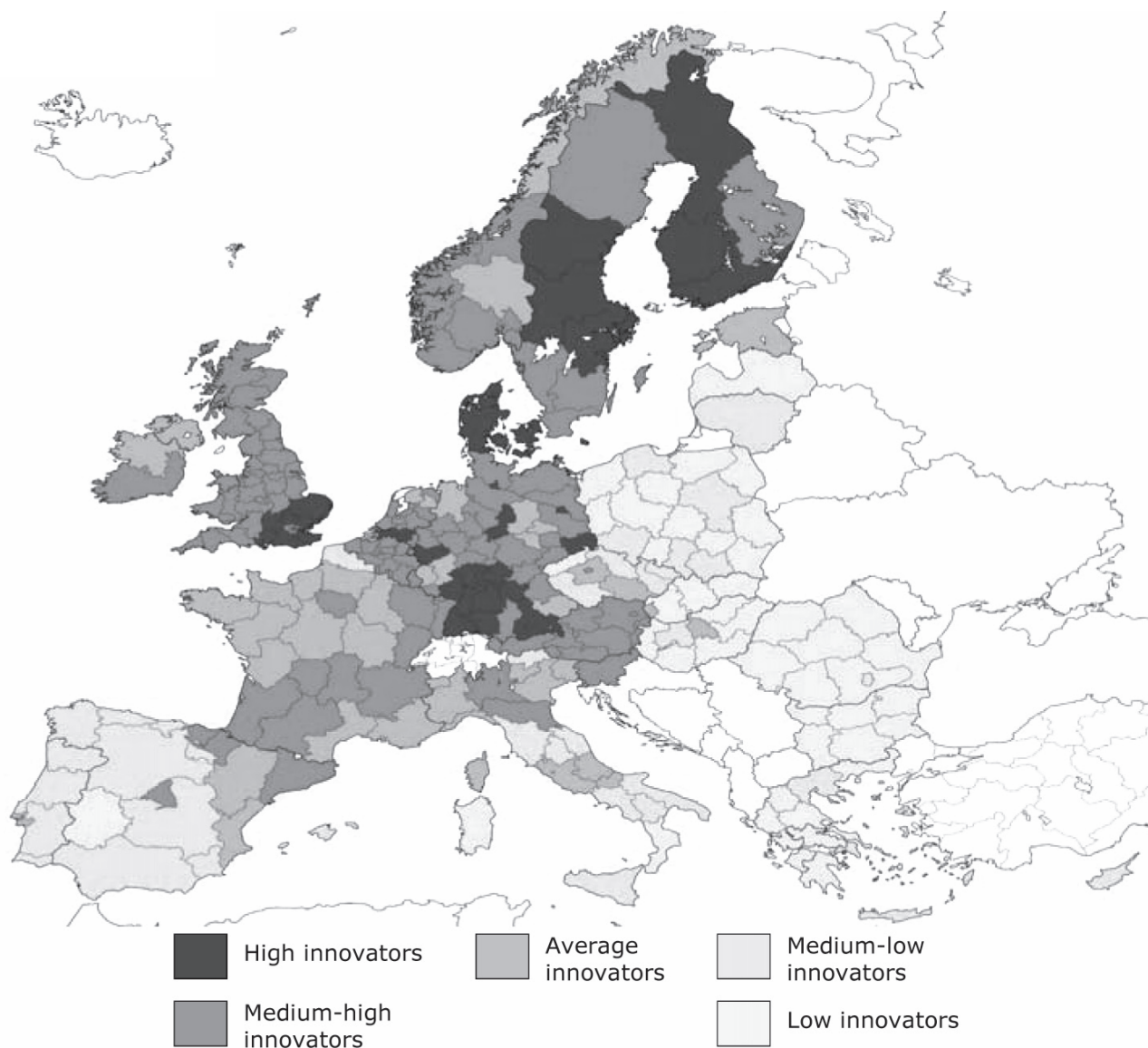
² GSRT, *The Greek Innovation System: Review of Greece's Innovation Policy by the OECD Background Report*, Athens August 2007

³ According to provisional data in 2004, GERD was 0,62% of GDP. Source: GSRT

⁴ GSRT, *The Greek Innovation System: Review of Greece's Innovation Policy by the OECD Background Report*, Athens August 2007

⁵ PRO INNO EUROPE InnoMetrics, *Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS) 2009*, December 2009

Figure 2: Ranking of regions according to their innovation performance



Source: Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2009

Among the Greek regions that improved their knowledge performance during the period 1996-2002 was also Central Macedonia (Table 1) as it increased by one or two points the percentage of highly educated people in the total population of the region but their total R&D expenditures increased only marginally, putting in question the depth and structural character of the improvement.

Table 1: Regional research and innovation performance – trends 1996-2002

	Unemployment 1996-2003 %-pnt ch.	Per capita GDP 1996- 2002 % growth	Industry share 1996- 2002 %-pnt ch.	Agriculture share 1996-2002 %-pnt ch.	Population density 1996- 2002 %-pnt ch.	Tertiary education 1999- 2002 %-pnt ch.	R&D intensity 1996- 2002 %-pnt ch.
Greece	-0,30	6,20	-0,04	-2,00	2,58	0,87	0,14
Central Macedonia	<i>1,30</i>	<i>6,04</i>	<i>-1,86</i>	<i>-2,02</i>	<i>4,02</i>	<i>1,73</i>	<i>0,01</i>

Source: Strategic Evaluation on Innovation and the Knowledge Based Economy in relation to the Structural and Cohesion Funds, for the programming period 2007-2013 (2006)

Furthermore, according to GSRT, the differences in the characteristics of innovation activity between Central Macedonia and other geographic areas of the country are presented in the table below. As observed, in RCM around one third of the population is involved in innovation activities, lower than Attiki and the overall country, and around 6% of the total turnover is produced from product innovations significantly lower than the average percentage of Greece. Enterprises in Central Macedonia have the lowest level of innovation activity, but also the smallest ratio of innovation expenditure per turnover unit. As a consequence, these enterprises present the smallest ratio of turnover from product innovation sales per turnover unit.

Table 2: Innovation statistics by region during the period 2002-2004

	Overall	Attiki	Central Macedonia	Rest of Greece
Innovation activity (1)	35,8%	39,6%	30,5%	33,2%
Turnover from product innovations (2)	11,0%	12,7%	6,1%	14,2%
Innovation expenditures (3)	3,1%	3,3%	2,3%	3,9%

(1) Percentage of the total population

(2) Percentage of the total turnover

(3) Percentage of the innovation active enterprises

Source: GSRT

As mentioned in a study concerning the managing and infusion of research investment and development in Northern Greece⁶, this greater area of the country (that includes Central Macedonia among other regions) shows a low share of the private sector as a financier of RTD and a very low share of financing from the private sector to public RTD performers (less than 7% of private funds) and vice-versa. On the other hand, the public sector predominates with almost 60% of financing, if higher education and public companies are included. Private companies receive only 4% of their RTD financing from the public sector. Hence, both public and private sectors seem self-contained in terms of investing resources. Another characteristic of the area (as well as of the entire Greece) is the significant role of EU financing through the Structural Funds and the Framework Programmes: close to 24% of total financing, although the decision making for the structural funds (14% of total RTD) is a domestic responsibility.

Most R&D employment and R&D expenditure concern higher education and government (public research centres) while business receive the lowest percentages (research and technology based innovation with many negative multiplying effects for business). This might be a result of the fact that R&D activities in the region are mainly governed and planned by central government (ministries, etc) rather than regionally. There is a lack of regional political initiatives to plan innovation policy in local terms taking into account local needs and institutions.

Resuming the above, it can be stated that in terms of regional priorities for R&D policy, although in general R&D infrastructures require continuous modernisation there are several indications showing that the main gap in R&D for RCM exists in the operational aspect of its innovation system rather than in infrastructures. In the past decade, a number and variety of R&D organisations have been created in the region that have accumulated strong experience in R&D activities, which can be further utilised so as to produce spill-over effects.

Innovation support actors

As far as key actors supporting innovation capability of the region are concerned, there are variable organisations actively participating in and promoting innovation initiatives in the area of Central Macedonia that attempt to define a cohesive and targeted regional innovation strategy, attract funding for start-up SMEs, positively influence policies and

⁶ SEERC, Central, East Macedonia and Thrace Knowledge Investment Strategy, Project Report of MIRIAD project, funded by FP6, Regions of Knowledge 2 programme (FP6-2004-KNOW-REG-2)

legislation formation relevant to research and innovation activities in Northern Greece and Greece and in general pursue collaboration between the academic and business community.

Recent innovation support establishments such as the Thessaloniki Innovation Zone, the Technopolis Business Park and incubator, and the four business incubators in the Thessaloniki eastern area, make the capital of RCM a unique case of potentially “innovation city” in Greece and Balkans. However, this whole innovation orientation is obstacle by the fact that R&D regional policies and priorities are mainly governed and planned on central government level (by ministries, etc) that consequently lack a strong local / regional perspective that would take into account the local needs and offers.

Some of the most **important actors** reinforcing innovation capability in RCM are:

The *Federation of Industries of Northern Greece (FING)*, is one of the most important and vivid organisations working intensively for the development of the industry in Northern Greece. Apart from the various services of high quality offered and representation of the interests of its members on national and international level, its main objective is to exploit and conjoin the experience and knowledge of its members in order to develop a strategy and forward proposals to the Greek government. So, its role is quite crucial in affecting the legislation and regulation system for SMEs constituting the industry sector.

Another main actor is the *Region of Central Macedonia (RCM) - Planning & Development Directorate* striving to achieve innovation and balanced development taking into consideration all opportunities on regional, national and European level. Development goals of RCM for the current programming period 2007-2013 are: the exploitation of RCM's strengths in the South-East Europe, the enhancement of local/regional competitiveness and the enforcement of cohesion inside the region.

The *Association of Information Technology Companies of Northern Greece (SEPVE)* represents information technology companies of Northern Greece. It provides its numerable members with a wide variety of services and supports them to widen their networks and achieve commercial success in the markets.

There are the following *Business Parks and incubators: Thessaloniki Innovation Zone, Thessaloniki Technology Park, Thessaloniki Technology Park Incubator and Thessaloniki Technology Park Management and Development Corporation SA (TTP/MDC SA),*

Business Park Technopolis, Technopolis Incubator, i4G Incubator and Thermi Incubator. Business parks and incubators constitute vital vehicles for scientific, technological and business growth. Business parks have a multi-dimensional supportive role for business sector growth and competitiveness development. They serve as industry-research liaison assisting assessment and exploitation of research results, promote the creation and sustainable development of innovative spin-off companies and new technologies (via the Incubators) and provide innovation support as well as technology transfer services to the local business community. The Incubators' main role is to provide the necessary infrastructures, support services and financial investment plans to selected innovative new enterprises in order to assist their success and sustainability in the market.

Last but not least the *Universities* together with the *Research Centres* play a significant role in the region's R&D capacity. They participate and elaborate numerous from basic to applied research projects in order to support and promote creativity, innovation and knowledge. The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the University of Macedonia, the Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki (TEI-Thes), the Technological Educational Institute of Serres and the International Hellenic University are the main formal educational institutes in RCM. The *Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH)*, the *National Agricultural Research Foundation (NAGREF)*, the *South-Eastern Europe Telecommunications and Informatics Research Institute (INA)* directly stimulate and promote innovation by conducting fundamental and applied research that meets the specific technological needs of the Greek and European industries. Research centres develop new products and services with industrial, economic and social impact, with special emphasis in exploiting research results and providing services for R&D development.

Finally, *Agencies, Changers and other organisations* have also a vital role supporting through their provided services the region's further development.

In RCM there are several indications (low innovation output indexes, while there are high innovation input indexes) showing that the existing research thematic areas in the area don't necessarily reflect the real business needs (in terms of R&D) of region and this is one of the most problematic elements for regional innovation in the area (lack of obvious and reasonable strategic link among research and business community in C.M). In other words, the region nowadays seems to have an important critical mass of organisations, know-how and human resources that in order to produce critical effects a new cooperative model and network approach is of high strategic importance.

Pre-existing initiatives for the promotion of C&I and Regional best practices for the promotion of C&I

The primary purpose of this template is to identify initiatives/best practices/successful experiences in the promotion of C&I and analyze its potential to be transferred to different geographical areas or network for C&I.

A new template should be used for each initiative/best practice

Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> best practice
Name	Open Coffee
Customer / actuator	
Private initiative	
Duration	Started in Thessaloniki in 2008 and is continuously organised on a monthly basis
Scope of initiative/best practice	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National	
Initiative/best practice description and assessment (<i>problem/need, objective, strategy, main results, ...</i>)	
<p>The new Greek generation possesses abilities and knowledge, values and self-confidence, ideas and visions for their realization. However, young people who wish to be entrepreneurs believe that are too mature to be just dreaming and – more importantly – realistically optimistic to start operating. It is important though for them – and for the long term flourishing of entrepreneurship in Greece – that young people view difficulties as challenges and the non-cultivated ground as source of opportunities.</p> <p>The Open Coffee is a movement that aims to be the single point of reference for Greek start-ups. In this context, the initiative covers existing and mainly new developments on Greek start-ups as well as the relevant topics of entrepreneurship and technology. Open Coffee meetings are being established around Greece, and offer a place to network and a platform for exchange of views and opinions so as to inform, connect and inspire.</p> <p>According to its declaration, Open Coffee aims to support as well as trigger all following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a network of people with common interests to support relationship building and collaboration; • cultivate a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship; • spread new technologies with an emphasis on the web. <p>The event has been welcomed by people in the cities that have been holding these meetings. In RCM, the meetings take place in Thessaloniki – the capital city of the region – and around 50 – 100 people are attending them regularly.</p>	

Main benefits and advantages
<p>Open Coffee has been established as the single point of reference for Greek start-ups. Young entrepreneurs and innovators from all over Greece and abroad are invited to present their entrepreneurial activities in a max 8 minutes presentation during which the main issues as well as differentiations of their companies are presented. Also the initiative allows a “pitch session” during which people can shortly present their ideas and even skill (people) needs and seek for collaborators from the attending audience.</p> <p>The communication of the initiative is performed mainly via social media, thus ensuring the participation of young people who are increasing using such tools for the communications.</p>
Main limits
<p>The main limit of this initiative is the requirement of a team of people who will undertake the task of organizing the events on a monthly basis, informing the other attendants, scouting for interesting presentations and making all necessary arrangements.</p>
Potential for replication <i>(grade and scope of portability, precondition for the replication)</i>
<p><i>The replication of this initiative is already on the go in a number of countries. The initiative was first held in the UK and ever since a number of countries and regions have uptaken it.</i></p> <p><i>What is required is a visionary and motivated team that will undertake the task of organising the events on a monthly basis.</i></p>

Type	<input type="checkbox"/> initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> best practice
Name	<i>TRACTORS -TRaining MATERIAL in Creativity and InnovaTION for EurOpean R&D Organizations & SMEs</i>
Customer / actuator	
Type	<input type="checkbox"/> initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> best practice
Name	
Costumer / actuator	
CERTH along with TRACTORS partnership	
Duration	2006-2008 (typical duration but impact and effects remain sustainable)
Scope of initiative/best practice	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National	
Initiative/best practice description and assessment (<i>problem/need, objective, strategy, main results, ...</i>)	
<p>Despite the widespread recognition of the need for creativity and innovation in industry, practical guidance and systematic approaches to managing the creativity process are still not available in an integrated training framework. This means that for managers embarking on creativity and innovation strategy for the first time appropriate toolkits can be difficult to source. Even firms that are considered to be established innovators the relevant research shows that 9 out of 10 product developments still fail, resulting in billions of wasted R&D resources internationally.</p> <p>Managers around the EU (and on international level) search for better ways to unleash the creativity and the innovative capacity of their employees. It is therefore essential for modern organisations and enterprises to develop systematic and methodical mechanisms to support the creativity and innovation of their employees within their everyday business operations. Although creativity and innovation management has had a broad acceptance from the research community, there is a big gap in vocational training systems as well as in the methodologies for creativity and Innovation, which are available for the European SMEs and the R&D organizations.</p> <p>TRACTORS was an initiative aiming to develop an intergraded training framework (material and methodologies) for creativity and innovation in the working place aiming to support the European SMEs and R&D organisations to benefit from this knowledge and use it in a practical manner in their everyday activities.</p>	
Main benefits and advantages	
<p>In the context of the TRACTORS project, after fulfilling a literature and research review of 500 articles, a Handbook on the development of Creativity and a number of training seminars on creativity techniques were elaborated that were welcomed by SMEs and R&D organisations in all partners' countries.</p> <p>As a result, many stakeholders from variable backgrounds and countries were trained with combining tools and practices from several sciences (Tacit Knowledge Management, H.R Management, Organisational Learning, Organisational Behaviour, etc). Target groups and users were provided with a fully documented training material in Creativity & Innovation Management. The material offers a practical framework to every</p>	

business or R&D organisations planning to practise such methods.

Networking and synergies in creativity and Innovation Management between the European SMEs, the research community and vocational training organisations were also nurtured and supported during the lifecycle of TRACTORS. In addition, a virtual space (portal in creativity and Innovation Management) was created bringing together people from all the aforementioned communities.

Main limits

Limits for the development of creativity are many and different among EU countries as they are related to their culture. However, there is an evident need for training in creativity and innovation management issues but unfortunately the SMEs are not always aware of its importance or do not have the necessary resources for providing such trainings to their employees.

Additionally, the most important obstacles for creativity were found to be:

- lack of financial resources and time,
- the fact that companies are reluctant in exploiting new opportunities mainly due to the fact that they are not aware of the potential positive outcomes that such a choice could have for them as individuals and for their company as a whole, and last but not least
- the organisational culture.

Potential for replication (*grade and scope of portability, precondition for the replication*)

Creativity training seminars could be followed by all possible interested parties and stakeholders, but it is essential to have creativity experts to perform the seminars.

Moreover, people who are aware of the importance of creativity, irrespectively of their professional background or institution they work for, should encourage this kind of initiatives.

Finally, training material was produced in English and in another 5 languages (Greek, Italian, German, Spanish and Lithuanian) and is available on the project's website. If necessary, the material could be translated in other EU languages so as to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the results.

Type	<input type="checkbox"/> initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> best practice
Name	<i>Thessaloniki Innovation Zone S.A.</i>
Customer / actuator	
<p>The company is supervised by the Ministries of Economy and Finance and Development. The composition of the Board of the "Alexander Zone of Innovation S.A." includes representatives from the academia, the private productive and financial sector, the local authorities and as well as the representative sector of a similar body from abroad, can guarantee the connection of research to production for local development.</p>	
Duration	Active since 2006
Scope of initiative/best practice	
<input type="checkbox"/> Local	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional	
<input type="checkbox"/> National	
Initiative/best practice description and assessment (<i>problem/need, objective, strategy, main results, ...</i>)	
<p>An Innovation Zone is an area designed to house innovative enterprises and research organisations with innovative actions, making use of synergies and a privileged system of incentives and development measures, contributing to the economic growth of the whole region. Thus, the Innovation Zone is considered a modern tool for the scientific, technological and entrepreneurial development of a region or a whole country.</p> <p>With the aim of turning Thessaloniki into an international hub for the development of knowledge and knowledge-based entrepreneurship over the next few years, the Greek state instituted the Thessaloniki Innovation Zone (T.I.Z.) through law 3489/2006.</p> <p>Thessaloniki Innovation Zone is a unique project in the whole South East Europe, a governmental initiative, with the aim to create a cluster of companies within geographically deteriorated regions (nucleuses) in Thessaloniki, based on new technologies and innovation.</p> <p>Alexander Innovation Zone, S.A. is the organization responsible for the plan, administration and realization of the particular project.</p>	
Main benefits and advantages	
<p>Small and medium-sized companies from Greece and abroad, Research & Development departments of multi-national companies, spin-offs and investors will gain significant advantages from their entry into the Thessaloniki Innovation Zone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proximity to major educational, technological, research and logistics centres - An attractive environment for capable, talented, highly-motivated executives - Competitive taxation systems for companies and executives - Access to financing programmes - A high-quality work environment - Tailor-made, inexpensive and flexible office and laboratory space - An environment of entrepreneurship and development - Access to the markets of South East Europe 	

Thessaloniki Innovation Zone will also serve the academia by offering an environment within which the results from the academic research can be transferred into products and services through start-up companies. The basis of these start-ups will be academic research and people from the academic community will participate.

Finally, through spill over effects, TIZ will have ripple effects on the whole area of Central Macedonia and its surrounding regions.

Main limits

Despite its positive aspects, TIZ has not been appropriately supported by the regional and the national governments. Additionally, the regional and local stakeholders need to be involved from the beginning of the design of the initiative so as to ensure on the one hand the recording of their issues and integration into the designing phase of the initiative and on the other their support during the elaboration of it.

Potential for replication *(grade and scope of portability, precondition for the replication)*

Such initiatives and structures would be interesting to be implemented on regional level and then to be interconnected on inter-national and inter-regional level so as to ensure on the one hand collaboration between the primary organisations involved in such tasks and on the other to ensure transfer of know-how and best practices across regions.

Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initiative <input type="checkbox"/> best practice
Name	<i>Thermi Link</i>
Customer / actuator	
Thermi Business Incubator S.A.	
Duration	Active since February 2011
Scope of initiative/best practice	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional	
<input type="checkbox"/> National	
Initiative/best practice description and assessment (<i>problem/need, objective, strategy, main results, ...</i>)	
<p>A high number of entrepreneurial ideas of young people or the results of pioneering Greek research conducted within Universities fail to be commercially exploited and / or be transformed into innovative products and services as their creators (usually from the research fields) cannot or do not know how to commercially exploit them, do not have the appropriate partners, do not target the proper target groups / customers or do not have access to relevant funds. Having in mind the above, Thermi Business Incubator together with THERMI Taneo Venture Capital Fund initiated the initiative Thermi Link in 2011. Thermi Link envisages creating an innovation driven community that will support the innovation ecosystem of Thessaloniki and beyond.</p> <p>Thermi Link is a space where networking and collaboration between researchers, knowledge intensive start ups and freelancers with pioneering ideas can be established. Thermi Business Incubator S.A. offers a working space to Thermi Link together with meeting rooms and multiple use areas. Anyone interested to participate in this initiative has been invited to visit Thermi Link, to occupy a space, to collaborate with other people present in the area, arrange working meetings with people present or interested to be present in the Link, and overall to share ideas and experiences with other people so as to enrich their project ideas and achieve synergies and multiplication of effects. Also, Thermi Link envisages hosting a number of seminars, workshops or networking events so as to accelerate the process of exploitation of innovative ideas and concepts.</p>	
Main benefits and advantages	
Thermi Link offers a working space in which people from various professional and scientific areas can co-exist, co-work and collaborate together so as to exchange views, opinions and ideas on current and future projects and ventures.	
Main limits	
The initiative requires a large working space (Thermi Link occupies a space of around 300 square meters) so as to allow a high number of people to be able to visit it daily, arrange meetings and workshops with other attendants and have enough space to feel the area as working room.	



Potential for replication *(grade and scope of portability, precondition for the replication)*

Such initiatives and structures would be interesting to be implemented on regional level so as to improve the innovation spill-over effects of a region within the area and beyond.

