

Dear Partners,

You have received the first issue of the MEDOSSIC Newsletter. Ten partners from seven Mediterranean countries are participating in the MEDOSSIC (Mediterranean organization structure and strengthening of innovation capacities for sustainable development) project.

The project will focus to support for the innovations and particularly eco-innovations. Based on the findings, we will design a pilot support structures for innovators, endeavouring to ensure that these structures will continue their purpose following the conclusion of the project. We are convinced that the key for the success is in networking and the exchange of best practices.

The project connects participants and creates cooperation opportunities, with frequent invitations to join project groups during the course of the project. All information regarding the project is available on the website which is continuously updated.

Medossic Project Group



First meeting of the project group and Steering Committee, hosted by the lead partner and held in Postojna on 23 and 24 April 2009.

"Project Medossic is co-financed by European Regional Development Fund."



www.medossic.eu

About the project

TEN PARTNERS - SEVEN COUNTRIES

We launched the transnational project in April 2009 which will be concluded in May 2011. The countries Slovenia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Spain, Croatia and Montenegro joined forces to collaborate in the project. The project is being implemented within the scope of the MED programme and is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.



Regional Development Agency of Inner-Karst Region, Ltd., Slovenia



Regional Development Centre Koper, Slovenia



Development Centre Novo mesto, Ltd., Slovenia



Eastern Crete Development Organization, Greece



TecnoMarche - Scientific and Technology Park of the Marche Region, Italy



DELTA 2000 Soc. Cons. a.r.l., Italy



Provincial Government of Malaga, Spain



Larnaca district development Agency, Cyprus



RRA Porin Rijeka, Croatia



Directorate for Development of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Montenegro

PROJECT COOPERATION

A variety of activities will be carried out within the MEDOSSIC project, to which various participants will be invited, among them predominantly state institutions, public research organisations, universities, local communities, chambers of commerce and industry, chambers of crafts and SMEs.

The first activity implemented by the partners was an analysis of the existing state of (eco-)innovation. Companies and existing institutions of regions in question were included in this phase with research institutions participating as well.

Based on nine national analyses of the situation in regions, prepared by the Medossic project partners, a synthetic report was drawn up comparing the regions and their eco-innovation support environments. Currently, the preparation of a so-called benchmarking analysis is being carried out which will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of individual eco-innovation support environments on whose basis recommendations for further actualisation of the project objectives will be designed.

Simultaneously with these activities, the partners of the Medossic project will also present a selection of best practices from the field of eco-innovation and provide support to eco-innovators with whom they will meet up during the course of the project activities. Strategic and implementation plans for the establishment of support structures for encouraging eco-innovation will also be prepared for each region.

Pilot structures' tasks will be defined in cooperation with the participants. These particularly regard activities such as the provision of information regarding novelties in the field of eco-innovation, current events and possibilities for cooperation among the various actors, financial resources for encouraging eco-innovations, etc.

The need for additional consultancy with regard to such activities aimed at innovators and companies innovatively active has also been noted. The pilot structures will be adapted to the specific environments of the partners and the needs of the environments and

participants will dictate the organisational structures and contents of the individual pilot structures.



Partners' meeting in Larnaca, Cyprus in June 2009

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The varied project activities will also be supported by communication activities. The partners will inform the media of developments regarding the MEDOSSIC project through communications and also invite the latter to key events. Participants will predominantly receive notifications through electronic mail and the Website /link to www.medossic.eu/.

Meetings between participants will be carried out at regional conferences with transnational conferences in Slovenia organised as well. The final results of the project will be presented at the final conference in the spring of 2011. Participants will also receive an information packet and brochure.

ANALYSIS OF ECO-INNOVATIONS

A comparative report analysing the state of eco-innovation in the environments of all partners participating in the Medossic project was prepared in February 2010 in cooperation with the Jožef Stefan Institute of Slovenia. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of

the eco-innovation support environments were highlighted on the basis of a comparison of national analyses of the situation.

The aim of such a comparative analysis was to obtain a thorough overview of the potential transnational partnership for encouraging eco-innovation in the entire area of the Medossic project, and consequently also in the specific environments of its partners. The approaches used to encourage eco-innovation are also diverse due to extremely varied cultural, political, economic and demographic factors of the participants. It holds true that eco-innovation is more prominent in areas with higher degrees of development, a factor which must also be taken into consideration when planning subsequent activities. The entire study is available in the English language at website. In continuation, we are presenting some of the key findings.

Basic characteristics of the regions

The smallest region among the nine regions included in the Medossic project is the Slovenian Notranjska-Karst region which is 9.3 times smaller than the largest region Marche in Italy. Similarly, differences in population, economic development, number and size of companies, GDP share, etc. exist.

Regardless of these differences, all the participating regions have a large (in some places even unexploited) potential for eco-innovation which all regions recognise, treating eco-innovation as a significant element of competitive advantage. They also support national priorities and objectives which to a large extent highlight the significance of investments into research and development through various instruments, and are also encouraged on the lower regional and local levels.

All the participating regions are distinguished by fragmented and predominantly unaffiliated eco-innovation support structures, pointing to a deficiency in the observed area. This is also enhanced by the insufficient degree of use of available financial resources and lack of state financing sources as well as an insufficient level of cooperation between economic and development organisations (universities, development agencies, etc.).

Investments into research and development
Despite the national declaratory importance of investing into research and development and the perception

that this is a key element of economic competitive advantage in Europe, an uneven allocation of national interest for the actual financial encouragement of this activity was noted in the Medossic project regions. The provinces Ferrara and Ravenna allocated the greatest share of GDP to research and development, both consequently possessing the greatest share of realised projects in the field of eco-innovation. Cyprus and Slovenia also allocate a relatively high share of GDP to research and development, however, the large differences between the national and regional levels in Slovenia should be noted.



Partners' meeting in Ascoli Piceno, Italy in December 2009

The large number of diverse national and regional projects and programmes should be emphasised as a positive finding in the survey, carried out in the participating regions in the field of eco-innovation, having a positive effect on the continued strengthening of eco-innovation capabilities.

Nevertheless, deficiencies are still seen in the area of patents, which do not attain the European average in any of the participating regions. Even more, the difference in the number of EPO patents per million inhabitants between the Medossic regions and the European average is three-fold, and between the Medossic regions and the USA and Japan, 27-fold.

Eco-innovation in individual regions

The enterprise (industry), tourism and real estate sec-

tors were noted as most important for eco-innovation. When informing eco-innovation operators of the state of eco-innovation in their organisations, it was often noted that a lack of comprehension of the concept itself existed, and consequently also a poorer assessment of the current realisation of eco-innovation. Such a specific objective is also rare on the national level. For example, none of the participating countries possess a central eco-innovation register.

The Croatian partners estimate a low number of initiatives in Croatia, but have observed several individual initiatives in this direction. A number of programmes and projects connected predominantly to tourism are underway in Greece, the same applying to Cyprus for which more prominent national financial support is characteristic. Among the most advanced participants in implementing eco-innovation are the participating regions from Italy, where in recent years, a growth in measures encouraging eco-innovation (e.g. monitoring of energy efficiencies) has been observed. Among the more significant measures for encouraging eco-innovation in Slovenia is the highlighted cohesion between ecology and innovations in evaluating research and development projects and other types of guidelines emphasised in fundamental national development documents. Eco-innovation represents an important part of development programmes in Spain, with solutions and cohesive activities introduced by various participants and a variety of programmes being conducted (also educational).

The future ...

The survey enabled the partners of the Medossic project to identify key strengths and weaknesses in encouraging eco-innovation in the regions observed. In this manner, the partners also identified key development challenges, which in addition to ensuring more relevant information as support to potential innovators, also points particularly to the encouragement of networking and cooperation between the various participants and innovation and development operators.

The activities of the Medossic project already ensure the latter to a certain degree, for by including participants in the preparation of strategic and operative plans for designing the pilot structures, they are also

creating a suitable environment for networking among these partners.

Another finding among the key objectives for further project activities is the non-cohesiveness of the existing support environments, which must also be fortified in the future through the networking of participants on the European level, among states and regions (through financing), decentralisation of knowledge centres and other forms of support.



Aluminum Industry in Cyprus

presentation of the project partner

THE GREEN KARST SUPPORTS ECO-INNOVATION

The Development Agency of the Notranjska-Karst Region of Slovenia is the lead partner in the Medossic project.

Boštjan Požar, Msc, Director: “The development state of the region is not promising. The region is marked by a critically insufficient number of people, knowledge, capital, economic operators, financial institutions, institutions from the supporting environment, etc. The economy is traditional, possessing a low level of technology with one of the lowest degrees of added value in the state. Jobs are lacking, particularly those for highly qualified staff. The Green Karst, our new development orientation, is one of the answers to this situation. The idea of this development paradigm arose from the finding that one of the primary strengths of the Notranjska-Karst region was precisely the well-preserved environment and natural and cultural heritage, maintained through our good management. Unfortunately, we did not know how to create an economic benefit from it. The key question was how to exploit the potential available in this environment.”

One of the objectives of the Green Karst strategy was to increase the innovative potential of companies, especially with regard to the development of new technologies which would contribute to the protection of the environment. We are intensively seeking financial initiatives for this area, therefore the Development Agency of the Notranjska-Karst Region of Slovenia, when obtaining European funds, systematically approaches partnerships and project contents which will contribute most to the implementation of the strategic guidelines of the region.

We are thus already participating in two projects within the scope of the MED programme which will aid in implementing the Green Karst strategy. These are the Wasman project, which deals with the urgent problem

of municipal waste and the fortification of the local public administration in developing an effective waste management system, and the Medossic project in which we decided to assume the leading role.

The management of a transnational partnership in the area of the seven Mediterranean countries poses a large challenge for our small organisation, one we are for the moment successfully tackling. On the other hand, as the lead partner we have, to a great degree, co-designed the project contents, meaning that the project's results will also be more beneficial and useful for our environment.

We are aware that we need to ensure our companies greater support in seeking information, adequate financial resources and networking with partners when introducing modern technologies and developing new products which decrease the effects on the environment.



GREECE: CRETE

Crete is the largest Greek island and the fifth largest island in the Mediterranean. It encompasses an area of 8,336km², and represents 6.3% of the total area of Greece with 601,131 inhabitants (comprising 5.48% of the total population of Greece). The island is predominantly known for its extraordinarily rich history (Minoan civilization), its breathtaking natural environment and its records as the cradle of Mediterranean diet. Due to its geographical position and the mountainous character, more than 1.700 agrarian species of flora are encountered in the island, 178 of which are exclusively endemic (they are not met anywhere else in the world).

presentation of the project region

Crete constitutes a research and innovation centre which has great potential for the development of eco-innovation. With the support of the 5 Research Institutes in the island and the more than 50 environmental research laboratories operating in its Universities and Research Centers, Crete may play a leading role in the production and mainly the diffusion of eco-innovation in the Mediterranean and Middle East.

Extremely promising sectors for the production of eco-innovation refer to the production of energy from renewable resources, while organic farming and herbals cultivation, as well as the manufacturing sector (especially the food and drinks sector and the manufacturing of chemicals), the tourist services and the construction sector have significant potential in promoting regional competitiveness. Especially when considering the fact that in these sectors are activated more than 88% of the enterprises established in the island (46.851) and employ 72% of the total employed population. The strengthening of the eco-innovation in the construction is rather a necessity, as the forecasts on the impacts of climate change in the Mediterranean and in the island of Crete in particular may have adverse effects on the future growth of the sector. Nevertheless, both public and private sector enterprises are currently activated in the recovery of municipal and olive mill waste, from which they utilize the organic matter for the production of compost that is next used as fertilizer and has a significant number of applications in soil remediation.

When considering the contemporary needs of the local SMEs and the difficulties observed with regards to the competitiveness of the local economy, one can refer that, an "SME-oriented" approach is needed in order to bring added value from all the different initiatives, and enhance the competitiveness of the region in general. To this direction, MEDOSSIC project is expected to reveal useful lessons from the problems encountered and build a bridge between successful results of environmental research and potential investors in green enterprises.



The oldest traditional irrigating system with wind mills in the plateau of Lasithi, Crete



Relief map of Crete