

**Interreg**  
*M*editerranean



**SOCIAL & CREATIVE**

## **Policy Briefing n. 9**

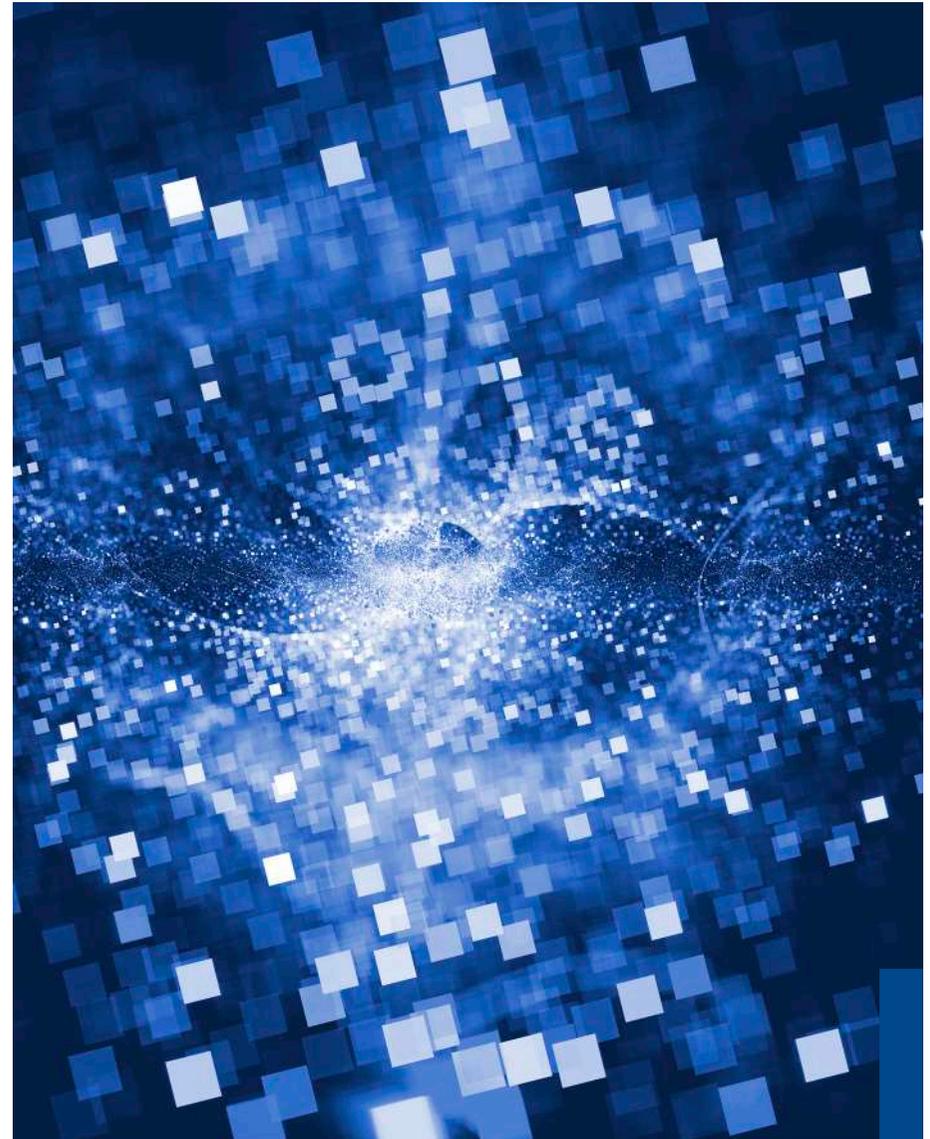
### TOWARDS A MEDITERRANEAN VISION OF INNOVATION

Project co-financed by the European  
Regional Development Fund

Whilst the INTERREG MED Programme's Social and Creative Innovation Community is exploring different approaches through concrete pilot initiatives in MED regions, a specifically Mediterranean Model is emerging as a result of the culturally grounded integration of social and creative innovation with the more traditional levers of technologic and industrial advancement. The resulting trend depicts a broad landscape in which these different forms of innovation – scientific, industrial, social and institutional – interact with each other in a lively and fruitful dynamic.

The development and validation of this Mediterranean Model of Innovation through the Social and Creative Innovation Community is one of the key goals of the TALIA project from the outset, building on previous work within the CreativeMED project (of the MED-CAP initiative in the 2007-2013 programming period). In fact, the Model was originally developed as a bottom-up synthesis of insights gained from five INTERREG MED funded initiatives combining creativity and innovation in a particularly impactful manner.

One of the first activities in TALIA was to bring together this material as a baseline framework for mapping the role and innovation trajectories of individual projects in the Creative and Social Community, in an early project deliverable entitled "Innovation Vision". This Policy Brief, the ninth in a series issued by the TALIA project, fulfils the need for a more synthetic and accessible presentation of the Vision and its key elements, which emerged after the implementation of a number of validation activities of the Mediterranean Model within the on-going projects funded in the current programming period. Such validation is ongoing through the application of an original Capitalisation Method, which is also described in this document.



## TOWARDS A MEDITERRANEAN VISION OF INNOVATION

The Vision for the Social and Creative Innovation Community is expressed as a series of statements, listed below.

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

**1. The harmonious development of the Mediterranean area is made possible by the unleashing of new and unforeseen innovation potentials.** New approaches at all levels, from individual attitudes to institutional procedures, can provide a collective and systemic response.

**2. The Mediterranean culture provides the ideal climate for development of a new model of innovation.** A Mediterranean model of innovation valorises Mediterranean characteristics, ranging from inter-cultural literacy to the gregarious use of public spaces, as the natural foundation for new societal models.

**3. Social and creative innovation play a driving role in defining the Mediterranean model.** Mediterranean peoples have long been known for their innate creativity and propensity towards social interaction, and we are finally seeing recognition of the contribution of these features for economic and social development.

**4. The Mediterranean model of innovation is being validated and instantiated in practice.** On-going projects in the Interreg-MED programme are gradually building a multi-faceted innovation ecosystem spanning the entire Mediterranean area.

**5. The uptake of effective innovations results from on ‘triple loop’ learning.** Impact from individual project initiatives is achieved by parallel processes of learning at the project, programme, and policy levels.

Realisation of the Vision occurs through the transformation of individual projects into active participants in an evolving Mediterranean-wide innovation ecosystem. This is made possible through the tools and actions of the TALIA project, which allow for individual projects to work together as a system. Learning occurs across this innovation landscape at the three levels of: i) pilots and projects, ii) programmes and sectors, and iii) strategies and policies. Thus, the Vision unfolds through interaction with on-going MED projects as the guiding reference.



## THE MEDITERRANEAN MODEL OF INNOVATION

The TALIA Model identifies three main elements that characterise initiatives in the Social and Creative Innovation Community. While the combination and impacts of each of these three elements differ from project to project, two common aspects repeat themselves rather consistently:

- The three elements are always present in some form as the structurally defining components of an innovation ecosystem in the Mediterranean space.
- The dynamics linking the three elements are driven by Collective Creativity, a specific feature of Mediterranean social dynamics that is driven by cultural and social norms.



The three elements are further developed below:

- **Community scale partnerships** are spontaneous alliances between different types of stakeholders with different multi-disciplinary perspectives, built at the local level (rural district, town, or urban neighbourhood). They usually involve both the public and private sectors and the research community, as well as citizens and citizen groups (according to the PPPP Public-Private-People Partnership model). With different

balances of engagement and power, these partnerships generally form the backbone of pilot experimentation in a MED project and constitute the context in which collective creativity occurs.

- **Territorial innovation** is a specific (place-based) form of product-service innovation that is underpinned by technology – predominantly, though not exclusively, ICT – while primarily driven by citizen needs and the specific features of a given place: natural resources, cultural norms, geographical specificities such as insularity, etc. Thus, it is a kind of innovation that specifically builds on the unique assets of a given territory while addressing its specific needs. The MED programme operates in a territorial framework from the outset, developing the ‘place-based’ approach to explore the potentials of coastal and rural areas, natural and cultural resources, and similar settings and assets often very specific to the Mediterranean space. This leads to a different quality (and relevance) of innovation as compared to that based solely on technical possibilities.

- **Trans-local socioeconomic ecosystems** are emergent forms of work and business that shift the emphasis from the single local company or network to a ‘trans-local’ transaction system that cuts across vertical sectors (e.g. business-oriented cultural associations, peer-to-peer exchanges, etc.), traditional value and supply chain configurations (e.g. ad hoc partnerships, co-working, etc.), as well as regional borders. Such configurations also tend to promote and/or ‘repair’ inter-regional value chains. Undoubtedly, it is quite a term, but it attempts to highlight how economic development in the MED space is tied to social and cultural aspects at the local level, which are in turn reinforced by inter-networking at higher geographic levels. This is a clear goal of the MED programme, namely to demonstrate the benefits of transnational networking and the positive fallout in reinforcing the cohesion of local development initiatives.

## CRITERIA OF SUCCESS

In parallel with the development of the Model, intended as a structured and coherent representation, a set of success criteria have been identified based on the experience of individual pilot initiatives within MED innovation projects over the last ten years. This list is open to change over time but represents a useful synthesis of what works in the Mediterranean context in terms of territorial innovation.

The main Success Criteria identified to date include:

1. **Cultural anchoring** is a quality, akin to the concept of territorial innovation, that builds on a tight relationship between the goals and the value proposition of an innovation initiative and the specific cultural heritage of the Mediterranean.
2. **Open networked people** is a quality not only of the participants but also of the target groups of the innovation. A propensity to openness, sharing and reciprocal learning promotes multi-disciplinary exchange and the development of new forms of action and expression.
3. **Innovation mixes** derive from an appropriate balance between high-tech and low-tech, emergent practices with tradition, and industrial with social innovation.
4. **Collective learning** results from when a new product or service is able to tell a story and engage the user/consumer in a knowledge exchange or raise awareness about important issues.
5. **Shared values** become visible when a new product or service embodies and transmits a broader ethical dimension and contributes to shared value creation.
6. **New business models** emerge from this fertile environment, where the value proposition includes an active role of the user/consumer in a knowledge exchange about the product or service to be delivered.

It must be underlined that this is a dynamically evolving list of features based on the experience of impacts attained. No one initiative embodies all of these criteria; rather usually one or two will stand out as explaining success in different cases.

An interesting reflection, currently under way in the TALIA project, results from the mapping of these features onto the different elements of the Model. This will hopefully lead to a more structured understanding of how these criteria operate in practice, helping practitioners and policy makers interpret on-going work in the Social and Creative Innovation Community and apply the lessons learned to their specific contexts and goals.

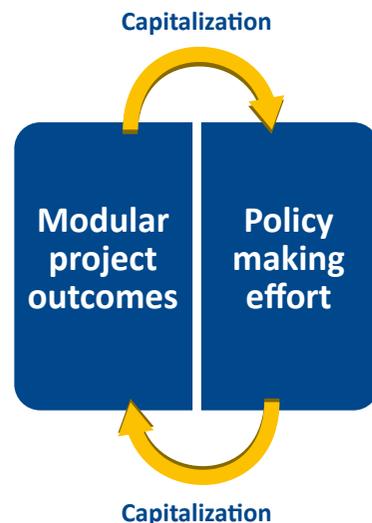


## THE CAPITALISATION METHOD

Validation of the Mediterranean Model with on-going projects is proceeding through the application of the Capitalisation Method developed in the TALIA project. As applied in the MED programme, the term “Capitalisation” refers to the “organisation of data concerning the implementation of programmes, projects, concerning their impacts, the methods used in order to make the accumulated experience usable for other programmes or projects”.

In this context, the Capitalisation Method adopted in TALIA considers activities, results and impacts from the Social & Creative Community – formed by the Modular Projects – as important evidence for addressing societal challenges through policy, requiring however several intermediate steps in order to translate into useful policy action:

- An aggregation of evidence, scaling up from the granular level of specific pilot interventions to the higher operational level of policy actions.
- The development and testing of relevant indicators for SI&CCI innovation such as the Criteria of Success elements.



TALIA thus considers Capitalisation as a process more than a concluding step. Capitalisation thinking is built into project activities from the onset, with the Capitalisation strategy defined in the early months of the project<sup>1</sup>. Activities of modular projects are considered relevant to policy makers as they unfold in real time, with the same degree of usefulness as final results. This also benefits partners and participants in the MED Social and Creative Innovation Community, as it enables them to align their approach to on-going policy priorities.

The tools employed in the implementation of such a method include the following:

- An informal survey of project Lead Partners identified the relative importance of the different elements of the Model, allowing to construct a first comparative analysis and overview.
- These comparative analyses formed the basis for discussion in the series of TALIA International Seminars programmed on a rotating bases with Modular Projects (to date: CoWorkMED, CHIMERA, and CreativeWear).
- The Model was also presented and discussed at international Network Dissemination Events outside the MED area (events of the European Network of Living Labs in Brussels and Geneva) in order to gain an ‘external’ perspective.
- The elements of the Vision have also been developed in a more interactive fashion in two World Cafés (Geneva and Palermo), leading to new insights on the Vision itself.

As the outcomes of these exercises are being incorporated into a second version of the Innovation Vision deliverable, the need was also expressed for a more synthetic and accessible presentation of the Vision itself and its key elements. This Policy Brief, the ninth in a series issued by the TALIA project, aims to do just that.

1. See TALIA Deliverable 4.1.1.1, “Capitalisation Strategy”

## THE INTERREG MED PROGRAMME'S SOCIAL AND CREATIVE INNOVATION COMMUNITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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