

# CREACT4MED OUR **IMPACTS** AND **ACHIEVEMENTS**

CRreative Entrepreneurs ACTing FOR  
the future of the MEDiterranean







## Foreword

**Maria Ruiz de Cossío, Senior Project Manager, EMEA, and CREAT4MED Project Coordinator**

Welcome to “CREACT4MED Our Impacts and Achievements.” As the Project Coordinator, it fills me with immense pride to present this comprehensive compilation of our journey, accomplishments, and the transformative impact we’ve made in the cultural and creative industries in the Southern Mediterranean.

Since the beginning of the project in March 2020, CREAT4MED has worked on 3 critical goals: **boost CCI businesses and entrepreneurship** in the Southern Mediterranean, **empower current and potential entrepreneurs**, in particular young people and women, and **establish a regional CCI hub** to bring together actors from North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Over the last four years, we have provided key financial support to 23 entrepreneurs, and 12 Business Support Organisations, trained over 400 individuals, and built a community of over 1600 creative minds across the Mediterranean and engaged over 1500 stakeholders across our many activities. What began as a mere proposal to make a difference in the cultural and creative community has evolved into a vibrant ecosystem of creativity, expertise, and collective endeavour.



Within these pages, you will discover a tapestry of stories that highlight our collective efforts to address some of the most pressing challenges facing the cultural and creative industries. From mapping the gaps in support and investigating ways to unlock human potential to providing training in key entrepreneurial skills and direct financial support, each achievement stands as a testament to the dedication and ingenuity of our diverse team of partners, collaborators, and stakeholders.

Throughout our journey, we have embraced the principles of inclusivity, diversity, and equity, recognising that true progress can only be achieved when all voices are heard, and all perspectives are valued. By fostering an environment of openness and collaboration, we have been able to harness the full potential of our collective expertise and creativity.

As we reflect on our past achievements, we also look toward the future with optimism and determination. The challenges facing the Mediterranean region are complex and multifaceted, but we remain committed to finding innovative solutions and forging new pathways toward a more sustainable and prosperous future for all.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to the success of CREAT4MED, from our partners and collaborators to our funders and supporters. Your unwavering commitment and dedication have been the driving force behind our achievements, and I am immensely grateful for your continued support. Together, we have the power to shape a better future for the Mediterranean region and beyond.

Thank you for joining us on this remarkable journey.

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## About CREAT4MED

CREACT4MED is an EU-funded project which aims to strengthen businesses with the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) in the Southern Mediterranean. It seeks to support entrepreneurs and start-ups, create jobs, and foster sustainable economic growth, with a particular focus on young people and women.

**Project full name:** CReative Entrepreneurs ACTing FOR the future MEDiterranean

**Grant agreement number:** ENI/2019/412-505

**Budget:** €2,220,675 (90% funded by the EU Commission)

**Timeline:** 1st March 2020 – 31st August 2024

### CREACT4MED Goals:

- Boost CCI businesses and entrepreneurship in the Southern Mediterranean, increasing the capacity of CCI to attract investment, create jobs and foster inclusive economic growth.
- Empower current and potential entrepreneurs, in particular young people and women, to start or grow CCI businesses through tailored training and financing opportunities.
- Establish a regional CCI hub to bring together actors from North Africa, the Middle East and Europe, strengthening networking, exchanges and cooperation in the sector across the Mediterranean.

CREACT4MED is led by the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA) and implemented by a consortium of partners from across Europe and North Africa.

### CREACT4MED's activities are split into 4 main pillars:

- Mapping the CCI ecosystem in target countries
- Training aspiring and established CCI entrepreneurs
- Sub-granting business incubators, MSMEs, and Civil Society Organisations
- Engagement and Advocacy on the economic importance and social impact of CCI



## Mapping

The first pillar of CREAT4MED's activities is mapping the current landscape of the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in the project's target countries. The aim of this exercise was to identify the key figures, actors, initiatives, cultural infrastructures, opportunities and obstacles in each of the target countries, with a view to uncovering and raising awareness of unexploited entrepreneurship and employment opportunities and developing appropriate support initiatives and policy recommendations.

### Consultations and Policy Discussions

CREACT4MED began the mapping pillar by constructing and carrying out consultations with the **Technical Expert Group** (TEG). The TEG was made up of project partners, renowned regional and local experts, and observers, set up to provide key insights into the CCI and support the development of the CREAT4MED Mapping Reports. These experts provided regional and local expertise on the CCI from different perspectives in each CREAT4MED country in areas such as available national data on CCI, national policies and strategies on CCI, key and impactful national financial and support programmes, the EU's and international organisations' actions, governmental institutions involved in the sector, educational systems and programmes, and incubators and accelerators. Each expert continued to be a key part of the mapping process of the CCI ecosystems. 5 TEG meetings were held between November 18, 2020, and February 25, 2021, with a total of 25 members, composed of 11 external experts and 9 observers plus 5 incubators, covering 11 countries.

Following the TEGs, the project engaged in **Stakeholder Engagement Group Workshops and Incubator Meetings**. These workshops discussed the role of CCI as vectors for employment and resilience and offered a space for key CCI stakeholders to present and discuss government strategies and public programmes/initiatives to promote CCI, private initiatives promoted by business support organisations and financing bodies, and international initiatives dedicated to CREAT4MED target sectors.

**5 Technical Expert Group meetings with 25 members**

**6 Stakeholder Engagement Workshops**

**6 Incubator Meetings**

**3 Mainstreaming Webinars**

**6 Policy Dialogues**

To engage further with the cultural and creative ecosystem beyond the Mediterranean, in February 2022 CREACT4MED led the organisation of the online session [Rewriting the Narrative: Africa-Europe](#) dialogue as part of the Africa-Europe Week organised alongside the EU-African Union Summit in Brussels. The event brought together 14 experts, policymakers and entrepreneurs to share creative success stories and discuss how to break down barriers and allow more potential creatives to achieve the same success. At the end of the session, a [Statement](#) was published and sent out to the Heads of State of the EU and the African Union containing the main recommendations explored during the session.

These meetings and consultations served as building blocks for the development of the 8 country reports, infographics, and the Data Observatory.

Whilst early consultations informed mapping reports published in the autumn of 2021, CREACT4MED continued to carry out social dialogue actions in 2023 and 2024, to continue building the big picture on boosting the industries and engaging with relevant stakeholders. In June 2023, the project held its first **Mainstreaming Webinar** in the series titled The Implication of the Private Sector for a Sustainable CCI. These 3 regional events addressed critical topics related to CCI: Towards a Sustainable Creative and Cultural Mediterranean Industry; Towards A Financially Resilient Creative and Cultural Mediterranean Industry; and Cultural Exchange and Intellectual Property: Ensuring Rights in The Creative Economy. In total, the webinars engaged 14 experts from across the Mediterranean with over 100 participants. These sessions led to the development of the Regional Roadmap with numerous policy recommendations.

Finally, the project organised 6 Advocacy sessions, which held online, bringing together policy makers and key actors within the CCI ecosystem of each target country including EU delegations, policymakers, representatives from international organizations and members of the CREACT4MED Technical Expert Group (TEG). Each session started with a comprehensive presentation of the regional policy paper and country-specific policy action plans. The sessions outlined strategic recommendations to bolster the CCI sector, with an ultimate vision of establishing a robust CCI Med Hub.



## Country Reports, Infographics and the CCI Data Observatory

In October 2021, CREAT4MED released the first of its [Country Reports](#). 8 reports were published covering Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia. Each report gives an overview of the current landscape of cultural and creative industries (CCI) which are defined in a broad sense, stretching from gastronomy to performing arts, to gaming and music, to advertising and fashion. The reports start with a brief overview of each country's macroeconomic situation and take a deep dive into the salient features of the existing CCI and entrepreneurial ecosystems. Key figures are presented regarding the cultural infrastructure. Key stakeholders and main actors within the CCI ecosystem are identified including governmental actors, private sector organisations, NGOs and associations, and academic institutions, as well as the identification of several national and international initiatives with a CCI focus. The Intellectual Property (IP) framework of the target country is analysed presenting the number of patents and IP agreements. Finally, the report outlines challenges and opportunities within the CCI sector and gives a series of policy recommendations. Additionally, 8 infographics to represent key data on the entrepreneurial ecosystem of each target country with a focus on women and youth empowerment were produced. The infographics provide a visual overview of several key economic and social factors relating to CCI including its contribution to imports and exports, the level of entrepreneurial activity, and women and youth empowerment. All mapping reports can be viewed at the CREAT4MED website [here](#).

**8 Country Reports**  
**8 Infographics**  
**1 Data Observatory**  
**1 Best Practice Repository**  
**1 Regional Roadmap**  
**1 Regional Policy Report**

In November 2022, the project launched the [CCI Data Observatory](#) to collect and show reliable available data on the Cultural and Creative Industries under one dashboard in the 8 CREAT4MED countries, as well as providing a regional perspective. The dashboard is composed of two main and one auxiliary pillar:

- 1<sup>st</sup> main pillar) CCI contribution to the economy: in this pillar, we gather information on the contribution of the underlying sector to economic activity, in terms of value-added, job creation, and exports & imports.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> main pillar) CCI enablers: in this pillar, we collect information on factors which can enhance the development of CCI underlying sectors such as policy and legislation, cultural and digital infrastructure, as well as information on the status of Intellectual Property (IP) in the CREAT4MED countries.
- The auxiliary pillar) Sectoral perspective: In this pillar, we present information on specific sectors such as filmmaking, media, music industry etc.

The CREAT4MED project continues to update the CCI Data Observatory to give an accurate picture of the cultural and creative industry landscape in the Southern Mediterranean. The Dashboard is completely free for all to use.

Reflecting on the wider impact of the cultural and creative industries, in May 2024 CREAT4MED published the report: [Unveiling the Power of Art and Culture: Enhancing Mental Health and Social Engagement in the South Mediterranean with Insights from Catalonia](#). The report was conducted by Salvador Simó, Deputy Director Mental Health Chair at UVIC-UCC and EMEA Expert Panel Member. It delves into how arts and culture may enhance mental health and overall well-being. It is well understood that the decline in mental health is a significant global concern, with rates plummeting worldwide. Fortunately, in response to this pressing need, successful initiatives have emerged, that can be replicated if the intricacies of the South Mediterranean region are considered such as the cultural capacity, social dynamics, and factors influencing both the economy and the cultural ecosystem. By studying these specificities, the report establishes a roadmap with 7 clear steps that can be applied to develop similar initiatives across the South Mediterranean region, drawing from the successful pilot cases in Catalonia.

## Regional Policy Report, Regional Roadmap, and Country Action Plans

The CREAT4MED regional policy paper, titled *Empowering the South Mediterranean: Building a Thriving Cultural and Creative Economy*, was published in June 2024. The paper aims to unlock the creative potential of the South Mediterranean region by proposing a comprehensive set of policy recommendations for building a thriving CCI ecosystem that fuels economic growth, empowers artists, and enriches the cultural landscape of the South Mediterranean. These recommendations take three global approaches: mainstreaming creativity, building an enabling environment and enhancing job quality for creative professionals, especially in light of digitalisation and technological advancements and the distinctive features of employment in the CCI.

The 8 Country Action Plans provide comprehensive overviews of key macroeconomic indicators pertinent to the development of the CCI, along with strategies for empowering women and youth. Each Action Plan is tailored to the specific national context, offering a set of relevant and impactful policy recommendations designed to foster the growth of CCI and support the empowerment of women and youth. They address critical issues such as improving infrastructure, enhancing educational and training opportunities, and increasing access to financial resources. Additionally, the Action Plans identify the main stakeholders necessary for the successful implementation of these policies. These stakeholders include government agencies, private sector partners, non-governmental organizations, and community groups. By highlighting these key players, the Action Plans aim to facilitate effective collaboration and coordination, ensuring that the proposed initiatives are carried out efficiently and effectively.

## CREACT4MED Policy Recommendations

CREACT4MED has made relevant, succinct, and actionable policy recommendations as a result of the comprehensive mapping exercises.

**70+ Policy Recommendations**

Through the publication of the CREAT4MED papers and reports we have developed over 70 policy recommendations categorized into these 3 key themes:

- Mainstream CCI in the South-Med region
- Build an enabling environment for Creative workers
- Enhance the quality of CCI jobs

Mainstreaming CCI is crucial, as the sector is not currently recognized as strategic or profitable by governments and the public in the region. Our first set of recommendations focuses on adopting a definition for CCI, raising awareness, and integrating CCI into mainstream economic and cultural policies. The second theme centres on building an enabling environment for creative workers. These recommendations aim to enhance the capacity of underlying sectors by improving product quality, providing training, and ensuring access to finance, among other measures. The third set of recommendations addresses the precarious working conditions of CCI workers. We aim to improve their quality of life by advocating for better working conditions and access to social safety nets, among other initiatives.<sup>1</sup>

## Best Practices

Another key element of the mapping pillar is the call for nominations of **Best Practices**. The first call was launched in February 2022 with its relaunch in August 2023. The call closed at the end of October. In total, we received 108 applications: 32 from Tunisia, 21 from Egypt, 16 from Morocco, 16 from Jordan, 12 from Lebanon, 11 from Palestine, 4 international initiatives. After a thorough evaluation, 54 were published and identified as Best Practices with 29 of them led by women, and 27 by young people. Of these 54 applications, 26 were shortlisted to proceed to the public vote. Combined with expert evaluations, the public vote decided the winner – one per country with an additional 6 special mention prizes.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that this is not a comprehensive list of the policy recommendations made by the CREAT4MED project. For the full list, please read the country reports, the regional roadmap, and our other mapping outputs

# WINNERS AND SPECIAL MENTION PRIZES

## EGYPT

**In numbers:**

**108 applications**

**54 Best Practices**

**6 winners**

**6 Special Mention Prizes**

### WINNER - Al Qalam



Al Qalam, is a community project to spread and teach Arabic calligraphy arts and Islamic decoration in the heart of historic Cairo. It is a unique learning atmosphere and encourages students to unleash their creativity by providing learning spaces, a design studio, a shop to buy calligraphy supplies and art gifts, and a meeting point for creators and artists. Through its various programs, Al Qalam seeks to promote linear movement through training and education, creating new generations of calligraphers and forming a supportive system, organizing exhibitions and educational seminars, providing tools and written products, marketing and promoting and digitizing artworks.

How will they use the award?

Al Qalam will buy a laser machine for engraving and drawing on wood, acrylic, leather, plastic, glass, cladding, cardboard, paper, and marble. This machine will enable Al Qalam to stage its first in-house production of its main products. For instance, the heads of Arabic calligraphy qalams (pens), accessories, souvenirs, and decorations, in addition to using it in printing and packaging, advertising, etc. This step will mark a significant departure from the longstanding practice of outsourcing manufacturing, ensuring that the final product meets Al Qalam's criteria and will contribute to a quicker response to the changes in demand. Consequently, the quality will be improved, and the intellectual property rights of the designs will be preserved.

**SPECIAL MENTION PRIZE – ALMAH** (a project by the Egyptian Clothing Bank)



ALMAH is a local Egyptian sustainable fashion brand that repurposes virgin vintage material into upcycled contemporary high-end fashion pieces, and creates unique items for resale and produces up-cycled fabric swatches for luxury fashion houses. ALMAH is a social enterprise (project of the Egyptian Clothing Bank, an Egyptian NGO) with a business model set for high-profit margins - depending on the competitiveness of the ECB collected material sourcing - dedicating all profit to the sustainable provision of functional fitting clothes to deserving children.

How will they use the award?

Almah will update the set of their photography studio for product shots instead of frequent rentals. This will help them photograph and archive the thousands of vintage pieces they have, and download these items for sale on our website, resulting in more sales and revenue.

## JORDAN

**WINNER – Puppets World for the Development of Children**



Puppets World is the first and only company in Jordan that aims to educate children and raise their awareness of social, behavioural, emotional, and cultural issues through the interactive mobile puppet theatre. Being mobile, the theatre reaches remote communities and targets locals, refugees, and disabled children from 4 to 12 years of age, regardless of their regional background. The plays are performed by internationally certified puppeteers in a fun and enjoyable way using puppets with different shapes and colours, also translated into sign language Puppets World Theater has received many global awards including the Austrian Intercultural Achievement Award 2022.

How will they use the award?

Puppets World will use the prize to make their ECO puppet theatre operational. The first of its kind in the Middle East is dedicated to raising environmental awareness among children. Through the planned puppet shows they will reach underserved children in rural areas solidifying their commitment to fostering environmental stewardship among the next generation. They will also dedicate

resources to the development of our equipment and tools used in the shows, ensuring the highest quality performances to deliver even more immersive and captivating experiences.

### SPECIAL MENTION PRIZE – [Qaleb Studio](#)



QalebStudio is on a mission to revolutionize the digital visual content industry by bridging the gap between the vast Arab-speaking online community and the availability of high-quality, culturally authentic Arabic digital content. As a pioneering platform, they empower businesses, designers, and individuals, irrespective of their digital literacy levels, with a comprehensive library of over 60,000 meticulously crafted templates and digital products that resonate with Arabic and Islamic aesthetics.

How will they use the award?

Qaleb Studio will expand its library, developing new templates and mock-ups that cater to high-demand areas, as informed by community input. They will also hold targeted skill-building workshops for distinct community segments, such as women entrepreneurs and young designers. In doing so, the library will be strategically enhanced to meet community needs, leading to greater satisfaction and utilization, and empowering specific groups within the community, fostering diversity in CCI participation and impactful design creation.



## LEBANON

### WINNER – [the OtherDada](#) on behalf of [Studio Madane](#)



Studio Madane is a dynamic Beirut-based youth-led collective, that targets intersectional reform by addressing issues at the crossroads of socioeconomic disparities, urban development, and progressive political change. It acknowledges that addressing one aspect alone cannot lead to comprehensive socioeconomic and urban transformation.



How will they use the award?

Studio Madane will launch a youth internship program for individuals from backgrounds in i) design, ii) political science, iii) and creative entrepreneurship. This program will foster organizational development, and critical and systems thinking in today's shifting paradigms through the lens of local innovation and creative entrepreneurship.

### SPECIAL MENTION PRIZE – [SAWA for Development and Aid](#)



سوا للتنمية والإغاثة  
Sawa for Dev & Aid

SAWA for Development and Aid is a Civil Society Organization (CSO) initially founded in December 2011 working with refugees. After working with marginalized communities, SAWA realized the importance of preserving the dignity of families by creating a source of income, especially for women-led households. To meet this need, SAWA launched the Masterpeace project, which aims to preserve the heritage culture of Levantine families through fashion. The Masterpeace fashion line consists of sewing workshops where women produce modern-traditional clothes and home decor items that represent the heritage culture.



How will they use the award?

This award will be utilized to support activities aimed at empowering women in cultural-related projects and preserving traditional food. The primary objective is to sustain the seasonal tradition of food preservation. The awarded amount will aid in expanding production to reach approximately 1600 households by distributing the food produced by the women involved in this project.

## MOROCCO

### WINNER – METEOR AIRLINES



Meteor Airlines' mission is to rekindle and preserve the vibrant Amazigh cultural heritage of Morocco, addressing cultural erosion and disconnection among Amazigh communities through disruptive Amazigh rock music. They believe that by infusing traditional Amazigh cultural elements with contemporary influences, they can make this heritage relevant and appealing to younger generations. This fusion can serve as a bridge between the past and the present, ensuring that Amazigh culture not only survives but thrives, and that the sustainable practices its people have promoted for centuries can be rekindled to face the current climate emergency.



How will they use the award?

Meteor Airlines will initiate an innovative project named "AGDAL residency". This project will be a comprehensive training program focusing on the fusion of Amazigh cultural heritage with climate action through arts. The program will include workshops and mentorship on music production, film-making, and digital distribution, targeting young Amazigh artists aged 18 to 26 in the rural areas and villages of Morocco. The training will integrate environmental preservation themes, aiming to inspire and empower participants to create music that addresses climate challenges. The project will leverage Meteor Airlines' expertise, cultural educators, and environmental activists to provide expert guidance and mentorship.

**SPECIAL MENTION PRIZE – [4SFEST](#) on behalf of the project [FeMENA](#)**



Focused on addressing the limited opportunities for emerging artists in the region, especially women and non-binary individuals, the project aims to enhance their skills and navigate the digital-dominated music market. Through immersive residencies, 1-1 sessions, and research papers, FeMENA promotes diversity and advocates for gender equality. Financially sustainable through partnerships and grants, the initiative not only contributes to economic development but also fosters a supportive network for participants. Despite challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, FeMENA has shown resilience, making it a transformative force in the electronic music landscape.

How will they use the award?

4SFEST will attend the WOMEX 2024 event to strengthen its ecosystem and promote networking. They will fund mobility and access to WOMEX\* for a female artist from the 4S network and a member of the 4S team to give a Moroccan female artist the chance to strengthen her networking opportunities and enable the 4S network to expand its field of partnerships.

## PALESTINE

**WINNER – [Askadar for Culture and Arts](#)**



Askadar is a creative cultural centre in the city of Nablus in the Northern West Bank. The centre opened its doors in March 2017 and has been providing much-needed culture and arts activities to children and teens (5 to 15 years old). Askadar was founded by a group of young artists and entrepreneurs with the goal of educating children in music and dance and giving them a safe, family-friendly environment for them to explore their creativity. Now, Askadar is engaging 150 students in art activities such as ballet, dabka, music and drawing.

How will they use the award?

Askadar will allocate the prize towards purchasing a safety flooring system for the kids' playground area. The installation of the safety flooring will significantly enhance the safety measures in the playground, providing a secure environment for children to play without the risk of injury.

## SPECIAL MENTION PRIZE – Tamer Institute for Community Education



مؤسسة تامر للتعليم المجتمعي

Tamer Institute for Community Education



Tamer Institute for Community Education is an educational non-governmental non-profit organisation focusing principally on the rights to education, identity, freedom of expression, and access to information. Tamer works across the West Bank and Gaza Strip, primarily targeting children and young adults to encourage and deepen learning opportunities. They aim to enhance reading, writing and all forms of expression among children and young adults by supporting Palestinian literature.

How will they use the award?

Tamer Institute will utilise the funds to transform the book “The Latecomers’ Queue” into an animated story. “The Latecomers’ Queue” narrates the captivating journey of Rima and her friends as they venture back to their school after the end of the school day. Through their adventure, they discover that the school transforms into a magical place beyond the confines of the official

system. They embark on a new way of learning, exploring, and rebuilding the school as a vibrant space where they can enjoy themselves and unleash their creativity.

## TUNISIA

### WINNER – DALL BY 3DNetInfo



Digiart Livinglab is a creative platform for social and open innovation certified by ENOLL (European Network of Living Labs). The D.A.L.L. is located in the centre of Nabeul, next to the Jarre (a symbol of the town’s heritage). The D.A.L.L. is a space for talented people from the region who want to develop their creative spirit and produce creative, innovative projects that have a social impact and use creative and digital technologies (3D, video games, virtual reality, augmented reality, IoT, etc.). The project is supported by NET-INFO, the School of Art and Technology (<https://3dnetinfo.com>) and the Tunisian creative technology association CREATEC.

How will they use the award?

D.A.L.L will organize an event titled “Tech Harmony: Innovating for Prosperity and Wellness”. This event will showcase the remarkable projects and success stories that have emerged from the D.A.L.L Living Lab, illustrating the impact

of the collaborative model on local communities and its potential for application across Africa. The event will feature a diverse range of activities including expert-led presentations, interactive workshops, and panel discussions involving our team, community members, and key stakeholders.

### SPECIAL MENTION PRIZE - [Couscous Publishing House](#)



Couscous Publishing House Couss et Co publishing house is a social company, co-founded in 2012 by Tunisian artist Rym Jâafra and author Yassine Ellil. They are specialised in the publication of comic books and magazines and have recently launched the comic book series “The Door of the Sea”. The aim of the series is to manage tolerance and improve the acceptance of cultural diversity in children, battling against the challenges posed by technology and quick access to information.

How will they use the award?

Couscous Publishing House will invest in the printing of 5000 copies of issue n°4 of the magazine of comics ‘The Door of the Sea’, ‘رحبنا باب’. which aims to educate children aged 6 to 11 years on tolerance and intercultural dialogue. 20% of the sale price of the publication will be devoted to improving infrastructure, installing libraries and purchasing supplies in public primary schools located in underserved neighbourhoods. They will expand the distribution and sale sphere of the magazine to reach children enrolled in public primary schools located in rural and urban areas facing increasing poverty and regional inequalities in North-West Tunisia: Beja, Kef, Jendouba and Siliana.

## Training

Training is CREAT4MED's second pillar. Training and capacity-building are crucial in the cultural and creative industries of the Southern Mediterranean as they enhance the skills and knowledge of local artists, creators, and cultural managers, enabling them to compete in a global market and innovate within their fields. By providing structured learning opportunities and professional development, such support has helped to fill gaps in expertise, disseminate state-of-the-art and the newest models, and cultivate confidence. Furthermore, capacity building supports the preservation and promotion of the region's rich cultural heritage, ensuring that traditional crafts and contemporary artistic expressions can thrive and evolve. Ultimately, investing in human capital through training and capacity building fortifies the cultural and creative sectors, driving social and economic progress in the Southern Mediterranean.

Under this pillar, CREAT4MED has held 2 cycles of the CREAT4MED Training Academy, the Management of Creativity Summer School, and several Regional Alumni Network Events. These activities had the aim of building capacity and transferring skills to young and women entrepreneurs in the region working in the cultural and creative industries.

### Training Academy

CREACT4MED held 2 training cycles which aimed to tackle the main aspects of running a cultural and creative enterprise touching on business models, legal obstacles, financial considerations, and marketing strategies giving a comprehensive overview of how to run a successful CCI business. The majority of the CREAT4MED trainees were entrepreneurs or founders of start-ups, however, many were freelancers and employed workers.

The Academy offered an online course comprising both synchronous and asynchronous teaching, with a duration of 6 weeks. The first cycle was held in May 2022 and the second in September 2023. Across both cycles, CREAT4MED engaged with over 400 aspiring entrepreneurs in a series of interactive workshops and webinars covering 9 modules:

- Module 1 - CCI Sector Insights
- Module 2 - Business Basics
- Module 3 - Ideation



Modules 1-3 were led by Ouafa Belgacem, CEO and Co-founder of Culture Funding Watch.

- Module 4 - Concept Design & Prototyping, led by Nadia Mansour, Associate Research Fellow at the World Economic Forum
- Module 5 - Company Formation, led by Sara Hammoud, Business Development Consultant
- Module 6 – Marketing, led by Neda Kharoub, Business Consultant and Co-founder of TTI Innovation
- Module 7 - Pitching Your Company, led by Abdelsamee Abouelhamd, Capacity Building and Project Management Consultant
- Module 8 – Internationalisation in the CCI Sector (asynchronous session)
- Bonus Module – Grant Management (asynchronous session)

Prior to starting the CREAT4MED Training Academy, most participants entered the training program with no to partial knowledge of the topics covered. Topics where trainees came already with foundational knowledge were marketing and business-related areas. There was a notable lack of knowledge on topics related to the cultural and creative industries more specifically, underscoring the importance of the training provided by the CREAT4MED Academy.

#### Training Academy in Numbers

- 407 trainees
- 121 learning hours
- 53% women
- 81% youth
- 83.5% believe the programme enhanced their employability

## Training Academy Testimonials



*“I applied for the CREAT4MED in 2022 to enhance my entrepreneurial skills and network with like-minded individuals. The program exceeded my expectations, offering valuable insights and practical exercises. Collaborating with fellow entrepreneurs and instructors was enlightening.”*

*Norchen Mechri, Training Academy graduate and Founder of E-Tafakna*

*“The CREAT4MED training program increased my knowledge of entrepreneurship and made me make connections with future partners from the Arab region. My expectations were to learn more about entrepreneurship to validate if I am ready to launch the organization or not. The training met my expectations and introduced me to future partners, too!”*

*Fatma Zahran, a Pharmacist, Instructional Designer and Social Entrepreneur from Egypt*



*“[Collaborative learning] was one of the reasons that prompted me to participate and attend the lectures, from which I benefited greatly.”*

*Hala Ali Al Sahli, Training Academy graduate and Founder of Hala Souvenirs, Jordan*

*“The CREAT4MED program was a great opportunity to explore the cultural and creative industry further and acquire more information about both the sector and the business development within it.*

*The sessions with the trainers were interactive; they made the content simple, easy, and engaging. A continuous and deeper reflection on the material will always be beneficial in the future. A strength of the program was how it encouraged thinking about important questions, like where ideas come from and what the vision is [of your company].”*

*Joelle El Haber, Founder of Jar of Jam, Lebanon*



## Management of Creativity Summer School



In addition to the online Training Academy, in September 2023, the project hosted the CREAT4MED **Management of Creativity Summer School** where 27 entrepreneurs from 22 funded projects travelled to Barcelona to take part in a week-long intensive course covering key topics on creativity and entrepreneurship. The Summer School was organised by the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA) in collaboration with StartUB!, the business incubator at the University of Barcelona. The Summer School featured training sessions, workshops and panel discussions on a range of themes such as storytelling for technology, digital marketing, and financing for entrepreneurs. This experience not only benefited the entrepreneurs as they implemented their business proposals under the CREAT4MED subgranting scheme, but also in the future growth of their businesses beyond the project's timeline.

*“Cross-collaboration in the cultural creative sector fosters diverse connections and shared experiences, strengthening the fabric of social capital and enriching our collective narrative. The cultural creative industry bridges economic value and personal expression, nurturing well-being through the transformative power of science, art, and imagination.”*

*Prof. Ayadi, President of EMEA and Director of the CREAT4MED project*

Over the week, 9 interactive workshops were held as well as 1-1 coaching sessions with 31 experts and mentors providing tailored advice to each business. Altogether, the Summer School engaged 88 actors across the cultural and creative industries in Barcelona and held a networking session with over 30 participants. Moreover, 9 collaboration agreements were signed between the CREAT4MED entrepreneurs. As well as impart knowledge and critical business skills, the Summer School aimed to facilitate connections between entrepreneurs to advance cross-border networking and internationalisation of their businesses.



*Hiba Ghiati, Founder and CEO of H-Kids in Morocco, and Khaled and Abo Alazem, Co-founder of Duma Toys in Egypt, celebrate their collaboration agreement.*

To connect the CREAT4MED entrepreneurs with the CCI ecosystem in Barcelona, the Summer School included visits to cultural landmarks and hubs in Barcelona, such as 22@ - known as the innovation district where creativity, design and technology have flourished, the CaixaForum and a virtual reality experience, el Born Neighbourhood – a district which blends artistic vibrancy and bustling boutiques with historical charm, and the Ernest Ventòs Foundation, for a workshop on Smells, Arts, and Marketing.



The Summer School also provided ample opportunity to network with group activities and social events throughout. To close the week, the entrepreneurs were also able to network with the ecosystem in Barcelona before heading back to implement the key lessons learned and reflect on the experiences had.

The full report can be found at the CREAT4MED website. As well as the wrap-up video on our [YouTube Channel](#).

**27 entrepreneurs**  
**31 experts**  
**9 collaboration agreements**  
**9 workshops**  
**88 stakeholders engaged**  
**4 cultural visits**

## Regional Alumni Network Events

The Regional Alumni Network events aimed to provide knowledge and skills young entrepreneurs from the Southern Mediterranean Region. They were organised by project partner the European Institute of the Mediterranean with collaboration from the lead partner, the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association. Participants who completed the CREAT4MED Training Academy became part of the Regional Alumni Network which offers opportunities for further exchanges between peers and with regional and international key players and experts (e.g. from Europe, USA, etc.). This is closely linked with the MED CCI Hub which offers networking opportunities, capacity building, enhanced visibility, and access to regional events and financial providers. The full reports of each Regional Alumni Networking Event can be found at the [CREACT4MED website](#).



**CREACT4MED Sub-granting**

**FUNDED ACTIONS**

- **Launch of a new product/service:** Seed funding to recently established businesses that want to kick start their products/services
- **Expand a product/service:** Early-stage seeds to already existing businesses willing to expand their service/operations

**WHAT'S IN FOR WINNERS**

- A sub-grant of up to **15,000€**
- **Technical Support Services** to be implemented by CREAT4MED local incubators → details: [Egypt](#), [Jordan](#), [Lebanon](#), [Morocco](#), [Palestine](#), [Tunisia](#)
- **International networking events** related to the CCI sector in the Mediterranean region

**ACTIONS SUBVENTIONNÉES**

- **Lancement d'un nouveau produit/service :** Financement de démarrage pour les entreprises récemment établies qui souhaitent lancer leurs produits/services.
- **Développement d'un produit/service :** Financement de démarrage pour les entreprises déjà existantes qui souhaitent étendre leurs services.

**POUR LES GAGNANTS**

- Une subvention de jusqu'à **15.000€**
- **Services de soutien technique** à mettre en œuvre par les incubateurs locaux CREAT4MED → détails: [Égypte](#), [Jordanie](#), [Liban](#), [Maroc](#), [Palestine](#), [Tunisie](#)
- Participation à des **événements de networking international** liés au secteur des ICC dans la région méditerranéenne.

The first Regional Alumni Network Event was held in August 2022. It was dedicated to the graduates of the CREAT4MED Training Academy to provide training and insights on how to apply for the CREAT4MED Call for Cultural and Creative Business Proposals. Giulia Dimonopoli, Events and Project Officer at IEMed presented the core details of the CREAT4MED Call for Cultural and Creative

Business Proposals. Specifically, she addressed the target and priorities of the call, the type of action funded, the eligibility criteria regarding applicants, activities, and costs, the evaluation process and selection criteria, the obligations of the selected beneficiaries, and the application timeline and process. Then María Ruiz, Senior Project Officer at EMEA explained the application process in detail, focusing on the application rules and procedures to ensure all attendees grasped the process and were able to build a solid application to the call. More than 31% of the attendees applied to the Call with over 80 participants attending the session.

Within the framework of the Management of Creativity Summer School in September 2023, the second Regional Alumni Network Event, *“Shores of Innovation: Access to Finance for Mediterranean Creative Ventures”* took place. The aim of this second event was to promote the professional development and networking opportunities of the capacity-building beneficiaries of the CREAT4MED project (from both the Sub-granting Scheme and Training Academy). The session brought together experts in finance and players who act as intermediaries between finance and entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative industries. Moderated by Prof. Jaime Argerich, Professor of Entrepreneurship at the University of Barcelona, 3 expert speakers joined the conversation, each representing a unique facet of the CCI funding landscape: Ouafa Belgacem (online), CEO of Culture Funding Watch, a network of experts in resource mobilisation who are passionate about supporting cultural initiatives in the global south, Jonàs Sala, Co-founder of Verkami, a cultural and creative crowdfunding platform based in Spain, and Jordi Pardo, President of Cercle de Cultura, an entity which provides the space for dialogue and debate in favour of culture and its greater presence and recognition in Catalan social life.



On the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2024, CREAT4MED held its third Regional Alumni Network Event on the exciting and critical topic of global trends in the cultural and creative industries. In an era defined by rapid technological advancements and disruptive innovation, the cultural and creative industries stand poised at the intersection of tradition and transformation. From the advent of immersive experiences to the integration of AI and blockchain, these sectors are witnessing a revolution fuelled by cutting-edge technologies. The webinar brought insightful examples from all over the US, to Kenya, to Tunisia, to Denmark to help participants gain an understanding of the key global developments in CCI and the spaces to watch.





The CCI play a pivotal role in the Mediterranean region’s social, economic, and cultural fabric. Given their societal impact, CCI actors have the potential to significantly contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This final Regional Alumni Network Event to be held in July titled: *Creative Minds, Sustainable Futures: Entrepreneurial Approaches to the SDGs*, will discuss the relevance of aligning cultural entrepreneurial projects with the SGDs, both from an environmental, social, as well as an economic perspective. Led by circular economy and sustainable development expert, Maya Karkour, the session will explore the ways in which entrepreneurs can integrate this strategy effectively into their projects and provide practical guidance on how to do so illustrated through success stories and best practices.<sup>2</sup>

## Sub-granting

The third pillar of the CREAT4MED project is sub-granting. The purpose of this pillar was to provide direct financial support towards strengthening cultural and creative start-ups, business support organisations, civil society organisations (CSO) and non-governmental organisations (NGO) in the Southern Mediterranean. There were 3 calls for subgrants over the 4 years of the project. The first, calling for the **Development of Incubation Services**, was directed at business support organisations (BSOs) encompassing a variety of mentoring, match-making, access to finance and IPR management services. The second, calling for **Creative Business Proposals** was directed at start-ups, CSOs, and MSMEs to launch or expand products and services, implement internationalisation, innovation or digitalisation strategies, and/or increase social inclusion and job creation. The third, calling for proposals to **Enhance Regional Cooperation**, directed at BSOs, NGOs and social enterprises, sought to empower stakeholders to foster cross-border collaboration.

<sup>2</sup> This final Regional Alumni Network Event will take place after the CREAT4MED Closing Event on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Across all three calls, CREAT4MED created over 400 job opportunities, provided capacity-building services to 148 entrepreneurs, launched 7 incubation programmes and facilitated one other, and 13 entrepreneurs enhanced or launched their websites, with another 20 launching products or services promoting Southern Mediterranean culture out into the world.

## The Incubators

6 subgrants of up to 15,750EUR were awarded to one incubator in each of the CREAT4MED target countries to establish incubation services for CCI entrepreneurs, with a particular focus on young people and women. The programmes supported entrepreneurs through the high-risk early stages of development and allowed them to build competitive businesses and relevant connections. Incubation programmes encompassed a variety of mentoring, matchmaking, access to finance and intellectual property rights services. Each incubator launched an acceleration programme starting with a call for applications, a 1-1 needs assessment, and finally, training sessions and workshops to enhance creative business management skills, as well as connecting the entrepreneurs with key networking events and opportunities to pitch for further funding. Below, read about each BSO and the impact they had with their incubation programme.

### NilePreneurs



NilePreneurs is a nationwide initiative started in 2019 and powered by the Central Bank of Egypt and the Egyptian Banking Sector. Fuelled by various partnerships with governmental and private sector entities, NilePreneurs has been supporting startups and SMEs in the domains of manufacturing, agriculture, and digital transformation by applying different innovation instruments. The initiative is piloted at Nile University based out of Cairo and has expanded to 4 other universities and continues to grow.



#### NilePreneurs in Numbers

**240 job opportunities created by incubated start-ups**

**90 personalised coaching hours**

**30 training hours**

**5 mentoring sessions**

**4 Community events**

From January to June 2023, Nilepreneurs achieved significant milestones with the CREAT4MED project. The team had active participation in community events such as the British Embassy Bazaar, Techne Summit, the Creative Industry Summit, and the 11th Edition of the Egyptian Handicraft Exhibition, providing valuable support for startups to showcase their work and engage with stakeholders. Additionally, a culture event at Nile University facilitated a workshop for selected business proposals. The project also conducted 5 mentorship sessions, enhancing the skills of participating startups in 3 key themes: Technical Production, Business Strategies, and Legal and Tax Considerations. These achievements reflect the project's commitment to nurturing entrepreneurship, promoting innovation, and fostering growth within the creative industry ecosystem.

### Nucleus Ventures



Nucleus Ventures based in Beirut aims to help under-represented entrepreneurs overcome the challenges of building globally competitive ventures from emerging ecosystems. They help innovative early-stage startups in emerging markets to transform into international ventures through structured and targeted access to global validation, mentorship and expertise, in addition to funding. They partner with governments, global businesses, funds and donors to create new venture opportunities, driving growth through innovation. They are a Unique Cadre of successful entrepreneurs, seasoned VCs, experts in residence, faculty partners & advisors 100% focused on execution.



With the CREAT4MED subgrant, Nucleus Ventures launched the Creatives Hub program in June 2022, carrying out the activities until December 2022. Throughout their programme which consisted of a bootcamp, mentoring and pitching sessions, 71 entrepreneurs benefitted with over 53 mentorship hours.

#### Nucleus Ventures' Creatives Hub in Numbers

**2 Core Entrepreneurship Skills Workshops**

**71 entrepreneurs benefitted**

**53 mentorship hours**

**1 bootcamp with 7 sessions**

**1 pitch session**

**4 CCI start-ups incubated**

60 entrepreneurs completed their boot camp with 7 sessions on ideation, product development, UX and UI design, value proposition, Go-To-Market strategy, and pitching skills. The bootcamp concluded with the CREAT4MED pitching event in June 2022 where 19 startups demonstrated their accumulated knowledge from the bootcamp into a pitch deck and pitching to a committee of the Creative's Hub.

***“We are honoured and delighted to be part of the group of business support organisations selected to support and incubate CCI startups and entrepreneurs. The grant allowed us to shed light on up-and-coming CCI startups in Lebanon, engage with the creative community and ultimately support 71 entrepreneurs in the sector.”***

***Farah Chamas, Operations Director at Nucleus Ventures and Creatives Hub Program Lead***

Nucleus Ventures then continued to support the selected CREAT4MED entrepreneurs, guiding them on how to develop a successful online presence, validate their ideal customer, identify their best channels to the market and grow their teams. Throughout the journey, every startup was connected with at least one lead mentor to support them and help them identify and overcome their challenges.

**TTi**



TTi is a non-profit Jordanian organisation based in Amman, founded in 2010 with the mission of spreading Entrepreneurship and Innovation culture among youth and women living in disadvantaged communities. Since 2010, more than 6000 direct beneficiaries have been served through +50 projects implemented all over Jordan, including awareness, training-camps, mentoring, consultation, matchmaking and early-stage incubation. They work with other community partners and key stakeholders within the eco-system to support innovative business ideas to boost economic-empowerment and employability for youth and women, especially outside the capital Amman, utilising TTi business incubators in Irbid (02incubator) and Karak (03incubator).





TTi in Jordan shortlisted 12 entrepreneurs out of 50 applications to take part in the incubation programme where 20 mentoring days took place. 5 hours of pitch training were delivered as well as 10 training and networking days. 7 of the 12 start-ups remain operational and financially stable with sale revenues. TTi also facilitated 2 networking events for entrepreneurs with participants discussing the challenges and opportunities related to craft entrepreneurship in Jordan.

**TTi in Numbers**

- 47 training and mentoring sessions held**
- 12 entrepreneurs benefitted**
- 16 job opportunities created**
- 2 networking events**

*“Through the support of the CREAT4MED project, we’ve successfully incubated a diverse range of startups, fortifying the CCI ecosystem and catalysing innovation that reflects the rich cultural tapestry of Jordan.”*

*Belal Raslan, Project Manager, TTi*

**LaStartupStation**



LaStartupStation, based in Casablanca, Morocco, has supported more than 2000 young, innovative companies in various key sectors in Africa. They have built a solid value proposition in the field of the deployment of digital projects, mobilising open innovation and the technologies of tomorrow.

The incubation programme launched by LaStartupStation was Scalerator#7. The aim of the programme was to support start-ups founded or co-founded by women to help them navigate the business world and climb the business development ladder. The aim of this programme is to strengthen startups operating in the cultural and creative industries to improve access to goods and services for underserved segments of the population, thereby contributing to the country’s sustainable economic development.



LaStartUpStation received 131 applications for the Scalerator Programme and 12 were selected to join a 3-day bootcamp with 8 masterclasses and 8 inspirational talks where finally, the entrepreneurs were prepared to pitch to a jury of experts. 8 were selected to join the incubation programme as well as the 4 CREAT4MED entrepreneurs selected under the Call for Cultural and Creative Business Proposals. After the capacity-building activities, 75% of the startups involved have progressed from the problem validation stage and prototype stage to the launch and development phase.

**LaStartUpStation: the Scalerator Programme in Numbers**

- 12 entrepreneurs benefited**
- 45 sessions held**
- 12 acceleration sprints**
- 1 Demo Day**
- 8 job opportunities created**

*“CREACT4MED fuels Morocco’s cultural creativity with vital subgrant support, enabling fresh ideas to thrive amidst heritage and open spaces. This initiative broadens the cultural creativity landscape, nurturing startups that reflect Morocco’s heritage.”*

*Soufiane Fanid, Former Project Manager, La StartUpStation*

**ASALA – the Palestinian Businesswomen’s Association**



Palestinian Businesswomen’s Association  
الجمعية الفلسطينية لصاحبات الأعمال

ASALA – the Palestinian Businesswomen’s Association - is a Palestinian NGO, whose mission is, and has always been, to provide services that help women in poverty change their lives, their social position, and their future by enabling and encouraging their successful participation in sustainable economic activities. In pursuing this goal, ASALA’s staff and supporters commit to the values of transparency, democracy, social equity, professionalism and coherence. Asala now has a membership of over 200 associates working in different fields and business sectors in CCI.

The overarching goal of Asala’s incubation programme was to support women-led SMEs, female entrepreneurs, and female start-ups in the cultural and creative industries. Palestine remains affected by myriad challenges and debilitating factors that over the years have contributed to social hardships and lack of opportunities. The incubation programme aimed to provide customized support to engaged businesswomen, facilitate access to finance with the Palestinian Monetary Authority, and the Middle East Investment Initiative, as well as provide B2B networking and partnerships with key actors such as the Arab



Hotel Association. Despite disruptions caused by the Israel-Hamas conflict in 2023-24, Asala continued working with CREAT4MED determined to make a difference for women active in creative and cultural entrepreneurship in Palestine.

**Asala’s Incubation Programme in Numbers**

- 30 entrepreneurs benefited**
- 60 coaching hours**
- 2 group training sessions**
- 4 cooperation agreements signed**

*“CREACT4MED: it’s a testimonial path of innovation and creativity. The support of the subgrant, helping ideas take off and fly in a free world enriched by cultural heritage and open space. The project brought a wider landscape for the industry of cultural creativity and facilitated the birth of new actors in the field.”*

*Merna Ziadeh, Programme Manager, ASALA*

**Minassa INCO-Tunisie**



Minassa INCO-Tunisie supports entrepreneurs to enable the emergence of viable businesses in the cultural and creative fields. Their vision is a cultural and creative scene for all, inclusive, creating social and economic value in Tunisia. INCO-Tunisie recognised that there is a lack of opportunity to enter foreign markets, and the weak connections between Tunisian and international cultural fields slow down the development of the ecosystem. To address this problem, Minassa’s incubator programme contributed to the development and the internationalisation of Tunisian cultural and creative enterprises. By implementing two successive 6-month support programmes, INCO Tunisia supported 8 Tunisian CCI enterprises in exporting and deploying their services and products in at least one foreign market in the year following their participation in the program.

**Minassa’s Incubation Programme in Numbers**

- 8 entrepreneurs benefited**
- 27 sessions held**
- 2 international mobility events**
- 1 demo day**

From December 2022 to June 2023, 8 start-ups were selected to take part in the INCO-Tunisia internationalisation programme. 4 of the start-ups received personalised coaching as well as support in drafting a fundraising proposal and an internationalisation plan. The remaining 4 benefited from masterclasses and individual coaching on international trade operations, e-commerce and export strategy design. Several of these start-ups were invited to attend an event to exhibit their start-ups at the Delta Festival in Marseille with over 700 exhibitors and pitch at a Demo Day at the DOT, a key digital innovation hub in Tunisia.

*“CREACT4MED represented an initial support in the implementation of an export program dedicated to cultural and creative startups. The program enabled us to test new approaches and methodologies for our entrepreneurs.”*

*Leila Hizaoui, Project Manager, Minassa INCO-Tunisie*

## In figures: The Incubators

**Total number of entrepreneurs engaged: 148**

**Total number of job opportunities created: 260+**

**Total number of training and mentoring sessions held: 130+**

**Total number of networking sessions: 9**

## The Entrepreneurs

The CREAT4MED Entrepreneurs are the cornerstone of the project, demonstrating the potential of the CCI in the Southern Mediterranean through their work, their passion and their achievements over the past year. The entrepreneurs work across the cultural and creative industries in sectors ranging from virtual reality and handicrafts to gastronomy and online platforms. The grants were used to implement the selected entrepreneurial business proposals from start-ups, Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs), and civil society organisations to launch a product or service, internationalise their business, or simply enhance their activities to grow and create employment for their local area. In this section, you can read about each entrepreneur, their journey with their business, and the real impact they were able to make with support from CREAT4MED.

### The Selection Process

To select the entrepreneurs taking part in the CREAT4MED subgranting scheme, a Call for Cultural and Creative Business Proposals was launched in the summer of 2022 where 156 proposals were received. The first stage of evaluation consisted of a written application where proposals were assessed according to the viability of the business model, the relevance and impact on the cultural and creative industries, the feasibility of the proposal outputs, cost-effectiveness, and the potential for cross-border collaboration. Proposals led by women and young people were awarded one additional point to ensure significant focus on these underserved groups. After the written evaluation, 67 companies were selected to pitch to a panel of multidisciplinary experts, divided by country. During the pitch, each proposal had 6 minutes to present their plans followed by 6 minutes of Q&A. After this second in-depth level of evaluation, 4 business proposals were selected per country.<sup>3</sup>

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the entrepreneurs who applied to the CREAT4MED call for proposals and hope they continue to boost the CCI in the Southern Mediterranean with their valuable work.

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<sup>3</sup> 4 entrepreneurs were selected from each country, apart from Palestine where the 4th proposal selected was ineligible due to registration issues.

## Kick-off Events

To kick-off activities and ensure the entrepreneurs had all the relevant and necessary information prior to starting work on their business proposals, the CREAT4MED team travelled to each target country for between December 2022 and May 2023. These events gave entrepreneurs the chance to network with other CCI actors in the programme and key stakeholders in their local ecosystems. The entrepreneurs and CREAT4MED Technical Assistance team were hosted and supported by the Business Support Organization selected under the project. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank them for their support!

Across the 6 country visits, we engaged with 75 players, organised 6 visits to cultural hubs, and held 24 1-1 meetings with entrepreneurs.

Visits to all CREAT4MED target countries can be read in the [Country Visits Report](#).

## Meet the Entrepreneurs

### Almah (a project of the Egyptian Clothing Bank)



ALMAH is an Egyptian sustainable fashion brand that repurposes virgin Egyptian vintage material into up-cycled contemporary high-end fashion pieces, curates unique items for resale and produces up-cycled fabric swatches for luxury fashion houses. This passion for making a difference in social and environmental issues sparked, CEO Manal's foray into fashion. With a unique approach centred on reusing materials, Almah's journey began, driven by a passion for sustainability and social impact.

#### Achievements with CREAT4MED - Almah

- 7 jobs created
- Launched their website
- Featured in Egypt Fashion Week 2023 and Vogue magazine
- From Waste to Good Taste initiative launched
- Produced a scalable collection of 300 pieces

With the support of the CREAT4MED subgrant, Almah’s team made sure that their innovative designs did not remain hidden from the limelight. The CREAT4MED subgrant provided a vital boost to Almah’s visibility, facilitating essential marketing efforts that were previously financially out of reach for a charitable organization. Almah invested in professional photo shoots, website development, and e-commerce platforms, amplifying their impact and reach and creating 7 jobs in the process. In 2023, Almah showcased their SS23 collection at Maison 69, Jozee Boutique, Mad Stitches and Posh and their vintage collection at Cairo Vintage Souq, Cairo Flea Market, Darb 15, MAZ and Redefine Flea Market as well as featuring in Egypt Fashion Week leading to a feature in Vogue Magazine. This ensured that their collection, now of over 300 pieces, is scalable and can be marketed to consumers for years to come.



**Reform Studio**



REFORM is an ethical international award-winning lifestyle brand that promotes sustainability. They are an Egyptian company, that produces a whole range of luxurious eco-friendly products ranging from fashion accessories to furniture, & home accessories. Each product is made out of their signature invented material “Plastex”. Plastex is a 100% eco-friendly handmade fabric that is made out of wasted plastic bags interwoven with natural fibres, Egyptian cotton, or polyester threads. Plastex is developed with hundreds of patterns, textures, and designs. REFORM was founded by Mariam Hazem & Hend Riad.

- Achievements with CREAT4MED - REFORM Studio**
- 5 new jobs created
  - 1 new shop opened in Dubai
  - Collection displayed at Galeries LaFayette
  - 237 products produced
  - 7000 plastic bags saved





CREACT4MED played a pivotal role in REFORM Studio’s growth trajectory, offering crucial financial support that enabled them to expand their team and effectively market their products. First, they increased their production capacity by expanding the workshop team through hiring a new loom weaver and two sales representatives for the Arkan shop in Cairo and for the popup shop at the Alley in North Cost. Through these expansions, they have been able to fulfil the demand on their products range and increase their sales revenues. With CRE-

ACT4MED’s backing, REFORM Studio also managed to establish a presence in the UAE with a pop-up shop in Dubai, laying the foundation for their long-term vision of becoming an international sustainable brand. The establishment of the pop-up led to a collaboration with renowned department store Galeries Lafayette in Dubai. This partnership underscores their international recognition and the impact of their sustainable ethos. In this time, REFORM Studio produced 237 products saving 7000 plastic bags from being dumped in the environment.

### Duma Toys



Duma Toys was founded by Abo Alazem to provide ethical, sustainable and safe products for children made from quality materials and artisanal Egyptian craftsmanship. The name Duma comes from the Arabic word “دمى” for dolls. The company was founded with the aim to introduce innovative, and entertaining toys to kids. Their toys are designed to be fun and interactive, to spark children’s imagination and encourage them to spend more time playing with their toys enhancing mental and psychological development.

#### Achievements with CREAT4MED – Duma Toys

- 5 new jobs created
- 20 new designs of baby clothing created
- 10 new toy designs
- 100 job opportunities created
- Doll customization tool developed
- Exhibited at the Birmingham Autumn Trade Fair

With the CREAT4MED subgrant, Duma Toys aimed to expand their market reach, engage with a wider audience, provide more products, and improve the digital tools on their website. First, Duma managed to attract international buyers through its presence in one of the UK and Europe's biggest trade shows in the field of gifts and toys: the Autumn Fair in Birmingham, UK. Their participation opened many opportunities for export by linking with distributors, retailers, and other businesses. Over 25 leads were established from small local stores to distributors and toy brands that order container loads, and they managed to secure and fulfil an order in early February. After the successful participation in the Autumn Fair, Duma decided to fully finance its participation in the Spring Fair held between 4th and 7th February 2023. As well as boosting their international presence, Duma worked on developing their products and services. Firstly, they contracted a freelance designer to create 20 new designs for a baby clothing collection, after completing the designing process a sample manager was hired to turn these designs into samples. Once the sampling finished, over 100 job opportunities were created to produce the new collections. Secondly, they launched a doll customisation feature where potential customers could request a specific design to meet their needs, all through their website. To do this, Duma started with a photoshoot of the doll variations hiring a professional photographer and then commissioning a freelance developer to create the digital feature. This work has laid a great foundation for Duma to attract more clients and continue to invest in their digital features and new product lines.



**Teatro Al Saeed**



Teatro Alsaeed for Theater and Arts is a company with multiple experiences in the field of performing arts. It started as an initiative in 2014 and was established as a company in January 2022. It seeks to establish a relationship between artists and the community in Upper Egypt by providing a space for practicing arts, holding workshops and artistic performances, and always trying to enhance the independent theatre troupes by providing administrative and artistic advice to the troupes or by providing the requirements of a theatre space with low prices.

The CREAT4MED subgrant, training, and network had a significant impact on the development of Teatro Al Saeed. Their project was to launch the Performing Arts Incubator in El Minya which combined training in performing arts skills such as script writing, scenography, theatre direction, and the art of acting itself, with courses on business management. Mostafa, Project Manager

at Teatro Al Saeed, explained that success in the creative and cultural sectors requires a blend of artistic talent and a dedicated business team to manage funding and marketing. This kind of training is vital in El Minya since currently, interested people must travel to Cairo to get access to this knowledge. Due to the success of the Performing Arts Incubator, El Minya has attracted experts and professionals to learn and share their knowledge. This inclusivity initiative has made it easier for women, who often face travel restrictions, to access skills and training locally.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED - Teatro Al Saeed

- Launched the Teatro Al Saeed Performing Arts Incubator engaging 70 trainees
- Created 12 jobs and supported the creation of 35 others, 17 of which for women
- Held their final shows with 887 attendees

The Incubator engaged with 23 theatre companies at their information session, working with 4 of those in the incubation and engaging 70 trainees. 12 new jobs were created with plans to hire 5 more people and indirectly support another 30 artists through their shows. Following the success of the Incubator, Teatro Al Saeed was able to position itself as a worthy applicant for further funding, with which it improved its facilities, including opening a new 70-seat venue and installing air conditioning and a sound system.



## Puppets World for the Development of Children



Puppets World is the first and only company in Jordan that aims to educate children and raise their awareness of social, behavioural, emotional, and cultural issues through the interactive mobile puppet theatre. Being mobile, the theatre reaches remote communities and targets locals, refugees, and disabled children from 4 to 12 years of age, regardless of their regional background. The plays are performed by International certified puppeteers in a fun and enjoyable way using puppets with different shapes and colours. They are translated into sign language too. Puppets World theatre received many global awards including the Austrian Intercultural Achievement Award 2022.

With financial support from CREAT4MED, Puppets World held 10 puppet shows for children in Jordan with the aim of connecting them with Jordanian cultural heritage. They were able to expand their reach to underserved areas, enriching performances with diverse cultural elements and teaching children about their own traditional customs and foods. They reached a total of

482 children over the course of the 10 shows, incorporating 2 brand new scripts. The support allowed them to elevate the quality of their performances by purchasing audio-visual equipment and enhancing the performances for children with disabilities, with over 200 enjoying

their shows. By actively promoting social inclusion and integration, Puppets World has broken barriers that might otherwise limit underserved children's access to such valuable experiences.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED - Puppets World for the Development of Children

- 12 jobs created with 5 more anticipated
- Held 10 puppet shows with 2 new scripts
- Engaged 482 children including over 200 with disabilities





## GIOIA Footwear



**GIOIA**



Founded in 2018, Gioia aims at producing casual footwear, while creating economic opportunities for local Artisans in Jordan. Their designs include traditional embroidery techniques incorporated into contemporary shoes. They are more than just a business, they work for a sustainable future to share economies, reduce poverty, discover talent and encourage creativity. Many people living in underprivileged communities possess artistic talents that are often neglected or not maximized to their full potential. Once Gioia’s team identifies these talents, they are guided to maximize the use of their skills to generate revenue and support their families for a better life.

With the CREAT4MED subgrant, Gioia leveraged a new cross-border business model between Jordan and Portugal, enhancing shoe quality while preserving traditional craftsmanship in Jordan. Collaborating with Jordanian, Palestinian, and Syrian artisans, the company addressed the rising global demand for their shoes, particularly in Europe. This grant enabled experimentation with this innovative model, despite initial challenges. A streamlined business approach was successfully implemented, including new designs aligned with current trends, standard operating procedures, brand and website enhancements, and establishing several connections with Portuguese manufacturers to outsource production and level up to global brands. With the completion of 25 prototypes, they curated an outstanding lookbook to present the collection, transforming GIOIA from an amateur brand to a sophisticated luxury label. This project culminated in the launch of an ongoing crowdfunding campaign with Verkami, to allow Gioia to grow sustainably and build an organic community sharing their passion for fair trade products promoting cultural heritage.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED - GIOIA

- 12 jobs created with a plan to create 12 more
- Enhanced their website and launched their “lookbook”
- Launched their crowdfunding campaign
- 25 prototypes launched

## ViaVii



ViaVii is a central hub for genuine local experiences and unique activities. Their vision to create an immersive form of tourism by enabling the era of “people to people travels.” The marketplace is built to help travellers easily find a variety of immersive experiences and ready-to-buy itineraries, designed by trained local communities, and instantly available to reserve online. The B2B products consist of a SAAS model and a conversational engine, allowing businesses to identify gaps and provide a significant opportunity for them to engage with their customers proactively, by helping them identify and book local experiences through their customer journey. ViaVii is based in Jordan but offers tourism experiences across the Southern Mediterranean and the Middle East.



The CREAT4MED subgrant and training have been instrumental in ViaVii’s growth. With the resources provided, ViaVii expanded its services and enhanced its operational capabilities. The support enabled the development of a localized training curriculum in Arabic, boosting the skills of local women hosts and creating websites that effectively showcase their services and to ensure accessibility and relevance for their audience, supporting the region’s unique

cultural and business landscape. This initiative has driven both visibility and revenue, aligning with ViaVii’s mission of sustainable cultural and economic growth.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED - ViaVii

- 2 jobs created
- Attended 2 key summits pitching to an audience of over 1000 and fostering potential partnerships with over 50 clients
- Launched 21 new experiences
- Trained 10 experience providers

The ViaVii team also attended 2 mega travel and startup events during the subgrant timeline: the Web Summit in Lisbon resulting in connections with 50+ potential clients, investors, and partners, and the World Travel Market, London where Viavii, pitched to an audience of over 1000, establishing significant industry connections including GetYourGuide and Amadeus, enhancing brand visibility and fostering key partnerships. With this strong network, ViaVii is well placed to become a disruptor in the cultural tourism industry.



## Talaween



Talaween is an interactive application that uses both digital and physical art activities to teach children the necessary soft skills needed to succeed in the 21st century. It provides interactive and comprehensive educational tools for teaching soft skills to children and adolescents through art, using engaging educational curricula written by specialists and converted into artistic exercises. Talaween was founded by Lina Abojaradeh in 2021 in Jordan. Lina is an established and award-winning artist, whose work uses storytelling to address issues of social, religious and racial injustice.

The CREAT4MED subgrant allowed Lina to research the soft skills gap she sees among children in Jordan to ensure Talaween was addressing a real need that could be marketed to consumers effectively. From there, Lina and her team began working on the Talaween mobile application to ensure accessibility and started working with schools and education providers to expand her network and consumer base. Lina continues to develop the application and her curricula to ensure more children and youth have access to her invaluable educational tool.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED - Talaween

- Developed the Talaween mobile application
- Enhanced the Talaween training curricula
- Created marketing and communication content to launch the Talaween mobile app

## Cezar's Projects



Cezar Projects is a youthful rural development initiative based in Mount Lebanon that works as a social enterprise since 2017. The enterprise is developing standard rural –tourism operations and coordinating rural initiatives, to meet sustainability through retaining local talents, creating innovation in sustainable tourism and generating new sources of income. In light of the awareness ‘Cezar’s Projects’ is spreading; it is now acting as a facilitator for developing sustainable initiatives in Chouf villages and managing different local experiences and facilities. All of which have created around 74 direct job opportunities as well as made a remarkable economic and social impact in the local community.

Over the last year working with the CREAT4MED subgrant, Cezar’s Projects developed a hub located in Farmville Barouk (a project owned and managed by “Cezar’s Projects”) and equipped it with sewing machines, threads, and other materials to launch 10 workshops for 21 women in the local area to learn skills in crocheting and sewing to produce innovative, unique and creative products to sell to Cezar’s Projects clients. Their project was called Waste to Art and had the key aim of reusing materials such as old fabrics, plastics, etc. and transforming “waste” into something new using local women’s handicraft skills. To do so, they signed 5 collaboration agreements with local suppliers to collect and buy waste from. Finally, to raise awareness of the products, the skills and value of the workers, and the circular economy aspect of the products, they launched a communication campaign and developed the initiative’s identity. These efforts have culminated in the creation of Farmville Barouk Creations that are now available in their physical shops that will be officially launched this year.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED – Cezar’s Projects

- Launched the Waste to Art Project
- Trained 21 women over 10 workshops
- 5 collaboration agreements signed
- Launched a communication campaign

## ClimberSpace



ClimberSpace is an outdoor small business from Lebanon specialized in resoling outdoor shoes and locally designing and producing outdoor products and apparel. It was founded by three passionate climbers and brothers who share the vision of creating an outdoor brand that shares the beauties of nature and people through locally crafted products.

Thanks to CREAT4MED's support, ClimberSpace was able to modernise its workshop and the space itself to allow them to work towards meeting the requirements for Vibram Cobbler certification. This certification, issued by the world's largest insole manufacturer, brings great credibility and has made ClimberSpace the first and only certified shoemaker in the Middle East. This achievement not only strengthened their reputation, but also enabled them to become part of a global network, accessing training and support from Italy. Obtaining such a verification was key to the future of ClimberSpace.

However, ClimberSpace were keen to diversify and strengthen their sales channels and reach a broader audience. To do so, they used part of the subgrant to develop and launch their online store and website. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with a surge in orders that propelled the business into the international market. This

expansion not only boosted revenue but also strengthened the brand presence globally. In addition, they secured partnerships with three suppliers and climbing gyms across three different countries: UAE, Jordan, and Egypt. These collaborations mark a pivotal moment in their journey, as they provide direct access to their new markets.

Finally, in their commitment to the climbing community and sharing their passion for the natural world, ClimberSpace continued to grow their climbers' festival, SpaceFest. This year in 2024 will be the fourth edition and they are expecting more than 400 people from all over the world. ClimberSpace see this as an opportunity to bring the community they have built together in person and establish themselves as the lead player in the climbing industry in the Middle East.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED - ClimberSpace

- **6 jobs created**
- **Obtained the Vibram Cobbler certification**
- **3 business partnerships made in UAE, Jordan and Egypt**
- **Launched their website**
- **Growth of SpaceFest**

## Mlouk Productions



Mlouk Productions is a film production company based in Lebanon equipped with professional resources and a creative team that is ready to bring inspiring stories to life. Mlouk joins the creative and production process to offer optimised workflows tailor made to every project. They cover the whole journey of a project, from the idea creation and elaboration to script writing, production and post-production. They produce cinema, entertainment, corporate and promotional videos. Their vision is to evolve storytelling and be able to explore and share humanity through stories.

With CREAT4MED, Mlouk Productions launched the first version of their VFX (visual effects) Learning Programme, designed to provide an introduction of VFX to 4 passionate graduates interested in such a career path. To identify the students who would truly benefit from the programme, Mlouk collaborated with local universities and with Pro-abled, an NGO that creates job and learning opportunities for people with physical disabilities. The program started with an introduction to the creative and production workflow, providing learners with a comprehensive overview of VFX production. This understanding prepared the way for learning the general VFX workflow and how it's implemented in the whole production pipeline. After grasping the fundamentals, the learners were guided to choose between one of the following topics to learn more in depth: Compositing, Modelling or Animation. This customization empowered students to align their learning path with their personal preferences and career aspirations. Personalized sessions were held by the Mlouk team with each student in order to advance in their creative process. The program was adapted to every student, respecting their pace and their learning goals, while orienting them to what's best for their career and learning journey. In launching the program, Mlouk employed several experts to fulfil the needs of a program manager, technical manager and an operation assistant.

### **Achievements with CREAT4MED – MLOUK PRODUCTIONS**

- **1 job created and 3 jobs supported**
- **Launched their VFX learning programme with 4 students**
- **Collaborated with 4 universities and 1 NGO**

## Tourific



Tourific, based in Lebanon, is a marketplace for self-guided audio and augmented reality tours, where tour guides can create their tours on the Tourific platform and share their experiences and knowledge for tourists to purchase and enjoy.

The CREAT4MED subgrant has been instrumental in accelerating the development process of Tourific and proving the concept. They successfully launched the MVP which allowed them to enter the market and start engaging with real users. This crucial step provided the team with actionable insights, helping to refine the approach and business model based on direct feedback. Secondly, the subgrant facilitated a research trip to Egypt, where the team immersed themselves in the local ecosystem, revealing new distribution channels and partnerships opportunities, notably in the travel and telecom sectors.

The knowledge and mentoring experiences gained from the program have been invaluable, contributing significantly to Tourific's growth and strategic direction. So much so that Tourific has been accepted into the TechStars Global Startup Network. Techstars is a pre-seed investor that provides access to capital, mentorship, and other support for early-stage entrepreneurs. They are ranked number 2 globally with an acceptance rate of 3%. This has allowed them to connect with key investors for long-term financial sustainability. The support provided through CREAT4MED was a key stepping stone to this achievement as it provided structure to the company and allowed them to reach initial key milestones.

### **Achievements with CREAT4MED – TOURIFIC**

- 5 new jobs created with 12 more planned
- Launched their MVP and marketing strategy
- Acceptance into Techstars Pre-Accelerator
- 11 tours finalised and ready for publication

## Cré Artisanat



Cré Artisanat, founded and directed by Moroccan artisan Wafae Zaoui, currently offers a range of handmade leather goods and accessories under the brand name BillYadi - دي يادي that meet both professional and everyday uses. The company also handles custom orders from individuals or companies. The products elaborated at Cré Artisanat have an aesthetic, creative and singular purpose and are different from a standardized mass production market. Cré Artisanat also offers adapted training programs for young and apprentice leatherworkers and works on the development of a professional network of specialized craftsmen/women in the different regions of Morocco.

With CREAT4MED, Cré Artisanat aimed to enhance their workshop space to be able to create new designs and scale their production in order to cater for an international market interested in handmade craftsmanship. In order to ensure strong revenues from their products, Cré Artisanat also invested in their communication and branding, developing their website and creating a new visual identity. With such ambition, Cré Artisanat hired 4 new people for the positions of a manager & designer for 6 months, an artisan assistant for 5 months, a communication and branding manager for 4 months and a freelance artisan for a new collaboration with an initial production order. The team has now become an integral part of their professional network and artisans' community. Through such collaborations with other artisans, Cré Artisanat produced 700 pieces and created a new collection meaning they not only increased production output but also showcased their talent and craftsmanship.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED – CRE ARTISANAT

- 4 new jobs created
- 700 pieces sold under the Bill Yadi brand
- Workshop space enhanced
- Website launched



## Felicity



Felicity is a chocolate boutique, an educational platform and a marketplace allowing master chocolate makers and producers in the network to develop their skills and sell their production, creations and training and consulting services.

With CREAT4MED, Felicity was able to create 3 jobs to support them with the full cataloguing of their products. They were also able to develop their social media strategy and build relationships with their community, as well as key chocolatiers.

## Help Mariage



Help Mariage is the first mobile application for planning a serene wedding in Morocco. They have a large-scale network of over 1000 professionals working in 40 sectors in the creative and cultural wedding industry by enabling them to develop their business by digitizing their activity, connecting them with eager brides and grooms to make their day perfect.

To boost their business with CREAT4MED, Help Mariage officially launched their website and mobile application. They hired a freelance IT developer who built the website according to their needs and trained the Help Mariage team to use the site and continue its development and upload content. Secondly, to grow their client base and network of professionals, they elaborated a database of 1000 professionals and employed effective social media strategies to reach 33.5K followers on Instagram, with the help of their newly hired sales manager.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED – Help Mariage

- 1 job created and 1 job supported, with 2 more planned
- 1 website launched
- Created a database of 1000 professionals and a community of 33.5K
- Collaboration with “Project Soar” to petition against child marriage in Morocco
- Attended 2 wedding fairs
- Registered their brand with the Moroccan Industrial and Commercial Property Office
- Opened their office space in Casablanca’s Technopark

Whilst Help Mariage is dedicated to ensuring clients get their dream wedding, they are also concerned with raising awareness of child marriage in Morocco. To that end, they partnered with “Project Soar”, a Moroccan association, and supported their petition against child marriage with the international initiative “Girls, not Brides”. In the future, Help Mariage hopes to financially contribute to this cause.

Whilst also having a strong community online, Help Mariage wanted to establish their presence in the industry with a physical presence. They have done so by attending two key wedding fairs in Casablanca and Fes. They discovered that many attendees were already aware of their work, which only cemented their presence and impact further. To ensure face-to-face interaction with their clients and professionals, they opened up their new office space in the Technopark in Casablanca, adapting it to their brand ensuring style and professionalism. Finally, with the same aim, they also registered their brands, Make My Day, and Wedding Coach, with the Moroccan Industrial and Commercial Property Office.

## HKids



HKids is a company specialized in the manufacture of personalized children’s furniture that is scalable and employs innovative solutions. At HKids they work on 4 values: i) the emotive: beautiful and comfortable furniture inspired by Moroccan design and culture; ii) innovation: innovative and unique design solutions; iii) safety: safe furniture for babies and young children; iv) social: services for families or associations that are in need, and exceptional prices for families with more than 3 children.

HKids made a huge impact with the financial support provided by CREAT4MED. Being a furniture store, up until CREAT4MED HKids was operating online and with partnerships. Now, founder and CEO, Hiba Ghiati has opened the first HKids store in a key department store in Marrakech. To achieve this great effort, HKids employed 10 people in the timeline of the subgrant with

plans to continue growing the team. Before HKids was made up of a production team, now they have administrative staff, management, designers, a community manager, a shop assistant, and two salespeople. This great expansion will ensure that HKids can fulfil new orders and continue to build their reputation. HKids also invested in developing their website, ensuring it has a sleek look to attract consumers and loaded it with the digital HKids catalogue, finalised after photo-shoots of the products also financed by CREAT4MED.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED – HKIDS

- Two photoshoot sessions
- Website developed
- Digital catalogue developed
- 1 store opened

Establishing themselves as a key player and facilitator, HKids also developed partnerships with several other brands in Morocco and now display 4000 products, demonstrating their commitment to support other small businesses in the industry.

### Askadar for Arts and Culture



Askadar is a creative cultural centre in the city of Nablus in the Northern West Bank. The centre opened its doors in March 2017 and has been providing much needed culture and arts activities to the children and teens (5 to 15 years old). Askadar was founded by a group of young artists and entrepreneurs with a goal of educating children in music and dance and giving them a safe, family-friendly environment for them to explore their creativity. Now, Askadar is engaging 150 students in art activities such as: Ballet, Dabka, Music and Drawing.



CREACT4MED allowed Askadar for Culture and Arts to open its doors to the children of Nablus to participate in their Summer School. CREAT4MED added the opportunity for kids to register and to have an experience of everything that Askadar provides. The funding allowed Askadar to hold classes in dancing, singing, painting, and playing several musical instruments. They were able to do so by hiring 6 new workshop leaders, purchasing more equipment, and renovating some of their classrooms. These improvements mean the children can try and select any activity they wish, whereas before, they were limited to the number of classes they could take. Due to the implementation of CRE-

ACT4MED, Askadar has seen a great increase in interest and registrations for the Summer School, meaning they are able to hold a second edition starting June 2024. Furthermore, following attendance at a toy fair in Istanbul, Askadar are also working with a toy manufacturer based there to discuss the possibility of purchasing further equipment for the children outside class times to enhance their enjoyment and overall experience at the Summer School.

#### Achievements with CREAT4MED – ASKADAR

- 6 jobs created
- New musical instruments purchased
- Networking with toy manufacturer in Istanbul
- 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Summer School planned for 2024

## Handmade Palestine

◆ HANDMADE ◆  
**PALESTINE**



allowing them to sell internationally, and an updated catalogue showcasing the artisans' work. As well as boosting community building online, Handmade Palestine also focused on their stakeholders locally by holding a capacity building activity on kitting and product design with 5 artisans with disabilities, partnering with the Oasis Centre. This year Handmade Palestine has grown hugely thanks to the successful communication strategy.

Handmade Palestine, located in Ramallah, Palestine, is truly a labour of love to bring the best of Palestinian handicrafts to international markets while supporting over 30 Palestinian artisans, cooperatives & designers in their creative journey. With the profits made, Handmade Palestine plants native trees in the local area, demonstrating their commitment to having a positive impact on the environment.

With CREAT4MED, Handmade Palestine strengthened their processes and network in or to internationalise the company for European and Gulf buyers. They also invested the funds in developing and implementing a creative communications strategy that focuses on storytelling and cultural heritage preservation. In doing so, they now have over 700 newsletter subscribers, a website powered by Shopify

### Achievements with CREAT4MED – HANDMADE Palestine

- 13 jobs created
- Supported 5 artisans with disabilities to showcase their work and products
- Community strengthened with over 700 newsletter subscribers
- Website enhanced powered by Shopify for international sales

## Meera Adnan

ميراعادنان  
*Meera Adnan*

MEERA ADNAN is a Palestinian contemporary clothing and accessories label from Gaza City. Their work focuses on reclaiming narrative and is influenced by religious, political, and local references that create a romantic and nostalgic visual monologue. Meera Adnan was founded and is led by CEO Meera Albaba. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing war in Gaza, Meera Adnan could not proceed with the implementation of the CREAT4MED subgrant. We continue to support her in whatever way we can.

## Klink



KLINK.TN stands as a revolutionary digital platform, specializing in artist booking and production. Sherazade and her team are on a mission to bridge the gap between musicians and event organizers, whether they are companies, individuals, festivals, or concert halls. The platform serves as a vital tool for musicians to promote their work, structure their careers, and gain visibility in the international market, thereby opening doors to new professional opportunities.

The CREAT4MED subgrant and training have played a pivotal role in KLINK's journey. The program's support came at a crucial time, aligning with their internationalization strategy and the launch of KLINK Fest. KLINK Fest is to be the online platform to connect artists and event organisers, and with the CREAT4MED subgrant, they finalised the digital development, collaborating with software company COMGURU, to streamline artist registration and profile creation, and investing in much needed hardware. To develop the meticulous compilation of a diverse artist database, they hired a commercial officer to ensure that the database formed the bedrock for prospecting and contract negotiations. They assembled an extensive repository of global festivals spanning countries such as France, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. Leveraging these enhanced resources, KLINK was able to establish agreements with international artists and solidify a partnership with a respected French label. Their extensive festival research culminated in the successful booking of an artist for the renowned International Hammamet Festival, and the signing of 4 others to the KLINK Fest platform.

### **Achievements with CREAT4MED – KLINK**

- **3 new jobs created with 4 more expected**
- **Launch of KLINK Fest**
- **Partnership with a French label secured, and first artist booked at the International Hammamet Festival using the platform**
- **4 artists signed**

## Digital Cultural eXperience



DCX believes that promoting heritage among young people is a key factor in building a prosperous and peaceful society. Their goal is to create attractive platforms and XR experiences that (re)connect young people with their heritage. In collaboration with experts and scientists, DCX creates immersive 3D, VR and AR experiences using storytelling and interactive gaming tools in museums, engaging the visitor in an educational and leisure experience. Monuments, artefacts and personalities come to life through virtual and augmented reality applications to make learning and the museum's visit a joyful experience.

CREACT4MED has played a central role in DCX's journey by providing essential financial support and access to a network of cultural players. The support enabled DCX to develop and expand its flagship project, Cultural Tour. This immersive application offers users a unique experience of exploring historic sites through 360° documentaries. Thanks to funding from CREAT4MED,

DCX has succeeded in producing immersive content for the Vieux Port de Bizerte, the Fort of Kelibia and the archaeological site of Oudhna, making history accessible and attractive to the younger generation and employing 10 people in the process. The project was initiated by collaborating with a specialised 360-degree production company to facilitate filming in 360 degrees. This encompassed the capture of 360-degree photographs for seamless integration into the application, as well as the production of 360-degree videos designed for immersive VR documentaries. They were also able to consult with a historian to ensure the scripts are both entertaining and factually accurate. Overall, the CREAT4MED support has played a pivotal role in bringing DCX closer to its goals by enabling the production of new products solidifying their position as innovators in the industry.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED – DCX

- 10 jobs created
- 3 new sites filmed: Oudhna archaeological site, the old port of Bizerte, Kelibia Fort
- Launch of their website and mobile application



## MAFT

# maft



Maft is an e-commerce & multiservice platform that represents and promotes emerging brands and creative entrepreneurs from the MENA region, in the fashion, design and handicraft sector internationally.

Maft's aim with CREAT4MED was to rebrand the company and effectively market its services online. The rebrand encompassed a new visual identity ensuring Maft matched a Mediterranean brand. They were successful in updating their look with the support of the art director and the work of a graphic designer. To create an impact with this new look, they held an editorial shoot, collaborating with three local brands and freelance professionals. This work was applied and integrated to the newly launched website, on which they worked with a UX designer. The site represents all Maft's activities, including the magazine, services, and the upcoming e-shop, meaning its update was a key milestone for the company.

Secondly, Maft aimed to establish themselves as a key player in the Tunisian fashion industry by holding a temporary pop-up store, bringing together local fashion brands, designers as well and artists for a 3-day event. This pop-up enabled Tunisian designers to meet a community of buyers and sell their products, as well as promote Maft and its mission.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED – MAFT

- 3 jobs created
- Supported 30 brands and designers
- Organized 4+ events for local fashion promotion
- Reached 5,800 users on the magazine site
- Attracted 411 page views from 248 users on the agency site

## The Virtual Art Gallery



La Galerie VR is a digital platform for the creation and reproduction, hosting, and sale of 360° 3D virtual tours and VR (Virtual Reality), specialising in visual art exhibition spaces. The virtual tours remain faithful to the architecture, the accuracy of the artworks, the spirit, and the atmosphere of the exhibitions. With 20 years of experience in 3D (Archviz), specialising in interior architecture and a background in new immersive technologies such as video games and VR, La Galerie VR creates existing or imagined spaces for art exhibitions. La Galerie VR allows the user to completely immerse in an interactive and hyper-realistic virtual reality.

With the CREAT4MED subgrant, the project successfully launched a marketing campaign targeting art galleries in the Mediterranean and MENA region.

Boosting visibility through social media, La Galerie VR reached out to potential clients, providing free virtual tours to one gallery in Tunisia and one artist, Fabio Adani, from Italy. These showcased the capabilities of the Virtual Art Gallery and attracted new visitors. To enhance technical competencies in video game programming, specifically for creating the MVP, Chief Technology Officer, Hamza Chakroun, underwent training on Blueprints for Unreal Engine. Hamza acquired essential skills that were instrumental in building the MVP together with a programmer which eventually led to the development of the MVP: a 3D real time virtual visit using Unreal Engine.

### Achievements with CREAT4MED – The Virtual Art Gallery

- 10 jobs created
- Acquired the “Start-up Label”
- Launch of the collective virtual exhibition with over 112 applications
- Exhibition of 18 artists in the virtual exhibition
- Virtual Tour integrated into the website
- Attendance at the WebSummit in Lisbon

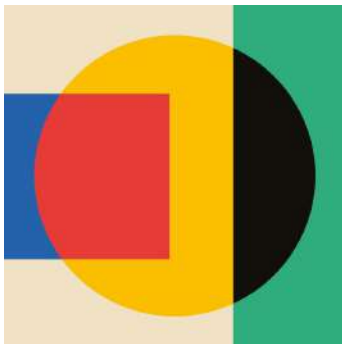
The Virtual Art Gallery also actively participated in the WebSummit Lisbon with a booth offering virtual tours displayed through VR headset. The acquisition of Oculus quest 2 headsets facilitated the delivery of an immersive experience to visitors, showcasing the capabilities of the Virtual Art Gallery platform. The training, exhibition of artists, and integrating the virtual tour to their website required the support of 10 freelancers, creating 10 job opportunities.

## The Regional Cooperation Actors

The final subgranting scheme implemented by CREAT4MED had the aim of enhancing regional cooperation. The key objectives of the call were to promote cross-border networking and partnerships, to stimulate cultural and creative collaborations and to facilitate the internationalisation of CCI companies to fund activities such as networking events, collaborative workshops, cultural exchange programs, international exhibitions, and capacity-building exercises.

The call was launched in Autumn 2023 and closed at the end of December. After a rigorous evaluation process, 6 entities were selected to implement their proposals with a maximum subgrant of 6.750EUR. 3 of the entities are based in Tunisia, 2 in Egypt, and 1 in Palestine with actions being implemented in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and the UAE. In total, 11 cooperation agreements were signed, over 360 participants were engaged, more than half being women and young people, and numerous other benefits including networking events, B2B meetings, and the internationalisation of CCI companies in the region. Below is a breakdown of each Regional Cooperation actor and how they turned the CREAT4MED subgrant into an impact for cross-border collaboration in the Mediterranean.

### Bazarna Pop Up Society



Bazarna Pop Up Society is the go-to service platform for local talents in the cultural and creative industries to promote their brands, especially in their early stages. Bazarna has supported hundreds of talents in the cultural and creative industries to improve their capacity, get exposure, generate steady sales, reach more clients on an offline and online basis, and receive brand recognition.



With the CREAT4MED subgrant, Bazarna Pop Up Society selected 23 CCI talents to showcase at their pop-up event in Dubai, held in collaboration with Curated Playlist. The talents attended the three-day event from the 24-26th of May 2024 at a bustling venue in the centre of Dubai. Many famous influencers attended and were connected with the selected companies for potential collaboration and advertising in the future.

**Key Impact Made with CREAT4MED**

- 23 women and young people attended the Bazarna Pop Up-Curated Playlist event
- 18 products were showcased
- 7 CCI influencers invited and engaged

**CREATEC (Tunisian Association of Creative Technology)**



CREATEC (Tunisian Association of Creative Technology) has the goal of organising and representing professionals in the digital content industries – animated cinema, video games, comics, photography, special effects, publishing, music, advertising, visual arts, graphic arts and performing arts, historical and cultural heritage. One of CREATEC’s projects is the Digiart Livinglab (DALL), a creative platform for social and open innovation certified by ENoLL (European Network of Living Labs). The D.A.L.L. is a space for talented people from the region who want to develop their creative spirit and produce creative, innovative projects that have a social impact



and use creative and digital technologies (3D, video games, virtual reality, augmented reality, IoT, etc.). The project is supported by NET-INFO, the School of Art and Technology.

CREATEC, through the DALL project, connected entrepreneurs to their metaverse to promote their country’s cultural heritage and their businesses. The metaverse is an immersive experience of traditions and artisanal craftsmanship through gamification mechanics, developed by DALL. In the metaverse, DALL co-designed an exhibition space with each entrepreneur to facilitate online business operations, creating a direct connection between culture enthusiasts and local artisans. CREATEC has successfully developed the virtual showroom and created digital twins of jewellery pieces by five artists from each of the following countries: Tunisia, Egypt, and Algeria. Altogether, 13 women and 6 young people

**Key Impact Made with CREAT4MED**

- 70 participants engaged
- 13 women and 6 young people benefitted
- 15 High-quality 3D models created for each artwork
- 7 cooperation agreements signed

benefited from the project. The next step for CREATEC is to showcase these works within the Africa Metaverse and further enhance the project’s impact and reach. After this process, CREATEC established 7 Memorandums of Understanding demonstrating a clear commitment to cross-border collaboration.

### Culture Funding Watch



Culture Funding Watch (CFW) is the destination for artists and arts organisations to access information and intelligence about Art and culture resources mobilisation. It is a network of people and content that supports equal access to information, provides services to facilitate access to resources as well as advocates for transparent and responsible financing for the Arts and Culture. It collects, sorts and disseminates funding opportunities, offers customised resource mobilisation services, builds the long-term sustainability capacity of cultural actors and organisations and promotes the establishment of evidence-based advocacy towards sustainable, transparent and responsible art funding.

CFW enhanced regional cooperation and the internationalisation of the cultural and creative sectors by launching the Creative and Cultural Industries Access to Finance Skills Development Program across Morocco, Jordan, and Egypt.

This initiative bolstered the capacities of CCI actors by providing training on access to finance and internationalisation in the form of 3-weekly masterclasses on fundraising, grant writing for CCI, and “know your donors and financiers”. They also held a regional networking meetup featuring speed-meeting sessions based on various CCI themes, offering a unique opportunity to engage with professionals and experts, share insights, and build meaningful relationships. Finally, they held an international placement award where two participants were selected to participate in a 5-day fully funded trip to one of their partner ecosystems.

#### Key Impact Made with CREAT4MED

- 169 CCI businesses supported
- 3 masterclasses delivered
- 1 regional networking event
- 1 international placement programme
- 3 cooperation agreements signed

## Hebron Community Centre for Youth and Adult Education



مركز الخليل المجتمعي لتعليم الشباب والكبار  
**Hebron Community Center**  
for Youth and Adult Education



Hebron Community Center for Youth and Adult Education is a Palestinian non-governmental organisation, established in the city of Hebron in 2019. They run activities to strengthen the fabric of Palestinian society through cultural programmes, involving youth and women.

With the CREAT4MED subgrant, Hebron Community Centre engaged with 30 cultural and creative business owners in ceramics, pottery and its formations, leather, carpets, embroideries, Palestinian heritage products, traditional clothing, and national musical instruments. They supported these entrepreneurs through training to enter markets in the Middle East and North Africa, aiming to increase trade exchange and cooperation, bolstering the Palestinian national economy, and creating employment opportunities for young creatives in the targeted fields. A 4-day digital and in-person training course with the par-

### Key Impact Made with CREAT4MED

- 30 participants engaged
- 4 days of training carried out networking events held

icipation of owners of cultural industries and entrepreneurship was carried out with participants from 4 countries: Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia. At the time of writing, the project is in the process of finalising their digital guide which showcases the artisans' work.

## Nakoll Eats



Nakoll Eats is the birth of a Middle Eastern food society in Cairo. "Nakoll", where training, food content, and startup food incubations cooked in one pot. Nakoll initiated the Farm2Fork movement in Cairo which aims to enhance food systems by engaging stakeholders and building a community to share knowledge, create connections and promote investment.

With the CREAT4MED subgrant, Nakoll Eats held 3 mentoring and coaching workshops in Lebanon with the digital tourism start-up, Tourific, to enhance understanding of the food-tourism industry. Tourific is a marketplace for self-guided audio and augmented reality tours, where tour guides can create tours on the platform and share their experiences and knowledge for tourists to



purchase and enjoy. Following this mapping exercise, Nakoll Eats proceeded to organise two networking events – one in Egypt and another in Lebanon - inviting key stakeholders in the food-tourism industry to participate and network. The events served as a platform to share knowledge, build cross-border collaborations and promote food-tourism in the region.

**Key Impact Made with CREAT4MED**

- 40 participants engaged
- 2 networking events held
- 3 B2B meetings held to enhance regional cooperation

### Ourghema



OurGhema is the first innovation hub in Medenine, Tunisia. They work with youth in the region to innovate and bring social change, boosting social entrepreneurship through their different incubation and support programs. At the same time, they provide a safe space for youth and women, to study, work and innovate at their co-working cafe.



To boost regional cooperation, Ourghema implemented their project “Rehla” which consisted of two residency programs, each lasting one week: one in Medenine and one in Cairo. Teaming up with a space manager in Egypt, they conducted sessions to connect communities in each country to promote entrepreneurship and co-creation by sharing experiences and providing an understanding of the local market. In total 26 participants benefitted from the programme, 16 from Tunisia and 10 from Egypt, 20 of whom were women. The purpose was to connect with peers in Egypt, share experiences and discuss

potential collaborations in the future. As a result, Ourghema has added more features to their space in Tunisia, using what inspired them in the discussions and the shared expertise. One such addition is the Ourghema Gallery where products by the women involved in their incubation programmes are sold and the upcoming cultural tour service, which was inspired by their Egyptian partner, StaBene. To close the Rehla project, Ourghema will be hosting their final event co-hosted by Ourghema and their Egyptian partners.

**Key Impact Made with CREAT4MED**

- 4 B2B meetings held
- 1 cooperation agreement signed
- 26 participants engaged in the residency programme

*“This project changed my perspective and definitely helped me have a better vision, for instance, we added new services in my space, made more collaborations and opened up to future work with other similar spaces in the Mediterranean.”*

*Yosser Belghith, CEO and Founder, Ourghema*

## Engagement and Advocacy

Raising awareness of the importance, value creation and social impact of creative and cultural industries (CCIs) is a key aspect of CREAT4MED. Over the four years of the project and many events, CREAT4MED brought together key CCI actors including business support organisations (BSOs), the private sector, financial institutions, academia, public authorities, and NGOs to foster a sustainable and collaborative CCI community.

**1500+ stakeholders engaged**  
**1600+ members on the CREAT4MED Community Platform**  
**3 Annual Conferences**  
**4 EU-Southern Neighbourhood Country Dialogues**  
**2 MED CCI Hub Events**  
**Participation in 15+ external events across the Mediterranean**

Over the course of four years, CREAT4MED has engaged with over 1500 stakeholders across our conferences, networking events, webinars, MED CCI Hub events, and synergy meetings. We have held 3 Annual Conferences, 2 Med CCI Hub events, 4 EU-Southern Neighbourhood Country Dialogues, 3 webinars, and participated in 15 external events across Europe and the Mediterranean.

### Annual Conferences

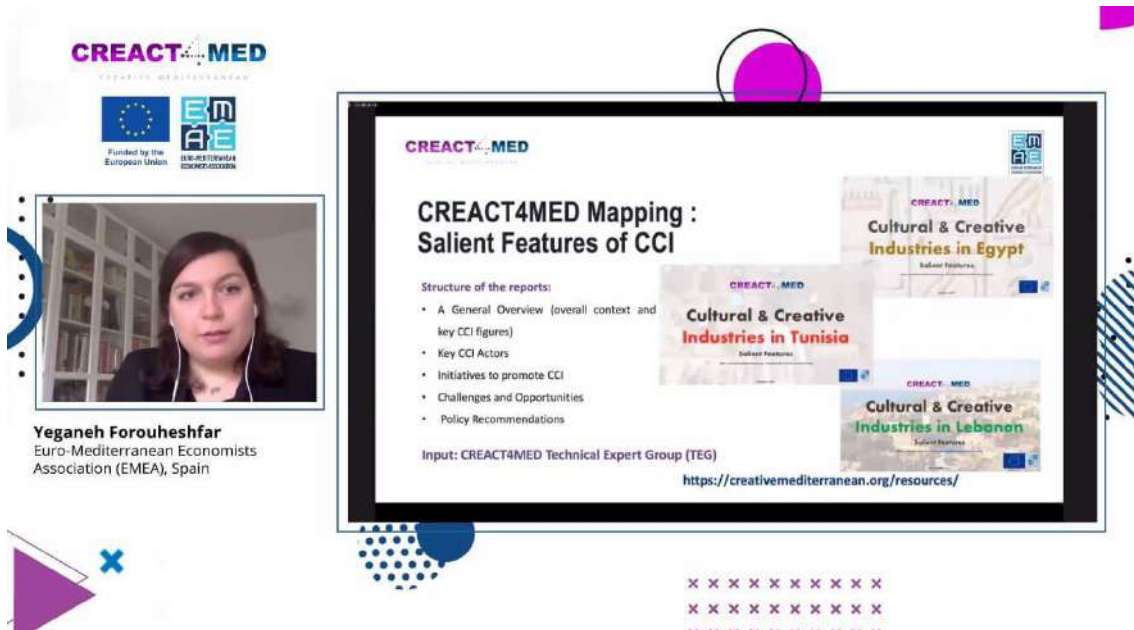
As part of this pillar, CREAT4MED has held 3 Annual Conferences, 2 held online and 1 in presence in Barcelona. The events strengthened links between identified stakeholders to create a productive and sustainable enabling environment for budding cultural and creative entrepreneurs. Across the 3 Annual Conferences, more than 400 people were engaged, including 68 experts, with more than half the participants being women, young people, and from Southern Mediterranean countries. The rich diversity of participants and experts allowed for enlightening and inspiring discussions on how to boost the cultural and creative industries in the region and beyond.

## Annual Conference I: Cultural and Creative Industries in the Mediterranean

The first CREAT4MED Annual Conference took place online on Zoom, on the 24th and 25th of November 2021, to raise awareness of the role of culture and creativity as a vector for employment and value generation in Southern Mediterranean Countries. The event was broadcast live on social media with great success reaching over 9,500 views and 1500 thruplays. The Conference was opened with welcome addresses from Prof. Rym Ayadi, President of EMEA, lead partner of the CREAT4MED project, and Ingrid Schwaiger, Deputy head of Regional Programmes, of DG Near.

The keynote speaker was Prof. Pierluigi Sacco, Professor of Economic Policy, University of Chieti-Pescara, Interim Director of the AP10-Policy Optimizer at the EIT-KIC Culture & Creativity, Senior Advisor to the OECD, Paris, Research Affiliate at metaLAB (at) Harvard and ISPC-CNR Naples.

The Conference showcased the project’s progress and provided a space for incubators, entrepreneurs, policy-making bodies, regional initiatives and international organisations to present their projects and achievements. 6 sessions were held in total covering CREAT4MED’s mapping of the cultural and creative industries, the support given by international organisations to the CCI, ecosystem enablement and barriers for the CCI, current regional CCI initiatives, CCI enablement and actions including legal, policymaking and funding, and finally, the incubation and acceleration of CCI. Closing the CREAT4MED Annual Conference 2021, Prof, Ayadi highlighted that “culture and creativity are transformational for the economies and the societies in the Mediterranean and must be recognised as pillars in the post COVID-19 recovery plan. To make a difference and an impact to develop CCI in the Mediterranean we must cooperate, build synergies and adopt a multi-stakeholder’s approach.”



## Annual Conference II: Unleashing the full potential of the cultural and creative industries in the Mediterranean

The second CREAT4MED Annual Conference was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2022, in the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Sant Pau Recinte Modernista, co-organised by EMEA and IEMED in collaboration with CreativeForum.si, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, and MedWaves. The conference showcased the project's achievements, set forth goals for the third year of the project, and provided a space to discuss innovative ideas for programmes, policies, and financial models to support CCI entrepreneurs and businesses in the Southern Mediterranean.

The conference was opened by Prof. Rym Ayadi, President and Founder of the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA), lead partner of the CREAT4MED project, and Ambassador Veronika Stabej, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia. On the second day, we were joined by Kristina Prunerová, Programme Manager of Civil Society and Culture at DG NEAR



Neighbourhood South, European Commission, who gave a welcome address highlighting the importance of the CREAT4MED project for the Mediterranean region. The keynote speaker of the event was Seda Röder, Founder and CEO of the Sonophilia Foundation, who emphasised that creativity is much more than the arts and design, rather it is everywhere and necessary across industries, and is vital for societal progress and human wellbeing.

Across 6 panel discussions, participants explained the impact of CREAT4MED, including the launch of the CCI Data Observatory, the incubators working with selected entrepreneurs in the 6 CREAT4MED countries, the current gaps and challenges for CCI entrepreneurs, available financing schemes for actors in the CCI, and the development of creative and cultural hubs with organisations from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, and the US. Finally, the conference provided the space for the first EU-Southern Neighbourhood Dialogue event where CCI cultural hubs and CREAT4MED project incubators presented their work and discussed potential collaboration opportunities. The conference also included a visit to the Fabra i Coats Art Factory in Barcelona, a space that brings together artistic creation and experimentation for Cultural Hub representatives.





### Annual Conference III: Navigating The Waves of Cultural and Creative Entrepreneurship in The Southern Mediterranean

The 3<sup>rd</sup> CREAT4MED Annual Conference: Navigating the Waves of *Cultural and Creative Entrepreneurship in the Southern Mediterranean* was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2024, co-organised by EMEA and IEMED, in collaboration with Culture Funding Watch. The event was held online to allow for participation of all stakeholders across the Mediterranean. 281 people participated in the event to build bridges and discuss innovative ideas on creativity's social and economic role, cultural policies, and job creation within the sector. We heard from talented artists and industry professionals across the Southern Mediterranean in the form of keynote speeches, panel discussions and interactive debates as they addressed the many challenges, opportunities and unlocked potential that lie within these multifaceted industries.



The conference was opened by Professor Rym Ayadi, President and Founder of the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA), lead partner of the CREAT4MED Consortium with Roger Albinyana, Managing Director of IEMED, and Maria Ruiz de Cossío, CREAT4MED Project Coordinator and Senior Project Manager at EMEA.

The keynote speech was delivered by Prof. Pier Luigi Sacco, Professor of Economic Policy, University of Chieti-Pescara, this time drawing examples of successful cultural and creative initiatives from across the world to provide a source of inspiration for the Mediterranean region, to take advantage of its untapped potential.

In 9 different sessions, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference addressed enablers in the CCI, creativity as a cross-cutting theme to social, economic, and environmental change, strategies for job creation, as well as hearing from the CREAT4MED entrepreneurs on their progress with the subgranting scheme and their impact in creating jobs, releasing products and holding capacity building activities in their local areas.

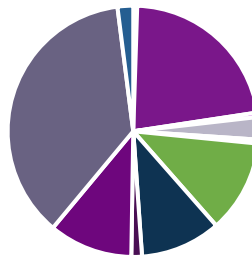
## CREACT4MED Engagement Platform

The CREAT4MED Engagement platform is a tool which provides networking opportunities, community building, funding opportunities, and knowledge exchange. By using this platform, the community can contribute to and benefit from the opportunities and knowledge shared to strengthen their competitiveness, create new jobs, and foster social and economic growth. The platform was launched at the beginning of the project and has continued to steadily grow alongside the project. We are now a community of over 1600 members from 24 countries!



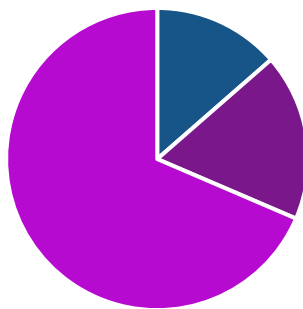
There are 513 startups represented, 307 creative individuals, 66 business support organisations, and 35 training and finance providers among many other CCI actors. The CREAT4MED Engagement Platform will remain active so make sure you sign up and contribute to this amazing community!

### TYPE OF ORGANISATION



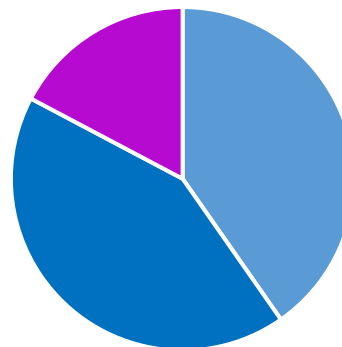
- Accelerator
- Creative Individual
- Finance provider
- Incubator
- International CCI Project
- Ngo Or Foundation
- Other
- Other Support Organization
- SME
- Startup
- Training Provider

### AGE



- Over 36
- 35 and under
- Prefer not to say

### GENDER



- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

## Med CCI Hub Events

A key element to the final pillar of the CREAT4MED project is networking and building partnerships. To ensure the CCI ecosystem was more connected with meaningful collaborations across sectors and countries, CREAT4MED established the Med CCI Hub to facilitate the exchange of ideas and opportunities among the different CCI stakeholders of the Mediterranean region. 2 Med CCI Hub events were co-organised in collaboration with local stakeholders to enhance the impact of these initiatives at the regional level. The events offered a unique platform to exchange ideas and opportunities among the various stakeholders of the Mediterranean region.

The first Med CCI Hub Event, co-organised by EMEA and IEMED, in collaboration with Culture Funding Watch, took place on June 26th and 27th 2023 online. The event included several speed-networking sessions, workshops, roundtable discussions, and CCI-specific seminars focusing on the importance of networking and building partnerships in the sector. Three sessions were held over the two days including a spin session with three rooms discussing international funding opportunities, marketing strategies, and networking and cooperation programmes. The event brought together 75 participants from 19 different countries with over half being women and young people.

The second Med CCI Hub Event took place in the framework of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference on the 30th and 31st of January 2024. To facilitate fluid networking and ensure participants were able to connect with all stakeholders of varying roles, the sessions took the form of spin-tables, networking and B2B sessions, as well as workshops on best practices and success stories in empowering youth and women through cultural and creative industries, fostering collaboration between creative actors and encouraging cross-border cooperation in the Southern Neighbourhood of the Mediterranean.

The first of 3 sessions was the Success Stories and Best Practices Roundtable. 14 of the top-scoring CREAT4MED Best Practices (in the CREAT4MED Mapping pillar) presented their businesses and initiatives across three themes: Cultural Entrepreneurship, Ecosystem Enablement, and Local & Regional Cooperation. Following the presentations from each Best Practice, discussions unfolded regarding common challenges faced by the entrepreneurs, such as team building, financial sustainability, and forging meaningful connections with customers and other partners or NGOs. Strategies like meticulous team selection, long-term planning, product diversification, and fostering trust emerged as vital solutions. The second session consisted of spin tables. This dynamic format encouraged active engagement and meaningful real-time interactions between entrepreneurs and other CCI stakeholders such as incubators, accelerators, finance providers, and business mentors. The final session allowed for free networking and 1-1 B2B meetings where 14 different experts met with 15 entrepreneurs and beneficiaries of the CREAT4MED Project.



## EU-Southern Neighbourhood Country Dialogues

The first EU-Southern Neighbourhood Country Dialogue was held on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and it was organised in collaboration with CreativeForum.si, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and the European Creative Hubs Network within the framework of the second Annual Conference. The event brought together 12 business support organisations from 10 different countries, acting as creative hubs in their respective regions.



The second EU-Southern Neighbourhood Country was held in Barcelona on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 within the framework of the CREAT4MED Management of Creativity Summer School, organised by IEMed in collaboration with EMEA, iED & StartUB!. The event was divided into two separate sessions: a collaborative workshop bringing CCI experts from the ecosystem in Barcelona and a panel, moderated by Gemma Aubarell, the Director of the Culture, Gender, and Civil Society Department at IEMed titled “*Creative Mediterranean: Exploring the Role of Culture in Mediterranean Cooperation*”. Combined, the sessions brought together over 30 participants of 10 different nationalities, with over two-thirds of the participants being women.



The third event was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 online, gathering over 30 experts from the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean to explore how to strengthen cooperation in the region with a focus on intermediaries, including BSOs and other support organisations. The session was opened by Gemma Aubarell, Director of Gender, Culture and Civil Society at the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), Maria Ruiz, Coordinator of CREAT4MED and Senior Project Manager at the Euro-Mediterranean Economists’ Association (CREACT4MED lead partner), and Chaymaa Ramzy, Executive Director of Shelter Art Space and facilitator of the session. The event provided a space for discussions on opportunities and needs for BSOs and intermediaries, creative urban development in the Mediterranean and the role of cities, and finally future creative development and skills.





The final EU-Southern Neighbourhood Dialogue event was held in the framework of the CREAT4MED Closing Event on the 10th of July 2024. The CREAT4MED entrepreneurs, incubators, and regional cooperation entities were invited to Barcelona to connect with CCI actors from Spain including start-ups, business support organisations, and representatives of key sectors in Catalonia such as fashion, digital technologies, and tourism.

## CREACT4MED participation in external events

As well as organising events under the framework of CREAT4MED, the project consortium has been committed to raising awareness about the potential of the cultural and creative industries across the Mediterranean, Europe and beyond. In doing so, project partners have participated in more than 13 external events including:

- RedStart Tunisie's Inno'Preneur Days – November & December 2023
- María Ruiz, EMEA at EIT's Culture and Creativity Days – October 2023
- Kirsty Fairhurst, EMEA, María Ruiz, EMEA and Giulia Dimonopoli, IEMED at Start-Ups Without Borders Summit – February 2023
- María Ruiz, EMEA on Express FM Radio in Tunisia – December 2023
- CREAT4MED Beneficiaries at the Creative MENA Summit 2023 – October 2023
- María Ruiz, EMEA at Stand Up! Capitalisation Event – July 2023
- EMEA Webinar: Women's Economic and Financial Empowerment in the Mediterranean and Africa: What has been achieved and what remains to be done? - July 2023
- Prof. Ayadi, EMEA at "Creativity & Brain Health in The Future of Work" At the Cities Summit of The Americas 2023 – April 2023
- Prof. Ayadi, EMEA at UN-ESCWA's Creative Industries Forum 2023 – February 2023
- Maria Ruiz, EMEA, MedaWeek – November 2022
- Maria Ruiz, Resource Mobilization Digithon MENA Region - September 2022
- Prof. Ayadi, EMEA at the Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Euro-Mediterranean region Culture Ministerial meeting of the EU-Southern Partnership – June 2022
- Dr. Yeganeh Forouheshfar, EMEA at Lebanese Center for Policy Studies' Webinar: Necessity-Driven Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries in Rural Areas: Pathways for Recovery and Building Resilience – June 2022
- Prof. Ayadi, EMEA at Journées Musicales de Carthage's Internationalisation of Music– December 2021
- Prof. Ayadi, EMEA at the Mediterranean Creative Economy Forum – November 2021
- Prof. Ayadi, EMEA at the European Creative Industries Summit "Future Unlocked!" – September 2021
- EMEA Webinar: Impacts of COVID-19 on the Cultural Creative Industries (CCI) In the Mediterranean: What Role for Digitalization? –November 2020





## Project Coordinator



### EMEA

The Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association, EMEA, is a Barcelona-based regional think-tank that serves as a leading independent and innovative policy research institution; a forum for debate on the political and socio-economic reforms in the Mediterranean and Africa; and a promoter of actions and initiatives that fulfil objectives of sustainability, inclusiveness, regional integration and prosperity.

## Our Partners



## Our Associates



CREACT4MED is a project funded by the European Union (EU) through the EuropeAid Programme, that aims to strengthen businesses and entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in the Southern Neighbourhood of the EU, with a particular focus on young people and women.