ChIMERA

Innovative cultural and creative clusters in MED area

P.A. 1: Promoting Mediterranean innovation capacity to develop smart and sustainable growth

Obj. 1.1: To increase transnational activity of innovative clusters and networks of key sectors of the MED area

https://chimera.interreg-med.eu/

D.4.6.1. Final review

WP 4. Testing

act. 4.6. Evaluating pilot activities

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Interreg Mediterranean
ChIMERA
EUROPEAN UNION

INNOVATIVE CULTURAL
AND CREATIVE CLUSTERS
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

4.1.3 Methodology for the pilots evaluation

4.6 Evaluating pilot activities

4.6.1 Final reviews from the partners about pilots activities

Introduction to methodology

Among the outputs of the Chimera project relating to the pilot activities a monitoring system was set up through a series of indicators and tools. These are described in this document that refer to two specific project sections': **4.1.3 Methodology for evaluation** and **4.6 Evaluating pilot activities**.

The pilot activities' evaluation methodology focused on different steps:
1) analysis of **qualitative indicators** useful for measuring results to assess the effectiveness of pilot activities;
2) creation of online **questionnaire and interviews** to receive feedback from targets involved in pilot activities;
3) analysis of the answers and **feedback** that emerged during the interviews;
4) comparison between the monitoring and evaluation of the project with quality standards;
5) pilots' final evaluation

The main target groups involved in the project that gave the feedback and answered the evaluation questionnaires are:
1. Cluster Managers,
2. Partners,
3. Enterprises.
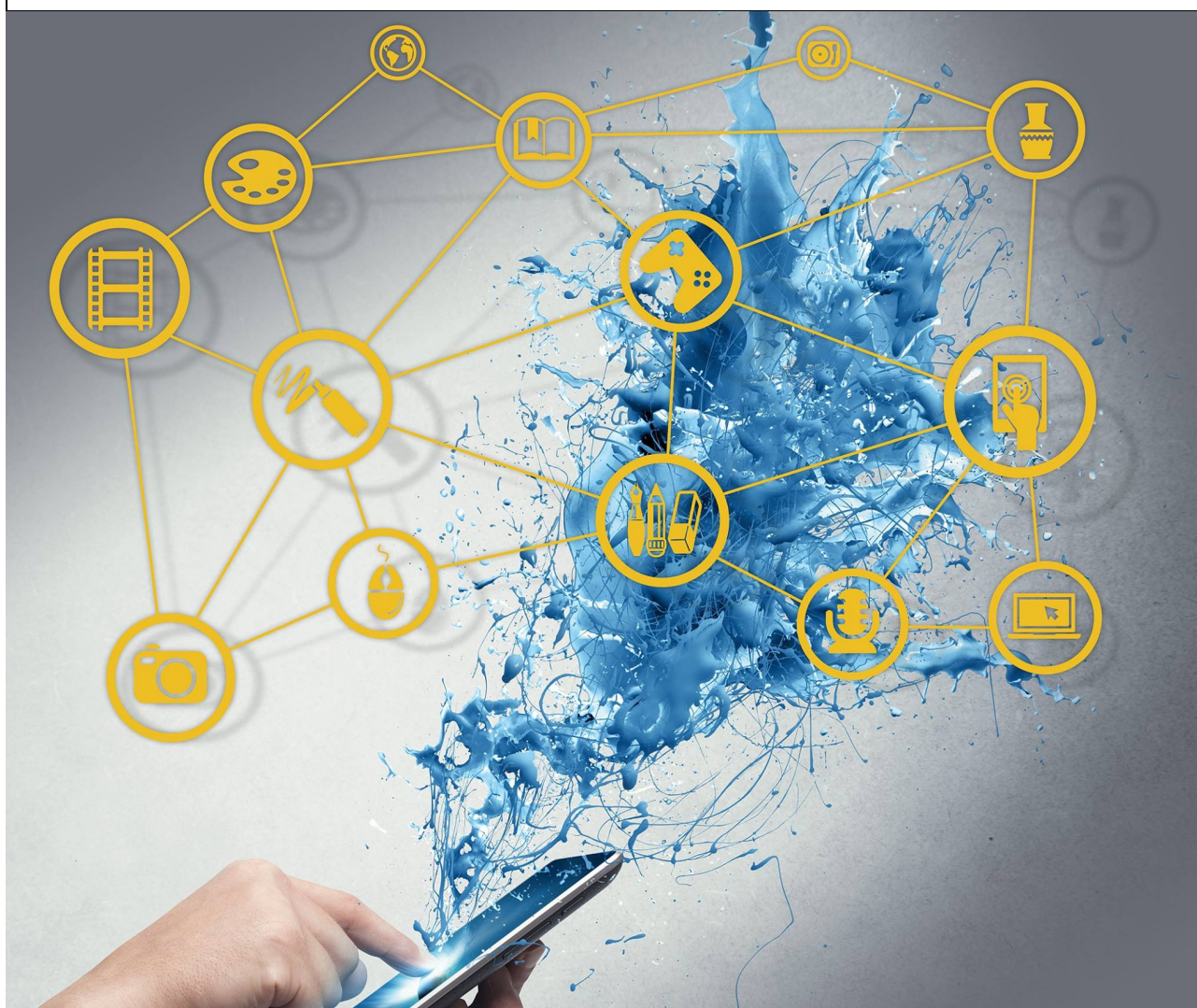
INDICATORS & TOOLS

To check the effectiveness of the pilot actions, we have chosen qualitative indicators to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the activities carried out during the pilots and how well the pilot actions responded to the different needs of targets involved, to ensure effective replicability in the future.

The qualitative indicators gave rise to the questions of the questionnaires and the interviews submitted to the targets. Thanks to the questionnaires we were able to understand if the activities carried out during the project's pilot actions were in line with the real needs of the target groups.
Within the pilot activities, the project proposed different actions to support the target groups and encourage the creation or strengthening of network work. For example we asked ourselves if it was effective to organize moments of matchmaking, or if it was useful to share ideas and strategies and encourage co-planning through the living labs.
We wanted to confirm the effectiveness of the activities in different cultural and international contexts and we had to understand if the models used had been effective in the 2 types of ecosystems with which we interacted:
ecosystem 1 - already established CCI clusters that had to enhance their networking
ecosystem 2 - CCI clusters that were being born

TOOLS

We used the online questionnaires and the interview face to face with the actors of the project, during the events and the training session, trying to improve the pilot actions of the Chimera project, during the course of the activities too.

Feedback from Enterprises
interview & online questionnaire
after the match making & living lab

Feedback from Cluster Managers
interviews face to face after the
training in Matera

Feedback from Partners
open ended questions
before the end of January

We collected and analized the feedback from the target groups during the project phases, and we choose (together with the partners) which kind of changes we made to make pilot actions more effective. (p*lease find attached to this document the questionnaires we used to receive feedback from the project target groups*)

Here is a detailed description of the questions we have proposed to the different target groups; the questionnaires and interviews covered the following pilot actions:

PILOT SUMMARY & INDICATORS

n **Pilot Numbers**

4.2 PILOT ACTION 1 - startup of innovative CCIs Clusters
4.2.1 - **2** Training sessions for cluster Managers
4.2.2 - **10** regional clusters strategic business plan

Feedback from Cluster Managers

4.3 PILOT ACTION 2 - services for internationaliztion/innovation
4.3.1 - **2** matchmaking events
4.3.2 - **30** assistance on international mobility of new entrepreneurs

Feedback from Partners & Enterprises

4.4 PILOT ACTION 3 - financial tools
4.4.1 - **10** new financial schemes
4.2.2 - **10** public funding tools

Feedback from Partners & Cluster Managers ???

4.5 PILOT ACTION 4 - living labs
4.5.1 - **10** innovation projects
4.5.2 - **1** community of living labs

Feedback from All

A. Cluster Manager

For the activities that involved Cluster Managers into the Chimera Project, we focused our indicators in the field of typology and effectiveness management of CCIs cluster.

To evaluate the pilot action **4.2.1 Training sessions for cluster Managers** and **4.2.2 regional clusters strategic business plan** we asked to Cluster Managers:

What are the features distinguishing CCIs cluster from other industry clusters?
What are the approaches to CCIs cluster management?
What are the key value drivers for cluster development that cluster managers have to focus their attention on?

B. Partners & Enterprises

For the activities that involved Partners & Enterprises into the Chimera Project, we focused our indicators in the field of typology and effectiveness about the methodology & format used into the project, like Matchmaking events & Living Labs.

To evaluate pilot action **4.3.1 matchmaking events** and **4.3.2 assistance on international mobility of new entrepreneurs** we asked to Partners & Enterprises:

The Chimera project has used the matchmaking methodology to encourage the exchange between cultural and creative companies of the partner countries of the project, to favor processes of contamination and internationalization. What would you have improved in the organization of each of the 2 matchmaking events? (For Partners)

To facilitate the exchange between expert and start-up companies of the ICC sectors in Europe, the Chimera project used the "Erasmus for young entrepreneurs" program. Did it seem like a choice consistent with the aims of the project? Explain what you would do to improve the effectiveness of this action. (For Partners)

One of the effective ways to promote the exchange of knowledge and contamination between companies in the same sector are matchmaking events. Do you think these moments of meeting are really effective? Can you detail your answer and your motivations? (For Enterprises)
Thanks to the Chimera project you became aware of the European program "Erasmus for young entrepreneurs". Do you think it is a useful program for you and your business? Can you tell us why? (For Enterprises)

C. Partners, Cluster Managers & Enterprises
To evaluate pilot action **4.5.1 innovation projects** and **4.5.2 community of living labs** we asked to all:

With the members of your cluster you will certainly have participated in the activities of the Chimera project, including the bootcamp and the living lab. Can you tell us if these moments of comparison and co-design were useful for you? (To CM)
(Explain briefly what advantages the cluster has and what could be improved)

How much did the "Chimera project" contribute to improving cluster management in the phase in which it is now? (To CM)

Please add suggestions regarding the activities in which you participated in the project

After having organized and managed the co-creation activities foreseen by the Chimera project together with the target groups, including the bootcamp and the living labs, can you tell us if these moments of comparison and co-design were useful? What would you have improved? (To Partners)

Please add other useful suggestions to improve the methodology and tools of the Chimera project in the future (to Partners)

With your enterprise you will have participated in the activities of the Chimera project, including bootcamps and living labs. Can you tell us if these moments of contamination and co-design have been useful to you? Can you suggest how to make them more effective? (To Enterprises)

D. Partners & Cluster Managers
For the specific activities in relationship to the financial opportunities for the CCIs Cluster in Europe, we focused our question linked with the different typology of organization & story of the CCIs clusters involved in the Chimera Project .

To evaluate pilot action **4.4.1 new financial schemes** and **4.4.2 public funding tools** we asked to Partners & Cluster Managers:

Before the Chimera project there was a clear business plan of your cluster?
If not - explain briefly why; If yes - tell us how Chimera project has helped to strengthen the sustainable model of cluster management (For CM)

The Chimera project has supported and / or stimulated the birth of new ICC clusters in Europe. One of the tools that were implemented by the project were the "finacial tools", which helped the cluster managers to reflect on the implementation of the strategic business plans of the clusters and on the possibilities of accessing national and European funds. In your opinion, were the tools provided by the project sufficient? What other tools would you have liked to use and / or create to support cluster work? (For Partners)

4.6 EVALUATING PILOT ACTIVITIES

During the project phases, there were many opportunities to discuss with the partners and with the participating target groups: we stimulated and received a lot of feedback on the methodology and tools that the project was using.

During the months of activity of the project, many relationships have been established and we have worked in close synergy with the partners of the partnership, so as to improve the ongoing activities. Thanks to the living labs, the 2 matchmaking events and the training sessions with the cluster managers, we were able to collect feedbacks and suggestions that allowed us to make an effective qualitative assessment of the pilot actions of the project, which we summarize below.

As regards the **pilot action 1**, positive results emerges from the evaluation of the training activities carried out for the cluster managers. The training part was very useful both for the already established clusters and for the newborn or still-in-process clusters. Training was also an important moment of co-mailing and connection between different European realities and created ideas for possible future collaborations in different project proposals. Some clusters that have participated in the project are starting to work together to create international European projects. Training has also served to improve the personal knowledge of cluster managers in the management of complex organizations in the field of cultural and creative industries within the European context.

According to the participants' opinion, the course was well structured on the use of new technologies in order to maximize visibility and convertion of small business. They consider both organization and lectures outstanding. However, some of them suggest to improve teamworking and underline the need of more time for practical sessions.

During the course a lot of interesting examples, practical cases and useful advices were provided. Thanks to this course they learned a lot of new information, even if some of them consider it too much technical and more useful for community managers, rather then cluster managers.

Following the training, many clusters reviewed some strategies and some objectives, improving business plans.

Analyzing **Enterprises ' questionnaires** and focusing on answers given to the questions on the **pilot action 2**, we can understand that these initiatives are very important for companies of the same sector. The matchmaking events is an opportunity for encouraging and promoting the creation of international relationships and contacts. It's an useful way to create different business opportunities and to monitorate their progresses.
These initiatives stimulate the generation to new visions and ideas and inspire the own work through the listening and watching activities too.
The "Erasmus for young entrepreneurs" is an opportunity reserved for new entrepreneurs in order to reinforce their personal skills, relevant for cluster managers, because they have an effective European tool to promote innovation and internationalization processes of their member companies.
Some companies felt they could participate in the Erasmus program for young entrepreneurs and signed up for the online platform that manages the matches between host entrepreneurs and new entrepreneurs. Some companies, on the other hand, did not consider it simple to participate in the program.

Analyzing **Partners' questionnaire** and focusing on answers given to the questions *What would you have improved in the organization of each of the 2nd matchmaking events?* (**pilot action 2**), someone says "I think it would be important to set up some follow-up activities that can monitor the progress of the reports and contacts established during the matchmaking events, to analyze the new networks and new business projects" (qte).

Moreover "Erasmus for young entrepreneurs" program is a great tool to support the mobility of the ICCs. "It would be useful to coordinate this instrument with the others European tools in the path of the internationalization, such as I-PORTONUS i.e. This could bring and encourage a multiplier effect."(qte)

From answers to the questions on **pilot action 3,** we can understand that "Chimera project" is a good support to the development of business plan.
The very first positive aspect of Financial Tools and Schemes within the Chimera Projects is the public-private partnership for the capitalization and for funding the CCI projects.
Many participants interested in some kind of funding require the advisory services as well as technical assistance to reach the funding schemes' requirements: "The financial scheme approach should integrate entrepreneurship within the development of creative practices and to take a 'creative' approach to the development of new businesses and the infrastructure that supports them. It means open the scope of the branch limits and limitations. " (qte).

From answers to the questions on **pilot action 4**, we can understand that the activities of the Living Lab are very useful. It's very helpful to know more about other similar projects and strategic solutions. These meeting moments are very important to run other realities. From answers to the questions

about the co-creation activities, foreseen by the Chimera project (including the bootcamp and the living labs), we can understand that these moments of comparison and co-design are really useful: "The activities of the Living Lab have been very useful thanks to its ability to involve the target groups and to the satisfactory process of design thinking. This process has led to the satisfaction of needs through the construction of a participatory flow chart on an innovative service to be implemented. Perhaps it may be useful to find solutions to simplify the language used that may seem too technical, to extend participation to a wider audience."

To improve the effectiveness of bootcamps and living labs, the Chimera project has provided for the sharing of a final goal common to all participants. In fact, all the moments of co-design that involved the member companies of the clusters, were aimed at the birth of the innovative project, which was carried out in the final phases of the project and which represents a useful tool to improve the effectiveness and management of each cluster in the coming years, following the strategies shared in the business plan. Almost all the clusters that participated in the Chimera project, have already started implementing their innovative project: observing the first results, we can imagine that there will be significant positive impacts.

In order to collect information on the partners and participants involved into the project, the Chimera project prepared 2 types of surveys, one for the partners and one for the participants. As emerged from the surveys, all of those who took part in it, both males and females, come from different areas of employment and belong to different ranges of age and countries.
In the case of participants, all of them agree that the participation in the project was useful for them and a lot of them consider it very interesting and useful for their enterprise. Most of them consider the topic of the Living Lab as a good way to enhance the development of the ICCs in their territory.

This methodology wasn't new to some of them. In fact, some of the participants already knew the Methodology or had already participated in a Living Lab.

As for the partners, all of them are very satisfied with the project and the results archived. The major success has been to create new projects among people coming from different backgrounds and sectors. Participants were very proactive, highly interested and gave important contributions to the services and activities.

4.6.1 FINAL REVIEWS FROM THE PARTNERS ABOUT PILOTS ACTIVITIES

We report in this document a brief analysis of the suggestions and feedback given by the partners in the assessment questions on the pilot actions 2,3 and 4. Please find attached the copies of the questionnaires completed by each partner.

PILOT ACTION 2
The matchmaking was very useful and interesting for companies, they appreciated it very much. For almost all of them, the two matchmaking events of Terrassa and Bari were very well organized and the companies had the possibility to meet other companies in a focused way thanks to the catalogues implemented and also to have a mini training focused on CCI industries.

As possible improvements for future projects:
Basilicata Region suggest to involve companies during the lifetime of the project considering that they are the final beneficiaries of the project results.

According to "Creative Apulia" it would be important "to set up some follow up activities monitoring the progress of the relationships and contacts established during the Matchmaking event, to analyze the new born networking and new entrepreneurial projects.

The Chamber of Commerce of Terrassa (Spain), the organizer of B2B matchmaker event, assure that the participants were very satisfied. Nevertheless, some improvements are suggested: the speed meeting methodology requires much more attention for participants. The recruitment process of all participants should have been finished earlier.

Other partners agree that the participants might be in full control of their meetings. In particular, Promalaga suggests that "the participants should easily register by ticking the time slots when they would like to meet people. They also should have the possibility to add a short cooperation profile stating their interests and explaining why they wanted to meet any person in advance to their meeting".

The Technology Park Ljubljana (Slovenia) is looking for some possibilities to improve the matchmaking events as well: "there could be added some team building activities in order to participants could better know each other and also to make some product or new services in the context of a two-day matchmaking event. Perhaps we could organize a short creative living lab activities with all participants and then present a new products/services and new partnerships at the end of the conference as an inspiration for further cooperation."

The CCI professionals and enterprises require a collaboration between different market agents, both national and international. All partners agree that EYE program is a great tool to support the mobility of the CCI's. Creative Apulia and Friuli Venezia Giulia Region suggest that it would be useful to coordinate this instrument with the other European tools in the path of the internationalization, such as I-PORTONUS. In this way we could encourage a multiplier effect.

For University of Algarve (Portugal) it was an excellent approach, but the only problem was "the status of the Erasmus for young entrepreneurs Program in each region. For example, in the Algarve

region there´s no National Contact Point, making difficult to achieve the same results as other partners. However, this approach gave the University of Algarve the opportunity to know and disseminate the Program between region CCI entrepreneurs. Currently, the University of Algarve is developing a Collaboration Protocol with the National Contact Point (Madan Parque) in order to approximate the Program to the companies and entrepreneurs of Algarve. This was the major result of this pilot Action to the Algarve ICC sector"

Nice Chamber promoted it to the companies, but they didn't contact them. They hope to integrate this service on the matchmaking and to promote it during the matchmaking event. In this way the companies will better understand the purpose.

Chamber of Terrassa has promoted the EYE program and is part of its implementing network, they consider it as a very useful tool for business peer learning and exchange. The only constraint is that "one of the participants in an EYE program exchange must be a new entrepreneur with less than 3 years' experience in running a business, and the Host Entrepreneur must be an experienced company with more than 3 years' experience in the market. The EYE program rules are excluding the exchanges of more mature CCIs."

PILOT ACTION 3
According to Friuli and Apulia, the positive aspect is represented by the chance of getting in contact with banks and public administrations which deal with politics and instruments for improvement, while the negative aspect derives from the evidence that this work remains a proposal, it could become concrete only if there will be the will for implementing those proposals by the institutions involved.

Region of Basilicata and Terrassa consider these activities as effective in order to support CCIs. In the case of Terrassa, "being the classical financial resources very limited in our country (expensive and only accessible by bigger companies), and as the CCIs are having difficulties to access to them, our role has been more to look for "alternative financing" sources and to collect them and promote them among CCIs. It is difficult to design innovative financial schemes if there are no sources of financing the public sector specifically. Concerning the public funding tools, the only way to help CCIs is to let them know the different funding possibilities that are available for CCIs and in time so that they can apply to them."

PILOT ACTION 4
It was very useful and a good way to involve stakeholders for all partners.
In the case of Slovenia, Living lab had a sociological impact on the community, as many participants have learned about the opportunity to participate in the CCI sector and get entrepreneurial thinking, which was previously quite foreign. In the living lab new participants took part on a daily basis, and also partly passers-by, which could also participate with their idea. The synthesis of entrepreneurial and creative creativity has provided excellent results through the boot camp, also in the direction of innovative and sustainable solutions.

As for Creative Apulia, the activities of the Living Lab have been very useful thanks to its capacity of involvement of the target groups and the satisfactory design thinking process. This process has lead to the satisfaction of the needs though the construction of a participatory flow chart on an innovative service to implement. As suggestion, Apulia proposes to simplify the language used, in order to extend the participation to a wider audience.

For Nice Chamber, it was the most important pilot activity, as it was long in term of time and development.

The bootcamps and living labs organized within the Chimera projects have been the seed for real local projects between the participants in Málaga. In particular, one of the projects initiated during the MultiMedCrea Living Lab have reached the public authority subsidy and currently is in process of implementation in the marginal quartier of city of Málaga. Hence, especially at the local level, where interactions between the local community and public authorities can be very close, co-production has been viewed as a practical solution to improve the quality and efficiency of services. Involving citizens and social collectives, as well as NGOs in producing their own solutions, in fact, is expected to allow for producing outputs that are better tailored to their needs at considerable cost-savings.

Terrassa shares its experience as well. The initially designed methodology was very well developed, but they had to change the composition of the different working groups in order to advance to a concrete result. The mixing of variety of stakeholders enriches the perspective but makes it more difficult to come to an end at later stages of the process.
The participant gives a suggestion about the meetings: they should be reduced to two because it is a little hard to involve stakeholders at the same time and at the same moment considering the arrangements they always have for institutional reasons or normal daily work.

Finally, University of Algarve considerate this methodology as very useful, but harder to understand. It is very specific and requires a lot of training before the implementation. And it was difficult to find external expertise to implement correctly the methodology. But despite the difficulties, it allowed the flow of new ideas and products/services development. The University suggests to have a full week training course concerning the methodology.

Globally, the pilot activity was very well managed and coordinated. Regarding the methodology, it was considered very good by all partners, as it was able to satisfy all objectives and results. All partners agreed that the project was really very well organized, designed and managed, the partnership responsive and coordinated. As a proposal, Apulia suggests to define some follow up activities and to experiment financial schemes defined by the pilot actions of the project.