



**Innovations Platform and Tools
for increasing innovation capacity of SMEs
in the Balkan Mediterranean Area**

INNOPLATFORM

Interreg 
Balkan-Mediterranean
INNOPLATFORM

**INNOPLATFORM PROJECT IS CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION
AND NATIONAL FUNDS OF THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES**

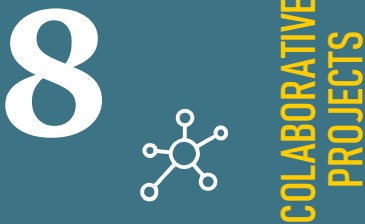
PROJECT OVERVIEW

The “Innovation Union” flagship defines innovation as a broad concept covering new or improved products and processes, services, new business models, and new forms of marketing and organisation. The focus is placed on innovation in SMEs, recognised as the new driving force of growth and jobs in the Union. Within this context and according to EU indicators for the innovation potential, the BalkanMed area lags behind the EU averages, while regional competitiveness is uneven and there is a need for a stronger transnational cooperation, especially in the area of business sophistication, capacity for innovations, and smart specialization.

As a project, InnoPlatform addresses these challenges by supporting the introduction of innovations in SMEs enabling them to innovate and/or adjust their business models to the changing economic, social and regulatory context. InnoPlatform partners developed a well-tailored set of services and tools for providing objective data and information to policy makers, researchers and investors (InnoScorecard), and a set of 5 web based tools (InnoTools) and services (InnoRegion) for improving SMEs opportunities, capacities, and knowledge for successfully introducing innovations and increasing internationalization opportunities. The developed knowledge and tools are supported and institutionally housed by a network of 6 BalkanMed Centres of Excellence in Innovations, which act as watchdogs in the area of policies on supporting innovations and as knowledge providers helping SMEs to successfully introduce innovations.

The whole concept of the InnoTools was demonstrated through 14 pilots involving 8 collaborative projects involving SMEs and research institutions and 6 SME pilots involving work on the introduction of new products/processes. The main beneficiaries of the InnoPlatform project are SMEs, Consultants, Research centres, Institutes and Universities, and Policy makers from the Balkan Mediterranean region.

PROJECT FACTS



PROJECT SCOPE

A comprehensive review of applied methodology for assessing the innovation potential of nations was conducted in order to identify the most applicable one for the BalkanMed Area. Given that the countries of the BalkanMed area are EU, or EU-applicant countries, the Innoplatform project applied the EU methodology for the innovation potential of nations. **Innoscorecard** visualizes the data comparing the countries with BM and EU averages.

In the development of **Innoregion**, the Innoplatform team applied the EU methodology for regional innovation potential identifying the dominant emerging industries in partner's regions. Innoplatform team conducted 60 interviews with SME representatives in order to develop the scope of the Innoregion service. Innoregion has three parts: Marketplace, Networking events, and Access to Finance.

Innoplatform team developed a comprehensive research methodology for mapping and profiling SME innovators in the BalkanMed area. The online survey reached more than 1100 SMEs and provided valuable data for comprehensive analysis of their needs. The research findings guided the scope and development of **5 InnoTools** to support the successful introduction of innovations in SMEs.

SERVICES

InnoScorecard

INNOSCORECARD RANKS BALKANMED COUNTRIES AND COMPARES THE BM AREA WITH THE EU PROVIDING INFORMATION TO POLICYMAKERS, RESEARCHERS, POTENTIAL AND PRESENT SMES, ON CURRENT CHALLENGES IN THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INNOVATION POTENTIAL.

SERVICES

InnoRegion

INNOREGION FOCUSES ON PROVIDING SERVICES THAT SUPPORT INNOVATIONS IN THE DOMINANT EMERGING INDUSTRIES OF BalkanMed REGION AND HELPS THE PROCESS OF CLUSTERING.

PROJECT SCOPE

INNOMODEL



INNOMODEL IS KNOWLEDGE DERIVED FROM THE BUSINESS CANVAS MODEL. THE MAIN AIM OF THE INNOMODEL IS TO PROVIDE A SNAPSHOT OF THE CURRENT BUSINESS MODEL OF SMEs AND START-UPS AS A REFLECTION OF THEIR STRATEGIC APPROACH, I.E. BUSINESS STRATEGY.

INNOSTRATEGY



INNOSTRATEGY, IS A KNOW-HOW ON HOW TO METHODOLOGICALLY CONNECT THE CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF SMEs DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, THE TECHNOLOGICAL PLAN, AND THE PLAN FOR POSITIONING OF NEW PRODUCT/SERVICE AT MARKETS.

SET OF TOOLS

InnoTools

INNOPARTNER



INNOPARTNER, IS A KNOW-HOW ON HOW TO IDENTIFY, APPROACH AND SOLICITATE PARTNERS FOR INNOVATION ACTIVITIES DERIVING FROM SME's TECHNOLOGICAL STRATEGY AND IDENTIFIED MARKET NEEDS.

INNOPROJECT



INNOPROJECT, IS A KNOW-HOW ON HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY INTRODUCE NEW PRODUCTS/SERVICES AT THE MARKET. THE TOOL REFLECTS THE KNOWLEDGE FROM THE NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES ADJUSTED TO THE CONTEXT AND SIZE OF SMEs.

INNOFINANCE



INNOFINANCE, IS A KNOW-HOW ON HOW TO APPROACH THE FINANCIAL EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE COMPANY GIVEN ITS BUSINESS MODEL, AND TO ASSESS AND EVALUATE ITS POTENTIAL INNOVATION PROJECTS.

CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

Centers of Excellence generally aim at promoting a concentration of knowledge in a priority area horizontally linking the entire chain of knowledge development through strategic partnerships between the private sector and the academia. A Center of Excellence at a most basic level consists of a team of people who promote collaboration and use of best practices in a specific focus area to drive business results.

ROLE OF CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATIONS

The Centers of Excellence in Innovations established with the InnoPlatform Project aim at providing knowledge and services to:

- SMEs and start-ups in facilitating the development of new ideas, products, services, technology and customer experience through providing access to specific information, knowledge, tools, and equipment established with the InnoPlatform project;
- Business support organizations and consultants in strengthening their capacities for supporting SMEs and start-ups in successfully introducing innovations; and
- Researchers, investors, and policy makers by providing data and analysis on the development of the innovation potential of the BalkanMed countries and regions.

CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE NETWORK

Center for Knowledge Management
North Macedonia, Skopje

**Computer Technology Institute
and Press "Diophantus"**
Greece, Patras

**Association of Information Technology
Companies of Northern Greece**
Greece, Thessaloniki

Burgas Free University
Bulgaria, Burgas

**Limassol Chamber
of Commerce and Industry**
Cyprus, Lemesos

UET Centre
Albania, Tirana

PILOT ACTIONS

In order to demonstrate the usefulness of the 5 InnoTools, Innoplatform team conducted demonstration activities covering 8 SME collaboration pilots (SMEs collaborating with Universities and Research Institutions) and 6 pilots of SMEs for introducing new products /services.

Participating SMEs were selected at an open call from October to December 2018, out of 232 SMEs which expressed interest in participating in the demonstration activities.

Experts from the Centres of Excellence in Innovations established through the Innoplatform project worked successfully with the SMEs on the application of the Innotools from January till June 2019.

Country	Collaboration pilots	New product/ process introduction pilots	Total
Albania	1	0	1
Bulgaria	3	0	3
Cyprus	1	3	4
Greece	2	1	3
North Macedonia	1	2	3

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Busoft Ltd – SaaS Software platform, granting medical services for end-users (MEDSys)

BULGARIA

Busoft Ltd. is an SME developing a platform for medical services. Innoplatform's Center of Excellence, BFU and the use of the InnoTools, helped the SME in refining the elements of its business model and revising its strategy. As a result, the new platform contains the following main modules: - Polyclinic - Outpatient medical care - General practitioners - Laboratory - Dental practice. The platform aims to maintain data import / export in various formats and contain full electronic record of each patient, process all documents, diagnosis, treatments and tests. The SME provided all necessary data, so the project was defined in details using the InnoTools. As a result, a MoU and NDA between the company and the university were signed setting and defining its collaboration on the development of the platform. The estimated project budget is 35.000 EUR.

Model Hydroponics Cultivations

GREECE – MESSOLONGHI

"Model Hydroponics Cultivations" is an SME located in Messolonghi, Greece. The SME is active in the production of vegetable products, utilizing standard hydroponic greenhouse facilities and offering these products in fresh or lightweight form. In the constant need to improve the production conditions and methods, the SMEs was supported by the Innoplatform Centers of Excellence and the InnoTools in identification of SME's R&D needs for future expansion of company's "smart" infrastructure. The Innootools application resulted into a design and development of a project and a detailed plan of implementation. A MoU was signed to utilize the institute's know-how in the field of production automation, using modern sensors and to develop machine learning algorithms, that will improve the production lines and the final quality of the products. The total project is estimated to 16.000 for the Innoplatform period phase (planning project) and around 80.000 for a future implementation of the second phase.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Fundscribe - <https://www.facebook.com/FundscribeCrowdfunding/>
CYPRUS

Fundscribe is a start-up with a business idea to combine a donation crowdfunding site with cashback opportunities, providing discounts through affiliate partnerships to project sponsors. The goal is to incentivize people to create a low-paying monthly subscription and fund community projects. Innoplatform Centers of Excellence and the InnoTools enabled the enterprise to create a clear business model and identify key technological partners. As a result, the SME signed a MoU with the Cyprus University of Technology to support the development of the platform.

GLUCO
NORTH MACEDONIA

Gluko is an innovative project of the start-up Inovation DOOEL. It is a non-invasive solution for measurement and monitoring of the glucose level of patients. The experts of the Innoplatform's Center of Excellence- CKM through the application of the InnoTools, helped the SME to clearly identify its development goals and set a strategy for increasing the revenue stream through introducing new products (Gluko) on the already developed software platform under the first product of the enterprise, ECG alert (picking up and sending ECG signals of patients and users to medical facilities). The modification of the developed platform, identified the need to have knowledge partners from the Faculties of Information Technology in the country. CKM Experts and the SME approached the largest University SS Cyril and Methodius. The collaboration is focused on making the current solution for data transfer through mobile networks more efficient by increasing the speed of the signals. Project budget is estimated to around 400.000 EURs. Gluko received 70% contribution from the National Fund for Innovations of North Macedonia.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Veleçiku Cheese

ALBANIA

Veleçiku Cheese is an SME developing innovative and authentic cheese products in Albania. The SME was supported by the Experts from Innoplatform's center of Excellence-UET Center in the use of the InnoTools for defining its development strategy. The focus was placed on technological innovations in the production process, increase in production, and food security. As a result of the application of the Innotools, VELEÇIKU CHEESE signed a Collaboration Agreement with the European University of Tirana on 15.02.2019 to support the technological change of the enterprise. The detailed analysis and definition of the project scope developed through the use of the Innotools ensured financial contribution from the Albania Investments Development Agency (AIDA) with 9865 EUR.

Codific - E-health solution for images processing and recognition

BULGARIA

Codific is an SME providing software for securing the deliverables quality in the medical business, with the provision of data security and integrity. The experts from Innoplatform's Center of Excellence-BFU through the application of the InnoTools, assisted the SME in developing its first aggregate plan of projects linking the development of new services with the existing technological platforms of the enterprise. As a result, a MoU and NDA between the company and the university were signed for supporting the Codific in the further development of the solution. The estimated project budget is 56000 EUR.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

JSoft Ltd –Web-based platform for kindergarten activities monitoring (KindGarden)

BULGARIA

JSoft Ltd. is an SME developing a SaaS-based system for managing data on children's food in kindergartens and schools. With the assistance from the Innoplatform's Center of Excellence-BFU, and the InnoTools, the SME refined its main product/service offer. The platform aims to manage the data about children's food in kindergartens and schools, including daily menus, cooking recipes, ingredients, food delivery and stock on one side and monitoring children's attendance on the other side. The system aims to pay attention to public funds and parents' fees regarding children's meals. A Web service was defined where all data are stored at municipality's server with purpose to track data from every kindergarten and school in the area. JSoft Ltd signed a memorandum for collaboration and an NDA with the University for joint work on the development of the platform. The estimated project budget is 43 000 EUR.

I4G – Incubation for growth

GREECE – THESSALONIKI

I4G is a business incubator working on support of the work of startups. I4G Team is working closely with the start-up founders providing knowledge and networks to grow their business. Within the framework of Innoplatform Project, i4G applied the know-how of the InnoTools to its strategy and operations and as a result formed an alliance with University and Research Institutes in order to increase its capacities for support of the R&D needs of its start up community.

NEW PRODUCT / PROCESS PROJECTS

MS&TS

NORTH MACEDONIA

MS&TS is an SME operating in the construction sector of North Macedonia. Innoplatform's Center of Excellence-CKM with the application of the InnoTools assisted MS&TS to completely redefine its business model in 6 months (January-June 2019). The application of the InnoTools emphasized a need to radically change the existing model of the enterprise in the way value is developed (key resources, activities and partners), delivered (value proposition, customer segments, relationships, channels) and captured (cost and revenue streams). The development goals were set high as there are strong market opportunities for growth and expansion. The aggregate plan of projects for the development strategy consisted of only one large project for radically changing the business model and moving from service to production-based enterprise.



As a result of the project, MS&TS launched production of innovative construction universal knives in June 2019. The total budget was estimated to around 55 000 EUR, while as a result of the well-defined project the MS&TS received funding of 30 000 EUR in February 2019 from the National Fund for Innovations of North Macedonia.

NEW PRODUCT / PROCESS PROJECTS

HAM SYSTEMS

GREECE - THESSALONIKI

HAM (Home Automation and More P.C.) was founded in 2016 in Thessaloniki, Greece and designs and develops consumer electronics and software, specializing in Internet-of-Things and Remote Energy Management. With the support of the Innoplatform Centres for Excellence and the Innotools methodology, HAM systems worked on the development of a DIN rail device with Wi-Fi that enables communication through RS485. The device produced with those characteristics makes RS-485 useful in industrial control systems and similar applications.

OVERNET DMD

NORTH MACEDONIA

Overnet DMD is a telecommunications network developer covering North Macedonia and the wider SEE region. Innoplatform's Center of Excellence-CKM with the application of the InnoTools assisted the enterprise in redesigning its business model and introducing new automated processes for managing and developing its resources. The focus of the development goals was placed on process efficiencies. The identified aggregate plan identified three important projects for Overnet DMD in the next three years: (1) reorganization of processes and introduction of an ERP solution to model the way of how value is delivered in the first year, (2) introduction of an experience laboratory for developing the new talent of telecommunication technicians in second year, and (3) production of innovative type of cable organizers for efficient field work in the third year. The total budget of the project was estimated to around 200 000 EUR, while Overnet DMD got shortlisted for support from the National Fund for Innovations of North Macedonia in June 2019.

NEW PRODUCT / PROCESS PROJECTS

Inowaste - <https://www.facebook.com/Inowaste/>

CYPRUS

Inowaste is an ambitious Cypriot start Up, which aims to develop a technological innovation based on a creation of complex system of components. Inowaste's mission is to change the way that waste is managed in the Construction and Demolition industry (C&D), and to actively promote the diversion of waste from landfill through highlighting alternative options for waste materials and indicating cost savings. The support from the Centers of Excellence and the application of the InnoTools enabled the enterprise to create a clear business model and identify and initiate key projects and activities.

TAMIT

CYPRUS

TAMIT is a start-up with a main scientific and technological objective to develop an innovative IoT-based system (product and services) for intelligent real-time water management and leakage detection. The application of the InnoTools and the experts from the Innoplatform's Center of Excellence-LCCI assisted the enterprise in developing the development strategy and the design of the solution as a main technological platform for the current and planned new services of the enterprise.

EkoNest - <https://eko-nest.com/>

CYPRUS

EkoNest, is a start-up designing, developing, and distributing eco friendly products alternatives to plastic. Through InnoPlatform, EkoNest explored new product ideas and with the help of Innoplatform Center of Excellence-LCCI and the InnoTools, it set clear development goals, developed a comprehensive development strategy, and identified an aggregate plan of projects to accomplish the set targets.

Opening the i-Labs

Opening of i-Labs under the Centers of Excellence

GREECE - NORTH MACEDONIA - BULGARIA - CYPRUS - ALBANIA

In order to successfully support the introduction of innovations in small and medium enterprises in the Balkan Mediterranean area, each Center of Excellence in Innovations established with the Innoplatform project was equipped with IT, collaboration, and prototyping equipment – i-Labs.





For more information please visit:

<http://www.innoplatform.eu/>

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