

## INNOLEA - INNOVATION FOR THE LEATHER INDUSTRY IN JORDAN AND EGYPT

LUMINIȚA ALBU<sup>1</sup>, VIORICA DESELCU<sup>1</sup>, PANAIYOTA VASSILEIOU<sup>2</sup>, DANA CORINA DESELCU<sup>3</sup>, MAHMOUD SAYED ABDELSEDEK<sup>4</sup>, SAHAR EL BARKY<sup>5</sup>, FAHMI ABU AL RUB<sup>6</sup>, FADEL ALLABADI<sup>7</sup>, EHAB AL-GHABEISH<sup>8</sup>, DESIREE SCALIA<sup>9</sup>, LINA TSAKALOU<sup>10</sup>, ALCINO MARTINHO<sup>11</sup>, VIRGINIJA JANKAUSKAITE<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*INCDTP-Division Leather and Footwear Research Institute, Bucharest, RO*

<sup>2</sup>*National Technical University of Athens, GR*

<sup>3</sup>*University POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Bucharest, RO*

<sup>4</sup>*South Valley University, EG*

<sup>5</sup>*Arab Academy for Science Technology & Maritime Transport, EG*

<sup>6</sup>*Jordan University of Science and Technology, JO*

<sup>7</sup>*Amman Chamber of Industry, JO*

<sup>8</sup>*Al-Balqa Applied University, JO*

<sup>9</sup>*Centro Italiano Per L'Apprendimento Permanente, IT*

<sup>10</sup>*Creative Thinking Development, GR*

<sup>11</sup>*Centro Tecnológico das Indústrias do Couro, PT*

<sup>12</sup>*Kaunas Technologijos Universitetas, LT*

The paper presents the project INNOLEA, which is a three-year capacity building project co-funded by European Commission through Erasmus+ Program. The project aims to fill an apparent gap in the area of specialized services for the leather sector in Jordan and Egypt and to utilize the experience and expertise of EU partners to establish four-leather-research centers within the universities of both countries.

Keywords: leather center, leather quality, innovation, competitiveness

### INTRODUCTION

INNOLEA is a three-year Erasmus+ project co-funded by European commission which aims to fill an apparent gap in the area of specialized services for the leather sector in Jordan and Egypt and to utilize the experience and expertise of EU partners to establish four-leather-research centers within the universities of both countries.

These centers will help the project partners in both countries to implement the various tasks of the project and to provide access to the stakeholders in the leather sector to business development services, such as quality testing, product certification, training, fashion trends, production organization, funding opportunities in order to develop this sector and improve its competitiveness.

The project also aims to create and maintain cooperation among Universities and businesses in EU, Jordan, and Egypt and to foster the innovation and manufacturing of high value and quality products of leather.

Project duration: 15.10.2017-14.10.2020.

### AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- INNOLEA project aims to fill an apparent gap in the area of specialized services for the leather sector with the establishment of four leather centres in local Universities,

two in Jordan and two in Egypt, utilizing the experience and expertise of EU partners in the area of services for the leather sector.

- Through the creation of these centres and the further tasks that will be implemented in this project, the leather sectors in Jordan and Egypt will be offered access to business development services, such as quality testing, product certification, training, fashion trends, production organization, BtoB and funding opportunities, and subsequently the Jordanian and Egyptian leathers sector will have a valuable ally for its further development;
- The project also aims to create and maintain a link between Universities and businesses of the leather sector that will foster innovation and the manufacturing of high value quality products, as well as further cooperation between EU and Jordan and Egypt Universities and leather businesses;
- The project also aims to help encourage the Egyptian and Jordanian governments to favour the establishment of leather centres within universities and to promote research and projects between EU and Egypt and Jordan universities in the leather sector, by creating a research innovation and training network, which will continue to operate and after the end of the current project.

## CONSORTIUM

The consortium was established on the basis of combining the different backgrounds, experience and expertise of the partners. It includes all the skills, recognised expertise and competences required to carry out all aspects of the work programme. The consortium comprises 12 institutions from 7 countries representing different parts of Europe and the Mediterranean.

There is a mixture of institutions with different profiles, capacities and complementary competences that are appropriate for the development of the work programme (higher education institutions, companies and non profit institutions, research and training centres and business associations).

Most of the partners are experienced in implementing transnational projects, required to carry out all aspects of the project work programme and complement one another regarding their role in the project. In this manner, the project provides for a stable partnership.

## PROJECT PARTNERS

- ✓ NTUA National Technical University of Athens (Greece) - *Coordinator*
- ✓ AAST Arab Academy for Science Technology & Maritime Transport (Egypt);
- ✓ ACI Amman Chamber of Industry (Jordan);
- ✓ BAU Al-Balqa Applied University (Jordan);
- ✓ CIAPE Centro Italiano Per L'Apprendimento Permanente (Italy);
- ✓ CRETHIDEV Creative Thinking Development (Greece);
- ✓ CTIC Centro Tecnológico das Indústrias do Couro (Portugal);
- ✓ INCDTP- Division ICPI Institutul de Cercetare Pielarie Incaltaminte (Romania);
- ✓ JUST Jordan University of Science and Technology (Jordan);
- ✓ KTU Kauno Technologijos Universitetas (Lithuania);
- ✓ SVU South Valley University (Egypt);
- ✓ UPB Universitatea Politehnica din Bucuresti (Romania).

## **WORK PACKAGES**

The project comprises a set of implementation activities that will materialize the project objectives, supported by preparation, management, quality and dissemination activities that will ensure the propagation of its results even after the project has ended.

### **WP1 Research and state of the art - LEAD: JUST**

Preparation activities the result of which is the creation of a cross-country research report which will contain an analysis of the importance of the leather sector for the economies of Egypt and Jordan, the training needs for staff in leather centres, and the most favourite pedagogical approach for trainers of staff in the leather centres.

In order for the report to be produced, complementing desk and field research shall be performed in both direct beneficiaries countries (Egypt and Jordan), based on a methodology created specifically for the research, with an aim to obtain a realistic view of the national leather sectors regarding its needs, prospects, and anticipated services. The other local partners could provide these two organisations with information and contacts.

### **WP2 Capacity building and setting up of leather centres - LEAD: UPB**

A capacity building programme will be prepared and implemented to enhance the skills of Jordanian and Egyptian experts in running and managing leather centres, followed by the actual setup and operational organization of the Leather Centres. The activities carried out in this stage are the core part of the project.

At this stage, the centres will be equipped with basic leather testing equipment and the relative books and standard protocols, after their staffs has undergone an advanced Capacity Building training in the EU leather centres' premises, based on appropriately developed training material.

EU partners as well as Chambers of Commerce of the two countries will help in the setting up of the centres and in testing their operation. A business model will also be developed for the leather centres, to support their sustainability as well as a collaboration platform that will be used as a shared workspace and the ground of new projects and joint activities. The main outcome from this activity is the Leather Centres pilot operation, which will provide validation of the successful operation of the centres and their readiness to enter into a sustainable cooperation with businesses from the leather sector.

### **WP3 Quality Evaluation - LEAD: CRETHIDEV**

Quality evaluation will be present throughout the duration of the project, making use of milestones and indicators in order to accurately determine whether the project is on schedule and the objectives are continually met. The outcomes of each activity shall be evaluated before the finalisation of the deliverables of the activity, in the context of the validation step of each activity.

### **WP4 Dissemination and Exploitation - LEAD: CIAPE**

Dissemination will be thoroughly described and guided through a dissemination and exploitation plan. Dissemination tools include the development of a database of contacts, printing of brochures, a website for the project, social media presence, the organization of two roundtables, organization of a final conference in Egypt for the propagation of results etc.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- ◇ The Universities where the leather centers will be established will have the opportunity to expand the fields of their applied research to topics regarding leather.
- ◇ The staff of the leather centers will be trained by European partners, experts in offering services to the leather sector, gaining, thus, from their experience in setting up and managing this kind of centers.
- ◇ The collaboration website platform that will be set up will be a virtual space aiming at favouring collaboration, where the leather centers and other stakeholders interested in the leather sector will be able to communicate with each other, to be informed about activities, developments and trends, events, projects, funding opportunities, other players, similar institutes or have access to useful links (associations of the leather sector, other Institutes, standardization bodies etc) in the region and worldwide.
- ◇ Through the dissemination activities and tools (roundtables, database of contacts, project website and online collaterals, brochures, newsletters and recommendations on “How leather centres are useful for the economic development of the region”) that will be developed and implemented in the two countries during the project’s lifespan, the following target groups will be reached and informed about the project and its outcomes as well as its potential results: Relevant stakeholders such as companies, BIOs, policy-makers, training centers, investment promotion agencies, corporate executives and investors, International Finance Institutions providing funds for development, researchers and academics and representatives of civil society.
- ◇ The sustainable business model for leather centers that will be created will be the basis for the creation of more leather centers in the two countries or in the whole region.
- ◇ With the creation of the centers, the leather sector will have a valuable interlocutor when discussing with Policy makers. The latter, on the other hand, will be able to consult experts in the field of leather, in their decision making.

## CONCLUSION

After project finalization will be obtained: a) - Establishing and equipping of **4 leather centres**, in **2** Jordanian and **2** Egyptian universities; b) - **Fostering academia-industry collaboration in the leather industry**; c) - **Capacity building of staff**, working in leather manufacturing and tannery: Promoting their potentials for better safety and quality.

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## REFERENCES

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