

Press Release

The Information Day & Three-Day Regional Circular Economy Workshop in Crete Successfully Completed within the framework of the LIFE-IP CEI-Greece Project

The Information Day and the Regional Circular Economy Workshop in Crete, co-organized by the Green Fund, the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEEN), the Region of Crete and the Unified Waste Management Association of Crete, were successfully completed from April 20 to 22, 2026, in Heraklion, at the Hellenic Mediterranean University – ELMEPA (Estavromenos area), within the framework of the LIFE-IP CEI-Greece Project – LIFE18 IPE/GR/000013 “Implementation of the Circular Economy in Greece”.

The Project is coordinated by MEEN and implemented in cooperation with 19 strategic partners, including the Green Fund.

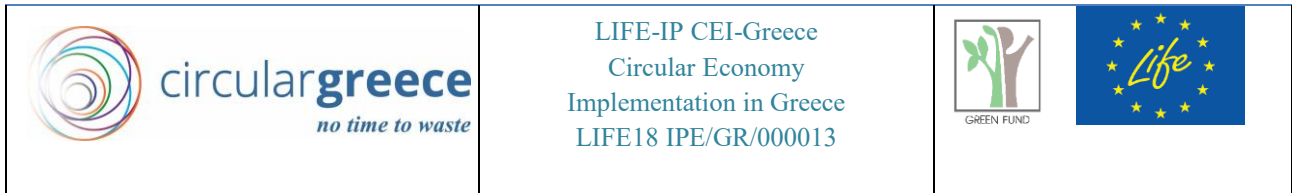
The ultimate objective of LIFE-IP CEI-Greece is to contribute to the implementation of the National Waste Management Plan, the National Waste Prevention Programme and the National Circular Economy Strategy.

Specifically, the Information day took place on April 20, with 104 participants, aiming to present the LIFE-IP CEI-Greece Project, highlight successful circular economy practices that can be implemented in Crete and promote a better overall understanding of the issues related to it.

Within the framework of the conference, welcome addresses were delivered by Mr. Nikolaos Xylouris, Deputy Regional Governor for the Environment, and Mr. Ioannis Anastasakis, Deputy Regional Governor for Climate Change and Sustainable Mobility of the Region of Crete, Mr. Manolis Grafakos, Secretary General for Waste Management Coordination of MEEN, Mr.



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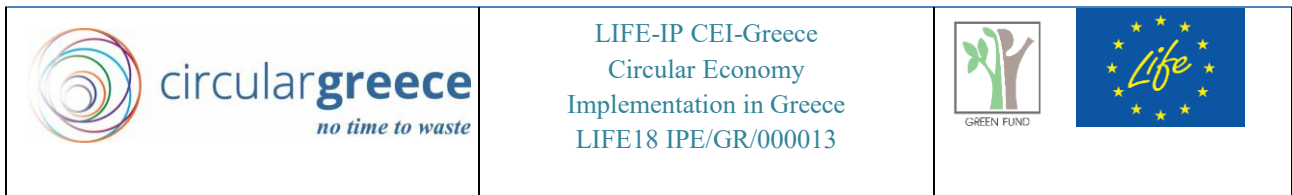
Ioannis Androulakis, Chairman of the Board of the Green Fund, Mr. Nikolaos Katsarakis, Rector of ELMEPA, and Ms. Maria Kozyraki, Secretary of the Decentralized Administration of Crete.

This was followed by the presentations session, during which Ms. Mary Plati, LIFE-IP CEI-Greece Project Manager at MEEN, presented the project’s actions and results. Dr. Athanasios Malamos, Vice Rector for Research and Innovation at ELMEPA, highlighted the institution’s research and innovation work with direct applications in the circular economy. Ms. Evgenia Stylianou, Head of the Independent Directorate for Climate Change of the Region of Crete, spoke about the utilization of Green Fund resources aiming at adapting the island to climate change challenges. Ms. Marianthi Liapi, Architect, Researcher and Head of design and management of research programmes at the Transformable Intelligent Environments Laboratory of the School of Architecture Engineering at the Technical University of Crete, explained how makerspaces, as collaborative spaces, also function as integrated educational spaces for the circular economy. Dr. Alexandros Stefanakis, Veterinarian and Chairman of the Board of Bio Research Laboratories, referred to the implementation of circular economy principles in the livestock sector and presented the LIFE MiCliFeed project, which addresses the Mediterranean diet of ruminants against climate change.

Subsequently, Ms. Ioanna Giakoumaki, Mechanical Engineer at ESDAK, spoke about the solid waste management projects designed and implemented in the Region of Crete. Mr. Antonis Papaderakis, Innovation Special Advisor of the Region of Crete, presented the Region’s Innovative Entrepreneurship Observatory. Mr. Giorgos Arampatzis, Associate Professor at the School of Production Engineering and Management of the Technical University of Crete, referred to the CSSBoost project and the innovative circular systemic



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solutions implemented in practice. The conference concluded with the presentation of Mr. Giorgos Amanakis, Recycling Director at Plastika Kritis, on the circular economy applications implemented by the company. The event was moderated by Ms. Kelly Koligiorga, Communication Officer of LIFE-IP CEI-Greece at the Green Fund.

From April 20 to 22, the Regional Capacity Building Workshop took place with a total of 158 participants and aimed to train stakeholders called upon to design and implement circular waste management solutions.

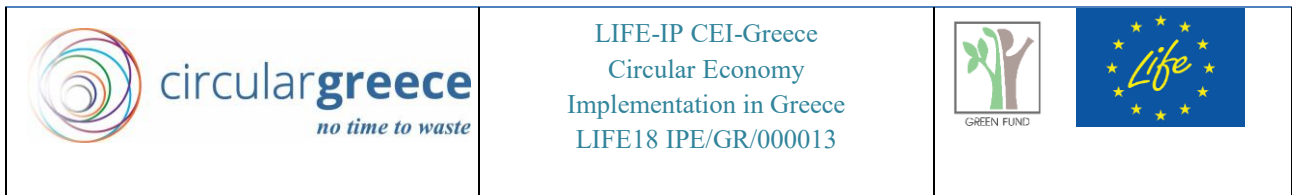
The first day of the workshop focused on the theme “Local Authorities & Circular Economy”, within the framework of which the institutional framework for waste management was presented by Ms. Faye Nakou, Mechanical Engineer and Expert at MEEN. Dr. Filippos Kyrkitsos, President of the Ecological Recycling Society, delivered presentations on circular economy financial tools and the Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) system, prevention actions and Integrated Green Points, while Ms. Zoe Gaitanarou, Waste Management Expert of the project at the Green Fund, spoke about Green Public Procurement.

Subsequently, Mr. Andreas Sotiropoulos, Environmental Scientist (MSc) at TERRA NOVA Environmental Technical Consultancy Ltd., referred to Hazardous Household Waste, Ms. Despoina Bakogianni, Project Manager at the Network of Sustainable Greek Islands (DAFNI), spoke about source separation and door-to-door collection, while Ms. Evgenia Karapatsiou, Environmental Scientist (MSc) at DIADYMA S.A. – Waste Management of Western Macedonia, delivered a presentation on the Creative Material Reuse Centres (KDEY).

The first day’s proceedings concluded with a discussion on the implementation of integrated waste management in the municipalities of



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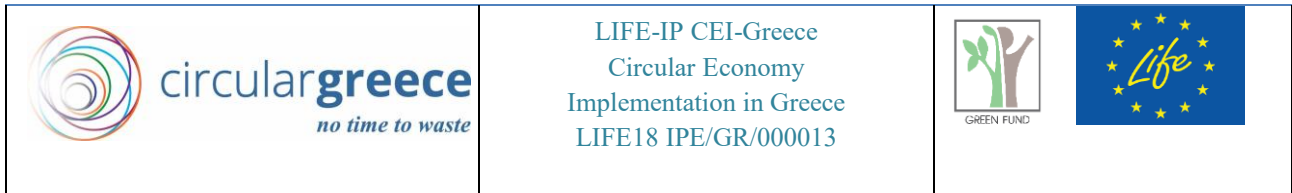
the Region of Crete, with speakers Mr. Stelios Spanoudakis, Deputy Mayor for Environment, Circular Economy and Quality of Life of the Municipality of Rethymno, and Ms. Kalliopi Fronimaki, employee of the Cleaning Directorate of the Municipality of Heraklion specializing in waste management, moderated by Dr. Filippos Kyrkitsos. The speakers referred to the legislative framework, economic impacts, technological modernization, collection optimization, and the administrative and institutional obstacles faced by municipalities. The discussion concluded by emphasizing that the PAYT system is a one-way path and that waste management is changing character, transitioning from simple collection and landfilling to scientific management, citizen education and entrepreneurship.

During the second day of the workshop, under the theme “Circular Economy in the Agri-food Sector in Crete”, presentations were delivered on bioeconomy by Ms. Niki Zolota, Chemical Engineer at the Network of Sustainable Greek Islands (DAFNI), on value chains in agri-food waste management by Ms. Maria Arymblia, Researcher at the Technical University of Crete, on circular economy applications at Mills of Crete by Mr. Alexandros Markantonakis, CEO, as well as on circular economy within the framework of Extended Producer Responsibility Programmes (EPR) and the New Alternative Management Systems with emphasis on agricultural plastics and pesticides by Ms. Roumpini Marini, LIFE-IP CEI-Greece Project Manager at the Hellenic Recycling Organization (EOAN).

Subsequently, Mr. Andreas Sotiropoulos delivered a presentation on industrial symbiosis, Dr. Chrysa Pagkalou, General Director of ETAM S.A., presented the European PROMOFER Project for improving fermentation processes for bioplastics production, Dr. Angeliki Maragkaki, Mineral Resources Engineer, spoke about green technologies for the production of value-added products, and Ms. Irimi Choudetsanaki, President of the Agri-



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food Partnership of the Region of Crete, delivered a presentation on Crete as European Region of Gastronomy 2026.

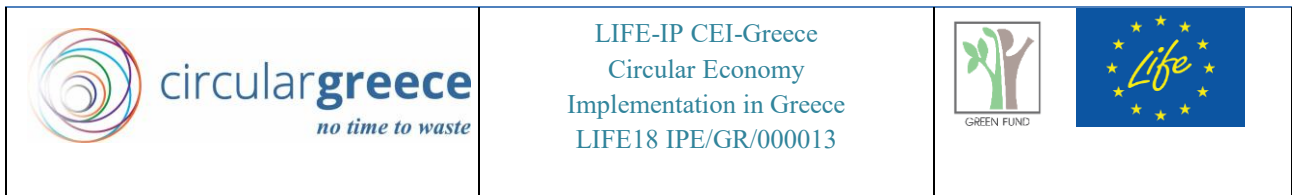
The second day's proceedings concluded with a discussion on food loss and food waste in the agri-food sector, with speakers Mr. Giorgos Arampatzis, Mr. Alexandros Markantonakis, Ms. Irini Choudetsanaki and Mr. Michalis Tzagkarakis, Communication and Marketing Director at Chalkiadakis Supermarkets, moderated by Mr. Kostas Ampeliotis, Professor at Harokopio University. The discussion focused on the quality of raw materials and by-products, the importance of life cycle analysis for assessing environmental, economic and social footprints, the role of supermarkets and consumer awareness for food waste prevention, the need for a regional strategy, as well as the possibility of energy recovery from biomass. The discussion concluded with concerns regarding the impacts of climate change on primary production, while emphasizing that the agricultural sector is the first to be affected and that systemic redesign and strengthening of production systems' resilience are required in order to address future challenges.

The third day of the workshop focused on circular economy and tourism. At the opening of the proceedings, Ms. Zoe Gaitanarou and Mr. Dimitris Chomatidis, Circular Economy and Information Systems Expert of the project at the Green Fund, coordinated the implementation of a circular entrepreneurship board game with the active participation of teachers and students from the Model General High School of Heraklion, stakeholders, and the contribution of LIFE-IP CEI-Greece partners.

Subsequently, Dr. Filippos Kyrkitsos presented best practices in the tourism sector, the Zero Waste HORECA platform and sustainable procurement in HORECA businesses, Ms. Emma Evmorfidi, co-founder of Thiswasasheet, spoke about circular entrepreneurship in tourism, and Ms. Litsa Fragkiadoulaki, on behalf of Development Crete, presented the Call for



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Applications for funding under the Action “Support for existing businesses in the Region of Crete for the implementation of environmentally friendly processes” – “DO BUSINESS GREEN IN CRETE”, within the framework of the “CRETE” Programme 2021–2027, while Mr. Kostas Ampeliotis referred to food waste reduction in the tourism sector.

The proceedings of the final day concluded with a discussion on the opportunities and challenges of circular economy in tourism businesses, with speakers Ms. Danae Antonaki, Sustainable Development Director of the Phāea Group, and Ms. Emma Evmorfidi, moderated by Mr. Dimitris Chomatidis. The discussion focused on the implementation of circular economy and regenerative hospitality in Crete’s tourism sector, the benefits of circular synergies and creative reuse, concluding that the transition to circular economy requires strategy, cooperation between competitors and local stakeholders, as well as the transformation of environmental challenges into opportunities for innovation.

The three-day workshop was coordinated by Mr. Dimitris Chomatidis.




More information on LIFE-IP CEI-Greece is available at www.circulargreece.gr and on our social media channels:

- <https://www.facebook.com/CircularGreece/>
- <https://twitter.com/CircularGreece>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/life-ip-cei-greece-circulargreece/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/circulargreece/>
- <https://youtube.com/@circulargreece>

Co-organizers



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|  | <p>LIFE-IP CEI-Greece Circular Economy Implementation in Greece LIFE18 IPE/GR/000013</p> |   |
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ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ
REGION OF CRETE



Hosting

Media collaborators



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