

Press Release

“Implementing the Circular Economy in Thira” Event Successfully Concluded

More than 50 tonnes of recyclable materials collected from Kamari and the island’s schools

Representatives of local government, local organisations, businesses and the educational community attended the Municipality of Thira’s information event, “Implementing the Circular Economy in Thira”, held on Friday, 16 October, at the Bellonio Cultural Centre as part of the European LIFE-IP CEI-Greece project.

In his welcome address, the Mayor of Thira, Mr Nikolaos Zorzos, highlighted the pressures placed on the island’s infrastructure by intensive tourism development and seasonality, stressing that development must remain in line with the island’s actual capacity and limits. He also emphasised the importance of the circular economy and the role that residents, businesses and local organisations can play in putting it into practice. He congratulated the students, teachers, businesses and all partner organisations on their contribution to the project’s activities.

Ms Mary Plati, LIFE-IP CEI-Greece Project Manager at the Ministry of Environment and Energy, then presented the programme’s key priorities. Mr Kostas Komninos, CEO of DAFNI, discussed the organisation’s experience, which informed the design of the activities in Santorini. Ms Maria Karakitsiou, Head of the Municipality of Thira’s Department of Environmental Planning, Green Spaces and Energy, and Mr Agis Antonopoulos-Rigas of DAFNI presented the activities being implemented on the island.

A particular highlight was the Thira Circular Schools programme, through which all schools in Santorini participate in the separate collection of recyclable materials. During the event, Pyrgos-Megalochori Primary School received the “Thira Circular School” award for the 2025–2026 school year, having collected the largest quantity of recyclable materials.

The Thira Circular Business initiative, piloted in Kamari, also delivered particularly positive results. From June to October, a total of 47.5 tonnes of recyclable materials, including PET plastic bottles, glass, cardboard and aluminium, were collected through a system combining sorting at source with door-to-door collection from food service businesses.

The President of the Kamari Community, Mr Dionysis Vamvakousis, and representatives of participating businesses shared their experience of the initiative. They noted that, despite

difficulties during the initial phase, the benefits were significant, while customer feedback was also particularly positive.

Mr Vangelis Kou koulis, representing the Thira Materials Recovery Facility, presented KAPA GROUP's longstanding contribution to the management of recyclable materials in Santorini. Reference was also made to the role of Enact, the Municipality of Thira's waste collection partner.

The event also explored the connection between the circular economy and local business activity. Mr Manolis Karamolegos, representing the Santorini Hoteliers Association, and Mr Matthaios Dimopoulos, representing the Union of Santorini Cooperatives – Santo Wines, presented private-sector initiatives that can help strengthen recycling and the circular economy. The Municipality of Thira and DAFNI stated that they would continue to support and expand these collaborations within the framework of the LIFE-IP CEI-Greece project.

The Municipality of Thira thanks the Ministry of Environment and Energy for coordinating the LIFE-IP CEI-Greece project, "Circular Economy Implementation in Greece", and the DAFNI Network of Sustainable Greek Islands for its continued support. It also extends its thanks to all speakers, the students and teachers of Pyrgos-Megalochori Primary School, the participating businesses and the members of the public who attended the event.