



Just Transition Platform – Project fiche:

UPGRADING OF ‘MINOS’ FACTORY SITE (PARK OF EXHIBITION AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES)

Greece, Crete

This document is part of a series presenting information and lessons learned on policy approaches at national, regional or local level supporting a just transition to a climate-neutral economy. The Just Transition Platform (JTP) assists EU Member States and regions to unlock the support in this transition. Visit the JTP website: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/just-transition-fund/just-transition-platform_en

Member State:

Greece

Region:

Crete

Sector:

Culture and Tourism

Total project budget (€):

438 119.24 (100 % EU-financed)¹

Sources of funding (in €):**EU funding:**

Cohesion Fund (2014-2020)

Project duration:

66 months (June 2018 – December 2023)

Responsible managing authority / agency / company:

Municipality of Ierapetra

Summary

The MINOS factory project in Ierapetra, co-financed by the Cohesion Fund and part of the Operational Programme Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development 2014-2020, transformed the old MINOS factory site into the MINOS Exhibition and Cultural Activities Park. The project aimed to upgrade the degraded area aesthetically and functionally, turning it into a hub for cultural activities.

The redevelopment included open exhibition spaces, a square, green areas, a monument representing the factory's funnel, a warehouse, a guardhouse, and a complex of houses. The park's design preserved the

historical and architectural characteristics of the former industrial site, emphasising its cultural heritage.

During the inauguration of the new facilities in March 2023, the Mayor of Ierapetra highlighted the project's significance in revitalising the area, contributing to cultural tourism, and providing a green space for the community. The project's journey faced challenges, but its successful implementation showcased the dedication of the Municipality of Ierapetra to enhancing the city's image and quality of life for its residents.

¹ The original budget was 890 000€ but was revised in 2019.

Type of activities:

The intervention, attempted in a space of 6 137 m², restores the degradation and 'injury' of the area in the aftermath of the demolition of the historic factory, which had been a landmark of the city of Ierapetra from 1908 to the beginning of the 1990s. The project involved creating new infrastructure, including open exhibition spaces, a square, cobbled block corridors, green areas, and various other facilities such as a refreshment room, public toilets, a warehouse, and a guardhouse². Notably, the redevelopment incorporated the historical and architectural features of the former industrial site, emphasising its cultural heritage. The project also included the construction of a monument symbolising the factory's funnel, a significant historical landmark³.

Goals and approach:

The primary goal was to upgrade the degraded area aesthetically and functionally, preserving its historical and architectural significance. The project embraced a thoughtful approach, incorporating elements of the former industrial space into the park's design to honour the city's cultural heritage.

The initiative aimed not only to enhance the city's image but also to stimulate cultural tourism within the urban fabric of Ierapetra⁴. The comprehensive redevelopment featured a range of facilities, from a refreshment room to public toilets, contributing to the park's functionality and appeal. Despite facing challenges during implementation, the project showcased the Municipality's commitment to creating a dynamic cultural hub, fostering community engagement, and improving the overall quality of life for residents.

Important outputs, results or achievements:

The MINOS factory project has yielded remarkable outputs and achievements, culminating in the successful transformation of the once-degraded site into the MINOS Exhibition and Cultural Activities Park. The project's key achievement lies in its ability to seamlessly blend aesthetic and functional elements, preserving the historical and architectural essence of the former industrial space.

The outputs include open exhibition spaces, cobbled block corridors, green areas, and strategically placed facilities. Moreover, the project successfully integrated the city's cultural heritage by creating a monument symbolising the iconic factory funnel, becoming a focal point for historical significance⁵. Beyond the physical transformations, the MINOS Exhibition and Cultural Activities Park now stands as a vibrant hub, contributing to cultural tourism, enhancing the city's image, and providing a valuable space for community gatherings and events.

Scalability⁶ and transferability⁷:

This type of project could be replicable and transferable to other regions of the EU. At its core, this project is about refurbishing urban spaces in disrepair to diversify the regional economy and capitalise on regional strengths. As such, any region with derelict properties, which potentially played an important role in the region's past could feasibly envisage to replicate this project in its essence. Also, worth underlying here is that these types of projects are eligible for EU financial support, as has been the case with the refurbishing of the MINOS facilities.

Whilst scalability is possible, it is intrinsically linked to the size and availability of culturally relevant but derelict sites in the region. Practically speaking, the project showcases that a multi-faceted, modular approach to the refurbishment of the facilities, with exhibition spaces, green areas, and recreational facilities, allows for scalability and enhances its flexibility.

2 See: [The upgrading of the "MINOS" factory area. Green and Cultural Spaces will be created | East \(anatolh.com\)](#)

3 See: [Lassithi: Inauguration of the park of exhibition and cultural activities "Minos" | Neakriti](#)

4 See: [Award for the upgrade of the "MINOS" factory | Neakriti](#)

5 See: [Lassithi: Inauguration of the park of exhibition and cultural activities "Minos" | Neakriti](#)

6 Scalability entails that a policy approach can be adapted to a bigger scale than just the local context.

7 Transferability entails that a policy approach can be applicable to a similar setting and replicated.

Tools for supporting economic diversification and reskilling/upskilling via projects:

- Capitalising on unique regional strengths for innovation
- Capitalising on regional cultural heritage to facilitate the transition away from the industrial past.

Key success factors and lessons learnt:

The success of the MINOS project in the Ierapetra municipality can be attributed to several key factors. Firstly, the project's high added value potential. The redevelopment of a significant municipal property on the coastal front, transforming it into a park for exhibition and cultural activities, considerably enriched the area economically and culturally⁸.

Secondly, the meticulous study conducted before the implementation of the project played a crucial role. The approved study by the Technical Service of the Municipality of Ierapetra was rooted in a deep understanding of the historical and architectural context⁹. The resulting incorporation of the former industrial area's typology and construction characteristics, preserving the collective memory and cultural heritage, showcased thoughtful planning.

Key challenges:

The MINOS factory project in Ierapetra encountered several challenges throughout its implementation. These difficulties mainly arose from the outbreak of the pandemic and the subsequent restrictions it imposed¹⁰, indicating that the project had to navigate the complexities and uncertainties associated with the global health crisis.

Central framework conditions¹¹:

Crete, the largest Greek island in the Aegean Sea and home to approximately 636 000 people, underwent a significant economic shift from a farm-based economy to a tourism-centric one in the 1970s. Located about 100 miles south of the Greek mainland, Crete's evolving economic landscape provided the backdrop for the MINOS factory project. In the current tourism-driven context, the idea of repurposing the MINOS plant into a cultural site emerged, aligning with the broader goals of the Greek European Regional Development Fund / Cohesion Fund Operational Programme Transport Infrastructure Environment and Sustainable Development.

Constructed in the aftermath of the German occupation, the MINOS factory in the eastern part of Ierapetra played a vital role in processing olive mills, producing kernel oil, soap, and carob flour, and acquiring carob from the surrounding region. The iconic funnel of the MINOS factory became synonymous with Ierapetra, alongside the Kales fortress. Although the factory was demolished in 1980, sparking debates among Ierapetra residents about its preservation as a living museum of culture, the historical significance of the site fuelled the vision to repurpose it into the MINOS Exhibition and Cultural Activities Park.

Outlook:

Looking ahead, the municipality envisions the park as a catalyst for future development and positive change. The overarching goal is for the MINOS project to function as a dynamic hub that enhances the city's image, stimulates cultural tourism, and contributes to the local economy. As a major cultural and recreational attraction, the park is expected to become a gathering place for residents of all ages, fostering social activities and enriching the quality

of life in Ierapetra. The municipal authorities have highlighted the importance of the project's role in boosting tourist traffic and serving as a landmark with both cultural and environmental significance.

8 See: [Lassithi: Inauguration of the park of exhibition and cultural activities "Minos" | Neakriti](#)

9 See: [The upgrading of the "MINOS" factory area. Green and Cultural Spaces will be created | East \(anatolh.com\)](#)

10 See: [Lassithi: Inauguration of the park of exhibition and cultural activities "Minos" | Neakriti](#)

11 Framework conditions encompass the institutional, informational and socio-economic factors that determine a given environment (contextual information), e.g. market conditions, access to finance, tax regulation, infrastructure and support.

Contacts:

- Municipality of Ierapetra
- Ειδική Υπηρεσία Διαχείρισης Ε.Π. ΥΜΕΠΕΡΑΑ (Special Service for the Management of Operational Programme)

Website / social media:

<http://www.ierapetra.gov.gr/contact/>

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