LEAD-MENA Newsletter #2 - November 2026

Lead-MENA
Launch of an Advanced Educational and Development Access Hub in MENA Region



Palais Ksar Saïd • Le Bardo • 29 June 2026

Spotlight: Networking & Partnership Forum

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From planning to practice

Message from the Coordinator

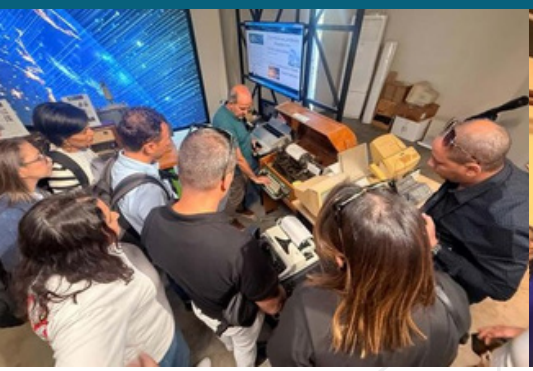
Dear partners and friends of the LEAD-MENA consortium,
Six months after our kick-off in Cairo, LEAD-MENA has moved from planning to practice. In October alone, 15 academic staff from our Tunisian and Egyptian partners trained for five intensive days at the International Hellenic University in Thessaloniki, and nearly 200 participants joined our labour market workshops in Kairouan, at AASTMT and online.
What makes me proudest is how quickly this knowledge travelled. Within two weeks, colleagues trained in Greece were opening the LEAD-MENA Hub in Kairouan to artisans and entrepreneurs, and bringing logistics experts and industry together in Egypt. The message from participants was clear: they want more, and 91.5% of those in Egypt asked to join our follow-up activities.
I warmly thank IHU and AASTMT for hosting and leading these events, and every partner for their commitment. The coming months bring online training, the opening of our educational hubs and our mid-term review in Florence in June 2027. Let us keep building together.

Dr Sourour Chtourou,
Project Coordinator - ISAMK - University of Kairouan (UNIK)

LEAD-MENA at a glance

LEAD-MENA (Launch of an Advanced Educational and Development Access Hub in MENA Region) is an Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education project, co-funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement No. 101237424. It develops education in sustainable packaging, design and logistics, and links universities with the labour market in Tunisia and Egypt.







Latest achievements

Four training events in October 2026 reached 19 trained academic staff and 198 workshop attendances, with satisfaction scores between 4.21 and 4.57 out of 5.

5–9 Oct 2026
E4.1 Capacity-building workshop
IHU, Thessaloniki, Greece
19 academic staff (15 in person, 4 online)
Satisfaction —

22 Oct 2026
E3.2 Workshop in Egypt
CITL, AASTMT
47
Satisfaction **4.57 / 5**

22–23 Oct 2026
E3.1 Workshop in Tunisia
LEAD-MENA Hub, ISAMK, Kairouan
29 (day 1), 36 (day 2)
Satisfaction **4.21 / 5**

26–27 Oct 2026
E3.3 Joint online workshop (Pack2Pack)
Google Meet
86
Satisfaction **4.52 / 5**

Five days of training in Thessaloniki

The International Hellenic University hosted academic staff from the University of Kairouan, the University of La Manouba, AASTMT and Badr University for an intensive five-day programme of about 42 hours. Each day combined lectures, laboratory sessions and teamwork:

1. Introduction to packaging and logistics, with international standards (ISO, ISTA, ASTM)
2. Smart packaging, brand protection and the 5S AI matrix
3. Sustainable packaging and eco-design, from life-cycle assessment to EU regulation
4. Printing, finishing and 3D prototyping
5. Logistics 4.0/5.0 and an integrated capstone project presented to the group

The full training package is published as deliverable D4.1, Capacity-Building Workshop Materials, and will be extended by online training modules (E4.2).



Training in Thessaloniki

Labour market workshops in Egypt, Tunisia and online



AASTMT • 22 October

Egypt

Egypt. At the College of International Transport and Logistics of AASTMT, Assoc. Prof. Ahmed Hussein Mahmoud Ali and Assoc. Prof. Mahmoud Ramadan Barakat led sessions on packaging in logistics: standards, traceability, brand protection, Logistics 4.0 and circular logistics. All 47 participants rated every statement 4 or 5, and 91.5% want to join follow-up activities.



ISAMK • 22–23 October

Tunisia

Tunisia. "From 3D Modelling to 3D Printing: Digital Fabrication for Packaging Applications" put the printers of the LEAD-MENA Hub at ISAMK to work. Day 1 trained academic staff and students; day 2 opened the hub to artisans, entrepreneurs, industry and professional associations. 84.8% of respondents expect to use what they learned within six months.



Pack2Pack • 26–27 October

Online

Online. The joint Pack2Pack workshop gathered 86 participants, mostly from Egypt and Tunisia. Prof. Dimitrios Folinas and Assist. Prof. Nikolaos Kladovasilakis (IHU) spoke on sustainable packaging and 3D prototyping; Dr. Mahmoud El-Feky and Dr. George Nobar on packaging design for logistics and anti-counterfeiting. Participants asked for compliance, technical regulation and market access to be built into teaching.

What comes next. Partners will share the workshop materials, run a longer-term follow-up survey and build a Tunisia–Egypt packaging network. The results feed directly into curriculum alignment (T3.3) and the industry-academia collaboration framework (T3.5).



ISAMK • 22–23 October



ISAMK • 22–23 October



ISAMK • 22–23 October

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Organised by ESSTED on behalf of the University of La Manouba, the forum (event E2.2) was held under the theme Empowering Innovation through Education. Its aim was to make the university a catalyst for innovation by strengthening links between higher education, research and the socio-economic world.

The forum confirmed that a university's mission goes beyond passing on knowledge: it is also to bring people together, connect them and act, creating value for students, partners and society. Warm thanks go to all partners, speakers and participants for their trust and commitment.

- 75 participants from universities, industry, brands, professional organisations, public institutions, associations and the innovation ecosystem
- 60 minutes of strategic dialogue on the challenges of packaging design in Tunisia and on collaboration between academia and socio-economic actors
- 10 partnership agreements signed, opening the way to lasting cooperation in innovation and knowledge transfer

"Great transformations are not born from isolated ideas, but from the alliances that bring them to life."

Project progress

Milestones **75 %**

12 of 16 achieved · 4 remaining

Deliverables **50 %**

8 of 16 submitted · 8 remaining

The contracting of the external evaluator (MS14) is under way.

Coming up

The next six months focus on online training and the opening of the hubs.

Online consortium meetings · first Tuesday of the month, 11:00 Tunis time

1 December 2026 · **5 January** 2027 · **2 February** 2027 · **2 March** 2027 · **6 April** 2027

June 2027 Mid-term review · Florence

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Project Partners

- **UNIK** – UNIVERSITE DE KAIROUAN – Tunisia
- **UMA** – UNIVERSITE DE LA MANOUBA – Tunisia
- **AASTMT** – ARAB ACADEMY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MARITIME TRANSPORT – Egypt
- **BADR** – BADR UNIVERSITY – Egypt
- **UNIFI** – UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI FIRENZE – ITALY
- **IHU** – DIETHNES PANEPISTIMIO ELLADOS – Greece
- **CCK** – CENTRE DE CALCUL EL-KHAWARIZMI – Tunisia