



Virtual Launch Conference of  
"CLUSTER – advanCing youth and women social  
inclUSion in The MEditerRanean"

Capitalisation Project within the framework of the ENI CBC Med Programme  
(C\_A.3.1\_0014)

16 November 2021

Online Via Zoom

10.00 – 12.00hrs CET

## BACKGROUND

The economic hardships following the COVID-19 pandemic have heavily hit employment opportunities in the Euro-Mediterranean region, raising numbers of citizens at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and hurting young people more than other age groups. Moreover, demand-supply skills mismatch is a key factor behind high unemployment and changing labour market demands highlight the growing importance of reskilling and upskilling of youth and women, together with diversifying and investing in sustainable economy sectors to better cope with future economic and climate crises.

Against this background, the [CLUSTER](#) capitalisation project, funded under the EU's ENI CBC Med Programme, aims to create a supportive environment for youth/women employment schemes, by equipping young NEETs, in particular women, with employability skills in four sustainable economy sectors, and promoting long-lasting partnerships between TVET institutions, the private sector and social economy actors, while raising awareness of public authorities and policy-makers. The IEMed acts as the

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Lead Beneficiary of CLUSTER which is implemented through a consortium of partners from Italy, Cyprus, France, Jordan, Palestine and Tunisia.

The CLUSTER Launch Conference is a high-level event strengthening networking and dialogue among relevant stakeholders, as a step towards the creation of a supportive regional environment for the employment of NEETs. With this in mind, and on the occasion of the first annual celebration of the Day of the Mediterranean by the UfM, it will consist of two panels with small interventions (5 minutes each) and an open discussion.

## AGENDA

### 10.00 – 10.15 **OPENING SESSION**

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Senén Florensa Palau, Executive President of the IEMed.

Keynote Address

Joumana Sweiss, Programme Officer at ENI CBC Med, Branch office for the Western Mediterranean, Valencia.

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10.15 – 11.05 **FIRST PANEL**

Youth labour market impact of the COVID-19 crisis along with gender disparities: towards an integrated and multi-dimensional employment scheme

#### Panellists

**Gemma Aubarell Solduga**, Head of Mediterranean Relations and European Networks Service, Directorate General for European and Mediterranean Affairs, Government of Catalonia:

“MedCat 2030: Towards an inclusive Mediterranean”

**Vito Intini**, Regional Lead Economist and Inclusive Growth Team Leader, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Arab region:

“Some critical aspects on youth and women’s labour markets for post-pandemic recovery”

**Anna Dorangricchia**, Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Expert, Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM):

“Women economic inclusion the region: a key (missing) target of the recovery policies?”

**Johannes Laepple**, German Development Cooperation (GIZ) Representative to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM):

“Unpacking GIZ’s integrated approach to employment promotion in the region”

**Yeganeh Forouheshfar**, Researcher, Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA):

“COVID-19 and sustainable entrepreneurship in the Southern Mediterranean region”

**Imen Ouardani**, Vice-Mayor of Sousse and Head of Partnerships of DarESS Tunisia, iesMed:

“Blue solidarity economy for new jobs in the Mediterranean”

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11.05 – 12.00 **SECOND PANEL**

Addressing labour demand-supply mismatch through sustainable economy sectors by reskilling and upskilling youth and women

#### Panellists

**Emmanuelle Roure**, Neighbourhood Coordinator, International Relations Unit, Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission (DG EMPL):

“EU sectoral policy dialogue on employment and social affairs in the region”

**Gaëlle Ferrant**, Economist and Gender Specialist, Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

“Developing girls’ digital skills for an inclusive economic recovery in Southern Mediterranean countries”

**Mounir Ghribi**, Director of International Cooperation, Communication, Skills Development and Research Promotion, National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics (OGS):

“Reinforcing the innovation-employability nexus in the Mediterranean: the BlueSkills project”

**Magali Outters**, Team Leader Policy Area, Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC – UNEP/MAP):

“Contribution from the SwitchMed initiative supporting the switch to circular economy in the Mediterranean”

**Cristina Mereuta**, Senior Human Capital Development Expert, Coordinator for Active Labour Market Policies, European Training Foundation (ETF):

“New opportunities and key policy implications of skills mismatch and activation challenges in SEMED countries”

#### Moderator of two Panels

Karina Melkonian, CLUSTER Project Manager, IEMed.

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## BIOS OF SPEAKERS (alphabetical order)



**Gemma Aubarell Solduga** is Head of Mediterranean Relations and European Networks Service, Directorate General for European and Mediterranean Affairs, Government of Catalonia, from which the MedCat 2030 Mediterranean Strategy is promoted. She is also a Professor at the Faculty of International Relations and Communication of the URL and Member of the GRITIM-UPF Migration Research Group and Chair of the Horizon 2020 Ethics Committee on TransGang Youth. She has been Director of the Department of Programs at the IEMed and Director of the Programs and Networks Unit of the Anna Lindh Foundation (Alexandria, Egypt) until 2016.



**Anna Dorangricchia**, as Gender Expert at Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat, works on gender data monitoring, women economic empowerment and women entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean Region. She has a long-lasting experience as Senior expert in programming, monitoring and evaluation under the framework of European Neighbourhood Instrument for MENA Regio, in the areas of social inclusion and economic development with a specific focus on women and youth.



**Gaëlle Ferrant** is an economist and gender specialist coordinating the gender programme of the OECD Global Relations Secretariat, Middle East and Africa Division. In this capacity, Gaëlle manages the MENA-OECD Women's Economic Empowerment Forum (WEEF) and leads the Gender Projects of the OCDE Country Programmes -notably in Morocco and Egypt-, including policy-oriented analysis, policy dialogue and gender data capacity building. Gaëlle joined the OECD in 2013 as economist. In 2013-2017, she was responsible for the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) and its country studies, and led the quantitative research of the OECD Development Centre on gender and development issues. In 2018-2020, Gaëlle was the OECD Development Centre's Gender Programme coordinator. In this capacity, she supervised the staff and consultants working as part of the gender team, as well as on the OECD horizontal Gender Policy Dialogue on Women's Economic Empowerment, managed donor relations with particular attention to fundraising, while continuing leading SIGI analyses.

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**Senén Florensa Palau** is the President of the Executive Committee of the IEMed, Chair of EuroMeSCo General Assembly, and director of the quarterly afkar/ideas and of the IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook. He was Ambassador Permanent Representative of Spain to United Nations and other International Organizations in Vienna; Consul General of Spain in Rome; President of the ELEC; Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs of the Government of Catalonia; Director general of the IEMed; Spanish Ambassador to Tunisia; General Director of the ICMAMPD of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Spanish Secretary of the Spanish-Moroccan Averroes Committee; Spanish Consul General in Berlin; Member of the Organizing Committee of the Barcelona Olympic Games COOB'92; Secretary-General of the departments of Trade, Consumption and Tourism and of Territorial Policy and Public Works of the Government of Catalonia; First Secretary of the Spanish Embassy at UNESCO; Director of the Technical Office of the Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana; Advisory member of the Office of the President of the Spanish Government (1979-1982). He is a member of the Board of Trustees and of the Governing Board of the Universidad Antonio de Nebrija in Madrid.



**Yeganeh Forouheshfar** is an economist and a researcher at The Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association, she holds a PhD in economics from Université Paris-Dauphine. Her research interests are entrepreneurship, digitalization, economic modelling, social protection, and demographic transition. She is also a research affiliate at DIAL and a member of EMNES research network. Yeganeh has published in peer review journals and contributed to scientific publications. She is involved with CREAT4MED and INVESTMED projects and in charge of mapping of the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) as well as blue and green economy in the Southern Mediterranean countries.



**Mounir Ghribi** is the Director of International Cooperation and Research Promotion (ICAP) at OGS. Director of advanced master in Sustainable Blue Growth jointly organized by OGS and the University of Trieste. Coordinator of the BlueSkills project for developing skills in the Blue Economy sector in the Mediterranean, a project labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Professor of Sustainable Development and Science Diplomacy at EUCLID Intergovernmental University. He is Former United Nations officer, in-charge of capacity building and fellowship programme at ICS-UNIDO. Member of the Union for the Mediterranean advisory board on Mediterranean for Jobs initiative. He represents Italy in various international initiatives, namely, the

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intergovernmental forum for the Western Mediterranean (5+5 Dialogue) for Research, Innovation and Higher Education and the G7 future of the seas and oceans and he coordinates the internationalization of the national Blue Italian Growth (BIG) cluster.



**Vito Intini** is the Regional Lead Economist and Inclusive Growth Team Leader at UNDP in the Arab region. Prior to this position, he was the Senior Macroeconomic Adviser at DESA in NY, where he worked on the global macroeconomic forecasting model, socioeconomic assessments of large infrastructure projects, quantitative methods to measure SDG interactions and prioritization, SDG costing and budgeting, and co-led the preparation of the UN guidance on Economic Transformation, among other activities. Before DESA, Vito worked at UNCDF

where he led the global program on Municipal Finance. Earlier on, he was the Chief of the Economic Governance Section at ESCWA in Beirut where he led a number of publications and capacity building programs. Vito was also a Private and Financial Sector Specialist at the World Bank in the Balkan region. He also worked for OECD, OSCE, EU and the academia.



**Johannes Laepple** currently heads the GIZ Project “Support to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) on Employment and Trade” in Barcelona. He has 15 years of professional experience in EU policy and development cooperation. Prior to his work at GIZ, he worked as a political advisor in the European Parliament and as Head of Office to the Chairman of the European Parliament’s Committee on International Trade. He holds degrees in Political Science and Governance and Development Policy. He also holds an MPA from Harvard University.



**Karina Melkonian** is CLUSTER Project Manager. She coordinates the technical, financial and administrative management of the project in close coordination with the project team and partners. Previously, as part of her role as EuroMeSCo Officer at the IEMed, she coordinated the drafting, peer review and editing processes leading to the EuroMeSCo publications and was also responsible for the activities related to the Euromed Young Researchers Lab. Before joining the IEMed, she coordinated for two years the Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration at the Department of Political and Social

Sciences at Universitat Pompeu Fabra. She also worked for three years at the Danish Refugee Council, the first NGO to intervene in the Syrian Crisis in Lebanon, and at the Aga Khan Development Network, as part of the Government of Canada’s Refugee Resettlement Program.

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**Cristina Mereuta** joined, in 2013, the European Training Foundation (ETF), agency of the European Union in charge with supporting human capital development in the EU Neighbourhood and Central Asia, where she has been working as a Labour Market Specialist and Senior Human Capital Development Expert on issues related to the skills anticipation and matching systems, methodological developments in the area of skills demand and supply, measurement of skills mismatches, as well as skills for smart specialisation. She is involved in ETF’s initiatives on upskilling and reskilling through active labour market measures, innovation and learning activities focused on the role of employment services, development of career guidance systems and youth employability.



**Imen Ouardani** is the current Vice-mayor of Sousse and the president of its local gender equality commission. She acts as the city's focal point in inter-city cooperation projects such as MC2CM (City to City Migration in the Mediterranean). She has recently joined iesMed, the European cooperative platform to boost the Mediterranean social economy, as Head of partnerships of DarESS Tunisia and as executive vice-president of the MedEBS Sousse 2021 forum. She has a professional background in the pharmaceutical industry and received her PhD in Biology in 2017, from the University of Santiago de Compostela, focusing on epidemiological analysis and genetic variability of enteric viruses. In addition, she regularly speaks at conferences of UCLG, MedCities and other international networks of local administrations.



**Magali Outters** is an Engineer in “Materials: Economics and Environment” from the University of Troyes (France). She also holds a Master of Industrial Ecology and a Post-graduate degree on International development. She has a significant expertise in sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and circular economy in the Mediterranean region with 15 years advocating for this approach and by being actively involved in numerous capacity building projects, technical studies, developing specific tools and pilot initiatives with governments, private sector organizations and CSOs. She is currently coordinating the Policy Area for SCP/RAC, a Regional Centre of the UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan and of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). The SCP/RAC Policy Area is currently supporting Mediterranean countries in the prevention of land-based sources of marine litter, plastic pollution and toxic chemicals. Likewise, it also works on an enabling environment for the development of green and circular businesses in the Mediterranean.

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**Emmanuelle Roure** works as Neighbourhood Team Leader in the International Affairs Unit of the Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission. The Neighbourhood team supports the sectoral cooperation on employment, labour and social policies with the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood partners at bilateral and regional levels (i.e. Union for the Mediterranean, Eastern Partnership). She has worked in the European Commission for more than 20 years, focusing mainly on external relations. She obtained Master degrees in Political Sciences and European Law at Sciences-Po Paris and College of Europe.



**Joumana Sweiss** has over 10 years of working experience in EU policies and particularly in euro-Mediterranean relationships. After a short experience at DG ECHO at the European Commission, she started her career in managing EU projects related to research and innovation and focusing on cooperation with Arabic countries. Since mid-2017, she works at the ENI CBC MED as programme officer, following up on projects especially those dealing with social inclusion and fight against poverty. She is fluent in Arabic, French, English and Spanish and she will be following up on CLUSTER at communication level.

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