



INVESTMED

InNoVative Sustainable sTart-ups for the MEDiterranean

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INVESTMED **ABOUT**

MSMEs in the Mediterranean region face important challenges in terms of sustainability, capacity to innovate, competitiveness and internationalisation. These challenges call for new solutions in order for MSMEs to maintain their existence and to enhance growth. Making the economy greener, developing natural assets and enhancing innovation and creativity can provide economic, knowledge-based and environmental benefits to the Mediterranean region.

INVESTMED addresses economic and environmental challenges, supporting sustainable, creative and innovative business opportunities for young people and women in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia. INVESTMED is set to benefit MSMEs via training, coaching and sub-granting. It will also provide support for public authorities by enhancing their capacities to encourage and to facilitate MSME access to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

INVESTMED has a duration of 30 months, with a total budget of €3.8 Million, of which €3.4 Million (90%) is funded by ENI CBC MED

INVESTMED OBJECTIVE

INVESTMED aims to support the development of sustainable entrepreneurship and business initiatives, by creating a strong business environment and by facilitating access to new markets, with the ultimate goal of generating increased economic opportunities and jobs for young people and women in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia.

INVESTMED produces tangible and long-lasting impacts at local and regional levels via:

01

Boosting sustainability and creativity in the Mediterranean Region

02

Encouraging equity-providing business opportunities for women and young entrepreneurs

03

Incentivising innovation-encouraging public authorities to facilitate access to IPR

04

Enhancing competitiveness by bridging access to markets and internationalisation



INVESTMED BENEFICIARIES

INVESTMED benefits Mediterranean Business Support Organisations (BSOs) and their network of enterprises, MSMEs, and start-ups. MSMEs and start-ups benefit from training, coaching and sub-granting to grow and to become sustainable. Markets and clusters of companies aiming to introduce sustainable and creative services in their value chain, can also benefit from this action.

INVESTMED NEWS & DEVELOPMENTS

Sustainable Business Management training course

7 cycles of trainees have now been inaugurated into the INVESTMED Sustainable Business Management (SBM) training programme, which aims to positively impact start-ups and Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in the green economy sector, the blue economy sector, and cultural and creative industries.

The objective of the training is to create a supportive environment for sustainable businesses in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia in order to increase the share of cross-border MSMEs and start-ups, with a particular focus on those managed by young people and women.



Mona Ramadan, from Lebanon, is one of the successfully graduated trainees. She has a Masters degree in applied microbiology and an MBA. "My passion towards entrepreneurship and environment drove me to enroll in the INVESTMED project," she explained. "The training program gave me the chance to enhance my knowledge about climate change, sustainability and sustainable development goals. In addition, it gave me an opportunity to meet new colleagues, exchange experience, and work towards the same goals. I learned that every act towards saving our planet counts and the solution starts with small acts that can compile to change the world."

The training programme offers:

- Skills development
- Opportunities for cross-border relations
- Individual coaching and mentoring for managers
- Meeting with potential investors
- The chance to apply for an INVESTMED subgrant

The programme is delivered by LUMSA University (Italy) and features teaching and research staff from LUMSA as well as other top universities, research institutes and international organisations.



Mai Darwish, from Egypt, also successfully completed the training course, and is now employed by INVESTMED partner CEEBA. The experience has been life-changing for her, not only for her professional development, but for personal growth too.

"I used to be very afraid of failure and always felt that whatever I did wasn't enough. With the pandemic, I had time to learn more, read more, and reflect a lot more."

Mai is particularly grateful for meeting her current mentor and manager at CEEBA, Marion Kussman. "With someone to support you and believe in you, you can really blossom and exceed expectations. Agnes made our online sessions really fun, very relevant to our daily work, and was always supportive in helping us to enhance our skills, sharing further information and development resources in the topics I was particularly interested in."



Mai with mentor and manager Marion Kussman, from CEEBA, and INVESTMED Project Manager at IEMed, Cristina Valero. The training course is made up of tutoring sessions, online classes, and groupwork, as well as a community-building platform that brings together trainees from all cycles, allowing them to share material and further resources, get to know aspiring entrepreneurs from across the region, discuss and debate relevant issues with experts and lecturers from the course, and build their professional networks.

"The discussions among trainees were very enriching," said Mai. "You find out that the three different countries are very alike in some respects, and facing the same issues. Everywhere you have justice and injustice, environmental disruption, people calling for or starting to implement innovative solutions to solve problems, create jobs, develop and be developed. We are still in touch on the INVESTMED community platform, and I am looking forward to getting to know entrepreneurs and smart minds from all cycles of the training."

Not only has Mai learnt more about the blue economy, particularly in the context of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, but she's also thought more about what it means to be an ongoing learner, and how professional development does not have to come at the cost of or in spite of human emotions.

"I really feel part of the INVESTMED family," she said. "The whole community has made me feel like I belong, and it's full of ideas and kindness. I plan to keep on developing my skills and using my current work opportunities with women and young entrepreneurs, to empower them like I have been empowered."



Sub-granting

INVESTMED offers direct financial support to both Business Support Organisations (BSOs) and entrepreneurs and small businesses in target countries.

A call was launched in November 2021 for proposals to develop incubation and acceleration programmes for entrepreneurs and start-ups in key sectors in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia.

17 applications were received across the three target countries, which were evaluated by a committee made up of INVESTMED partner representatives. The successful applicants are:

Egypt: ICEALEX

Lebanon: Fondation Diane

Tunisia: Association Westerwelle Foundation



The funding will be used to develop, launch and implement programmes to support selected entrepreneurs in the green economy, blue economy, and cultural and creative industries to realise their business goals.

A call was also launched for entrepreneurs and start-ups, to receive funding to implement business proposals to develop new strategies, launch new products or services, or internationalise and reach new markets.

The top applications from each country, as assessed by expert external evaluators, were invited to pitch their business idea to an international panel of judges composed of project partners and local and European experts.

Each country held a two-day pitching event, hosted by INVESTMED partners Beyond Group (Lebanon), CEEBA (Egypt) and BUSINESSMED (Tunisia). A total of 65 shortlisted start-ups and MSMEs across the three countries competed for grants of up to €20,000, as well as the grant, personalized support and capacity-building programmes delivered by the INVESTMED incubator in their country.



Opening the event in Tunisia, Mrs Jihen Boutiba , General Director of INVESTMED's lead partner BUSINESSMED, mentioned: "Our world is facing major challenges: generalized economic slowdown, health and environmental crises, as well as difficult access to markets, especially for young people... our objective today is not only to select up to 14 initiatives to benefit from funding and coaching, but above all to create a strong and ambitious INVESTMED community that we will seek to maintain, develop and integrate within the ENI CBC MED network."

All three pitch events heard an impressive array of creative and innovative business proposals, and provided a chance for young, aspiring entrepreneurs to meet and network with like-minded people from their own sector and others. Stay tuned for the announcement of the winners!

Intellectual Property Rights Guidebook published

To complement its Sustainable Business Management training programme, INVESTMED has published an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Guidebook, available in English, French and Arabic.

IPR can be confusing and complicated - but they are also key to protecting and unlocking the economic potential of creativity and innovation, so it's important that entrepreneurs familiarise themselves what they are and how they can be protected. The Guidebook aims to guide aspiring entrepreneurs through the basics of intellectual property and the legal frameworks protecting it globally, including IPR treaties and conventions, and nationally in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia.



Clear, comprehensive, and illustrated with real-life case studies, the INVESTMED IPR Guidebook explains the difference between trademarks, copyrights and patents, what kind of protection is best for different innovations like logos, sound recordings or computer software, what laws apply to intellectual property in each country, and how to apply or oppose an application. In the upcoming months, awareness campaigns and events will be designed and launched to ensure the maximum possible dissemination of this information and its value for current and aspiring entrepreneurs. The Guidebook can be downloaded in English, French or Arabic.





Events

The 4th INVESTMED Steering Committee meeting was held on Thursday 26th May 2022, in a hybrid format in Barcelona and online. Project partners gathered to review the progress achieved so far, and agree steps forward to continue momentum to achieving overall goals.



The meeting was opened by Vincent Ernoux, Coordinator of the ENI CBC Med Programme, which provides funding to INVESTMED. He commended the consortium on their strong cooperation across both shores of the Mediterranean, and noted the positive steps that have been made to support new, sustainable business opportunities for young people and women in the South Mediterranean.

Partners discussed project developments and achievements, and began collaboration on events to kick off the sub-granted projects, as well as advocacy and policy events scheduled to take place in the next months. There was renewed commitment from all present to work together towards sustainable business and economic growth and development in the Southern Mediterranean, with a special focus on young people and women.

INVESTMED PARTNERS

BUSINESSMED

Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises

Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises, Tunisia

Since its creation in 2002, BUSINESSMED has brought together the main business organizations of the Euro-Mediterranean area with the aim of promoting multilateral cooperation, attracting foreign investment and fostering social dialogue and socio-economic integration in the region. As the main representative of the private sector in the Mediterranean with its network of 22 Business Confederations and more than 800K public and private companies, BUSINESSMED, beyond its commercial vocation, contributes to laying the foundations for peace and prosperity in the region.



Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association, Spain

The Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA) is a Barcelona-based regional think-tank that serves as a leading independent and innovative policy research institution; a forum for debate on the political and socio-economic reforms in Mediterranean and Africa; and promoter of actions and initiatives that fulfil objectives of sustainability, inclusiveness, regional integration and prosperity.

IEMed.

European Institute of the Mediterranean

European Institute of the Mediterranean, Spain

The European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), is a consortium comprising the Catalan Government, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation and the Barcelona City Council. Adopting a clear role as a think tank specialised in Mediterranean relations based on a multidisciplinary and networking approach, the IEMed encourages analysis, understanding and cooperation through the organisation of seminars, research projects, debates, conferences and publications, in addition to a broad cultural programme.



**beyond
GROUP**

Beyond Group, Lebanon

Beyond Group brings together three specialized, change-driven practices: Public Policy & Management, Organizational Learning & Development, and Innovation & Technology Integration to develop agile solutions that respond to local needs while capitalizing on global knowledge and partnerships. Beyond Group supports governments, donors and multilateral agencies, civil society organizations, and communities through journeys of learning, innovation, and transformation as they achieve sustainable impact within their own communities and around the world.



Institute of
Entrepreneurship
Development

Institute of Entrepreneurship Development, Greece

Established in 2005, Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (IED) is a fast-growing Center of Excellence in European Entrepreneurship. As a state-of-the-art international organization, IED promotes change for the better, through entrepreneurial and innovative actions and supports every entrepreneurial venture across Europe. With the use of our EU partner network and our experience in diverse EU funded research programmes focused on entrepreneurship, we have created a Knowledge Hub tailor-made to cover the needs of the entrepreneurial world, in the European area.



LUMSA
UNIVERSITÀ

Libera Università Maria SS. Assunta, Italy

Libera Università Maria Ss. Assunta (LUMSA) is a highly ranked Italian Non-State University, principally located in Rome and Palermo, with over 7,000 students (10% international) and 500 teaching, research and administrative staff. It offers bachelor's and master's degree programs in the human sciences, education and communication sciences, psychology, data science, law, business administration and banking, economics, political sciences and modern languages. LUMSA awards PhD degrees in economics, social policies, law, developmental psychopathology and education.



Rumundu Social Promotion Association, Italy

Rumundu is a Green Incubator based in Sardinia. Through advanced training courses, we help grow conscious startups and leaders who want to help make a sustainable change for the planet. We strategically support companies, organisations and public administrations to develop projects with high economic and social value and low environmental impact, through interventions based on circular economy models. We want to train responsible leaders by giving them the tools to be promoters of a change. that is necessary today and accompany them in the development of sustainable projects.



Confederation of Egyptian European Business Associations, Egypt

CEEBA, the Confederation of Egyptian-European Business Associations was established to create one powerful national pan European network to advocate on behalf of Egyptian Business for market access to the EU and to promote EU-Egyptian Trade and Investment. CEEBA advocates on behalf of Egyptian Businesses for market access to the EU, promotes EU-Egyptian trade and investment, coordinates the activities of the European chambers and business associations and acts on behalf of non-existent bilateral chambers for EU member states.



Spanish Chamber of Commerce, Spain

The Chamber of Spain is a public body ruled by Law 4/2014 and that represents the general interest of the Spanish companies and entrepreneurs acting in the commerce, industry, services and navigation sectors. The Chamber of Spain coordinates 85 local Chambers in the country, and provides advice, support services and training activities to Spanish companies, entrepreneurs and students.



Associated Partners





INVESTMED CONTACT



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