ASCAM-E
2021 ACTION PLAN
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1. Introduction

As every year, ASCAME presents its Action Plan for the coming one. A year, 2021, which will be remembered as the year of the huge post COVID-19 crisis and a progressive but slow economic recovery. The coronavirus pandemic has left a large number of human victims in its wake and has deeply affected many key economic sectors, leading to high levels of unemployment, business bankruptcies and leaving many families on the poverty line.

For this reason, the ASCAME 2021 Action Plan is different this time. It is fully adapted to the post COVID-19 situation, with the aim of reviving the different economies composing the Mediterranean basin by launching several initiatives and activities.

This new era requires new approaches and urgent measures to help counteract the negative consequences of a devastating 2020. As a matter of fact, this Plan is the result of a high adaptability capacity to lay the foundations for a new Mediterranean economy. ASCAME, from a regional perspective, will make available to its members and the Mediterranean private sector a series of events, projects, institutional meetings and other initiatives to contribute to their recovery.

ASCAME’s 2021 Action Plan focuses on the implementation of the ‘Recovery Plan and a New Economic Model for the Mediterranean’ with several activities aimed at enhancing the region's recovery and its promotion in these difficult times. Among others, some initiatives we will be developing are the #MedaMeetings, which explore business opportunities in the Mediterranean, the Mediterranean Digital Live platform, which offers an online platform for business, as well as several meeting with international stakeholders with the objective of exploring opportunities for the region.

Furthermore, as on previous occasions, the 2021 Action Plan executes the ‘ASCAME 2018-2022 Strategic Plan’, with the usual and also innovative events of the Association, as well as the numerous activities of the international cooperation projects of the ASCAME network. In this regard, a noteworthy and promising initiative is that of promoting the Mediterranean beyond the region, and strengthening ties with other regions and continents.

Now is the time to act. Together we will be stronger to defeat the economic pandemic.
2. ASCAME 2021 Events Plan

1st Mediterranean Meetings (MedaMeetings) - Exploring Mediterranean Markets

- A series of conferences and business meetings within the framework of ASCAME’s Recovery and New Development Plan, through the Mediterranean Digital Live Platform
- February – December 2021 – Barcelona, Spain
- Organisers: ASCAME, Barcelona Chamber of Commerce and other partners

- Business Opportunities in the Mediterranean Region - Exploring Mediterranean Markets

  Mediterranean North Africa Countries Meeting – 25 February –
  Mediterranean South Europe Countries Meeting – 28 April –
  Mediterranean Middle East Countries Meeting – 30 June –

- Business Opportunities between the Mediterranean and the world - Promoting Mediterranean Markets
Time to act: stronger together

- Mediterranean - Brazil Economic Forum – 27 May –
- Mediterranean - Gulf Region Economic Forum – End September –
- Mediterranean - USA Economic Forum – End October –
- Mediterranean - Africa Sub-Saharan Economic Forum – November, MedaWeek Barcelona 2021 –

➤ Sectoral and multi-sectoral B2B’s

- Sectoral and multi-sectoral B2B’s (Mediterranean Digital Live Platform)

5th Industry Week: From Needs to Solutions

- 23-26 March 2021 – Barcelona, Spain
- Organisers: ASCAME, Barcelona Chamber of Commerce and other partners

2nd Mediterranean Real Estate Forum: The Next Resetting

- 10 June 2021 – Barcelona, Spain
- Organisers: ASCAME, Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, Consorci de la Zona Franca de Barcelona, FIABCI

B4PLANET: Planet in Need, Business in action. (Global platform for critical sustainable solutions)

- 25-27 May 2021 – Barcelona, Spain
- Organisers: Fira de Barcelona with the collaboration of ASCAME

2nd Barcelona New Economic Week (BNEW)

- 5-8 October 2021 – Barcelona, Spain
- Organisers: ASCAME, Barcelona Chamber of Commerce and other partners

Mediterranean Logistics and Transports Summit (MedaLogistics Summit)*

- 5-8 October 2021 – Barcelona, Spain
- Organisers: ASCAME, Barcelona Chamber of Commerce and other partners
- *To be held in the framework of the 2nd Barcelona New Economic Week (BNEW)

- 18th Mediterranean Transports and Logistics Forum
- 13th Mediterranean Ports and Shipping Summit
- 1st Africa Logistics Meeting
15th Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders (MedaWeek Barcelona 2021) – ‘A Future in Common’

- 17 – 19 November 2021 – Barcelona, Spain
- Organisers: ASCAME, Barcelona Chamber of Commerce and other partners

18th New Africa Business Development Forum
5th Mediterranean Hotel & Hospitality Forum
9th Mediterranean Green & Renewable Energy Summit:
  - Keynote Speeches
  - 10th Meda Cities Forum
  - 5th Meda Solar & Wind Energy Forum
  - 1st MedaTalk ‘Mediterranean Hydrogen’
  - 2nd MedaTalk ‘Mediterranean Sustainable Agro-Business’

2nd Mediterranean Healthcare Forum
1st Mediterranean Audiovisual & Creative Industries Forum
3rd Mediterranean Social Economy Forum
1st Mediterranean Meeting of Agriculture and Food
6th Mediterranean Islamic Finance Forum
13th Mediterranean Women Entrepreneurship Forum
MEDATALK – 1st Mediterranean Cruise Industry Conference
MEDATALK – 1st Mediterranean Sport Industry Conference

10th Mediterranean Economic City Forum (MedaCity)

- Date to be confirmed – Rijeka, Croatia
- Organisers: Croatian Chamber of Economy – Rijeka County Chamber with the collaboration of ASCAME

2nd Adria4Blue – Blue Economy Forum

- Date to be confirmed – Rijeka, Croatia
Time to act: stronger together

- Organisers: Croatian Chamber of Economy – Rijeka County Chamber with the collaboration of ASCAME

**Mediterranean Cosmetics Forum (MedCosmetics) - Morocco**

- Date to be confirmed – Rabat, Morocco
- Organisers: Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services of the Rabat region with the collaboration of ASCAME

**9th Mediterranean Tourism Forum (MediTour)**

- Date to be confirmed – Fes Meknes, Morocco / Oran, Argelia
- Organisers: ASCAME and Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services of the Fes Meknes region

**6th Mediterranean Finance Forum (MedaFinance)**

- Date to be confirmed – Cairo, Egypt
- Organisers: ASCAME and other partners

**5th International Egypt Investment Forum**

- Date to be confirmed – Cairo, Egypt
- Organisers: ASCAME, Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce (FEDCOC) and other partners

**International Conference: Rebuilding the Port of Beirut – Lebanon**

- 17 – 19 Nov – online
- Organisers: ASCAME, the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut & Mount Lebanon and other partners
- *To be held in the framework of MedaWeek 2021*
3. ASCAME 2021 Institutional Meetings Plan

![Conference Image]

**Bureau | March 2021**

**Executive Committee | April 2021**

**Executive Committee | November 2021**

**General Assembly | November 2021**
4. ASCAME 2021 International Cooperation Projects Plan

ASCAME and its network aim to support initiatives and projects conducted by the European Union, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) or any other institutional entity that offers chances to create opportunities in the Mediterranean region.

More than 80 ASCAME members are involved in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation projects adding strong value to the consortiums through their unique set of expertise and extensive networks in the Mediterranean region’s private sector. All of these projects presented in this “International Cooperation Projects Plan” section aim to serve as an instrument to tackle important elements on economic activation, green economy, energy efficiency, cultural heritage, innovation, investment, and technology. They offer great opportunities to take action towards the recovery of the region and to establish synergies with other members and networks of stakeholders.

The Joint Monitoring Committee, decision-making body of the ENI CBC Med Programme, has recently approved 22 projects under the call for strategic projects out of the 198 proposals submitted. ASCAME’s members are present in more than half of the approved projects as leaders, partners and/or associated partners, representing many Chambers of Commerce and other similar entities of the ASCAME’s network.

The Programme has now a pool of 63 projects, involving over 450 organisations from both shores of the Mediterranean, worth over €188 million (€169 million EU contribution). The ultimate goal of the Programme is to ensure enduring cooperation in the Mediterranean in order to make the region more competitive, innovative, inclusive and sustainable.

In this context, ASCAME is pleased to congratulate its members, who have once again shown their involvement and willingness to continue their work in the service of Mediterranean economic development.
MEDUSA - Development and promotion of Mediterranean sustainable adventure tourism

The overall objective of the MEDUSA project is to develop a competitive form of adventure tourism in the Mediterranean, which is based on environmental, social and economic sustainability values. Therefore, firstly MEDUSA aims to identify and valorise territorial assets for developing Adventure Tourism (AT) products, especially off-season, based on a thorough understanding of market demand drivers, supply and competitiveness variables. Secondly, to promote a multi-stakeholder engagement to capacity building and exchange of experiences and adopt strategic alliances that will formalize roles and responsibilities for AT destination stewardships. Finally, to implement pilot actions rolling out improved and new AT products, as well as develop and promote tourism packages through a cross-border marketing alliances to international source markets. More information about the project here.

Cross-border Seminar on Mediterranean Adventure Tourism
- 16ht of March – Amman, Jordan (online)
- Organised by Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association (JITOA)

Mid-Term Conference
- November – Beirut, Lebanon (online)
- Organised by Rene Moawad Foundation

MAIA-TAQA - Mobilizing new Areas of Investments and Together Aiming to increase Quality of life for All

The MAIA-TAQA project deals with the fact that in the Southern Mediterranean countries there is a growing need for Resource Efficiency (RE) services (consulting, engineering and operations) because of the pressure on the environment. Through the creation of real demonstration cases with local companies, MAIA-TAQA raises awareness among SMEs and policy-makers of innovation practices and policy instruments in the area of RE services. Furthermore, the established “Innovation One Stop-Shops” offering innovation support services will create an enabling environment for the development of the RE sector in the Southern Mediterranean countries. Finally, a SMEs network will pave the way for tackling the regulatory frameworks and trade barriers. More information about the project here.

Webinar MAIA-TAQA & ORGANIC ECOSYSTEM on innovation in energy efficiency and agriculture
- 19 January - Online

MAIA-TAQA Training Courses: SMEs, EPC companies, single professionals operating in the utilities/building sectors that will become a market operator and a provider of the innovative RE services (dates to be confirmed).
- February - April: ToT training by international partners only for local trainers in the three pilot countries: Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan. (Online)
- April - Demo Training (Online)
- April - Evaluation of demo training and participant feedback (Online)
- April - Design of Training orientation for RE services at the CCs (mentoring and orientation, online)
MoreThanAJob - Reinforcing social and solidarity economy for the unemployed, uneducated and refugees

The financial crisis in Europe, as well as the unstable financial and political situation in many Mediterranean Partner Countries, sorely tested the applied economic model. Furthermore, around 15 million persons (migrants and refugees) born in a third country currently live in the region and need to find a job or enter the education system. It has become apparent that new and credible alternatives to the mainstream economy are needed. These transformations in the economy and the society have brought increased attention to the social and solidarity economy (SSE) actors that have been capable of helping to turn the challenges into opportunities. Nevertheless, for the SSE initiatives to be efficient, effective collaboration with the public authorities is fundamental. MoreThanAJob will deliver and demonstrate a framework of best practices, previously identified and studied for the inclusion of the unemployed (including refugees and uneducated) in the work and education system. The framework is based on the collaboration of SSE actors and public authorities for delivering in a more effective way their services. This will be done through pilot sub-projects aiming to ensure a long-term impact and the creation of jobs. More information about the project here.

Training session for social and solidarity economy (SSE) actors participants: training sessions expected to be provided until February 2021

- Training session for SSE actors participants to provide them with knowledge and competencies to develop proposals for the subgrants: Call will open from March, till May 2021.
- Topic 1: Social Dialogue between Public Administrator (PA) officers and social and solidarity economy (SSE) actors.
- Topic 2: Coaching, Counseling, and Mentoring.

MEDSt@rts - Med microfinance support system for start-ups

Young people with promising business ideas abound in the Mediterranean region. However, young entrepreneurs encounter severe credit constraints and gathering enough money to start or scale up their enterprise is often impossible. MEDSt@rts wants to help young people jump that deterrent hurdle. To do so, the project will develop an innovative supporting model to facilitate access to funding for “non-bankable” people. It will target strongly committed young Mediterranean people with innovative business ideas, either in initial or consolidation stage. Scouting, training and funding will be the three main steps of MEDSt@rts’ approach, and, as a result, new MSMEs will be launched in each participating country and new jobs will be created. More information about the project here.

Call for the selection of 25 aspiring entrepreneurs

January – Cagliari, Italy: the 25 selected candidates will be involved in a path based on the following steps, with a further selection moment:

- Training (joint training program of business incubation, web seminars, mentoring service);
- Field training to improve skills, abilities and entrepreneurial aptitude;
- Financial advice;
Financial subsidy for an amount not exceeding € 10,000.

**MED PEARLS - The Mediterranean as an innovative, integral and unique destination for Slow Tourism initiatives**

Most models of tourism in the Mediterranean area are based on mass tourism and follow a fragmented vision of the region as a sum of different markets. Med Pearls aims at internationally positioning the Mediterranean as a unique and integral destination to experience the Med lifestyle through Slow Tourism (ST), inviting travellers to discover sustainably and responsibly new destinations while taking time to have direct contact with local communities. The project will deliver a set of 26 new ST products created by local Destination Management Companies (DMCs) and ICT enterprises thanks to financial and technical support called Product Development and Innovation Facilities. The idea is to create similar experiences based on the typology of products and themes agreed among partners, therefore, visitors will live similar experiences, of the same quality, in any of the 13 areas targeted by Med Pearls. The project will address both local and international markets, like the USA, Canada, Northern Europe, Russia or Asia, organising a comprehensive commercialisation and marketing strategy. More information about this project [here](#).

- **Training on Slow Tourism products development, marketing and promotion** (to be confirmed)
- **Marketing and visibility initiatives to promote the developed tourism products and destinations** (to be confirmed)
- **Action plan for the implementation of Slow Tourism strategies in pilot areas** (to be confirmed)

**MedArtSal - Sustainable management model for Mediterranean Artisanal Salinas**

Today salinas across the Mediterranean are suffering from environmental pressures and economic stress. Their products face strong competition from cheaper land-produced salt and from the world trade. To stay viable, salinas are confronted with the choice of closing, industrializing the production or changing the business orientation towards sustainable tourism and new artisanal products. This third option is the idea behind MedArtSal. The project will define a sustainable and adaptable management model for artisanal salinas including, among others, a marketing strategic plan and a biodiversity strategy. With this aim, MedArtSal project addresses both salinas managers and institutional policy-makers. On the one hand, salinas managers will receive up-to-date training on how an artisanal salina should be managed in order to remain competitive, especially by diversifying products. On the other hand, institutional policy-makers will help build the management model which will be further tested in two artisanal salinas in Spain and Tunisia. Finally, a network of Artisanal Mediterranean Salinas will be created to capitalize the project results in the long run. More information about the project [here](#).
**Demonstration projects on the diversification of salinas products/services carried out in Spain (La Esperanza) and Tunisia (Sidi Al-Hani) (to be confirmed)**

**Pilot actions for the development of new products/services in selected salinas (to be confirmed)**

**GREENinMED - Speeding up the MED SMEs' uptaking of eco-innovative solutions in energy and water management**

The hotel industry in the Mediterranean is one of the most important worldwide and continues to register significant growth. This success with local/international tourist comes with several environmental drawbacks such as the substantial consumption of water and energy. With the aim of helping hotels to stay competitive and improve at the same time their capacity of eco-innovation, GREENinMED project proposes an integrated approach for the development of new products and services addressed to the efficient use of water and energy and reduction in consumption by 10% in the hotel industry. The project will develop eco-innovative products such a seawater air conditioning, water and energy-saving devices for spa, garden irrigation and industrial cold generation. To reach this ambition, consulting services focusing on the identification of the eco-innovative products and services on and their adaptation to actual needs/contexts will be delivered to selected hotels. Furthermore, the purchase of new equipment to improve research and testing capacities of SMEs and the creation of spin-offs will be facilitated through sub-grants. More information about the project [here](#).

**Call for the innovation vouchers (advisory and support services to test or implement innovation solutions, in order to improve the efficiency and efficacy of water and electricity management)**

- April-May

**ORGANIC ECOSYSTEM - Boosting cross border Organic Ecosystem through enhancing agro-food alliances**

Organic agriculture represents a solution to achieve food safety and security and environmental sustainability that account for joint challenges, consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals. However, organic agriculture is still relatively underdeveloped in Mediterranean countries. Main shared challenges are inconsistent or lacking support policies from national/local governments, low innovation capacities, limited knowledge of sustainable farming practices, and a weak value chain where MSMEs operate in a disaggregated way. ORGANIC ECOSYSTEM project aims at reducing these obstacles and make the MSMEs operating in organic agriculture more competitive and better integrated. The project intends to establish a cross-border agro-food ecosystem, which will set the ground for the development of the Mediterranean whole organic sector. This will be encouraged through new business alliances, creation of innovative value chains, and specialized support provided to MSMEs to increase the quality and the commercialization of products and their capacities to access to new markets. More information about the project [here](#).

**Webinar MAIA-TAQA & Organic Ecosystem on innovation in energy efficiency and agriculture**

- 19 January – Online
- Organised by ASCAME
Event among stakeholder and signatories of the ORGANIC ECOSYSTEM Executive Agreement in the Mediterranean to discuss new strategic lines of action

- 9th of February
- Organised by the Ministry of Agriculture of Jordan

Networking event among projects and initiatives working on organic agriculture in the Mediterranean region

- February (specific date to be confirmed)
- Organised by the Ministry of Agriculture of Jordan

National training course (10 days) for the 4-5 selected MSME’s to provide them tools and methods aimed at boosting their organic production

- April (specific date to be confirmed)
- Organised by the project consortium in Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Greece and Italy

MSMEs receiving consultancy services to facilitate their entry in innovative organic value chains and participating in international agro-food fairs

- From April 2021 until December 2022
- Organised by the project consortium in Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Greece and Italy

IPMED - IP Capacities for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the MEDiterranean Region

A solid bond between Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), research and innovation constitutes a fundamental pillar for knowledge-based societies. Crucial for the development and competitiveness of start-ups, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and entrepreneurs, IPR is, however, the element of the axis most often unknown or overlooked by these groups in business decision-making both in Europe and beyond. Recent studies on firm competitiveness and economic performance highlight that only 9% of SMEs make use of IPR in Europe (against 40% of large companies). Yet small firms owning IPR perform better than those that do not (increased reputation, strengthening of long-term business prospects and increased turnover). In the Euro-Mediterranean area, changing this pattern of low interest/access to IPR is critical to help regions of both shores of the basin achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. IPMED intends to contribute to that change by helping local authorities understand how they can better support entrepreneurs in accessing, using and optimizing the growth potential of IPR, and enhancing the IPR of young entrepreneurs. More information about the project [here](#).

Training sessions on IPR use and management (to be confirmed)

TEX-MED ALLIANCES - Textile Mediterranean Alliances for Business Development, Internationalization and Innovation

Like many others, the textile sector has changed dramatically during the last decades. Advanced countries have brought in high performance and high added-value technologies while emerging countries, mainly from Asia, have sharply reduced the costs putting insane pressure on Mediterranean traditional clothing SMEs. In contrast, the Mediterranean textile sector has traditionally been a weak innovation performer. TEX-MED ALLIANCES aims at reducing that persistent
innovation gap. To do that, the project proposes an innovative approach based on the development of two types of initiatives: cross-border initiatives identified and promoted by the project partners and cross-border project ideas/proposals arising directly from MSMEs. Together, these actions will put innovation at the core of the sector. Eventually, TEX-MED ALLIANCES will help textile and clothing MSMEs expand internationally inside/outside the Mediterranean area, fostering job creation and technological upgrading. More information about the project here.

Financial support to foster internationalization, circular economy and innovation in the textile and clothing industry

- February – April

InnovAgroWoMed - Social Innovation in the Agri-food sector for Women’s Empowerment in the Mediterranean sea basin

On both sides of the Mediterranean Sea, there is a common trend in terms of low women empowerment and participation in the labour force. InnovAgroWoMed project aims at boosting women labor participation and entrepreneurship, by leveraging on the potential of the agri-food sector - an industry closely linked to the cultural identity of the Mediterranean region - and showing a significant level of untapped potential in terms of innovation and growth. While countries such as Spain and Italy feature comparatively high levels of growth in the agri-food sector, albeit, with very low levels of women participation, the MENA agricultural business is still fragmented, and with low women employment. This project will focus on two European regions (Valencia, Spain and Sicily, Italy) and two MENA areas (Béja and Médenine in Tunisia, and Palestine), identified as suitable for the implementation and scaling up of a sustainable value model in the agri-food sector: Rural Social Innovation (RSI). RSI redefines the boundaries between organizations and the community, addressing broader societal challenges by seeking economic, social and environmental sustainability, balancing tradition and innovation and explicitly seeking community development at the local level. More information about the project here.

Women training in marketable skills in the agri-food sector: full training to become entrepreneurs or employee in the agri-food (to be confirmed)

- To be confirmed – Sicily, Italy

RESMYLE - Rethinking employment and social integration of young Mediterranean people through sustainable development

The RESMYLE project is based on two findings: firstly, the difficulties of professional integration of young people in the Mediterranean, in particular for NEETS, are increasing. Secondly, the challenges of environmental protection in the Mediterranean create many new needs in the Mediterranean territories that are largely unfulfilled at the present time, particularly in the lack of skills in some fields: waste sorting, eco-mobility, risk prevention, etc. To respond to this double challenge, RESMYLE mobilizes 9 Mediterranean operators (cooperatives, associations, universities) in 5 countries (France, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia) around 3 complementary areas of intervention: the inclusion of sustainable development topics in the support actions carried out by the organizations (associations, social centers working on integration of NEETS in the Mediterranean); the testing of a set of hands-on field trainings for young people focusing on sustainable development and based on mobility, intercultural exchanges and real environmental issues; the creation of a Mediterranean network of eco-incubators of youth-led activities based on a common method and shared tutoring/trainings. More information about the project here.
Online training tool to organise workshops with NEETs

- January – Online (date to be confirmed)

Training workshops through the establishment of the "Mediterranean Practical School for Sustainable Development"

- Spring-summer (date and place to be confirmed)

INVESTMED - InNoVativE Sustainable sTart-ups for the MEDiterranean

On the one hand, Mediterranean MSMEs face important challenges in terms of competitiveness, sustainability, internationalization and capacity to innovate which call for new solutions to ensure their growth and continued existence. On the other hand, greening the economy and enhancing natural assets can provide both economic and environmental benefits in the Mediterranean region. On this basis, the INVESTMED project aims at addressing both economic and environmental challenges, supporting new, sustainable business opportunities for young people and women in three countries: Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia. INVESTMED is set to positively impact both MSMEs, which staff will be trained and coached to become more competitive, and public authorities, whose capacities to facilitate access and protect Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) to MSMEs will be reinforced. More information about the project here.

Project activities and events coming soon.

CRE@CTIVE - Innovation for bringing creativity to activate Traditional Sectors in MED area

Textile, footwear and leather are Mediterranean traditional sectors, with an annual estimated global turnover of more than €280 billion and 2.7 million employees working mainly in MSMEs which account for 90% of the industry. During the last decades, these sectors have been affected by the economic slowdown and a very strong competition from Asia. These Mediterranean traditional sectors are under threat if they do not quickly renew their business models. Unable to compete in price or volume, the main challenges for them are product and process innovation, the establishment of new business models and the creation of business sustainable alliances to strengthen the value chains. CRE@CTIVE will address these challenges. In particular, the project is aimed at boosting creativity as a key aspect for increasing economic opportunities of the MSMEs by creating links between the traditional sectors and the creative industries (crafts, design, culture, etc.). As a result, creative innovation will upgrade the products and will improve their positioning, making them more competitive in the global markets. More information about the project here.

Insitutional Kick-off Meeting

- 4th of March
- Organised by the Textile Research Association (AITEX)

NEX-LABS – NEXUS-DRIVEN OPEN LABS FOR COMPETITIVE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

NEX-LABS targeted territories, characterized by water scarcity and both an irregular rainfall and population distribution, reflect agriculture as largest user of water (70-90%) while future global warming projections (~2°C) are expected to cause a decrease in summer precipitation (~10/-30%), threatening water availability (~2/-15%) and agricultural productivity (~-
12/-40%). The latent conflict between energy efficiency (=60%) and water production is also increasing energy footprint/m3 of water used to produce food. The predicted shortfalls in Water/Energy/Food (WEF) require a NEXUS approach. In this context, the NEX-LABS project aims to support the implementation of clean technologies for sustainable and resilient growth of agri-food sector production based on a more efficient use of energy (renewable/solar solutions) and water (wastewater treatment, water harvesting or reuse solutions) in Mediterranean Partner Countries region thanks to the contribution of ICT such as blockchain technology, Internet or the Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning and Big Data. More information about the project here.

Project activities and events coming soon.

iHERITAGE - ICT Mediterranean platform for UNESCO cultural heritage

The Mediterranean UNESCO cultural heritage needs new techniques to improve its level of interpretation, taking advantage of new technologies and commercialising the latest research results. In this regard, iHERITAGE will provide new solutions through an innovation-driven growth process to promote cross-border technological transfer, Living Labs, industry-academia collaboration and the creation of spin-offs and new products, using the latest ICT technologies: Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR) and Mixed Reality (MR). The project will address socio-economic challenges at cross-border level through the active involvement of young people, women and NEETs who will take part in the Living Labs, training courses, and the creation of spin-offs, thus contributing to increase employment opportunities and foster innovation. The project will support collaborations among universities, SMEs, start-ups and spin-offs devoted to the creation of AR/VR/MR products. Eventually, iHERITAGE will improve access to UNESCO cultural heritage, on site and off site and will contribute to the establishment of the Regional Centre for Safeguarding and Valorisation of Mediterranean (CRESPIEM) Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) (CRESPIEM), to be recognized under Category 2 of UNESCO. More information about the project here.

Project activities and events coming soon.

INTECMED - Incubators for innovation and technological transfer in the Mediterranean

Although participating regions of the INTECMED project are heterogeneous in terms of innovation, they do share a common challenge: overcome the obstacle of different actors working with innovation at local level to coordinate their actions and to find synergies. For this reason, INTECMED aims to develop an integrated innovation ecosystem at local level to support technological transfer and commercialization of research results. The project will use a methodology of building resilience into risk management (BRIM) to develop a shared vision of how to build start-ups overcoming inexperience and gap between academic knowledge and business development. This methodology will be implemented by creating regional alliances, facility points, mentorship programmes, innovation exhibitions where investors and innovators could exchange their ideas and business opportunities. Through mentorship, skills development in business planning, the commercialisation of research results of at least 48 entrepreneurs and researchers will be increased and at least 4 new spin-offs will be launched with the creation of not less than 12 new jobs. More information about the project here.

International Press Conference

- 9th of February
- Organised by Chamber of Commerce of Achaia (Greece)

More project activities and events coming soon.

YEP MED - YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PORTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN
Ports connected to international trade, environment and sustainability, digitization, port logistics and transport networks are currently one of the main focuses of job creation in the Blue Economy sector. Additionally, the ports ecosystem has a high concentration of companies that are usually bigger than in other sectors, allowing for a greater jobs absorption capacity. This potential could be better exploited through dedicated dual technical and vocational education and training (TVET) with job-oriented placement schemes addressing NEETs in the Mediterranean region. Facing this challenge, YEP MED proposes to enrich the TVET by developing three main areas with skills shortages: foreign trade, environment and sustainability, digitization and port logistic operations. The project will develop port-logistics TVET resources adapted to the sector needs, launch learning programmes with job placement programmes and set up partnerships between key stakeholders in the 7 involved countries. YEP MED will adapt 9 training curricula to the actual needs of the productive sectors, introducing personalized monitoring to students and creating training courses that address environmental issues.

*Project activities and events coming soon.*

INTERNISA - Developing the INTERNISA network of synergies to increase the number of digitally skilled women employed in the ENI CBC MED territories via matching demand and supply in the labour market

The territories involved in the ENI CBC Med Programme suffer from high unemployment rate and low participation of women in the labour market. At the same time, job growth is hindered by the low penetration of digital innovation in Mediterranean territories which hampers the capacity of small enterprises to find access to know-how or venture capital for innovation. With the aim of provide training in digital skills to women and know-how about digitalization approaches to businesspeople, INTERNISA will combine training in the digital sector with professional development in the agri-food, textile, tourism and financial sectors. To reach its objective, the project will develop online and offline services addressed to women and employers providing training curricula and personal consulting. Project activities will culminate with interventions related to match-making of labour demand and supply through an online platform and job fairs to foster contacts among job seekers and employers. More information about the project [here](#).

*Project activities and events coming soon.*

TECHLOG

The project introduces programs to support, assist and transfer of research-industry cooperation technologies in (trans) port communities. TECHLOG aims also to achieve in the Med area common safety levels of (trans) port operations while enhancing their efficiency. Therefore, the project aim to produce sustainable and significant effects in key thematic fields for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation such as start-ups development, technology transfer, employability of young people and women, waste management and energy efficiency.

*Project activities and events coming soon.*

EBSOMED - Enhancing business support organisations and business networks in the Southern Neighbourhood

*EuropeAid Project*

The ultimate goal of this project is to promote the Mediterranean Business Ecosystem by boosting investment and job creation in the region with a view to economic growth. This is being done until now through the strengthening of the capacity building of Business Support Organisations (BSOs) in the Southern Neighbourhood Countries. More specifically, EBSOMED stimulates trade and investment flows by supporting the internationalization of Euro-Mediterranean SMEs

- **Strategic paper on Sustainable Tourism Strategy in the post COVID-19 context in the Mediterranean region**
  - January

- **BCD Webinar - Promoting the Euro-Mediterranean Business Ecosystem: The Business Country Desk, a Trade & Investment mechanism to boost the Regional Economic Recovery**
  - 12 January – Online

- **6th meeting of the EBSOMED Executive Committee**
  - 15 January – Online

- **BSO Management Academy – Mobilizing expatriates and the diaspora in service of attractiveness and economic development**
  - 19 January – Online

- **Official Launching of the Business Country Desk Platform**
  - 18 February – Online

- **Business Matchmaking Forum - Med Business Days 2020 - Business operators’ role in boosting economic Diasporas in the Mediterranean**
  - 18 February – Online

- **Business Matchmaking Forum (pending to be defined)**

- **Eu Med Roadshow (pending to be defined)**

**BLUE GROWTH COMMUNITY - Capitalization & communication project for Blue Economy innovation in the Mediterranean**

*Interreg Med Project*

Blue Growth Community’s main objective is to build a real community of projects dealing with Blue Growth, allowing the reinforcement of the cross-cutting and integrated dynamics between projects and transnational key stakeholders and support Mediterranean clusters in their transnational activities processes. Furthermore, enhancing the dissemination and transferability of projects results, ensuring a wider and deeper impact towards external multilevel stakeholders, contributing to the sustainable socio-economic development of the Mediterranean area through innovative investments in the Blue economy. More information about the project here.

- **Annual Assembly of the Blue Growth Community**
  - March – Lisbon (on-line event, to be defined)

- **Mid-term BGC Conference**
  - 8 June – Barcelona (to be defined)

- **Capitalization BG Event**
5. ASCAME 2021 International Relations Action Plan

During 2020 the ‘Recovery Plan and a new Economic Development Model for the Mediterranean’ was presented to the main regional and international actors working in the Mediterranean to join forces and find synergies in the recovery process.

The responses received to the Recovery Plan have been overwhelmingly positive. Therefore, during 2021, in addition to its regular international meetings, ASCAME will hold various meetings with relevant stakeholders in order to analyse efficient ways to implement the Recovery Plan and to look for opportunities for the Mediterranean Private sector.

Some of the actors with whom the Association plans to meet are the following:

- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- European Commission
- European External Action Service (EEAS)
Time to act: stronger together

* European Economic and Social Committee
* European Investment Bank (EIB)
* World Tourism Organization (WTO)
* World Business Angels Forum (WBAF)
* Barcelona City Council
* World Federation of Consuls
* European Institute of the Mediterranean
* MEDCRUISE
* Union for the Mediterranean
* African Development Bank (AfDB)
* Islamic Development Bank (ISDB Group)
* International Finance Corporation (IFC) - World Bank Group
* International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI)
* International Hotel&Restaurant Association (IHRA)
* Mediterranean governments
* Etc.