



# How can MSMEs capture opportunities at a time of economic transformation?

## Stocktaking Seminar

December 3rd, 2020



The European Union-funded MED MSMEs Programme organised its annual stocktaking seminar online, on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 in presence of representatives from the European Commission, European Union Delegations, Union for the Mediterranean representatives, national Small Business Act Coordinators and representatives of the private and public sector from partner countries. The **objective of the seminar was to provide insights into the implementation** of activities and share thoughts and ideas to orient the development of the Programme's 2021 Action Plan.

The seminar took place on the back of a transforming global economy that is characterised by **digitalisation, robotics, artificial intelligence, climate challenges** and the reorganisation of **global value chains** accelerated by the COVID19 crisis.





The European Union's response in this context is geared towards **better addressing people's needs and creating better resilience and competitiveness of MSMEs**; notably through a new SME strategy, a new industrial strategy for a globally competitive, green and digital Europe, and the EU's Green Deal.



It is also within this context that the relevance of the MED MSMEs Programme's overall objective, which is to support the development in the South Med partner countries of an enabling business environment for MSMEs and their financial inclusion, is ever greater.



*MSMEs are the backbone of economies and represent two thirds of employment and more than 50% of the world GDP. They can be the real drivers of the digital and green transition of world economies but are also the most vulnerable in times of economic turmoil.*

*Supporting the formulation and adoption of policies and regulations that can contribute to the development of MSME ecosystems worldwide has never been more vital.*

The Programme's regional lens provides the methodological framework and the resources needed to accompany the exchange of experience and practices between Europe and South Med countries as well as amongst South Med countries, thus supporting the adoption of best practices for the formulation of adequate policies for MSMEs to thrive.

In the past year, the Programme has implemented an annual workplan that includes **organising working group meetings in six countries** to discuss the two main areas of intervention of the Programme:





## *internationalisation and access to finance.*

Findings from these working group meetings have highlighted that:

- SMEs and digitalisation are top priorities along with internationalisation and alternative finance;
- under the necessity to respond to the pandemic, national dialogue and governance are increasingly inclusive; and
- the adoption of policies, strategies and regulations have been expedited. Participants also expressed their genuine interest on the trends of nearshoring in the European Union.

Discussions taking place during the seminar further ***explored and confirmed these points***, highlighting additional topics to keep in mind by the Programme such as potentially expanding its geographic outreach to Africa, ensuring women inclusion and gender equality, considering blended finance or extra guarantees to serve the most fragile segments of the MSME population.

## ***What's next ?***

In the following weeks, the Programme will fine-tune its 2021 working plan taking these discussions and recommendations into consideration, and integrating feedback and input on ideas for future orientations.

