

Side event on Circular economy opportunities in the Arab region

19 November 2024

8:30–11:00 a.m. | Zekreet Room

Event description

The Mediterranean region is undergoing a significant transition towards a circular economy. Many countries, particularly Mediterranean Arab countries, are shifting from traditional production methods to more advanced industrial frameworks, enhancing recycling and reuse practices. Efforts are being made at every stage of material consumption and disposal to reduce environmental impact. The ultimate goal is to minimize or eliminate waste through the “polluter pays” principle and adherence to waste hierarchy principles.

In this context, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) serve as the backbone of the Mediterranean economy, and play a vital role in driving the shift towards a resource-efficient economy and in spearheading innovation. The progress made in circular economy practices is enhancing the competitiveness of Arab SMEs and preparing them for the green transition. As the future of business increasingly demands integration of resource efficiency, SMEs that embrace these practices will be better positioned for success.

This event is co-organized by the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA), Interreg NEXT MED Programme and MedWaves, the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).

Event objectives

The primary goals of this event include the following:

- Uncover the transformative potential of circular economy for Arab Mediterranean SMEs.
- Showcase inspiring success stories of circular economy implementation across diverse sectors.
- Develop a strategic road map for circular economy adoption tailored to Arab Mediterranean SMEs.

Topics to be covered

The event will provide a platform to explore and discuss the following topics:

- **The transformative potential of the circular economy for SMEs:** Explore how adopting circular economy practices can drive innovation, enhance resource efficiency, and boost competitiveness for Arab Mediterranean SMEs.
- **Success stories and innovations in circular economy:** Highlight real-world examples of successful circular economy initiatives across various sectors, showcasing their impact and benefits.
- **Developing a strategic road map for circular economy adoption:** Provide actionable guidance on creating and implementing a transition strategy for SMEs, including leveraging resources and measuring impact for continuous improvement.

Target audience

The event is designed to engage the following groups:

- **Primary:** SMEs across various sectors that are implementing or are interested in circular economy practices; public institutions involved in sustainability and environmental policy; private investors seeking opportunities in green innovation; and researchers focused on circular economy applications and advancements.
- **Secondary:** Industry associations and business networks supporting SMEs; policymakers and regulatory bodies shaping circular economy frameworks; and educators and students in fields related to sustainability and environmental management.

Language

The core content will be delivered in English.

Contact information

- **Contact person:** Vincent Ernoux
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Agenda

8:30-9:15 a.m.

Innovating for a greener future: the role of research and development in empowering Arab SMEs for circular economy success

- SMEs in the Mediterranean economy and their role in the transition to a circular economy.
- Role of research and development (R&D): How research and development drive innovation, enhance resource efficiency, support sustainable practices and open new opportunities for Arab SMEs.
- Success stories.
- Actionable steps and recommendations for SMEs to adopt circular economy practices and measure impact.

Moderator

Mohamed Wageih, Project Officer, PRIMA Foundation

9:15-9:45 a.m.

Unlocking the potential of the circular economy for Arab Mediterranean SMEs

- Opportunities for innovation and competitive advantage.
- Challenges and strategies for implementing circular practices.

Moderator

Giorgio Mosangini, Green Entrepreneurship and Civil Society Team Leader, MedWaves, UNEP MAP Regional Activity Centre for SCP



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Agenda

9:45-10:30 a.m.

Showcasing circular economy success: innovations across traditional and emerging sectors

- **Maher Oudira**, Green ALAFCO, Egypt
- **Oumaya Marzouk**, on behalf of Respect Environmental Group, Tunisia
- **Oussama Koudhai**, Indinya, Tunisia
- **Mohamed Aboklela**, Tilestic, Egypt

Moderator

Martin Heibel, Communication Manager, Interreg NEXT MED Programme

10:30-11:00 a.m.

Strategic road map for Arab Mediterranean SMEs: navigating the circular economy transition

- Developing a transition strategy.
- Leveraging support and resources.
- Measuring impact and ensuring continuous improvement.

Moderator

Vincent Ernoux, Coordinator for Western Mediterranean, Interreg NEXT MED Programme