

Workshop track on Green businesses

18 November 2024

1.00–4.00 p.m. | The Pearl Room

Introduction

The concept of green businesses has gained significant traction in the Arab region over the past decade. Initially driven by the global push towards sustainability and the need to address pressing environmental challenges, the green business movement has become a vital component of the region's economic landscape. With increasing awareness of climate change, resource scarcity, and the need for sustainable development, Governments, businesses and communities have begun to prioritize environmentally friendly practices across various sectors.

In the Arab region, the green business sector has seen substantial growth, particularly in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and water management. These have become critical in addressing the region's unique environmental challenges, such as water scarcity, desertification, and energy dependence. As a result, there has been a surge in innovation, with entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) developing cutting-edge solutions to promote sustainability and reduce environmental impact.

Looking ahead, the green business sector in the Arab region is poised for continued expansion. The increasing demand for sustainable products and services, coupled with supportive government policies and international investment, is creating fertile ground for green businesses to thrive.

SMEs are well-positioned to take advantage of these opportunities, as they can be more agile and innovative in developing and scaling sustainable solutions.

By the end of the workshop, participants will have gained valuable insights into the green business landscape, learned practical strategies for scaling their ventures, and acquired the skills needed to secure impact financing and drive their SMEs towards success in the sustainable economy.

Topics to be covered

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

- **Session 1: Exploring trends and opportunities**

This session will provide participants with an overview of the latest trends in green businesses, focusing on key areas such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, food security and water management. The discussion will highlight the emerging opportunities within these sectors and explore how SMEs can leverage these trends to drive growth and innovation. The session will also highlight regional programmes in these sectors that SMEs could benefit from. Participants will gain a deep understanding of the current landscape and learn how to identify and capitalize on opportunities in the green business sector.

- **Session 2: Scaling blueprints for green business models**

In the *first part* of the session, participants will delve into the factors that drive the success of specific green business models. They will explore how key success factors—such as system capacity, data analytics levels, and collection efficiency—vary across different models. This segment will also address how business milestones and investment objectives differ based on the stage of growth and maturity of the business. Understanding these elements is crucial for improving investment benefits and ensuring the sustainability of green business ventures. The second part of the session will involve a hands-on approach where participants will be introduced to high-impact and high-growth business opportunities in green solutions. They will work in groups to review detailed business model descriptions and blueprints, focusing on key success factors and potential impacts. The session will conclude with an exchange of insights and results among the groups, providing participants with practical strategies to scale their green businesses effectively and attract the right investment to drive sustainable growth.



Agenda

1:00-2:00 p.m.

Exploring trends and opportunities

Presenters

Conrad Rein, Director, University of Chicago – Innovation Commission for Climate Change and Food Security

Ahmed Huzayyin, Director of Eco-Industrial Department, Chemonics Egypt

Youssef Brouziyne, Regional Representative, International Water Management Institute – MENA Office

Rwdah Al-Subaiey, Senior Director Enterprise Project Management Office (PMO), Process and Sustainability, Ooredoo Qatar

Moderator

Nashwan Dhahir, Country Director, Centre of Excellence for Water and Sanitation (CEWAS) Iraq

Spotlight on regional programmes and initiatives

Presenters

Nicolas Farhat, Regional Innovation Hub Manager – MENA, Water and Energy for Food (WE4F)

Mohamed Wageih, Project and Policy Officer, PRIMA Programme

Maria Caldero, Project Coordinator, Interreg Euro-MED Innovative Sustainable Economy Mission

Milou van Bruggen, Programme Officer – Digital Sector, Greentech Expert, International Trade Centre (ITC)

2:00-4:00 p.m.

Scaling blueprints for green business models

Introduction (15 minutes)

- **Johannes Heeb**, Senior Partner, Seecon
- **Aline Bussmann**, Co-Director, CEWAS

Interactive discussion (40 minutes per part)

- **Part 1:** Understanding business models and success factors
- **Part 2:** Investment-readiness and impact financing for green businesses

Exchange and key takeaways (25 minutes)

Roundtable themes

- *Table 1:* Agriculture market linkages and supplier integration
- *Table 2:* Solar irrigation
- *Table 3:* Resource recovery
- *Table 4:* Alternative farming inputs
- *Table 5:* Circular economy in home material and construction

Co-facilitators (experts)

Conrad Rein, Director, University of Chicago – Innovation Commission for Climate Change and Food Security

Ahmed Huzayyin, Director of Eco-Industrial Department, Chemonics Egypt

Youssef Brouziyne, Regional Representative, International Water Management Institute – MENA Office

Nicolas Farhat, Regional Innovation Hub Manager – WE4F MENA

Mohamed Wageih, Project Officer, PRIMA Programme

Martin Heibel, Communication Manager, Interreg NEXT MED Programme

Milou van Bruggen, Programme Officer – Digital Sector, Greentech Expert, ITC

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

Alejandro Lafarga, Programme Manager, Interreg NEXT MED Programme

Giorgio Mosangini, Team Leader, Green Entrepreneurship, MedWaves, United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production

Nashwan Dhahir, Country Director, Centre of Excellence for Water and Sanitation (CEWAS) Iraq

Katie Mapondera, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Specialist, UHUB, University of Doha for Science and Technology

Souhail Khoury, Investment Facilitation Manager, Berytech