

INNOVATION, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Framework, financing models and good practices

High level meeting organised by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)
and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat (UfM)

5th - 6th October 2015

Palau de Pedralbes, Barcelona

Presentation

Innovation is at the heart of economic and social development as it helps improve productivity and competitiveness. The economies of the Mediterranean countries have made progress in developing innovation policy frameworks. Nonetheless, one of the remaining challenges is increasing the level of integration of SMEs in networks supporting the introduction of new technologies.

Governments of the region are progressively adopting innovation policies and strategies through the introduction and improvement of the access to new technologies within the public and private sectors, while promoting its use for entrepreneurship and moving towards knowledge economy. According to the World Bank, innovation processes germinate and develop in “innovation systems” which are made up of public and private organizations and actors that connect in various ways and bring together the technical and financial competencies and inputs required for innovation. In addition, it is relevant to analyse the link between innovation/productivity and examine the essential access to finance to facilitate the introduction of innovation.

The meeting will discuss among the participating actors and experts from the region how policy-makers can develop and reinforce a business and inner friendly ecosystems favourable to innovation.

PROGRAMME

5th October

16.00-16.30 Accreditations and welcome coffee

16.30-17.00 Opening session

Senén Florensa, President, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)
Claudio Cortese, Senior Deputy Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

17.00-17.30 Overview of the innovation, information and communication technologies ecosystem

Governments in the Mediterranean region are keen on promoting innovation either directly by supporting the development of technologies or indirectly by creating a favourable innovation climate through incentives or laws. However, countries at various stages of development differ in terms of their capacity to use and create knowledge through modern technology. The technological capacity is also influenced by the skills of the employees and the access to funding, as well as the ability to access existing technologies and effectively apply it.

Chair

Javier Albarracín, Director, Socioeconomic Development Department, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Speakers

Ahmed El Alfi, Chairman, Sawari Venture Partners, Egypt
Mohamed Ba, Head of Innovation Division, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

17.30-18.00 Debate

18.00-18.30 Coffee break

18.30-19.20 Brainstorming session: How to improve the skills and ecosystem to foster innovation

This session aims at sharing initiatives, ideas and policy proposals that contribute to the improvement of the business environment for innovation. The challenges for the introduction of new technologies and innovation in the public administration and private sector will be addressed to come up with recommendations that facilitate its adoption with the purpose to foster economic growth, entrepreneurship and technology start-ups development.

- How could governments and international organisations foster the adoption of innovation?
- Which are the main benefits of introducing new technologies in enterprises?
- Which capacities and policies should be further developed to improve the framework for innovation?

Chair and moderator

Sherif Younis, Financial and Trade Advisor, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

19.20-19.50 Presentation of main conclusions

20.00 Cocktail

6th October

9.00-10.00 Exploring new means of funding for technological innovation

Although funds are often available it is difficult to have access to them, especially at the early stages of a business or innovative developments. International organisations promote a number of programmes and initiatives to support innovation, and enterprises may find new opportunities in this context.

While innovation often takes the form of adopting existing products and processes from more developed countries and adapting them to local conditions, Technology adoption can be costly and firms may therefore need access to external finance. Alternative sources of financing will be explored to increase the access to capital for the underserved start-ups utilizing crowd funding, angel investing, private public partnership funds and remittances.

- How accessible is bank financing and International organisations funds for innovative activities?
- Which are the main challenges for technology adoption in the Mediterranean region?
- How can new and accessible ways of funding be promoted and developed?

Chair

Jaloul Ayed, Former Minister of Finance, Tunisia

Speakers

Elias Ghanem, Chairman, Zoomaal, Lebanon

Marcel Prunera, Expert in financing technology companies, Partner at CREA Inversión

First Comments

Sébastien Bourillon, Senior Banker, Information and Communication Technologies Team (EBRD)

Shiva Dustdar, Head of Innovation Finance Advisory, European Investment Bank (EIB)

10.00-10.30 Debate

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-12.00 Inspiring good practices that could be replicated

The objective of this session is to share experiences and good practices that have been developed in the Mediterranean region. The exchange of views regarding existing initiatives that promote technology entrepreneurship and support the introduction of innovation in enterprises and institutions can contribute to the knowledge transfer among the experts and professionals working on the field.

- Which are the most relevant achievements and experiences gained from successful cases?
- How can we set the right framework to encourage good practices to be replicated?

Chair

Xavier Dumont, Head of the Entrepreneurship Resource Center, Barcelona Activa

Speakers

Dina El-Shenoufi, Chief Investment Officer, Flat6Labs, Egypt

Nidal Qanadilo, Chief Corporate and Business Development Officer, Oasis 500 accelerators, Jordan

Mete Çakmakci, Secretary General, Technology Development Foundation of Turkey

First Comments

Jaroslav Ponder, Strategy and Policy Advisor, World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

Kyriaki Papageorgiou, Senior Researcher, Institute for Innovation and Knowledge Management, ESADE Business School

12.00-12.30 Debate

12.30 Closing remarks

Senén Florensa, President, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Claudio Cortese, Senior Deputy Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

Invited guests

Adam Hill, Digital Communication Advisor, Anna Lindh Foundation

Artur Serra Hurtado, Director, Innovation and Research, Citilab

Eugènia Guarro, Socioeconomic Development Department, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Fearghus Roche, Chief Operating Officer, Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME)

Jacinto Soler-Matutes, Senior Partners, Emergia Partners

Jaume Baró, Managing Director of Enterprises, Barcelona Activa

Jean-Pierre Mariaccia, Managing Partner, Elecio Consulting

Jordi Martinez Blanch, IDAEA, Manager for European projects, Spanish Council for Scientific Research (CSIC)

María Tarancón, Innovation for Development Team, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Egypt

Mariluz Arranz, Commercial Office of Egypt in Barcelona

Mathieu Carenzo, Executive Director, Centre of Entrepreneurship, IESE

Rafael Rodríguez-Clemente, General Coordinator, Spanish Council for Scientific Research (CSIC)

Roser de la Torre, Socioeconomic Development Department, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

Yehia Halim, Commercial Counsellor of Egypt in Barcelona

** English will be the working language of this meeting.*