

EBSOMED

ENHANCING BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

REPORT

2018 - 2023



**Towards an inclusive economic development
and boosted business ecosystem within the South
Neighbourhood region**



Project funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION







ENHANCING BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Enhancing Business Support Organisations and Business Networks in the Southern Neighbourhood :

is project co-financed by the European Union and coordinated by **BUSINESSMED** (Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises) as part of a consortium of six partners. More than thirty organisations from **26 countries** are also affiliated to the project.

The ultimate goal of this 4-year project (2018-2022) is to promote the Mediterranean Business Ecosystem by boosting investment and job creation in the region with a view to economic growth. This will be done through the strengthening of the capacity building of Business Support Organisations (BSOs) in the Southern Neighbourhood Countries.

More specifically, EBSOMED intends to increase the overall capacity management of Business Support Organisations (BSOs) in the Euro-Mediterranean region by improving the services offered to SMEs

The action strives to empower MED Private Sector stakeholders by:

- Developing Business linkages and networks between Southern Neighbourhood, BSOs and EU counterparts.
- Supporting them in seizing the financing services offered by Development and Finance

At the entrepreneurial level, EBSOMED was designed to stimulate trade and investment flows by supporting the internationalization of Euro-Mediterranean SMEs.

EBSOMED will give a new dimension to regional integration through the establishment of a sustainable hub and the development of win-win business partnerships in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

- Employer Confederations;
- Networks of Chambers of Commerce and Industry;
- Economic Development Agencies;
- Support Agencies for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs);
- Organisations, Research Centres and Support Networks for Civil Society (Youth and Women)

Through the members of these networks, the EBSOMED Consortium gathered the majority of Business Support Organisations (BSO) and the Euro-Mediterranean and Arab Chambers of Commerce, thereby ensuring the mobilization of SMEs and BSOs in all the associated countries.

OBJECTIVES

Strengthen

the capacities of intermediary organisations in the view of providing improved business services and tools towards their members, as well as towards trade and investment partners.

Define

regional strategies and action plans with the European Commission for selected sectors with a high potential for growth and employment creation.

Promote

a stronger role in advocating the needs of BSOs' members in public-private dialogue and the dissemination of good practices with a view of enhancing the international image of Southern Neighbourhood Countries.

Maximise

business linkages through the establishment of regional coordination platforms to further substantiate new partnerships between Northern and Southern Mediterranean BSOs.

Enhance

the institutional partnership between the European Union and the Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood Countries and reinforce South-South Cooperation Mechanisms.

Increase

trade exchange and stimulate investment in the Mediterranean region.

Ensure

the viability of EU funding initiatives through a close coordination and better synergies with bilateral and regional cooperation programs.

CONSORTIUM

BUSINESSMED (Leader)



BUSINESSMED brings together 24 business organizations from 18 countries in the Euro-Mediterranean zone, with the aim of promoting multilateral cooperation, attracting foreign investment and fostering social dialogue and socio-economic integration in the region.



ASCAME (Partner)

The Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry, ASCAME is a non-profit international organisation that represents the private sector of the Mediterranean, regrouping the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and similar entities of both shores of the region.

CAWTAR (Partner)



The Center of Arab Woman for Training and Research, CAWTAR is a centre of research and studies relating to gender and the status of Women, of advocacy for the improvement of Women's status and of collecting data, indicators and statistics.

ANIMA Investment Network (Partner)



ANIMA is an international network that works towards economic integration and convergence between Europe, Middle East and Africa. It develops initiatives with the objective of making its partner countries more attractive to business and investment.

EUROCHAMBRES (Partner)



The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, EUROCHAMBRES represents enterprises in Europe, through national, regional and local chambers of commerce and industry.

GACIC (Partner)



The German-Arab Chamber of Industry and Commerce, GACIC is the largest organisation in the framework of business cooperation between Germany and the Arab world, representing more than 3200 member companies.







EBSOMED

in a few figures



700

BSOs and smes engaged
in capacity building activities

50

Consortia created
to submit EU tenders



3000

women and women-led
organizations

+200

Articles published
on the Media



20

Memoranda
of Understanding



signed between

28

organizations



+50

publications covering
industry outlooks,
sectorial reports
and strategic papers



31

new services created
for BSOs and SMEs

+800

B2B meetings
organized

16

Training workshops organized
on project development



22

tender
awarded.

100

best practices within
the project benefeceries



One EBSOMED label for
BSOs services developed

+2400

BSO staff trained
on operational skills

3,500

Networking opportunities for
business personnel and BSO
representatives



12

Technical assistance missions
organized between south
med and North med countries





PRIORITY 1



Capacity Building

To improve the performance, knowledge, and capacity of Mediterranean BSOs in business support services and innovation

The EBSOMED academies

The EBSOMED BSOs Management Academies were dynamic and engaging 2-day events specifically designed to cater to the needs of Intermediary Organisations' Executives. These academies aimed to provide targeted and dedicated capacity training for participants.

The Academies offered a comprehensive learning experience that seamlessly blended theoretical concepts with practical applications. Through an interactive approach, participants were encouraged to actively engage in the learning process. Esteemed Course Leaders, predominantly sourced from experienced EU BSOs and other relevant stakeholders, guided and facilitated the sessions.

The main objectives of the academies were to improve the overall performance of Southern Business Support Organisations (BSOs) and enhance the quality of services provided to their members, particularly SMEs. Additionally, the academies facilitated networking, the exchange of experiences, and the sharing of best practices between Northern and Southern BSOs. This collaborative platform allowed BSOs to learn from one another and establish valuable partnerships.

Few numbers:



30

Regional Executive Training Workshops for BSO Managers



2420

BSOs staff trained on managerial and operational skills



55%

women participation quota ensured (i.e. 1320)



535

beneficiary organization through the capacity building program



EBSOMED Workshops on EU Project Development

The Workshops on EU Project Development were dynamic one day events that specifically targeted Employers' Confederations, Economic and Development Agencies, and chambers of commerce. These workshops provided a valuable opportunity for participants to gain insights and knowledge in various key areas related to project development and funding support.

The overall objectives of these workshops included informing participants about European opportunities available to support BSOs executives' ideas and businesses, as well as equipping them with the necessary knowledge to benefit from EU support for businesses in the Mediterranean area. Participants also learned to master the funding obligations and principles associated with EU-funded projects, while gaining practical skills in forecasting checks, audits, and project evaluation using operational tools.

These comprehensive workshops provided a unified platform for participants to acquire vital knowledge, skills, and practical insights. By addressing the specific needs of Employers' Confederations and Economic Development Agencies, the Workshops on Project Development

Few numbers:



16

Training workshops on project development and management for Economic Development



50

Consortia established by Southern and EU employers organizations and BSOs to participate in EU Call for Proposal/tenders



22

Project proposals successfully submitted and awarded



26

Countries involved between south and North



Employers' BSO thematic committees

EBSOMED established 7 Thematic Committees over the duration of the project. These committees were designed to ensure the follow-up of structural macro-economic progress in South MED countries, focusing on specific goals related to transversal topics and priorities in the Euro-Med Region. Additionally, their aim was to ensure internal coherence within this progress, with a particular emphasis on promoting the private sector, sustainable growth, and employment, especially through the engagement of Employers' Confederations.

Originally, the project planned for three Thematic Committees to tackle important issues such as skills development and vocational training, gender mainstreaming and women empowerment, and education & research and development (R&D) on energy technologies.

Due to the success of these committees, the project expanded by adding four new committees that complemented and built upon the initial three. The four new thematic were : The green deal, Digitalization, Internationalization of SMEs , and the empowerment of women and young entrepreneurs.

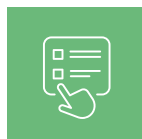
By leveraging their expertise, these committees played a crucial role in driving progress and facilitating collaboration among stakeholders.

Few numbers:



6

Periodical Surveys



10

Facsheets produced



7

Industry Outlooks
published



67

Meetings of the different
committee organized



Peer technical assistance missions

The general aim of the Peer technical assistance missions was to strengthen the capacities of Economic Development Agencies (EDA) through Technical Assistance missions delivered by experts from peer organisations. These missions encompassed various areas of focus, including BSO strategic planning and management. The experts provided valuable insights and guidance on key performance indicators and other strategic aspects.

Additionally, the missions aimed to support Investment Promotion and Regional Development. The project collaborated with the agencies to devise strategies for attracting investments and promoting economic growth in the regions. They explored avenues for partnership and cooperation with various stakeholders to stimulate regional development and maximize opportunities.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation were also key areas of focus during the missions. The project experts offered valuable guidance on fostering entrepreneurship, cultivating innovation-driven ecosystems, and promoting a culture of creativity within the agencies. They shared insights on developing support mechanisms for entrepreneurs and facilitating the growth of innovative startups. Overall, these missions played a crucial role in strengthening the capacities of Economic Development Agencies and fostering sustainable bilateral partnerships between business support organizations.

Few numbers:



11

Peer technical assistance missions provided from EU organisations to southern organization.



7

med countries involved



19

BSOs worked on the assistance missions



87

BSO managers directly reached by the assistance missions



EBSOMED label for BSO services

The main objective of the Labelling BSOs activity was to create a special quality label for Chambers of Commerce and Business Support Organizations (BSOs) in the Mediterranean region. Unlike in the European Union, there wasn't a system in place to ensure or evaluate the quality and range of services provided by Mediterranean BSOs.

The purpose of this quality label was two-fold. Firstly, it would help assess the services offered by BSOs and determine their quality through a self-assessment process. Secondly, it would serve as a way for BSOs in the Mediterranean to connect and share information about the services they provide, best practices for managing their organizations, and other helpful insights. These connections would be essential for striving for excellence and making improvements.

The project drew inspiration from the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB), which had developed a quality management system to evaluate different skills and abilities of Chambers and Exchanges in Turkey. This system had been beneficial in promoting knowledge sharing and improving the services and internal operations of BSOs in the country.

By adopting TOBB's successful approach, the Labelling BSOs activity aimed to achieve similar results in the Mediterranean region. The goal was to create a quality label that would not only provide reassurance to stakeholders but also foster collaboration and the exchange of ideas among BSOs.

An label was then designed inspired by the EBSOMED Charter and two cycles of training were conducted to introduce ,educate and inform the Chambers of Commerce about the importance and benefits of the labelization process. The objective was to equip them with the knowledge and understanding needed to pursue the EBSOMED label and meet the necessary requirements.



**EBSOMED label
for BSOs**

Impact rating tool

EBSOMED developed of an online tool called IMPACT RATING, which served economic development organizations in assessing the impact of investment projects or companies on their territories. The tool was customizable to suit the strategies of various organizations and countries. It had been developed by the ANIMA network in collaboration with several development banks, business associations, investment promotion agencies, and environmental NGOs. The tool was compatible with international standards and norms on social responsibility and sustainable development, aligning with most established guidelines.

Previously known as the EDILE rating methodology, the tool was originally developed under the EDILE project and in collaboration with partners during the ENPI CBC MED program (2007-2013). EBSOMED updated the tool, changing its name to IMPACT RATING and designed a new logo. Its primary function is to enable the comparison of performance between companies or projects in the same sector or with similar characteristics.

By utilizing IMPACT RATING, organizations and BSOs could offer incentives, technical assistance, financial support, or even prestigious labels to the best-performing entities based on tangible and objective criteria. The tool could be configured and criteria weighted to align with the specific needs and priorities of different territories, countries, or companies. It provided a comprehensive framework for assessing impact across different categories, accommodating the unique strategies of each organization.

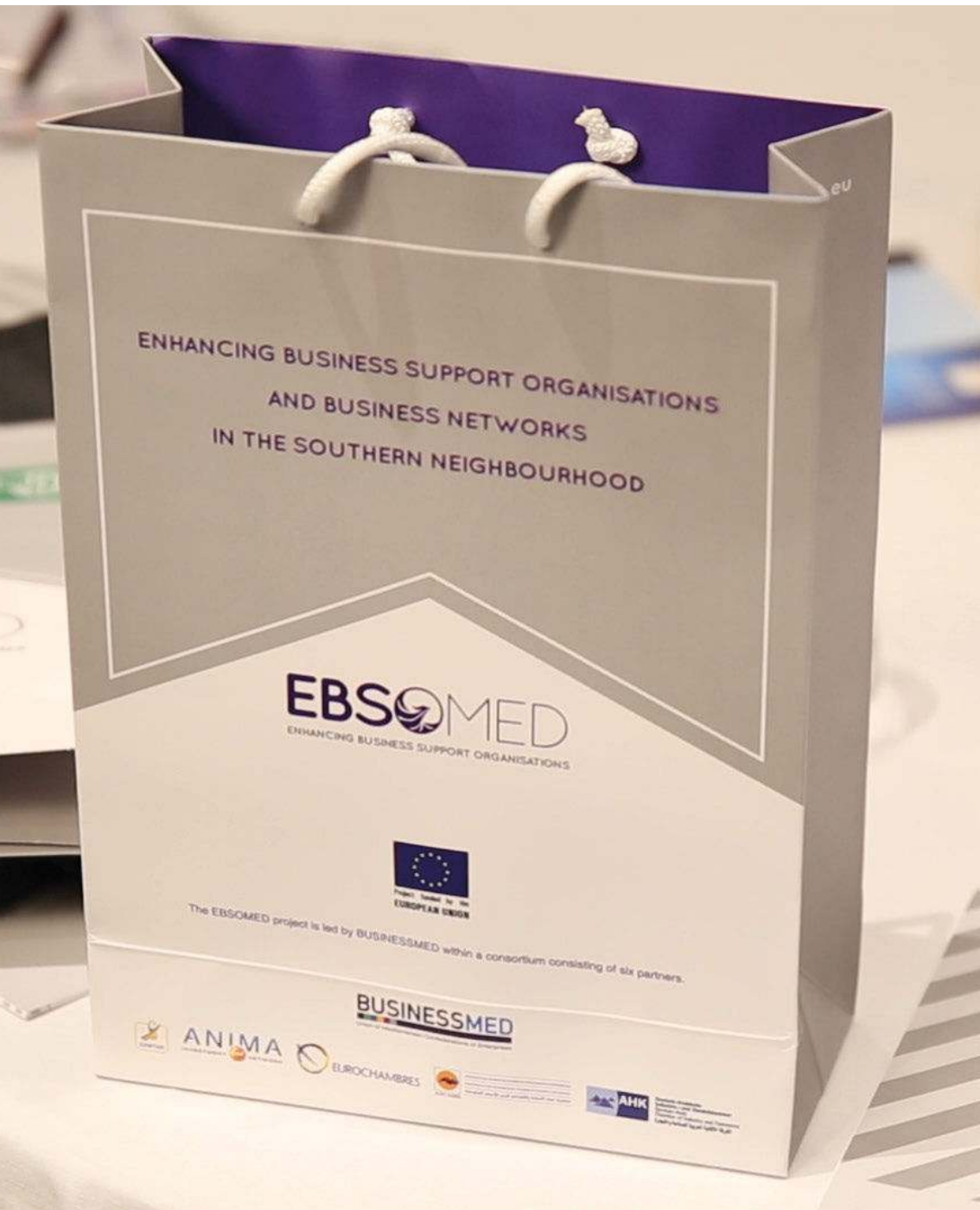
With the introduction of IMPACT RATING, EBSOMED aims to contribute to a more informed business ecosystem, empowering economic development organizations to evaluate and reward positive impact in line with their respective goals and strategies.



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PRIORITY 2



Med Link

To build networks and digital platform for regional exchange and cooperation among euro-mediterranean business ecosystem

The Business country desk

The digital platform of the Business Country Desk (BCD) represented a pivotal aspect of EBSOMED's development strategy, focusing on fostering entrepreneurship and investment. In recent years, BUSINESSMED has dedicated significant efforts to creating a versatile tool that promotes talent, facilitates international business expansion, fosters networking opportunities, and advocates for the enhancement of the entrepreneurial ecosystem across Europe, the Mediterranean, and Africa.

Originally established in physical format back in 2007, the BUSINESS country desks have played a vital role in facilitating business development within the region. However, with the advent of the digital era and with the invaluable support of EBSOMED, BUSINESSMED has successfully transformed this process. They have introduced the digital version of the BCD, an intuitive and accessible online platform that provides companies, entrepreneurs, and investors with both human and technical support to foster high-value partnerships.

The ultimate objective of the BCD platform is to become the go-to digital resource for B2B interactions and business collaborations. Since its launch, the platform has evolved by incorporating an e-learning module service and integrating relevant project documents and publications. The BCD serves as a sustainable strategy that ensures the long-term impact of the project, empowering businesses and individuals across the Euro-Mediterranean region to thrive in today's digital age.

Few numbers:



400

Regional organizations and enterprises have subscribed to the partnership area



25

Registered countries



650

B2B business meetings scheduled and organized through the BCD platform

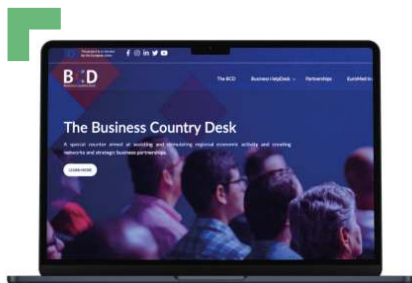


41

Activity sectors on the platform



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Joint Activities with donors, banking and non-banking

Two collaborative initiatives involving donors have been combined to form a comprehensive two-day event, bringing together 279 representatives from Euromed and Arab Chambers of Commerce, private sector stakeholders, financial institutions, and Business Support Organizations (BSOs). This event aims to leverage the biannual MEDAFINANCE conference, focusing on the transversal priority of improving access to finance.

During this event, significant progress achieved in the field of access to finance will be showcased, and the 2019 MEDAFINANCE survey will be launched. This survey serves as a unique reference guide, providing information on grants, technical assistance instruments, lines of credit, and innovative non-banking financial tools available for Mediterranean SMEs. It includes details on eligibility criteria, relevant sectors, and contact information.

To ensure the survey remains up-to-date, annual updates have been conducted, making it accessible to relevant EU programs and projects that emphasize access to finance, such as the MEDMSMEs program. Additionally, a targeted e-alert focused on access to finance and funding opportunities has been distributed to a database of over 4,000 contacts.

Few numbers:



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279

representatives of private sector stakeholders, financial institutions, and BSOs mobilized



+100

executives of BSOs have been trained on access to finance



+2500

persons downloaded the survey from the EBSOMED website







PRIORITY 3



Med Cooperation

To foster business cooperation and investment opportunities at regional and sub-regional levels across the euro-mediterranean region

The Business matching fora

The Business Matchmaking Fora, which served as opportunities to facilitate company meetings and organize B2B meetings, also played a crucial role in creating partnership opportunities. These events provided a platform for businesses to connect, explore potential collaborations, and forge strategic alliances. By bringing together representatives from various sectors and regions, the Business Matchmaking Fora fostered an environment conducive to networking and partnership development.

Through targeted sessions and interactive discussions, participants had the chance to showcase their products, services, and expertise, while also identifying synergies and exploring avenues for collaboration. The Fora acted as a catalyst for initiating productive conversations and fostering meaningful connections between businesses from different backgrounds and geographical locations.

The outcomes of these B2B meetings were instrumental in creating tangible partnership opportunities, allowing companies to expand their networks, access new markets, and tap into the expertise and resources of potential collaborators. The Business Matchmaking Fora served as a conduit for unlocking business potential and driving economic growth in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Few numbers:



+500

Active participants



41%

Women participation quota ensured



24

south Med countries mobilized



43

best practices shared during the
matching fora



The Sector Alliance Committee

The Sector Alliance Committee (SAC) was dedicated to enhancing private sector organizations in the Southern Neighbourhood countries (SNC) by fostering collaboration and cooperation. Its primary objectives were to address regional issues, promote inclusive economic development, and facilitate job creation in the Mediterranean business ecosystem.

SAC brought together high-level panels consisting of industry experts, commercial actors, and private sector representatives. These panels engaged in constructive dialogue with governmental and international bodies. The event provided a valuable opportunity for experts and Business Support Organizations (BSOs) to share their experiences and insights, focusing on key priority sectors and niche areas that could immediately contribute to the regional economy.

Through SAC, key sector challenges were discussed, and ongoing solutions and initiatives were presented to make these sectors more sustainable and successful. The event served as a platform to challenge businesses and governments to evaluate and improve their existing policies. It showcased case studies and success stories from the region and beyond, inspiring participants to learn from best practices and innovative approaches.

Few numbers:



3

roadmaps and action plans on transport
& Logistics, sustainable tourism and
green transition developed



136

participants from both the south and
north shores of the Mediterranean









PRIORITY 4



Med Promotion

To improve the visibility of South
Neighbourhood countries as trade and
investment destination

Regional promotional campaigns

During the lifetime of EBSOMED, a series of five regional promotional campaigns were meticulously planned. These campaigns served the purpose of presenting the project's objectives, raising awareness about EBSOMED's specific goals, and reaching a wider audience in the target countries. The primary aim was to strengthen the visibility of the European Union's commitment to its partner countries in the southern Mediterranean region.

In the initial campaigns, the focus was on increasing awareness and engaging a broader audience throughout the project's duration. These efforts included highlighting the content and expected outcomes of EBSOMED.

As the project progressed into its second year, the promotional campaigns shifted their focus towards showcasing the progress made and the initial results achieved by EBSOMED. They became platforms for sharing success stories that emerged from the project's implementation. The campaigns extended their reach across the Euromed Region, with a particular emphasis on Southern Neighbourhood Countries.

These promotional campaigns were instrumental in building momentum for the project, creating broader awareness, and effectively communicating its achievements. They served as powerful tools for engaging stakeholders, sharing success stories, and fostering a deeper understanding of EBSOMED's impact within the Euromed Region.

Few numbers:



50

Different media involved



12

Countries reached



20

Journalists mobilized for each campaign



+200

Articles published on EBSOMED



EU MED ROADSHOWS in SNC

The Euro Med Roadshows, as part of the EBSO Med project, served as a platform for entrepreneurs to connect and network. With a specific focus on women entrepreneurs, these roadshows featured keynote speakers and successful female entrepreneurs who shared their valuable experiences and insights on the journey to business success.

The intervention strategies deployed during the roadshows were designed to address key areas such as promoting women's access to markets, fostering an entrepreneurial culture for women, emphasizing the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in women's economic development, and supporting the integration of women in business associations.

By facilitating discussions on youth and women's access to markets, the roadshows aimed to dismantle barriers and unlock new opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs. They also placed significant emphasis on nurturing an entrepreneurial culture that empowered women to initiate and expand their business ventures.

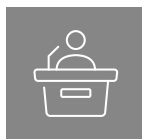
Furthermore, the roadshows actively worked towards promoting the integration of women and young entrepreneurs into the business landscape, ensuring their voices were heard and their interests were represented. The ultimate goal was to leverage resources effectively and efficiently, driving women's economic empowerment and generating a more vibrant and inclusive business ecosystem at all levels of society.

Few numbers:



1150

BSO, financial institutions, government bodies, SMEs, women-led businesses involved



1500

Regional Executive Training Workshops for BSO Managers
BSOs staff trained on managerial and operational skills beneficiary organization through the capacity building



860

female entrepreneurs & women in managerial position were targeted



10

EU MED Roadshows established to promote investment and business partnerships in the Mediterranean region.



EU MED ROADSHOWS in Europe

The EU MED ROADSHOWS in Europe had the specific objective of improving the image and increasing the understanding among EU entrepreneurs of the South Mediterranean region. These Roadshows, focused on Northern Europe, targeted EU BSOs and SMEs that had a potential interest in the South MED region.

It was of utmost importance to promote South ENI countries in the North and present their regional pool of competences along with the existing opportunities. The Roadshows provided a valuable platform to inform EU companies about the economic context and promote investment and business partnership opportunities in the Mediterranean region.

Another key aspect of the Roadshows was the exchange of best practices among BSOs, enabling them to learn from each other's experiences and enhance their operations. This encouraged the development of new synergies and business opportunities, contributing to the growth and success of both the South Mediterranean and EU entrepreneurs.

Overall, the Roadshows played a vital role in bridging the gap between EU entrepreneurs and the South Mediterranean region, fostering understanding, collaboration, and economic development.

Few numbers:



1000

Participants reached
in Europe



4

EU MED roadshows implemented
in an EU country



300

female entrepreneurs & women in
managerial position targeted



450

BSOs, international structures, SMEs and women-led
enterprises participated in the EU roadshows







EBSOMED Publications

For a better-informed business environment
in the Mediterranean region.

The project publications

EBSOMED publications played a vital role in sharing knowledge and promoting economic development in the Euro-Mediterranean region. These valuable resources captured the project's expertise and experiences, offering insights to a wide audience.

Designed to be accessible and user-friendly, the publications catered to BSOs, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and researchers, providing clear and concise information. Their findings and recommendations were easily understood, making them a valuable reference for individuals and organizations seeking to learn from the project's accomplishments.

Beyond the project's conclusion, the importance of EBSOMED publications remains significant. They serve as a lasting legacy, providing a reference point for future stakeholders. These publications offer practical tools, success stories, and effective strategies that can be applied to foster entrepreneurship and promote economic cooperation. The availability of EBSOMED publications ensures the continuity of knowledge transfer and capacity building. They serve as a repository of information, facilitating the replication and adaptation of successful approaches. This contributes to sustained economic growth and improved collaboration between Euro-Mediterranean countries.

Few numbers:



10

Factsheets



3

Sector strategic paper



5

Industry outlooks



+30

other technical resources









EBSOMED communication channels and visibility tools

For an enhanced visibility among BSOs and SMEs across the region



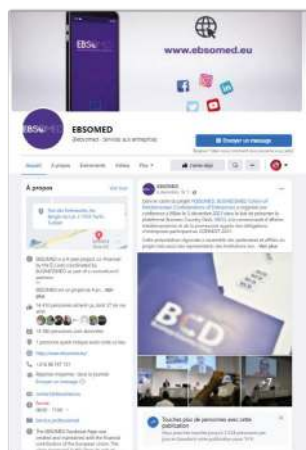
Communication chanel



Website



Mobile App



Social Media accounts

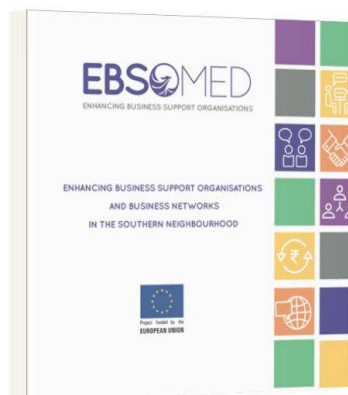
Classic tools



visibility items



Rollup



Brochure

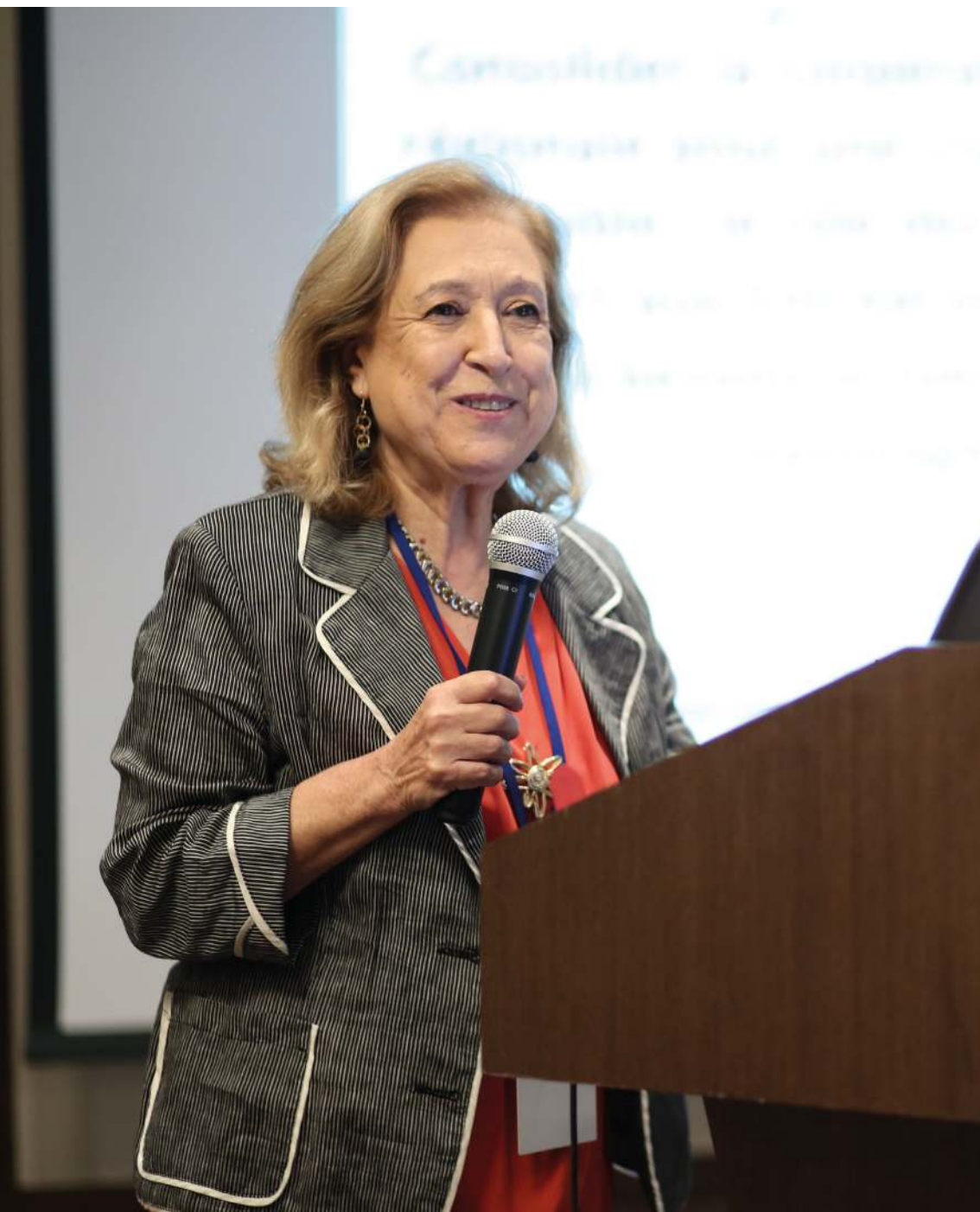


Project
co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

BCD
Business Country Desk

3 December 2021
Milan, ITALY







Succes stories & Testimonials

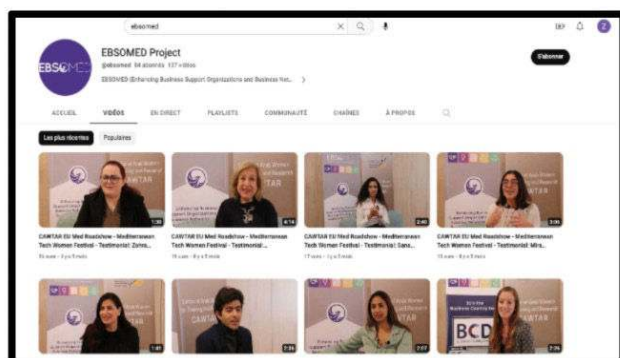
For more inspiration and best practices

Succes stories & Testimonials

The EBSOMED Success Stories and Testimonials! section on YouTube invites you to explore a collection of captivating narratives showcasing the remarkable impact and success achieved through the EBSOMED project.

We invite you to Immerse yourself in the stories of individuals, entrepreneurs, and organizations who have benefited from EBSOMED's support and opportunities. Witness their triumphs, challenges, and valuable lessons learned along their entrepreneurial journeys. From new services creation to market expansion stories, these success stories exemplify the potential and resilience of businesses in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Through heartfelt testimonials, entrepreneurs express their gratitude and share personal experiences of how EBSOMED has transformed their businesses. These stories not only highlight the project's impact but also inspire others to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams and seize the opportunities offered by EBSOMED.



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Project funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

This publication was co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the EBSOMED consortium and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

BUSINESSMED
Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises



ANIMA
INVESTMENT NETWORK



EUROCHAMBRES



ASSOCIATION DES CHAMBRES DE COMMERCE ET D'INDUSTRIE DE LA MEDITERRANEE
UNION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
اتحاد غرف التجارة والصناعة للبحر الأبيض المتوسط



Deutsch-Arabisches
Industrie- und Handelskammer
German-Arab
Chamber of Industry and Commerce
الغرفة الألمانية العربية للصناعة والتجارة



Ebsomed.eu



The EBSOMED project is led by BUSINESSMED within a consortium of six partners.