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Interreg NEXT MED Programme and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Mediterranean MSMEs journey to the Arab SMEs
Summit (Doha, 2024) - Call for applications

Rules for participation

#everythingMEDpossible





This call for applications is co-organized by the EU-funded [Interreg NEXT MED](#) Programme and the [United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia](#) (ESCWA), main organizer of the Arab SMEs Summit 2024 that will take place in Doha (Qatar) between the 17th and 19th November 2024.

The rules contained in this document are fully applicable to any Micro, Small or Medium Enterprise (MSME) interested in participating in the call for applications. The non-compliance with these rules may lead to the rejection of the participant. One-man enterprises are authorized to participate but not freelance workers.

The objective of this call for application is the selection of up to 6 MSMEs that have been related to the ENI CBC MED projects (see below for more details) that will be given the opportunity to showcase their innovative and sustainable achievements during the Arab SMEs Summit 2024.

WHICH ORGANIZATION CAN PARTICIPATE?

Any interested MSME¹ may participate in the contest provided that **it is based² in one of the following participating countries of the ENI CBC MED³ Programme: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia**. The organizations must have been partners, subgrantees or financial beneficiaries of ENI CBC MED projects.

The participation of individuals will be rejected as well as the participation of entities which have had no clear and demonstrable links with ENI CBC MED projects. When completing the application, the MSMEs **will necessarily indicate the ENI CBC MED project(s)** they have been related with.

¹ According to [the recommendation by the EC \(2013\)](#), MSMEs have employ less than 250 staff members (<250), have an annual turnover of maximum € 50 Million (≤50M) and a maximum balance sheet of € 2 Million (≤2 M).

² As evidenced by their national VAT number (or equivalent)

³ That is, the Arab states of the ENI CBC MED programme.



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It is worth remarking that having received direct funds from the projects is not a **mandatory condition** as other types of support received from the projects might be considered, such as coaching, training, advice to entrepreneurship, etc.

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

Only one application under each specific area

Each MSME can participate to this call **with a maximum of 1 application per thematic area**. Should an MSME send more than 2 applications, all the applications sent may be rejected.

Thematic areas

The participant will send to the Interreg NEXT Programme a maximum of 1 application to each of the following 2 thematic fields:

Thematic Area 1: Circular Economy breakthroughs by Mediterranean SMEs

In the application Form, MSMEs are invited to describe **significant innovations** in terms of **circular economy** having led to the production of new products, new services, new processes or new business models, or, to any noticeable improvement of preexisting products, services, processes or business models. The MSMEs should be able to demonstrate that, thanks to their innovations, they have contributed, or they are contributing **to an economy which is more sustainable and more efficient in resources**.

The call is open to **any type of sector**, either Mediterranean traditional or emergent sectors.

The featured innovations will have **enough interest to be replicable or extendable** to other geographical areas to the Arab world. Only innovations with a **high potential of impact** should be considered.

Thematic Area 2: Agro-food and Agriculture

In this thematic area, MSMEs will present **significant innovations** having led or leading to build a stronger and more competitive Mediterranean **agricultural sector**, making it more sustainable from the triple point of view of economics, social and environment.



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Innovations in products, services or processes that led to an increased capacity of the Mediterranean to go the market, to internationalize and to generate jobs while scaling-up are to be considered.

In this second area the priority focus is on business and job creation while the focus of the first thematic area is on the contribution to the development of a Mediterranean circular economy. Applications with the exact same content presented to the 2 areas will not be accepted.

Both thematic areas may have a dedicated Side-event at the Arab SMEs Summit in Doha in November 2024.

Products/services/processes/models to be presented in both Thematic Areas do not have to be strictly limited to the achievements of the MSMEs within the framework of their participation in the ENI CBC MED project (previous or consecutive achievements may be presented too).

Other participation criteria

The applications **must** satisfy the following participation criteria:

- The applying MSME accepts that, if selected by the Interreg NEXT MED Programme, **it will attend the Arab SMEs Summit in Doha.**
- The organization accepts that it will participate to the Arab SMEs Summit **under the coordination of the Interreg NEXT MED.**

At any moment of the procedure, the non-compliance with one or several of these criteria will automatically lead to the rejection of the participant.

Submission of applications

To participate to the call, MSMEs will have to apply by **the 19th of July 2024**. To do so, they will **complete the application form available on the ESCWA Website** (with a link from the Interreg NEXT MED Website).

The participants **must complete an application for each thematic area they want to participate to.**

Applications sent by mail or by any other means, as well as applications sent after the deadline will be rejected. If the application form is not completed appropriately, the Interreg NEXT MED Programme may exclude the participant from the competition.

Questions on the contest can be addressed by email only (see below). No questions on the contest will be answered by phone. Questions of the state of the selection process will not be answered neither by phone or my email.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF THE MSMEs

All applicants compliant with the rules contained in this document submitted by eligible organizations **will be evaluated by a Selection Committee** composed of representatives from the Interreg NEXT MED Programme and from ESCWA.

The Selection Committee will **preselect up to a maximum of 10 applications for the Thematic Area 1 and up to a maximum 10 applications for the Thematic Area 2.**

The **first 3 organizations in both Thematic Area lists will be invited to attend the World Arab Summit** of Doha under the coordination of the Interreg NEXT MED Programme. The remaining organizations will be put on a reserve list.

The results of the evaluation will be published on the website and relevant social media profiles ([Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#)) of the Interreg NEXT MED Programme by the latest at 14th September 2024.

Evaluation Criteria

The Selection Committee will assess the applicants against the following **evaluation criteria**:

- **Relevance** with the thematic area selected in the application
- **Impact** of the product/service/initiative indicated in the application and to be featured at the Arab SMEs Summit
- **Potential of replicability and scalability**, in particular (though not only) among Arab states
- **Contribution to the digital economy** (as a horizontal non-mandatory criteria)



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Each criterion will be scored from 1 to 5 points, 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the best score. The final scores of the pictures will be the arithmetical addition of the 3 sub-scores. Final scores obtained by each organization will be available upon demand.

In case 2 or more applications receive the same score and occupy the third (3) position of one ranking, the applications will be reassessed by a different group of assessors (substitutes) on the same 3 evaluation criteria. Should the draw persist between the applications, the application with the higher score in Relevance first, and, in Impact second, will be chosen.

Finally, if the application can't be untied after these specific procedures, priority will be given to the application that was submitted first.

Information to the selected organizations

The selected MSMEs as well as the final ranking **will be announced before the 14th September 2024** on the different Programme communication platforms.

Moreover, selected MSMEs will be informed by email using the address provided in the participation form. The winning organizations will be given 5 calendar days to acknowledge receipt of the notification and explicitly accept the award. Failure to explicitly accept the award during the given deadline will be considered as a rejection of the award, and the Interreg NEXT MED Programme will automatically contact the following organization according to the final ranking lists.

The Programme cannot be held accountable for wrong emails submitted by the participants in the application form.

By accepting the award, the **selected MSMEs accepts to undertake the travel indicated in the below section.**

Invitation to participate in the Arab SMEs Summit

The 3 selected MSMEs of each category (6 organizations) will be invited **to participate and share their products/services/initiatives during the Arab SMEs summit** that will take place between 17th November 2024 and 19th November 2024 in Doha (Qatar). Travel costs to and from Doha and accommodation in Doha for one (1) person per SME **will be covered by the organization.**



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Beyond the possibility to participate in the Interreg NEXT MED side-events, the selected SMEs may have the opportunity to participate in the other activities of the summit.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned, the Interreg NEXT MED Programme reserves the right to cancel the participation of the selected MSMEs in cases of lack of funds or if the participation of the Programme to the summit is canceled.

PERSONAL DATA

The data collected in the Application Form as well as any personal data that the Interreg NEXT MED Programme may collect at any time during or after the application procedure will be used in conformity with the EU Regulation 2016/679 on General Data Protection and for the strict and only purpose of implementing the participation of the selected MSMEs to the Arab SMEs summit.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE RULES

By participating in the contest, participants agree to confirm that they have read and abide by the Rules and decisions of the Interreg NEXT MED Programme and the Selection Committee. The organizers reserve the right to modify the Rules (and then notify appropriately the modifications) or cancel the contest at any time without prior notice.

CONTACTS

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