



EU–South MED Cluster Matchmaking Event

In the context of the #TechDays

Organised by the European Commission, THE NEXT
SOCIETY, Ceipiemonte, and the European Cluster
Collaboration Platform (ECCP)

Dates: 12 – 13 October 2021

The event will be held virtually

An initiative of the European Union





In the context of the #TechDays

EU - South MED

Cluster Matchmaking Event

SAVE THE DATE | 12-13 October 2021 | Virtual Event



Call for Expression of Interest

30th of September 2021 **(23h59 CEST)**

Focus areas:

- Agriculture and Food Industry
- Creative Industries and tourism
- Digital Solutions
- Sustainable Energy and Greentech
- Transport and Mobility

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1. Objectives

The **EU – South MED Cluster Matchmaking Event** will take place virtually on 12-13 October 2021, in the context of the #TechDays – Match Up! event by THE NEXT SOCIETY. The event will be organised by the European Commission, THE NEXT SOCIETY's partners ANIMA Investment Network and Ceipiemonte - the Piemonte Agency for Investments, Export and Tourism, and the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP).

The overall objective of the event is to promote information exchange and networking opportunities for European cluster organisations and their members with counterparts from Southern Mediterranean (South MED) countries.¹

The overall objectives for the participants of the event include:

- Explore trade, investment and partnering opportunities related to the focus areas.
- Initiate discussions that would ultimately result in Letters of Interest, Memorandum of Understanding, and other types of partnership agreements.

The matchmaking event will take place in the context of the last of a series of 3 #TechDays designed by THE NEXT SOCIETY: Meet Up, Catch Up and Match Up! The goal of this series of events is to bring about collaborations between South MED and EU innovators but also within the South MED ecosystem, with clusters playing a key role in the value chain.

The Call for Expression of Interest is launched to identify **Cluster Organisations, Business Network Organisations and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)** from the EU (and non-EU COSME) countries who wish to participate in the EU – South MED Cluster Matchmaking Event & #TechDays. The participants should be related to the following focus areas:

- Agriculture and Food Industry
- Creative Industries and Tourism
- Digital Solutions
- Sustainable Energy and Greentech
- Transport and Mobility

All applicants should be willing and committed to participate in the virtual activities of the EU – South MED Cluster Matchmaking Event & #TechDays. **The submission of an expression of interest to this call indicates an acceptance of the terms stated in the call.**

This call is published on the ECCP website. Expressions of interest to participate in this event must **be submitted electronically following the following [link](#) (also available on the ECCP website) by the 30th of September 2021 (23h59 CEST).**

¹ Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine*, and Tunisia

* *This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue*

2. Context of the initiative

The event will take place in the context of the ECCP activities. As part of an approach aimed at promoting international cluster cooperation for the benefit of SMEs, DG GROW is continuing its support to international cluster cooperation through the ECCP including the organisation of specific cluster matchmaking events and policy development actions. This is carried out to support the efforts of cluster and business network organisations to develop partnerships and business cooperation in European and global markets, for the benefit of their members. The events are currently funded under the EU Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs Programme (COSME).

The ECCP provides a visible framework for this virtual matchmaking event and for subsequent events. As the cornerstone of the European strategy in support of SMEs' internationalisation through clusters, the ECCP provides a wide range of information and services to facilitate the interaction between clusters not only within Europe, but also with international partners.

In order to ensure a successful event that will have a high level of participation from South-MED organisations, the ECCP has established a collaboration with [THE NEXT SOCIETY](#), an initiative co-funded by the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR). THE NEXT SOCIETY is an open community of changemakers, entrepreneurs, investors, corporates, NGOs, public and private innovation, research and economic development hubs from Europe and seven Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. It aims at mobilising, promoting and reinforcing innovation ecosystems and economic development in the MENA region. THE NEXT SOCIETY supports the emergence of talents and innovative leaders who will drive the next trends and usages by targeting start-ups, clusters and technology transfer offices to accompany their development.

3. Agenda

The EU – South MED Cluster Matchmaking Event & #TechDays will be held virtually on 12th – 13th October 2021. The **tentative agenda** for the event is the following:

Tuesday, 12 th October 2021		
09:30 – 09:45	Opening	
09:45– 10:15	Parallel panels	Panel 1 - Global Digital Marketing, social media and business promotion
		Panel 2 - Eco-sustainability: advantages and implications in the Next Society's target sectors
10:15 – 10:30	BREAK	
10:30 – 12:10	B2B sessions for Clusters and Business Network Organisations B2B Sessions for SMEs	
12:10 – 12:20	Debriefing session	
12:20 – 12:30	Q&A and Closure	

Wednesday, 13 th October 2021		
09:00 – 09:05	Opening	
09:05 – 11:05	B2B & C2C sessions (mixed)	
11:05 – 11:20	BREAK	
11:20 – 11:30	Online site visit – South MED cluster	
11:30 12:00	Debriefing Session - testimonials	
12:00 – 12:10	Online site visit - EU cluster	
12:10 – 12:20	Q&A, Wrap up & Collective Picture	

The cluster, business network organisations and SMEs selected to participate in the event will have to send a **commitment e-mail** to eccp.matchmaking@vva.it in which they agree to **attend the virtual event, conduct at least four virtual matchmaking meetings and attend the virtual debriefing session** on 12th October.

The participation in the EU – South MED Cluster Matchmaking Event & #TechDays will be free of charge. Since this is an online event, there is no travelling or reimbursement of any expense.

4. Who can participate?

This call is addressed to **clusters, business network organisations and SMEs** that are interested in engaging in **collaboration activities with South-MED counterparts** in fields related to:

- Agriculture and Food Industry
- Creative Industries and Tourism
- Digital Solutions
- Sustainable Energy and Greentech
- Transport and Mobility

The event is open to clusters, business network organisations and SMEs **from the EU and non-EU COSME countries**. Cluster and business network organisations whose SME members are interested in developing business collaborations with South-MED organisations are highly encouraged to respond to this call.

Participation of **cluster organisations involved in [ESCP-4i \(European Strategic Cluster Partnership – Going International\)](#)** is strongly encouraged.

Opportunities for SMEs: The ECCP encourages European cluster and business network organisations to disseminate this opportunity among their SME members and contacts, who, if interested, should apply independently.

5. Selection criteria

To be selected:

- The cluster, business network organisation or SME must be a legal entity established in a European Union Member State or in a country eligible for participating in the COSME programme. See list of non-EU participants in the COSME programme here: <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/39579>
- The cluster or business network organisation has to be involved in offering or channelling cluster or network support services to SMEs;
- The cluster organisations should comply with the definition given in: <https://clustercollaboration.eu/cluster-definitions>
- The cluster organisations shall be registered in the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (www.clustercollaboration.eu) with a complete profile (the complete cluster profile of each applicant registered on the ECCP should be provided together with their application)
- The SME must comply with the definition given in the European Commission recommendation 2003/361: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&locale=en>

Applications will be selected according to the following qualitative criteria:

- Cluster, business network organisation or SME's activity in the target sectors (Agriculture and Food Industry; Creative Industries and Tourism; Digital Solutions; Sustainable Energy and Greentech; and Transport and Mobility).
- On the cluster, business network organisation or SME's potential to maximise matchmaking opportunities, through the participation to this event, based on a clear description of the type of partnership the applicant is looking for, and on the potential for establishing tangible cooperation as an outcome of the Event. This expression of interest for collaboration shall be clearly articulated as responses to the questionnaire to be submitted with the application.
- On the willingness to engage in closer cooperation with other cluster and business network organisations from South-MED countries to better support SMEs in global competition through joint efforts.

The decision on the selection of applicants will be based both on the requirements above and qualitative merit of each application; the balanced geographical coverage of the COSME participating countries will, in case of equal merit, be taken into consideration.

6. Expression of interest

Expressions of interest should be submitted electronically via the following [link](#) (also available on the ECCP website) by the **30th of September 2021** (23h59 CEST).

The expression of interest should encompass:

- A questionnaire on the cluster, business network organisation or SME profile – available on the link above;
- Evidence of the legal entity of the cluster or business network organisation – to be uploaded when submitting the questionnaire;
- For clusters, evidence of the completed cluster profile registered in the ECCP (e.g. print screen) – to be uploaded when submitting the questionnaire.

Please make sure to provide complete, accurate information and contact details.

Visit ECCP for further information on cluster collaboration and support: www.clustercollaboration.eu

If you have any questions, please contact the following email at: eccp.matchmaking@vva.it

All the personal data provided will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data.