

# EU – South MED Cluster Matchmaking Event & #TechDays

In the context of the 7<sup>th</sup> EU-Africa Business  
Forum

Organised by the **European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP)**

in cooperation with **THE NEXT SOCIETY**

*Date: 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020*

*The event will be held virtually*



## Call for Expression of Interest

**Deadline: 21 September 2020 (23h59 CEST)**

Focus areas:

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

[www.clustercollaboration.eu](http://www.clustercollaboration.eu)

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## Objectives

The European Commission will organise the **EU – South MED Cluster Matchmaking Event & #TechDays**, on 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020. This event will be jointly organised by the EU-funded European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) and THE NEXT SOCIETY.

The objectives of the event are:

- To initiate and to strengthen cluster cooperation between European cluster organisations with counterparts from South MED countries and their members, especially SMEs, by exploring trade, investment and partnering opportunities related to the specific sectors outlined below; and
- To promote discussions and networking between participants, which would ultimately result in the development and signing of Letters of Interest, Memorandum of Understanding, and other types of partnership agreements.

This call for Expression of Interest is published on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) website: <http://www.clustercollaboration.eu>

Find below more information on the event, including the eligibility criteria to participate and the instructions to apply.

This event will take place in the context of the 7<sup>th</sup> EU-Africa Business Forum, which will be a major event bringing together European and African business leaders and policy makers to foster business cooperation between the two continents.

This call is published on the ECCP website. Expressions of interest to participate in this event must be **submitted electronically by the 21 of September 2020 (23h59 CEST)** at [EUmatchmaking@clustercollaboration.eu](mailto:EUmatchmaking@clustercollaboration.eu)

## Context

The **EU-South MED Cluster Matchmaking Event** is set up to support clusters, in their mission to open up new markets, to collaborate on cross-sectorial level and to provide relevant first contacts for the benefit of their members.

As part of an approach aimed at promoting international cluster cooperation for the benefit of SMEs, the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the European Commission (DG GROW) is supporting international cluster cooperation through the ECCP, including the organisation of specific cluster matchmaking events and policy development actions. This is carried out to promote the efforts of cluster organisations to develop partnerships and business cooperation in European and global markets, for the benefit of their members. This will also facilitate the integration of European SMEs in European value chains.

The matchmaking 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](#). 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 7 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. To reach these goals, THE NEXT SOCIETY launched a four-year action plan (2017-2020), co-funded by the EU. It supports the emergence of talents and innovative leaders who will drive the next trends and usages by targeting startups, clusters and technology transfer offices to accompany their development.

## Agenda

The **tentative agenda** for the event is the following:

Monday, 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	
11.00 – 12.30	Online Seminar
14.00 – 17.00	Online Matchmaking Session

Tuesday, 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	
10.00 – 12.00	Online Matchmaking Session

Prior to the event, the selected participants are expected to participate in a preparatory live **webinar** entitled "Tracking of potential partnerships and guidance to business showcase". The webinar will inform participants on how to use the online matchmaking platform and on how to conduct the online matchmakings.

## Who can participate?

The Call for Expression of Interest is launched to identify Cluster Organisations and Network Organisations from EU (and non-EU COSME) countries who wish to participate in the EU – South MED Cluster Matchmaking Event & #TechDays, and whose SME members are interested in developing business collaborations with South-MED organisations. The participants' activities 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

Participation of cluster organisations involved in ESCP-4i (European Strategic Cluster Partnership – Going International) is strongly encouraged. Strand 2 ESCP-4i partnerships are required to communicate if South-MED countries are among the target countries included in their internationalisation strategy.

#### Opportunities for SMEs:

- European cluster organisations are encouraged to disseminate this opportunity among their SMEs.
- Cluster organisations will have the opportunity to propose two SMEs for possible participation in the EU – South MED Cluster Matchmaking Event & #TechDays.

## Eligibility and selection criteria

To be selected:

- The cluster or business network organisation must be a legal entity established in a European Union Member State or other COSME country. See list here: <http://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/27019>
- The cluster or business network organisation should be registered on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) [www.clustercollaboration.eu](http://www.clustercollaboration.eu) with a complete profile (the complete cluster profile of the applicant registered on the ECCP should be provided together with their application);
- The cluster or business network organisation should comply with the definition given in section 1.3 (s) on 'innovation clusters' in Annex I of the "EU Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation"<sup>1</sup>;
- Applicants should be active in the sectors targeted by the event (see page 1) and to present opportunities for collaboration with those sectors.
- Each cluster or business network organisation has to be involved in offering or channeling cluster or network support services to SMEs.
- Targeted participants should be Cluster managers (1 participant per Cluster).

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<sup>1</sup> 2014/C 198/01. According to this definition: ('innovation clusters' means structures or organised groups of independent parties (such as innovative start-ups, small, medium and large enterprises, as well as research and knowledge dissemination organisations, non-for-profit organisations and other related economic actors) designed to stimulate innovative activity by promoting sharing of facilities and exchange p.9 9 of knowledge and expertise and by contributing effectively to knowledge transfer, networking, information dissemination and collaboration among the undertakings and other organisations in the cluster;) See at: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN) with further information available at [http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state\\_aid/modernisation/rdi\\_framework\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/modernisation/rdi_framework_en.pdf) and [http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state\\_aid/legislation/horizontal.html](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/horizontal.html), amending the Community Framework (2006/C 323/01 see at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:323:0001:0026:en:PDF> a reference of section 5.8 of which was included in the COSME Work Programme regarding the "innovation clusters" definition

**Applications will be selected according to the following qualitative criteria:**

- The cluster's potential to maximise matchmaking opportunities, through the participation to this event, based on a clear description of the type of partnership the applicant cluster organisation 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 in the responses to the cluster questionnaire provided in annex and to be submitted with the application.
- The willingness and readiness 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.
- Clusters operating outside the fields indicated should extensively motivate their application.
- Participation in a COSME-funded European Strategic Cluster Partnership ESCP-4i is an asset. For further information visit the following link: <https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/eu-cluster-partnerships/escp-4i/secondgeneration>

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. The selection of the applicants based on the criteria above will be made by the EASME and the European Commission services.

The **selected** cluster and business network organisations will have to submit a **commitment e-mail** in which they agree:

- to participate in the **preparatory webinar** entitled "Tracking of potential partnerships and guidance to business showcase;
- to attend the **virtual seminar**;
- to **conduct at least four virtual matchmaking meetings** during the event; and
- to complete an Online Questionnaire.

## Costs and expenses

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

## Application

Clusters organisations applying to this call 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.**

Applications should be submitted electronically by the **21 of September 2020 (23h59 CEST)** to Mark Spinoglio and Daniela Coutinho at [EUmatchmaking@clustercollaboration.eu](mailto:EUmatchmaking@clustercollaboration.eu).

The submitted expression of interest should encompass:

- A completed questionnaire (located on the call website as a separate document) on the cluster or network organisation's profile;
- An evidence of the legal entity of the cluster or network organisation; and
- A proof/ evidence of the completed cluster profile registered in the ECCP (print screen).

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

Visit ECCP for further information: <http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/>

If you have any questions, please contact Daniela Coutinho and Igor Kopic at [EUMatchmaking@clustercollaboration.eu](mailto:EUMatchmaking@clustercollaboration.eu)

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.