



# INVESTMED

## Sub-grant Programme Kick-off Event

**24th and 25th October 2022, Beirut, Lebanon**  
**Co-organised by Beyond Group, IEMed, EMEA,**  
**and CEEBA.**

To support the development of sustainable entrepreneurship and business initiatives, by creating a backing environment and facilitating access to new markets with the final goal of generating increased economic opportunities and jobs for young people and women in Egypt, Tunisia, and Lebanon.



# INTRODUCTION

The INVESTMED Sub-grant Kick-off event took place on the 24th and 25th October 2022 gathering the winners of the call for sub-grants from the three partner countries: Egypt, Tunisia, and Lebanon. The event was hosted in Beirut, Lebanon, and was co-organised by the project partners: Beyond Group, European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA), and the Confederation of Egyptian-European Business Associations (CEEBA).

The EU funded INVESTMED project launched a call a year ago for sub-grants to provide support for new, sustainable business opportunities for young people and women in three countries: Egypt, Lebanon, and Tunisia. The call looked for innovative MSMEs, startups, and recently established enterprises mainly involved in the following sectors: Green economy, Blue economy, and Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI). 12 MSMEs were awarded the grant in Lebanon, 12 in Egypt, and 14 in Tunisia.

The selected entrepreneurs besides receiving a grant for their project, are set to benefit from many other advantages from the INVESTMED project such as: receiving an incubation programme, being part of an online community with different investors, actors, and startups from other countries, receive specific Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) training for the three countries, and participate in multiple events with actors and investors from all over the Mediterranean.

The Kickoff event began with an awards ceremony for the winning entrepreneurs to celebrate the kick-off, then we heard from industry experts addressing the challenges facing the corresponding sectors (green economy, blue economy, and CCI). Following that, the entrepreneurs could break out into workshop sessions to reflect and discuss the ideas introduced by the experts in the context of their own businesses and sectors. Finally, the entrepreneurs were given the opportunity to check their contract for consultation.

The event was a great success starting the winning businesses on their journeys to make a lasting impact to sustainable and creative industries in the region. The next time the subgrantees meet will be in Barcelona in the spring – until then!

## Background to the INVESTMED programme:

MSMEs in the Mediterranean region face important challenges in terms of sustainability, capacity to innovate, competitiveness and internationalization. These challenges call for new solutions so that MSMEs can maintain their existence and enhance growth. Making the economy greener, developing natural assets, and enhancing innovation and creativity can provide economic, knowledge-based, and environmental benefits to the Mediterranean region.

INVESTMED addresses economic and environmental challenges, supporting sustainable, creative, and innovative business opportunities for young people and women in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia. INVESTMED is set to benefit MSMEs via training, coaching and sub-granting. It will also provide support for public authorities by enhancing their capacities to encourage and to facilitate MSME access to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

INVESTMED aims to support the development of sustainable entrepreneurship and business initiatives, by creating a strong business environment and by facilitating access to new markets, with the goal of generating increased economic opportunities and jobs for young people and women in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia.



# Summary of the event

## Introduction of the project and the INVESTMED Programme

Ms. Jihen Boutiba opened the session by highlighting the role of INVESTMED project in promoting sustainable initiatives and creating employment opportunities for youth and women in the southern Mediterranean. Ms. Boutiba emphasized the crucial role that the 41 beneficiaries had to play to make the project a success and promised that the project team would give them all the necessary support.

Before concluding her opening speech, Ms. Boutiba stressed that this first regional event is an excellent opportunity to create new connections between different entrepreneurs from different countries and to learn more about the southern Mediterranean region in terms of challenges and opportunities.

Mr. Vincent Ernoux from the Joint Technical Secretariat intervened to congratulate the 41 sub-recipients for winning the grants and assured his confidence in their innovative and sustainable initiative for their ability to lead successful endeavours.

Mr. Ernoux also took the opportunity to explain the ENI CBC Med program and its role in addressing common challenges in the Mediterranean basin as it helps to have two shores in permanent exchange, which is the promise of a developed, complementary, and self-sufficient Mediterranean basin.

Jessica Hannah, from the Beyond Group, opened the event and encouraged the winning entrepreneurs to make the most of the event and the people that were in attendance to promote synergies and collaboration.



Cristina Valero from IEMed, summarised where the project is so far: the subgrant call was launched almost one year ago with 38 applications being received from Lebanon, 50 from Tunisia, and 22 from Egypt. This had the result that 12 were selected from Egypt and Lebanon, 14 from Tunisia. With this, the incubation programme can start with Business Support Organisations.

Cynthia Echave from Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association explained that INVESTMED will have lasting impact. This part of the project will ensure capitalisation of the project and make the example visible to the region. Experiences can have an impact on policy and how to encourage green economy and business models in the region.

Finally, Mokhtar Kembi from BusinessMed, gave an overview of the financials and costs assuring our entrepreneurs that support will be given throughout the process.



## Award Ceremony for the winning entrepreneurs

The winning entrepreneurs were presented with their certificates to cement their participation in the programme. The awards were presented by

Mr. Mohamed SGHEIR BEN YOUSSEF – BUSINESSMED

Ms. Jessica HANNA and Ms Raya SFEIR – BEYOND GROUP

Ms. Marion KUSSMANN – CEEBA

Entrepreneurs from Lebanon were presented with their award by Beyond Group Representatives Jessica Hanna and Raya Sfier.





Entrepreneurs from Tunisia were presented with their award by BUSINESSMED representative Mohamed Sgheir Ben Youssef.





Entrepreneurs from Egypt were presented with their award by CEEBA representative Marion Kussmann.





## Workshop: challenges for green and creative entrepreneurship

### Keynote experts:



**Mr Antoine Karam**  
**Country Director Lebanon, Right to Play International**  
**Green Economy Expert**

Antoine is a Business, Management & Development expert with 16 years of experience in supporting international organizations & private sector companies develop their strategies, manage their project programs, develop proposals & studies, access funding, grow their portfolio and build the capacity of their teams. He worked for 10 years with large consulting firms in France including Ernst & Young, CGI Consulting and Accenture consulting. He moved back to Beirut in 2015 and started supporting international and local actors in the development sector, with a focus on economic development, entrepreneurship and solid waste management. Antoine has trained, coached, and mentored more than 500 green and social entrepreneurs in the MENA region and was co-leading Switchmed Green Entrepreneurship programme implementation in Lebanon between 2015 & 2019. Antoine is currently the country director of Right To Play in Lebanon.

Mr Antoine Karam, a green economy expert, highlighted key approaches to bear in mind when embarking on a green business: it has to be sustainable both economically and environmentally. On economic sustainability, he warned entrepreneurs about the "serial grantee trap". It is important that entrepreneurs use the grant and the training provided to ensure their businesses are able to gain and maintain independence.

Mr Karam pointed out another trap for entrepreneurs which is the price-orientated culture. Many entrepreneurs try to make the cheapest product. Whilst price is an important factor, what consumers look for is value. This is an important lesson to keep in mind.





**Mr Hussam Hawwa  
Difaf Founder and CEO  
Blue Economy Expert**

Hussam holds a BSc. in Agricultural Sciences and Engineering Diploma from the American University of Beirut, as well as a MSc. degree in Rural Development Studies with minor in Integrated Water Resources Management from Wageningen University, Netherlands. He has complemented his studies with over 12 years of experience in conducting, managing or assessing projects in the water, wastewater, and environment sectors, collaborating with international NGOs, donors, government, water establishments, municipalities, and local communities across Lebanon and around the Mediterranean region. Founder and current CEO of Difaf SAL, an environmental engineering and consultancy company based in Lebanon. Difaf projects address water conservation and water-use efficiency, rainwater harvesting, wastewater treatment and pollution control, environmental impact assessments, sustainable agriculture, ecological restoration, and environmental policy. Scope of Difaf's work targets Lebanon and MENA region, reaching Iraq, Algeria, and Tunis. Representing Difaf, Hussam provided technical and business development trainings for farmers, students, and environmental entrepreneurs, participated in many seminars and workshops dealing with water issues, and invited speaker at notable events such as Beirut Water Week, IUCN – World Conservation Congress.

Mr Hussam Hawa, our keynote expert on blue economy businesses, spoke of the challenges facing the sector in the Mediterranean region and the solutions. The challenges he highlighted included water resources management and difficulties with fertiliser and contamination. In this capitalist age, one factor to take into consideration is the long-term effects on nature.







**Mr Ali Abu Awad**  
**Cofounder, Creative Consultant**  
**CCI Expert**

Ali is cultural & creative advocate, pursuing sustainable design through a practical set of skills in event management, audio visual arts & green technology. A multi-disciplinary communication consultant, an audio-visual producer, and a design thinker by essence. Ali has been supporting local & regional creatives and artists in Lebanon for the past 12 years and has worked with cross cultural artists in the MENA region in addition to various collaborations with performers, collectives, and spaces across the EU.

Our final expert, Mr Awad, discussed the importance of cultural and creative industries despite them seldom being recognised. He explained that they are everywhere, and these skills and knowledge are needed across sectors. It is also one of the most valuable as it is an industry and skill set that will be the last to be overtaken by automation. In the Lebanon, creatives have started to bring back the Arabic language into their work. This is a welcome movement.





## Working groups: what are the challenges in the context of each business?

Following the keynote speeches, the entrepreneurs split off into sector groups to discuss the challenges in the context of their own businesses. In each group, entrepreneurs made a short presentation of their companies.

In the blue economy group, there were 5 entrepreneurs moderated by Mr Mohamed Sgheir Ben Youssef of BUSINESSMED dealing in the following sub-sectors: microalgae production, recycling of plastic bottles, farm fishing, water treatment, and reduction of water waste. According to Taieb Nemissi, of Algae Pool (Tunisia), one of the main concerns in the blue economy in the MENA region is the scarcity of water. Their main challenge is funding, as there is high investment required in the sector. This was confirmed by Watersec, a company that provides a small device attached to pipelines to track real-time consumption. Another insight came from Marwa Eldriny, from Sustain Egypt Think Tank, who explained that there are many gaps in water treatment and water saving initiatives.

The challenge is how to best share knowledge between businesses, companies, and societies.

In the green economy group, there were 15 entrepreneurs moderated by Marion Kussman of CEEBA. The green economy industry is expansive and was subdivided into the following subsectors: waste, agriculture, sustainable materials, sustainable chemicals, natural cosmetics, and technology. One key challenge was sales respect to valorisation. In the waste sector, despite start-up trials to highlight added value from recycling, the sales are not satisfying. To solve this, we need better innovative trials alongside awareness campaigns. There were fruitful discussions on how to price the product: the lower limit should be the direct cost, and the upper limit is defined by the market.



The participants in each group were:

### Green:

#### Plstka

Plstka is a Rewarding app with Ai Optimization Supply chain system to waste management

By our app you can swap your solid trash by discounts and vouchers coupons in various life services such as Food , drinking , medical and transportation and you can also buy any product with price lower than market price by your trash.

#### Wastology Company

Wastology offers the environmental and economic solution of waste lube oil spillage.

It is first Egyptian used oil re-refining company manufactured entirely locally and aims to process 10% of the oils used in Egypt with the aim of producing re-refined base.

#### New Power

We are "New Power", Egyptian company specialized in the production of Alternative Fuels for the cement industry, specifically (RDF - Refuse Derived Fuel) and waste management.

#### ReFuse S.A.R.L

ReFuse bridges communities and industries, creating the key linkage for a circular economy able to empower each user. Waste-power grows with scale: it is when friends, neighbors, and local organizations cooperate that they can use its value to fund community initiatives, and solve their most-pressing issues. ReFuse flips the problem, making waste the solution.



### Hydrek

Hydrek provides innovative home scale hydroponic systems with creative designs that can save space, water and energy

### Green Alafco

Having started its activity since 2016, GREEN ALAFCO is a Tunisian recycling company of Aluminium Used Beverage Cans (UBC) and scrap PET Bottles through the social and financial inclusion of the informal sector of waste pickers and by installing smart recycling machines with innovative technologies.

### Moline

Moline is a manufacturing startup that makes clean, sustainable, well-designed skincare products for all family's members. It was born of a simple purpose: to create safe,

### Darmmess Sarl

Darmmess is a social enterprise producing marketing and distributing globally a high phenolic extra virgin olive, coming exclusively from their mimos village, southern Lebanon.

### Cubis Laboratoire

Cibus Laboratoire plays a positive role in decreasing pollution, limiting agricultural waste, maximizing the benefit from natural resources without bleeding them dry, combatting hunger and providing work opportunities particularly for women.

### SmartLand S.A.L

SmartLand supplies and installs an automated irrigation and fertigation smart system linked to a mobile application to serve the farmers optimize their production and operating model by providing them with real time data related to the soil they use.

### Recyglass

The project consists of installing a glass recycling and recovery unit and is based on the collection and crushing of glass waste to produce cullet which will be used as raw materials for glass manufacturing companies.

### Ithaka VTIC

Ithaka is the only and first Eco-friendly hostel in Alexandria providing high quality accommodation, cultural and social experiences with budget pricing.

### Savvy Element

Savvy Element is a green manufacturing company from sustainable homecare and self-care products.

### Dooda

Dooda Solutions is a women-led earthworm farm that raises earthworms using advanced technologies to produce premium grade soil and liquid vermicompost at commercial scale.

### Kainau Cosmentic

Kainau cosmetic a company specializing in the development, subcontracting, consulting and monitoring of cosmetic products

### Wrfley

Wrfley is an instant supermarket. We guarantee the delivery of groceries, fresh vegetables and meat in less than ONE hour.

### Smart logger

SMART LOGGER (SML) is an innovative company whose objective is to accelerate digital transformation in the environment, industry and mainly agriculture sector.

### Merit Aromas & Hierbals

Merit Aromas & Herbal teas comes in as a trend to reunite with nature and heading towards a healthier life in a parallel with nature.

### Lait Espoir

Lait Espoir is a Tunisian startup in agritech dedicated to creating technological solutions in agriculture especially in dairy milk farming, our first mobile app is SmartFarm that helps breeders manager better and easier their herd of cows.



## Blue:

### Algae Pool

AlgaePool is a Tunisian Startup which develop microalgae innovative production units using Recycled Smart Containers.

### Sustain Egypt Think Tank

Sustain Egypt Think Tank (SET)

- Online Strategic Sustainability Knowledge hub, and
- A platform for collecting and analyzing accurate data on the business implementation of sustainability goals (mainly related to water, energy, circular economy and the green economy, and social responsibility).

### WaterSec

Watersec is born to face water scarcity and limit its negative socio-economic impact. It offers a technological solution to monitor water consumption and make it sustainable.

### Fresh Fish

Fresh fish farm to produce a different types from fish as tilapia, cat fish and mullet then make process at fish as smoking fish and fillets.

### Live Love Recycle

Live Love Recycle is a social enterprise with the aim of making recycling easier by digitizing the waste management sector, while employing people in vulnerable situation, in order to create a self-sufficient waste management system.

## Cultural and Creative Industries:

### Moovin360

We are a 3D solution provider working mainly on promoting heritage and patrimony through realizing digital twins and 3D environment of the existing monuments.

### Chabrouh Eco Farm

Chabrouh eco farm is an educational farm that provides kids and youth with hands on educational programs to increase their awareness about the importance of protecting the environment, and hence to improve their eco-friendly behaviors.

### Cezar's Projects

Cezar's Projects is a rural development initiative founded by Cezar Mahmoud and led by a skilled local team of youth.

### Semsemia

Semsemia is a slow, educational, and rural tourism company that mainly operates in the provinces.

### Super Fny

Super Fny is a social enterprise specialized in vocational training and employment services of TVET students and graduates particularly and handicrafts generally to improve their competencies to fit the needs of the labor market.

### Ourghema

Ourghema was launched in 2018, it is a cultural co-working café, we work with the youth in our region to innovate and bring social change, we boost social entrepreneurship through the different incubation and support programs we implement.

### Plastic Lab

Plastic lab recycles the collected plastic waste by organizations and municipalities into construction and design materials, such as recycled plastic sheets, beams, and blocks that can be used in the construction and design sectors.

### Egypt Day Tours

Egyptomania offers authentic products created to reflect the local cultural diversities within certain parts of Egypt.



### Couss & Co Editions

Couss et Co publishing house is a social company, co-founded in 2012 by Tunisian artist Rym Jâafra and author Yassine Ellil. We are specialized in the publication of comic books and magazines.

### Mirage Group

Mirage Group is a company specializing in new technologies applied largely in the cultural field.

### B'sarya for Arts

Located in Egypt's north coast city of Alexandria, B'sarya is an art space that aims to contribute to the development of artists and the contemporary art scene in Egypt, with a focus on visual arts, Music and new media.

### Oasis Events

Oasis Events is an events agency that works on organizing cultural, touristic and entertainment projects and events with an impact on presenting the artistic, historic and cultural heritage in the region of Southern Tunisia.

### Domaine ElHtoub

A place where the walls tell of a dream come true. Retreats, events & more.

### Olive tree productions

Rooted In Beirut, Olive Tree is a production company catering to Lebanon as well as the Middle East and North Africa MENA regions.

## Next steps:

The selected projects are beginning to work on their start-ups and innovative business ideas whilst working with the incubation services. The next time the participants and partners will meet will be in Barcelona in 2023. Until then!





## Event agenda:

### DAY 1 - OCTOBER 24, 2022

**9:30 – 10:00 COFFEE AND WELCOME**

**10:00 – 11:00 Introduction of the Project**  
 ENI CBC Med Representative  
 Ms. Jessica HANNA – Beyond Group  
 Ms. Jihen BOUTIBA – BUSINESSMED

**11:00 – 12:00 Introduction of the INVESTMED Sub-grant Program**  
 Ms. Jihen BOUTIBA – BUSINESSMED  
 Prof. Rym Ayadi – EMEA  
 Mr. Mokhtar KEMBI – BUSINESSMED  
 Ms. Cristina VALERO – IEMed  
 Ms. Pascale ASSAAD – Fondation Diane  
 Mr. Ahmed BASTAWY – ICEALEX

**12:00 – 13:00 Announcement Award of Selected Projects**  
 Ms. Cristina VALERO – IEMed  
 Mr. Mohamed SGHEIR BEN YOUSSEF – BUSINESSMED  
 Mr. Alaa ARIDHI – Westerwelle Startup Haus Tunis  
 Ms. Pascale ASSAAD – Fondation Diane  
 Mr. Ahmed BASTAWY – ICEALEX

**13:00 – 13:30 Contracting session with BSOs**  
 Ms. Cristina VALERO – project manager at IEMed  
 Mr. Mohamed SGHEIR BEN YOUSSEF – BUSINESSMED  
 Mr. Alaa ARIDHI – Westerwelle Startup Haus Tunis  
 Ms. Pascale ASSAAD – Fondation Diane  
 Mr. Ahmed BASTAWY – ICEALEX

**13:30 – 14:30 LUNCH BREAK**

**14:30 – 16:30 Workshop: Challenges for green and creative entrepreneurship**  
**Keynote expert panel:**  
 Overview of 3 sectors: green, blue and CCI economy.  
 Moderated by Ms. Jessica Hanna – Beyond Group, and Cynthia Echave – EMEA  
 Expert in Green Economy – Mr. Antoine KARAM  
 Expert in Blue Economy – Mr. Hussam HAWA  
 Expert in CCI – Mr. Ali ABUAWAD  
**Working groups session**  
 WG1 – MSMEs on Green Economy  
 WG2 – MSMEs on Blue Economy  
 WG3 – MSMEs on Culture and Creative Economy

**16:30 – 17:00 END OF DAY 1**

**19:00- 21:00 Dinner and networking**





## DAY 2 - OCTOBER 25, 2022

**9:30 – 10:00** COFFEE AND WELCOME

**10:00 – 11:30** **Networking Event – Synergies Between Participants**

Ms. Raya SFEIR – Beyond Group  
 Ms. Jessica HANNA – Beyond Group  
 Ms. Marion KUSSMANN – CEEBA  
 Mr. Mohammad SGHEIR BEN YOUSSEF – BUSINESSMED

**11:30 – 12:30** **Sub-grants Q&A**

Ms. Cristina VALERO – IEMed  
 Mr. Mokhtar KEMBI - BUSINESSMED

**12:30 – 13:30** LUNCH BREAK

**14:30 – 16:30** **Panel Discussion and Signature of Contracts**

Ms. Cristina VALERO – IEMed  
 Mr. Mohamed SGHEIR BEN YOUSSEF – BUSINESSMED

**Group Lebanon**

Ms. Raya SFEIR – Beyond Group  
 Ms. Jessica HANNA – Beyond Group  
 Ms. Pascale ASSAAD – Fondation Diane

**Group Tunisia**

Mr. Mohamed SGHEIR BEN YOUSSEF – BUSINESSMED  
 Mr. Alaa ARIDHI - Westerwelle Startup Haus Tunis

**Group Egypt**

Ms. Marion KUSSMANN – CEEBA  
 Mr. Ahmed BASTAWY – ICEALEX

**15:00- 15:30** **Closure and next steps**

Ms. Jessica HANNA – Beyond Group  
 Mr. Mohamed SGHEIR BEN YOUSSEF – BUSINESSMED  
 ENI CBC Representative

