

MedVentures

Business development workshop

Marseille, 3 December, 2010

This workshop brought together 70 field players (incubators, entrepreneurs, clusters, investors, economic development agencies) from 12 Euro-Mediterranean countries in the framework of the MedVentures. The objective was to propose and share concrete actions so to help the best Mediterranean start-ups go international. The proposals discussed during this workshop will help defining a 3-year MedVentures action plan.

4 actions lines, avenues of discussion, were proposed:

- **Diasporas:** How to mobilise Diasporas networks originating from the Mediterranean so to help them create, coach or invest in high-potential start-ups?
- **Training, mentoring, coaching:** What supporting measures are needed to help the Mediterranean start-ups go international?
- **Co-incubation/Softlanding** : how to develop a distributed supporting network between Europe and the Mediterranean?
- **International connections:** What kind of matchmaking platforms and events to connect start-ups with investors, customers or partners?

A – Diasporas: How mobilise Diasporas networks originating from the Mediterranean in favour of the development of local high-potential start-ups?

(Click on the names /organizations for connections and more information)

Yacine Rhamoune / **Algerian Start up Initiative** business plan competition and distance coaching for young Algerians with innovative projects in 18 universities in Algeria. The competition has been organized in 2009 by the talents of the Algerian Diaspora in Silicon Valley: More than 130 business plans were received from Algeria, North Africa and Europe, and 3 winners were selected (free incubation, coaching, and cash) .

- **Proposed actions:** raising public awareness about entrepreneurship in Algeria, extend the business plan competition to the whole Maghreb region in partnership with TechWadi, reinforce the sourcing of start-ups from the Diaspora within the 2011 MedVentures competition.

Wissam Rabadi / **Bedaya** : Seed fund for Jordanian and regional start-ups. For many, Diasporas are seen as a pure loss for the country of origin when it is actually an asset for MED countries entrepreneurs and innovation professionals: skilled Diasporas can provide funding, expertise and international connections, even while remaining in their host country.

- **Proposed actions:** strengthen the role of social networks to engage skilled Diasporas in entrepreneurial projects (see the example of « **Jordan's Brain Gain** » on LinkedIn)

Pierre Distinguin / **Provence Promotion**: Description of the Home Sweet Home experience: a promotion program targeting highly-skilled French Diaspora professionals in the US wishing to create or acquire a business in high added value sectors in France (ICT, media, cleantech, etc.). Since

5 years, Home Sweet Home has encouraged and helped the reinstallation of 46 companies in Provence (70% of the entrepreneurs were French expatriates based in the USA).

- Proposed actions : Organization in Europe or in North America (US/Canada) of a Home Sweet Home event which will focus only on Mediterranean start ups (involving the MedVentures partners)

Samir Abdelkrim / [ANIMA Investment Network](#): For the Mediterranean companies, Diaspora networks can serve as business relays for internationalization. A study on economic Diasporas was realized by the ANIMA network to measure the potential of the Diaspora talents: more than 470 networks have been identified,

- Proposed actions : develop a web-based platform facilitating interactions between Mediterranean entrepreneurs, Diaspora talents abroad (who can provide mentoring, support and funding) and foreign investors. A regional workshop to go further will be organized in 2011.

B: Training, mentoring, coaching:.. What accompaniment measures to help the Mediterranean start-ups to go international?

Douja Gharbi, [CJD Maghreb](#) (Network of young Mediterranean business leaders who provides support to entrepreneurship): A large part of Mediterranean entrepreneurs are eager to go international but lack of concrete skills: communication, finance, legal and marketing. There is locally a strong need for expertise and accompaniment strategies in the Mediterranean. There is a clear need to create and consolidate networks of entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean, such as CJD Maghreb who is engaged in concrete actions of mentoring, coaching and training.

- Proposed actions : Organise more trainings dedicated to entrepreneurship in 2011, based upon the lessons of existing pilot initiatives in the Mediterranean, such as [Distrimed](#), which aims at enabling more Mediterranean businesswomen to access new distribution networks and go international (access to the European market), specifically by raising awareness about retail industry and e-commerce standards, but also franchising.

Albert Ollivier, Caisse des Dépôts et Consignation / [Fonds d'Amorçage de Réalisation et d'Orientation \(FARO\)](#) : With a budget of 1 million euros, the fund enables European entrepreneurs to study the feasibility of innovative projects undertaken in collaboration with partners from the South of the Mediterranean. Each project backed by the Faro is allocated a subsidy of 20,000 euros maximum, to finance up to 50% of the total costs involved in the works.

- Proposed actions : sustain and extend the FARO fund in order to strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs in the Mediterranean region.

Marie Corman, [European Commission – DG Industry](#) : Coordinator of the working party on Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation that brings together ministries and economic actors from Europe and the Mediterranean. The goal of the working party is to improve the investment climate of the Mediterranean by producing concrete recommendations and by providing support to innovation and start-ups.

- Proposed actions : gather several feedbacks from MedVentures partners on how better improve the ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean. Link MedVentures with the Enterprise Europe Network, a network gathering 580 organisations supporting enterprises in 47 countries (including Syria, Israel, Egypt and more recently Tunisia, Morocco).

Nader Bouhri, Talan: Talan is a Euro-Mediterranean consulting company specializing in the integration of new technologies (finance, telecom utilities and public services). Internationalization is a major concern for start-ups in the Mediterranean, even during the incubation period. The most dynamic and innovative start-ups rely highly on individual managers, but the networks, including the networks of highly-skilled diasporas, can also help a company to have an international vision.

Regis Ferron, IRD / PACEIM: PACEIM is a project which aims at supporting, by 2014, at least 100 Mediterranean start ups led by scientific and technical Diaspora talents located in France and Europe. A tender was launched between May and August 2010: 50 projects to create innovative companies were received. 6 companies will receive support and should be offered co-incubation services in the North and the South of the Mediterranean.

➤ **Proposed actions** : Integrate some partners of the MedVentures network in the PACEIM initiative in order to develop fruitful synergies.

C -Co-incubation between Europe and the Mediterranean

Robert Sanders / European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN) is a non-governmental pan-European network bringing together 200+ Business & Innovation Centres (BICs), and similar organisations such as incubators, innovation and entrepreneurship centres across the enlarged Europe (including some Mediterranean partners countries). EBN is a Platinum sponsor of MedVentures 2010 and propose to develop co-incubation (softlanding) so to help entrepreneurs develop their activities on the 2 rims of the Mediterranean.

➤ **Proposed actions** : 1 week (or more) of incubation and coaching in Europe (free office space and tailored business support) are offered by EBN to the 3 best MedVentures entrepreneurs. The 3 EBN hosting incubators sponsoring the Soft Landing Award are : [Knowledge Dock - University of East London \(UK\)](#), [Toulon Var Technologies \(France\)](#), [Business Development Friesland \(Holland\)](#).

Nicolas Rouhana / Berytech Berytech is the first facility in Lebanon for entrepreneurs, offering on the same site with high added value services : entrepreneurial experience, technological innovation, mentoring and business matching. Berytech has developed international partnerships and considers co incubation as the best way to offer an easy start for Mediterranean companies looking to go abroad

➤ **Proposed actions** : Berytech ask for the development of a regional service offer, a label, defining a quality of service and enabling cross-border actions for the co-incubation of start-ups.

Rob Moss / Knowledge Dock Business Centre is the University of East London's (UEL) enterprise development service and European Business Network (EBN) accredited Business Innovation Centre (BIC). Knowledge dock connects students to business opportunities, enable entrepreneurs to make the right connections to start their business, SMEs to the specific expertise to grow their business, and connect industry to the academic knowledge at the university. Knowledge dock already implemented softlanding actions, such as the coaching of French start-ups (from Poitiers) for their business development in UK.

➤ **Proposed actions** : Knowledge Dock Business Centre will support one of the 3 start-ups winners of MedVentures in 2011

Hasan Omar / PICTI : The Palestine Information and Communications Technology Incubator (PICTI), is an independent Palestinian organization that has been created through the initiative and support of the Palestinian

Information Technology Community. PICTI and its partner organizations, including PITA and Paltrade, have as their mission the revitalization and the sustainable growth of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) sector in Palestine. PICTI has successfully coached one of the 3 medventures winners, [Addicts 123](#)

- Proposed actions : include tele-services (based on videoconference) in the co-incubation offer

[Kamel Osmane](#) / [MEDAFCO](#) / MEDAFCO (coach MedVentures) engineering, consulting and support services in the Mediterranean. Medafco highlights the need for more training of incubators managers in Algeria & Maghreb, and for benchmarking with euro-mediterranean players

- Proposed actions : train South Med incubators managers so to set the basis for high quality co-incubation services between Europe and the Mediterranean

[Charlotte Blottiere](#) / [Toulon Var Technologies](#) (TVT): TVT supports entrepreneurs from the idea to the business development stage and is involved in a large number of european and Mediterranean projects. According to TVT softlanding/co-incubation fits very well with the Euro-Med context & environment

- Proposed actions : TVT will support one of the 3 start-ups winners of MedVentures in 2011; TVT proposes that staff exchanges be developed between euro-med incubators

D – Smart Matchmaking platforms and events between Europe et Méditerranée ?

[Pierre Laffite](#) / [Sophia Antipolis Foundation](#): The Foundation Sophia-Antipolis facilitates exchanges within a network of areas of innovation, clusters, centres of excellence and science parks at a French and international level. In the Sophia Antipolis innovation cluster (www.sophia-antipolis.org), the Foundation is responsible for organising scientific, technological and entrepreneurial activities. M. Laffite, its founder, stressed two points : the importance of mobilizing business angels networks at a regional level and the role of federative platform at local level (such as the "start-up factory" initiated by the Foundation and Sophia business angel) and at a Mediterranean level

- Proposed actions : Develop a Mediterranean services platform which would federate existing initiatives and players aimed at supporting high growth start-ups. Mobilize diaspora around business angels initiatives.

[Tommaso Giordano](#) / [Promos](#) : Promos is a Special Agency of the Milan Chamber of Commerce for the development of international activities. Its mission is to promote the entrepreneurial system and the pre-eminent areas of Milan and its province worldwide. Promos has several regional offices in the Mediterranean and is planning several actions in the region in 2011.

- Proposed actions : promote Medventures start-ups on the north of the Mediterranean. Promos plans to co-organise a business to business event in Milan , first semester 2011 with the MedVentures team

[Denis Bergé](#) / Marseille Provence Chamber of Commerce and Industry / [Med Business Network](#) (MBN) : MBN puts together chambers of Commerce who developed a joint service platform to support SMEs in their business development between France and Maghreb. More than 200 companies have benefited from the MBN services so

far. Services range from intelligence/information (with a database of 40,000 webpages available on market opportunities, subsidies, customs procedures) to customised support services (market studies, business development services)

➤ Proposed actions : CCIMP has successfully organised MedVentures business to business meeting on december 2010 and proposed to be co-organise new MEdventures events in 2011.

Gilles Lecoquen / OSEO French national innovation agency develops three complementary business lines: innovation support and funding, direct financing of companies, in cooperation with banks, guarantees of bank financing and equity financing. To overcome the recurrent problem of lack of capital, OSEO launched the free online matchmaking service between investors and SMEs seeking capital: OSEO capital PME. First launched in April 2008, OSEO capital PME has continued to evolve and today hosts more than 6,000 active investors, 4,000 companies and enabled more than €45 million of private equity funding in 2010.

➤ Proposed actions : OSEO is one of the key sponsors of MedVentures in 2010 and is contributing to the development of a MedVentures Online community on OSEO Capital PME . The access to this community if free and all MedVentures start-ups and investors interested to step in are welcome (platform in French up to now).