

Your Monthly Tabadool

The MED MSMEs Programme is committed to green and minimizes the environmental impact of its regional events

In January 2023, 26 tons of CO2 emissions generated by the air transportation of 90 participants in the Marrakech and Brussels regional events were offset by the purchase of [Gold Standard Certificates](#) funding a [biogas programme in Kenya](#), thus contributing to the installation of 18,000 biodigesters sparing 260,000 tons of wood and benefiting 110k beneficiaries. Such compensation contributes to SDG 2, 3, 5, and 7. The Programme encouraged its ecosystem to widely promote the mechanism towards SMEs as too few offset projects exist in the South Med region in comparison with sub-Saharan Africa, South America or South-East Asia.

The “digital paradox” in the MENA region highlighted by the World Bank

Active social media that contrasts with low use of digital payments: this is the **paradox** noted by the World Bank in its 2022 report on « [The Upside of Digital for the Middle East and North Africa: How Digital Technology Adoption Can Accelerate Growth and Create Jobs](#) ». To this end, the recommendations include universal access to digital services by targeting underserved populations and areas, the widespread use of digital technologies for economic purposes and the adaptation of electronic payment systems and the regulatory framework for trade online.

“SMEs Go Digital” (Singapore): an inspiring programme

This programme, supported by Infocomm Media Development Authority ([IMDA](#)) of Singapore, is backed by a **multi-service platform to help SMEs in their digital transformation**. The services offered include a business self-assessment, a pool of consultants for one-on-one advice (free of charge on first use), peer-to-peer experience sharing, recommendations for digital solutions tailored to needs, and referrals to available grants. The programme, which has supported over 80,000 SMEs since its launch in 2017, is described in detail [here](#).

ESG practices, the Achilles' heel of SMEs in the MENA region

SMEs in emerging economies and in particular in the MENA region **lag “significantly behind” in terms of ESG** (environmental, social and governance) practices notably due to

the social component (under-representation of women in the workforce and business management).

This finding is revealed by a recent [joint World Bank/EBRD/EIB report](#). It is worth noting the interesting regional comparison provided by the study, which calls for urgent action by the governments concerned and the international financial institutions to remedy the weaknesses observed in MENA countries. It is underlined in conclusion and in a broader perspective that the transition towards a sustainable business environment at the global level is only possible if SMEs are stakeholders in ESG practices.

Trade Finance: The TFG Platform

[Trade Finance Global](#) (TFG) is a British platform for **sharing knowledge** and **facilitating trade finance** for businesses. The first part of the platform is built around multiple headings: financial instruments, guides, articles, events, statistical data, podcasts, conferences, etc. The second part of the platform helps companies finance their commercial transactions abroad through innovative solutions and a network of relationships with more than 300 banks, funds and alternative financing organizations.

The global digital economy scrutinized by The Paypers

[The Paypers](#) defines itself as “the Netherlands-based leading independent source of news and analysis products for the global fintech, payments, and ecommerce industry.”

[Online and hybrid events](#), debates, recent trends, latest news, regulations, networking opportunities... The platform is a **watch tool** in multiple and varied fields: banking, payment infrastructures and systems, open banking and open finance, Banking-as-a-Service, B2B payments, fintech, regtech, cybersecurity...

Unicorns in numbers worldwide

According to [Pitchbook](#), a US-based financial software and data provider, there are over **1,230 active unicorns** globally. We learn that three countries are home to the largest number of unicorns, namely the United States (667), China (211) and India (63).

While unicorns designate startups valued at more than a billion dollars, the term decacorn is used to qualify those whose valuation exceeds 10 billion dollars. The term dragon refers to unicorns valued at \$12 billion or more.

