

## Hybrid regional meeting - Exchange of experiences on the simplification and digitalization of international trade procedures

Marrakech, 26-27 September 2022

### Context

As part of its support activity for SME export development policies and programs, during the first semester of 2022, the MED MSMEs program initiated pilot support projects at national level (Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) in the areas of digital transformation of exporting SMEs and strengthening the export ecosystem.

The progress of these projects was discussed with the SBA coordinators during the regional meeting held on June 24, 2022 at the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (Barcelona). At the same time, the national strategies and instruments for supporting the digitalization of SMEs in some partner countries were presented, as well as the support provided by the International Trade Centre-ITC to the internationalization of SMEs in the region.

Given the interest generated by these topics, the SBA coordinators suggested organizing an hybrid regional event on the simplification and digitalization of international trade procedures, including the use of digital single windows.

PORTNET organizing the International Conference and Exhibition on the Single Window in Morocco from September 26 to 28, 2022, an event that will bring together practitioners from 22 countries, it was agreed to organize the MED MSMEs regional event in the framework of the above Conference , thus maximizing the potential for networking and experience transfer.



### Simplification and digitalization of international trade procedures

The importance of simplifying international trade procedures is evidenced by the establishment of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement which aims primarily to improve the efficiency of trade in the world, to encourage economic growth cutting red tape at borders, increasing transparency and taking advantage of new technologies.

Reducing transaction costs is essential to enable SMEs to participate effectively in global value chains (GVCs) and to continue to use international trade as an important engine for growth and sustainable development. Achieving paperless cross-border trade is a long and difficult process, and it cannot be achieved without close collaboration between countries. The MENA region is no exception to the rule: there is an opportunity to increase trade through simplification and digitalization, especially since intra-regional trade is one of the weakest in the world.



To this end, the exchange of experiences in the field of simplification and digitalization of international trade procedures is essential to identify good practices and opportunities for cross-border cooperation in order to improve the trade integration of the region in the benefit of all.

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Particular importance will be given to the exchange of information between stakeholders on the different approaches to the implementation of the agreement on trade facilitation signed by certain countries of the region with the WTO (Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia) , the strategies and instruments developed (e.g. digital one-stop shops), the difficulties encountered and the solutions found.

In addition to the opportunity to examine the organization and methods of deployment of national electronic single windows, a presentation of the functioning of a regional electronic single window (ASEAN) will be delivered by the Program and discussed with the participants.

### **Coordination with other EU regional initiatives & Complementarity with EU bilateral Programmes**



This regional event will be closely coordinated with the EU-funded regional program “Trade and Investment Facilitation Mechanism (TIFM)” implemented by the International Trade Centre. A 60-minute session entitled “Supporting SMEs internationalisation in benefiting from regional opportunities” will be organized to present the TIFM which aims at strengthening trade relations between 10 Euro-Mediterranean countries from the perspective of policy makers, the business community and trade support organisation. Through the recently upgraded Euromed Trade Helpdesk, participants will see how this regional trade portal can support SMEs grow their business, the identification of trade opportunities, market access conditions, trade procedures and business contacts. During the session the participants will also have the opportunity to learn how to access this instrument and to receive useful information aimed at facilitating the access of SMEs in their country.

In addition, EU delegations will be informed and invited to participate in order to identify possible opportunities for support through bilateral cooperation programmes

### **Purpose and expected results**

The objective of the event is to foster the exchange of information and the transfer of expertise between peers on the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and related tools (in particular, the electronic single window).



The expected results are as follows:

- More than twenty officials from ministries and agencies responsible for international trade of MED MSMEs partner countries contributed to the exchanges during the event.
- The information and lessons learnt are used at the level of national policies
- Some areas of regional cooperation were identified and discussed.
- The exchange of information and contacts between the participants continue after the meeting.
- Recommendations for follow-up actions are issued, discussed and validated.

The inclusion of this regional MED MSMEs meeting in the work of the Conference and International Exhibition of Single Windows of PORTNET can only amplify the positive effects of exchanges between participants and contribute to the implementation of initiatives to simplify international trade procedures.

## Target group

The target audience includes:

- SBA coordinators / Ministries of Trade, Digital Transition and Transport
- Customs administration / Export promotion agencies / Port agencies
- Private sector representations
- Development partners.

As an indication, the number of participants will be 32 (3 participants per Partner Country, in addition to the SBA coordinator), the PORTNET event bringing together 300+ participants.

## Connect remotely and Access Presentations online

Remote participants will be able to access the sessions and contribute to the dialogue by registering by using the following links:

### Day 1

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87442092120?pwd=REpwdG8rN21YVGvNm5LdDg4RTdUUT09>

### Day 2

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87313979674?pwd=UC90cmg1M09oZGhZTIN3TUMrTkIWZz09>

Access presentations by using the QR Code beside:



Or by clicking [HERE](#).

## Languages

On-the-spot simultaneous translation in French and English will be made available.

Arabic simultaneous translation will be made available to the extent technically possible.





## MED MSMEs Programme – 26 and 27 September 2022 “Digital Trade Facilitation for greater intra-regional trade”

### Day 1 - Morning (September 26, 2022)

Time	Topic	Speakers
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Participation in the PortNet Conference opening session	All MED MSMEs participants
12:30 p.m. – 02:30 p.m.	Lunch	All MED MSMEs participants

### Day 1 - Afternoon (September 26, 2022)

Time	Topic	Speakers
2:30 p.m. – 2:40 p.m.	Opening speech	Mr. Brahim ARJDAL, General Manager Maroc PME (SBA coordinator)
2:40 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.	EU support to regional trade	Ms. Liisa Tanttari, Programme Manager DG NEAR, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
2:50 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	EuroMed Trade and Investment Facilitation Mechanism (TIFM)	Ms. Elodie Robin, Manager Trade Related Technical Assistance projects/programmes, International Trade Centre (ITC), Geneva, Switzerland
3:00 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.	Support of MED MSMEs programme to the SME export ecosystem	Mr. Christophe Malherbe and Mr. Paolo Castrataro –Key Experts of the MED MSMEs Programme
3:10 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Simplification and digitalization of foreign trade procedures	Mr. Trevor O'Regan – MED MSMEs Programme Expert
3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Simplification and digitalization of foreign trade procedures, Morocco	Mr. Saïd Maghraoui HASSANI, Director of Defense and Commercial Regulations, Ministry of Industry and Trade – Morocco
3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Coffee break	
4:00 p.m.-4:15 p.m.	Simplification and digitalization of foreign trade procedures, Jordan	Mr. Laith ALMRASHID, Industrial Engineer-Rules of Origin Section; Ministry Industry, Trade and Supply (MITS), Jordan
4:15 p.m.-4:30 p.m.	Simplification and digitalization of foreign trade procedures, Egypt	Mr. Mohamed Elshahat ADLY EL YAMANY, Head of the Trade Facilitation Department, Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), Egypt
4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	Other testimonials / Discussion	Moderator: Mr. Trevor O'Regan – MED MSMEs Programme Expert
5:30 p.m.-5:40 p.m.	Conclusions	Mr. Paolo Castrataro – Key Expert MED MSMEs Programme

Followed by the PortNet sponsored diner (dress code: casual chic).





## Day 2 - Morning (September 27, 2022)

Time	Topic	Speaker
09:30 a.m. – 09:40 a.m.	Opening statement	Mr. Paolo Castrataro – Key Expert MED MSMEs Program
09:40 a.m. – 09:55 a.m.	PortNet Morocco experience	Mr. Youssef Ahouzi, Director General, PORTNET S.A., Morocco
9:55 a.m. – 10:10 a.m.	Jordan's National Single Window Experience	Dr. Mufleh Abu Olaim, Director, National Window, Jordan Customs
10:10 a.m. – 10:25 a.m.	Egypt National Single Window – Advanced Cargo Information (ACI) Experience	Mr. Waleed Mahmoud MAKY ABD EL WAKY, Assistant Head of the Customs Authority for Pre-Clearance, Egypt
10:25 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Case study: ASEAN Single Window (ASW)	Mr. Trevor O'Regan – MED MSMEs Programme Expert
10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Coffee break	
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Other testimonials / Discussion	Moderator: Mr. Trevor O'Regan – MED MSMEs Programme Expert
12:30 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Conclusions	Mr. Paolo Castrataro – Key Expert MED MSMEs Programme
12:45 p.m. – 2.00 p.m.	Lunch	

## Day 2 – Afternoon (September 27, 2022)

Hour	Topic	Speaker / Participant
2:00 p.m.- 2:40 pm	Supporting SMEs internationalisation in benefiting from regional opportunities	Ms. Elodie Robin, Manager Trade Related Technical Assistance projects/programmes, International Trade Centre (ITC), Geneva, Switzerland
2:40 p.m.- 3:00 pm	Questions & answers	All participants
3:00 p.m.- 5:00 pm	Bilateral meetings to exchange experiences	All technical parties
3:00 p.m.- 5:00 pm	Meetings between SBA coordinators & MED MSMEs experts	SBA coordinators & MED MSMEs key experts



**Venue: Congress Palace of Marrakech, Morocco**



[Congresses & Seminars in Marrakech: Palais des Congrès \(congres-seminaires-marrakech.com\)](http://congres-seminaires-marrakech.com)

