

EUROMED CLUSTERS POLICY SEMINAR

Introduction & Context

Clusters are increasingly recognized as an efficient tool to boost industrialization, generate externalities, enhance innovation and improve value chains in emerging economies. Countries of the South and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMCs) (South Med), like many countries across the world, are seeking to enhance their economic performance and reap the benefits of cluster development. From a development perspective, these clusters are key to improve their competitiveness, exports potentials, integration into value chains, and thus generate jobs in sectors where they have a comparative advantage.

Despite many challenges, many Clusters in South Med countries are active with different timelines, approaches, and specializations and operating at different levels of development and maturity. Some of these challenges include the lack of legal recognition and coherent national framework, underdeveloped innovation ecosystems, financial constraints, skills mismatch and weak linkages between public policies and private sector dynamics. These barriers make it difficult for clusters to scale up or align with broader industrial, trade, or development strategies and limit their potential of integration into regional and global value chains and advancing green transition goals.

Against this background, the Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Institutes of Economic Science (FEMISE) and the Economic Research Forum (ERF) introduce a flagship series of high-level policy seminars launched under the EuroMed Clusters Forward (ECF) project.

These Policy seminars bring together policymakers, cluster leaders, private sector representatives, and international experts to explore challenges and opportunities in developing regional value chains (RVCs), exchange on successful policy experiences, and identify actionable best practices for cluster development. The main objective of these seminars is to generate practical, tailored policy recommendations that support clusters' development, industrial cooperation and innovation across EuroMed countries.



Three seminars will take place across the EuroMed region:

- Maghreb Seminar (Tunis, 25th of March 2026)
- Mashreq Seminar (May, 2026)
- EuroMed Regional Seminar (2026)

Each seminar contributes to the development of a comprehensive Policy Package, including synthesis reports, expert interviews, and national policy briefs to support long-term strategy building.

The Maghreb Context

In the Maghreb, clusters are emerging as important drivers of economic transformation, supporting industrial diversification, innovation, and regional competitiveness. Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria have developed clusters in sectors such as automotive, electronics, mechatronics, renewable energy, and digital technologies. These clusters not only strengthen local production capabilities but also facilitate knowledge exchange, technology adoption, and integration into regional and global value chains.

Despite progress, clusters face persistent challenges: fragmented regulatory frameworks, underdeveloped innovation ecosystems, limited research–industry linkages, restricted access to financing, and skills mis-matches. Nevertheless, many clusters in the region have shown initiative and resilience, implementing innovative projects, fostering partnerships with European clusters, and experimenting with new approaches to skills development, co-investment and green technologies.



EUROMED CLUSTERS POLICY SEMINAR- MAGHREB EDITION

Policy Dialogue For Cluster-Driven Innovation &
Regional Value Chains

25 MARCH , 2026 - TUNIS, TUNISIA

Maghreb Policy Seminar Objectives

The Maghreb Policy Seminar offers a dedicated platform for policymakers, cluster managers, private sector representatives and international experts to engage in an active policy dialogue on cluster development and regional value chains. Specific objectives include:

- Analysing key challenges facing clusters in the Maghreb, including industrial upscaling, value chains integration, innovation financing, and skills–industry alignment.
- Sharing successful policy and cluster initiatives from Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria and the EU.
- Generating actionable recommendations for policies, regulations, and collaborative mechanisms to strengthen clusters' role in industrial competitiveness, innovation and regional value chain integration.

Maghreb Policy Seminar Structure

After the opening and the keynote speeches, the seminar is organized around three thematic sessions, addressing the three identified key challenges facing cluster development:

- Industrial Upscaling and Innovation.
- Innovation Financing and Private Co-Investment:
- Skills Development and Research–Industry Collaboration: Each session combines policy presentations, cluster case studies, followed by interactive discussions where participants reply to a short digital questionnaire.

The final session will be a focus group exercise where participants will be split in groups. In each group, challenges will be further explored and answers to the questionnaires revealed and specific best practices shared. This will initiate a focused discussion aiming to identify actionable strategies relevant to the national context. This dynamic format ensures practical outcomes, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange to strengthen cluster-driven innovation and regional value chains across the Maghreb.



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AGENDA

09:00 -09:30	Registration
09:30 – 10:00	Welcome & Opening Remarks Maryse Louis, General Manager, FEMISE Tarak Chérif, President of ANIMA Investment Network Omar Bouzouada, General Director, APII Tunisia Keynote speaker: H.E. Fatma Thabet Chiboub, Minister of Industry, Mines, and Energy, Tunisia EU Delegation in Tunisia (TBC)
10:00- 10:20	Panel 1: Clusters role in driving competitiveness, innovation, and regional integration- special emphasis on the green and digital transition Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adel Ben Youssef, Professor of Economics at the Université Côte d'Azur, France• TBC



Challenge 1: Industry Upscaling, Innovation & Climbing the Value Chain

10:20-10:40
(20 mins)

Session 1.1. Understanding the Challenge: Industrial Upgrading and Innovation Challenges in the Maghreb

*Clusters in Maghreb countries remain concentrated in low- to mid-value-added sectors. Upscaling is critical for competitiveness, export diversification, and attracting new clients. Moving up the value chain also enables **job creation**, adoption of **digital and Industry 4.0 technologies**, and **greener production practices**.*

Speakers:

- Youssef Fadil, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Morocco
- Omar Rekkache, Algerian Investment Promotion Agency (AAPI), Algeria
- Inès Zegnani, Agency for the Promotion of Industry and Innovation (APII), Tunisia

10:40-11:20
(40 mins)

Session 1.2. Policy Best practices in Industrial upgrading and Value Chain Integration:

Morocco:

- Ayda Fathi, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Morocco
- Nourdine Bouyaakoub, Electronics, Mechatronics and Mechanics Cluster of Morocco (CE3M)
- Oussama Nour, Tanger Med and General Confederation of Enterprises of Morocco (CGEM)
- Abdelaziz Meftah, Moroccan Association of the Automobile Industry and Automobile Manufacturers (AMICA)
- Adlan Mohammed Najem, Cluster Agro-industriel (COER)

Tunisia:

- Hichem Turki, CEO, Novation city (sousse)
- Rim Saeid, Technopole El Ghazala
- Amine Sellami, Cluster Mecatronic de Tunisie



	<p>Algeria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yacine Rahmoun, Capture Doc Digitalisation <p>Europe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mattia Miglietta, ENVI Park and Polo CLEVER, Italy
10:40-11:20 (40 mins)	<p>Session 1.3. Interactive session</p> <p><i>Open discussion and Q&A and Participant reply to a digital questionnaire (3 QS) about the applicability of these practices in their countries</i></p>
11:40-12:00	<p>Coffee break and networking</p>

Challenge 2: Expanding innovation-oriented financing, and private co-investment

12:00-12:20	<p>Session 2.1. Understanding the challenge: Unlocking the potentials of financing innovation for Clusters</p> <p><i>Most clusters rely on limited public or donor funding, with few instruments tailored to support R&D, technology adoption, or collaborative projects. The absence of clear legal status often restricts clusters' eligibility for national funds, while weak investor confidence limits private participation.</i></p> <p><i>Strengthening dedicated financing tools and co-investment mechanisms is essential to scale innovation and ensure cluster sustainability.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ilyes Boumahdi, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Morocco • Zakaria Madani, Maroc Clusters, Morocco • Rep de l'Assemblée des représentants du peuple (ARP), Tunisia • Jauad El Kharraz, Chief Executive Officer & Founder, WECEN
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	<p>Session 2.2. Policy Best practices: models of investments that worked for the Clusters</p> <p>Morocco:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yasmine Soufiani, Moroccan Investment and Export Development Agency (AMDIE) • Chafik Elouriaghli, Maroc Numeric Cluster • Touria Ben Rabah, Haliopole cluster • Amar Najib, Cluster Valbiom <p>Tunisia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mariem Maamouri, Crowdfunding, APII • Tarek Triki, Smart Capital • Kamel Hindaoui, Fonds de Développement de la Compétitivité (FODEC) <p>Algeria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meriem Benslama, Algerian Center for Social Entrepreneurship <p>Europe :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathalie Jardinier, Team Henri Fabre, France • Sonia Fernández, AMEC, Spain
<p>13:00-13:10</p>	<p>Session 2.3. Interactive session <i>Open discussion and Q&A and Participant reply to a digital questionnaire (3 qs) about the applicability of these practices in their countries</i></p>
<p>13:10-14:10</p>	<p>Lunch</p>



Challenge 3: Skills mismatch and research–industry collaboration

14:10-14:30

Session 3.1. Understand the challenge: Skills mismatch and R&D needs in Cluster development

Across the Maghreb, clusters face persistent gaps between workforce skills and industry needs, limiting innovation and competitiveness. Collaboration between universities, research centres, and firms remains weak, with few structured mechanisms for joint R&D or technology transfer. Strengthening vocational training, co-designed curricula, and cluster-based innovation platforms will be key to bridging these divides and fostering a dynamic innovation ecosystem.

Speakers:

- Chedly Abdelly, National Agency for Scientific Research Promotion (ANPR), Tunisia
- Abdelkader El Khissassi, Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the European Union and NATO
- Donatella Di Vozzo, European Training Foundation
- Chekib Ben Mustapha, Expert, Tunisia

14:30- 15:10

Session 3.2. Policy Best practices on successful skills upgrading and research-industry collaboration

Morocco:

- Zerkti Jamal Eddine, Institut de Formation aux Métiers de l'Industrie Automobile (IFMIA)
- Aicha Hadraoui, Cluster ENR
- Chaymae Baba-khouya, Cluster Menara

Tunisia:

- Narges Hammar, L'Association des Centres Techniques Industriels Tunisiens (ACTIT)
- Anouar Zouari, PACE-AMIT
- Ourida Chalouati, Qualitative Growth for Employment (CQE) (Fonds Co-innov)
- Douja Gharbi, Red Start, Tunisia



	<p>Algeria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boukhalfa Yaici, Green Energy Cluster • Sarah Ait Hamou, WomWork <p>Europe :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marius Alexa, ICONIC Cluster, Romania • Irena Łobocka, Sustainable Infrastructure Cluster, Poland
15:10-15:20	<p>Session 3.3. Interactive session</p> <p>Open discussion and Q&A and <i>Participant reply to a digital questionnaire (3 qs) about the applicability of these practices in their countries</i></p>
15:20-15:40	<p>Coffee break</p>
15:40-17:00	<p>Working/FOCUS Groups</p> <p><i>Split the participants in 3 Groups including EU, think-tanks, according to their profiles. Each group will be moderated by one of the 3 Experts assisted by FEMISE/ERF/ANIMA. Answers collected from the questionnaires after each session will be combined.</i></p> <p>Within each group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will discuss each of the three challenges (from the thematic sessions) • The Moderator will reveal the combined answers <p>Further discussion will take place answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the best practice of policy or initiative within the challenge? • How can this policy be implemented at the national level? • How can clusters leverage this policy for digital, Industry 4.0 adoption and job creation?



<p>17:00- 17:30</p>	<p>Closing Remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maryse Louis, General Manager, FEMISE• Emmanuel Noutary, General Delegation, ANIMA
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