



Tourism: “Generating Jobs for Youth in the MENA Region”

UfM Headquarters
Carrer de Pere Duran Farell 11
08034 Barcelona

09.00 – 09:30 **Registration and welcome coffee**

09:30 – 10.00 **Welcome address:**

H.E Marisa Farrugia, Deputy Secretary General of the UfM for Social and Civil Affairs Sector and the Tourism Dossier.

Mr. Rachid Maaninou, Deputy Secretary General of the UfM for Business and Development Sector.

10.00 – 11:30 **Session 1: Creating job opportunities in Tourism – celebrating success stories**

Introductory remarks and moderation:

Julian Zarb, Researcher, Local Tourism Planning Consultant and Visiting Senior Lecturer at the University of Malta

Tourism is a highly important sector of the economy which contributes greatly to both global development and economic and social integration in rural, peripheral or emerging regions. It also contributes to such goals as social and regional cohesion and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage. Tourism is a major economic pillar in many MENA countries and has become a strategic component in the diversification of oil-based economies. The MENA region welcomed 6% of international tourist arrivals in 2018. Given such a booming industry jobs in the hospitality sector are expected to increase. Are youth in the MENA region aware of these opportunities, are they qualified to seize them or are they innovative to create their own jobs or businesses in the tourism sector?

Presentations of entrepreneurs in tourism:

Tomás Caero, Founder & CEO of CityCheck (Portugal)

Ahmed Yehia, Managing Director of Eco Group (Egypt)

Younnes Ouazri, CEO and Founder of Ecodome (Morocco)

Rola Fayyad, Co-Founder of ViaVii (Jordan)

Tania Gomes, Founder and CEO of Meduse (Portugal)

Muna Haddad, Managing Director of Baraka (Jordan)

Open discussion (Q&A)



11:30 – 12:00

Coffee break

12:00 – 13:30

Three Parallel Break-out sessions for working groups

1. Tourism, a catalyst for the development of youth entrepreneurship and MSME's:

Moderator: Simona Simulyte, Founder of ChangeMakers'ON (Lituanie)

The MENA Region's population is one of the youngest ones in the world with an estimated 50% of the inhabitants of the Southern Mediterranean countries under the age of 25 compared to 27.8% in the EU. Tourism has proven to be one of the most resilient economic activities, offering the ideal professional environment for the creation of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. Particularly for youth, the sector offers a variety of opportunities due to the fact that are being characterized as stakeholders that contribute a positive social and economic impact, as well as distinguished by their modern mindset and the willingness to change and grow. However, many countries with rapidly growing youth populations, are either struggling to educate their young people, or else many young graduates cannot find a job and this results in unemployment.

- What are the challenges that young entrepreneurs face in the tourism sector?
- Which solutions might be offered by the tourism sector that anticipate the growing youth population and reduce unemployment?
- Which opportunities are or could be made available to foster and promote young entrepreneurship in the Region?

2. Women in Tourism:

Moderators:

Daniela Moreno Alarcón, Gender, Development and Tourism field expert at HIDRIA Ciencia, ambiente y desarrollo SL

Women assume many roles in the tourism sector and it provides them with opportunities for empowerment compared to other industries. Women account for the majority of the global tourism workforce but tend to work in informal and low-status positions and not many are involved as business owners, leaders or policy makers. We need to see more women in managerial positions and business leaders or owners in the tourism sector. Women still lag behind men in many economic opportunities due to financial hurdles, cultural boundaries, social norms or lack of access to resources which in one way or another prevent women from starting their own businesses or work full-time.



- What are the challenges that women entrepreneurs face in the tourism sector?
- How can opportunities through online platform tourist services (Uber, Airbnb etc.) are made available for women in sharing economy in their countries?
- What training or resources do women start-ups or business owners need to start their SMEs, or to improve their efficiency, productivity, effectiveness and professionalism to succeed?

3. Digital Transformation in the Tourism Sector:

Moderator: Tomás Caero, Founder & CEO of CityCheck

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is one of digital nature and never has a revolution been witnessed with such scale, scope and speed. The new technologies have made it possible to exchange jobs for tasks, affecting the employment relationship and the labour landscape. The tourism sector has completely caught up with the recent trends by creating innovative hubs and digitalizing most of its services. For SMEs it is an easier and cheaper way to start up their businesses, however the necessary know how is indispensable.

Overall, the potential for the MENA Region is enormous but the necessary technical resources and skill set are required.

- Current shifts have changed the roles of producers and consumers and the variety and volume of tourism products. What are the current and future challenges and opportunities?
- In which way can digital transformation be used to benefit sustainable tourism for development?
- In which way are countries currently helping the population to adapt their skill set in order to stay or become desirable on the job market?

13:30 – 15:00

Networking Lunch

15:00 – 16:00

Presentation of recommendations by the moderators of each working group

16:00 – 16:10

Conclusions

Manal Kelig, Executive Director for the MENA region, Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA)

16:10 – 16:15

Closing remarks

Marisa Farrugia, Deputy Secretary General of the UfM for Social and Civil Affairs Sector and the Tourism Dossier.