



Reinforcing the Innovation-Employability Nexus in the Mediterranean

A Handbook for Academia, Industry and Policymakers

High-level Roundtable and Presentation of the publication

Digital event hosted by the Union for the Mediterranean

2 December 11.15

Despite youth in the Southern Mediterranean being the most educated generational group ever, young graduates in the region experience the highest level of unemployment among higher education graduates in the world, up to 33% according to the World Bank (2018).

One of the reasons for this problem is a persistent gap between the skills acquired at universities and the requirements of industry. More than 32% of Enterprises in some Southern Mediterranean Countries have identified labour skill levels as a major constraint to hiring.

Universities and research centres are key actors for developing vibrant and sustainable economies by developing competences and innovation. At the same time, focus is growing on the expectation that higher education institutions contribute to their “third mission” by contributing to the knowledge transfer and innovation of their societies and economies.

A variety of initiatives and best practices already exist in the region for incentivising the creation of new start-ups, developing internship and industrial doctorates programmes, developing employable and digital skills among students and researchers. Nevertheless, further attention needs to be brought to them in order to facilitate replication and upscale of positive initiatives.

In this framework, the **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)**, supported by **GIZ**, is launching an initiative targeting universities, research centres, education ministries, and all complementary stakeholders (especially intermediary institutions and industry).

The goal of this initiative is to share best practices and available tools that can be put in place in order to reinforce career opportunities of students, graduates and researchers. One focus of this action will be best practices suitable for PhDs, researchers, high-level graduates.

Following a developing process kick-started by Digital Steering Committees held on 5 and 19 May 2020, the Union for the Mediterranean has developed a publication as a useful handbook describing in a synthetic and communicational way different possible tools. Possible best practices include career services and internships, skills for employability, teaching and learning, mobility, collaborative doctorates, partnership for innovation and capacity development.

On 2 December 2020, a public digital presentation will be held, along with a distinguished Round table centred on how to improve the employability of students and researchers, and how to use research and innovation as tools for development.



Agenda.

11.15 Connection to the digital platform and double check for technical issues by participants.

11.30 Opening.

- Amb. Nasser Kamel, **UfM Secretary General**
- Mr. Johannes Laepple, **German Development Cooperation (GIZ)**
- Ms. Itaf Ben Abdallah, Senior Advisor for Higher Education and Research Division, **UfM Secretariat**

11.45 Keynote speaker.

“Academia-business and its role after the pandemic”

- Dr. Angelo Riccaboni, Chair, **PRIMA Foundation**

12.00 Presentation of the publication.

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A Handbook for Academic, Industry and Policymakers”*

- Mr. Giuseppe Provenzano, Advisor for Research and Innovation, **UfM Secretariat**
- Dr. Nina Volles, **UfM Consultant**

12.15 Round table.

Innovation and employability as tools for the SDGs in the Mediterranean. Which tools, best practices and partnerships for a way forward? How to connect industry with academia? How to facilitate careers for students and researchers?

- Dr. Riam Kanso, Founder and CEO, **Conception X**
- Dr. Marcello Scalisi, Director, **UNIMED**
- Dr. Boutheina Lassadi, **BUSINESSMED UMCE**

12.50 Closing.

- Mr. Giuseppe Provenzano, Advisor for Research and Innovation, **UfM Secretariat**