

Med Youth Lab'26



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط

Entrepreneurial skills

Guidelines for Application



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط



The UfM Secretariat
is co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

With the support of



giz
Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

With the institutional support of



Università
degli Studi
di Palermo

Contents

About the UfM Med Youth Lab 2026	3
Dates	4
Who is eligible to apply?	4
Programme focus: Entrepreneurial Skills.....	5
Support for participants	5
How to Apply.....	6
Selection Process	6
Results & Confirmation	7
Contacts	7
ANNEX I – Evaluation Grid Template	8

About the UfM Med Youth Lab 2026

The **UfM Med Youth Lab** is a skills-building initiative organised by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) with the support of the German Development Cooperation. This year's **third edition** is open to young **university students and recent graduates aged 18-29** from across the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean who have no or limited prior knowledge of entrepreneurship.

This edition focuses on **Entrepreneurial Skills**. The programme is **an introductory capacity-building initiative** aimed at participants who have had no previous training or experience in entrepreneurship. This lack of prior exposure is in fact a defining criterion for participation.

The programme combines **online training with in-person workshops in Palermo, Italy (December 2026)**, held back-to-back with the UfM Employment Forum. Through non-formal education methods, expert-led sessions and teamwork, participants will build basic entrepreneurial skills, including entrepreneurial mindset, innovation, financial literacy, communication and problem-solving.

The initiative follows a **Training of Trainers (ToT) approach**. This means participants will be supported to design a simple, introductory awareness session on entrepreneurship, which they will be encouraged and supported to deliver to peers at national or local level in 2027. This is not professional trainer certification: participants are not expected to become entrepreneurship experts or advanced trainers, but peer facilitators who can share basic concepts with others in their communities.

The programme aims to equip up to 30 young participants with the basic tools and confidence to engage with entrepreneurship and to pass this knowledge on to their peers.

If you are a university student or recent graduate (max. one year ago), curious about entrepreneurship but without prior experience in the field, and ready to work with peers from across the region, we encourage you to apply.

Dates

- **Online training:** October to December 2026 (exact dates to be confirmed)
- **In-person workshops:** 14-16 December 2026 (TBC), Palermo, Italy.
- **Application deadline:** 30 August 2026 23:59 CEST

Who is eligible to apply?

To take part in the UfM Med Youth Lab 2026, **applicants must meet the following criteria:**

- Be **between 18 and 29 years** old at the time of application
- Be a **national and resident of a UfM Member State**. Please note that, while all UfM nationalities are eligible to apply, **full coverage of travel, visa, and accommodation costs for the in-person segment in Palermo will be covered only for nationals of the following UfM Member States:** Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, and Türkiye.

- Holders of UfM nationalities not specifically listed above are still eligible to apply but must autonomously secure funding for their participation in Palermo, Italy.
- Be **currently enrolled in a university programme**, or have recently graduated (no more than one year before the application deadline)
- Hold a **valid travel document** (i.e., passport)
- Have **at least a B2 level of English**, or equivalent ability to actively engage in discussions and group work
- Have **no previous significant knowledge or experience in entrepreneurship-related topics** (i.e., no similar training, no experience running or funding a start-up, no experience working with business support organisations)
- Be **fully available to participate in both the online training and the in-person** segment in Palermo, Italy.

This edition is aimed specifically at beginners.

Applicants with significant prior training or professional experience in entrepreneurship not eligible to be selected, as the programme is designed as a first introduction to the topic.

Participants to the previous two editions of the UfM Med Youth Lab (2024 and 2025) are eligible to apply to this call, given that they must in any case meet the criteria listed above.



Programme focus: Entrepreneurial Skills

All participants will follow a common programme on entrepreneurship and employability, covering, among others:

- **Entrepreneurial mindset and initiative**
- **Innovation and creativity**
- **Basic financial literacy**
- **Communication and problem-solving**
- **An introduction to the Training of Trainers (ToT) approach**

The online phase (October-December 2026) lays the common knowledge foundation through a mix of webinars and self-paced learning. The in-person phase (December 2026, Palermo) is dedicated to hands-on, non-formal workshops where participants finalise a simple, introductory session on entrepreneurship that they can later deliver to peers in their own country. Each participant will produce a short session outline and basic supporting materials, such as i.e., a simple presentation and a feedback form.

Support for participants

Selected participants will benefit from:

- Access to online training materials and sessions.
- For nationals of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean UfM countries¹, coverage of costs linked to the in-person segment in Palermo, Italy (travel, accommodation and all related expenses), in line with UfM procedures and available budget.
- **Visa support will be provided where required**, including supporting documentation from the UfM Secretariat. Selected participants remain solely responsible for verifying visa requirements and submitting their application in accordance with the [official guidance and information](#) issued by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI). Visa issuance is at the sole discretion of the Italian authorities, and the support provided does not guarantee approval.

- Guidance and templates to design and later deliver (in 2027) an introductory awareness session on entrepreneurship at national or local level.

Please note that the application, participation, the access to all material related to the to the UfM Med Youth Lab is free of charge. No application or participation fees will be charged at any stage.

The UfM and its partners are committed to making the programme inclusive and accessible to all participants. **If you have any accessibility needs** (i.e., related to health, mobility, communication, or learning), **please indicate this in your application** and the team will work with you to find appropriate solutions wherever possible.

Unless otherwise specified, **costs are directly managed by the UfM or its appointed contractor, and no reimbursement is foreseen for purchases** (i.e., visa fees, flight tickets, hotel reservation, etc.) **made independently by participants**, unless specifically authorised in advance by the UfM.

¹ Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, and Türkiye.

How to Apply

Applications must be submitted through the online application form in English, including:

- **Video (max 2 minutes, in English)** explaining your background, your motivation, and what you hope to learn from the UfM Med Youth Lab
- **Proof of current university enrolment or graduation certificate** (if graduated within the last year)
- **Copy of a valid travel document.**



Selection Process

Step 1: Preselection

Applications will be automatically rejected if:

- Incomplete or submitted after the deadline
- Not meeting the eligibility criteria
- The applicant has significant prior training or professional experience in entrepreneurship, which does not match the introductory level of the programme
- The content is not original (i.e., fully made with AI)

Step 2: Evaluation

The evaluation will be conducted by UfM staff, based on the criteria set out in the **evaluation grid in ANNEX I**. Priority is given to applicants with genuine motivation, clear learning expectations, and no prior exposure to entrepreneurship.

Gender balance will be a transversal approach used throughout the evaluation process, aiming for at least 50% representation of female participants. Geographical balance will also be ensured, trying to avoid overrepresentation of any single country or area.

Results & Confirmation

- **Selected participants will be notified by the end of September.**
- **Unsuccessful applicants will not be contacted individually.** Due to the high volume of applications, organisers are not able to provide individual feedback on application evaluation and scoring.

All selected participants must sign a **Letter of Commitment with the UfM**, confirming their intention to actively participate in the UfM Med Youth Lab across both its online and in-person components in Palermo. While full participation is strongly encouraged to ensure a meaningful learning experience, a minimum threshold of engagement in the online sessions will be defined and communicated in advance. Participants who are unable to meet this minimum threshold, or who withdraw from the programme without providing a valid and documented reason, may be asked to reimburse any non-refundable costs already incurred on their behalf (i.e., flight tickets, travel insurance, accommodation).

Contacts

For any further clarifications on the application, please contact:

medyouthlab@ufmsecretariat.org

ANNEX I - Evaluation Grid Template

Criteria	Description	Points	Evaluator's Score
Motivation and Interest		62	
Description of motivation	Has the applicant clearly described their motivation to participate in the UfM Med Youth Lab in a consistent, relevant and organised way?	0-31	
Learning expectations	Does the applicant have ambitious yet realistic expectations, consistent with their motivation to participate in the UfM Med Youth Lab?	0-31	
Knowledge and Experience		40	
Interest in entrepreneurship	Does the applicant show a genuine interest in entrepreneurship and employability, appropriate to a beginner level?	0-20	
No significant previous knowledge or experience	Applicants with no or minimal prior knowledge or experience in entrepreneurship-related topics will be given favourable consideration.	0-20	
Access to opportunities		8	
Challenges to access to opportunities	According to challenges highlighted in the application form.	0-8	
Final Score		110	

Med Youth Lab'26



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط



The UfM Secretariat
is co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

With the support of



german
cooperation

DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

financed by

giz

Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

With the institutional support of



**Università
degli Studi
di Palermo**



ufmsecretariat.org



The UfM Secretariat
is co-funded by the
EUROPEAN UNION

Palau de Pedralbes | Pere Duran Farell, 11
Barcelona, Spain - 08034
Phone: 00 34 93 521 4100 | Fax: 00 34 93 521 4102