

New in Israel: An EU-funded training programme for entrepreneurs

The SwitchMed training programme is currently mobilizing entrepreneurs with an inspirational environmental vision. Those selected for the project will be entrepreneurs with startups that have environmental, social and economic values in fields such as: water, energy, fair trade, green building, sharing economics eco-tourism, education and more. In the training programme, the entrepreneurs will receive the tools and skills needed to turn their innovative concepts into a successful and profitable green business models from experts who have undergone specific training by the European Union, Outstanding participants will also benefit from support and accompaniment in launching their green business.

SwitchMed is an EU initiative whose goal is to advance a green economy in the Mediterranean Basin. The programme, which is also operated in Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, shows not only that that environmental issues cut across borders, religions and political conflicts but also that they are increasingly relevant and are gaining momentum. According to Doron Fahima, SwitchMed's project manager, "Over the years, with the development of industry and the increase in consumption, there has been increasing damage to the environment. At first sight there appears to be a conflict of interests between economic and business development and the environment. At the same time, regulatory changes and public perceptions have led industry and business to take the environment into account in their business activities and also to carry out efficiency measures and to reduce environmental damage. Moreover, in the light of these changes, many business opportunities have arisen which provide solutions in a variety of fields."

In Israel, the initiative is taking place thanks to the EU's cooperation with Maof which was selected to operate the programme. Maof, a support deployment for SMEs belonging to the Agency for Small and Medium Sized Business in the Ministry of Economy, operates 40 branches throughout the country. In the framework of the programme, 8 training workshops will be held over the coming months throughout Israel with the participation of 160 entrepreneurs with ideas that contribute to the environment and to society. The workshops will take place in Ashdod, Beersheba, Upper Galilee, Haifa (started 31.12.15), Jerusalem, Netanya and Tel Aviv. Registration for the training programme is currently underway.

Tamar Simchi, Maof's General Manager for the coastal plain and the western Galilee: "We welcome this cooperation with the European Union and this opportunity to advance the field of green entrepreneurship in Israel by means of helping stakeholders to produce environmental and social values alongside economic profit. Green entrepreneurs have an important role to play in leading change and raising awareness of the need to protect the environment across a wide variety of fields."

For additional information and to submit the registration form, see the [Maof website](#).

For further information on the SwitchMed programme see <http://www.switchmed.eu/en>