



Lab de la Tech For Good et de l'Innovation Positive en Méditerranée

EMERGING Mediterranean digital summit: an afternoon dedicated to accelerating Tech For Good in the Mediterranean

17 December 2020 – The [EMERGING Mediterranean digital summit](#) was broadcast live on the web from the Orange-Vélodrome stadium in Marseille on Monday, December 14, to bring together the biggest stakeholders and experts in innovation and Tech For Good around. The event was full of valuable exchanges with many initiatives being presented that aim to make the Mediterranean a more resilient place. The afternoon debates will lay the foundation of a white paper that will come out in the first quarter of 2021. EMERGING Mediterranean is far more than just a conference: this publication will herald the emergence of the Tech For Good Do Tank in the Mediterranean that it is becoming. There were over 20 outstanding speakers, 8 high-level round tables and keynote speeches, 10 vibrant pitches and 5 exceptional winners. More than 2500 people watched all the digital summit's debates both live, and on the replays on our dedicated EventMaker platform, on top of everyone who tuned into our Facebook Live feed to gain new insight and join the incredible EMERGING Mediterranean community! The day ended by announcing the 5 EMERGING Mediterranean start-ups that won a place on the [Social & Inclusive Business Camp](#) in January 2021.

EMERGING Mediterranean is a programme founded by Samir Abdelkrim and the culmination of the work done during the preparatory forums of the summit of the two shores. It is supported by the French Development Agency and aims to identify, accelerate and scale up future innovative Tech For Good leaders from Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia.

The EMERGING Mediterranean digital summit is the new meeting point for Tech For Good stakeholders in the Mediterranean

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EMERGING Mediterranean s'appuie sur un réseau de partenaires-pays expérimentés et reconnus en Méditerranée :





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Here are just some of the inspiring and high-impact topics that were discussed at the digital summit: making digital technology a force for good for the south shore of the Mediterranean, using expertise to make the region more resilient, convincing international investors about the viability of Northern Africa to secure a sustainable pipeline of high-impact start-ups between the two shores of the Mediterranean, accelerating regional sustainable development with digital technology and digital sobriety, making female entrepreneurship the centre piece of the new digital revolution in the Maghreb, fighting investors' prejudices and boosting talented entrepreneurs across the diaspora.

"I wholeheartedly endorse the inclusive approach of EMERGING Mediterranean as it aims to help trend-setting Mediterranean entrepreneurs network. The first results of this dynamic initiative have already bolstered entrepreneurship, resilience and Mediterranean Tech For Good", states Ambassador Karim Amellal, Interministerial Delegate for the Mediterranean, during his inaugural speech at the digital summit. The ambassador has supported the programme since it started and once again shown how much he values its merits as a perfect example of an initiative which aims to benefit the future of an innovative and unified Mediterranean. This initial advocacy was followed up by Samir ABDELKRIM's exclusive interview with Salwa TOKO, Chairwoman of the French Digital Council, to discuss the role of digital technology as a force for good between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

This summit was concrete advocacy for Tech For Good in the Mediterranean and defined by three key topics: funding positive innovation in the Maghreb, enhancing biodiversity and embracing female entrepreneurship. You can watch all the replays on the following link: <https://bit.ly/3r9TIVC>

Funding Mediterranean innovation

After the two inaugural discussions came the first panel about funding Tech For Good in the Mediterranean: ***"What are the challenges and perspectives for 2030? How can we convince investors to secure a sustainable pipeline of high-impact start-ups between the 2 shores of the Mediterranean in the future?"***

To discuss the matter, Samir ABDELKRIM welcomed Sami AGLI, President of the Confederation of Algerian Patronage Citizen, Isabelle BEBEAR, Director of International

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and European Affairs at Bpifrance; Kenza LAHLOU, General Partner at Outlierz Ventures; Stéphan-Eloïse Gras, Executive Director of Digital Africa and Rym JAROU, CEO of Smart Tunisia.

Investors and financial backers discussed many points and came to an agreement about **how essential it is to build a start-up-friendly ecosystem** that is underpinned by private investment. Stéphan-Eloïse GRAS pointed out the lack of continuum in the financial products entrepreneurs have access to. She highlighted how important it is for them to have a wide range of funding sources to help them through the various phases of growth. As a result, Digital Africa has launched new investment funds and Bpifrance has been supplying other funds throughout Africa. Sami AGLI and Rym JAROU brought up another aspect of building ecosystems: **creating a legal framework for start-ups**. The Startup Acts that have been cropping up across the region – and are already in place in Tunisia – have been hailed as an inspirational model. Our panellists are convinced that financial facilitation, tax exemptions and promoting research and innovation are tools worth exporting. *“It is crucial to structure the ecosystem. This must include careful consideration about venture capital, legislation that governs start-up development and enhancing innovation,”* adds Sami AGLI, Chairman of the CPAC. Finally, Kenza LAHLOU stressed the importance of rallying different economic sectors together. They must be ready to welcome young start-ups and their innovative ideas with open arms so that they can build the digital solutions of tomorrow together. In her opinion: *“Traditional sectors need to be willing to deregulate to give innovative companies a chance to bring improvements to the table”*

After this panel, Cyril COLLON, General Partner at Partech Africa and Jérémie PELLET, Managing Director of Expertise France, spoke about the various initiatives each of their organisations are carrying out in the region and gave an overview of the main ecosystems they work in (Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, respectively).

Cyril COLLON illustrated the current state of Maghreb ecosystems and gave insight about their growth potential: *“Our impact will be so wide reaching because we are funding cost-effective models that tackle real problems on the continent.”* Jérémie PELLET talked about programmes to encourage entrepreneurship in Tunisia and diasporas as well as initiatives to support Libyan youth rebuild their country (coding schools, online universities, FabLabs, etc.).

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Biodiversity and digital technology to tackle the challenges within the Maghreb

Discussions continued during a **panel all about biodiversity: "The Mediterranean, a new "O3D" laboratory? : How can we accelerate sustainable development with digital technology in the Mediterranean?"**.

For this plenary, Samir ABDELKRIM was joined by Patricia RICARD, Chairwoman of the Paul Ricard Oceanographic Institute, Isadora BIGOURDAN, Senior Business Manager at the French Development Agency, Sarah TOUMI, Member of the Presidential Council for Africa, Jean-Marc PHILIP, Chairman of Oshun and winners of the AFD Digital Challenge, Mohamed TABYAOUI, founder of Prevdev (Morocco) and Amor SAHNOUN, Founder of Bus Software (Tunisia).

Patricia Ricard and Isadora Bigourdan shone light on what they see as a green wave of technological innovation in the Mediterranean that is being led by responsible entrepreneurs who are trying to solve everyday problems with answers that are economically, socially, democratically and ecologically sustainable. Mohamed TABYAOUI's and Amor SAHNOUN's participation and hard work are the perfect example of how entrepreneurs that are sensitive to responsible innovation have emerged. Jean-Marc PHILIP discussed water management in the Mediterranean by reminding us that both shores share the same concerns regarding this vital resource. He mentioned the various innovations that exist to promote access to water in the region. Patricia RICARD talked about the challenges the Mediterranean and its biodiversity are facing and ended by saying that she is convinced how essential a role digital innovation has in addressing them. The combination of biodiversity and technology promises to develop responses to the crisis the Mediterranean is currently undergoing.

Female entrepreneurship: the driving force behind the Mediterranean digital revolution

An all-female panel delved into the topic of female entrepreneurship to bring this high-impact series to an end: **"Women For Good: Putting female entrepreneurship at the centre of the new Mediterranean digital revolution!"**. The next plenary welcomed Aissata LAM, Chairwoman of the Mauritanian Youth Chamber of Commerce, Amel SAIDANE, Chairwoman of Tunisian Startups, Salwa TOKO, Chairwoman of the French Digital Council, Leila BENYOUCEF, Founder of KiddyStories, Lamiae BENMAKHLOUF,

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Managing Director of the Casablanca Technopark, and Shadda ELMAGRI, Co-founder of Deraz

Once again, our speakers all came to several conclusions: although the number of female entrepreneurs is on the rise, there are still not enough. Lamia BENMAKHLOUF was adamant about the fact that women need to be coached and mentored to break out of their isolation and take the leap of faith into business: *"Women need to be boosted and supported to break down the barriers and become successful entrepreneurs."* Salwa TOKO said that female entrepreneurs are too often overlooked by investors, that they devalue themselves and even give up on getting involved with the Tech sector. Aissata LAM and Amel SAIDANE responded to this by asking men to educate themselves about equality as, quite apart from encouraging girls to take the plunge into entrepreneurship, there is also a misogynistic system that is in dire need of restructuring. Amel SAIDANE said: *"Today, only 2% of VC funds are earmarked for start-ups run by women! Therefore, it is also essential to raise awareness among mostly male investors and contact people who share the vision of an egalitarian world."*

Samir ABDELKRIM brought an end to this intense debate by saying: *"The south shore of the Mediterranean is full of start-ups that are working to impact and solve the problems within their society while formalising the informal thanks to technology: education, environment, female entrepreneurship, health, agriculture, social economy and financial inclusion. Identifying them, helping them stand on their own two feet and giving them every chance to convince investors and financial backers to support them while they scale up is an enormous issue. With so much talent, the Mediterranean is the right place for anything to do with Tech. But this can only be achieved with favourable national legislation and national and international ecosystem stakeholders collaborating."*

The 5 EMERGING Mediterranean winners were selected during this digital summit - two months after the programme was launched

After the highly successful call for applications (227 overall - a third of which were from women), the Bootcamp of the 2 Shores selected the 10 most high-impact finalists and came up with answers to highly relevant current issues. The digital summit was the moment to choose the 5 EMERGING Mediterranean start-ups:

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- From Algeria: **YSA MED TECH**. This e-health start-up was founded by Mourad Mohammed BENOSMAN. It specialises in treating chronic pain and chronic stress such as sciatica, lower back pain, ankylosing spondylitis, arthritis and osteoarthritis. It has created two devices - the first of which already has an international patented - that measure pain and relieve it with pulsed light technology. *Learn more about: www.ysamedtech.com*
- From Libya: **Speetar**. This e-health start-up was created by Ahmed Khaled ELFAITURI. Speetar is a telemedicine web and mobile app platform. It links Libyan doctors with patients in the diaspora who need medical care. The solution is an all-in-one model: a digital health booklet, a online appointment booking system and a remote consultation platform. *Learn more about: www.speetar.com*
- From Morocco: **MyTindy**. This socially economic and financially inclusive start-up is run by Aida KANDIL. It is a marketplace specialised in African crafts that provides numerous Moroccan craftspeople with solutions and helps them sell their products online and develop their businesses. With further development, this platform could benefit an even greater number of Maghreb craftspeople. *Learn more about: www.mytindy.com*
- From Mauritania: **DAADOO VDP**. Aminetou SY created this start-up which works on climatic resilience by upcycling plastic waste into paving stones and bricks. These building materials are also resistant to salt and humidity so that they can be used in flood plains. DAADOO VDP uses its solution to fight plastic waste and reduce environmental impact. It has a highly positive impact both socially, as it works with a group of over 1500 women, and economically as it creates employment. *Learn more about: <https://www.facebook.com/daaddosar/>*
- From Tunisia: **Kyto-Prod**. Created by Olfa KILANI, this innovative agri- and bio tech company has developed a circular-economy solution. It offers a wide range of products and super foods made from chitosan - a naturally occurring molecule with many uses in the cosmetics, textile, food and paramedical industries. *Learn more about: www.kytoprod.com*

A place on the highly sought-after [Social & Inclusive Business Camp](#) acceleration programme These start-ups have also won the following prize package: a seven-thousand-Euro (€7000) seed fund, a high-level visibility boost, transport and accommodation expenses paid for their trip to the annual EMERGING Valley summit, full access to investor meetings, participation in the Mediterranean Digital Dialogues and

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encounters with leading partners at the next summit of the two shores of the Mediterranean.

Other highlights over the next few months

EMERGING Mediterranean will shortly be communicating about the progress of its 5 programme winners in a **white paper written from the debates of the digital summit and is a highly positive proposal to accelerate innovation in the Mediterranean.** It will also be giving details about the participation of the members of the programme at the next EMERGING Valley summit on April 7 and 8, 2021, to bring together African and global digital entrepreneurs, decision-makers and experts to the Aix-Marseille-Provence region.

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Samir ABDELKRIM concludes: *"Our EMERGING Mediterranean digital summit was the second highlight of this programme, but it is also the culmination of several years of meetings and exchanges with the Mediterranean Tech For Good ecosystem. I am more convinced than ever that the Mediterranean region has all the assets to become the positive-innovation hub between Europe and Africa and am delighted to have been able to lead this great project and bring together experts and stakeholders from the region to go over the hot topics. The debates and exchanges will help advocate for Tech For Good in the Mediterranean, the result of which will be presented at the EMERGING Valley summit on April 7 and 8, 2021. I would also like to thank my teams, our partners and all the experts who have worked together in recent months, as well as the numerous Maghreb start-ups that answered our call for applications. Thanks to all of them, this first edition of the programme was such a huge success."*

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About EMERGING Mediterranean

After the preparatory forum of the [Summit of the two Shores](#) and with the support of the French Development Agency, EMERGING Mediterranean was set up to identify, accelerate and bring the star companies of Mediterranean Tech For Good to the forefront to help strengthen their impact, highlight their success stories and make their societies more resilient.

For more information: www.emergingmediterranean.co

About EMERGING Valley

The EMERGING Valley summit was created by Samir Abdelkrim in 2017 (author of "Start-up Lions") and brings entrepreneurs, decision-makers and global digital experts to the Aix-Marseille-Provence area. This area is the perfect meeting point between Africa and Europe. EMERGING Valley wants to promote emerging digital ecosystems in the Aix-Marseille-Provence region. EMERGING Valley is supported by the Department of the Bouches du Rhône, the Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolis, Euroméditerranée, the Marseille-Provence Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the City of Marseille, and helps build bridges between African start-ups and French, European and international innovation networks.

To learn more about EMERGING Valley, please visit: www.emergingvalley.co

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