

The Mediterranean Manifesto for sustainable and circular business development

The urgency

Time is running out to prevent irreversible damage from the triple planetary crisis: climate change, environmental pollution, and biodiversity loss.

Social inequalities are widening, and we are far from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The well-being of current and future generations and nature's biodiversity are at stake.

We urgently need a radical transformation of our economic systems and consumption and production patterns towards sustainable, circular, inclusive, and participatory socio-economic models.

The reality

Despite these dramatic challenges, no encouraging transformation is happening at the macro level: countries are failing to make adequate progress towards environmentally and socially sustainable economic systems.

Yet at meso and micro levels, we can drive the transition towards sustainable and equitable business models. These are companies that understand that no enterprise exists in isolation — every economic activity forms part of a broader social reality, and both are embedded within the natural ecosystems that sustain us all. Such emerging businesses acknowledge their interdependence and embed environmental and social objectives into their business strategies.

Our commitment

As organisations supporting business creation and development, we are committed to promoting the transition towards justice-oriented circular economy models: businesses which create ecological value and safeguard the environment by addressing environmental challenges and reducing environmental impacts, while also being equitable and socially empowering.

No company should be allowed to externalise its environmental and social costs. The transition from linear to circular economy is not optional — sustainable businesses must become the new normal.

Business Support Organisations (BSOs) should also enhance their collaboration and networking to increase the coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency of service provision for sustainable entrepreneurs and companies.

Our call to action

With this vision, we, Mediterranean BSOs, call on all Public, Private, and Non-Profit BSOs to embrace the following decalogue of principles and actions:

1. Apply innovative approaches, methodologies, and tools to foster environmental and social value creation while minimising negative impacts of business models. This includes, among others, applying circular economy strategies, eco-innovation, eco-design, and promoting fair labour relations, participative governance, gender equity, and global environmental justice.
2. Continuously build internal capacities and expertise to support sustainable and circular business development.
3. Ensure that the transition to sustainable business models is inclusive and equitable, providing targeted support to underrepresented entrepreneurs, including women, youth, and marginalised communities, so that no one is left behind in the circular economy transition.
4. Foster and enable territorial ecosystems and conditions in which sustainable businesses can emerge and thrive; promote cooperation among enterprises, communities, institutions, and knowledge actors; and support systemic transformations that make local contexts more resilient, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable.
5. Regularly measure and transparently report on the environmental and social impacts of business support initiatives through robust MEAL (monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning) systems.
6. Share and exchange knowledge, resources, and experiences on sustainable business development with like-minded organisations and make learning publicly accessible to accelerate collective progress. Coordinate activities, launch joint initiatives, and promote networks at national and regional level with organisations that share these values to amplify our collective impact.

7. Collaboratively boost access to market and increase demand for sustainable products and services while challenging unsustainable consumption practices.
8. Engage financial actors and channel financial resources (grants, loans, equity) towards sustainable and circular businesses.
9. Raise awareness and knowledge widely concerning sustainable and circular business models.
10. Advocate collaboratively for supportive policies and regulatory frameworks that enable sustainable business development and create a level playing field where sustainable businesses can thrive, and unsustainable practices face appropriate consequences.

Join the movement

The Mediterranean region has been a cradle of innovation and exchange for millennia. Now, we must channel that same spirit to build an economy that serves both people and planet.

Is your organisation aligned with the principles of this Manifesto? Join us. Endorse it today @ www.theswitchers.org/ecosystems

Together, we can make sustainable business the only business.