

# Third International TouMaLi Conference

*TouMaLi 2025: Project Insights and Forward Paths on Sustainable Tourism, Waste Solutions and Litter Prevention*

Hammam Sousse, 26th and 27th November 2025

**Green Forward Programme**

**Presented by Afef Ajengui, Regional Program Manager SPARK**



# Introduction to Green Forward

The Green Forward initiative, funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa (DG MENA), aims to foster a green and circular economy in the Southern Neighbourhood region, which includes 8 countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Green Forward operates at three levels: macro, meso, and micro, implemented respectively by a consortium comprising Expertise France, SPARK, and UNIDO.

## Funded by



# Duration: 36 Months

(Mar. 2024 - Feb. 2026)



7 countries from Southern Neighbourhood

Misr El Kheir (GESR)



Jordanian Chamber of Industry



BIAT Lebanon



Teams for Development



Enactus Morocco



Flow Accelerator



CITET

Tunis International Center for Environmental Technologies





SPARK's intervention aims to enhance the capacity of business support organisations (BSOs) to serve as ecosystem enablers, bridging the gap between policy and practice. This initiative is committed to fostering job creation, economic opportunity, and alignment with the principles of the European Green Deal in all seven target countries.

With SPARK, it is designed to bolster the capacity of business support organisations (BSOs) to act as key ecosystem enablers, bridging the gap between policy (macro level) and SME (micro level). This initiative is committed to fostering sustainable economic growth and innovation through comprehensive support and collaboration, promoting an inclusive green economy.

# The Green Forward Approach

A three-level integrated model:

1. Macro Level (Expertise France): Policy dialogue, enabling regulations, national GCE roadmaps
2. Meso Level (SPARK): Strengthening BSOs as key ecosystem enablers
3. Micro Level (UNIDO): Supporting MSMEs, youth, innovators, and green entrepreneurship





# Why BSOs Matter in the GCE Transition?

BSOs are uniquely positioned to:

- Connect government agendas with private sector needs
- Advocate for greener, more inclusive policies
- Support SMEs in adopting green practices
- Facilitate market linkages, partnerships, and green finance access

They are the bridge between policy ambitions and real on-the-ground impact.



# The BSOs' Role in Policy Engagement

Under Green Forward, BSOs are increasingly:

- Acting as intermediaries between SMEs and ministries
- Collecting evidence from MSMEs to inform policy
- Leading local advocacy campaigns
- Participating in national GCE committees
- Supporting regulatory alignment with EU standards





# Strengthening BSOs Under Green Forward

Our support focuses on:

- Capacity building (technical training, GCE frameworks, standards, circularity tools)
- Peer learning across Mediterranean BSOs
- Networking & regional collaboration
- Development and testing of green toolboxes
- Supporting BSOs to become advocacy actors, not only service providers





The implementation experience underscores 5 structural barriers that continue to shape the GCE landscape in the region:

1. Fragmented data and limited institutional GCE readiness;
2. Inconsistent stakeholder alignment and engagement sustainability (Need for stronger alignment between macro and meso actors)
3. Persistent knowledge gaps (insufficient technical expertise in several BSOs), and demand for practical tools
4. Weak policy coherence and complex regulatory pathways
5. Limited access to green finance.
6. Low awareness among SMEs

*Addressing these barriers requires a combined focus on evidence-driven capacity building, streamlined operational coordination, and structured policy advocacy mechanisms - areas that Green Forward is now well-positioned to strengthen in its next implementation phase.*



# Key Lessons Learned

1. BSOs want to play a strategic role, but need tools, evidence, and skills
2. Policy dialogue requires coordination between stakeholders
3. SMEs show interest in green practices but lack technical support
4. Regional collaboration accelerates learning and uptake
5. Awareness on GCE is still low → communication must increase
6. Green Finance is a major bottleneck → Strengthening BSOs on Green Finance is essential to bridge the gap between policies and SME needs.



# How BSOs Drive Policy Dialogue and Enable Greener Regulations - in Green Forward

Within the Green Forward programme, Business Support Organizations (BSOs) are positioned as bridge actors between the private sector, public institutions, and civil society. Their role goes far beyond offering services - they influence and shape the enabling environment for the Green and Circular Economy (GCE).

# 1. BSOs as Drivers of Policy Dialogue

Green Forward trains and equips BSOs to:



**Collect evidence from SMEs:** BSOs work directly with MSMEs and entrepreneurs. This direct access allows them to gather:


- Practical challenges faced by companies (waste management, compliance costs, certification, green standards)
- Market gaps and needs
- Opportunities for circular business models

This evidence is then channelled upward into national policy discussions.

 **Translate private-sector needs into policy recommendations:** BSOs receive capacity building on:

- Policy analysis
- GCE regulatory frameworks
- Environmental standards & EU regulations

This allows them to produce **informed, realistic, and sector-based policy recommendations.**

 **Participate in national policy platforms:** In several Green Forward countries, BSOs now sit on:

- Circular economy task forces
- National working groups with ministries of environment, industry, economy

This strengthens public–private dialogue.

## 2. BSOs as Advocates for Greener Regulations



**Raise awareness among policymakers; Through:**

- Policy recommendations
- Stakeholder consultations
- Public–private roundtables

This ensures that ministries understand real economic needs and opportunities.



**Act as “trusted voices”**

Governments often see BSOs as neutral, technical, and development-oriented actors - making them credible messengers for green reforms.

### 3. BSOs as Coordinators Between Sectors

Green Forward strengthens BSOs to become **ecosystem conveners** capable of connecting:



#### **A. Private Sector ↔ Public Institutions: BSOs:**

- Communicate new regulations to enterprises
- Explain compliance requirements
- Help shape government roadmaps

They make sure policies reflect the reality of SMEs.



## B. Private Sector ↔ Civil Society: BSOs:

- Organise awareness campaigns
- Promote green entrepreneurship
- Support youth and community groups in adopting GCE practices

This mobilises society around the green transition.

## C. Public Institutions ↔ Civil Society: Thanks to BSOs:

- Ministries can communicate their strategies more effectively
- Civil society can advocate for environmental concerns
- Joint events and consultations become more inclusive

BSOs act as “translators” between technical policies and civic engagement.

## 4. How Green Forward Builds BSO Capacity for This Role

The programme provides:

- Training on in the policy level to BSOs
- Green Economy standards and technical knowledge
- A practical GCE toolbox (to support SMEs & inform policies)
- Peer-learning between 7 Mediterranean countries
- Networking with ministries, donors, academic institutions
- Opportunities to participate in regional conferences
- Direct involvement in mapping regulatory gaps

This transforms BSOs from simple service providers into **ecosystem influencers**.



# How BSOs Support Sustainable Tourism & Litter Prevention

Through the Green Forward programme, **BSOs act as ecosystem facilitators** that could support the tourism sector by:

## 1. Training Tourism SMEs

- Resource efficiency (water, energy)
- Circular practices
- Waste audit and reduction
- Green certification pathways

## 2. Supporting Waste & Litter Prevention Solutions

- Partnering with recycling companies
- Encouraging eco-design and reuse
- Collecting best practices

### 3. Creating Dialogue Between Tourism Sector & Public Authorities

- Position papers on sustainable tourism
- Recommendations for green standards
- Advocacy for better waste regulation in touristic areas

### 4. Raising Awareness Among Tourists & Local Communities

- Behaviour-change campaigns
- Communication materials on waste prevention
- Workshops with youth, NGOs and municipalities

# Conclusion

The transition to a green and circular economy will only be successful if BSOs become strong leaders in:

- Supporting SMEs
- Guiding policy reforms
- Connecting public and private sectors
- Promoting green business opportunities

The Green Forward is proud to support this transformation in the Mediterranean.



# Thank you so much for your attention

**Green Forward Programme**  
**Presented by Afef Ajengui, Regional Program Manager SPARK**