

3rd edition of SME EnterPRIZE: Generali extends its search for Europe's most sustainable SMEs

- Generali is seeking to boost a culture of sustainability in SMEs in order to build a green and inclusive European economy
- SDA Bocconi – School of Management will create a dedicated White Paper and Research project, focusing on the opportunities and challenges Europe's SMEs face in their sustainability journey
- Generali partners with European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME to reinforce sustainability, competitiveness, and innovation in European SMEs

Milan – Generali's **SME EnterPRIZE**, its flagship initiative to boost a culture of sustainability in Europe's SMEs, is underway. Generali is searching for the most sustainable SMEs across Europe, looking to find best practices which can inspire other entrepreneurs and help society tackle our environmental and social challenges.

This year's edition, the third one, will involve **SMEs from ten EU countries**: Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain.

In each country, Generali will work through its distribution network, local partners, and the member associations of European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME in all involved EU countries to discover local **Sustainability Heroes** who will be given special recognition at a dedicated event in Brussels this Autumn. The 'Sustainability Heroes' are entrepreneurs that have implemented notable sustainability initiatives in their business activities that can become an inspirational model for fellow entrepreneurs. The initiative highlights best practices across two categories: Environment and Social.

SMEs can find out more information on how to participate through: <https://www.sme-enterprize.com/what-is-sme-enterprize/>

In partnership with **SDA Bocconi – School of Management**, there will also be a dedicated **White Paper** and Research project to understand the challenges and opportunities Europe's SMEs face in their sustainability journey. Generali has also established a strategic partnership with **European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME**, through their R&D project platform GreenerSME, aimed at further reinforcing sustainability, competitiveness, and innovation in European SMEs.

Generali believes that Europe's SMEs are essential to meet the EU's ambition to build a greener and more inclusive economy. Across the past two years, SME EnterPRIZE reached over 13,000 SMEs in its search for Sustainability Heroes, and, with this edition, will have interviewed more than 2,000 SMEs as part of the White Paper research project.

Prior Sustainability Heroes include:



- Mint Future GmbH, a German-based business, enabling the owners of electric vehicles to turn saved CO₂ emissions into cash or sustainability projects;
- CleverFarm, a Czech agriculture business committed to developing smart solutions for farmers such as IoT-based sensors and precision agriculture tools; and
- Rioma, a textile company that created a foundation operating in Spain and South America to support young people at risk of social exclusion.

Philippe Donnet, Generali Group CEO, said: “As Europe’s leading insurer, SMEs are an important segment of our business, as we provide certainty for them to plan their future. SME EnterPRIZE was born from our belief that supporting these businesses, which collectively represent more than half of Europe’s GDP and 99% of EU companies, must be addressed if Europe is going to build a greener and more inclusive economy in the future. SME EnterPRIZE is a project which captures a snapshot of where SMEs stand today in their sustainability journey, as we have reached out to over 13,000 in the previous two editions through our distribution networks, and looks at how institutions can help accelerate sustainability transition through policy choices – which is at the heart of SDA Bocconi’s research and White Paper. We believe that we must listen carefully and keep track of their progress – Europe’s sustainable future will depend on their success.”

“If we are asked how to convince SMEs to embrace the sustainable transition, an excellent starting point would be the ESG ‘business case’”, said **Francesco Perrini, Associate Dean for Sustainability at SDA Bocconi School of Management, Full Professor of Economics and Business Management, and Scientific Coordinator of the SME EnterPRIZE White Paper research project**. “Our research confirms the positive link between sustainability-oriented social and environmental commitment and a range of corporate performance benefits. In other words, SMEs that invested early in sustainability – including in clean and renewable energies, energy efficiency, and saving, reuse or recycling of materials – are now better equipped than others in facing the complexities we are experiencing, seizing new competitive and market opportunities, and managing their risks more effectively.”

Stefan Moritz, Secretary General of European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME underlined that “countering climate change and promoting sustainable development is a priority for the majority of SMEs and Mid-Caps, and it will be even more in the coming years. Small and Medium-sized companies as well as Mid-Caps in this process towards a Green Economy need to be supported, assisted, encouraged, and not overloaded with bureaucratic or economic burdens that make it more and more difficult to cope with the challenges ahead of us. SME EnterPRIZE is a great positive example on how we can encourage more companies to follow the good examples of others. We as Europe’s Mittelstand are proud to be Generali’s partner in this.”

THE GENERALI GROUP

Generali is one of the largest global insurance and asset management providers. Established in 1831, it is present in over 50 countries in the world, with a total premium income of € 81.5 billion in 2022. With 82,000 employees serving 68 million customers, the Group has a leading position in Europe and a growing presence in Asia and Latin America. At the heart of Generali’s strategy is its Lifetime Partner commitment to customers, achieved through innovative and personalised solutions, best-in-class customer experience and its digitalised global distribution capabilities. The Group has fully embedded sustainability into all strategic choices, with the aim to create value for all stakeholders while building a fairer and more resilient society.

SDA BOCCONI SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

For fifty years, we have been committed to fueling your educational experiences with our passion for knowledge and concrete know-how, creativity and scientific rigor, and cultural and international diversity. We were born to support the continuous growth, improvement and transformation of people, companies and institutions, and we will stand by your side through the toughest challenges.

Over the years, we have grown with our clients and students. We have learned to change and transform what we offer. We have gone from national to global leaders according to prestigious, international rankings. We have increased our commitment and the programs we offer to ensure we always have an answer to the needs of new skills. We have transformed



our research in relevant and applied knowledge and embraced the challenge of the digital transformation. And we have designed and created a campus for the future, one of the most innovative in the world.

We are an international school with headquarters in Milan and Rome and a pan-Asian hub in Mumbai, India. Our classrooms reflect the globalization of modern society and the diversity of thought that cultivates progress and innovation.

Our strength lies in our ability to evolve, thanks to the contagious, innovative energy found at all levels of our community.

We do not fear the future. We want to play a leading role in the global market of higher education alongside small, medium and large companies and institutions. We are proud of our identity and the Italian creative ingenuity we represent, but we will always be open to the world.

EUROPEAN ENTREPRENEURS CEA-PME

European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME (Confédération Européenne des Associations de Petites et Moyennes Entreprises) is the largest confederation of voluntarily associated small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Europe.

We are a Brussels-based business federation which currently counts 27 European associations among its members, with more than 2.4 million enterprises, employing over 23 million people. For 31 years we have defended the economic and political interests of our members' associated companies at the European Institutions, and cater for new opportunities, like SME EnterPRIZE, GreenerSME, DigitaliseSME and SME2B. Please find more about these opportunities here: www.european-entrepreneurs.org.