



Webinar 1 - 2024
ESG for SMEs

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Friday 22 March 2024

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honored to welcome you to our online webinar titled "ESG for SMEs," organized by the Gozo Business Chamber. As the president of this chamber, I am delighted to see the growing interest and awareness surrounding the pressing need for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices in today's business landscape.

In recent years, there has been a significant shift in mindset, with increasing recognition of the imperative to address environmental concerns and uphold social responsibilities. From climate change to diversity, businesses are now expected to be active participants in shaping a sustainable future, ensuring that our past mistakes do not dictate our future trajectory.

Indeed, the challenges posed by climate change are already evident, impacting supply chains, operations, and communities globally, including here in Malta and Gozo. The urgency to address these challenges cannot be overstated, particularly as we strive to navigate towards a net-zero carbon future.

While our islands face their unique set of challenges in achieving sustainable growth, particularly highlighted in the 2022 Country Report by the European Commission, it is crucial to recognize the pivotal role that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play in our local economy. With the majority of businesses being SMEs, their embrace of ESG initiatives is essential for fostering a more sustainable economy.

Despite SMEs not being subject to ESG reporting under current accounting rules, there are compelling reasons for them to integrate

sustainability into their operations. Adopting sustainable practices not only benefits the environment but also yields significant advantages for SMEs, including cost reductions, access to new markets, and improved competitiveness.

In pursuit of sustainability, SMEs can undertake various measures to enhance their ESG performance. From reducing CO2 emissions to investing in renewable energy sources and improving energy efficiency, there are numerous opportunities for SMEs to operate in a greener manner while also reaping financial rewards.

Moreover, as the importance of ESG information in assessing creditworthiness grows, SMEs with robust ESG credentials stand to gain access to better financial conditions and critical resources, further underscoring the business case for sustainability.

In conclusion, I urge all SMEs to embrace the ESG imperative, not only as a moral obligation but also as a strategic advantage. By integrating sustainability into their business models, SMEs can contribute to a more resilient and prosperous future for our communities and our planet.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to the insights that our distinguished speakers, Mr. Clint Azzopardi Flores and Dr. Roberta Lepre, will share with us today. Let us embark on this journey towards a more sustainable future together.
