

## 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME association 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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.

**Generali Group CEO Philippe Donnet** said: *"We launched SME EnterPRIZE with the aim to promote a culture of sustainability among SMEs and support them as they embrace it, while at the same time, give public visibility to the most inspiring success stories. This is part of our effort to make Generali the Lifetime Partner to SME enterprises in Europe. In the previous two editions of our initiative, we have reached out to over 13,000 SMEs through our distribution networks, and looked at how institutions can help accelerate sustainability transition through policy choices – which is at the heart of SDA Bocconi's research and White Paper. Our commitment to SME enterprises remains as strong and as meaningful as ever, since Europe's sustainable future will depend on their success."*

*"If we are asked how to convince SMEs to engage in the sustainable transition, an excellent starting point would be the ESG business case," said **Francesco Perrini, Associate Dean for Sustainability at the Italian University SDA Bocconi - School of Management, Full Professor of Economics and Business Management and scientific coordinator of the white paper related to the EMS EnterPRIZE project.** "Our research confirms the positive link between social and environmental commitment focused on sustainability and a series of benefits in terms of business performance. In other words, SMEs that invested early in sustainability, including clean and renewable energy, energy efficiency and materials saving, reuse or recycling, are now better equipped than others to deal with the complexities we face, seize new competitive and market opportunities and manage their risks more effectively."*

**Stefan Moritz, Secretary General of European Entrepreneurs CEA PME**, emphasized that *"the fight against climate change and the promotion of sustainable development are a priority for the majority of SMEs and mid-sized companies and will be even more so in the coming years. In this process towards a green economy, small and medium-sized enterprises and mid-sized companies must be supported, helped, encouraged and not be overburdened with administrative or economic burdens that prevent them from meeting the challenges ahead. The EnterPRIZE SME Award is an excellent and positive example of how we can encourage more companies to follow the good examples of others. We are proud to be Generali's partner on this issue."*

#### 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.