

Generali launches the second edition of SME EnterPRIZE and anticipates key findings from a survey of 1,000 SMEs

- Survey produced by Bocconi University shows that SMEs adopting an ESG action plan increased while SMEs not implementing a plan have doubled
- Barriers that European SMEs face include difficulty accessing sustainable finance and SME-targeted public incentives as well as lack of demand for sustainable products and services
- Generali will explore these topics on 26th October at the second edition of SME EnterPRIZE and will unveil all the findings of the Bocconi survey within in a dedicated White Paper, while announcing the 2022 SME 'Sustainability Heroes'

Milan – Generali today anticipates the key findings from a survey of over 1,000 small and medium sized businesses from across Europe. The full results of the survey will be shared at the second edition of SME EnterPRIZE this October, through a dedicated White Paper produced by Bocconi University. SME EnterPRIZE is Generali's flagship project designed to promote a culture of sustainability among European SMEs. It has the goal of inspiring SMEs to develop sustainable business models and stimulating public debate on the topic while recognising entrepreneurs that can become an inspirational model for others to follow.

The survey found that around 25 percent of SME owners and managers say they've now put in place a plan to improve the way they do business to be more environmentally and socially responsible. That's against just 14 percent two years ago. However, more than 40 percent of those asked said they had no sustainability plan at all to put in place, up from 20 percent two years ago, despite the survey results indicating that having an environmental and social business strategy in place resulted in better customer satisfaction, a better reputation, more efficiency and even increased market share. SMEs ask to be boosted in their sustainable transition through access to sustainable finance, public incentives for SMEs and stronger promotion to boost demand for sustainable products and services.

Philippe Donnet, Generali Group CEO said: *"Our survey showed that there's a strong business case for good environmental and social practices. The insurance and financial industries can help through better access to funding for sustainable initiatives, and this is the chance for Europe to come even closer together. The continent's SMEs hold the key to a sustainable recovery, and we look forward to recognising the leaders in implementing sustainable business methods this upcoming October. They will stand as an example to follow across the whole of Europe."*

The launch of this year's edition prompts the start of a process that will see SMEs shortlisted in all 9 countries participating in the programme: Austria, Croatia, Czechia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal and Spain. An independent panel of judges on a high-level Scientific Committee will then select the 'Sustainability

Heroes', to be announced at a ceremony in Brussels on 26th October. The 'Sustainability Heroes' are entrepreneurs that have implemented notable sustainability initiatives in their business activities that can become an inspirational model for fellow entrepreneurs, becoming sustainability ambassadors. The initiative highlights best practices across three categories: Welfare, Environment and Community.

Last year's inaugural Generali SME EnterPRIZE 'Sustainability Heroes' were drawn from over 6,000 SMEs and included a Hungarian vegetable-oil manufacturer with an innovative zero-waste policy, a low-carbon eco-hotel in Austria, an Italian organic farming business with an exceptional approach to employee welfare and a textile company in Spain that supports young people at risk of social exclusion.

Generali will also unveil a White Paper by Bocconi University that will explore the progress Europe's SMEs have made in building sustainable businesses, the challenges they face and the potential contribution from politics and finance.

Further information and insights are available on <https://www.sme-enterprize.com/>.

THE GENERALI GROUP

Generali is one of the largest global insurance and asset management providers. Established in 1831, it is present in 50 countries in the world, with a total premium income of € 75.8 billion in 2021. With around 75,000 employees serving 67 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.