Skills development initiatives for enterprises:
sharing of the findings of the initial mapping and concrete examples

14 December 2021 online workshop

This presentation is an abstract of the report to be delivered in 2022 which will include detailed information.

Identifying initiatives developed to cope with the COVID crisis impact in the EU Neighbourhood countries[*]

- Focusing on enterprise skills development

- Targeting innovation, greening and sustainability

- Describing the approach implemented and tools used

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* Except south Caucasus countries

Data collection : online desk research + few additional interviews

Main limits:

- Time devoted
- Remote desk research is the main source of information
- Lockdown restrictions : lack of direct interactions
- Interviews produce opinion not always facts
- Data collected are not on the same level:

    - All initiatives: Maghreb, MENA, Central Asia

    - Initiatives focused on skills development BY, MLD, RU and UA and WB and Turkey

The Covid context: impact for the companies

Restrictions to mobility, closure of non-essential business, lockdown March-June 2020

Temporary shutdowns of business activity

Problems (out of sanitary issues) faced by businesses: loss of turnover, logistics and supply chains disruption, investment plans frozen, communication and marketing plans frozen, wages payments and cash flow difficulties, difficulties in covering fixed costs, financial risks and default risks, difficulties in digital transformation (e.g., e-commerce)

Businesses resumed work as of +/- June 2020

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Measures developed to deal with the crisis (generic information)

Sanitary	Provision of medical material and pharmaceutical products	- Funding - Incentives packages - Grants and Loans - Fiscal measures (tax relief, credit or exemption) - Social measures (temporary wage subsidies, etc) - Digitilisation - Legal and Policy changes - Training
Economical	Support for businesses, boosting demand, balancing public finances	
Social	Transfers, preservation of jobs and wages, food security	

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Main features (1)

Priority was ensuring sustainability of businesses, maintaining jobs and socio-economic safety nets by stabilizing the economic sector (all regions mapped)

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Overview

- # 25 Partner Countries*

- # 358 Initiatives identified, of which 31 regional

- # 267 that include skills or training dimension

Quantitative information based on data collected by experts and included in the information collection matrix

* Except South Caucasus countries

COVID-19 related, 146

Initiatives non covid related, 212
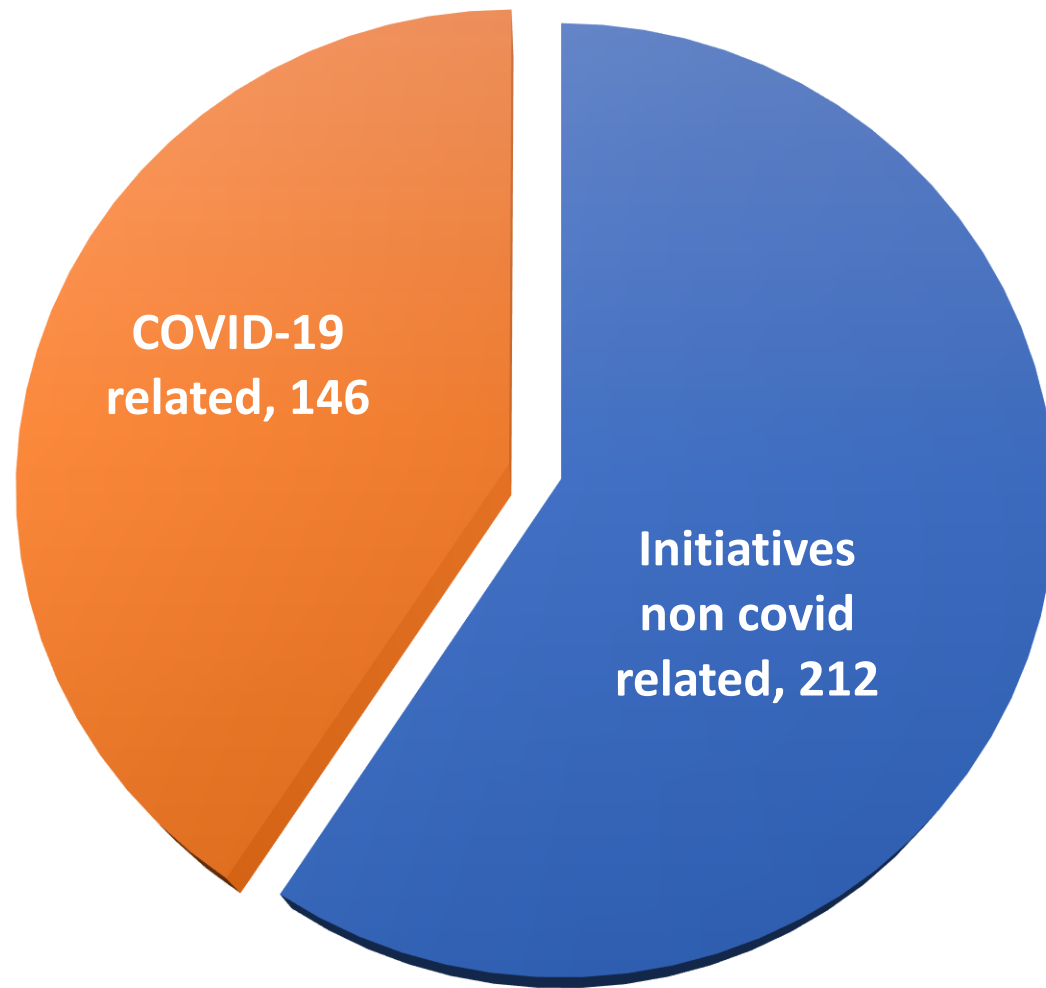
60% non-COVID related

Most of identified initiatives pre-existing to Covid crisis

Few programs were a direct response to COVID

Existing initiatives adapted

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Total number of initiatives identified: 358

Main features (2)

Majority of initiatives were launched before Covid-19 crises

Few measures specifically addressing COVID-19 through the prism of enterprise skills

skills development already on the agenda

Adaptation flexibility

new training curriculum and resources were quickly developed

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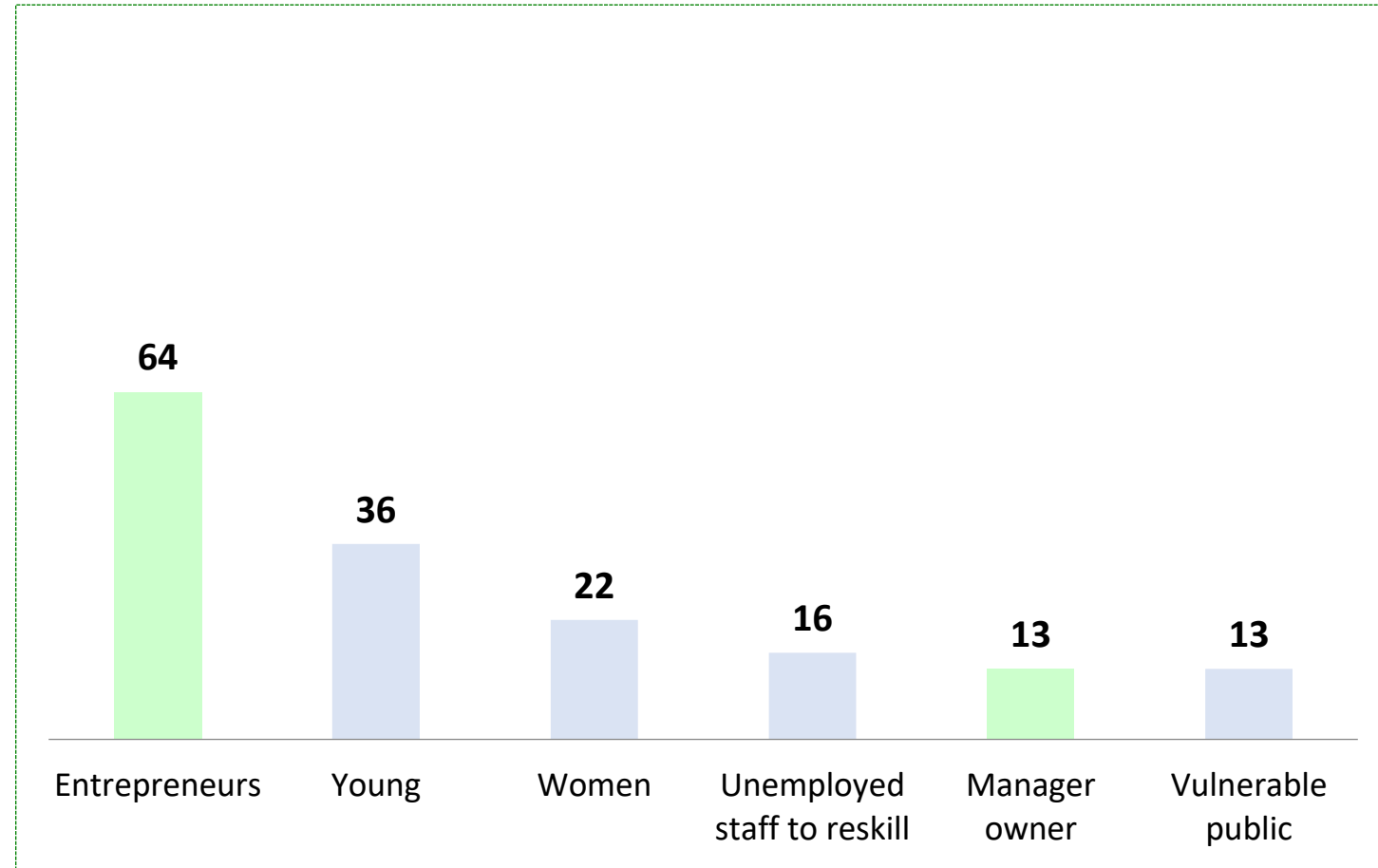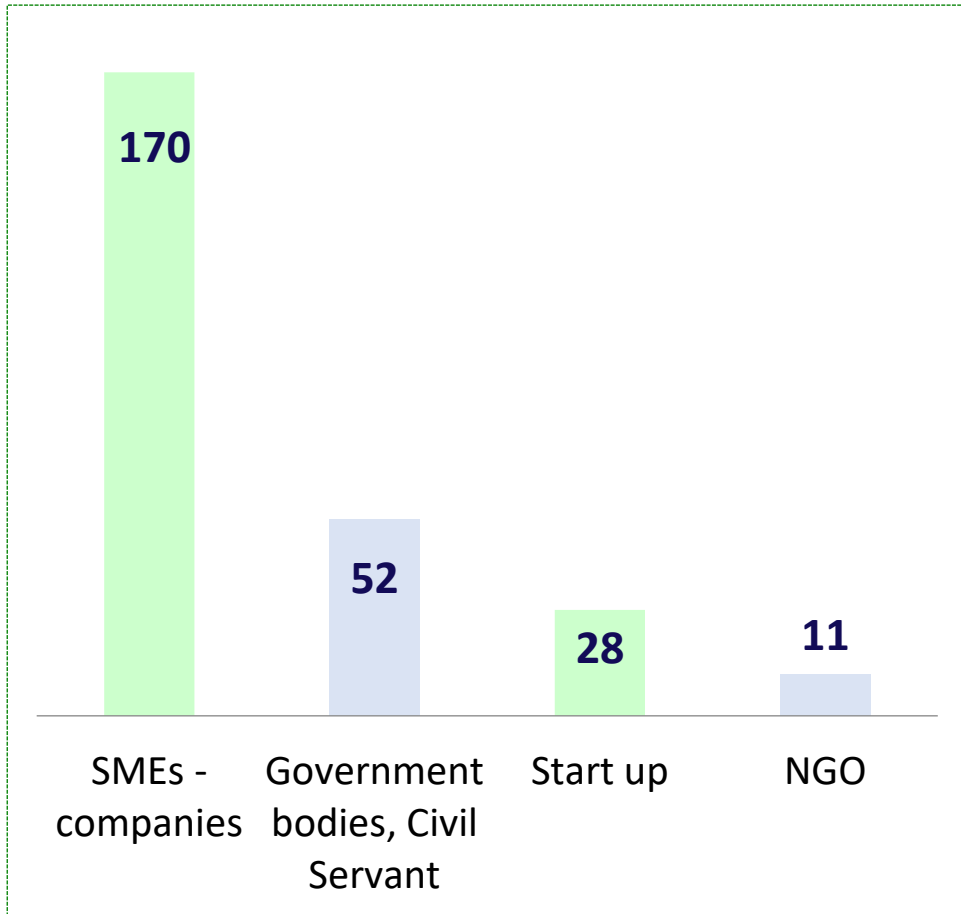European Training Foundation

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Types of organisations initiating the programmes (national :327)
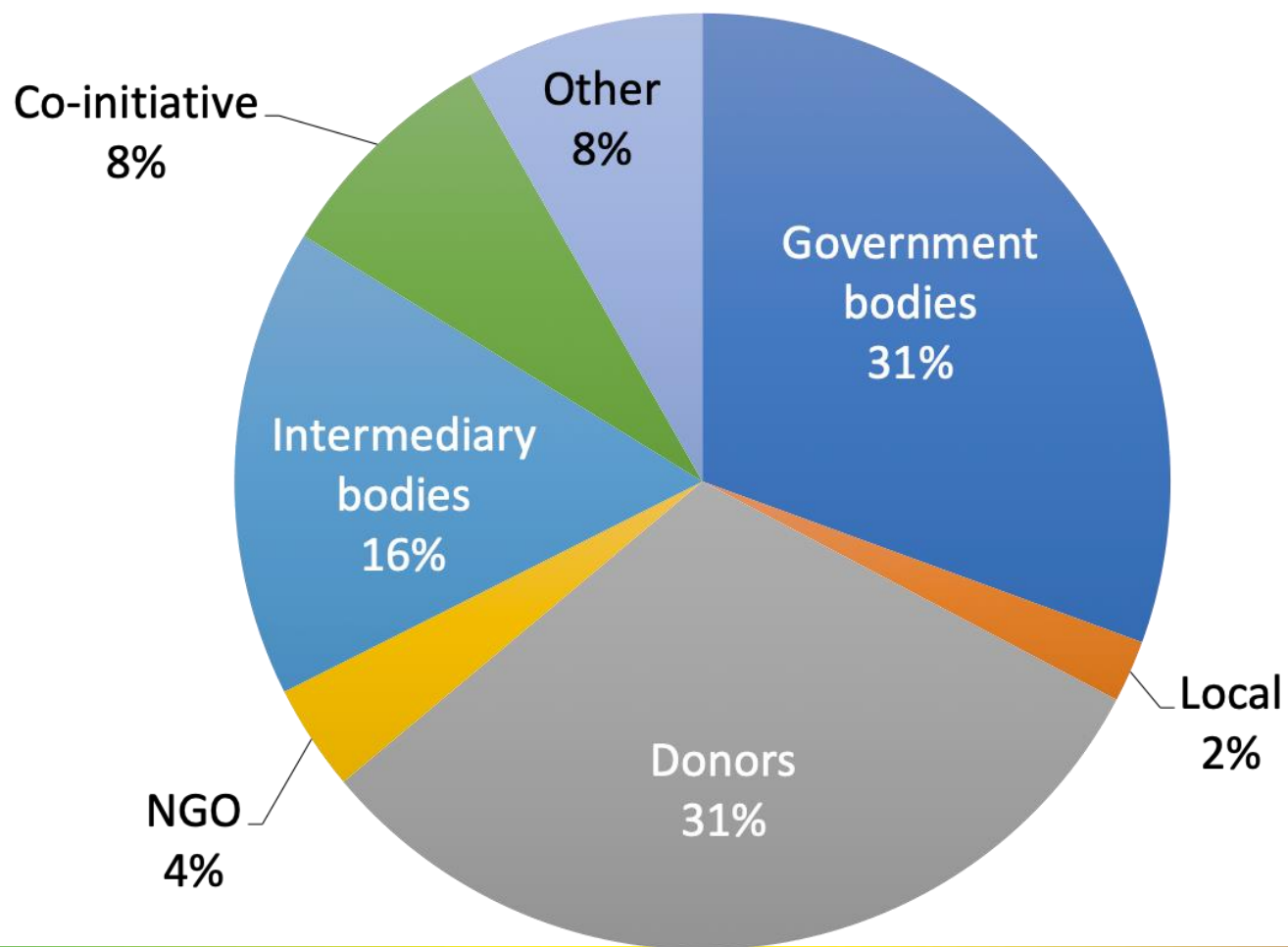
Remark: Vast majority directly or indirectly donors funded

- Other 8%
- Co-initiative 8%
- Government bodies 31%
- Intermediary bodies 16%
- Local 2%
- NGO 4%
- Donors 31%

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Total number of initiatives identified: 358

170	SMEs - companies
52	Government bodies, Civil Servant
28	Start up
11	NGO

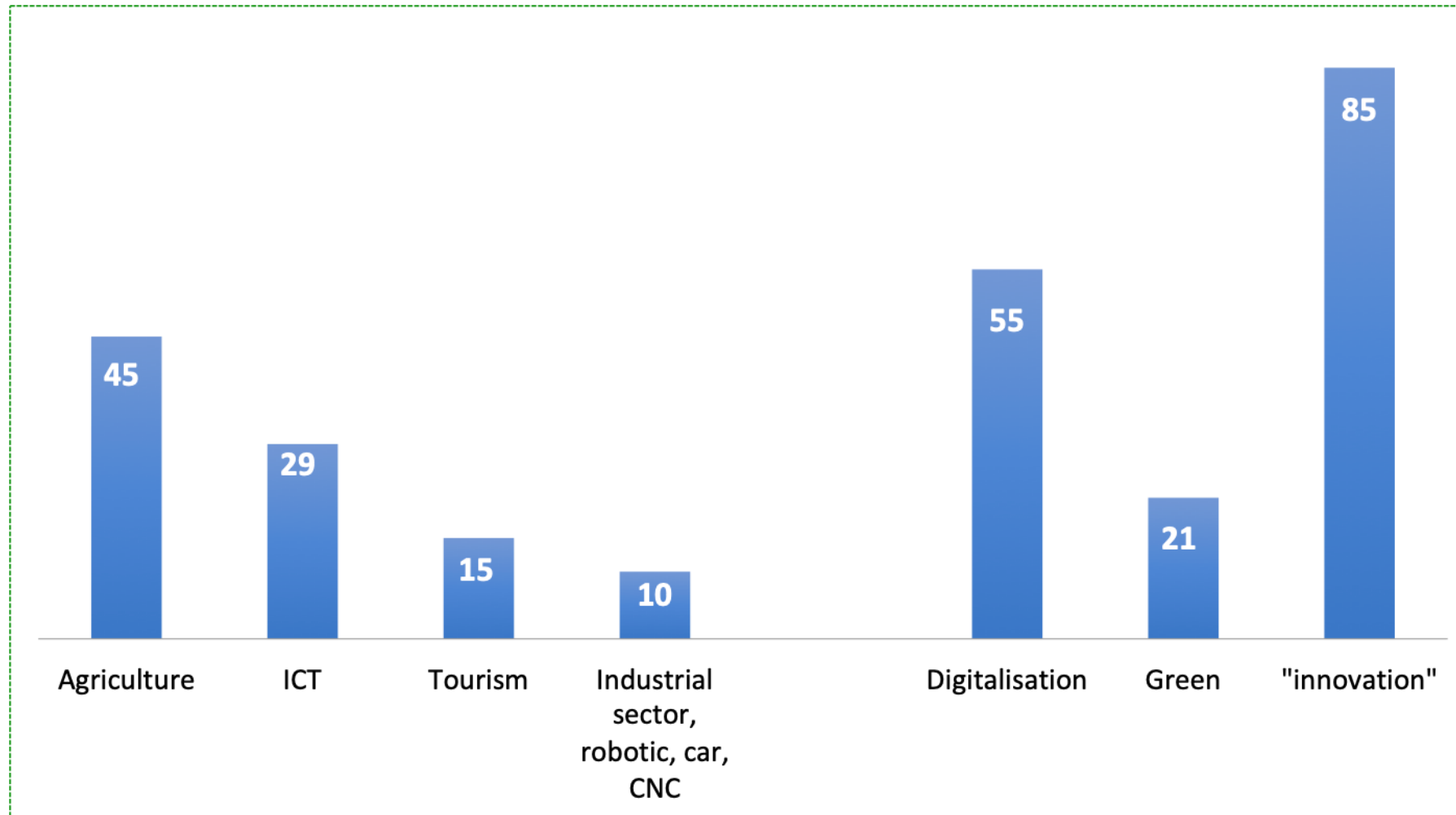|	
64	Entrepreneurs
36	Young
22	Women
16	Unemployed staff to reskill
13	Manager owner
13	Vulnerable public

Majority of initiatives are companies oriented
Encouraging Entrepreneurship is considered as key

For one initiatives several target can be mentioned (e.g. start-up and manager)

Targets (2) : sectors

- Innovation: wide understanding
- Greening need of in-depth investigation
- Tourism is one of the most impacted sector not really covered by initiatives

Digitalisation is emerging as the most dominant skills initiatives
Agriculture remains a key sector in the EU neighbourhood countries

Remark: For one initiative targets can be multiple (e.g. a sector, a topic and a public)

Main features (3)

Two key priorities identified: digitalisation and entrepreneurship

Digitalisation is emerging as the most dominant soft skill that initiatives target (WB&T)

Staff and owners of SMEs often do not understand the importance of digitalisation (SEMED)

Low level of digitalisation, which led to losses of jobs in enterprises and sectors not adapted to remote provision of products and services (CA)

IT skills requirement is common feature of all initiatives, across all sectors and target groups (WB&T)

Countries set digital strategies (e.g. TUN, LBN),

Local SMEs to lack a digital strategy, a vision of how to profit from digitalisation (SEMED).

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Two key priorities identified: digitalisation and **entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship to respond to the challenges: pandemic, migration and depopulation and overall to tackle unemployment (BY,MD,RU,UA).

One third of initiatives relate to **entrepreneurship** in BY, MD, UA, RU and 20% in Maghreb

Development of an online platform "**Intaliq**" where **entrepreneurs** and SMEs can find information and short training modules on entrepreneurship (Morocco)

Opening of a Centre for Excellence in **Entrepreneurship** (BiH)

The four countries of Central Asia embarked on reforming their VET systems, promotion of more **entrepreneurship** already for many years, and the progress remains slow.

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Other considerations

There are few initiatives related to greening

Greening is considered as an Important issue but were the actors focused on coping the pandemic?

This analysis has not found significant efforts related to greening of businesses (WBT)
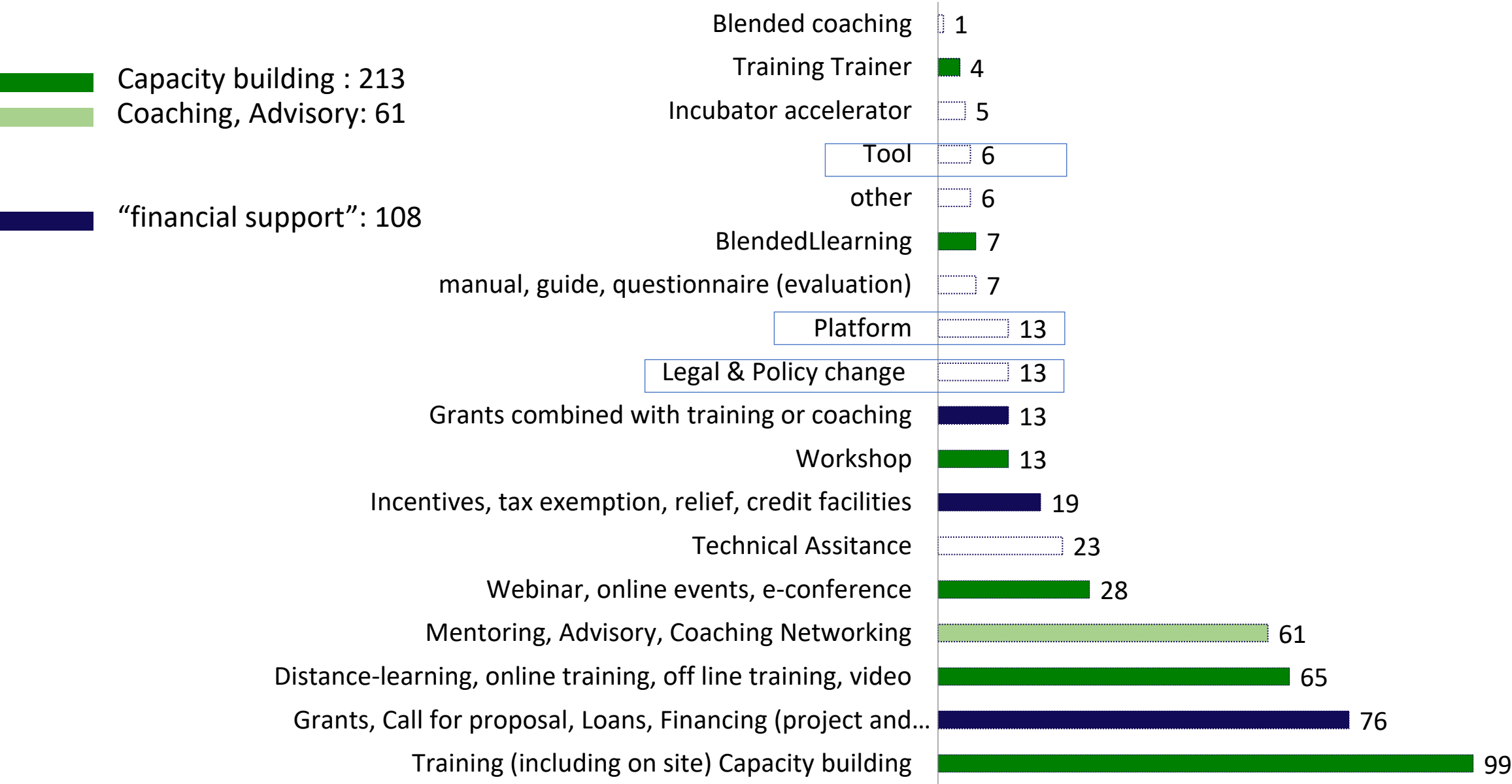
Six of the 21 identified initiatives having a greening dimension are developed in Morocco

The pandemic as an accelerator: digitalisation booster

Regional cooperation is an asset: WB6, EU4business in EaP, Solidarity package CA, UPM

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Types of initiatives

Total number of occurrences : 459

Capacity building : 213
Coaching, Advisory: 61

"financial support": 108

Type	Value
Blended coaching	1
Training Trainer	4
Incubator accelerator	5
Tool	6
other	6
BlendedLlearning	7
manual, guide, questionnaire (evaluation)	7
Platform	13
Legal & Policy change	13
Grants combined with training or coaching	13
Workshop	13
Incentives, tax exemption, relief, credit facilities	19
Technical Assitance	23
Webinar, online events, e-conference	28
Mentoring, Advisory, Coaching Networking	61
Distance-learning, online training, off line training, video	65
Grants, Call for proposal, Loans, Financing (project and…	76
Training (including on site) Capacity building	99

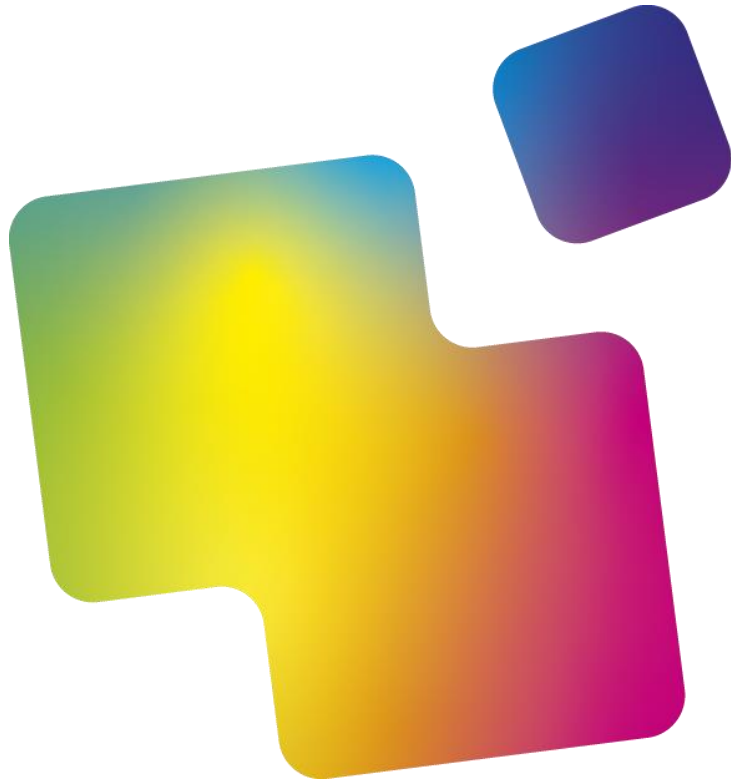# Main features (6)

Implementation of initiatives

Financial support is important but not on the top of the solution

Variety of programs size: level of funding is crucial

Behind the concept of capacity building lie many realities that need to be explored in detail: size, modular approach, blended learning, online learning, fees, qualification awarded or not, training or product information, etc.

The combination of means (e.g., training + coaching + grant + platform) must be investigated to analyze the relevance in terms of cost, sector, transferability

Mentoring, coaching, advisory are also popular ways to acquire skills

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