

# Creation of the SMTMC Centre of Excellence for Industrial Maintenance

*Achieved result of the SMTMC project*

- Developed as part of the SMTMC sustainability and innovation strategy
- Supported by academic, industrial, and governmental partners
- Structured to ensure training, certification, and consulting services
- Promotes Industry 4.0 skills and lifelong learning in maintenance engineering
- Based at the *École Pratique de Formation* of the Tunis Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Officially endorsed through a cooperation agreement signed by the Presidents of the four Tunisian universities (Sfax, Carthage, Gabès, Jendouba) and the President of the Tunis Chamber of Commerce and Industry

## 1. Introduction

The SMTMC Centre of Excellence is a landmark achievement of the SMTMC project. It was conceived to provide a sustainable institutional framework for advancing industrial maintenance skills in Tunisia. Hosted by the Tunis Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Centre embodies a collaborative model that brings together universities, industry stakeholders, and public authorities to foster innovation, ensure skills development, and strengthen links between academia and the labour market.

This initiative aims to institutionalise and perpetuate the results of the SMTMC project by offering a structured environment for certification, consulting, training, and business development, in alignment with international standards and Industry 4.0 priorities.

## 2. Objectives

The SMTMC Centre of Excellence was created to ensure the long-term impact and sustainability of the SMTMC project outcomes. It is designed to serve as a national and regional hub for industrial maintenance training, certification, and innovation. The main objectives of the Centre are to:

- **Consolidate the achievements** of the SMTMC project into a permanent institutional structure that bridges academia, industry, and public authorities.
- **Promote continuous professional development** through certified training programmes aligned with Industry 4.0 and national economic priorities.
- **Deliver consulting and technical assistance** to companies in need of maintenance engineering support and digital transformation.
- **Support lifelong learning** by offering flexible training formats and open-access resources for students, technicians, and professionals.
- **Enhance innovation in maintenance engineering** through joint projects, research collaboration, and transfer of best practices.
- **Strengthen employability and industrial competitiveness** by reducing the gap between training provision and labour market demands.
- **Provide a national platform** for the coordination and recognition of maintenance-related qualifications and skills in Tunisia.

## 3. Activities carried out

Since its operational launch, the SMTMC Centre of Excellence has initiated a range of activities aligned with its mission of fostering excellence in industrial maintenance training and collaboration. These include:

- **Signature of a multilateral cooperation agreement** between the Presidents of the Universities of Sfax, Carthage, Gabès, and Jendouba and the President of the Tunis Chamber of Commerce and Industry, formally establishing the Centre.
- **Development of a physical and functional structure** within the École Pratique de Formation of the Tunis Chamber of Commerce and Industry, equipped with offices, training space, and digital tools.
- **Launch of certified training sessions and workshops** targeting professionals, engineers, and technicians, based on the TMC-VET modular course catalogue developed during the project.

- **Hosting of stakeholder forums and dissemination events**, promoting Industry 4.0 skills, innovation in maintenance, and university–industry partnerships.
- **Support for the deployment of the TMC-KNOWLEDGE platform**, offering self-paced and blended learning modules in maintenance engineering.
- **Initial consulting missions** carried out with local industries for needs analysis, skills upgrading, and predictive maintenance implementation.
- **Integration of national and regional networks**, including links with professional associations and private-sector clusters, to expand the reach of the Centre’s services.

These activities demonstrate the Centre’s capacity to translate the SMTMC project’s objectives into impactful, visible and sustainable actions.

#### 4. Expected impact

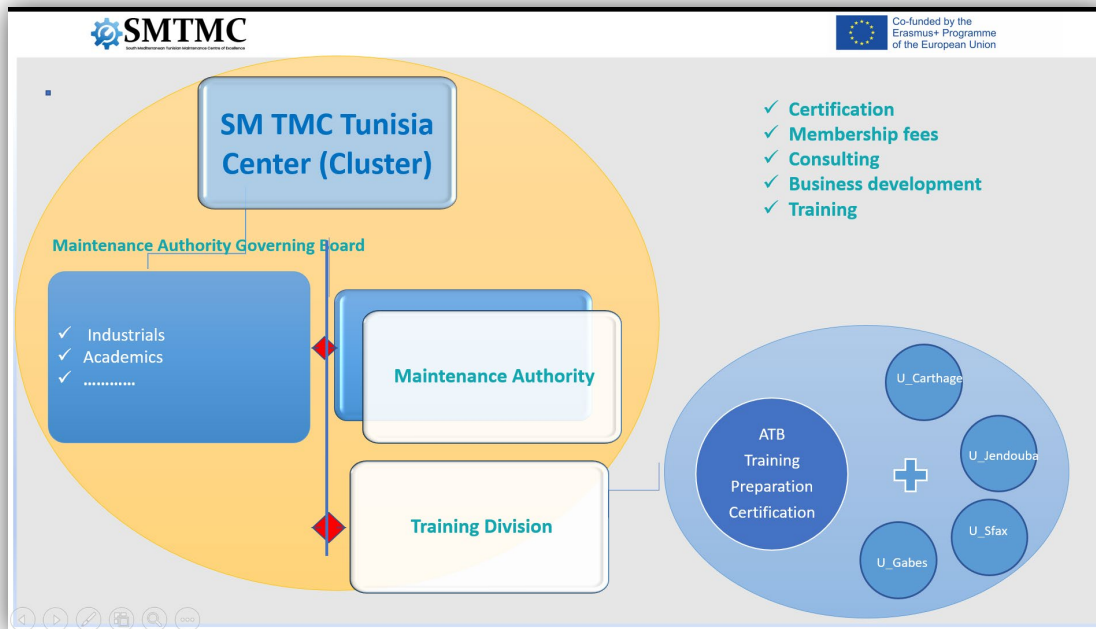
The SMTMC Centre of Excellence is expected to generate lasting structural and institutional impact at both national and regional levels. Its creation ensures that the results of the SMTMC project are embedded into an operational and recognised framework, capable of responding to the evolving needs of the labour market and industry.

The expected impacts include:

- **Sustainability of training and innovation** in the field of industrial maintenance through a permanent, locally embedded structure.
- **Improved alignment between training provision and labour market needs**, resulting in better employability of graduates and upskilling of workers.
- **Strengthening of academic–industry collaboration** in Tunisia through joint training, research, and consultancy initiatives.
- **Wider access to high-quality, certified training programmes**, especially for professionals and technicians from underserved regions.
- **Contribution to Tunisia’s industrial modernisation and Industry 4.0 readiness**, by fostering competence development in predictive maintenance, digital diagnostics, and smart systems.
- **Regional leadership** in the field of maintenance engineering, positioning Tunisia as a reference country for South Mediterranean cooperation and knowledge transfer.

The Centre will continue to serve as a hub for innovation, skills recognition, and inclusive growth beyond the SMTMC project lifecycle.

The diagram below illustrates the governance and operational structure of the SMTMC Centre of Excellence. It shows the roles of the Maintenance Authority, the Training Division, and the academic and industrial partners involved in training and certification delivery.



## 5. Visibility and media coverage

The creation and official launch of the SMTMC Centre of Excellence have attracted strong national attention and have been recognised as a strategic milestone for Tunisia’s industrial and educational ecosystem.

The Centre was publicly inaugurated in December 2024 during a high-level event gathering university rectors, industry leaders, representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and professional organisations. The event marked the official commitment of all stakeholders to sustain the project’s outcomes and to promote innovation and excellence in industrial maintenance.

The launch was widely covered in the national media, including:

- *Entreprises Magazine* (December 2024):  
*“Lancement du Centre d’excellence SMTMC : Une avancée majeure pour la formation et l’industrie en Tunisie”*  
<https://www.entreprises-magazine.com/lancement-du-centre-dexcellence-smtmc-une-avancee-majeure-pour-la-formation-et-lindustrie-en-tunisie>

- *La Presse* (25 December 2024):  
“*Industrie 4.0 : Lancement du premier Centre d’excellence en maintenance en Tunisie*”  
<https://lapresse.tn/2024/12/25/industrie-4-0-lancement-du-premier-centre-dexcellence-en-maintenance-en-tunisie>

These articles highlighted the Centre as a forward-looking initiative that bridges education and economic transformation, and positions Tunisia as a leader in maintenance engineering and vocational excellence in the region.