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Building Resilient Organisations

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been felt by almost all the 2,604 firms and corporations surveyed by HSBC Group for the bank's Navigator Report earlier this year. The findings of the report, entitled 'Building back better', were discussed during the webinar 'Building Resilient Organisations', held by TradeMalta and supported by HSBC Bank Malta.

The webinar focused on how companies are weathering the current crisis and how they are planning to make their enterprises more agile and more resilient. Guest speakers included Warwick Long, Head of Commercial Banking, UK Non Ring-fenced Bank & Europe International, HSBC Bank p.l.c., Joyce Grech, Head of Commercial Banking HSBC Bank Malta, economist JP Fabri, and Joe Schembri, Chief Officer TradeMalta who moderated the discussion.

The COVID-19 pandemic has heavily impacted more than two thirds of the companies surveyed. With these impacts came adjustments and a significant majority of businesses continue to operate in ways which differ to the pre-pandemic scenario.

In the uncertain economic and business landscape caused by the pandemic, resilience is considered of primary importance. In this context, a strong balance sheet and efficient working capital are seen as key for continued success. The coronavirus has also reshaped priorities with most companies focused on short-term planning, and only a minority having enough capacity to consider long-term plans.

The changes have however opened up new opportunities as most businesses are actively pursuing new prospects. The pandemic has also changed the way businesses operate. Companies expect that remote working will become the norm in the next two years, and virtual meetings and collaboration tools are anticipated to become standard technologies. Businesses understand the need to digitalise more processes.

Previous HSBC Navigator reports have shown that environmental sustainability now permeates all aspects of business strategy, and companies have not backtracked from their commitments in this area during the pandemic. Pressure to become more sustainable comes from three main sources: customer demand, government regulations, and employees. As a result, nine out of ten businesses say that they need to reassess or review their operations to re-establish their operations on firmer environmental foundations.

Joyce Grech, Head of Commercial Banking at HSBC Malta, said: "Only one out of five businesses believe that their infrastructure and culture are sufficiently agile, which signals significant weaknesses—the more agile the firm, the better-prepared it is for a crisis. What we also see is that human capital is an important factor. Treating employees well is one of the top characteristics of a resilient company, so good cultural practices can build employee loyalty in the long term."

The latest Navigator report 'Now, next and how for business', which continued to build on the Summer 'Build back better' report, has just been issued and is available on <https://www.business.hsbc.com/navigator/report>. In this edition 10,000 businesses were surveyed spanning 39 countries, markets and territories.



PHOTOCAPTION: Left to right, Economist JP Fabri, Joyce Grech, Head of Commercial Banking at HSBC Malta and Joe Schembri, Chief Officer Trade Malta

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