

## **Webinar on Gender-Smart Investing in Support of Inclusive Growth in North Africa**

### **Concept Note & Agenda**

#### **Context**

Gender smart investing employs market systems and finance to improve economic opportunities of women. It is an investment strategy that uses capital to address gender disparities and better inform investment decisions. The aim is to achieve more equitable development and strengthen women's participation in the labor market in terms of both quantity and quality. The approach has been gaining interest from investors, development actors, and equity advocates globally.

In Africa, women run large share of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs). However, most female-led enterprises are small firms with little opportunity for growth (necessity entrepreneurship). Investing from a gender lens has emerged in numerous African countries via private equity funds, impact investing funds, microcredit institutions, venture capital or even angel investors groups, and in some countries, it targeted specific economic sectors.

SMEs and entrepreneurship are positively linked to faster economic growth and job creation in general. Many North African countries have begun to recognize the social and economic role of SMEs and entrepreneurs and have taken certain steps to support these enterprises.

In general, though, SMEs and entrepreneurs in North African countries are still faced with various barriers, preventing these economies from leveraging the immense benefits associated with a thriving entrepreneurial landscape characterized by an innovative ecosystem.

Aside from the economic benefits, enhanced promotion of SMEs and entrepreneurship can also help overcome social challenges – specifically referring to the high level of unemployment among women and the extremely low levels of female ownership of businesses.

It is against this background that ECA is organizing the webinar “Gender- smart investing in support of inclusive growth in North Africa”, on 7 June 2023.

#### **Objective**

The webinar will be an opportunity to shed light on:

- Gender lens investing and its impact on entrepreneurship in North Africa.
- Major challenges facing North African women-led and owned firms in accessing finance.
- Good practices for promoting gender-lens investment in North Africa.

**Event format:** Online

**Date & Time:** The event will take place on June 7<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 to 12:00 Rabat time (GMT+1)

**Languages:** The meeting language is Arabic, English, and French. Interpretation available in all 3 languages (English, French and Arabic)

**Contact:** Ms. Amal Nagah Elbeshbishi, Economist, UNECA Office for North Africa, [elbeshbishi@un.org](mailto:elbeshbishi@un.org) .

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**Wednesday 7 June, from 10:00 to 12:00 (UTC+1)**

**Registration link: <https://share-eu1.hsforms.com/1n1lOzLZ-ShWxZh5Aq-L4eQg2r8l>**

### **Agenda**

**10:00- 10:15** Opening remarks, by Ms. Zuzana B. Schwidrowski- Director of the ECA Office for North Africa

**Moderator:** Ms. Amal Nagah Elbeshbishi, Economist, UNECA Office for North Africa

**10:15- 10:45** Presentation of the study and its main recommendations, by Mr. Cobus de Hart- Director of Africa Consulting, Oxford Economics Africa

**10:45- 11:15** Presentation on “Gender Smart Investment in Egypt: How to Go from New to Normal?” by Ms. Amal Mowafy- Chief of Party, USAID Egyptian Pioneers- The American University in Cairo

**11:15- 12:00** Questions and comments