



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



KINGDOM OF MOROCCO
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC INCLUSION
SMALL BUSINESS, EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS



القمة العربية لريادة
الأعمال والمشروعات
الصغيرة والمتوسطة

ARAB SMEs SUMMIT

من الصمود للازدهار From resilience to prosperity

Marrakesh, 12-14 December 2023

مراكش، 12-14 كانون الأول/ديسمبر



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa
Sub-Regional Office for North Africa



OXFORD
ECONOMICS
AFRICA

Launch of the report on

“Gender-Smart Investing in Support of Inclusive Growth in North Africa”

December 13th | 10.00-11.30

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 in this context that the Sub-Regional Office for North Africa of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA- SRO- NA) is organizing this launch to share good practices for promoting gender-lens investment in North Africa, with the aim that these good practices will provide insight and learnings for other countries across the continent.

The launch is a good opportunity to present the final report on “Gender-Smart Investing in Support of Inclusive Growth in North Africa”, jointly produced by our organization in partnership with Oxford Economics Africa.

This report has benefited from the debates, conclusions, and recommendations of the webinar on “Gender- Smart Investing in Support of Inclusive Growth in North Africa”, organized by the Sub-regional Office for North Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa, in Rabat on 7 June 2023, and took into account the comments and recommendations from this webinar.

Objectives

- 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.

Language

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

Contact Person

Ms. Amal Nagah Elbeshbishi, Economist, UNECA Office for North Africa,
elbeshbishi@un.org

Agenda

December 13th | 10.00-11.30

10.00-10.15	<p style="text-align: center;">Opening Remarks</p> <p>Ms. Zuzana B. Schwidrowski, Director of the ECA Office for North Africa</p> <p><i>Moderator: Ms. Amal Nagah Elbeshbishi, Economist, UNECA Office for North Africa</i></p>
10.15-11.00	<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation of the Study and its Main Recommendations</p> <p>Mr. Cobus de Hart- Director of Africa Consulting, Oxford Economics Africa</p>
11.00-11.30	Q&A

