

Day 2

Sustainability and responsible business practices – Opportunity spotlights

■ Introduction

The sustainability and responsible business practices opportunity spotlight aims to shed light on key pathways available to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Arab region to capitalize on sustainable practices and responsible business innovations in today's evolving market. As the world increasingly prioritizes sustainability, SMEs play a crucial role in driving environmental stewardship, economic growth, and social responsibility.

This 30-minute panel will explore various opportunities available to SMEs, including funding sources, governmental support programmes, and strategic partnerships that promote sustainability. Through insightful discussions, participants will discover actionable strategies for accessing resources, navigating regulatory landscapes, and forging valuable collaborations in the green economy. The session aims to inspire entrepreneurs to adopt sustainable practices and elevate their businesses while contributing to a more sustainable future.

■ Moderator

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Zahraa Taher, Managing Director of FinMark Communications, Bahrain

Speakers

- **Nicolas Farhat**, Senior Director, Water and Energy for Food (WE4F) and SMEs Programmes, WE4F, Lebanon
- **Ahmed Al Mawlawi**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Qatar

■ Thematic focus

The sustainability and responsible business practices opportunity spotlight aims to highlight critical pathways available for SMEs to integrate sustainable practices and thrive in a competitive marketplace. Attendees will gain practical knowledge and actionable strategies to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities faced by SMEs in today's dynamic, sustainability-focused environment.

Key themes for discussion include:

- **Access to green funding:** This theme will explore various funding mechanisms available to SMEs pursuing sustainable initiatives, including grants, impact investments, and green financing. Panelists will discuss the criteria that funders look for, the importance of a robust sustainability plan, and how SMEs can effectively pitch their green projects to secure necessary funding for growth.
- **Government and institutional support for responsible business practices:** Governments and institutions play a crucial role in fostering an enabling environment for sustainable SME growth. This theme will cover initiatives and support programmes aimed at promoting responsible business practices, including incentives, training programmes, and access to market information.
- **Supporting sustainable practices of SMEs:** In this panel, experts will discuss best practices for identifying and implementing sustainable practices that enhance the competitiveness of SMEs in the green economy. They will highlight initiatives aimed at supporting sustainable practices among SMEs, emphasizing how these initiatives promote access to resources, drive innovative solutions, and create new market opportunities, ultimately fostering sustainable business growth.