

DOHA, NOVEMBER 18-19, 2024

The Regional Policy Dialogue for Supporting the Entrepreneurship Enabling Environment



Content

BACKGROUND	02
OBJECTIVE	02
KEY THEMES	03
METHODOLOGY	04
EXPECTED OUTCOMES	05
TARGET AUDIENCE	06
PRELIMINARY AGENDA	07

Background

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of the Arab region's economy, playing a pivotal role in job creation, innovation, and economic diversification. Representing over 90% of all businesses in the region, SMEs employ a significant portion of the population and are key drivers of sustainable and inclusive growth. Their contributions are vital in fostering innovation, promoting gender equality, and supporting economic stability. Despite their importance, SMEs face numerous barriers, such as limited access to finance, complex regulatory frameworks, a shortage of skilled labor, and political instability. [1]

Addressing these challenges through effective regulatory reforms and fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge exchange is essential to unlock the full potential of SMEs and ensure their long-term growth and contribution to the region's development.

Objective

The objective is to advocate for supportive regulatory frameworks and policies that nurture the growth and sustainability of SMEs in the Arab region. By promoting a culture of collaboration and knowledge exchange among Arab countries, the policy dialogue sessions aim to empower SMEs to thrive in a dynamic and competitive market. Additionally, the sessions will focus on identifying effective policies and strategies that foster entrepreneurship, drive innovation, and contribute to broader economic development.

The policy dialogue will be held from November 18 to 19 in Doha, Qatar, within the framework of the Arab SMEs Summit—Rowad 2024, organized by UN ESCWA and QDB.



مؤتمر رواد
لريادة الأعمال
2024
Rowad Entrepreneurship
Conference
DOHA - QATAR



2024
ARAB SMEs SUMMIT
Navigating Digital Horizons
أفاق العصر الرقمي

[1] International Monetary Fund (2019): Enhancing the Role of SMEs in the Arab World; Washington, D.C.

<https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/PP/2019/PPEA2019040.ashx#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%20micro,towards%20micro%20enterprises%20>

Key Themes

1. SUPPORTIVE REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS AND POLICY ADVOCACY FOR SMES

This theme focuses on addressing regulatory barriers for SMEs in the Arab region. Discussions will cover policy gaps, their impact on SME growth, and strategies for supportive regulations. The session will highlight advocacy, the role of stakeholders in promoting SME-friendly policies, and showcase successful models from regional and international contexts.

2. COLLABORATION AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AMONG SMES

This theme focuses on regional collaboration and knowledge sharing for SME success. Discussions will cover cooperation platforms, success stories, and strategies to overcome partnership barriers. The session will also highlight how digital technologies enhance knowledge exchange, innovation, and continuous learning in the Arab SME sector.

3. FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT FOR SMES

Access to finance is crucial for SME growth, and this theme explores available financial instruments and funding opportunities. Discussions will address the role of financial institutions, alternative financing mechanisms, and strategies for financial empowerment, emphasizing resilient infrastructure for SMEs to access essential resources and thrive.

4. INNOVATION, EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES, AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR SMES

This theme highlights innovation and emerging technologies in SME growth, focusing on creating an environment for technological advancement. Discussions will cover integrating AI, IoT, and blockchain, public-private partnerships, and the essential infrastructure and legal frameworks SMEs need to thrive, enhancing economic diversification and resilience in the Arab region.

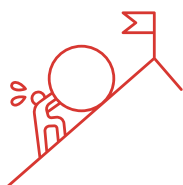
Methodology

The policy dialogue sessions will take place in a collaborative roundtable format, fostering an open and constructive exchange among policymakers, SME owners, industry experts, and other key stakeholders. Each session, lasting 90 minutes, will be moderated to ensure focused discussions on critical issues such as supportive regulatory frameworks, financial empowerment, innovation, and collaboration for SMEs across the Arab region. The dialogue will promote a culture of knowledge sharing and cooperation, allowing participants to present challenges and innovative solutions from their respective countries.

The format is designed to encourage diverse viewpoints, with moderated discussions aimed at identifying tangible solutions to the current obstacles Arab SMEs face. Through dynamic interactions, participants will explore strategies to foster entrepreneurship, enhance financial access, and develop policies that drive innovation. By advocating for conducive policies and financial support, the sessions will lay the groundwork for sustainable economic development in the Arab region.



Expected Outcomes



Identification of key regulatory challenges and opportunities for SMEs in the Arab region.



Development of a roadmap for policy advocacy and regulatory reform to support SMEs.



Establishment of networks and partnerships for ongoing collaboration among SMEs.



Sharing of best practices and innovative solutions to support SMEs.



Commitment to fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge exchange for SMEs.



Enhanced access to financial resources and instruments.

Target Audience



POLICY MAKERS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS



REPRESENTATIVES FROM INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.



SME OWNERS AND ENTREPRENEURS



BUSINESS LEADERS AND INDUSTRY EXPERTS



ACADEMICS AND RESEARCHERS



CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS



MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

Preliminary Agenda

Arab SMEs Summit - Rowad 2024 | November 18-20 | Doha, Qatar

DAY 1: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024

1.00 PM – 2.30 PM	2.30 PM – 4:00 PM
Part I <u>Theme:</u> Supportive Regulatory Frameworks & Policy Advocacy • Welcome and Introduction • Open Discussion • Summary and Key Takeaways	Part II <u>Theme:</u> Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange • Introduction • Open Discussion • Summary and Key Takeaways

DAY 2: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024

1.00 PM – 2.30 PM	2.30 PM – 4.00 PM
Part III <u>Theme:</u> Financial Support for SMEs • Introduction • Open Discussion • Summary and Key Takeaways	Part IV <u>Theme:</u> Innovation, Emerging Technologies, and an Enabling Environment • Introduction • Open Discussion • Summary and Key Takeaways